

# Ancestry Tips

by Jeremy Schryer

## Ancestry Library Edition

Our local library offers a special version of the Ancestry service. To use this service, you must access it through our library's internet. The library edition allows you to search for and download records and gives you access to most of the ancestry collection.

## BMD's

It is best to begin your search with BMD's or Birth, Marriage, and Death records. These records will give you key information on an ancestor you are looking for. There are two main types of BMD records on the Ancestry site; the first being government records, and the second church registers. Government records are fairly straight forward; church registers can be a little more complicated.

## Church Registers

An important place to look in a church register is the index. Most church records will contain an index of surnames at the end of each year, or at the end of the book. If you know that a family member was present in a community but their name does not show up under a search, check over the index for the year. As an additional note for the index; typically there will be a number beside each individual. The listing "B47" doesn't mean the record is on page 47 but that it was the 47<sup>th</sup> baptism of the year. You will have to follow through the register in order. Pages in church registers are numbered differently to what we use today. The front and back of one page will most commonly be "page 34".

## Census

This type of information can provide you with clues to where your ancestors lived, how many children they had, their religion, tribal association, and their approximate age at the time. Census information can be inaccurate and should be taken secondary to BMD's.

## Military Records

You may have relatives that served in the armed forces. These records will provide information such as the age of the individual, next of kin, location of enlistment. Some information should be handled with caution in military records and should be taken secondary to BMD's.

## Online Trees

The Ancestry site has thousands of trees posted by various contributors. These trees can provide you with possible connections and common ancestors. These trees should be checked over carefully for inconsistencies or errors.

## Damaged Records

Occasionally you will come across records on the Ancestry site that will be illegible. This isn't the end, but it will cost extra. There are two options. You can contact the church and request a copy of the record or you can check with the Drouin Institute online. Records under the Drouin collection are currently being rescanned. Most of the new scans are clear and easy to read. Currently they are only available through the Drouin Institute's website.

## Translation

Many records that are part of the Drouin Collection on the Ancestry site are in French. If you do not understand French all is not lost. Most church records follow a standard pattern.

For example – a baptism

Le seize Mars mil huit cent quatre vingt quatre nous soussigné curé certifions avoir baptisé \_\_\_\_\_ né le douze courant fils légitime de \_\_\_\_\_, saisonnier, et de \_\_\_\_\_ de cette paroisse, parrain \_\_\_\_\_ cultivateur, marraine \_\_\_\_\_ son épouse qui ainsi que le père n'ont pu signés avec nous lecture faite.

The 16<sup>th</sup> of March eighteen eighty four we undersigned priest certify to have baptized FIRST MIDDLE NAMES born the twelve current legitimate son of FATHER'S FIRST AND LAST NAME, FATHER'S OCCUPATION, and of MOTHER'S FIRST AND MAIDEN NAME of this parish, godparents are FIRST AND LAST NAME, GODFATHER'S OCCUPATION, godmother FIRST AND LAST NAME. Closing remarks (in this case the spouse and father could not sign).

Here are a few common terms to get you started

Né – born

Majeur – age of majority

Mineur – under age – you will often see a note giving parental blessing at the wedding.

Epouse de Feux – refers to the dearly departed – in this case spouse of the departed.

Parrain – Godfather

Marraine – Godmother

Inhumé – buried

Le douze courant – the 12<sup>th</sup> of the current month

Aujourd'hui – today

Hier – yesterday

Cultivateur – Farmer

Curé – Priest

Saisonnier – Seasonal Worker

Journalier – Apprentice (journeyman)

## Building a Tree

### Research

Begin building your family tree with what you know about you and your family. Collect photos, stories, birth, marriage, and death records.

### Your Tree

There are many different ways to build your family tree. To start you may even want to use a pencil and paper. This can however be difficult to maintain as your tree grows. There are many websites and software titles that will allow you to build a digital tree.

You can use the Ancestry website to build a tree. In order to do this, you will need to start a new account. New accounts will also give you a fourteen day free trial. If you do not cancel the free trial near the end of the fourteen days, then your credit card will be automatically billed.

Cancelling the subscription will not affect your tree, but it will not allow you to see records. At any time if you wish to cancel or reactivate your account you can call the Ancestry website at 1-800-958-9073.

You may also wish to consider purchasing the Ancestry software which comes with a free subscription to the Ancestry site for a few months.

### Sourcing

While providing important clues, family stories can also lead to misdirection or inaccuracy. Misdirection and inaccuracy in research can lead to a great loss in time and money. The key behind making a great tree is verifying a family story with church or government documentation. Providing proper citations for your documentation proves vital information.

### Privacy

When building your digital tree on the Ancestry site it is advisable that you keep your tree under the private setting. By selecting the private setting on your tree, other people will not be able to see vital information about you and your loved ones that are living unless you let them. People will be able to see information on individuals in your tree that are deceased.

