Heritage Quest Online
June 12, 2018

Heritage Quest offers an essential collection of genealogical & historical sources, United States federal censuses, access to print published family histories and wide variety of unique research materials, bank records, immigration and military records, bank records and more. Now that Heritage Quest is part of the Ancestry.com family of databases, additional content has been added. This is especially beneficial to genealogists since Heritage Quest offers remote access from home. If your hometown or community library system offers Heritage Quest as part of their genealogical database offerings, this will be an added benefit tool for research from home.

The new Heritage Quest Online offers new capabilities and benefits to patrons:

1. The intuitive interface provides a fresh user experience that will be familiar to Ancestry.com users.
2. The U.S. Federal Census 1790-1940 – a highly valued resource that now includes complete every-name indexes and unique interactive maps.
3. Census data exceeding 700 million records that can now be discovered using Exact Match, Phonetic, Variant, Soundex, Wildcard and Keyword Searches.
4. Searching full-text of the expanded collection of more than 40,000 family and local history books – is now enhanced with thumbnail images and hit highlighting.
5. A new Image Viewer offers basic and advanced capabilities without any plug-in, making it easy to share images with family and friends.
6. Image resolution that is significantly improved with the addition of greyscale and color.

New Features

Genealogical and historical sources for more than 60 countries, with coverage dating back as early as the 1700s.

1. Birth, Baptism, Marriage, Death and Census Records includes more than one billion names from the U.S., Canada, Europe, Mexico, Central and South America, Caribbean, Africa and Asia

2. Cemetery Indexes for the U.S., Canada, U.K. and Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Mexico, Germany, Italy, Brazil and Global Burials at Sea
3. Military Records include the U.S. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files 1800-1900 (NARA M804)**, U.S.** Records of Confederate Prisoners of War 1861-1865, and the U.S. Remarried Widows Index to Pension Applications 1887-1942. Other military records include Colombia Military Records 1809-1958, Traunstein Bavaria Military Records, 1830-1918, Louisiana War of 1812 Pension Lists, Netherlands Army Service Records 1807-1929, U.S. Naval Enlistment Rendezvous 1855-1891, and more.
4. Social Security Death Index (SSDI) containing over 94 million records of deceased persons with social security numbers whose deaths were reported to the Social Security Administration
5. U.S. Public Records Volumes 1-2, contains **a** compilation of 800 million various public records spanning all 50 U.S. states from 1950 to 1993
6. Map and Photo Collection with more than 7 million names identified and 600,000 images from the Library of Congress Photo Collection 1840-2000

Federal Census Content

Among the many changes to Heritage Quest Online, you will find that all publicly available U.S. Federal Census records (1790-1940) are now fully searchable in Heritage Quest Online and even more census research options:

1. 1850 & 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules
2. 1890 Veterans Schedule
3. Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880
4. U.S. Enumeration District Maps and Descriptions, 1940
5. U.S. Federal Census - 1880 Schedules of Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes
6. U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules, 1850-1885
7. U.S. Special Census on Deaf Family Marriages and Hearing Relatives, 1888-1895
8. U.S. Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940

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Heritage Quest Genealogical Research Database
Core Collection Content

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Heritage Quest® Online is a comprehensive treasury of American genealogical sources—rich in unique <u>primary sources</u>, local and family histories, and finding aids. Records availability dates back to the 1700s. Researchers will find content pertaining to the United States, British Isles, and throughout Europe. Regardless of your ethnic background, or if your ancestors were in urban areas or rural areas, or occupational status as in farmer or factory worker for example, there should be something for everyone.

The collection consists of five core data sets:

1. **U.S. Federal Censuses** feature the original images of every extant federal census in the United States, from 1790 through 1940, slave, veteran, and non-population schedules, and more related content. NOTE: Please see additional information below concerning the 1860 Slave Schedules. The collection also includes

2. **Genealogy and local history books** provide more than 7 million digitized page images from over 28,000 family histories, local histories, and other books.

3. **Revolutionary War records** provides access to the complete NARA Series M804 collection - *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files,* a collection of an estimated 83,000 application files from officers and enlisted men who served in the Revolutionary War in all branches of the American military: army, navy, and marines.

4. **Freedman's Bank Records**, with more than 480,000 names of bank applicants, their dependents, and heirs from 1865–1874, offers valuable data that can provide important clues to tracing African American ancestors and researching the Reconstruction Era.

Links to the following content are also available to the following collections:

- **U.S. Congressional Serial Set** records the memorials, petitions, private relief actions made to the U.S. Congress back to 1789, with more than 480,000 pages of information.

Slave Schedules Content

Searching slave schedules can be challenging. For some, it can be a subject that many initially avoid. While the historical context can be disturbing, be advised that these schedules potentially contain significant amounts of useful genealogical and historical information. For example, there are approximately 3.9 million individuals noted on the 1860 U.S. Census Slave Schedule. That is about 40% of the population of the southern states at the time.

You may search the Slave Schedules by Owner Name and/or Location, but using the Browsing feature can provide broader insight into the areas where your ancestors may have been living. What was the makeup of other homes, farms, or plantations surrounding the location where your ancestor was living (i.e., small family homes/farms with only a few slaves and servants vs. large plantations with large numbers of slaves and servants)?

