Thousand Oaks Library Genealogy Resources

Ancestry Library Edition

This is the most common starter database for genealogy searches. Ancestry is a commercial subscription service. You can access it at the Library to do some searching. Family trees can only be made if you purchase a subscription. United States Census; military records; court, land and probate records; vital and church records; directories; passenger lists and more.

Ancestry Library Edition is slightly different from a trial subscription or a full subscription to the database. Ancestry specifies that we can offer this database only to users within the Thousand Oaks Library and Newbury Park Library. You can also use the database on your personal computer or tablet while you are connected to the Library WIFI service.

Ancestry Library Edition key differences from Member (U.S.Discovery level) subscriptions –
1. Services not included: Family Tree creation, Collaboration with others, DNA service, publishing service, Ancestry shop, and access to hire an expert.
2. Databases not included: Family trees, obituaries, people finder, family facts, Historic newspapers, passenger & immigration lists, worldwide (international) records, and a few other sources.

If you are curious about subscriptions, Ancestry currently states that it has the following levels of membership:

	U.S. Discovery	World Explorer	All Access
Grow a family tree with exclusive search tools.	X	X	X
Connect with fellow members to share questions and advice.	X	X	X
Access 15+ billion records from all 50 U.S. states.	X	X	X
Expand your search with 3+ billion worldwide records.		X	X
Find stories among 112+ million pages in the Newspapers.com Basic subscription.			X
Explore 487+ million original military records on Fold3.com.			X
Enjoy premium support with a dedicated 1-800 number.			X

*If you are interested, you can go online to ancestry.com see prices, this graphic is just to show the difference in services.

How to begin:

1. Do your homework!
   Find out any and all information available to you from sources at hand – family documents, discussions with family members, old address books, photos, clippings, scrapbooks and yearbooks.

2. Write out what you find – or type it up in a document…
   This is the beginning of your family tree. You might want to start with two lists – your mother's side and your father's side of your family.
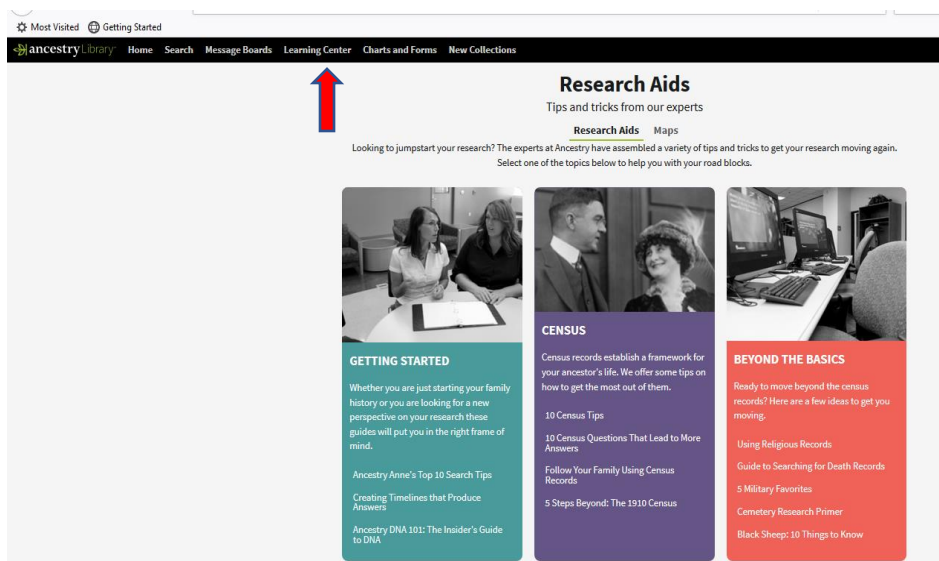
   You might not have a lot to begin with, but write down anything, memories, guesses, stories. Things like addresses or cities where your family used to live can help you decide if a person is your relation, or just someone with the same name.

   Having a word file with your notes can be a help when working with Ancestry Library Edition. Since you can't build a family tree inside Library Edition, you will want to save documents and work on your tree elsewhere.

   On a computer, you can open both Library Edition, and your Word file, and copy information. I suggest using a USB drive for storage, as this will be efficient for capturing files you find on Library Edition.

