

Adapting to the Ancestry Change in Family History Centers

Robert Raymond

April-2007

RobertRaymondUT@hotmail.com

Ancestry Family History Center Edition

As of April 2007, Ancestry is providing a special “edition” to family history centers (FHCs) and another special edition for the Family History Library (FHL). There is no doubt that Ancestry has designed the FHC Edition to help drive sales of its regular subscriptions. It contains a free, healthy taste of what is available in a regular subscription. It shows the number of search results for every database, not just those in the FHC Edition. It shows links to images of original documents, even though the FHC Edition doesn’t include images for very many databases. And, it offers special discounts for FHC users.

Today, we look at what is available in the Ancestry FHC Edition and what substitutes exist for popular databases that are no longer available. The table on page 2 shows the databases and collections in the order we will cover them.

Exact Search

In the FHC Edition, it would be confusing if the results were sorted by number of stars (☆☆☆☆), as that would mix results from included and excluded databases. Instead, the FHC Edition always uses “Exact Search,” because the search results show a document icon (📄) next to included databases, and a padlock icon (🔒) next to databases which are not.

Remember when doing exact searches that results must match *all* the information you enter. Entering too much information will return zero results. Start with just a surname and a location. If you get too many results, add a little information and repeat the search. If you add some information and the number of results drops to zero, remove that information and try something else.

If you set Spelling to Soundex instead of Exact, Ancestry will include matches that are similar in sound or spelling (using the Soundex system). To read about using wildcards and exact searching, click on the Search Button on the bar at the top of the page, and then click on Search Tips, underneath the Photos & Maps tab.

Speaking of tabs, the Home page and the Search page both have the same search form with four tabs along the top. None of the databases from the final two tabs are included in the FHC Edition: Stories & Publications and Photos & Maps. Keep your searching to the first two tabs: Historical Records and Family Trees.

Once you start a search from the Home or Search pages by entering just a surname and location, narrow your results by clicking on the name of one of the databases included in the FHC Edition. If you need to further narrow the results, scroll to the bottom of the page and use the “Refine Your Search...” form. This is a special database-specific form that usually has more fields by which you can narrow the results of your search.

Personal Accounts in Family History Centers

If you decide to buy a personal account, you will find it harder than you might guess to use it at a family history center. For a full examination of the issue, see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FHCNET/message/14832>.

Google Instead of Long Addresses

Internet addresses, like the one at the end of the previous paragraph, can be difficult to read, accurately retype, or remember. It’s a lot easier to remember a simple phrase, search for it in Google, and select the desired result. With any luck, the desired result will be the first result. In the table on page 2, the phrase to search for in Google is shown in square brackets [like this].

To perform a Google search, first go to google.com – that’s the only internet address you need to remember. To make it even easier, you can make it your home page, or your default search engine, or you can install the Google toolbar.

In any case, once you get to Google, enter the search phrase followed by the Enter key on your keyboard. If you’re entering the search phrase from memory, don’t worry about getting it exactly right. For example, any of these phrases will find the Utah Pioneer Online Library: [Pioneer online library], [Utah online library], [pioneer online library], [pioneer utah online library] or [utah pioneer online library].

Sometimes Google shows advertisements based on your search phrase. These are labeled “Sponsored Links” and are displayed either at the top of the search results, or along the right side. You should ignore the sponsored links most of the time.

Important Collections Still Included in Ancestry FHC Edition

Collection	Still Included?	Notes [Or Google Search Phrase]
England/Wales Census 1841-1891	Yes	Not including images
England/Wales BMD 1837-1983	Yes	Including images
England/Wales Free BMD 1837-1983	Yes	Available for free on www.ancestry.co.uk , on www.rootsweb.com , or at home [FreeBMD RootsWeb]
England/Wales BMD 1984-2004	Yes	Available for free on www.ancestry.co.uk or at home
Immigration: Atlantic Ports Passenger Lists*, Baltimore, Boston, California, Detroit, Florida, Galveston, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Seattle.	Yes	Many of the small databases that are no longer available are subsets of the databases that <i>are</i> available, so more than 81% of all immigration records are available in the Ancestry FHC Edition. Images available on microfilm. [Ellis Island]
Border Crossings: From Canada to U.S.	No	Microfilm
Passenger and Immigration Lists Index (PILI)	No	Public libraries with Thompson-Gale databases
U.S. Federal Censuses 1880, 1900, 1920	Yes	Including images.
U.S. Federal Censuses, other years	No	All census years are still available at the Family History Library, and on BYU campuses. HeritageQuest has images for all census years and head of household indexes for 1790-1820 and 1860-1930 (1930 is partial). [Pioneer online library]
Book Collection	No	HeritageQuest [Pioneer online library]
PERSI	No	HeritageQuest [Pioneer online library]
Freedman's Bank	No	HeritageQuest [Pioneer online library]
Social Security Death Index (SSDI)	No	[RootsWeb SSDI]
Message Boards	Yes	Click on Community Tab
Ancestry World Tree (AWT)	Yes	Use Family Trees tab on search form
Member Trees	Yes	Available for free on www.ancestry.co.uk or at home
OWT	No	Use Ancestral File [FamilySearch]
Revolutionary War databases	No	HeritageQuest [Pioneer online library]
Civil War databases	No	[Civil War Soldier Database] Microfilm images have more information
WWI Draft Cards	Yes	Images available on microfilm
WWII Draft Cards	Yes	Images available on microfilm

*The Atlantic Ports Passenger Lists covers these smaller ports: Alexandria, VA; Annapolis, MD; Bangor, ME; Barnstable, MA; Bath, ME; Beaufort, NC; Belfast, ME; Bridgeport, CT; Bridgeton, NJ; Bristol, RI; Cape May, NJ; Charleston, SC; Darien, GA; Dighton, MA; East River, VA; Edenton, NC; Edgartown, MA; Fairfield, CT; Fall River, MA; Falmouth, ME; Frenchmans Bay, ME; Galveston, TX; Georgetown, D.C.; Gloucester, MA; Hampton, VA; Hartford, CT; Havre De Grace, MD; Kennebunk, ME; Key West, FL; Little Egg Harbor, NJ; Marblehead, MA; Mobile, AL; Nantucket, MA; New Bedford, MA; New Berne, NC; New Haven, CT; New London, CT; Newark, NJ; Newburyport, MA; Newport, RI; Norfolk, VA; Oswegatchie, NY; Passamaquoddy, ME; Penobscot, ME; Perth Amboy, NJ; Petersburg, VA; Plymouth, MA; Plymouth, NC; Port Royal, SC; Portland, ME; Portsmouth, NH; Portsmouth, VA; Providence, RI; Richmond, VA; Rochester, NY; Sag Harbor, NY; Salem, MA; Sandusky, OH; Savannah, GA; Saybrook, CT; St Augustine, FL; St Johns, FL; Waldeboro, ME; Warren, RI; Washington, NC; Wilmington, DE; Yarmouth, ME.