



American Ancestors[®]

by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Introducing American Ancestors

Website: AmericanAncestors.org

American Ancestors, also known as New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) is the oldest and largest genealogical society in the world. We have been helping family historians advance their research for nearly two centuries. We are a nonprofit organization located in Boston with a staff of 100 people, half of whom are professional genealogists. While we have a concentration of resources about New England, we have databases and educational material about a wide variety of topics, including strong Atlantic Canada collections, extensive New York resources, mid-Atlantic and Midwest collections, as well as international holdings.

Nearly all of our resources can be accessed via AmericanAncestors.org. Anyone (members and non members) can also visit our Research Center in-person at 99 Newbury Street in Boston, Massachusetts (note we are closed from 3/1/23-12/31/23 for construction).

What we offer:

- Nearly 500 searchable record-based databases for genealogical research
- Access to specialized document-based databases via external partners
- Library featuring hundreds of educational videos
- Free live chat with a genealogist, five days a week
- Online events, including webinars, author talks, and lectures on many subjects
- Archive of *American Ancestors* magazine and *Register* issues
- Educational family history courses on demand



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- A free comprehensive family history curriculum for educators
- A searchable archive of digitized manuscripts, genealogies, and other resources (nearly one million documents)
- A library catalog with links to digitized material, where available
- AmericanAnceSTREES online family tree

Get Started

Begin on our home page at AmericanAncestors.org

Look at the upper right-hand area of the site, where you'll see the option to log in if you're a member, the About Us menu, the Bookstore, and the option to create a family tree.

Search

Our searchable databases and collections are grouped under the word Search on the left-hand side of the screen. The Search menu contains several options, including a search Content by Topic option (this searches all content on our website), a list of all our genealogical databases, our external partner databases, and access to an archive of our digital manuscripts and our library catalog.

Search the Databases

We have two ways to search the databases at American Ancestors. First, you can use the search screen to search for names, locations or time periods. In general, “Less is More,” that is, searching on just a few fields tends to be more successful than completely filling out the form. The search form accepts wildcards, such as an “*” to replace one or more letters in your search string. You also have the options of filtering results by record type – e.g., birth, marriage, death OR by category – e.g., vital records.

The second search option is browse the databases. Click the left-hand word “Search” at the top of the page and select “A to Z list of all databases” from the drop-down box. At the browse search page, type a term into the search box or filter by location, year, or category. The results are listed alphabetically. If a camera icon appears next to the database, images are available. A page icon means you will see an index entry.



External Databases


On behalf of our members, we negotiate access to large databases of specialized content. An abridged listing of offerings is below. The complete list is at [AmericanAncestors.org/Search/External-Databases](https://www.americanancestors.org/Search/External-Databases).

- Colonial Caribbean
- HeritageQuest Online
- Marquis Biographies Online
- Everyday Life and Women in America
- HistoryGeo.com
- Jewish Life in America
- Slavery, Abolition and Social Justice
- Gale In Context: U.S. History
- Virginia Company Archives
- 19th Century U.S. Newspapers
- Early American Newspapers, Series I, 1690-1876
- Irish Newspaper Archives
- Parchemin Notarial Database
- Genealogy Quebec

Educational Offerings

Educational materials at American Ancestors are numerous and include online subject guides ([AmericanAncestors.org/Tools/Research-Guides](https://www.americanancestors.org/Tools/Research-Guides)) on a wide range of topics from Getting Started, Getting Organized, using the website and more. The detailed, topic specific guides cover subjects such as 17th century New England research, African American Genealogy, Catholic Records in New England, French-Canadian Genealogy, German Genealogy, Massachusetts Research, Irish Research, and researching World War Veterans. And many more.

