

CHAPTER 5



Best of the Internet

KEY FAMILY HISTORY WEB SITES



The internet contains a wealth of information and makes it easy to contact and stay in touch with others who might be working on your family roots. Whether you are experienced or a novice in tracing your family roots using the Internet, these personally-reviewed and singled-out-for-excellence web sites will empower you in your search for your treasured family heritage. A virtual *treasure trove* of empowering, irreplaceable knowledge and information—much of which had been essentially “lost” to mankind in dusty archives around the world—is now instantly available to you at your fingertips at any time.

Web sites come in all degrees of value, efficiency, and friendliness. And since everyone has different needs, not all are equally useful for every family historian, but each may have something of immense value to offer you and perhaps add an important piece to your family history puzzle.

This collection of key web sites is not meant to be a comprehensive listing of family history web sites available, as there are well-known web directories, such as *Cyndi's List*, that do this very well. Searching the various online genealogy databases can be time-consuming and even difficult. Rather, this is a valuable, easy-to-use selection of personally pre-screened, key web sites to save you valuable time, help you get started and get organized, and help you add new branches to your family tree, thus empowering you with the *Best of the Internet*. These sites and resources are **FREE** unless marked with an  to signify that access to some or all of the content requires a fee.

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Winston Churchill

Opportunity in Difficulties

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees

the opportunity in every difficulty.” – Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

1. FamilySearch.org **FREE** New.FamilySearch.org

www.familysearch.org
http://new.familysearch.org

(New.FamilySearch.org has *restricted use* at press time; the worldwide rollout to the public will be announced soon.)

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch.org homepage. At the top, it says 'FAMILYSEARCH' and 'A service provided by THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS'. Below this, it reads 'Free Family History, Family Tree, and Genealogy Records and Resources from Around the World'. There are several search filters: 'Search Records for Your Ancestors' with fields for 'First and Middle Name(s)', 'Last or Family Name', 'Life Event', 'Year', and 'Year Range'. There are also dropdown menus for 'Country or Region' and 'All Countries'. A 'Search' button is visible. Below the search area, there are sections for 'What's New', 'Family History Library', 'Free PAF Family History Software', and 'News & Events'. The 'Family History Library' section lists various resources like 'Free Online Classes', 'Research Series and Special Events', and 'Monthly Class Schedules'. The 'Free PAF Family History Software' section describes the 'Personal Ancestral File (PAF)' as a free genealogy and family history program. The 'News & Events' section mentions 'Salt Lake City Prizes for Week of Family History' and 'Free Family History Library Classes Online'.

FamilySearch™ is one of the comprehensive, preeminent family history Web sites on the Internet, and the largest genealogy organization in the world. It provides online access to the

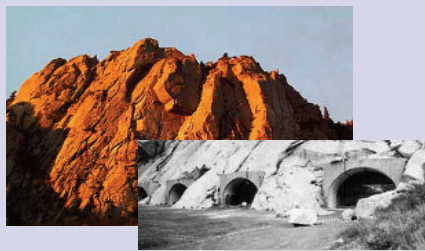


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world-famous Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah and the largest collection of free family history, family tree, genealogy records and resources in the world. It is the link to the world's largest repository of genealogical resources and a global network of research centers. Millions of people use FamilySearch online, or through over 4,600 family history centers in 132 countries, to learn more about their family history. FamilySearch is a nonprofit organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (casually known as the LDS or Mormon Church).

FamilySearch Ongoing Major Projects

- Vastly improving their software and infrastructure
- Digitizing and indexing their extensive collection (of billions) of worldwide genealogical records held in the Granite Mountain Records Vault, currently viewed online at www.FamilySearch.org > *Search Records* > *Record Search pilot*. Although a billion names can already be accessed online free of charge, most of the vast collection of genealogical resources is yet to come online. FamilySearch is undertaking massive digitization and indexing projects to bring most of




Granite Mountain Records Vault

the additional collection of unique records online over the next few years.

- Adding millions of new records each year from its acquisition efforts
- Partnering with other libraries in digitizing their unique records
- Expanding their extensive collection of published family histories
- Upgrading their Family History Library catalog using new technology; you'll be able to view microfilms on your home computer. Right now, the online catalog allows you to see what microfilm and other holdings are at the library, and then order the films to be sent to one of the 4,600 family history centers nearest your home for viewing. About 100,000 rolls of microfilm are circulated to Family History Centers each month.
- Adding their new valuable wiki site
- Adding new searchable maps

and vital records with Swedish relevance.

