# 5 Fabulous Google Research Strategies
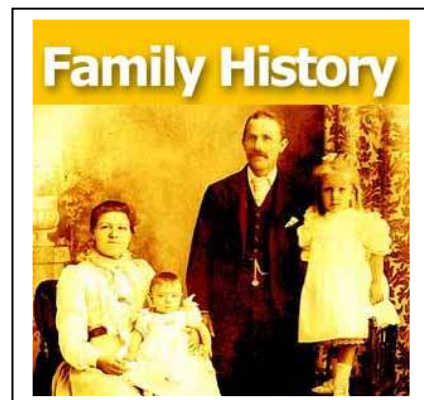
## ....*for the Family Historian*

by Lisa Louise Cooke
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*The Genealogy Gems Podcast*
& *Family History: Genealogy Made Easy*
www.genealogygems.com

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**About the author**: Lisa Louise Cooke is the producer and host of the podcast *Family History: Genealogy Made Easy* which features interviews with experts in the field of genealogy, inspirational stories and seasoned advice along with the step-by-step tools for researching your family tree. For the more advanced researcher, Lisa produces and hosts *The Genealogy Gems Podcast.* Both podcasts can be found at her website www.GenealogyGems.com. She also *hosts The Family Tree Magazine Podcast* for America's #1 Family History print magazine. Lisa is a sought after international speaker, and author of four books, most recently *Turn Your iPad into a Genealogy Powerhouse.*



# Family History Online Radio Shows at
## www.GenealogyGems.com

# 5 Fabulous Google Research Strategies
## ….*for the Family Historian*

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# Research Strategy #1:  *Start with Search Basics*

Understanding the core Google search techniques can take you a long way in your research before having to move on to advanced techniques.

| If you search… | You'll get results containing… | Uses & Examples… |
|---|---|---|
| genealogy Minnesota | the words **genealogy** and **Minnesota**. | Use with unique words. Genealogy and Minnesota will give you far too many results to be effective |
| *"U.S. Federal Census"* | the exact phrase **U.S. Federal Census** | When you know the exact word or phrase you want with no variation. |
| *"obituary"* | Every page will include at least one occurrence of the word **obituary**. | |
| *Lincoln  −Abraham* | the word **Lincoln** but NOT the word **Abraham** | Great for eliminating a word that is commonly linked to your search term but has no bearing on your research. |
| *define:probate* | definitions of the word **probate** from sources found on the Web. | Great for research clarification |
| *City  *  directory* | the words **city** and **directory** separated by one or more words. | The source you are looking for might turn out to be the city "phone" directory which would not appear in results for a search on "city directory" |

# Research Strategy #2:  *Use Advanced Search Techniques*

After you've exhausted the basic search techniques, it's time to tap into Advanced Search.  This will help you search with more precision and hopefully even better results. You'll find the Advanced Search link next to the search box on the Google home page. You can also get there directly by going to:  http://www.google.com/advanced_search Here are some great ones to try:

## The OR Search

To find pages that include either of two search terms, add an uppercase OR between the terms. For example, here's how to search for cemeteries in either Manhattan or Brooklyn:

*Cemeteries Manhattan OR Brooklyn*

## Synonym Search

Google no longer supports using the Tilde (~) for synonym searches. Therefore, you will need to include the various words in your query.

For example, to learn more about an industry your ancestor worked in you can search for train history and railroad information like this:

*History train OR locomotive OR railroad*

## Numrange Search

A Numrange search delivers results containing numbers in a given range. Just type in two numbers, separated by two periods, with no spaces, into the search box along with your search terms.

