How to obtain materials from other libraries

- Ask your librarian if interlibrary loan is an option—or ask if the other library could make a photocopy or scan the applicable portions of the material for you.
- Drive to one of the libraries that owns the material, if it’s close enough—it might just be worth it to examine the material in person. Find library location information on www.worldcat.org/libraries.
- Locate a researcher in the area of the holding library who would be willing to visit the library for you and determine if the material is useful.
- Try looking for the material at Web-based booksellers, now that you know it exists.

For more information about the value of WorldCat as a genealogical research tool, see www.oclc.org/worldcat/genealogy/

This site includes effective genealogical research in WorldCat.

WorldCat provides information about library materials, and where available, links to digitized versions of library materials

- Account books
- Autobiographies
- Cemetery records
- Church histories and records
- Civil War and other military records
- Company information—catalogs, archives, etc.
- Diaries and journals
- Family Bibles
- Family histories
- Family papers
- General genealogical resources such as directories, handbooks and magazines
- Historic newspapers from the U.S. and other countries
- Historic photographs—including digitized ones
- Indexes to burial records
- Indexes to births, marriages and deaths
- Indexes to obituaries
- Indexes to wills
- Interviews and oral histories
- Manuscripts from archives
- Microfilmed genealogy and local history collections
- Oral histories
- Pictures
- Probate records
- Slavery and antislavery materials, including slave records
- Town histories

WorldCat is the world’s largest bibliographic database. It contains information about more than 170 million items owned by 10,000 libraries around the world. Constant growth makes WorldCat a rich resource for genealogists who seek primary source materials.
Accessing WorldCat on FirstSearch

- FirstSearch is sold only to libraries. Ask your librarian if you have access, and if so, how.
- Look on your library’s Web site for WorldCat. Check for OCLC WorldCat, WorldCatFirstSearch or OCLC FirstSearch.
- Ask if your library offers remote access that would enable you to search from home.

Your starting point depends on how your library has set up access to WorldCat. If you see the FirstSearch home page, choose WorldCat from the link near the top of the page or the “Select a topic or database” drop-down menu.

Searching WorldCat on FirstSearch

Enter search terms into the search boxes, using quotation marks as indicated in these examples:

- **Family names:** enter the family name followed by the word “family,” e.g., “marsh family”
- **Specific person:** enter the person’s name, e.g., “andrew jackson”
- **Organizations:** enter terms for the organization, e.g., “presbyterian”; you can specify a location as well, e.g., “presbyterian and baltimore”
- **Geographic locations:** for place names within the U.S., search the place name in combination with the abbreviated and full state name, e.g., “union springs” and (ny or new york).

Keep in mind that WorldCat won’t search for spelling variants, so try different variations if needed to retrieve records and do the most general type of search you can that limits your results list to a manageable size.

Using search results from WorldCat on FirstSearch

You’ll receive a list of records that match your search terms. Items owned most widely by libraries are listed first. Get more details information by clicking on an item’s title. In FirstSearch WorldCat, you can also click the Libraries Worldwide link to see which libraries own the item. If your library owns the item, it will be highlighted.

You can e-mail WorldCat records to yourself or anyone else from any page that shows an e-mail symbol. You can also print WorldCat records.

Accessing WorldCat through WorldCat.org

From any computer with Internet access enter www.worldcat.org in the URL field. You’ll see the basic search box where you can enter search terms, or you can click the “Advanced Search” link to enter a more detailed search that will also let you set limits on search results.

If your search retrieves more records than you want to review, you can narrow your search in these ways:

- Return to the main search page and enter more specific search terms, e.g., “marsh family bible”
- Use the facets on the left column of the results page to refine your search by author, content, format, language or publication date.

NOTE: WorldCat.org searches the entire WorldCat on FirstSearch database but displays holdings only for libraries that subscribe to WorldCat on FirstSearch and have their holdings in WorldCat. Therefore, to view all holdings information, you must search WorldCat via FirstSearch.

Using search results from WorldCat.org

To select a record in a results list, click on the record title. You’ll see a screen that lets you determine the nearest library that owns the item, obtain more detailed information about the item, see related subject headings and read reviews that have been posted about the item.

If the detailed record indicates the item is not owned by any libraries, you will need to visit your local library’s Web site and search WorldCat on the OCLC FirstSearch service.

NOTE: WorldCat.org searches the entire WorldCat on FirstSearch database but displays holdings only for libraries that subscribe to WorldCat on FirstSearch and have their holdings in WorldCat. Therefore, to view all holdings information, you must search WorldCat via FirstSearch.