Chinese Ancestry - www.Jiapu.com

Launched in 2008, hosts more than 3000 Jiapu – Chinese family histories  bound in volumes – the earliest being from the 6th century BC and the most recent from the 1940s. The collection has been made available through an exclusive long-term partnership with the Shanghai Library, which holds the largest collection of Chinese family history records in the world. The site is in local language.

3. RootsWeb.com

www.rootsweb.com

FREE

A thriving, free genealogy community on the web (part of the Ancestry.com network) providing



a robust worldwide environment for learning, collaborating and sharing for the expert and novice alike. The site provides access to huge transcribed records from volunteer researchers, and contains extensive interactive guides and numerous research tools for tracing family histories. The site's *WorldConnect Project* contains more than 480 million ancestor names. Besides helpful advice such as the *RootsWeb Guide to Tracing Family Trees*, it boasts over 31,000 mailing lists, over 132,000 message boards, and the RootsWeb Surname List of more than 1.2 million surname entries.

It also hosts many major websites and sources of free data, such as: Cyndi's List, USGenWeb Project, the Obituary Daily Times (an index to published obituaries), National Genealogical Society, FreeBMD (the Civil Registration index of births, marriages and deaths for England and Wales);



and Genealogy.org.

4. Footnote.com

www.footnote.com



Through partnerships with some of the most



prominent archives in America including the National Archives, Footnote digitizes millions of documents, records and photos that paint a picture of our shared past that few have seen before. The collections include records relating to the Revolutionary War, Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War, African American History, Native Americans, historical newspapers, naturalization documents, and city directories.

You can search the site for free: See all the index information and reasonably sized image thumbnails, register and make any kind of contributions, including comments, annotations, Spotlights and Footnote Pages. You can even view millions of full images for free, it's just the full images in the Premium Titles that require a paid subscription.

Best International Web Sites

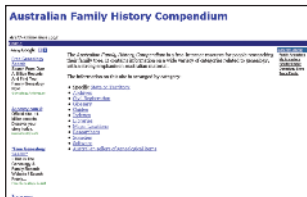
Searchable online databases or informative tools

Most everyone wants to find out where their ancestors came from, and search for their roots in the 'old country'. More than 60% of Americans today claim ancestry from the 23 largest European heritage groups. The most common European ancestries are: German (50.8 million), Irish (36.5 million), English (28.2 million), Italian (17.8 million), Polish (10 million), French (9.6 million), Scottish (6 million), Scotch-Irish (5.3 million), Dutch (5.1 million), Norwegian (4.7 million), Swedish (4.3 million), and Russian (3.2 million). Other common ethnic groups include: African (2.7 million), West Indian (2.5 million), and French Canadian (2.2 million). You might think that unfamiliar records and language barriers could thwart your search for your family roots, but they don't have to. Here are the best tools and online resources to help you trace your ancestors in North America, British Isles, Europe, and beyond.

Australian Family History Compendium -

www.cohsoft.com.au/afhc

FREE



A free Internet resource for researching your Australian family tree; contains information on a wide variety

of categories related to genealogy.

Australia FamilySearch -

<https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Australia>

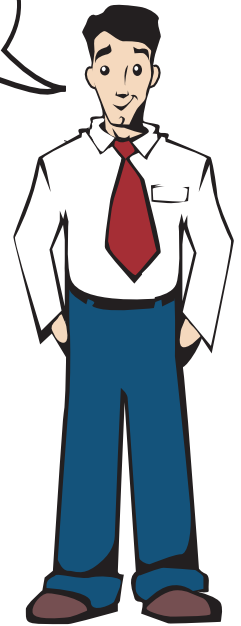
FREE



A community website to help you learn how to find your Australian ancestors with extensive articles, information and links

to key web sites.

Many web sites are directories or portals containing numerous links to international web sites. See the **Best Web Directories/Portals** section on page 173 for a list of directories to guide you to additional sites.



Canadian Genealogy Centre -

www.genealogy.gc.ca

FREE



This Web site facilitates the discovery of your Canadian heritage roots and family histories. Collections include published histories of Canadian families and communities, transcriptions and indexes of parish registers, census, cemetery, immigration, military and land records, newspapers and directories, journals of Canadian genealogical and historical societies, genealogical reference tools, government publications including genealogical data, and much more.

Canada - Library and Archives -

FREE

www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/



Canada's national collection of books, historical documents, government records,

photos, films, maps, music...and more. This heritage includes publications, archival records, sound and audio-visual materials, photographs, artworks, and electronic documents such as websites.

Canada FamilySearch -

FREE

<https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Canada>



A community website to help you learn how to find your

Canadian ancestors with extensive articles, information and links to key web sites.