Note: See the handout "Ancestry Anne's tips" for more information, but please note that the Library Edition will not support entering your family information into "Family Tree." This is one reason I suggest creating a Word file for your ancestry work.

   There are more guides to help you with your research, just click on the "Learning Center" link at the top of the Ancestry screen.

Let's Get Started! Using Library Edition

I suggest you begin with the most general search to get started.

Technology Training

Start with the person for whom you have the most existing information.

Sometimes one accurate result can help you find other people in your tree.

Here is an example of a general search – if you don't know a birthdate, go ahead and guess the decade.

Sample result – I have one accurate match, near the top of my result:

If I "Hover" over the link to the Census record, it will show some helpful information:

I know there's a Hannah in the family, so this helps identify this result as the correct person!

If I Click the link to the Census, I will see a copy of the record, from microfilm that has been digitized.

The 1860 census does not have as much detail as some later census images.

How to save –

When you do not have a personal account in Ancestry, you can't save records to your own tree or "shoebox" for future reference. But, you can save the information two ways:
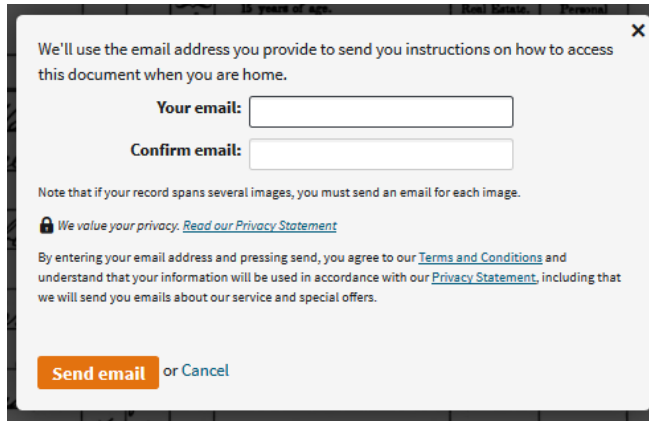
Click the green "SAVE" button at the upper right corner of your screen, and you will see two options:

> Send Image Home

> Save to This Computer

I recommend "Send Image Home" if you are using a Library computer, and do not have a usb drive with you. You will get instructions to input your email address, and a link will be sent that you can access from any Internet connected computer.
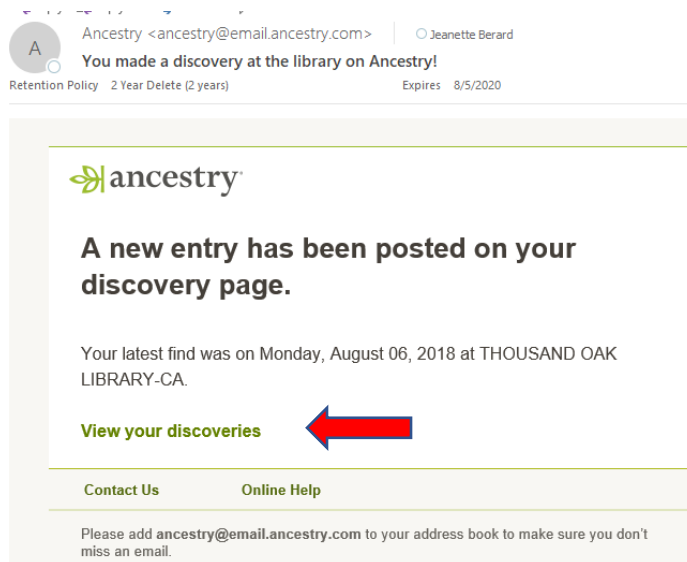
The email will arrive with a link. When you click the link, it will open an Internet browser to a page called, "My Discoveries"

But – Where's my File?

If there's no "Download Image" button, you can still get the citation, by clicking "Printer Friendly." You can copy and paste the citation to a Word document to save it.

If you do get the "Download Image" button, then click "Download Image" to get the file. It may not be immediately obvious where the file went.

If you are using FireFox, you may need to click the Download button (arrow at upper right corner of screen) to show the files you have downloaded

When you click on the filename, a copy of the image will open. Note, there is no "Save" button here.

