

Mesa FamilySearch Library  
Fall, 2014 Conference  
James L. Tanner

## **Effective Use of Ancestry.com**

In order to find individuals on Ancestry.com it may be necessary to search under a variety of combination of names, dates and where appropriate, places. Let's say you are trying to find John Erikson in Wisconsin about 1900. You will immediately see that there are a lot of John Eriksons.

Here are some tips for narrowing the choices:

Look at the entire family and select a less common name to search. Here with a father named John, you might try the wife's name or one of the children, look for the least common name.

Try searching after adding one piece of information at a time. For example, searching for the first name and a date and place, last name and a date and place.

Search by adding information one fact at a time. For example, search on the first name, then on the first name, surname, and place, then on the names, place and a specific date. Then try different combinations of names, place and dates. To get the most out your search, finally, type in as much information as possible. Clicking on a category or database listed to the left of the search fields will take you to a new search results page that shows the results found only in the chosen category.

If you are looking for a specific type of information, go to the tab for that category. For example, if you would like to search for Family Trees, go to that tab, you will get the best results by filling out the search box specific to the type of content being searched. Within the tabs, search specific databases, such as specific Wisconsin records for John Erikson. Often, an Ancestry.com search of a specific database will come up with a name not found in a more general search.

Ancestry.com also automates the finding of valuable source documents through their system of "shaking leaves." During the past year, the accuracy of these suggested sources has increased dramatically. In order to take advantage of the automated search function, it is necessary to have a family tree in Ancestry.com. You should also be aware that Ancestry.com's Family Tree Maker programs with synchronize data to and from your desktop to your online family tree.

Ancestry.com has a particularly powerful search engine that will search on almost any combination of fields in the search document.

## **The Tabs – What are they?**

### ***Family Trees***

Ancestry.com will use every fact you enter in your own personal Family Tree to search all of the billions of historical records, photos and family trees for missing details about your ancestors. Use the database to look for records on existing or missing ancestors. Pro – a huge number of families and individuals. Con – very few of the individuals have sources even though Ancestry.com automates the process.

### ***Search***

Search Historical Records, Family Trees, Stories and Publications, Photos and Maps. Do a general search or focus in on a particular location. Ancestry.com has many new search parameters in their Advanced Search, allowing more specifics in locating your ancestors. You can now search on any life events that match a location, including birth, residence, marriage, military service and death.

You can add a family member to the search and also search by keyword.

To search in the right collections, you can click on “Collection Priority.” New fields make it more flexible to add any details you might know about life events or relationships of the person you are looking for. For example, the new search fields you can enter an approximate birth year or make an educated guess, if you do not know for sure.

### ***DNA***

Ancestry.com does DNA Testing both paternal and maternal utilizing the state of the art laboratory, Sorenson Genomics, for its DNA testing services. Ancestry.com has recently hinted at a new DNA product or website that will become available shortly.

### ***Collaborate***

Use geographical or surname message boards to post inquiries about your ancestors. Use the social networking site, Member Connect to stay in touch with others researching the same family lines. Ancestry.com scans public member trees to find members who are researching the people in your tree. Once you connect a matching ancestor from another member’s tree to one of your ancestors, they will let you know when that member adds new life events, source records, photos or stories featuring your ancestor. You can then decide whether or not to add the information to your own tree. Search the Ancestry Member Directory to find family members and others interested in the same family lines or geographic areas that you are.

### ***Learning Center***

Often overlooked, the Learning Center contains instructional videos, Ancestry Magazine, Weekly and Monthly Updates, Webinars and Ancestry World Archives Project Newsletter. There are also a large selection of free forms and charts. The World Archives Project that uses volunteers to bring free historical record collections to the public through indexing. The indexes are then offered free to the public on Ancestry.com.

### ***Publish***

Products available from Ancestry.com include Family History Books, Family Tree Posters, Photo Books, Calendars and Collage Posters. Photo Books include Wedding, Travel, Family and Seasonal.

### ***Shop***

Purchase Books, The Ancestry Magazine, Maps, Records and Software, including the best-selling Family Tree Software.

### ***Public Profile***

Helping other members, sharing research interests, show your Public Member Trees

### ***Footnote.com now Fold3.com***

Ancestry.com now owns the former Footnote.com website now Fold3.com with its millions of documents from the U.S. National Archives.

### ***Genline.com***

Swedish Records mainly parish records. Most of these records have been consolidated into the World Edition of Ancestry.com

Ancestry.com acquired ***Archives.com*** with millions of new records and ***FindAGrave.com***.