This would be an ideal search if you are unsure of an exact year. For example:
*Jehu Burkhart 1850..1860*


## Link Search

Let's say that you find a terrific genealogy website all about your specific family line. Wouldn't it be nice to know who else out there on the Web is interested in that family line? Here's a tip for how to find out:


By doing a search using the search term **link:** you will get a results list of webpages that have links to that webpage. For instance:


*link:www.genealogygems.com*


Note there can be no space between the "link:" and the web page url.
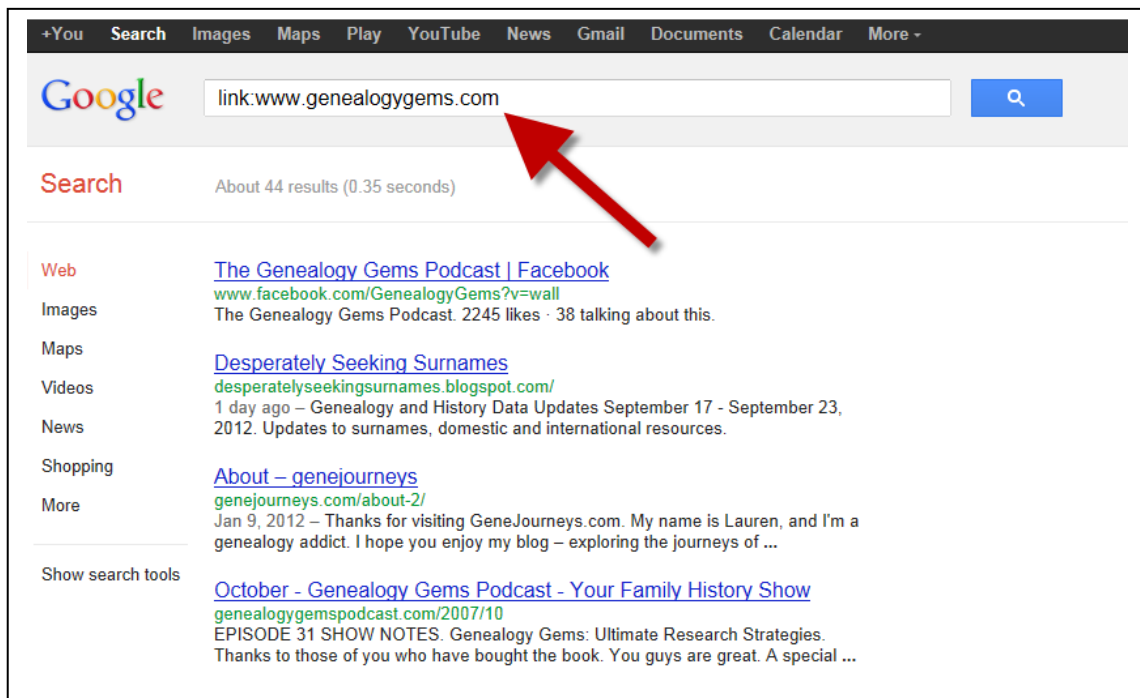
## Related Search

Similar to the Link Search, the Related Search will list web pages that are "similar" to a specified web page. For instance, the following search will list web pages that are similar to the *Burkhart Family web site*:

*related:www.Burkhartfamily.com*

Note there can be no space between the "related:" and the web page url.
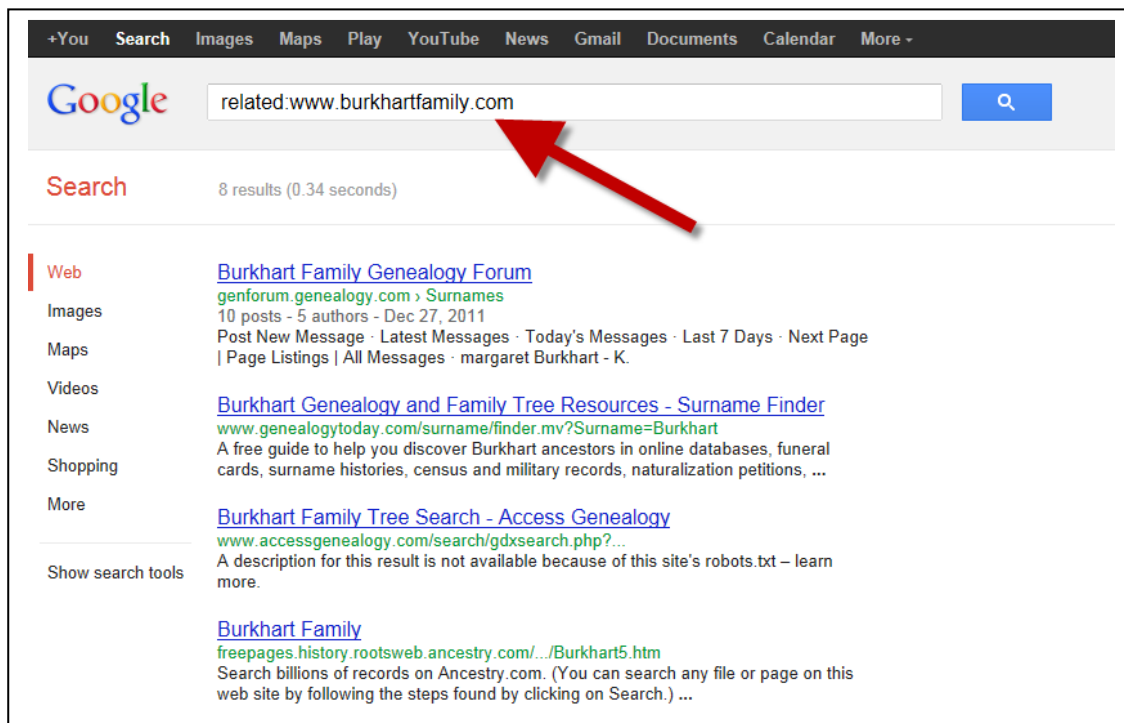


