Learning Objectives:
- Familiarity with genealogy resources available through Mesa County Libraries.
- Working knowledge of key datasets in Ancestry and Heritage Quest: census, vital records, military, immigration, and directories.
- Ability to conduct census search using basic and advanced search features.
- Ability to trace multiple generations using Ancestry and Heritage Quest.

What databases does the Library offer patrons?
- Ancestry.com: available only in the library through the library website.
- Heritage Quest Online: available through the library website from anywhere.

Accessing the library’s genealogy resources (subject guide)
- In an internet browser, go to the library website: mesacountylibraries.org
- Hover over eResources tab at top.
- Click on Subject Guides.
- Click on Genealogy. Or you could go directly to this page by entering guides.mesacountylibraries.org/genealogy in the address bar.

This guide contains genealogical resources specifically selected by Mesa County Libraries staff. It includes books, other websites, tools, and helpful tips, as well as information about local and regional history.

- From the General Resources tab on the Library’s genealogy subject guide, Library’s databases (right-hand side of page).
- Select Ancestry Library Edition (in-library only) or Heritage Quest. Provided you are connected to the library’s wi-fi network, you may use your laptop or other device to access Ancestry. If you are using Heritage Quest from home, you will be prompted for your library card number.

Accessing Ancestry Library Edition or Heritage Quest Online from library website
- Hover over on eResources.
- Click on eResources A-Z.
- Scroll through the list or jump to Ancestry Library Edition or Heritage Quest.
Ancestry: home page

Simple search. Click on Show more options for advanced search.

This area highlights new features or tools.

You can also limit your search to these datasets by clicking on them.

Ancestry: datasets

Within each category of data listed (e.g., military), there are multiple subcategories. Within a subcategory, you may find multiple years. Ancestry has dozens of datasets. Some of the more useful ones that apply to most researchers are:

- Census – federal and state. Federal censuses are taken every 10 years, beginning in 1790. A federal census is only available to the public 70 years after the census was taken. State censuses can be useful because they are taken in non-federal census years, so you can find somebody who was born or arrived mid-decade.

  Before 1850, the census only recorded the name of the head of household and a count of household members by age group, gender, and status. From 1850 on, the census lists every member of the household and, generally, age at the time, place
of birth, and birthplace of parents. In some years, other information such as occupation, marriage date, immigration date, and property value is recorded.

- **Birth, Marriage & Death Records** – As a group, these record life events and are called “vital records.” Information availability is dependent on location and year.
  
  **Birth** – includes baptism and christening records. Birth records will sometimes include the mother’s maiden name which can be useful.
  
  **Marriage** – includes marriage and divorce records. Some records include the bride’s maiden name as well as the names of the brides’ and grooms’ parents.
  
  **Death** – records include death certificates, Social Security death notices, cemetery information, and obituaries.

- **Immigration & Travel** – includes ship and airplane manifests, naturalization applications, and border crossings.

- **Military** – includes draft registration cards and enlistment and service records. Besides helping flesh out family history, these can be useful to establish the hometown of a relative for a given year or establish the latest possible date that an immigrant arrived in the U.S.

- **City Directories** – City directories can be useful sources of information. In their heyday, they often contained (in addition to addresses) occupations and employers. Since they are in alphabetical order by last name, you can sometimes easily find other potential family members.

- To see all of the record collections available through Ancestry, click on Card Catalog at bottom left of Quick Links box. This list is searchable, so when you click on a particular collection, Ancestry will limit your search to that collection. This can be a big timesaver if you have already done preliminary research and determined which collections are likely to have the information you need.

**Ancestry: basic search options**
The basic search (either on the home page, by clicking on New search, or clicking on the Search tab from anywhere in the website) has the following fields:

- First and middle name.
- Last name.
- Place your relative might have lived – If you enter the city, Ancestry will usually show you a set of choices for county and state. If you enter the county, Ancestry will usually show you a set of choices for state.
- Birth year.
Enter as much information as you have. Ancestry will show you results with the best matches first, so it is usually better to put in a best guess than to leave a field blank. If your guess is wrong, Ancestry will still find your record, but it may be lower on the list of results. If you leave fields blank, you will get more results to wade through than if you entered the information. You have to enter something in at least one of the search fields to get any results.

