Ancestry Library Edition

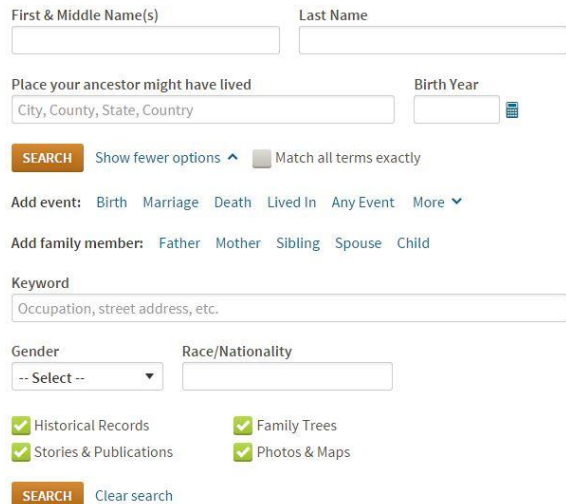**ancestry™** Ancestry is a great place to start your genealogical research. It is home to about 10,000 datasets containing billions of names and millions of records, updated weekly. Records include US census data through 1940; UK and Canadian census data; birth, marriage, and death records; immigration and travel records; military records; and much more. The amount of information available can be overwhelming. This guide offers search tips and guidance on limiting search results for a more manageable set of records. Please note that you must be in the Library to access Ancestry.

To get started, visit our website at elmwoodparklibrary.org. Hover over the Research/Learning tab and click on Genealogy & History. Click on the link to Ancestry.com to access the database. Before beginning your search, think about exactly what you are looking for. It may be easier to begin by navigating to a specific collection rather than searching. For example, if you are looking for records from the 1920 US Census, you can click straight through to that dataset using the links at the bottom of the homepage. If you are looking only for immigration records, start by clicking on the search tab at the top of the page and click on Immigration & Travel. For a good rundown of what is available, click on the Search tab and click on All Categories. Browse the Special Collections column on the right. Click on Card Catalog to see even more special collections.

If you are looking for any record regarding a specific person, searching is the best way to start. Click on "Show more options" next to the search button to get the full search menu. Be as specific as you can to get the best results. However, you may want to leave the "Match all terms exactly" box unchecked at the start. It is easy to limit results to more exact matches later. Use the asterisk as a wildcard in searches (**Rob*** will return results for Rob, Robert, Roberto, Roberta, etc.) Use a ? to replace a single character **?atherine** will return results for Catherine or Katherine. You can enter two last names in the last name field.

Let's try a search. You are looking for Emelie T. Clancy. She was born in France and immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s. Enter her first and last name. Click on Birth to add France as the birth location and click on Death to add United States as the death location. Click on search. You should have more than 500,000 results, broken down by category. Before trying to comb through these, use the search filters to narrow results.

Three of the four search fields used are at their most broad setting. The more exact these filters are, the more specific the results will become. As you drag the filters along, a dialog box will indicate what is filtered out. In this case, we are 100% sure about the first and last

name, so drag those filters to the most exact setting. Click update. This drastically narrows the amount of results. Click on the 1930 United States Federal Census result. Click on the image to see the actual record. You can either print the document, save it to a flash drive or save it to your Discoveries page (which you can access from home.) Under the save menu, click on send image home to save it to your Discoveries page. If you choose to print the document, you can either print the entire image or zoom in and only print the displayed portion of the image.

Let's try another type of search. Return to the Ancestry homepage. Click on the Search tab and click on Card Catalog. On the left side of the page under Filter By Collection, click on Schools, Directories & Church Histories. Next, click on U.S. School Yearbooks, 1880-2012. Let's see what we can find about Roger Ebert. We know that he lived in Illinois and was born in 1942. Enter that information along with his first and last name and click on search. We have thousands of results.

Again, the search filters are set to their most broad settings. We are fairly confident in our information, so update the filters to match the image at the right. Birth year is set to +/- 1 year; first name is set to exact, sounds like and similar; last name and lived in: are set to exact. Click on Update for a more manageable set of results. Click on the view image icon for the first result. This is a page from the 1963 Illio yearbook.

This example searched one of the many datasets available in the card catalog. When you click on the Search tab, you can also browse data by state or by country. If it is possible to start by narrowing your search to a particular collection, doing so can save you time in your search. A note on setting filters: if a document (such as an immigration form) was filled out inaccurately (misspellings, etc.) using the most exact filter settings may bypass relevant information. Do not assume that names were spelled consistently on all documents.

Questions? Contact Adult Services at askref@elmwoodparklibrary.org or 708.395.1217.