Ancestry.com Card Catalog:
Pro Genealogists Tricks

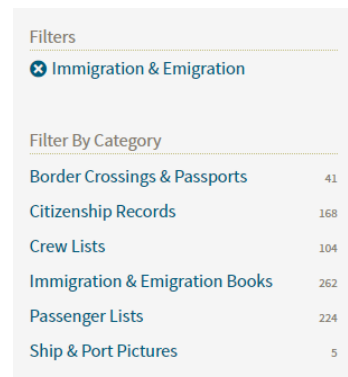Link to the Video: https://youtu.be/6mY2J0m0Yt0

Depending on your research question and your research plan will determine your best strategy. Starting on the Card Catalog as opposed to chasing leafy hints is guaranteed to net you more results. Hints are only providing the easiest results or the low hanging fruit, whereas using the card catalog will show you everything available on Ancestry.

The Genealogy TV video, "Ancestry.com Card Catalog: Pro Genealogists Tricks," demonstrates tricks used by smart genealogists to gain the best results quickly.

Following your Research Plan (knowing what you want to look for), start by using the filters first to see what record sets are available in the time and place you are researching.

Ancestry.com > Login > Click Search > Dropdown to Card Catalog. Reset filters each research technique below.

1. Filter by Category – Ancestry provides the "Filter By Category" in the top left column of the Card Catalog. Before clicking into a category, notice the number of record sets next to each category. This is not the number of records, but instead the number of collections in each category.
   - Drill into these categories to see subcategories in that group.
   - Once you have drilled into a subcategory, the order in which you've filtering is listed with the main category on top and the subcategory beneath. Click the bottom filter to go up to the main category again. (In this case clicking the Citizenship Records removes that filter and taking you back up to the Immigration & Emigration Category.)
   - Review the record sets available and search various spellings.

Filters	
⊗ Immigration & Emigration	
Filter By Category	
Border Crossings & Passports	41
Citizenship Records	168
Crew Lists	104
Immigration & Emigration Books	262
Passenger Lists	224
Ship & Port Pictures	5

Filters	
⊗ Immigration & Emigration	
⊗ Citizenship Records	

2. **Filter by Location & Era** - Searching by location first, then by decade, then by remaining categories works well when following a logical research plan. This is by far my favorite way to research.

- Go to Search>Card Catalog.
- Scroll down the left column to choose a country. Drill down to a state/province/county/city if needed.
  - i. Search both broad and local regions.
  - ii. Some records will be held at the county, state, county or township level depending on the type of record set.
- Click on the decade or century to narrow by era.
- Now you can see the categories that still have records sets for your filter settings.
- Also note the number of record results and the number of records in the records column near the right side of the collections list. Now click on a category of interest.
- If there are several sets of records you wish to explore in the collections list, hover over the name and right-click and choose "open in a new tab." The chosen sets will open in their own browser tab across the top. Then simply close each tab when you are done researching them.

Filters

- ⊗ Europe
- ⊗ Denmark
- ⊗ Frederiksborg
- ⊗ 1800-1899

Card Catalog
Searchable listing of all record collections

Title

Keyword(s)

Search or Clear All

Filters
- ⊗ Europe
- ⊗ Denmark
- ⊗ Frederiksborg
- ⊗ 1800-1899

Filter By Category

Birth, Marriage & Death	7
Court, Land, Wills & Financial	1
Dictionaries, Encyclopedias & Reference	1
Immigration & Emigration	1
Stories, Memories & Histories	8

Results 1-18 of 18   Sort By Date Added ▼

Title	Category	Records	Activity
Denmark, Church Records, 1812-1918 (in Danish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	45,309,264	
Web: Denmark, Emigration Index, 1868-1908	Immigration & Emigration	358,177	
Denmark, Civil Marriages, 1851-1961 (in Danish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	202,850	
Denmark, Estate Records, 1436-1964 (in Danish)	Court, Land, Wills & Financial	2,615,147	
Denmark, Select Burials, 1640-1917 (in Danish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	1,252,302	
Denmark, Select Baptisms, 1618-1923 (in Danish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	8,678,994	
Denmark, Marriages, 1635-1916 (in Danish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	3,665,877	
Hertugdømmet Slesvigs Topographi (in Danish)	Dictionaries, Encyclopedias & Reference	337	
Slaegten Weldingh I Denmark og Norge (in Danish)	Stories, Memories & Histories	31	
Slaegten Ritzau (in Danish)	Stories, Memories & Histories	25	
Slaegten Breinholt (in Danish)	Stories, Memories & Histories	56	

3. Results – Several Items to take notice. Use filtering to narrow your results to a manageable list.

- Number of Results – If you have too many results to search, filter further by location or date.
- Filter per Research Plan
- Note Record Count
- Note "New Records" added since your last search
- "Sort by" filter can be helpful.
  Sort by the largest Record Count can help your odds of finding your ancestors. However, your ancestors might just be in those smaller record sets too.

Card Catalog
Searchable listing of all record collections

Results 1-18 of 18   Sort By Date Added ▼

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Sort By dropdown options: Collection Title, Date Updated, Date Added, Record Count

4. Keyword Research – Keyword searches can provide extra results over a Title search.

- The Keyword search box is good for subjects like "WWII" or "mounted police" or for items where you are not sure what to search for but have a general idea.
- When searching for items like "Korean War" you should search both by Keyword and by Title separately. Shown below is an example of the two searches with different results. As you can see, searching "Korean War" as a Title netted 5 record sets, whereas searching the same as a Keyword netted 51 record sets.

Title
Korean War

Keyword(s)

[Search] or Clear All

Results 1-5 of 5

Title
📄 Alabama, U.S., S
📄 U.S., Korean War

Title

Keyword(s)
Korean War

[Search] or Clear All

Results 1-25 of 51

Title
📄 U.S., World War II
📄 U.S., Navy Muster

5. Wildcards – Wildcards are used when searching someone's name within the record set. They can be useful to search for name variations like "Madson" or "Madsen" or "Mattson"
   - Use * to replace 1- 5 variable characters.
   - Use ? to replace 1 variable character.
   - More Rules about Wildcards
     i. You cannot have the first AND last letter be a wildcard. One or the other (first or last letter as a wildcard) will work.
     ii. Must have at least 3 non-wildcard letters.
   - More about searching from Ancestry… Wildcards at Ancestry Support

Using the name Madsen as described above, in this situation there are a variety of ways to search the Madsen name.

   - Here the ? is replacing a single character as shown in the first example "Mads?n." This result could show Madsen or Madson.
   - Using the * (as in Ma*sen) could result in Madsen or Mattsen or more variations.
   - By using both (as Ma*s?n) one could find Madsen, Madson, Marcusen, Mathiasen, etc.