

51 Websites for Genealogy

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One thing genealogists need to remember is that digitized online genealogy records represent fewer than 20% of all American records that *could* be valuable for genealogy research. Millions of documents in city/town, county, state, federal and non-government offices are waiting to be made accessible to researchers. In the meantime, you can find a treasure trove of genealogy-related data, research tools and finding aids on websites that are NOT the biggest, heavily advertised subscription sites.

Subscription and fee-based sites are marked with a **\$**. **There are a few ways to get free access to the major subscription sites:** 1) The sites denoted “free at FSCs” are available when you visit a FamilySearch Center (FSC), which is free to the public and located at virtually every Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) church. 2) Most public libraries offer free access to Ancestry.com, and sometimes the two other Ancestry-owned sites: Fold3.com and Newspapers.com. 3) Subscription sites will sometimes offer free access for a limited time period, such as a holiday weekend. To stay informed, follow the sites’ Facebook pages or sign up for the e-newsletter from Thomas MacEntee at <https://genealogybargains.com/>.

The Major Record Sites

FamilySearch.org – free online for anyone – register for an account.	A goldmine of records, with more coming online all the time. Secret: some collections at the big paid sites are there only because of their partnerships with FamilySearch, <i>where the same records are free</i> . Mobile apps for Family Tree and Memories.
Ancestry.com \$ - World edition free at FSCs and at most public libraries. Monthly and 6-month memberships; more expensive for the World version.	More than 33,000 collections, plus family trees, and good DNA features (except for lack of chromosome browser, so download your results and upload them to MyHeritage and/or Gedmatch). Mobile app.
MyHeritage.com \$ – free at FSCs. Annual membership or basic free membership for up to 250 in your tree.	The best DNA-matching features, but poor ethnicity estimates. Great photo enhancement technology. 19+ billion records, good non-U.S. collections. Powerful mobile app.
FindMyPast.com \$ – free at FSCs. 1-month and 12-month subscriptions in three tiers, or pay-as-you-go.	Specializing in U.K and Irish records, Canada, NZ & Australia. Huge British newspaper archive. Some free record sets including 1881 U.K. census.

Ethnic & Regional Records & Resources

1. JewishGen.org	Indispensable resource for anyone tracing Jewish ancestors.
2. New England Historic and Genealogical Society \$ - free at FSCs. 3-month and annual memberships http://www.americanancestors.org/	450+ collections with 1.4+ billion names. Strongest on Yankee records but covers far more than New England. Offers a family tree feature.

3. New York Genealogical & Biographical Society \$ Annual membership. https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/	Founded in 1869. New York's largest and oldest genealogical organization. Members can access online their highly respected quarterly journal, published since 1870.
4. Italiangen.org and GermanGenealogyGroup.com	Websites of two genealogy societies in NYC whose volunteers indexed thousands of records. Click on “Databases” on each site.

General Reference & Tools

Research Wiki at FamilySearch.org Outstanding resource for learning what records are available, and where, for nearly any location in the world.	Also search general topics such as Civil War, immigration, etc. At FamilySearch.org, click <i>Search/Research Wiki</i> .
5. Wikipedia.com	Great for learning about any location, especially for seeing <i>where</i> a county is within a state.
6. Google.com – can surprise you with what it can find	Learn how to use advanced Google search methods to maximize your results.
7. Facebook Groups on genealogy and history, plus lists of educational genealogy YouTube channels & genealogy-related podcasts www.socialmediagenealogy.com	Download Katherine R. Willson’s list of more than 16,700 genealogy and history Facebook Groups. Place-based groups are a great way to crowd-source help from people who live there.
8. Rootsweb.ancestry.com (owned by Ancestry) home.rootsweb.com/	One of the first collaborative genealogy websites, Family Trees, Message Boards.
9. US Gen Web www.usgenweb.org/	A collection of state, county and special-project pages compiled and maintained by volunteers for more than 20 years.
10. Wikidata – list of family names/surnames by Soundex https://tinyurl.com/wikiprojectsoundex	Use Soundex to help your search for people whose name was spelled in different ways over the generations. For someone who is a brick wall, this resource can show you <i>surname variations</i> that can help you broaden your search.
11. Reverse date calculator – https://tinyurl.com/calculatebirthdate	To calculate a birthdate from a gravestone’s death date and age (years/months/days) at death. (Remember, the age at death <i>could</i> be wrong.)
12. Ancestor Search Genealogy Calculator & Tools	Handy calculators, date and calendar.

One-World Family Trees – *be careful* of undocumented data and relationships. These trees are recommended primarily for searching to see if your ancestors are already on there with information you didn’t previously have. NOT recommended as your primary online family tree.

