

How To Start Climbing Your Family Tree

by Ramona Konar

Log on to **Ancestry.com**:

- Go to the San Diego Public Library website at <https://www.sandiego.gov/public-library>
- Click the “eLibrary” tab
- Scroll down to “History & Genealogy” and click on it
- Scroll down to “ProQuest: Ancestry Library Edition”
- Log in with your library card number

To start searching census data, go to the lower right-hand corner and click on the year when you want to begin. (Census data doesn’t become available until it’s 70 years old, so the most recent is 1940. The 1950 Census will be released in April, 2022.)

A search page will come up, asking for First/Middle Name, Surname, Date of Birth, and Location.

The information contained on census documents varies according to state and time period. Most contain the names of the people in the household (not always perfectly accurate), relationship to head of household, age, state of birth, mother and father’s state of birth, and occupations. Some state whether the home is owned or rented and the value of the property. (You can Google, “\$1,800 in 1930” for a comparison to current values.) Some show levels of education, and ability to read or write in English.

When you enter a grandfather’s name for a Census in which he was still a child, you can usually find the names of his parents and siblings, and occasionally his grandparents. Keep an eye out for the places of his parents’ birth, so you can use that when searching for them. You can estimate their birthdates by subtracting 30 years (+ or – 10 years) from Grandpa’s birth date.

Grandmothers are a little bit harder, because they are most often listed by their married name. An Ancestry.com “Family Tree,” if available, is the easiest way to find a birth name. If you’re lucky, sometimes a marriage license is available that lists the name of the bride and her parents.

If you need further information, you can call the Tierrasanta Branch Library at (858) 573-1384, email us at TSstaff@sandiego.gov, or send a message to our Facebook account (@Tierrasanta Library).

Happy climbing!