Search fields vary: not same for all sites. Test different types of searches, read FAQ; use wildcards; read description; examine index (what's included)

Punctuation marks improve search: plus sign (both items on page, may be able to control closeness of items). See more below.

Order of results: for search engines, ads come first; for websites best match usually first, may be option available to sort by date

Genealogy searching: test different kinds of searches; less can be more (don't be too specific)

Image only collections: not indexed; not searchable, but browsable. However, many collections have basic index either in separate volume or in beginning of volume (e.g., wills, estates, probate, land records)

Image only: Ancestry.com, collection listing called **Card Catalog**. Findmypast.com, called **A-Z of Record Sets**. On other websites, look for such links as "**explore our collections**," "**collection listing**," etc. FamilySearch.org, click Search at top of page; below map, see "**Find a Collection**"

When searching a new collection: examine collection index (what's included). Always read description of collection: Source of data? Search parameters? Gaps in what collection contains? Global searching - great time saver, but results overwhelming - may provide answer. More specific searches: fewer, but often more meaningful results, more search options than in global search

How exact are name searches? Does search for "William" bring a "Bill;" will search for "Crowe" bring back "Crow"? Does search engine suggest an alternate if search term is misspelled? *Search for name*: James Wilcox, Google searches title, text of pages for those two words (also Jim, Jimmy). Not necessarily related to each other, just on same page; first results will have names closest together. Later results James (or variations) OR Wilcox

Less can be more: adding too much information might exclude records without **all** information, or information not quite a match

FamilySearch.org uses wildcard (**?**) for one character and (*****) for multiple characters, must specify first three letters of name

What you've been missing in familysearch.org: Catalog pulldown, search by location, then search by individual categories, not all online (some - Camera or hyperlink indicates online)

Ancestry.com: restrict search to specific collections; search collections by locations. *Pennsylvania* State Archives - *Ancestry*.com partnership means that state archive records are free to non-subscribers who are PA residents

Global search engines ranked by traffic/month: Google, Bing, Yahoo, Ask, AOL, Wow, Webcrawler, Mywebsearch, Infospace, Info, Duckduckgo, Contenko, Dogpile

Important tip: No matter what the website, **explore**. Look for search tips. No expected results? Try doing search another way. Do not assume that a search without results means your ancestor is not there.

Punctuation marks for searching (no space between mark and word)

Plus sign: Terms on same page, not necessarily close to each other. Some sites use +# (with number of words). Google has dropped use of +

Minus sign Used to exclude 1) multiple-meaning words, 2) eliminate by exclusionary word

Quotation marks: Exact word or phrase.

Asterisk, question mark: Placeholder for unknown or wildcard—some sites require minimum characters to use wild card. Some sites use ? foe one character and * for multiple characters.

RANGE: Separate numbers by two periods without spaces (year range, date range)—includes al dates in range. Will NOT exclude pages that include other dates.

Search Strategy Resources

Beginner's guide to searching records: https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/a-beginners-guide-to-searching-records/

Record search tips: find your family: https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/record-search-tips/

How to search ancestry: https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/How-to-Search-Ancestry

Ancestry card catalog:: https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/catalog/

FamilySearch Catalog: https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog

ArchiveGrid: https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/

Google alerts: https://www.google.com/alerts

MyHeritage collection catalog: https://www.myheritage.com/research/catalog

Spelling substitution tables for the US and Canada: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Spelling_Substitution_Tables_for_the_United_States_and_C anada

Maps and Boundaries:

Street name changes: http://stevemorse.org/census/changes.html

Atlas of historical county boundaries: http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/

Historical maps, search location by date: https://www.randymajors.org/maps

Historical Resources

Glossary of **medical terms** used in the 18th and 19th centuries
https://www.thornber.net/medicine/html/medgloss.html

Old diseases and obsolete medical terms: definitions: https://www.thoughtco.com/historic-causes-of-death-4034067

Understanding **ICD codes** on death certificates: https://familyhistorydaily.com/free-genealogy-resources/icd-codes-death-certificates-genealogy/

Discover the hidden meaning on those numbers on a death certificate: https://lisalisson.com/icd-codes-death-certificates/

International Classification of Diseases (ICD), historical: http://www.wolfbane.com/icd/index.html

Historical **occupations**: http://www.capitalareagenealogy.org/page_96f.htm

Jane's Dictionary of Old Occupations: https://www.familyresearcher.co.uk/glossary/Dictionary-of-Old-Occupations-Index.html

List of occupation abbreviations: http://www.genealogyintime.com/dictionary/list-of-occupation-abbreviations-page-a.html

In what war did my ancestor serve? https://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2014/04/23/what-war-did-my-ancestor-serve-in/

Historical vital records: http://www.learnwebskills.com/family/vitalrecords1.htm

7 common historical newspaper abbreviations and terms: https://blog.newspapers.com/7-common-historical-newspaper-abbreviations-and-terms/

Understanding historical newspaper terms: https://blog.genealogybank.com/understanding-terms-found-in-historical-newspapers.html

Photos: Historical, Events, People

http://deadfred.com/index.php   https://www.ancientfaces.com/

https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/find-photos/

http://www.searchforancestors.com/records/photo.html

https://www.cyndislist.com/photos/lost-and-found/

Social Media

Facebook: Genealogy and history (in English) groups/pages, a 436-page PDF file containing 16,700+ links (updated Jan 2021): https://moonswings.files.wordpress.com/2021/01/genealogy-on-facebook-jan-2021.pdf File includes a clickable table of contents. *Note:* As of January 2021, future updates and maintenance of list is being handled by Cyndi's List at https://cyndislist.com/facebook. Download a Canadian list that includes French-speaking groups at https://genealogyalacarte.ca/?page_id=10169, and an Australian list at https://www.lonetester.com/2020/12/facebook-for-australian-history-and-genealogy-2/

Books, Newspapers

https://archive.org/

Many states have statewide newspaper projects (often through a university library), theancestorhunt (above) for links organized by state. The following states have a central online repository: AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, KY, ME, NY, NC, OH, OR, SC, TX, UT, VA, WA, and WY. City, county and university libraries may be a source for newspapers (sometimes online) and/or for links to newspapers online

Cyndi's List: https://www.cyndislist.com/newspapers

Library of Congress newspaper site, Chronicling America: Newspapers from 1790 to 1924. Also listing of newspapers (1690 to present) and libraries holdings, either microfilm or paper copy http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles/