Favorite Family History Websites 2013

By Sterling & Claudia Sudweeks

familysearch.org
- *Family Tree tab*: This is where you keep your pedigree and family group information. This is the largest searchable Family tree in the world. You can use either the pedigree or fanchart views.
- *Photos tab*: Add photos and stories and attach them to people in the tree. You can create albums of photos as well.
- *Search tab*:
  - *Records tab*: The place to see the records that have been digitized and transcribed through the LDS Church's FamilySearch indexing project. thiss site is now one of the largest resources online that includes indexes of names from census, birth, marriage, death, and other records, as well as downloadable scans for many of the original documents. New records are constantly being added. Don't forget to also use the **"Browse by Location"** further down the page which will lead you to the actual databases available. The main search engine and the database search engines work differently – so try them both. (**Remember to sign in** to see more records.) **Hint**: you can leave the main name blank and enter the names of parents on the advanced search to find the possible children. **Also:** you can put source records into your source box and attach them to people in your family tree
  - *Genealogies tab*: Ancestral File & Pedigree Resource File
  - *Catalog tab*: Family History Library Catalog (various searches)
  - *Books tab*: This is a collection of digitized family histories available online through the BYU libraries, the Church & Family History libraries, as well as the Allen County, Houston Public & Mid-Continent Public libraries. The archive includes histories of families, county and local histories, how-to books on genealogy, genealogy magazines and periodicals, medieval books (including histories and pedigrees), and gazetteers. There is also a link for submitting family histories to add to this database.
- *Get Help (top right corner): Help Center:*
  - *Product Support*
  - *Research Assistance:* Ask a Specialist/General Research Help, ResearchWiki (or go to **wiki.familysearch.org**)
  - *Getting Started*
  - *Learning center*: So many great Research Courses online
- *About tab (bottom of page)*
- *Blog tab (bottom of page)*
- **labs.familysearch.org** (*Not currently connected to the main page*) This site also shows pieces from some of the projects that are currently being worked on by the Church family history department. It includes previews of new features they are working on and other interesting tools and information. (**England Jurisdictions 1851**, **Standard Finder**, **Community Trees**)

ancestry.com This site is one of the premier genealogical resources on the internet, and it requires a **paid** subscription to fully access. However it is **available for free at the Salt Lake, BYU & local LDS family history libraries**, and occasionally throughout the year for short "trial memberships". This site contains many excellent searchable databases, including war records, city, state, and **federal censuses** (1790 to 1940 US), British census records (1841 to 1901), some vital records databases, newspapers from some major cities, immigration records, early American databases, and much more (it is constantly expanding its collection of records – there are over 30,000 databases). You can also download the actual images of the original documents for many of these records. It also has a growing collection of other researchers' family trees, pictures, and histories. You can also search specific databases. A list of the databases is found in the **Ancestry Library Catalog**.

lib.byu.edu/sites/familyhistory **BYU Family History Library Resources**. You just have to check this site out to see all the possibilities. Our favorites include "**Records**", "**Education**", and "**Digital Archives**" (**links to individual state & country archives' resources**). Also the "**Research Outlines**" (to the right) can be very helpful in learning how to research in a specific area.

heritagequestonline.com (available for free through pioneer.utah.gov) This is a subscription site that is available for Utah residents for free through the pioneer.utah.gov website. Click on the "Genealogy" tab, then "Connect from Home", and then use "u2p84030" as the password for AF/Highland area. You can also use your personal library card number (instead of this access code). This site has digitized images of many US **federal censuses** from 1790-1940 censuses, together with searchable indexes for many of them (by head of household). In addition to the ability to search by name, these census records can be searched by place of birth, age, ethnicity and some other variables. This site also includes a database of assembled genealogies and local histories, the Periodical Source Index (PERSI), the Freedman's Bank database, and a database of Revolutionary War era Pension & Bounty-Land Warrant Applications.

rootsweb.com This free site has many searchable databases, including the RootsWeb Surname List, Social Security death index, email listservers, and some civil records databases (excerpts from British birth, marriage, and death indexes [see freeBMD.rootsweb.com under Vital Records section]), family trees, individual families genealogy websites, "world pedigree file", etc..

cyndislist.com This site is a functional index to genealogical resources on the internet. It is an organized, alphabetized, growing listing of over 310,000 family history related websites. If you can think of a subject having to do with an ancestor you are looking for (job, location, religion, historical time period, mode of transportation, war in which he/she served, etc.) you will have a good chance of finding a link to it here.

google.com This is one of the most powerful tools in online genealogical research. Try searching a surname + genealogy, a location, marriage records online + the name of the state, the name of a newspaper + archives, etc. The limit is your imagination. (Example search for "Bradford Pennsylvania genealogy": Gold mine result of **Tri-Counties Genealogy & History** for Bradford Co., PA, Chemung Co., NY & Tioga Co., PA). For other ideas on how to use Google, try **familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/The_Google_Genealogist**.

mocavo.com This is a great search engine specifically for family history searches. This site also allows you to upload a tree and will send you suggested research sites for you to check based on the information in your tree. There is a basic and upgrade subscription (which adds even more search features).

books.google.com This site allows you to search complete books that have been scanned and indexed by Google. These mostly include books that are in the public domain (the copyrights have run out). I have found that this is a particularly rich source to find information about ancestors from early colonial times.

maps.google.com This is a great source to use to see how close together certain towns are when analyzing possible research answers. (Hint: use the "Get Directions" to have it calculate and map how close the towns are.)

treeseek.com This site accesses your familysearch.org account to create 9 generation fancharts, 9 & 10 generation pedigree charts, and name clouds. It has also just created an app that will allow you to see how you are related to a friend (under "Tools" tab).

treelines.com This is a great new site for telling your families stories. The use of pictures & documents, captions, a timeline and the ability to upload a gedcom to make pedigree branches on the timeline, is a phenomenal way to tell your stories interactively. Request access to this site!

VITAL RECORDS INDEXES

freeBMD.rootsweb.com This is a free UK Birth/Marriage/Death database searchable online. This is a volunteer extraction effort that is still in progress. The records contain index information for the period 1837-1983. You can use the information in this index to order certificates online from the UK General Register Office (for a fee). As of 7 Oct 2011 the site contained 206,977,723 distinct records. (Hint: In marriage searches, if you click on the page number in the desired marriage you choose from your search results, you will see all individuals married listed on that page. And if, for example, you know from a census that your Fred Channell was married to a Mary in Suffolk County, and only one of the individuals listed on the marriage page results is named Mary, you will now have her maiden name – Mary Ann Chapman.)

archives.utah.gov/research/indexes/index.html This site contains digitized images of Utah death records from 1904-1958, among other state records that may be of interest. It is a free site, and the images can be downloaded onto your computer. The death records are also available on the familysearch.org website. (Or visit **archives.utah.gov/digital/81443.htm** to search just the death records and **archives.utah.gov/digital/81443.htm** for Utah Vital Records and Statistics Birth certificates, 1905-1910.)

abish.byui.edu/specialCollections/westernStates This is on the BYU Idaho family history website. It contains the links to the **Western States Marriage Records Index**, which contains records from Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, eastern Washington, eastern Oregon, western Colorado and selected counties in California. There are also links to personal histories, and indexes of some selected birth, immigration, and death records.

sos.state.il.us/departments/archives/databases.html This site is run by the state of Illinois, and has several online databases of Illinois vital (marriage and death) & other records from the 1700s to the 1900s. This site is extremely picky on spelling, so try all possible spellings. This site is an interesting example of what the future could hold for other states who might be interested in making their vital records more available online.

sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/birthdeath/ Another example – Missouri

in.gov/library/databases.htm Includes Indiana marriage database.

ukcc.uky.edu/vitalrec Kentucky – limited Marriage & Death databases

States like Virginia are working on it: **lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/opac/dripabout.htm#project**

LOCALITY AND LOOKUPS

usgenweb.com This is the homepage for a national volunteer effort where each county has a family history related website, with links and descriptions of the various local family history resources. These individual sites can vary quite a bit from one to another, but many contain valuable information such as transcriptions of local cemeteries, local vital records, census records, etc. Some of these sites offer volunteer "look up" services to check for local records.

worldgenweb.org This is the world equivalent of US Genweb (see above). There are specific websites for various countries, some of these sites are more helpful than others.