13. Wikitree.com	Many features including ability to get emails when new info is added on your surnames of interest.
Family Tree at FamilySearch.org	Powerful features, including uploading photos and documents, attached records found at FamilySearch, and the ability to see who made a change to a person’s page to and connect with them. At FamilySearch.org, click <i>Family Tree</i> on the top menu bar.

Finding-Aid Sites

14. Cyndi's List – www.cyndislist.com Vast index of genealogy on the internet.	340,000+ links in 200+ categories, leading genealogists to helpful sites for 25+ years.
15. Linkpendium – www.linkpendium.com	A resource directory similar to Cyndi's list, with millions of links to resources.
Research Wiki at FamilySearch.org	Tells you what records are available, and where, for nearly any location in the world. At FamilySearch.org, click <i>Search/Research Wiki</i>

Books

16. Internet Archive www.archive.org	Downloadable out-of-copyright family and local histories in PDF or e-book format. Particularly valuable for county-based genealogy biographical books from early 1900's. Wayback Machine can find info on now-defunct websites including genealogy sites.
Books at FamilySearch.org	Many digitized online books plus index to books in other major genealogy libraries. At FamilySearch.org, click <i>Search/Books</i> .
17. Google Books – books.google.com	Has many out-of-copyright books with genealogy data. Not downloadable but can be stored in “My Books” and “My Library,” and can be organized into folders (such as by state).
18. Worldcat.org Find libraries near you that have the book you want to see.	Most genealogy books are reference-only and usually not available via inter-library loan – you have to go there. Note: not all libraries participate in WorldCat (e.g., not Sacramento County) so you have to check their online catalogs separately. Register a free account to create lists and bibliographies.

Cemeteries

19. FindAGrave.com – free. Page information from volunteers, owned and powered by Ancestry.com. Register an account to create new memorials or to manage the memorials of your close relatives.	Since 1995. 226+ million volunteer transcriptions. Can provide great clues. Do research on any <i>unsourced</i> information on a memorial page.
20. BillionGraves.com – free, or \$ premium level lets you check family/nearby plots and receive notices of new grave records matching surnames you specify.	Has more non-U.S. graves than FindAGrave. GPS data for every grave helps you locate the stone.

Maps

21. David Rumsey Map Collection – http://www.davidrumsey.com/	Outstanding resources with thousands of free, downloadable historical maps. See free YouTube videos on how to use this site for genealogy.
22. Library of Congress - www.loc.gov/maps/	Search by county in any state. Many maps, both online and for purchase.
23. United States Geological Survey - http://www.usgs.gov/news/historical-maps-your-fingertips	On the linked page (see left), click the hotlink “TopoView 2.1” (2 nd paragraph).

24. Atlas of Historical County Boundaries Project – shows county boundary changes over time https://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/index.html	Outstanding site. Use the Interactive Map feature to see county boundary changes, so you know <i>where</i> to look for records over your ancestor’s lifespan of living in one place.
25. Historicmapworks.com - maps for sale \$	A huge collection of maps, including many cadastral maps (showing residents’ names) at reasonable prices.
26. Etsy.com - maps for sale \$, some inexpensive and digitized for download. Before you pay, check if the map is free on #20 or #21 above.	Search “historical map” plus a location (state, city, etc.). If purchasing a download, pay attention to the image resolution vs. recommended print size.

Immigration & Naturalization

27. Liberty Ellis Foundation (Ellis Island +) http://heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger	65 million records of arrivals through the Port of New York, from Castle Garden 1820 to April 18, 1890 or Ellis Island starting Jan. 1, 1892. Search by person’s name or ship name.
28. One-Step pages at SteveMorse.org Check his Public Appearances link. One or more of his remote lectures may be available to the hosting group’s non-members (i.e., you).	Tools for finding immigration, census and vital records, and for “dealing with calendars, maps, foreign alphabets” and more. Can help you find records when just going to the repository website doesn’t get you results.
29. Photos of ships your ancestors came on	See #26 above, Ellis Island website has ship images. OR search images.google.com when you know the ship name.
30. Finding Aid to U.S. Naturalization Records and Indexes Online https://www.germanroots.com/naturalization.html	A helpful volunteer-maintained list of places to find naturalization records, especially those not at Ancestry.com.

Military & Government Records

31. Fold3.com – free basic membership. Premium level \$ is free at FSC and maybe also at your public library.	Military records from all wars. Owned by Ancestry. The free basic membership lets you make unlimited searches and provides access to certain collections but not all.
32. Civil War Soldiers & Sailors database www.nps.gov/civilwar/index.htm	Find your Union or Confederate ancestor in this database of 6.3 million men from 44 states and territories, then learn exactly where their units fought and when.
33. DAR.org – click “Genealogy”. Also search their Library catalog by any ancestral surname, not just those in the Revolutionary War.	Find evidence that your ancestor fought in or otherwise supported the American Revolution. (Does not have <i>all</i> who did so, only those whose descendants applied for DAR membership and provided adequate proof.) When available, get copies of that documentation for a fee. Also a searchable Library Catalog and index to family bible records.

