

## **Finding Old Books** **Ted Bainbridge, Ph.D.**

Some internet sites help you find old and not-so-old books that are relevant to your research. Use the following methods to discover what exists, then get access to it. If you are lucky you might find exactly what you want - and a lot more.

### **Worldcat**

Use the internet to search the catalogs of libraries close to your home. Search by subject, title, and author. If they don't have what you want, try Worldcat. Worldcat gives you access to the catalogs of over 10,000 libraries worldwide. Go to <http://www.worldcat.org/>. Near the top left of their screen select "Everything", "Books", "DVDs", "CDs", or "Articles". In the search box type keywords that describe what you want, or the name or surname of an author, or the title of an item you want, or any combination of them. Click "Search everything". A hit list appears. Click the title of an item that interests you. Another hit list appears; it is a list of libraries that own that item, sorted by their distance from you. Click the name of a library. In some cases you will see that library's description of the item and in other cases you will see the search page for the library's catalog; if you see their search page, use it. In either case you will get to the description of that item and its location. If the item circulates, ask your local librarian to get it for you through Interlibrary Loan. If the item does not circulate, Interlibrary Loan can request copies of pages you specify.

### **Family-Search**

Family-Search's *Family History Books* includes, "digitized genealogy and family history publications from the archives of some of the most important family history libraries in the world. The collection includes family histories, county and local histories, genealogy magazines and how-to books, gazetteers, and medieval histories and pedigrees." In April of 2015 the 200,000th item was added to this collection. Go to the collection's main page at [https://books.familysearch.org/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=FHD\\_PUBLIC](https://books.familysearch.org/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=FHD_PUBLIC). Use the search box or the Advanced Search option. Expect to spend considerable time reading the hit list to find what you might use and eliminate irrelevant suggestions. Clicking an item on the hit list opens images of the item's pages. Right-click any page to save the entire file to your computer, then double-click the file on your computer to open it and read it at your convenience.

### **Google Books**

Go to <https://books.google.com/>. Type keywords, author, title, content, or any combination of them in the search box, then click "Search Books". A hit list appears. Click the title of an item that interests you. If the book is out of copyright or if the copyright owner has given permission, you will see a "preview" of the book or perhaps the entire text. A preview displays some of the pages of a book but not all of them; you may see many pages, then a gap of many missing pages, then more pages. If you have found a preview, return to the hit list and look for another listing of that item; perhaps that listing will be the entire text instead of just a preview. If the book is in the public domain, you can download a PDF copy of the book to your computer and keep it for

future reference. When you get into a book you want, use the search box at the left center of the screen. A hit list appears. Click a page number. You will go to that page and your search term will be highlighted on that page. Right-clicking a page image will let you print or save the page.

### **Archive Books**

Go to <https://archive.org/> and type keywords, authors, or titles into the search box. Beside the search box you can select "All Media Types" as it is, or you can click its tiny up and down triangles to select the type of media you want. Press the "Return" or "Enter" key on your keyboard. A hit list appears. Click the title of an item. Click "fullscreen" under the item's image. To change pages, click the left and right arrows at the bottom right of the screen or click either page of the image. Use the search box near the top right of the screen, then be patient while the program reads the entire text. The bottom of the screen will display a bar with a marker for each page that contains what you put in the search box. Click a marker to see that page with your search term highlighted. Use the magnifying glasses at the bottom right of the screen to change the size of the image if you want. If you enlarge the image, you can drag the page across your screen in any direction to read all of the page. Right-click a page to save it.

### **World Vital Records**

Find a Family History Center at <https://familysearch.org/locations/>. On their computers choose the "FHC Services Portal", then "Premium Family History Websites", then "World Vital Records". Near the center of your screen you will see a map with a menu bar at its top. Its choices are United States, UK & Ireland, Canada, Australia, and World. Click the label of the area you want, then click one of the items offered. When you see a list of individual items that are available, look for titles including words like history, biography, biographical, sketches, or portrait. Click the title of a book you want to use. Search within the book by typing a name or other important word into the search box and click "Begin Search". A hit list appears, showing where that name or word was found. Click a choice within the hit list. The page selected will appear. You can move forward and backward in the book by using the left and right triangles at the bottom of the screen.

### **Ancestry**

Ancestry, a pay site at <http://www.ancestry.com/>, also is available for free at Family History Centers. On Their computers choose the "FHC Services Portal", then "Premium Family History Websites", then "Ancestry". On their menu bar, hover over "Search" then select "Card Catalog" from the drop-down menu. In the search box for "Keywords" type "history" or "biography" without quotes and a name or place that interests you. Check each item on the resulting hit list.

### **Others**

Cyndi's List is a collection of over 333,000 links related to genealogy or research aids. Go to <http://www.cyndislist.com/>. The most effective way to find old books or other materials about a place is to search for that place, then search the hit list for items that interest you.

Family Search is a large collection of genealogical research aids. Go to <https://familysearch.org/> then click "Search". Click within the map under "Research By Location" to drill down to a list of available resources related to the area you want. Search the hit list for interesting items.

If you are willing to buy a book, try <http://www.amazon.com/> . Search "Select Books" then search for a title, author, or subject.

Look at the web site of each appropriate genealogical and historical society. See if the organization sells books, pamphlets, research papers, or data sets that might help with your project.

### **Be Persistent**

If you don't find what you want within a book, change the search words and look again. Don't give up on a book until you have searched for every reasonable term you can think of. Look for names, places, events, and dates.

If a book preview hasn't helped you, return to the hit list and hunt another entry for that item.

If one of the above sources fails you, try another. Try all of them. If all these sources disappoint you, do an internet search for what you want. If a persistent and imaginative search does not find what you want, repeat your efforts with another search engine. Google, Bing, Yahoo, and other search engines often find different items.

### **An Example - Getting a Priceless Pennsylvania German Research Tool or Free**

If your ancestors were Pennsylvania Germans, whether you think they were pioneers or not, "The Strassburger books" should be on your shelf. The series title is, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers. A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727 to 1808*. Volume 1 (776 pages) is 1727 - 1775, Volume 2 (893 pages) is *Facsimile Signatures 1727-1775*, and Volume 3 (709 pages) is 1785 - 1808 [*and*] *Indexes*.

You can get a FREE set of these books:

Volume 1: Go to <https://archive.org/details/pennsylvaniagerm42stra> , scroll below the image of the book's pages until you see the **DOWNLOAD OPTIONS** panel, then select **PDF**. Give the file time to load. Click your browser's download button and proceed as instructed.

Volume 2: Change that internet address to <https://archive.org/details/pennsylvaniagerm43stra> and proceed as above.

Volume 3: Change that internet address to <https://archive.org/details/pennsylvaniagerm44stra> and proceed as above.

Double-clicking your saved copy of a volume will open the book inside a PDF viewer. Use that program's Search or Find box to hunt what you want. Hunt each variant spelling of a name that you can think of. This is essential because of the following. (1) The old Germanic alphabet differed from the modern English alphabet, and there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the two. (2) Indexers can mis-read the script, err in transliterating from their alphabet to ours, and make typing errors. (3) The spelling a person used at the time of immigration may differ significantly from modern spellings you may have seen. For example, I have a copy of a document signed by my immigrant ancestor Jakob Reicherdt (as I transliterated his signature). Some of his descendants who still live in the same valley where Jakob settled spell their names *Reicherdt*, while others use several other spellings, some as different as *Richard* and *Reigard*.

Now, download those books and exploit them to the fullest. Good hunting!