



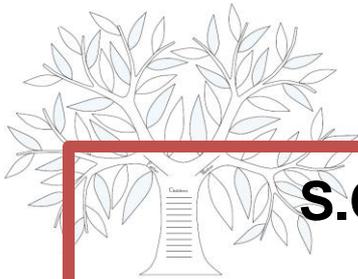
## **Welcome to Ancestry.com**

### ***Part 2: Improve Your Search Strategies on Ancestry.com***

As of June 2012, Ancestry.com provided access to more than 10 billion records, 41 million family trees, and 2 million paying subscribers. Today's class will explore the many search strategies using the Search Box on your Ancestry.com home page. We meet on February 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in the Computer Classroom.

#### **Ancestry.com Syllabus for February 14th**

- A. Search Strategies
  - 1. Items on your Home Page to Use
  - 2. Basic Search Form
  - 3. Advanced Search Form
  - 4. Default First Name Settings
  - 5. Default Last Name Settings
  - 6. Wild Cards
  - 7. Soundex
  - 8. Keyword Searching
  - 9. Search by Record Type
  - 10. Search by Location
  - 11. Two Ways of Viewing Results
  
- B. Search Results
  - 1. Why No Results?
  - 2. Why Too Many Results?
  
- C. Ways to Win the Name Game
  - 1. Best Search Strategies
  - 2. Brick Wall strategies



**S.C. Computer / Genealogy Special Interest Group**

*Karen Ristic*

***Welcome to***

ancestry.com®

*The largest collection of family history records on the web*

**February 14, 2013**

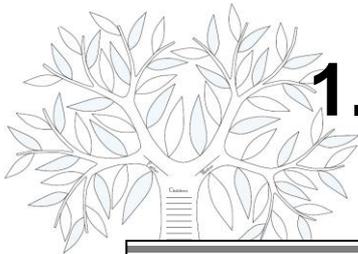
**Part 2:**

***Improve your Search Strategies  
on Ancestry.com***



# A. Search Strategies

## 1. Items on Your Home Page to Use



1

**My Quick Links** [+ Add a link](#)

- [Ancestry Card Catalog](#)
- [Birth, Marriage & Death Records](#)
- [U.S. Census Records](#)
- [Immigration & Emigration Records](#)
- [Military Collection](#)
- [Edit your profile](#)
- [1870 United States Federal Censu...](#)

2

**My Shoebox**

Record	Date Viewed	Name(s)
<a href="#">1940 United States Federal Census</a>	03 Jan 2013	Dorothy Torbrin
<a href="#">Washington, Marriage Records, 1865-2004</a>	31 Dec 2012	Charles G Lettelier
<a href="#">U.S., Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, 1889-1970</a>	18 Dec 2012	Nelson Frank LeVee Jr

[See all shoebox items](#)

4

**My To-do List** [+ Add an item](#)

- Find Thomas Campbell immigration
- Find Patrick Flanagan birth place
- John Truax obituary ?

[View recently completed to-do items](#)

5

6

**John Truax Family Tree** [My Trees](#) [View this tree](#)

**Recent family tree activity**



Anna (Wells) Truax



John Truax, 1880  
United Stat...



John Truax, 1870  
United Stat...

**About this tree**

- 122 people
- 2 photos
- [View People With Hints](#)
- Home Person: [John Truax](#)
- Last viewed: [Nancy](#)

3

**Recent Activity**

**Historical Records** [See more](#)

- [U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918](#)  
for Charles Gaskill Lettelier
- [1930 United States Federal Census](#)  
for Charles G Lettelier
- [1940 United States Federal Census](#)  
for Charles G Lettelier

**Searches** [See more](#)

- [Michael Lev\\*](#)  
All Records
- [Charles Letteliers](#)  
All Records
- [Charles Letteliers](#)  
All Records

## A.2. Basic Search Form

1. The main challenge is learning how to search through the huge amount of information. **Most of our searching is for individuals.** The search process begins with “casting a large net” first. Whatever you find can be refined from that point.
2. When a name is entered there and the **Search** button is clicked, **every database that is indexed for names will be searched.** That may be just what you need, but sometimes that type of search will result in more information than needed.