If you click "Copy" you can then paste the document into a file. Do this by opening or creating a Word file, and then clicking the right mouse button and selecting the option to "Paste."

The result of "pasting" the document into your Word file.

Be sure to save your file!

Working with Downloads:

If you have a Windows 10 computer, the downloaded files are relatively easy to find, click on "Windows Explorer
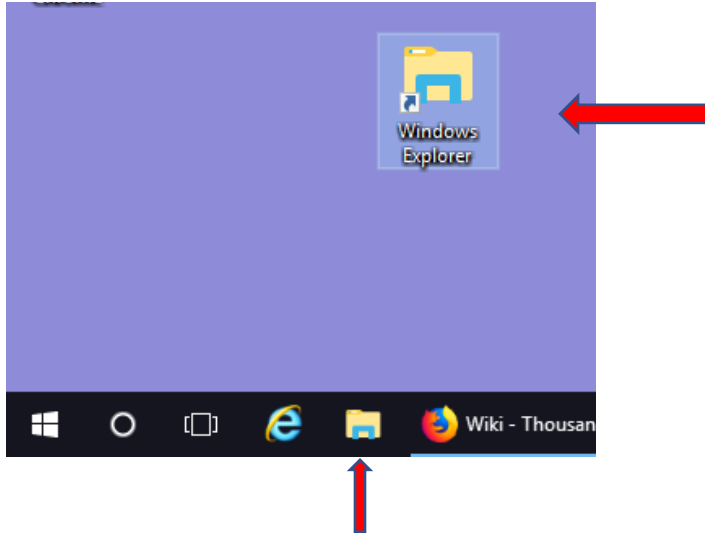
You may see "Windows Explorer" on your task bar at the lower edge of the computer screen, or it may appear as a "shortcut" on your desktop. It looks like a file folder.

Then click on "Downloads"
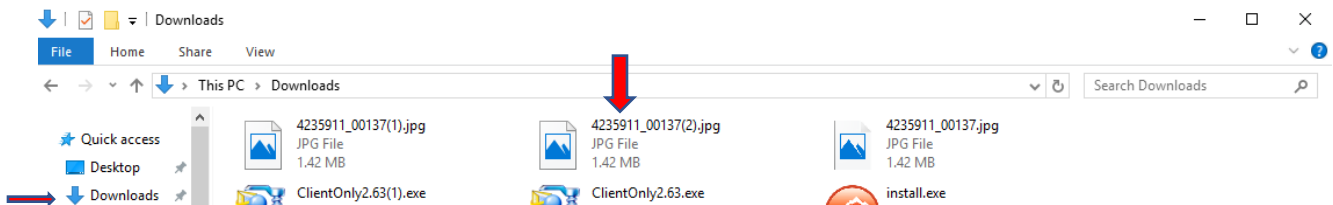
Note the Ancestry downloads have weird numbers instead of a name. I suggest you save these to another file, and give them a name so they are easier to locate.