**Ancestry: Exact vs sound-alike**

When you enter a name in the First & Middle Name field or the Last Name field, a check-box titled Exact appears below the name field. If you want records with the first or last name spelled exactly as you specify, click on Exact. Leave it unchecked if you are willing to accept spellings like Isenhower or Eisenhauer for Eisenhower. For most years, the census was collected orally and due to human error, misspellings are common, so Exact may be too narrow a search, especially if you are just starting your research.

**Ancestry: advanced search options**

If you have additional information about a relative or you want to narrow down a list of individuals with the same name and similar birth dates, you may want to use advanced search options:

- **Event** – When you click on the event name (e.g., marriage), Ancestry opens up a window to enter location and year.
- **Family member** – When you click on the relationship (e.g., spouse), Ancestry opens a window for first and/or last name.
- **Keyword** – perhaps an occupation or employer.
- **Gender.**
- **Race and Nationality.**
This can be useful, for example, when a relative with a common last name has a sibling with an unusual first name or when a relative with a common name has a life event in a small town or unusual location. As always, Ancestry’s search results include all records that match in some way with your search terms, and it lists the closest matches first.

**Ancestry: search results**

These results are based on the broadest search – all categories and exact name matches are NOT required. You can:

1. Click on a category along the left or click on the categories tab at the top right to narrow the results by type of data.

2. View a summary of a record by hovering over the name of the record (e.g., 1940 United States Federal Census). The summary will give you options to view the image of the original document or see more information from the record.

3. View the image of the original document by clicking on View Image for any record.

4. Require the name match to be more or less exact by using the slider on the left under Search Filters. Click Update to re-run the search with the changed filters.

5. Edit your search. You may want to broaden your search if you got few or no results or narrow your search if you got too many results.
6. Start a completely new search. **Ancestry: record summary**

If you hover over a record in your search results, a pop-up window with a record summary appears. This is a transcription of the information from the original record.

Click on the image icon to view the image of the original document.

Click here to see additional fields transcribed from the record.

Use the slider to view the rest of the summary.

**Ancestry: full record view**

If you click on a record in your search results or click on See More in the pop-up window that appears when you hover over a record, you will get transcription of the full record.

There are 2 nice features in full record view. You can send a downloadable copy of the image to your email (click on the Send document button). Also, for some forms, you can also see a blank form of the document (Click on View blank form). This comes in handy because some forms have many columns and some of the images are blurry and hard to read, so the column headings can be difficult to read or keep track of.

To return to the results list, click on All Results at the top left.
Ancestry: more family members

Beginning in 1850, the census lists all of the members in a household. In the summary view and the full record view, you can click on a name to see information for that household member. Ancestry will also show you Suggested Records for that person in the bottom right of the window. These may be additional records, sometimes for different census years, some from different sources, that may be the same individual.

Tracing a family following the male line through the census is relatively straightforward. If you search for Dwight Eisenhower, you find that he was born around 1892. You could then look for a census record for him when he was a child – in either 1900 or 1910. In 1900, there is a record for his family. You verify that the relationship between the head of household and Dwight was father-son and can feel relatively confident that Dwight’s father’s name was David. David Eisenhower was born around 1864, and his birthplace is Pennsylvania. Now you can search Ancestry for a David Eisenhower born around 1864 living in Pennsylvania. Again, you would look in the 1870 or 1880 census to try to locate his parents.