The image shows a search form titled "Search" with several fields and buttons. Numbered callouts (1-5) point to specific elements:

- 1: First & Middle Name(s) field
- 2: Last Name field
- 3: Estimated birth year field
- 4: Search button
- 5: Show Advanced button

The form includes a "Clear Form" link, a "Show Advanced" button, and a "Help" link. Below the main search fields are two expandable sections:

- Life Events:** Includes a dropdown for "Any Event", a "Year" field, a "Location" field, and a "Remove" button. Below it is a "+ Add life events (birth, marriage, death, and more)" link.
- Family Member:** Includes a dropdown for "Choose...", a "First Name" field, a "Last Name" field, and a "Remove" button. Below it is a "+ Add family members (mother, father, spouse, siblings, children)" link.

Two expanded dropdown menus are shown at the bottom right:

- Any Event:** Shows a list of events: Any Event (selected), Birth, Death, Lived In, Marriage, Arrival, Departure, Military.
- Family Member:** Shows a list of family members: Choose... (selected), Choose..., Father, Mother, Spouse, Child, Sibling.

# A.3. Advanced Search Form

- 1. Name:** Can be Exact or Default (see next page).
- 2. Event:** Can be Exact or Default. Use type ahead.
- 3. Family Member:** Exact or Default
- 4. Keyword:** Results with the *keyword* will be prioritized as better matches. The *keyword* may be anywhere in the content or the *title* of the record.
- 5. Gender:** Specifying the gender of a person will return results where that gender was indexed. It may exclude results where no gender was specified.
- 6. Race/Nationality:** This can be especially useful when searching census records. As with gender, it may exclude results where no race or nationality was indexed.
- 7. Collection Priority:** Changing the collection priority will allow you to choose which country you would like your results to be from. You can choose to simply prioritize results, or to only show results from that country.
- 8. Restrict to:** There are four options here to help you narrow down the results that you receive. By default all four of the options are selected. Removing one of these four options will remove that group of records from your search results.

The screenshot shows an advanced search interface with the following elements:

- Match all terms exactly:** A checkbox option at the top.
- Name:** Fields for "First & Middle Name(s)" and "Last Name", both with "Use default settings" dropdowns. A red box labeled "1" is next to the "Last Name" field.
- Event:** Fields for "Any Event" (dropdown), "Year" (with "+/-" and "0" dropdown), and "Location" (with "Remove" button). A red box labeled "2" is next to the "Location" field. There is also an "Exact Only" checkbox and a "Use default settings" dropdown.
- Family Member:** Fields for "First Name" and "Last Name", both with "Choose..." dropdowns and "Remove" buttons. A red box labeled "3" is next to the "Last Name" field. Below is a "+ Add family members" link with examples: (mother, father, spouse, siblings, children).
- More:** A "Keyword" field with an "Exact" checkbox. A red box labeled "4" is next to the "Exact" checkbox. Below is a link: "e.g. pilot or 'Flying Tigers'".
- Gender:** A dropdown menu currently showing "- Select -". A red box labeled "5" is next to the dropdown.
- Race/Nationality:** A text input field with an "Exact" checkbox. A red box labeled "6" is next to the "Exact" checkbox.
- Collection Priority:** A dropdown menu currently showing "All Collections" with a help icon. A red box labeled "7" is next to the dropdown. Below is a checkbox for "Show only records from these collections".
- Restrict to:** Four checked checkboxes: "Historical records", "Family trees", "Stories & publications", and "Photos & maps". A red box labeled "8" is next to the "Family trees" checkbox.
- Search:** A large orange "Search" button at the bottom.
- Clear Form | Hide Advanced:** Links at the top right.