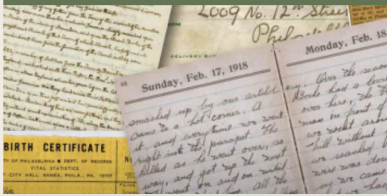
RESEARCH GUIDE



Youth Education

FIND OUT MORE →


RESEARCH GUIDE



Writing & Publishing Your Family History

FIND OUT MORE →

RESEARCH GUIDE



Preserving Your Family Treasures

FIND OUT MORE →

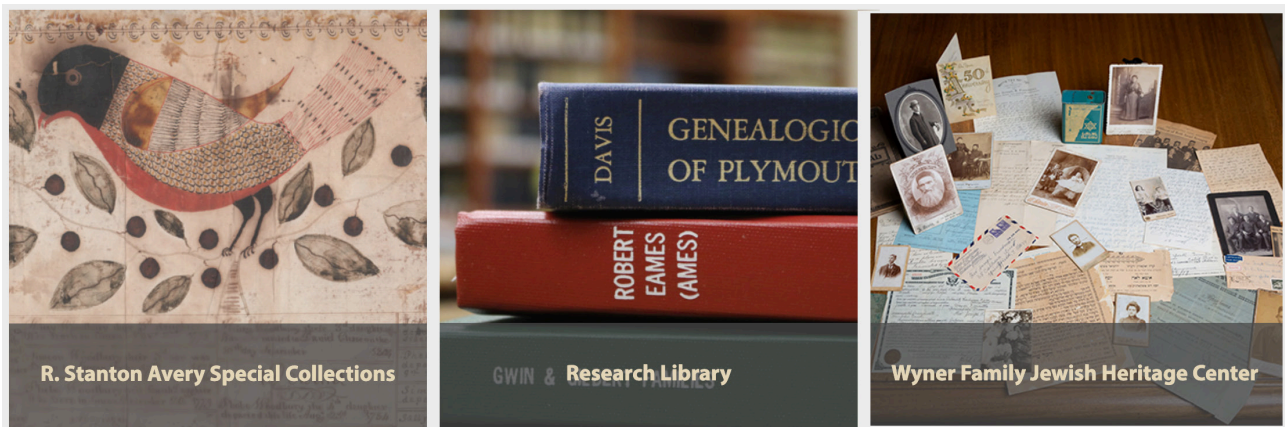
Use the Catalog

The Catalog displays the full range of treasures at NEHGS. It defaults to a keyword search which is the most commonly used option. If you are seeking a specific surname, use the subject search to find family histories, e.g., search for "Smith Family" as a subject.

On the Catalog results page, a book icon means it is published material and at our Research Center. A manuscript icon means it is unpublished and in our special collections. An increasing number of results will display a link above the catalog number to a website with a digital version of the book.

Digital Library and Archives

The Digital Library and Archives at NEHGS contains materials from three repositories at NEHGS:



- R. Stanton Avery Special Collections
- Research Library
- Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center

The materials are browsable and mostly unindexed, although some have searchable transcriptions. The Digital Library and Archives may be one of the most important resources for virtual users as items that are normally only available through a visit to the Research Center can be accessed online.

R. Stanton Avery Special Collections

The material from the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections is also known as our manuscript collection. The collections have been arranged into 12 groups:

- Business Records & Accounts
- Church Records
- Civil War Manuscripts
- Commonplace Books
- Family and Personal Papers
- Family History Manuscripts
- Family Registers & Bible Records
- Finding Aids for Manuscript Collections
- French and Indian Wars Manuscripts
- Local History Manuscripts
- Revolutionary War Manuscripts
- William Bolland Papers

Research Library

The collections from the Research Library include:

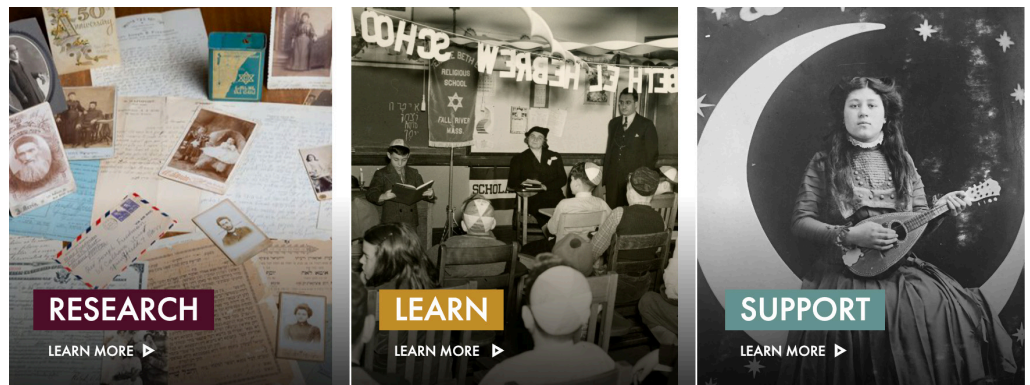
- City Directories
- Family History books
- Local History books

Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center



The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center™

at NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC
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The seventeen collections from the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center include:

- Abraham Captain Ratshesky Papers
- Bureau of Jewish Education Records
- Combined Jewish Philanthropies Records
- Community and Social Service Organization Records
- Dr. Robert Sperber Papers
- Family and Individual Papers
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Boston Port Records
- Jewish Communities of the North Shore
- Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston Records
- Jewish Heritage Center Photographs
- The Jewish Times Collection
- Leo Shapiro Newspaper Collection
- Rabbinical, Synagogue and Jewish Education Papers
- Spiro Family Papers
- Winer, Kane, Snider Family Papers & Elm Farm Foods Records
- Wyner Family Papers
- YMHA & Hecht House Records

These digitized materials offer a unique perspective on our ancestor's lives and place and time in history.

Available online tools include Family Charts (multi-generational chart, family group sheet), as well as templates such as the Research Plan or the Research Logs for documenting your search. Other tools help you prepare for a family interview (see AmericanAncestors.org/Tools/Research-Templates).

For quick answers, try our online chat with a genealogist. Our genealogists can explain how to use a particular website or resource, answer brief local history questions, define an unfamiliar term or phrase in a record, or make recommendations for where to find records.

AncesTREES

Also at American Ancestors, we offer AncesTREES, a FREE online family tree experience. You can create a tree from scratch, or import an existing family tree, get hints to grow your tree, and use social media features to share your tree with friends and family. You will need a Guest Membership account or higher to access American AncesTREES.



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