

S. C. Computer / Genealogy Class SIG

December 11, 2014

Karen Ristic

Ancestor Hunting in Online Databases





Effective Strategies for Searching Genealogical Databases

1. Prepare to Search

2. What Are You Searching For?

3. Start with the Census

4. Use the Help, Tips, and Learn

5. Use the Advanced Search

6. Use Wildcards, Partial Names, and Localities

7. Analyze your Results and Be Critical

A. First, What is a Database?



1. Definition:

- a. A collection of information organized for rapid search and retrieval
- b. Databases can be online, off line, or a combination of both

2. Value:

- a. Quickly find compiled genealogies and original and other records
- b. It is likely that many of our American ancestors in the 1800s and earlier will be found in at least one database

3. User Beware:

- a. Some contain many errors

4. More is Less; Less is More

5. Example: Karen's Surname Database

Karen's Kilobytes of Genealogy

Page 4 of 21

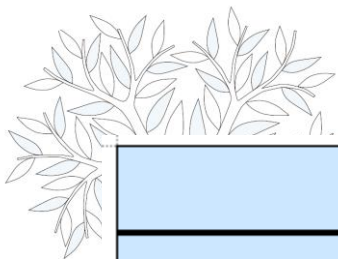
CHILTON, Isabell to CROSSMAN, Sarah

[| Home Page](#) | [First Page](#) | [Previous Page](#) | [Next Page](#) | [Last Page](#) | [Index of Pages](#) |

<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Live Years</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Spouse</i>	<i>Place Years</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>City</i>
CHILTON	Isabell (---)	1520-1549	A	CHILTON, Richard	1540-1549	ENG	Kent	Canterbury
CHILTON	Isabella	1586*-1630	2	CHANDLER, Roger	1586*-1600	ENG	Kent	Canterbury
CHILTON	Isabella	1586*-1630	2	CHANDLER, Roger	1600-1607	ENG	Kent	Sandwich
CHILTON	Isabella	1586*-1630	2	CHANDLER, Roger	1607-1615	HOL	Leyden	
CHILTON	James	1563*-1620*	1	FURNER, Susanna	1620*	MA	Barnstable	Provincetown
CHILTON	James	1563*-1620*	1	FURNER, Susanna	1600-1607	ENG	Kent	Sandwich
CHILTON	James	1563*-1620*	1	FURNER, Susanna	1607-1620	HOL	Leyden	
CHILTON	James	1563*-1620*	1	FURNER, Susanna	1563*-1600	ENG	Kent	Canterbury
CHILTON	Lyonell	1563-1582*	A	---	1563-1582*	ENG	Kent	Canterbury
CHILTON	Richard	1520-1549*	B	---, Isabell	1520-1549*	ENG	Kent	Canterbury
CHILTON	Susanna (FURNER)	1565*-1620*	1	CHILTON, James	1620*	MA	Plymouth	Plymouth
CHILTON	Susanna (FURNER)	1565*-1620*	1	CHILTON, James	1585-1600	ENG	Kent	Canterbury
CHILTON	Susanna (FURNER)	1565*-1620*	1	CHILTON, James	1600-1607	ENG	Kent	Sandwich

6. Many Databases to Choose From

- **GenealogyInTime Magazine** (<http://www.genealogyintime.com>) has extensive online articles listing the top 100 genealogy websites for 2014. They state: *“As one of the world’s leading free genealogy websites, our mission at [GenealogyInTime Magazine](http://www.genealogyintime.com) is to find creative and innovative ways to help people connect with their ancestors. One way we do this is to provide an objective and comprehensive list of the most popular genealogy websites from around the world.*
- In addition, this website breaks up the top 100 genealogy websites into more than 12 separate “Best” Websites for various genealogy topics, such as “Best Websites for UK and Irish Genealogy.”
- This presentation does not use all 100 websites as examples, but rather some of the ones I consider generally the most useful for beginners. My list is on the next page and is not in the order they have listed. It includes a few sites not on their list. A short look at what they have to offer may influence your decision to (or not to) purchase a subscription to them.