## Allintitle Search

If you start a search with allintitle:, Google will restrict the results to only pages that have all of the search words in the title. For example, to get only documents that have Minnesota, railroad and history in the title:

*Allintitle: Minnesota railroad history*
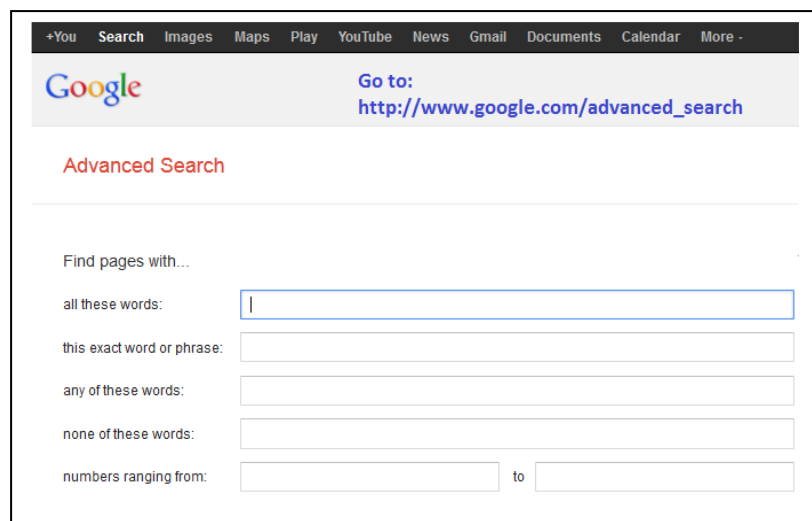
## Allinurl Search

If you start a search with allinurl: Google will restrict your search results to only those that have all of the search words in the url address. For example, if you only want documents that have Minnesota, and railroad in the url address:

*Allinurl: Minnesota railroad*

Note: punctuation will be ignored in this type of search. For instance if Minnesota/railroad will ignore the slash and give you the same result as no slash at all.

## Additonal Advanced Search Features Available from the Advanced Search Page at http://www.google.com/advanced_search

- **Google Local:** Find products and services in a specific U.S. town or zip code.

- **Language:** Specify in which language you'd like your results.

- **Date:** Restrict your results to the past three, six, or 12 month periods.

- **Occurrences:** Specify where your search terms occur on the page - anywhere on the page, in the title, or in the URL.

- **SafeSearch:** Eliminates adult sites from search results.

# Research Strategy #3:  *Get Visual with Image Searches*

It's really easy to do a search of images on the Internet.  In the very upper left corner of your screen you'll see the word WEB, and you will want to click the word IMAGES. This will take you to Image Search which looks a lot like the classic version of Google.

Now let's say after listening to **Genealogy Gems Premium Episode #2** where we talked to Paula Stuart Warren about the records for Work Projects Administration that we want to search for images of WPA workers. Just type in "WPA worker" and click the SEARCH IMAGES button.  Your results list will include a lot of great old historic images related to the WPA.