## A.4. Default First Name Settings

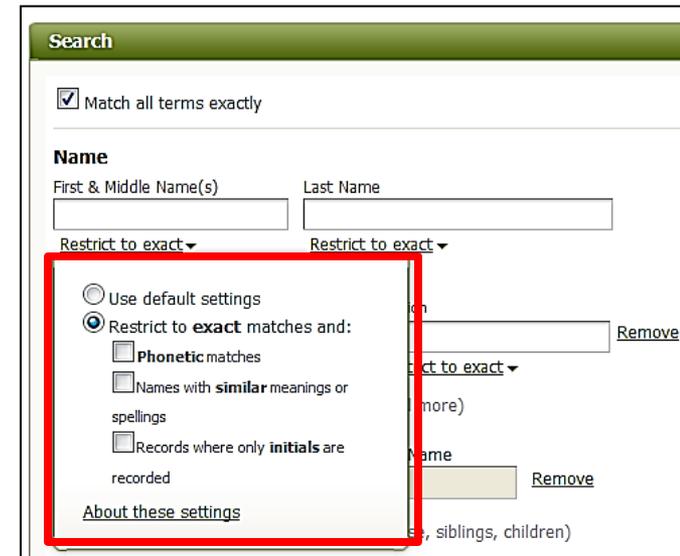
1. When you use **default settings**, Ancestry looks through every first name they have recorded in more than 29,000 data collections, and pull out any record where the first name is **Similar or exact to what you typed.**

### 2. When you click on Restrict to EXACT matches AND:

**Phonetic match** of what you typed: A first name which has a **similar meaning or spelling** as the one you typed or an initial that matches the name you typed. It may also return records that do not match the first name you typed, but strongly match other criteria that you have listed. Results are ordered based on how well all the elements in that record match your search.

**Similar Variations**: There are alternates and **spelling variations that are commonly used**, such as *Will* for *William*. If you choose this option Ancestry looks for records with these alternates and consider them as possible results for you to look at.

**Initial Variations**: Sometimes in records our ancestors were identified with just their **first initials, or the initials of their given and middle names.** By including this option, Ancestry examines and possibly includes records that just have initials in the first name. So if you enter *Mary*, they look at records that have *M* as the first name.



The screenshot shows the Ancestry search interface. At the top, there is a 'Search' header. Below it, there is a checkbox for 'Match all terms exactly' which is checked. Under the 'Name' section, there are two input fields: 'First & Middle Name(s)' and 'Last Name'. Below these fields are two dropdown menus, both set to 'Restrict to exact'. A red box highlights a dropdown menu that is open, showing the following options: 'Use default settings' (unselected), 'Restrict to exact matches and:' (selected), 'Phonetic matches' (unselected), 'Names with similar meanings or spellings' (unselected), and 'Records where only initials are recorded' (unselected). There is also a link for 'About these settings' at the bottom of the dropdown. The background shows parts of search results with 'Remove' buttons.

# A.5. Default Last Name Settings

- 1. When you use default settings**, Ancestry looks through every last name they have recorded in more than 29,000 data collections, and pulls out any record where the last name is **similar or exact to** what you typed.
- 2. Exact Matches**: Records that contain a last name that is **exactly** what you typed in will appear in your results.
  - If you choose **Soundex**, any record that contains one of the Soundex variations for a surname might appear in your results.
  - If you choose phonetic**, they will identify appropriate search strategies that apply to specific data collections and if a record has one of those names, Ancestry will use it as a possible record for your results set.
  - Similar Variations**: There are **alternates** and **spelling variations** that are commonly used such as *Hashe* for *Hash*. If you choose this option they will look for records with these alternates and consider them as possible results for you to look at.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry search interface. At the top is a green header with the word "Search". Below it is a checkbox labeled "Match all terms exactly". The main search area is divided into "Name" and "Family Member" sections. The "Name" section has input fields for "First & Middle Name(s)" and "Last Name", with a "Use default settings" dropdown and a "Restrict to exact" dropdown. The "Family Member" section has a "Choose..." dropdown and a "First Name" input field. A "Year" field with a "+/-" sign and an "Exact Only" checkbox are also present. A "Add life events" button is visible. A red box highlights a settings dropdown menu that is open, showing three radio button options: "Use default settings", "Restrict to exact matches and:", and "Names with similar meanings or spellings". Under "Restrict to exact matches and:", there are three checkboxes: "Soundex matches", "Phonetic matches", and "Names with similar meanings or spellings". A link "About these settings" is at the bottom of the dropdown.