7. Some Databases to Explore

Some Popular Databases

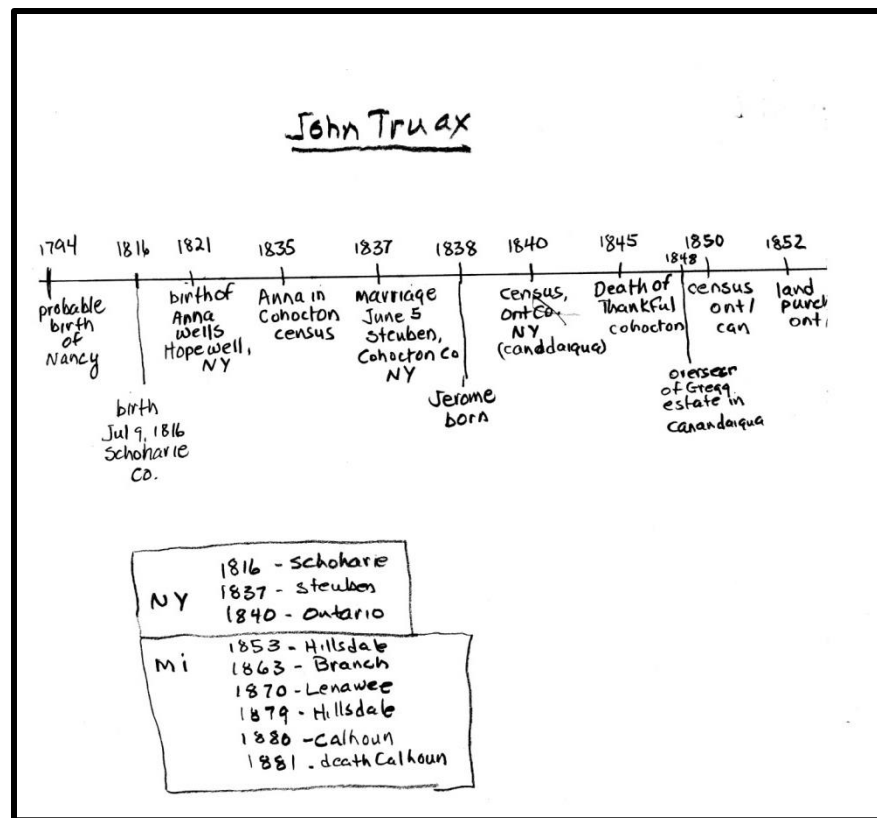
Ancestry.com (U.S.:\$99/6 mo; World:\$149/6 mo); 11 billion names; 2.7 million subscribers. www.ancestry.com	World Vital Records (\$119.99 yr) 1 billion records, 11,000 databases from around the world. www.worldvitalrecords.com
Google (free); 30 trillion webpages and growing; books, maps, earth, translate, and more. www.Google.com	Cyndi's List (free) 970,000 pages visited each month. www.cyndislist.com
Find A Grave (free); 121 million grave records. www.FindAGrave.com	GenealogyBank (\$69.95/yr; \$19.95/mo; includes access to more than 6,500 newspapers, 1 billion articles; http://genealogybank.com
Fold3 (\$79.95/yr; \$11.95/month; 407 trillion total mostly military records. www.Fold3.com	US Gen Web (free); number of databases vary as to state; www.USGenWeb.com .
FindMyPast (\$99.50/yr; 1.7 billion international records: U.S., Canada, NZ, UK, Australia. www.findmypast.com	NSDAR (free); 42,922,638 names; lists ancestors, descendants, patriots, resources for NSDAR applications; http://www.dar.org/national-society/genealogy
FamilySearch (free); 3 billion names from all over the world; www.familysearch.org .	New York Genealogical & Biographical Society (U.S. \$60 yr) 1 million names, digital books, journals, & periodicals. www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org

B. Strategy 1: Prepare to Search

1. Before you go online:

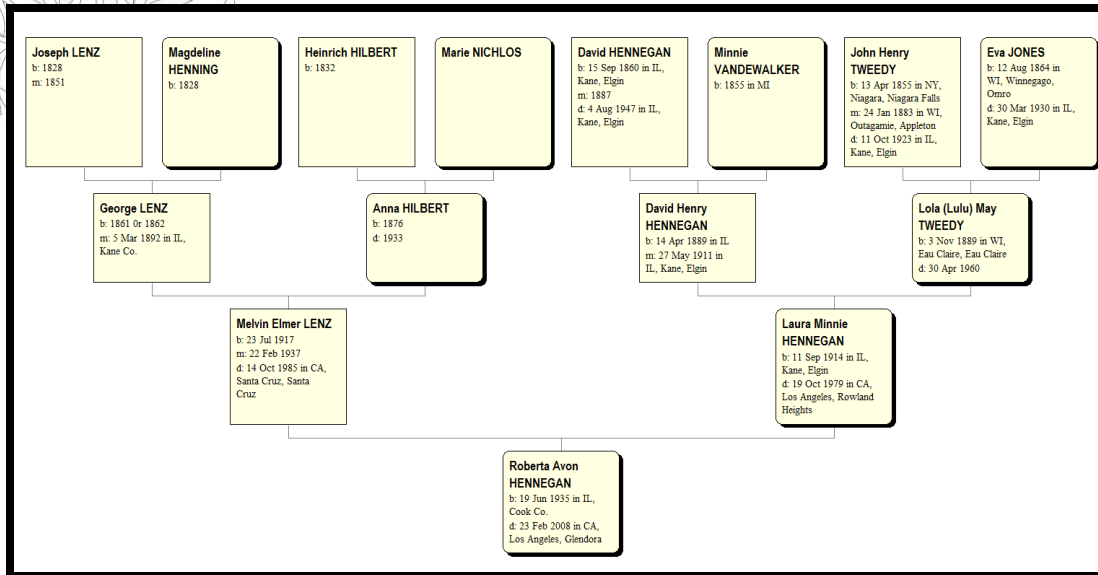
- What is the name you are researching AND what are the various spellings?
- What is the location of the person in the various times of life AND during what time periods?
- Do you know the name of the spouse AND names/dates of the children?

A Timeline



2. Some Tools to Get Started

a. An Ancestor Chart



b. A Census Comparison Chart

Census Comparison Chart							
Name:	Birth Date:		Birth Place:		Death Date:		Death Place:
	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850
database							
series, roll, page #							
dwelling #, family #							
state							
county							
city							
age							
where born							
marriage							
father							
mother							
spouse							
child 1							
child 2							
child 3							
have image printout?							
	1860	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930
database							
series, roll, page #							
dwelling #, family #							
state							
county							
city							
age							
where born							
marriage							
father							
mother							
spouse							
child 1							
child 2							
child 3							
have image printout?							

3. More Tools to Get Started

A Timeline

Name:		Robert Nimrod ELLIS
Parents:		Hercules ELLIS Jr. (Abt 1809-1873) and Phillippi CASSIDAY (Abt 1811-)
Life Range:		3 Dec 1836 - 2 Nov 1911
1836 Dec 3	Birth:	KY, Oldham County.
1840 Jun 1	~The 1840 census began on this day.:	
1840 Jul 1	Spouse:	KY, Shelby, Shelbyville. Mary Elizabeth LANCASTER (1840-1897)
1850 Jun 1	~The 1850 census began on this day.:	
1860	1860 Census:	KY, Oldham County. Nimrod is listed in the census at age 24 living with his parents.
1860 Jun 1	~The 1860 census began on this day.:	
1863 Dec 29	Marriage Bond:	KY, Shelby County. Nimrod Posted a marriage bond of \$100 to Mary Elizabeth "Mollie" LANCASTER.
1863 Dec 31	Marriage:	KY, Shelby County. Marriage to Mary Elizabeth "Mollie" LANCASTER. Adaline Neal. The other witness was her half-uncle, George H. ELLIS.
1864 Mar 2	Sold Land:	KY, Shelby, Shelbyville. Sold his interest in the lands once owned by his father.
1866 Jan 31	Son born (#1):	KY, Shelby County. James Robert ELLIS (1866-1935). Born in KY, Shelby County. Laura Jane ELLIS (1867-1953). Born in KY, Shelby, Chestnut Grove. Listed in the census as the head of the household at age three.
1867 Apr 30	Daughter born (#2):	
1870	1870 Census:	
1870 Jun 1	~The 1870 census began on this day.:	
1871 Sep 17	Daughter born (#3):	KY, Shelby County. Lena ELLIS (1871-1905). Born in Shelby KY, Oldham. Hercules ELLIS Jr. (Abt 1809-1873).
1873 Dec 31	Death of Father:	KY, Oldham. Hercules ELLIS Jr. (Abt 1809-1873).
1875 Jul 27	Daughter born (#4):	KY, Shelby, Chestnut Grove. Effie Mae ELLIS (1875-1955).
1876	City directory:	KY, Jefferson, Louisville. Listed in the City Directory as residing in KY, Jefferson, Louisville.
1877	City directory:	KY, Jefferson, Louisville. Listed in the City Directory as a salaried employee.
1880	1880 Census:	KY, Oldham County. The 1880 Census yields a calculated birth date of 1867.
1880 Jun 1	~The 1880 census began on this day.:	
1880 Jun 2	Census:	KY, Jefferson, Louisville. Listed in the census at age 32 as the head of the household. Daughters, Laura at age 13, Lena at age 10, and Effie at age five.
1890 Jun 1	~The 1890 census began on this day.:	
1900 Jun 1	~The 1900 census began on this day.:	
1905 Sep 16	Death of Child (#3):	KY, Henderson, Henderson. Lena ELLIS (1871-1905).
1910 Apr 15	~The 1910 census began on this day.:	
1911 Nov 2	Death:	TX, Johnson, Cleburne.