GRAVES AND CEMETERIES

findagrave.com This is a rapidly growing site. "Find A Grave is a resource for finding the final resting place of family, friends, and 'famous' individuals. With millions of names and photos, it is an invaluable tool for the genealogist and family history buff. Find A Grave memorials can contain rich content including photos,

biographies and dates. Visitors can leave 'virtual flowers' on the memorials they visit, completing the online cemetery experience. Find A Grave's primary purpose is a graves registration website." You can also add information on graves not yet in the database.

history.utah.gov/research_and_collections/cemeteries/index.html Utah Cemetery and Burial Database

namesinstone.com Name in Stone Cemetery Maps. This site has a searchable database that provides information about the deceased as well as a map to locate the actual headstone. (Both the American Fork City Cemetery and the Highland City Cemetery are cemeteries that have been mapped.)

gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1 United States Department of Veterans Affairs Gravesite Locator

billiongraves.com Billion Graves. This is another popular site where individuals are adding photos of headstones and submitting transcriptions of cemeteries.

OTHER IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SITES

ellisisland.org This free site contains immigration records for people who came through Ellis Island from 1892 until the mid 1920s. You can search a computerized database, and then download a digital copy of the actual ship manifests that the records were extracted from. You can also see photographs of many of the ships these records came from. The Church had a large role in extracting these names and helping to create the computerized database.

castlegarden.org Castle Garden was the precursor to Ellis Island as the port of entry for immigrants who went through New York City. This site contains a free, searchable database of 10 million of the immigrants who went through Castle Garden between 1830 and 1892 (when Ellis Island opened, see the previous link). You can also perform more advanced searches of this database (and some others) for free using the stevemorse.org website listed below.

stevemorse.org This site has links that will allow you to perform **more powerful searches** of a number of online databases at other sites (some available for free some for a fee). Databases include Ancestry.com, Ellis Island, Castle Garden, Baltimore, Boston, Galveston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco ship arrivals; New York City birth, death, bride, groom, and naturalization indexes; the SSDI and others.   Incredible for New York City research!

immigrantships.net The immigrant ships transcribers guild. This site offers online searchable transcripts from over 5000 ships. This site is run by a group of volunteers who transcribe ship manifests from microfilmed records.

LAND RECORDS

glorecords.blm.gov This website is run by the Bureau of Land Management, and contains a searchable database of land patents. These document the sale of land from the federal government to private individuals (e.g. homesteaders, etc.). Digitized images of these land patents are also available for many states. This site is a work in progress, so you may find some people in the database, where the images are not yet available.

OTHER MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT RECORDS SITES

nara.gov The United States National Archives. What kinds of genealogically useful records are found in the National Archives? The kind that documented people's interactions with the federal government: censuses, passenger arrival records/immigration, naturalization records, land records, & military records, as well as records connected to certain groups, namely Native Americans, African Americans, Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, and Hispanic Americans. There are search engines connected to this page include **"Online Public Access**", "**Archival Research Catalog**", and "**Access to Archival Databases**". To see what is available through ancestry.com, fold3.com (formerly footnote.com) & other sites, see **Microfilm Publications and Original Records Digitized by Our Digitization Partners** or **archives.gov/digitization/partnerships.html**.

dar.org/library Daughters of the American Revolution resources

fold3.com (formerly footnote.com) This is another **paid** subscription site. The Footnote.com collections feature documents relating to the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, WWI, WWII, U.S. Presidents, historical newspapers and naturalization documents. Many of the documents available have come from a partnership with the National Archives, and the LDS church FamilySearch indexing project.   This site can be accessed for free at the Salt Lake Family History Library and at the BYU Library.

www.itd.nps.gov/cwss (**This site may be down now, since I can't find a new link.**) The "Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System" is a computerized database containing very basic facts about servicemen who served on both sides during the Civil War. The initial focus of the CWSS is the *Names Index Project*, a project to enter names and other basic information from 5.4 million soldier records in the National Archives. The facts about the soldiers are being entered from records that are indexed to many millions of other documents about Union and Confederate Civil War soldiers maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration.