You can simply drag and drop the download into the file, and then rename it, to drag, click and hold down the left mouse key, and once you are over the destination file, release the mouse key. You may see the words "Move to" appear
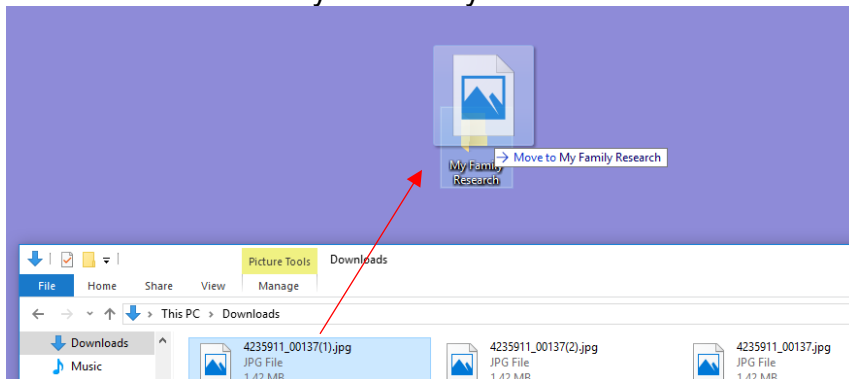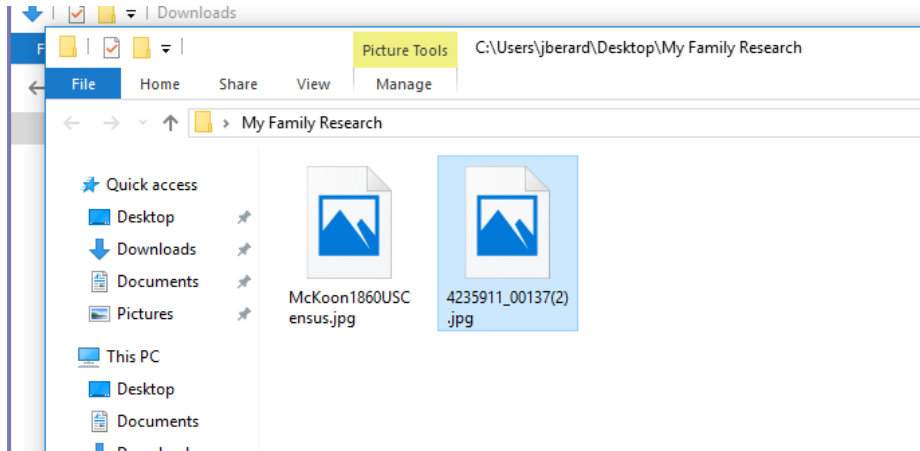
Rename the file:

The file on the left has been renamed as an example. To rename a file you can click on the existing name – two slow clicks – click, pause, click. Or you can use the Right mouse key to select the option, "Rename"
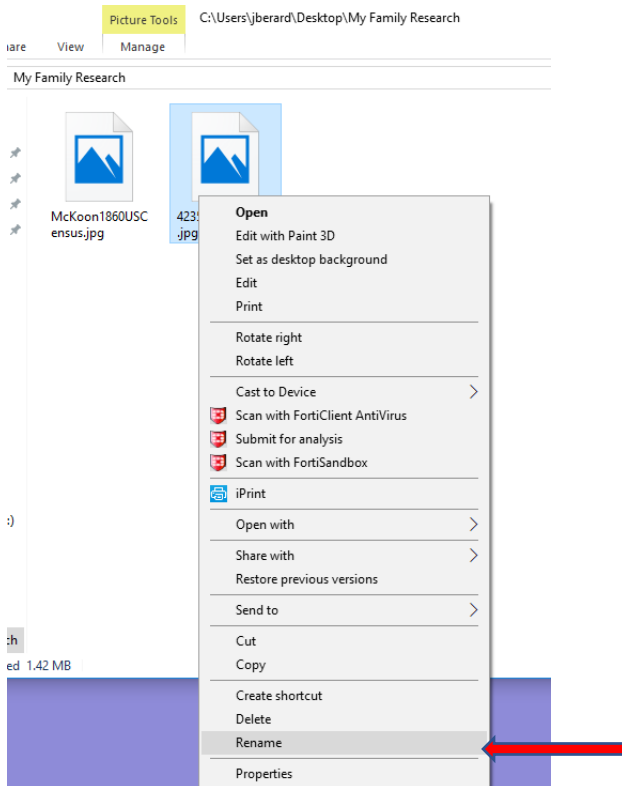
I like to name the files using the person's name, date of the document, and type of document. It is good practice to leave no blank spaces, and do not use punctuation. The underscore can be used to separate words if needed.

If you are using your own computer, or if you have a usb drive connected to the Library computer, you can do the shorter process.

Click "Save to this Computer" you will get a jpeg (image) file, this will usually save to your downloads, and then you can move it and rename it following the process above.
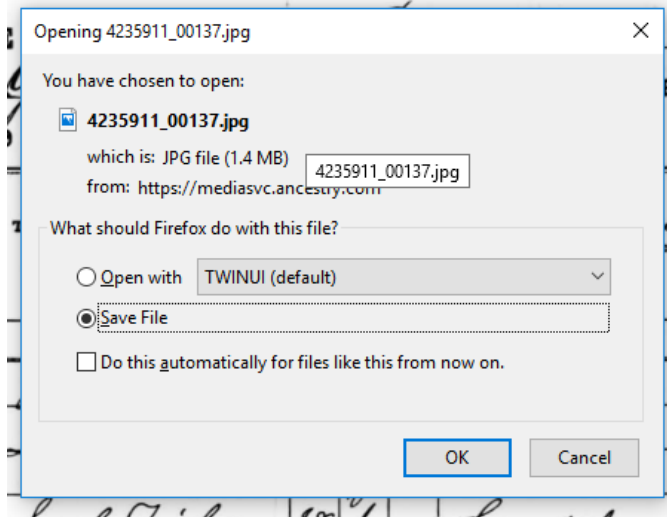
A jpeg file is an image file – it is not saved as text, and is not searchable.