Location List

Name: AR, Cross, Ellis	
Used by: 1. Clara M. SPEER (1903 -) Birth (1903) 2. George W. SPEER (1897 -) Birth (1897) 3. James F. SPEER (1899 -) Birth (1899) 4. John H. SPEER (1909 -) Birth (1909)	
Name: AR, Cross, Hamlin	
Used by: 1. Felix Herbert GRIFFIN (30 Nov 1903 - 9 Feb 1964) Marriage: Alma (or Elma) SPEER (24 Jun 1928) (Age: 24) 2. Alma (or Elma) SPEER (14 Aug 1905 - 17 Apr 1974) Marriage: Felix Herbert GRIFFIN (24 Jun 1928) (Age: 22)	
Name: AR, Cross, Wynne	
Used by: 1. John F. SPEER (16 Oct 1870 - 29 Aug 1962) Death (29 Aug 1962) (Age: 91)	
Name: AR, Pulaski, Little Rock	
Used by: 1. Auverm Ray GRIFFIN (28 Jun 1935 - 1 Nov 1979) Death (1 Nov 1979) (Age: 44)	
Name: AR, St. Francis, Forrest City	
Used by: 1. Felix Herbert GRIFFIN (30 Nov 1903 - 9 Feb 1964) Burial 2. Mary Ann GRIFFIN (4 Feb 1940 - 21 May 2009) Birth (4 Feb 1940) 3. Alma (or Elma) SPEER (14 Aug 1905 - 17 Apr 1974) Burial	
Name: CA, Los Angeles Co.	
Used by: 1. Diana Marie PRADO (8 Jul 1982 -) Birth (8 Jul 1982)	
Name: CA, Los Angeles, Covina	
Used by: 1. LaRae Ellen GRIFFIN (23 Nov 1959 -) Marriage: James Frederick LAWRENCE (20 Feb 1988) (Age: 28) 2. James Frederick LAWRENCE (28 Nov 1960 -) Marriage: LaRae Ellen GRIFFIN (20 Feb 1988) (Age: 27) 3. Lacey Elizabeth Anne LAWRENCE (30 Aug 1988 -) Birth (30 Aug 1988)	
Name: CA, Los Angeles, Glendora	
Used by: 1. Roberta Aron HENNEGAN (19 Jun 1935 - 23 Feb 2008) Death (23 Feb 2008) (Age: 72)	
Name: CA, Los Angeles, Hacienda Hts	
Used by: 1. LaRae Ellen GRIFFIN (23 Nov 1959 -) Marriage: David Cruz PRADO (19 Mar 1978) (Age: 18)	

A Location List



C. Strategy 2: What, Specifically Are You Searching For?

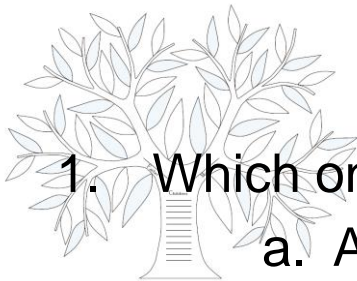
1. The information you find varies from database to database.

