Using On-line Databases

- **WEB RESOURCES I USE MOST OFTEN**
  - Sites w/ images of original sources
    - Official records, photos & newspapers
  - Sites w/ derivative sources
    - Indexes, abstracts, transcripts
    - Periodicals & family histories
  - Family trees by other researchers
- **Message boards & mailing lists**
- **Various resources and tree builders**
  - **Family Tree Maker**
- **REASONS FOR HARD TO FIND RECORDS**
  - Name is wrong on index
    - Indexer misreads handwriting
    - Recorder misspells name
    - Recorder misinterprets what he heard
    - Recorder "dittoed" data incorrectly
  - Someone was missed by the recorder
    - Maybe person is in hiding
    - Maybe person had a disagreeable attitude
  - Someone wanted to mislead recorder
    - Maybe personal embarrassment
    - Maybe not of legal age
  - Record is being overlooked within search results
    - Too many resulting "hits" with search
    - Data missing from index
    - Name change or variant spelling
    - Search criteria excludes a record – too much info
- **Document your discoveries: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY**
- **Cite Sources**
- **WEBSITES WITH READY ACCESS**
  - No fee sites
    - FamilySearch
    - Find A Grave
    - Google
  - Fee-based sites
    - Ancestry
    - Fold3
- **Beginner mistakes** "TMI" too much input

FamilySearch

Tips:

1. Always search by name first
2. Always view the image of the original record
3. Attach sources to your Family Tree
4. Search using a variety of methods
5. Less is more…. Begin with a minimum of information and apply filters to your results to refine
6. them
7. Log in with your FamilySearch account first in order to save records and images to Source Box
8. Use Research plan and log

Demonstrate FamilySearch

- ○ Search
  - ▪ Records
  - ▪ Images
  - ▪ Catalog
  - ▪ Research Wiki
- ○ Family Tree
  - ▪ Tree

Find A Grave:

Crowdsource / GPS / Photos of headstone

1. See what a simple name search reveals first
2. Use memorial links to find other relatives buried near by
3. Carefully review grave and memorial information
4. Learn more about the cemetery your ancestors were buried in
5. Contact Find a Grave volunteers to thank them and ask questions
6. Add what you know to existing memorials with a free Find a Grave login

Google: you all know it is the largest library in the world

Some basics

- Word order matters
- Never case sensitive
- Each word should add focus
- Use genealogy terms (birth vs. birthday)
- Google searches in priority order
- Top pages will have highest to search criteria
- No limit to your search query
- Keep track of your good and bad search phrases

Wildcards

- **Quotation Marks**
    - When a keyword or phrase encased in quotation marks, makes it MANDATORY
    - Ex: "Oliver Baker" franklin county Indiana
- **Minus Sign**
    - Remove unwanted keywords by subtracting them from your search! (- sign must touch word)
    - Ex: "Oliver Baker" franklin county Indiana –ohio – Illinois
- **Asterisk**
    - Acts as a place holder for a word or short phrase
    - Ex: Oliver W. Baker / Oliver William Baker
    - Ex: "Oliver * Baker" (asterisk does not touch)
- **Numrange search (..)**
    - Tells Google that a year within that range should appear in the search results θ
    - Ex: "Oliver Baker" franklin county Indiana –ohio –Illinois 1821..1905
- **question mark (?)**
    - may be used to represent a single character, anywhere in the word.
    - Ex: searching for Oliver Bak?r would return both Bakr and Baker and Bakar

Ancestry ($)

- All Collections
    - Keep it simple
    - No birth certificate with death date
    - Name
    - Locations
    - Special collections
- Card Catalog
    - Getting to unindexed records
    - No name or date to input
    - Only collections

FOLD3: ($) military records

In closing

- Remember "TMI" principles
- Limit your search input
- Use filters to narrow your search results
- Don't forget variant spellings
- Use those wildcards (* or ?)
- Look for browsable collections

Where to Start

1. What do you know, and how do you know it?
2. What do you want to know – Where would you find what you are looking for?
3. Select records to search – create Research Question
4. Obtain and search the record
5. Use the information - Documentation, always cite your sources - ALWAYS