## A. 6. Wild Cards

1. You can search alternate spellings with the asterisk \*, which represents 0 to 5 unknown characters. The query **Johann\*** will search for **Johann** and **Johannes**. A query for **Smel\*er** will search for **Smeltzer** and **Smelzer**, among others.
2. If you want to search for names that differ only by one letter, use the question mark (?) wild card. A search for **Johns?n** will return both **Johnsen** and **Johnson**.
3. You can now put a wild card first, such as **\*son** or **?athew** to catch all spellings and variations.
4. Either the first or last character must be a non-wild card character. For example, **Han\*** and **\*son** are okay, but not **\*anso\***.
5. Names must contain at least three non-wild card characters. For example, **Ha\*n** is okay, but not **Ha\***
6. Example: If you type in **Ann\***, this will match names such as *Ann*, *Anne*, *Anna*, or *Annabelle*. And if you type in **Ann?**, this will match names such as *Anne* or *Anna* but not *Ann* or *Annabelle*.

## A.7. Soundex

1. *Soundex* is a system originally used by the National Archives to index records such as censuses and some passenger arrival (immigration) records.

**Soundex is based on the sound of a name, rather than actual spelling.**

This allows names such as **Smith**, **Smythe** and **Smyth** to be seen as the same name, while removing the need to sort through names beginning with **Sm-**. A typical *Soundex* code begins with the first letter of a name, followed by three numbers. For example, the *Soundex* code for the name **Wilcox** is W422. The follow letters are always disregarded: **A, E, H, I, O, U, W, and Y.**

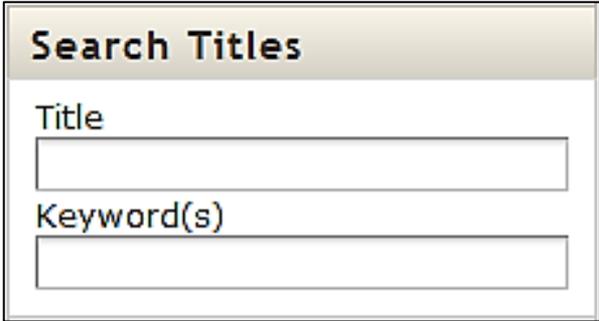
2. To use the *Soundex* option the user must **check the box next to "Exact matches only"** and their search will only produce results that match the entered information exactly

National Archives Soundex code

Number	Letters Represented	Number	Letters Represented
1	B, F, P, V	4	L
2	C, G, J, K, Q, S, X, Z	5	M, N
3	D, T	6	R

## A.8. Using the *Keyword* Search Field

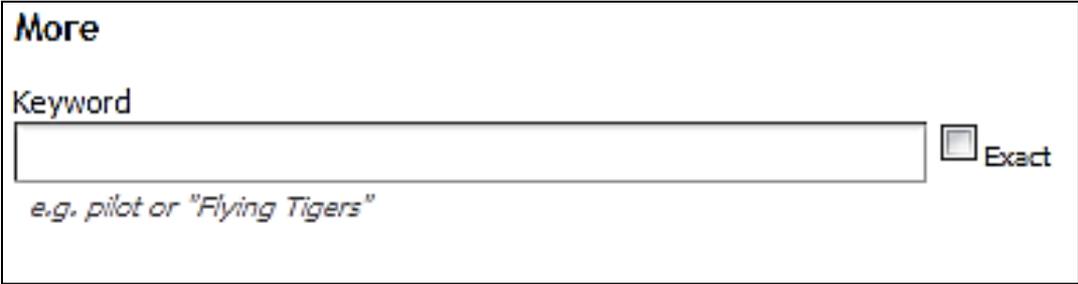
1. Many Search templates on the Ancestry website provide a *Keyword* search field. Often, more data is found on an original record than the number of fields provided by a search template would indicate. **If you do have additional information, you can enter this data in the keyword field in order to refine your search results.** Using the *keyword* field like this is especially helpful if your ancestor has a common name and you are getting more results than you can easily review.
2. **The *Keyword* field is useful to eliminate erroneous results.** For example, if you know the child of John Smith is named Gertrude Smith, you will most likely be able to narrow your results considerably by entering this daughter's name in the ***Keyword*** field.