These databases may include:

Vital
records

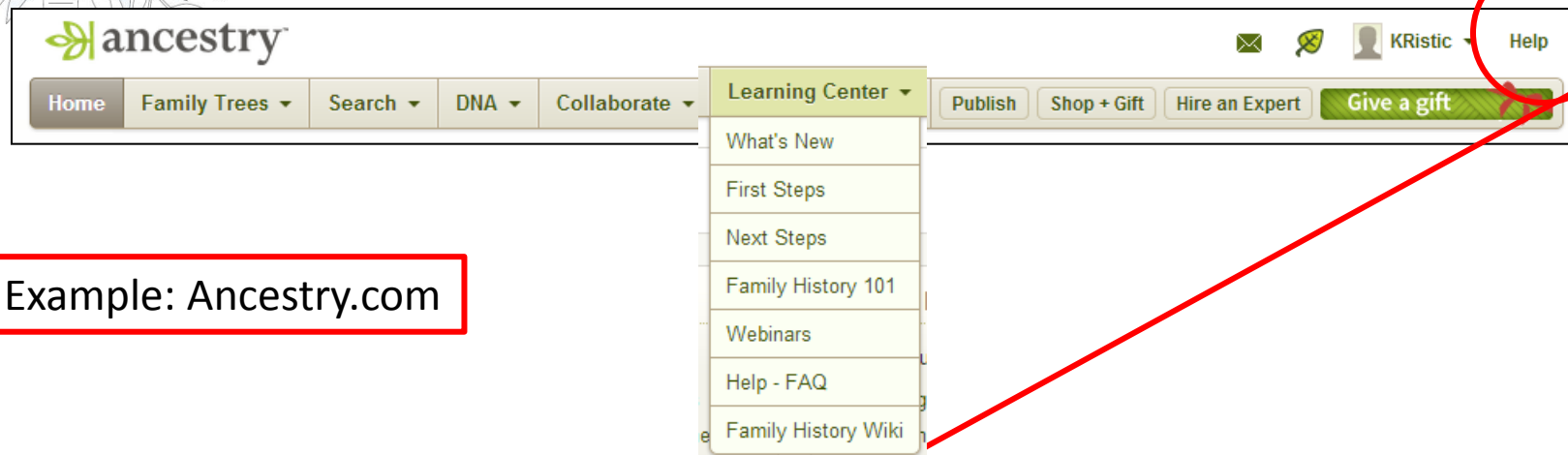
- a. Name of an ancestor.
- b. Date and place of birth, marriage, and death.
- c. Names of parents.
- d. Names of spouse and children.
- e. Lists of belongings, property, and so forth.
- f. Biographical information
- g. Religious affiliation
- h. Military information