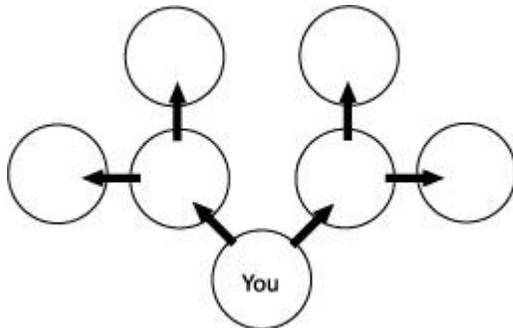
### Hints

A benefit behind having a digital tree on the Ancestry site is that it will give you notice of possible records and even other people with the same common ancestor. Hints will pop up beside the name of a family member in the form of a small green leaf. By left clicking on the leaf it will show you the possible hints. You can decide to attach the hint to a family member or to ignore them. You may also have the option of seeing the trees that others have on the same person.

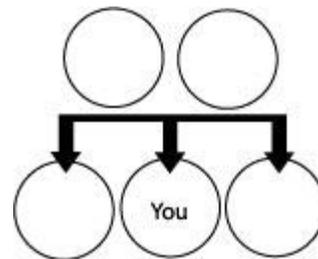
## Searching

When searching for individuals on the Ancestry site it is best to begin with a basic search and then refine using advanced options. As a recommendation your search should first *filter back* using direct ancestors and then later *filter down* to search for their children. The reasoning behind this search method is that it is easier to find direct ancestors first, and then find their children.

Step I - Filter Back



Step II – Filter Down



## Variants

Even if a last name is easy to spell it may be listed several different ways on the Ancestry site. There are many reasons for this – ranging from an illiterate scribe to an incorrect digital transcription of a record.

As an example, the surname “Wilson” can also be listed on the as Whilson, Weelson, Wellson, Whalson, Vilson, Velson. Keep track of the name variants in a list for later use.

You can also use wildcards in your search under a surname. To use a wildcard search on the Ancestry site all you need do is include an asterisk. For instance while searching for the last name Wilson you may want to try \*ilson.

## Ground Research

At times you will hit a wall in your research. It may help you to contact township offices, and churches. Each of these options will cost money but may yield additional results.

## Keep Notes

Sometimes it will take years to fully uncover information on a single individual. It is important that you keep notes of your progress in order to avoid looking in the same areas over and over.

## DNA

When family information and records are unavailable there is a modern option which you can turn to. DNA tests can offer connections to other people that are genetically related, which can be most helpful with ancestors that were adopted. This type of test is usually around two hundred dollars and is painless. Most tests involve a cotton cheek swab or test tube of saliva.

## Helpful Websites

Here are a few additional sites to help with your research.

\$ indicates a fee

Ancestry \$ *(free access to the library edition through our library)*

<http://www.ancestry.ca/>

Automated Genealogy

<http://automatedgenealogy.com/index.html>

Canada Gen Web Cemetery Project

<http://cemetery.canadagenweb.org/ON/index.html>

Canada Headstones Project

<http://www.canadianheadstones.com/>

DNA Tests \$

<http://www.familytreedna.com/>

<http://dna.ancestry.com/>

<https://www.23andme.com/en-ca/>

<http://www.gedmatch.com>

Drouin Institute \$

<http://www.genealogiequebec.com/>

Family Search

<https://familysearch.org/>

Fold 3 \$

<http://www.fold3.com/>

Genealogy of Canada

<http://www.nosorigines.qc.ca/>

Ontario Genealogical Society

<http://www.ogs.on.ca/>

Library and Archives Canada

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html>

Library and Archives Canada – digital collections

<http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/E/Alphabet.asp>

La Société généalogique canadienne-française

<http://www.sgcf.com/>

The Research Program in Historical Demography \$  
<http://genealogy.umontreal.ca/en/>

National Archives of Quebec  
[http://www.banq.qc.ca/collections/collection\\_numerique/index.html](http://www.banq.qc.ca/collections/collection_numerique/index.html)

Tanguay Collection (National Archives of Quebec)  
<http://bibnum2.banq.qc.ca/bna/dicoGenealogie/>

Fichier Origine  
<http://www.fichierorigine.com/>

Find My Past \$ (*some free*)  
<http://www.findmypast.com/>

US National Archives \$ (*some free*)  
[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

US Library of Congress  
<http://www.loc.gov/>

Heritage Canada  
<http://heritage.canadiana.ca/>

Canadian Military History Gateway  
<http://www.cmhg.gc.ca/cmh/page-512-eng.asp>

## **War of 1812 Sites**

<http://www.warof1812.ca/>

[http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/war\\_of\\_1812/](http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/war_of_1812/)

<http://www.eighteentwelve.ca/>

[http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/chrono/1774canada\\_saved\\_e.shtml](http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/chrono/1774canada_saved_e.shtml)

<http://regimentalrogue.com/battlehonours/1812-btlhnrs.htm>

Graveside Marker Project  
<http://www.1812veterans.ca/en/index.php>