Search Titles

Title

Keyword(s)



More

Keyword

 Exact

*e.g. pilot or "Flying Tigers"*

# Using the *Keyword Search Field* (cont.)

*The following examples will help you use the keyword search field in a variety of collections and databases. Please note that keywords aren't limited to these collections; these examples are merely a starting point to get you thinking about how you might want to use keywords in your historical record searches.*

**1. Newspapers & Publications; Stories, Memories & Histories.** These collections are an excellent place to use *keyword* searching. When you search a newspaper, periodical, or story, you are searching the entire text of the document. As an example, if you have an ancestor that was a war hero, you may want to enter the **name of the war** in which they served, **any medals** they received, or additional terms you've heard in reference to this person as *keywords*. As always, fill out as many vital facts (name, date of birth, etc.) as you can to ensure accurate results.

**2. Obituaries.** Often a person's obituary will contain details about **their life**, **occupation**, or **surviving relatives**. If you know any of this additional information, entering it in the *keyword* field will help refine your search results. If you are looking for an obituary in a particular newspaper, entering part or all of the **name of the publication** in the *keyword* field will help you to find the exact obituary you're searching.

**3. Social Security Death Index.** The Social Security Death Index (SSDI) contains the following information for each entry, if the data was available to the Social Security Administration: **Last name, first name, social security number, state issued, birth date, death date, last residence, and lump sum paid**. Since not all of these fields exist on the SSDI search form, you can enter it as a *keyword* if you have this additional information.

# Using the *Keyword* Search Field (cont.)

**4. Census Records.** As you go further into the past, you may notice that although the **city** in which your ancestor lived remains unchanged, the county or parish borders around the city may have shifted. Rather than entering the city in the Location field, try entering it as a *keyword*. If you know the **street address** of an ancestor, the best place to put this is in the *keyword* field.

**5. Military Records.** Military records are another group that benefits from *keyword* searches, as you can enter the names of the **regiment**, **rank**, or **other small detail** for which there is no preset search field. Again, entering the most complete information available to you in the other fields will help you get a better level of accuracy in your search results.

**6. Keywords in the Card Catalog.** The *keyword* field is also available to help you search for a particular database within the **Card Catalog**. While the *title* field only searches the *titles* of databases, the *keyword* field will also search in the **database description and source information** (found below the record summary). This is especially useful if you know the general type of information contained within a database but not the exact wording of the database *title*.

**Note:** Although *keyword* items are subject to **Wild Cards**, **Soundex**, and other similar search variables, you will probably find greater success if you are **not** applying these to the **Keyword** field.

# A. 10. Search by Location



Search ▾ DNA ▾

- Search All Records
- Census & Voter Lists
- Birth, Marriage & Death
- Public Member Trees
- Military
- Immigration & Travel
- Card Catalog**

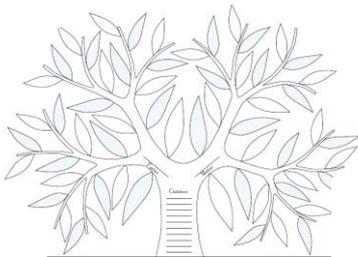
Title	Collection	Records	Activity
<a href="#">Utah County, Utah Cemetery Index</a>	Birth, Marriage & Death	87,658	
<a href="#">Utah Directory, 1890: Salt Lake City, Logan, and Provo</a>	Schools, Directories & Church Histories	41,516	
<a href="#">Memories that live : Utah County centennial history</a>	Stories, Memories & Histories	485	
<a href="#">Web: Utah County, Utah Obituary Index, 1874-2010</a>	Birth, Marriage & Death	192,671	

**FILTER BY LOCATION**

Australia	118
Canada	1000+
Europe	1000+
Mexico	18
<b>USA</b>	<b>1000+</b>
Africa	10
Asia	46
North America	1000+

Ancestry allows you to search for records for an ancestor from a specific geographic region. For example, if you know that your ancestors came from New York, you may search for specific records from New York.