This is a good reason to "copy" the image, and "paste" it into a Word document, so you can add notes about the files. (Even when an image file is pasted into Word, it is still an image, it won't convert to text.)

Working with your search results

Census records – these can show family groups, occupations, and addresses. They give a relative age of the individuals, and may show family relationships, for example:

Head – person who is the principal owner/renter of the address
Wife –
Son
Daughter
-in Law
Renter
Servant

What does it mean? The census taker had a form, and posed questions to whomever was at home at the time. That person would give answers which were not verified.

Names/spellings may be incorrect – often the census taker went purely on what they heard and did not ask for spellings (and some respondents may not have known accurate full names or may not have been willing to give them).

Ages, are usually roughly correct, based on the year, rather than actual birthdate. Some respondents may have obscured the age(s) of persons in the household.

Where were they from? This may have been assumed by the census taker, or it may have been asked. Some countries may have changed names since the time the information was given, and some country names may be mistaken for others. Sometimes you need to see several census years to get a consensus on the country of origin.

How to get unstuck? Try variant names, try adding or omitting initials. If the person is female, try using original surname as well as married name. Try varying the year of birth or location of birth. If you know parent's or sibling's names, try locating those – sometimes a spelling error will be revealed by finding a family member.

Family Search

Family Search is a free online service, which anyone can use by creating a free account.

You can create the free account by filling in the online form:

Note that the form asks if you are a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints member – if you click the (i) button, the site will tell you this is because:

"Some collection owners have granted family history centers and church members access to their records in exchange for preservation services provided by the Church."

There is now free training available from FamilySearch RootsTech, see them at https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/rtc2021

You can see some information about using FamilySearch by clicking the help button, and selecting "Getting Started" from the menu.
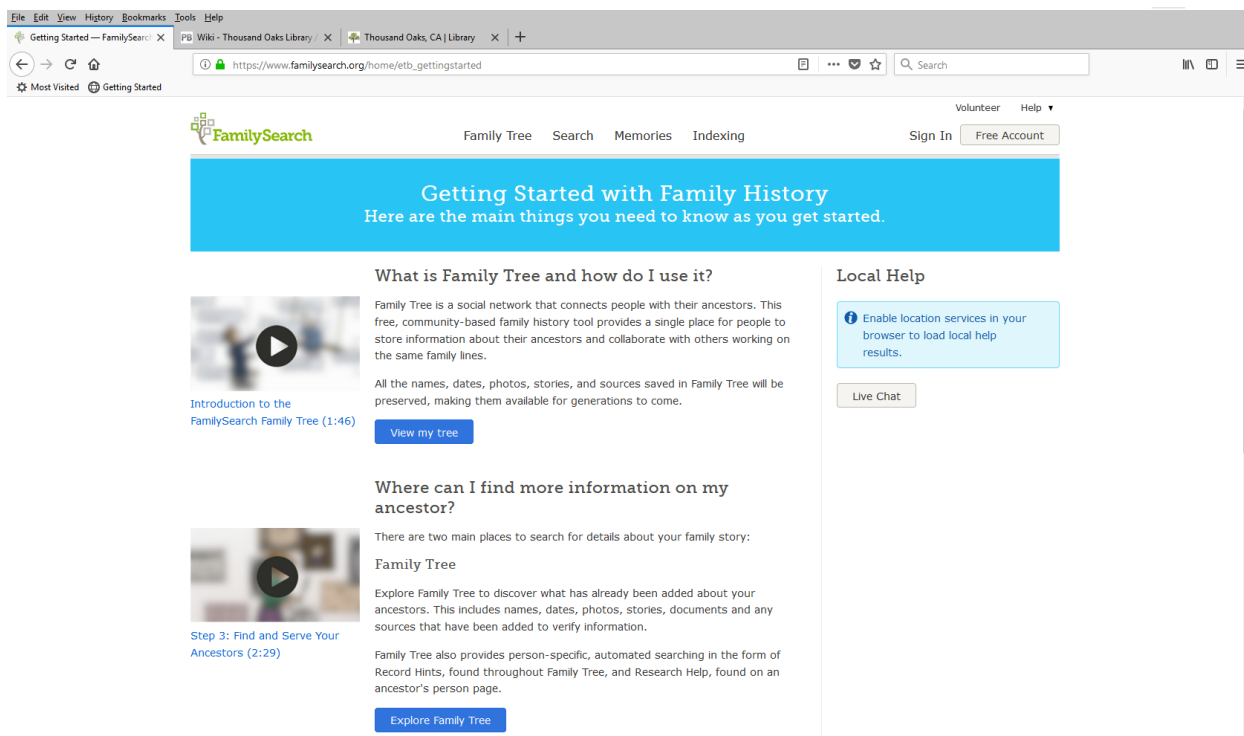
If you click on "Getting Started" you can watch videos on how you use the various tools available.

