



# Your Family History Is Just a Click Away

## 15 great websites for genealogy research.

by: Judi Hasson | from: [AARP](#) | May 16, 2011

There's a bonanza on the Internet for anyone searching for their family roots.

As more records go online worldwide, a click of a mouse can take you back in time by hundreds of years in a matter of minutes via websites designed to help you hunt down your past.

**See also:** [How to begin building your family tree.](#)

Though some sites charge a fee, some of the best are free. If you don't get a match right away, don't give up. Try spelling your ancestor's last name different ways if you come up with a blank, because errors are rampant throughout historical records.



A lot of genealogy research can be done from the comfort of your own home.  
— Tetra Images/Aurora

**Ancestry.com:** A subscription-based service that searches 6 billion records worldwide. Many libraries have a subscription to the site and some offer a library edition you can access from your home computer for free. Ancestry.com also sponsors [RootsWeb.ancestry.com](#) — a free, all volunteer-based project that includes local history, gravestones and old church records.

**Archives.gov:** The federal government's exhaustive database includes U.S. military records, naturalization records, land records and much more.

**Census records:** The U.S. Census Bureau does not have digitized census records, but

Ancestry.com and Heritagequest.com have digitized many of these records from 1930 and earlier. The 1940 Census will be released next year. These websites are subscription-based, but access is free of charge and unlimited from any National Archives facility and from many public libraries.

**Cyndi's List** is a huge compilation of genealogical sites in the United States and around the world. [CyndisList.com](http://CyndisList.com) includes city directories, wills, marriage certificates as well as church, military and adoption records.

**Ellisland.org:** It offers a list of passengers from every ship that entered the Port of New York between 1892 and 1924. Manifests include place of last residence, occupation, family members in the United States and the residence before arriving in United States.

**FamilySearch.org:** This exhaustive free database of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints includes databases from around the world and a wide range of documents from births, baptism and death records.

**Footnote.com:** This subscription site is sponsored by Ancestry.com that provides access to original documents, including orphan records, military pensions, Confederate papers and much more.

**Findagrave.com:** An online repository of more than 60 million grave records and millions of photos.

**GenWeb sites:** Search for these free sites (there are thousands of them) by stating your ethnic or geographic specialty and adding "GenWeb" in the search box. (Example: "Turkey + GenWeb")

**Italiangen.org:** You don't have to be Italian to benefit from the great volunteer effort on this site to index New York's five boroughs' vital records.

**JewishGen.org:** Thousands of databases, research tools and other resources are available to help those with Jewish ancestry.

**SteveMorse.org:** Having trouble with the spelling of your immigrant ancestor's surname? This free site helps you search in one step.

**State and local records:** A group of volunteers put together the [USGenWeb Project](http://USGenWeb Project) to provide genealogical research in every county and every state in the United States.

## Related

- [Research your family story, now! Read](#)
- [Trace your Civil War ancestors. Read](#)
- [Find roots to British royalty. Read](#)

## Discover Your Roots

Enter our [genealogy sweeps](#) for a chance to win this grand prize:

- \$1,000 travel money to discover your roots in person or to put toward a family reunion
- Five-hour consultation with Megan Smolenyak,

**Social Security death records:** Here is a repository (at [ssdi.RootsWeb.ancestry.com](http://ssdi.RootsWeb.ancestry.com)) that will give you details about your ancestors who had Social Security numbers and died in 1962 or later when the records were computerized.

**United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:** The museum has 42 million records, including a vast database of survivors and Holocaust victims. Go to [USHMM.org/research/collections/search/](http://USHMM.org/research/collections/search/).

national genealogy expert

- Signed copies of Megan Smolenyak's books, *Who Do You Think You Are?* and *Trace Your Roots With DNA*
- One-year subscription to Ancestry.com
- Onetime DNA ancestry testing

## How is Your Genealogy Research Going?

Let us know if this article was helpful and share your own research quandaries and successes in the comment box below, or join other members in the [Genealogy community group](#) for more tips and advice.