Ancestry: image view

When you choose View Image or click on the image icon, you view an image of the original document. At the top right corner, Ancestry offers options. With Tools, you can change the view. Of the available options, reverse colors is the most helpful. This will show the image as a negative. What was white is now black, and what was black is now white. Sometimes you can read difficult images more easily in this mode. The Save button gives you two options: you can either send the image by email or you can download the image onto the computer.
In image mode, you can page forward and backwards within the same source. For census information, this will probably be a neighborhood or district within a town. For sources like city directories, you will be able to page through the entire directory. Return to where you were in Ancestry by clicking on the small left-pointing arrow at the top left of the screen.

**Ancestry: other datasets**

Although the examples so far have focused on federal census data, the same procedures for searching and viewing apply to other datasets.

**Practice 1:** Using Ancestry, identify as many male precedents (father, grandfather, great-grandfather, etc.) as you can for Diane Messinger, who currently lives in Arlington, Virginia and has an older sister named Claire. She was born before 1940. For each relative, note the relative’s name and year of birth.

**Practice 2:** Using Ancestry, find the following information for Shoji Kaga, born in 1927:
- Enlistment date into US Army.
- College(s) attended.
- Recent address.
- The approximate year of birth of his oldest brother.
- Wife’s maiden name.

**Heritage Quest Online: home page**
Heritage Quest Online is the genealogy database you can access through the Mesa County Libraries website from any location. If you are accessing the database from outside the library, you will be prompted for your library card number.

Heritage Quest Online has 4 main sources – federal census, books and directories, Revolutionary War Era (soldiers with pensions and land grant applications related to the war), and Freedmans Bank (a bank established in 1865 for freed slaves and African-American freedmen). Books and directories include city directories, which can be an important source of information.

In 2015, Heritage Quest released a major upgrade to their database by teaming up with Ancestry.com, which now provides the search capability for Heritage Quest. As a result, Heritage Quest looks and functions very much like Ancestry.

**Heritage Quest Online: search census**

Three ways to start searching:
1. Search at top of page – click on Census Search photo or on “search now” link below photo.
2. Begin Searching button (green button near middle of page).
3. Search Census (click on photo at bottom left or on “search now” link below photo).

The search screen looks very similar to the advanced search screen in Ancestry.

You can also choose to search only a particular data collection (for example, the 1930 Federal Census) by clicking on the name of the collection at the bottom of the search screen. Alternatively, you could click on the year you want from the Heritage Quest home page.
**Heritage Quest Online: census results**

If you chose to search the entire census collection (i.e., you did not specify a particular census year), you will get a list of all censuses in which Heritage Quest found a match for your search. The results are organized from oldest to most recent. To look at the records for a particular census year (for example, 1920), click on the link for that year. To look at all the records for all census years, click on Records at the top right.

Once you select a specific census year (or if you selected a particular census year at the start of your search), Heritage Quest will display results for each matching record, with the best matches first.

As with Ancestry, you can click on View Record on the left to view a full transcript of the record. You can click on the icon in the View Image column to view the image. If you simply hover over View Record, a pop-up window with a transcript of the record appears. That window gives you the opportunity to View Record to see the full transcript or you can click on the image to view the image.

In either the pop-up window or the Record view, you can click on any of the household members listed to view their information. For example, if your search was for a child, you can click on the father's name to obtain his information (including birth date and birthplace).

**Heritage Quest Online: search city directories**

Heritage Quest includes city directories published between 1821 and 1989 within the broad category of Books and Directories, which Heritage Quest sometimes labels as simply books. Unlike Ancestry, searches in Heritage Quest are searches within a particular category. If you are in the census collection, you will not be able to find results in the books and directories collection. To determine which collection you are searching, look at the top of the search page.

To start a city directories search:
- From any location in the database, Click Search at top left of page, then click on Search Books and Directories photo or on “search now” link below photo.
From the Heritage Quest homepage, click Search Books (click on photo at bottom left or on “search now” link below photo).

This part of the Heritage Quest website contains printed family and location histories as well as city directories. Click on city directories at the top to start searching city directories.

As of this writing, city directories are a relatively new addition to the Heritage Quest database. As a result, they are highlighted as added new content at the top of the Heritage Quest home page. This link will take you directly to a search of city directories.