Using FamilySearch is fairly similar to using Ancestry Library Edition, and accesses a lot of the same records, but they are presented in different views, and work off a central family tree that the user creates.

Some differences are that in viewing census results, the person you are searching is not highlighted in the result, and when you hover over the census columns the text view of handwritten entries does not exist. This can make it more difficult to use and interpret.

The FamilySearch Library in Los Angeles
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Los_Angeles_FamilySearch_Library#Los_Angeles _California_FamilySearch_Library

They now offer live assistance online, research requests and training

Handouts – Sample forms, tips

Sample Form #1, Family Group Record. This is an example of a very standard form for recording a family group. You can photocopy the form and use it to hand write information, or you can use it as a pattern to create your own word document to enter information. From Powell, Kimberly. *The Everything Family Tree Book*, Adams Media, MA, 2006, p. 299.

Sample form #2, Chart for plotting your Family Tree. This is another very standard way of recording your family members. It doesn't give as much information as the Family Group Record, but it helps to show the relationships between people in your tree. From Powell, Kimberly. *The Everything Family Tree Book*, Adams Media, MA, 2006, p. 298.

Tip sheet – these tips are extremely helpful to keep in mind as you start researching your family history. From Powell, Kimberly. *The Everything Family Tree Book*, Adams Media, MA, 2006, p. x

Ancestry Anne's Top 10 Search tips – tips from the Ancestry website. (Note: some of the tips are only for those with personal accounts.)

Books to help you in your genealogy search – a bibliography of some starter genealogy titles found in the Thousand Oaks Library.

Other Genealogy resources here at the Library and online.

American Ancestors
Databases of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Highlights include full-text access to the New England Historical and Genealogical Register (1847-1994), and New England state vital records and index resources. Sponsored by the Conejo Valley Genealogical Society.

Los Angeles Times (1881- current)
Access to obituaries and other information related to California and Los Angeles. If your family may have been from the greater LA area, finding birth, death, marriage, and divorce records may be possible with this resource. You may also be able to find supporting information for family lore, such as businesses, major events, and social connections.

Local News Index
Get very local stories about the Conejo Valley. Local newspapers indexed by Thousand Oaks Librarians, including obituaries 1982-2016. Like the LA Times, this index can help you find local family records. Note this is an index, not a database. Once you locate a citation, you will need to view the microfilm, which can be requested from the Reference Desk.

In addition, more resources are found on our Virtual Library
https://research.tolibrary.org/az.php?a=all&s=154645

A word about DNA – This can be a fairly useful tool, especially if you are stuck, or trying to locate lost family members. It is also somewhat expensive. If you want to pursue DNA linking, you really need an account at one of the genealogy services. If you find you are interested in DNA testing, I recommend you read some of the current articles about the process prior to making a decision and selecting a test company. Science News has a very helpful review of the process.
https://www.sciencenews.org/article/consumer-genetic-testing-dna-genome