D. Strategy 3: Start with the Census

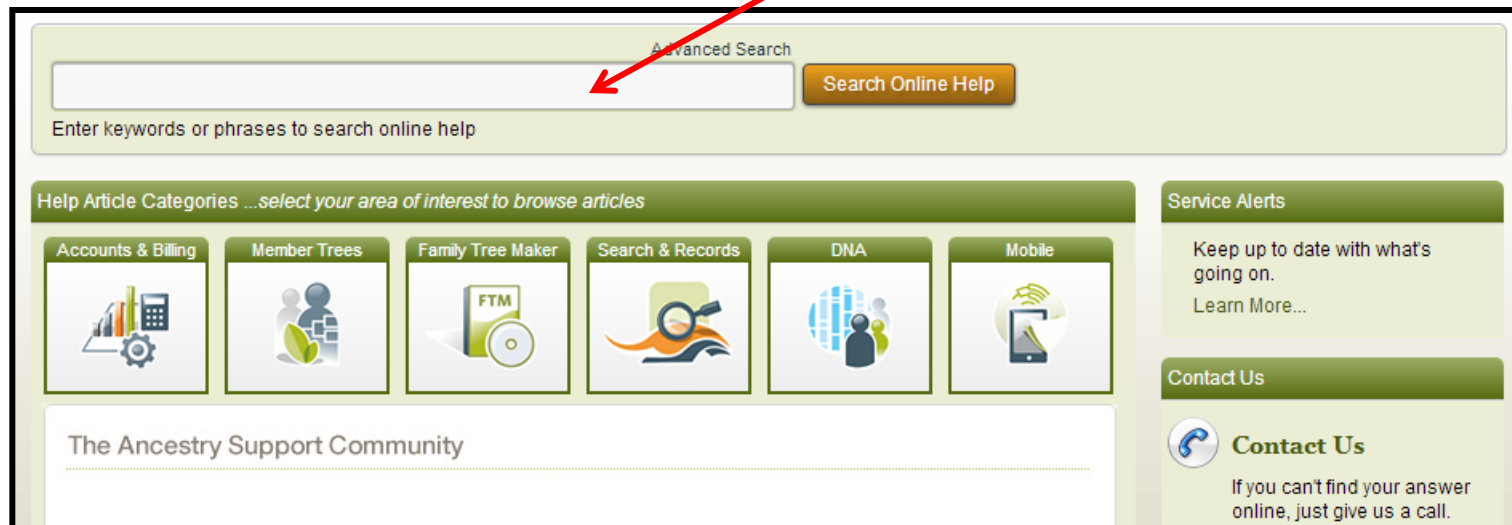


1. Which online census should I use? All of them!
 - a. Ancestry.com
 - Every name – all censuses index
 - Paid subscription
 - b. Heritage Quest
 - Has “head of household,” better looking images, but not all years
 - c. Family Search
 - Excellent indexes, fewer images than Ancestry.com, but it links to them
2. Keep track of your data (use the census forms)
3. Don't believe everything in the census
 - Errors by census taker
 - Errors in transcription
4. Focus on young children
5. Examine the census images, not just the indexes and transcriptions

E. Strategy 4: Use the Help, Tips, and/or Learn of the Database



Example: Ancestry.com



Use the Help, Tips, and/or Learn of the Database



Family Tree Memories Search Indexing

Volunteer

Get Help ▾

Ray Ristic ▾

HELP TOPICS

Family tree, memories
Search, indexing, family
History center, genealogy assistance,
mobile apps, and more

LEARNING CENTER:

Hundreds of online
courses: places,
countries, subjects,
most popular courses,
new courses, audio,
video, slides, and
more

RESEARCH WIKI

Get genealogical research
Advice or learn where to
find record collections

Self Help

▶ Quick Start to
FamilySearch
(03:34)

Getting Started

Help Center

Learning Center

Research Wiki

What's New

Contact Us

Call Us

Live Chat

Send Message

Find Local Help

Remote Connect

My Cases

WHAT'S NEW

Recent changes

F. Strategy 5: Use the Advanced Search (NEHGS)



The image shows the homepage of the American Ancestors website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: WELCOME, KAREN_132 | LOGOUT | HELP | ABOUT NEHGS | SUPPORT NEHGS | TEXT SIZE: + - and a small icon of a house. The main header features the American Ancestors logo on the left, the title "American Ancestors" in a large serif font, and the text "New England Historic Genealogical Society - Founded 1845" below it. To the right of the header is a red button that says "Join NEHGS!". Below the header is a dark blue navigation bar with white text links: SEARCH | LIBRARY | RESOURCES | PUBLICATIONS | STORE. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has the heading "Discover Your Family" and a search box with the placeholder text "First Name - Last Name". To the right of the search box is a red box containing the text "ADVANCED SEARCH". Below the search box are links for "Popular Databases | All Databases | Library Catalog" and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and a generic social media icon. The right column has the heading "News" and three news items, each with a small photo and a title: "John Winthrop Sears, 1930-2014", "NEHGS Hosts Angela Lansbury on November 13", and "Burns and Goodwin Credit NEHGS on Face the Nation".

WELCOME, KAREN_132 | LOGOUT | HELP | ABOUT NEHGS | SUPPORT NEHGS | TEXT SIZE: + -

American Ancestors

New England Historic Genealogical Society - Founded 1845

[Join NEHGS!](#)

[SEARCH](#) | [LIBRARY](#) | [RESOURCES](#) | [PUBLICATIONS](#) | [STORE](#)

Discover Your Family

EXTERNAL DATABASES **ADVANCED SEARCH**

First Name - Last Name

[Popular Databases](#) | [All Databases](#) | [Library Catalog](#)

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [YouTube](#) [Social Media](#)

News

John Winthrop Sears, 1930-2014
Former NEHGS director and longtime friend of the Society, passed away November 4 at the age of 83.

NEHGS Hosts Angela Lansbury on November 13
Join us for a retrospective of her legendary career, lively conversation, and celebration of family history.