The search screen looks somewhat similar to the census search. There is no event option and the only searchable family member is spouse.

Practice 3: Using Heritage Quest, find the name and birth year of Dwight Eisenhower’s father and grandfather.

Genealogical Records searchable from library website

Obituary records for Western Colorado are available on the library’s website:
- [www.mesacountylibraries.org](http://www.mesacountylibraries.org)
- Books and Media
- Catalog
- Enter individual’s name in search box. No particularly format is required. For example, you could enter Butler, Helen or Helen Butler.
Change search parameter from “in Mesa County Libraries” to “in Genealogy Records.”

The search results will give you the date and page number an obituary appeared in The Daily Sentinel for the individual. There may be more than one listing for an individual – in some cases, the obituary is simply repeated; in other cases the later obituaries may contain additional or corrected information. For some individuals, the website will provide the full text of the obituary, often with the photograph that appeared in the newspaper. If you only have a date and a page reference, the library has microfilm copies for the newspaper beginning in 1893. These are available on the ground floor of the Central library. You can save, send, or print the information you find using the microfilm reader software.

Practice 4: Using the genealogy records available through the library catalog search, find the obituary for Leo Thomas Prinster.

Tips for tracing relatives and compiling a family history

- Gather as much information as you can from your family. Even a minor recollection can be helpful to narrow or verify a search.

- If you are starting from scratch, it is usually best to start with your closest relative (a parent or grandparent).

- Since federal census information is only available 70 years after its collection, you will find the most information about people born before the most recent available census (at the present time, that’s 1940).

- Be flexible with your searches, broaden or narrow the search depending on the number of results you get. Be aware that family lore may not always be accurate. The family may, for example, be from Texas by way of Missouri. In addition, clerical errors, transcription errors, and just plain bad handwriting can create unexpected spelling changes.

- Double-check to make sure you have found the correct person. Use multiple sources to verify names, places, birthdates, etc. Don’t assume that what appears to be a match is really a match.

- Keep copious notes about the information you find in any given record including, the name of the individual, names of relatives, dates, and locations. Make sure to note the source of the information and, if at all unusual, the search terms you used to find the information. By doing so, you avoid ‘reinventing the wheel’ – looking for and find the same information over and over again.

- Use a consistent system to organize your information. Ancestry has a set of useful tools under the Charts and Forms tab.
The Heritage Quest website provides many useful research tips under the heading Research on the home page. Note, however, that some of the databases the tips refer to are only available through Ancestry. Nevertheless, the tips are a good starting point for researchers. Some can be useful if you have reached a dead-end or need help with a particular category of information (e.g., immigration).

Answers for Practice Questions

1) Diane Messinger:

Father Edwin Messinger (1907)
Grandfather Jacob Messinger (1871)
Great-grandfather George Messinger (1841)

2) Shoji Kaga

Enlisted March 1946
Attended Portland State University and University of Portland
Lived at 1800 Township Circle, Raleigh, NC
Oldest brother born in 1922
Wife’s maiden name Chin

3) Dwight Eisenhower

Father David Eisenhower, 1863
Grandfather Jacob Eisenhower, 1828

4) Leo Thomas Prinster

From Grand Junction Daily Sentinel page 3D Obit - August 12, 2012
Leo Thomas “Teo” Prinster
December 14, 1928 – August 8, 2012
Leo Thomas Prinster, known to family and friends as Teo, passed away peacefully and surrounded by family on August 8, 2012, after a lengthy illness at his home in Glenwood Springs. He was 83.
Teo was born December 14, 1928, to Frank Joseph Prinster, Sr. and Josephine Patterson Prinster, in Grand Junction. An avid sports fan and accomplished athlete, he graduated from Grand Junction High School in 1946, leading the basketball team to its first state championship, and earning the coveted Joe Biggs Memorial trophy for Most Outstanding Athlete. He attended the University of Utah on a football scholarship and graduated with a degree in Business Accounting. Soon after college, Teo entered the US Marine...