# A.9. Search by Record Type



Search ▾ DNA ▾

Search All Records

Census & Voter Lists

Birth, Marriage & Death

Public Member Trees

Military

Immigration & Travel

Card Catalog

Search Titles

Title

Keyword(s)

Search or Clear All

Filter Titles

Reset all filters and start over

FILTER BY COLLECTION

Census & Voter Lists	547
Birth, Marriage & Death	1000+
Military	1000+
Immigration & Travel	400
Newspapers & Publications	1000+
Pictures	35
Stories, Memories & Histories	1000+
Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	185
Schools, Directories & Church Histories	10,00+
Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills	1000
Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs	1000+
Family Trees	11

FILTER BY LOCATION

Australia	125
Canada	1000+
Europe	1000+
Mexico	19
USA	1000+
Africa	13
Asia	51
North America	1000+

FILTER BY DATES

1600s	1700s	1800s	1900s
1600s	1700s	1800s	1900s
1610s	1710s	1810s	1910s
1620s	1720s	1820s	1920s
1630s	1730s	1830s	1930s
1640s	1740s	1840s	1940s
1650s	1750s	1850s	1950s
1660s	1760s	1860s	1960s
1670s	1770s	1870s	1970s
1680s	1780s	1880s	1980s
1690s	1790s	1890s	1990s

FILTER BY LANGUAGES

German	1000+
English	1000+
Spanish	8
French	675
Italian	106
Swedish	22

Matches 1-25 of 31,213

Sort By Popularity

Title	Collection	Records	Activity
<a href="#">Public Member Trees</a>	Family Trees	2,147,483,647	
<a href="#">1940 United States Federal Census</a>	Census & Voter Lists	134,473,509	UPDATED
<a href="#">1930 United States Federal Census</a>	Census & Voter Lists	124,962,440	
<a href="#">1900 United States Federal Census</a>	Census & Voter Lists	77,277,539	

1. If you are looking for a specific type of record for an ancestor, you may search for the record from within the database directly. For example, if you are looking for a Social Security Death Index record, you may search from within the database and only see results from that database.
2. You can use "Search Titles" and search by **Title** and/or **Keyword(s)** to narrow down the list of available databases.
3. Or you can either find the database under "Filter Titles"
4. Note. The databases listed in the Card Catalog are sorted by **Popularity** by default. You can also sort by **Database Title**, **Date Updated**, **Date Added** and **Record Count**. If you haven't found the database you're looking for, you can continue to filter by **Location**, **Date**, and **Language**
5. Once you have located the database you wish to search, click on the **database title**.

# A.11 Two Ways of Viewing Results

All results for *John Truax*

Searching for...  
Name: John Truax  
Death: 1876-1886  
**Edit Search**  
or [Start a new search](#)

**Narrow by Category**

▼ All Categories

Census & Voter Lists	790
Birth, Marriage & Death	456
Military	371
Immigration & Travel	26
Newspapers & Publications	3,682
Pictures	35
Stories, Memories & Histories	358
Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	31

Matches 1-20 of 6,085 Sorted By Relevance **View Sorted by relevance**

A little more information will give you better results.  
Try adding a state, province or country in "Lived In (Residence)"  
Try adding a birth or death date; even a guess might help.

You can press 'r' to [refine your search](#), or 'n' to [start a new one](#).  
Check out [Getting the most out of new search](#) for more tips and tricks.