LDS PIONEER SITES

lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysearch/1,15773,3966-1,00.html This is the **Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel** database on the Church's website. It is the most complete listing of individuals and companies in which Mormon pioneer emigrants traveled west to Utah from 1847 through 1868. However, it is still an incomplete listing, as rosters have not been found for all pioneer companies. There is a link on this site to submit corrections if you find any errors or missing details in this database. You can either search this site for a specific person or you can browse the list of companies alphabetically or chronologically. Even if your particular ancestor did not write a journal of their experiences crossing the plains, this site allows you to find other firsthand accounts about what your ancestor's company experienced during their journey.

lib.byu.edu/mormonmigration/index.php Mormon Migration passenger lists

overlandtrails.lib.byu.edu/search.html Overland Diaries & Letters, 1846-1869

user.xmission.com/~nelsonb/pioneer.htm
This site contains a searchable database of Mormon Pioneers. Not every pioneer is referenced here, but it does give a short list of references for where you can find many pioneers mentioned (i.e. ship manifests, pioneer journals, and other references).

www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/ Journals, Diaries, Biographies, Autobiographies and Letters of Some Early Mormons and Others Who Knew Joseph Smith, Jr. and/or His Contemporaries.

mormonhistory.org/content/view/412/67/lang,en/ British Latter-day Saint history resources

OTHER BRITISH SITES

findmypast.co.uk This is a **paid** subscription site that specializes in British research. It offers both full subscriptions and a **"pay-as-you-go"** plan where you can buy short blocks of access depending on your need. It has access to the 1841-1911 UK censuses, the BMD index, and many parish records.

nationalarchives.gov.uk National Archives of the United Kingdom (some **fees**).

bbc.co.uk/familyhistory/ The BBC (thanks to the "Who Do You Think You Are?" craze) has put a variety of family history resources on their website.

ww1.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/welcome.aspx Scotlands People Connecting Generations (**fees** involved) Includes Statutory Registers (births, marriages, deaths), old parish registers, Catholic registers, censuses 1841-1911, and other searches involving wills & testaments and coats of arms.

SCANDINAVIAN SITES

genline.com This **paid** subscription site is for doing **Swedish** genealogy, and it includes searchable databases with links to digitized records from the 16th-20th century. These records consist of birth/baptismal, confirmation, marriage, death/burial, church ledgers and household examination rolls (in Swedish of course). This site has a two-week free trial, and can also be accessed for free in the family history center.

riksarkivet.se/default.aspx?id=2138 The National Archives and the regional state archives of Sweden

dis.se/en.html DIS society. Swedish research.

emiarch.dk/home.php3 Danish Emigration Archives

sa.dk/content/us/ Danish State Archives

sa.dk/ao/English/default.aspx Danish Parish Registers and Population Censuses

arkivverket.no/eng/content/view/full/2 National Archives of Norway

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moveable_feast Moveable Feast Holy Days (Wikipedia)

SOCIAL GROUPS AND RELATIVE FINDER (the future of genealogy)

Facebook.com (many FamilySearch groups such as: **New Jersey Genealogy Research Community**)

genealogywise.com The genealogy social network. There are many subgroups based on research interests (surnames, locations, etc.) This is aimed at connected good genealogical researchers and making it easier for them to work together.

(familysearch.org – under the Learn tab → Forums → Community → Social Groups)

roots.cs.byu.edu/devdigroots BYU Relative Finder. This site can be used to find how you are related to various groups of famous people. It is also possible to create a group and have it calculate relationships within

the group. It is a work in progress. The goal is to use new.familysearch.org to find the relationships. In the past, it has accessed LDS Ancestral File to calculate relationships. There is also a **facebook app**.

<u>FAMILY HISTORY ON TV</u> (inspiring stories)

Who Do You Think You Are **nbc.com/who-do-you-think-you-are** - You can see past episodes at this site and find some on youtube.com.

Faces of America **pbs.org/wnet/facesofamerica**

The Generations Project **byutv.org/thegenerationsproject/Episodes** (done by BYU tv)

On **youtube.com** you can also watch episodes of:

- African American Lives
- Who Do You Think You Are (BBC version, which had 7 series, several episodes each; there are also Canadian, Australian, & Irish series)

*On the youtube shows, remember to pick the ones that are in parts (1/6 or 1/3). If it isn't split into parts, it's not the whole show.

Ancestors **byutv.org/show/54f848ee-6d19-4502-9981-070cdbd1f1bf** (also done by BYU tv). This focuses more on records than family history stories.