Release of the 1950 Census

We are increasingly getting questions regarding the availability of the 1950 census. The 1950 census is still under the privacy guidelines of the "72-Year Rule". This rule is governed by Public Law 95-416, enacted by Congress in October 1978 and mandates that all federal census returns are kept confidential until 72 years after the census to which they pertain. By virtue of this directive, the 1950 census will not be released until April of 2022. For more information on this law, please visit the following links:

US Census Bureau website concerning this legislation:
https://www.census.gov/history/www/reference/legislation/legislation_1974_-_1983.html

Download the actual law: https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/nara_legislation.pdf

FAQ link concerning how to obtain restricted census records:
https://www.census.gov/history/www/faqs/genealogy_faqs/how_do_i_request_census_records_that_are_not_available_from_the_national_archives.html

These restrictions are in place to protect the right of privacy of living individuals, access to population schedules is restricted for seventy-two years after the census is taken. Unless an exception is granted, these records are not available to researchers during that time. CAUTION: If you wish to examine any post-1940 census returns, it is wise to avoid listing genealogical research as your reason. If you feel your situation warrants an exception, you must contact the following office: Personal Service Branch, Bureau of the Census, P.O. Box 1545, Jeffersonville, IN 47131.

Individuals may request their own records (before they are publicly available) via the Census Bureau's Age Search Service by visiting the following link **https://www.census.gov/topics/population/genealogy/agesearch.html** for guidelines and procedures. This service provides individual information from censuses that are still protected by the privacy statutes, but only to the named person, his or her heirs, or legal representatives. There is a Congressionally-mandated fee for this service. Individuals interested in requesting a search of their personal census records must complete a form BC-600. The downloadable version is available at the following link **http://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2013/demo/BC-600.pdf**.   The Spanish version is available at the following link **http://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2013/demo/BC-600sp.pdf**. Solicitud Para Busqueda De Registros Censales).

If your reason for an exemption is granted, this agency will provide, for a fee, official transcripts of census records from 1950 to 2000. Access is restricted to whomever the information is about, their authorized representatives, or, in the case of deceased persons, their heirs or administrators. You must first write to the agency and request **FORM BC-600.**

The instructions and requirements are included with the form itself. No personal handwritten correspondence will be accepted. **The decisions on granting exemptions are based on each individual case. The guidelines for access are very stringent. One final piece of advice is never use genealogy as the reason for this type of request.**

Heritage Quest Online – Quick Research Tips

1. To find missing ancestors in the census—Try searching using just middle or nicknames for the given names. You can also try searching without a given name and then filtering your results by location, gender and age. Occasionally, census takers only recorded initials in place of the given name. Using only a first initial will bring up these records.
2. To view state maps—Click on the MAPS button near the top of the home page to access to the Map Guide to U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920, which shows county outline maps at ten-year intervals. The old county boundaries are superimposed over the modern

lines. These maps will help you find your ancestors in the correct county when doing record searches.

3. To search books better—Use wildcards to cover all possible alternative forms of names. Put * or ? in the middle or end of names where you expect variations. Example—typing Wil* Sm?th will return results for William, Will, Willard, Smith, Smyth, etc.
4. To expand your search—Don't forget to check other databases in HeritageQuestOnline.
   a. Freedman's Bank contains records from African American depositors after the Civil War
   b. Revolutionary War Pension Applications Collection provides records from family Bibles, personal letters, battle accounts, and more
   c. U.S. Serial Set has selected memorials, petitions and private relief actions of the U.S. Congress
   d. To get more tips—Click the RESEARCH AIDS button near the top of the home page.

PERSI Access Update

For many years, PERSI was one of the most heavily used components of the Heritage Quest. In 2016, Ancestry.com absorbed Heritage Quest into its family of genealogical databases. When the time came for licensing renewals with ProQuest which works in conjunction with Ancestry, PERSI was discontinued due non-renewal of licensing.

Access is now available through subscription to the Find My Past database which serves as the sole subscription distributor to consumers and libraries. PERSI is compiled and maintained by the Genealogy Center at Allen County Library in Fort Wayne. Patrons may visit the following link on Find My Past to obtain the most current profile at https://www.findmypast.com/persi. Patrons may contact the Genealogy Center of the Allen County Library with content questions at http://www.genealogycenter.org/Contact.aspx.

For those unfamiliar with the importance of PERSI, it serves as a comprehensive index of most genealogical and family-history oriented periodicals. PERSI enables researchers to locate key information about people and places. It contains over 2.5 million entries from thousands of historical, genealogical and ethnic publications, making it an invaluable, comprehensive family history resource. Researchers may access articles, photos, and other materials that may be difficult to locate using traditional search methods. This can help to build the historical context around personal research, and the world that our ancestors lived in. This information often provides leads for follow-up investigation.

Most articles are from periodicals covering the United States and Canada, but also include thousands of genealogy and local history entries (in both English and French) from Britain, Ireland and Australia. Articles fall under twenty-two different subject headings, or record types. These include biography, cemeteries, census records, church records, court records, deeds, institutions, land records, maps, military records, naturalization records, obituaries, passenger lists, probate records, school records, tax records, vital records, voter records, and wills. Articles covering three or fewer specific families are arranged by surname.

PERSI is updated annually. The most common type of search is by surname. Once you type search for the surname, you can also narrow the search by locality. Each citation provides the following information:

1. Name of periodical
2. Title of article
3. Author of article
4. Volume number and page number
5. List of libraries that have the periodical in their collection

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Additional Links for Tutorials

The links listed below will provide Youtube presentations and other related informational links to supplement the information contained in this study guide.

ProQuest – Heritage Quest Online – Click on each icon at top of page beginning with "About"
https://proquest.libguides.com/hqo/about

Compiled by Bryan L. Mulcahy, Reference Librarian, Fort Myers Regional Library, 6/12/2018.