**Michigan, Deaths and Burials Index, 1867-1995**  
Birth, Marriage & Death  
★★★★☆

NAME: **John N. Truax**  
MOTHER: Louisa Truax  
FATHER: John Truax  
BIRTH: abt 1854 - Canada  
DEATH: 31 Aug 1877 - Watertown, Tuscola, Michigan

**Michigan, Deaths and Burials Index, 1867-1995**  
Birth, Marriage & Death  
★★★★☆

NAME: **John Truax, Sen.**  
MOTHER: Jane Truax  
FATHER: Abram Truax  
BIRTH: abt 1809 - Canada  
DEATH: 18 Jul 1888 - Hopkins, Allegan, Michigan

Sorted by relevance

Summarized by category

Searching for...  
Name: John Truax  
Death: 1876-1886  
**Edit Search**  
or [Start a new search](#)

**Narrow by Category**

▼ All Categories

Census & Voter Lists	790
Birth, Marriage & Death	456
Military	371
Immigration & Travel	26
Newspapers & Publications	3,682
Pictures	35
Stories, Memories & Histories	358
Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers	31
Schools, Directories & Church Histories	485
Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills	221
Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs	48
Family Trees	3,451

Hot Keys  
n New search  
r Refine search

Matched 9,536 from All Categories **View Summarized by category**

▼ **Census & Voter Lists** 790

- 1880 United States Federal Census 129
- 1870 United States Federal Census 115
- 1860 United States Federal Census 108
- 1850 United States Federal Census 85
- U.S. IRS Tax Assessment Lists, 1862-1918 50

[See all 790 results...](#)

▼ **Birth, Marriage & Death** 456

- Indiana, Marriage Collection, 1800-1941 47
- United States Obituary Collection 36
- Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801-1928 34
- Ohio, Births and Christenings Index, 1800-1962 33
- U.S. and International Marriage Records, 1560-1900 24

[See all 456 results...](#)

▼ **Military** 371

- U.S. Civil War Soldiers, 1861-1865 41
- U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles 28
- U.S., Civil War Pension Index: General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934 26
- U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 26
- U.S., Returns from Military Posts, 1806-1916 24

[See all 371 results...](#)

▼ **Immigration & Travel** 26



## B. Results

### 1. Why No Results?

1. The first question to answer when looking for a woman is "when was she married?" She will have a different last name after each marriage.
2. The other principal challenge is when an individual goes by a middle name or a nickname. All public records give public names and, when you can't find the individual because the public name is different than the first given name you normally expect, you will need to search for all possible variations.
3. The person providing the information for the record may have been unsure of some of the details (like a cousin providing information about the parents of the deceased for a death certificate).
4. The one making the record (such as a census taker or records clerk) writes what he or she thinks was said (such as recording McKalsky instead of the Polish name, Menkalski).
5. The transcriber(s) misinterpret the writing due to bad handwriting or poor image quality.

# B.2. Why Too Many Results?

You need to:

## 1. Edit Your Search: Add more information

Searching for...

Name: John Truax

**Edit Search**  
or [Start a new search](#)

**Narrow by Category**

Matches 1-20 of 89,393 Sorted By Relevance

A little more information will give you better results.  
Try adding a state, province or country in "Lived In (Residence)"  
Try adding a birth or death date; even a guess might help.

You can press 'r' to [refine your search](#), or 'n' to [start a new one](#).  
Check out [Getting the most out of new search](#) for more tips and tricks.

## 2. Narrow by category: Select one

## 3. Sorting Your Results

View Summarized by category

Sorted by **relevance**

Summarized by **category**

Narrow by Category	
▼ All Categories	
Census & Voter Lists	76
Birth, Marriage & Death	3,434
Military	274
Immigration & Travel	47
Newspapers & Publications	5,000+
Pictures	6
Stories, Memories & Histories	2,181
Schools, Directories & Church Histories	248
Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills	516
Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs	92
Family Trees	650