Burns and Goodwin Credit NEHGS on Face the Nation
Roosevelt biographers recall how NEHGS helped them uncover family history connections



The image shows the "Advanced Criteria" search form on the American Ancestors website. The form is titled "Advanced Criteria:" and has a "Save This Search..." button, a "New Search" button, and a "Hide Advanced" button. The form contains several input fields and dropdown menus. The "First Name" and "Last Name" fields are at the top, followed by a "Use Soundex" checkbox and a "Year Range" field with a "-TO-" separator. Below these are "Category", "Database", "Favorite(s) only" checkbox, "Free only" checkbox, and "Record Type" dropdown menus. The "Country", "Province/County/State", and "County/City/Town" fields are at the bottom, followed by a "Keywords" field and a "SEARCH" button. A red arrow points from the "ADVANCED SEARCH" link in the previous image to the "Advanced Criteria" form.

WELCOME, KAREN_132 | LOGOUT | HELP | ABOUT NEHGS | SUPPORT NEHGS | TEXT SIZE: + -

American Ancestors

New England Historic Genealogical Society - Founded 1845

[Join NEHGS!](#)

[SEARCH](#) | [LIBRARY](#) | [RESOURCES](#) | [PUBLICATIONS](#) | [STORE](#)

Advanced Criteria:

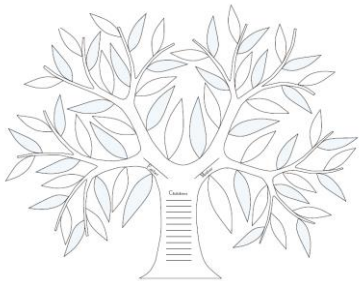
[Save This Search...](#) [New Search](#) [Hide Advanced](#)

First Name Last Name ☐ Use Soundex Year Range -TO-

Category Database ☐ Favorite(s) only ☐ Free only Record Type

Country Province/County/State County/City/Town

Keywords



Advanced Search (Ancestry.com)

Search

First & Middle Name(s)

John

Last Name

Truax

Place your ancestor might have lived

City, County, State, Country

Estimated birth year

Calculate it

Search

Advanced search >

Search

Hide Advanced



☐ Match all terms exactly

First & Middle Name(s)

John

Restrict to exact, similar ▼

Last Name

Truax

Restrict to exact ▼

Birth ▼

Year

1816

+/-

2 ▼

Location

Schoharie County, New York, L



☐ Exact

Use default settings ▼

+ Add life events (birth, marriage, death, and more)

Family Member

First Name

Last Name

Child ▼

Jerome

Truax



+ Add family members (mother, father, spouse, siblings, children)

Keyword

"civil war"

☐ Exact

e.g. pilot or "Flying Tigers" ▼

Gender

Male ▼

Race/Nationality

☐ Exact

Collection Priority

United States ▼



☒ Show only records from these collections

☒ Historical records

☒ Family trees

☒ Stories & publications

☒ Photos & maps

Search

or

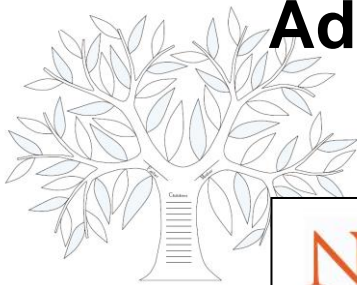
Cancel


Hide Advanced

Clear Form

Mansfield News Journal (Mansfield, Ohio)

Advanced Search (New York Genealogical Biographical Society, NYGBS)





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[NY FAMILY HISTORY SCHOOL](#)
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[GET INVOLVED](#)
[NYG&B ONLINE STORE](#)

Research & Discover: Public Portal



If you are a member, [log in now](#) to enjoy direct access to all of our online resources.

Not a member? Explore our exclusive online resources for members by clicking a drop-down menu on the right under [Research Tools](#) and the [eLibrary](#) or [join now](#). NYG&B Members also receive print subscriptions to our two quarterly publications, the [New York Researcher](#) and the [New York Genealogical and Biographical Record](#), discounts on tickets to our [programs](#), and access to our [Minisearch Service](#).



Research Tools

Go to Research Tools to discover numerous instructional articles by experts in the field and original guides to assist you in your family history research. Click on the drop-down menus below to explore these resources. The "Getting Started" tab below has useful guides that are available to both members and nonmembers.

eLibrary

Go to the eLibrary to explore the NYG&B's growing collection of digitized records and publications, including the full run of The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record. Click a drop down menu to explore the collections.