34. Veteran’s Nationwide Grave Locator gravelocator.cem.va.gov/	Find where your vetran ancestors were buried in a U.S. military cemetery.
35. National Archives www.archives.gov	The nation’s record keeper. Veteran’s service records, immigration/naturalization, visas/passports, land records, maps, military, and much more. Not easy to use but can have valuable information. See “how to” videos on YouTube.
36. General Land Office Records – for finding land records in the 30 <i>federal</i> land states. Search here: blm.gov/services/land-records	Land records can be challenging for beginners. Read about land patents here: familysearch.org/wiki/en/Land_Patent_Search and more generally here: familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Land_and_Property

Newspapers

37. Elephind.com	Search engine focused only on historical, digitized (and free) newspaper collections.
38. Chronicling America http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/	From the Library of Congress, a searchable database of digitized American newspapers, and information about them, from each U.S. state and territory.
39. FultonHistory.com A one-man volunteer website with some unique finds.	Searchable repository of many of the old newspapers published in New York State and elsewhere, with 51+million old pages. Clunky interface, so be sure to read the Help & FAQ.
40. California Digital Newspaper Collection https://cdnc.ucr.edu/	11+ million pages of historical California newspapers published from 1846 to the present. Browse and search by title, date, county or tag.
<i>Do not subscribe to a paid service (below) until you check the list of newspapers in their database, to ensure they have papers for the states/regions/cities and the dates you need.</i>	
41. Newspapers.com \$, 7-day free trial, monthly and 6 mos. Available free at some public libraries.	Owned by Ancestry.com. 20,700+ newspapers. Scroll to the bottom gray bar, click “Browse Newspapers.” A very useful map lets you see papers by proximity to your locations of interest. After clicking on the “Search by Location” map, look for the Map tab (next to Browse) on next page.
42. GenealogyBank.com \$, 7-day free trial, annual subscription	13,000+ newspapers, 260+ million obituaries. Scroll to the bottom green bar and click “Newspaper List” to check locations.

General Genealogy Education

43. FamilyTreeWebinars.com – free live broadcast & free for 7 days. \$ for annual subscription to watch any time. Syllabi and 2-to-10-minute Tech Zone webinars for members only.	Outstanding webinars to increase your knowledge and make your research go faster, get better results and be more satisfying. More than 1,900 webinars in 26 categories, many with a members-only downloadable syllabus.
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44. Videos (free) at RootsTech archive https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/library	Full-length sessions from the RootsTech conferences from 2022 back to 2015.
Learning courses at FamilySearch.org A huge library of video tutorials.	Click Search/Records from the top nav bar; look for Search by Place, then click the map or use the Search box. For general genealogy education (non-geographic) topics, see familysearch.org/help/helpcenter/learning-center
45. LegalGenealogist.com The excellent blog of Judy Russell, a genealogist with a law degree and a very popular conference speaker.	Use the right sidebar to find posts on copyright, ethics, methodology, legal definitions and more.
46. EvidenceExplained.com Website of professional genealogist and source citations guru/author Elizabeth Shown Mills.	Helpful “QuickLesson” series gives the basics on how to cite your sources to a high genealogy standard.
47. Dick Eastman’s blog – free Standard Edition, or inexpensive \$ 3-month or annual Plus Edition. https://eogn.com/	Eastman’s Online Genealogy Newsletter has helped keep genealogists informed and educated for more than 25 years.
48. Genealogy Center at the Allen County [Indiana] Public Library	Good general resources. Their YouTube channel has videos for state-specific genealogy in Arkansas, West Virginia, New York, Indiana, New Hampshire and more.

DNA Tools & Education

49. DNAPainter.com - free membership for creating one profile, or \$ (annual) for multiple profiles and other features	Outstanding site for those who have taken an autosomal DNA test (the type used for ethnicity and cousin-matching) and have their results on a site with a chromosome browser. Cool tools to see which DNA segments you share with others, or to help determine a match’s relationship to you.
50. Gedmatch.com – free basic tools, with \$ levels to access additional matching tools	Find and contact DNA matches who tested at companies other than where you tested (Ancestry, FTDNA, 23andMe, LivingDNA, MyHeritage)
51. Roberta Estes blog - https://dna-explained.com/	Genetic genealogy expert who writes in language that non-experts can understand, with clear explanations and analysis. Very helpful for whenever the DNA testing companies make changes. Sign up to receive her posts by email, and just delete any that don’t pique your interest.
There are many Facebook Groups on DNA topics and, at #42 above, many webinars about DNA at FamilyTreeWebinars.com	