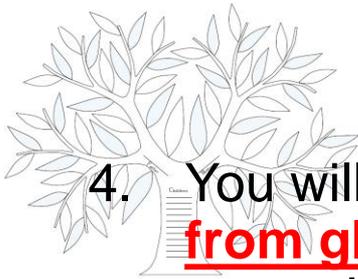
## 4. Restrict to EXACT matches

# C. Ways to Win the Name Game

## 1. Best Search Strategies

1. When someone has a relatively unique name, **enter only the first or last name and limit the search results with the other criteria available within the database.** For example, in *searching* in the 1930 Census for Greensbury Bivens living in Somerset County, Maryland, you can enter Green\* in the first name field, nothing in the last name field, select Maryland in the State field, and enter Somerset in the County field. He is listed as Greenberry Brewans in the index.
2. **Try the name with the prefix attached** (O'Brien would be OBrien). If that is not successful, try the name **without** the prefix (Dougal, Brien, Angelo, Dyke).
3. To find "spellings" such as these, **go to the individual database you want and click Search without entering anything into either name field.** The only way to find these people is to use only the first name, with additions of place of residence, birth date, death date, etc. If you know enough other details about the person you are seeking, you may even locate the record in an index without using the name at all.

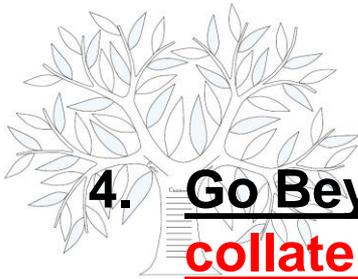
# Best Search Strategies (cont.)



4. You will be more successful refining your search as you **get away from global searching and into individual databases**. For example, let us assume you want to find an ancestor who fought in the Civil War. There are significant differences among these five Civil War search templates: Records, Index, Service, etc.
5. When within any database, **always read the Description and Extended Description** to gain an understanding of what is included. There may also be some special search instructions.
6. When the list of databases is too large to easily browse, you can go to the bottom of the page and **use the “Refine your search” template**. (i.e. you want to find which newspapers on the very long list you have are from the Topeka area.) If you want a quick alternative instead, you can also hold the Control key and press F on your keyboard or select Edit and then Find in your Internet browser menu to find where that specific word or phrase is used on that page. As you use these search techniques, you will increase your success in finding the records about your ancestors, their families and their contemporaries. **Don't be afraid to use all possible tools.**

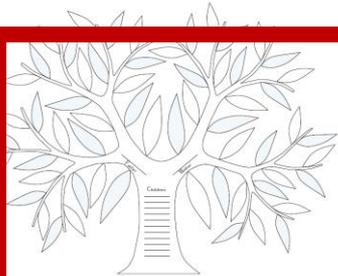
## 2. Brick Wall Strategies

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1. **Where to Start:** When you revisit an ancestral line you haven't worked on in a long time, it's best to **do a quick review**. Grab a sheet of paper and do some brainstorming. If you keep a research log listing all the sources you've checked and the results, you'll want to look it over. If you don't keep a research log, now's a great time to start one.
  2. **Explore what's new... and old:** **Revisit sources** you've already searched. In addition to the fact that new content is constantly going live, as your research progresses, you may have more luck with databases and records you have previously searched due to the addition of new names and information.
  3. **Take a step back:** In family history, a step back may mean **revisiting more recent ancestors**. In your haste to move back a generation, are there records you overlooked or that were previously inaccessible to you--records that may hold the answer to your problem?



## 2. Brick Wall Strategies (cont.)

- 4. Go Beyond the direct line:** Expand your search to **include collateral relatives** and go beyond the immediate siblings. In-laws, half-siblings, cousins, step-parents and whoever else you can dig up. Their records may include details missing in the records of your direct ancestors.
- 5. Reorganize information:** Create chronologies using the records you've collected on your ancestors. **Compare the timelines** with those records you haven't quite been able to tie to your family. Look for similarities or conflicting facts that can help you either link them to your family, or rule them out.
- 6. Learn about new records:** Are you new to working with probates? Do you find land records downright scary? (Metes and bounds--yikes!) **Take a step toward conquering new resources.** Take an online class, ask for help from a local society, or get your hands on a reference book that will help. Ancestry.com offers a growing selection of online classes that can be viewed in the archive in the Learning Center at your leisure.



S.C. Computer / Genealogy Special Interest Group  
***Karen Ristic***

***Next Month:  
Thursday, March 14, 2013, 10:00 a.m.  
Computer Classroom***

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**Part 1: Basic Search Strategies**