Upcoming NYG&B Events

Check the NYFHS calendar for more events from the NYG&B and our partner organizations

[Research Aids Article Topics](#)
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Other Advanced Search Techniques



- ▶ Change the spelling
 - ▶ Search using fewer fields
 - ▶ Search by surname only
 - ▶ Search by given name only
 - ▶ Search using wild cards
 - ▶ Search by unusual occupation
 - ▶ Change the place
 - ▶ Search for your person, his brothers and sister, and parents in each available census
 - ▶ Find them and list them on each census year



G. Strategy 6: Use Wildcards, Partial Names, and Localities

a. Example 1: Ancestry.com

- **Only * and ? are used**
 - ✓ * is used for alternate spellings which represents 0 to 5 unknown characters. Example:
 - ✓ a search for **fran*** will return hits on words like **Fran**, **Franny**, **Frank**, **Frannie**, or **Frankie**.
 - ✓ **Johann*** searches for **Johann** and **Johannes**.
 - ✓ **Smeler** searches for **Smeltzer** and **Smelzer** and others.
 - ✓ ? Is used for one letter
 - ✓ **Johns?n** will search for **Johnsen** and **Johnson**

H. Strategy 7: Analyze Your results and BE CRITICAL (Find A Grave)

John McMahan
Memorial Photos Flowers Edit

[Learn about upgrading this memorial...](#)

Birth: Apr. 22, 1793
Pennsylvania, USA

Death: Nov. 20, 1856
Albany
Whiteside County
Illinois, USA

Son of Joseph McMahan and Mary Schryhauser; Husband of Rachel Hugunin

Family links:

Parents:
[Joseph McMahan \(1761 - 1838\)](#)

Children:

[Joseph A McMahan \(1822 - 1900\)*](#)

[Ebenezer B McMahan \(1828 - 1855\)*](#)

[Oliver P McMahan \(1842 - 1927\)*](#)

[Phoebe McMahan Young \(1861 - 1904\)*](#)

Spouse:
[Rachel Hugunin McMahan \(1803 - 1857\)*](#)

[*Point here for explanation](#)

Burial:
[Rood Cemetery](#)
Whiteside County
Illinois, USA

Created by: [Odette](#)
Record added: May 09, 2008



Added by: [Odette](#)

[Add a photo for this person](#) [Request A Photo](#)

Photos may be scaled.
Click on image for full size.

[Leave flowers and a note](#)

Phoebe McMahan Young
Memorial Photos Flowers Edit

[Learn about removing the ads from this memorial...](#)

Birth: 1861
Ohio, USA

Death: 1904
Whiteside County
Illinois, USA

Daughter of John McMahan and Rachel Hugunin, wife of Finley Young.

Family links:


Parents:
[John McMahan \(1793 - 1856\)](#)
[Rachel Hugunin McMahan \(1803 - 1857\)](#)

Spouse:
[Finley Young \(1829 - 1869\)*](#)


[*Point here for explanation](#)

Burial:
[Oakridge Cemetery](#)
Albany
Whiteside County
Illinois, USA

Created by: [Odette](#)
Record added: Apr 02, 2009
Find A Grave Memorial# 35458590



Added by: [C Greer](#)



Cemetery Photo
Added by: [Donna Bogs](#)

[Add a photo for this person](#) [Request A Photo](#)

Photos may be scaled.
Click on image for full size.

[Leave flowers and a note](#)

And Remember:

- ✓ Search using all potential variations in a name.
- ✓ Look for Advanced options in web sites.
- ✓ Use Help Tips options to find compensate for searches that aren't producing using a name only.
- ✓ Don't depend on one site, like Ancestry, for all data.
- ✓ Visit as many different sites as possible and use Shortcuts and Wildcards if you can.
- ✓ Analyze your results.
- ✓ Never give up.

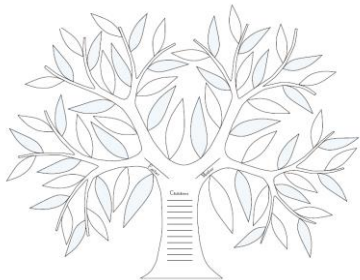
Thank you and Good Luck !!



Karen Ristic

nerak2000@earthlink.net

S.C. Computer Club / Genealogy SIG
Meets 2nd Thursday at 10:00 a.m.



S. C. Computer / Genealogy Class SIG
Next Computer Class
Thursday, January 8, 2014, 10:00 a.m.
Karen Ristic

Introduction to Ancestry DNA (Frequently Asked Questions)