Websites available at FHC – show how to get there

- **American Ancestors**
- **Ancestry**
- **FindmyPast**
- **Fold3**
- **GenealogyBank**
- **Irish Ancestors**
- **MyHeritage**
- **... More**

Brooklyn County Library Websites – show

- Heritage Quest (some for Free), purchased by Ancestry

LINKS FOR WEBSITES

Free

FamilySearch: https://www.familysearch.org

- **BYU FamilySearch Basics Class 1 Getting to Know FamilySearch:**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBc6Q_bSHlw
- **FamilySearch Class 2: Adding and Correcting information:**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uZen4vF22c
- **FamilySearch Class 3: Finding People to Add to Family**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDMQw2b4ipw
- **FamilySearch Class 3: Tending Your Tree: Basic Research**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVjDVgMRk6Y

Find A Grave https://www.findagrave.com/

- **Find A Grave tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9DuZHQ9Ouo**

Google https://www.google.com/

Fee based

Ancestry https://www.ancestry.com/

- **How to Use Ancestry.com for Beginners: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VoaccOtPSY**
- **Getting Started in Ancestry: https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/Getting-Started-Lesson-1-Starting-Your-Tree**

Fold3 https://www.fold3.com/?group=1

How to use Fold3: https://www.casscolibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/Genealogy/Guide-to-Fold3-1.pdf

- **A Quick Tour of FOLD3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaxI3aOM55c**

GenealogyBank https://www.genealogybank.com/

- **How to Search GenealogyBank:**
  https://www.genealogybank.com/static/downloads/HowtoSearch_eBook.pdf

Differences between Ancestry & FamilySearch:

- **Key differences in their Family Tree(s):** Ancestry and FamilySearch have completely different philosophies for maintaining family trees.
    - ○ Ancestry has each user create their own family tree (or trees).
        - ▪ Have more than 8+ billion names spread across 80+ million trees.
            - • Impossible to know how many billion names are duplicates.
- FamilySearch has goal of creating a single world-wide tree in which users share all info (except for living).
    - ○ Have more than a billion names with a much lower percentage of duplicates.

- **• Key differences in their Records Search tools:** Most significant differences are the date & wildcard parameters.

    - Searching by date (years only):
        - ○ Ancestry needs one year only – results will be prioritized by variations from that year (0, ±1, ±2, ±3, etc.)
        - ○ FamilySearch requires a range of years – any results outside the range are ignored
    - Using * wildcards in names (first and/or last name):
        - ○ FamilySearch needs one accompanying letter only (i.e., A*, *ly, etc.)
        - ○ Caution: sometimes "no results" will display when there are actually too many results
        - ○ Ancestry needs three accompanying letters (i.e., abc*, *xyz, l*mn, etc.)

Other Tips for Improving Search Results:

- Start with minimal search parameters – typically first/last names plus time/place for one event only
    - ○ Adding parameters weakens the search because …
        - ▪ Each parameter creates the risk of data mismatches
        - ▪ Each parameter mismatch decreases chance for a record appearing in the search results
    - ○ Use "filters" to limit search results to a specific record type or specific record collection(s)
        - ▪ Filtering techniques differ between Ancestry and FamilySearch so see their tutorials
    - ○ If search creates too many results, then …
        - ▪ Refine location to reduce results (i.e. search by county rather than by state)
    - ○ Reduce time parameter (change date range in FamilySearch; select an "Exact to …" button in Ancestry)
    - ○ If search creates too few results, then …
        - ▪ Eliminate a parameter (i.e. try it without a given name)
        - ▪ Broaden time/place parameters (i.e. broaden date range)
        - ▪ Change surname to check for variant spellings

- o Use * wildcards to capture possible variants (i.e. "Mc*rley" will capture "McCurley" "McCearley" & "McKerley")

- • When all else fails, try same search elsewhere

  - o Try another "Big 4" – Ancestry, FamilySearch, FindMyPast, and/or MyHeritage
    - ▪ Record may be mis-indexed in one & correctly indexed in another
    - ▪ Results are prioritized differently, even when they're using the same index
    - ▪ Remember that search "tricks" which didn't work in one website may work in another

- • Other tidbits …

  - o For death or burial records, eliminate birth parameter (time/place)
    - o Many death indexes don't include place of birth
    - o FamilySearch may exclude Find-a-Grave memorials if birth State is different than death State