# How to Search Ancestry®

Finding records on Ancestry® can help you build your family tree. Start by charting your family tree by hand. Write down what you know, then search Ancestry to find what you do not.
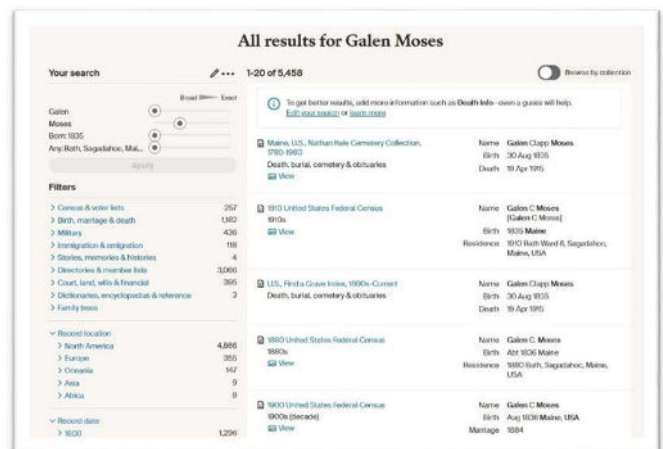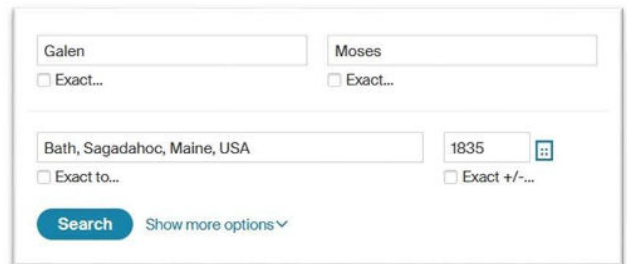
### How to Access Ancestry

1. Visit www.patten.lib.me.us.
2. From the top navigation menu, click **Digital Resources.**
3. A drop down menu will open, click **Ancestry Library.**

### How to Search for Records

1. From any page on Ancestry, click the **Search** tab, type in as much as you know about the ancestor you are searching for.
2. To search with extra facts, click the **Show more options** link. To limit your search results to an exact name or date, enter information in a field, then select **Exact** under that field. It's usually best to start with a broad search and only select **Exact** if you get too many results.
3. Enter information and click **Search.**
4. To narrow your search results to a certain time, place, or record type, select a filter (or multiple filters) on the left side of the page.
5. In your search results on the right side of the page, click on a record to open it. Examine the details to see whether they match the details of the person you're searching for.
6. If it's a match, you can print the record from its page by clicking **Print** in the upper right hand corner. To save the image to the desktop or a thumb drive, click **Print** and then **Save As PDF** rather than choosing a printer destination.

7. If the record contains the names of other family members as well, those names should appear further down the page. You may have to scroll to see them. They may be clickable links and will take you to more records about that relative.

**Search Tips**

- **Change how broad or narrow your search is.** If your results don't seem relevant enough (or you're not getting enough results), try moving the sliders in the top-left corner of your search results.
- **Narrow your search by location or date.** From your list of search results, look for the Filter by menu in the panel on the left side of the page. In the Filter by menu, under **Record Location** or **Record Date**, click a location or date to filter your results.
- **Try searching with both more and less information.** Add and remove different facts in the search form (since different types of records have different combinations of data).
- **Search for the right records for the right time of life.** If you're looking for someone's parents, try narrowing your search to a decade or so after the person's birth. Don't include information about that person's spouse or children, but do include information about their siblings. Search for female ancestors using only their maiden names early in life and only their married names after they married, if they married.
- **Get search results that include spelling mistakes and different spellings.** Sometimes names are spelled incorrectly on censuses, and sometimes handwriting can be difficult to read.
- **Read the collection description at the bottom of record collections and record summary pages**; it usually includes information specific to the collection.
- **Take note of any "Suggested Records"** on the right hand size of the page. They may or may not be the right person or point you to an unknown relative!