But of course sometimes when you do an image search, you end up with some images that don't really look like they have anything to do with what you were looking for. Well, recently Google provided a sneak peek into the improvements that they have in store for Image Search which should improve your results in the future.

First to give you a feel for the current breadth of Google Images, there are over 300 million digital photos taken every single day!  And Google has set its sights on being the search index that has over 1 trillion images to search from.  Imagine that!  Well, you have to believe that there will be a wealth of genealogical and historical images tucked in that 1 trillion.  And we're going to want to find them.

Currently, they have some of the best Object Recognition Technology available and this is being advanced.  You can actually use some of this technology right now with their advanced search.

Let me show you how it works:

Go to Image Search and let's look for a portrait of an historical figure like George Washington. So type in George Washington and click Search Images. Now the first page of results looks good. We see lots of faces of George. But just move onto Page 2 or the results and soon you'll come across and photograph of George Washington's false teeth.

Now let's stop right there. We just want faces of George Washington - not monuments, and not false teeth. So go back up near the search box and click the SEARCH TOOLS button. Next click TYPE and then click **FACES**. Now, EVERY search result is a facial image. It may be a portrait, on a stamp or on a coin, but it will be a face.
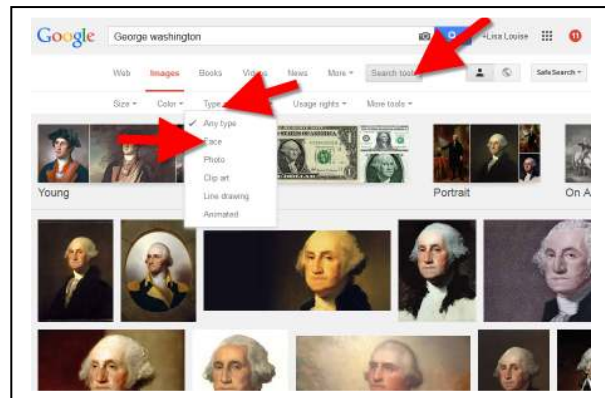
Now it may be a face of someone who <u>works</u> at George Washington University – as I say it's not perfect yet. But Google's not done perfecting this process. Google has made a commitment to start to add features that use complex image analysis. This may mean in the future that once you've honed in on the face you're looking for, Google will be able to detect it specifically and narrow your results even further.

Google doesn't plan on limiting image recognition to just the faces of people. We will be seeing an ability to find objects in pictures
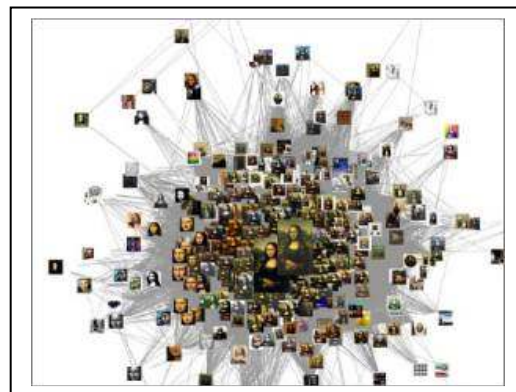
and using them as a reliable way to filter irrelevant pictures.  This might come in handy if you are looking for a certain landmark, or item that pertains to your research.

And finally, Google has developed an improved algorithm for ranking images called *VisualRank*, so we should continue to see improvements on image results searches right away.

Look to *The Genealogy Gems Podcast* and my blog at www.genealogygems.com for future updates!

## Research Strategy #4:  *When a Website Doesn't Have a Search Box, Use Site Search*

Have you ever gone to a website where you found dozens of links to great source data but there that was no search engine to be found?  You could spend hours clicking on links and digging around for your surnames.  Well, Google can come to your rescue.

**Google allows you to restrict search results to a specific site**.   When you reach a site (such as the Genweb site for Sibley County Minnesota where I was looking for my LARSON ancestors) highlight the URL and press the Control and C keys on your keyboard.  You've just copies the URL to your clipboard.



Now go to Google.com.  Click the Control and V keys simultaneously to paste the URL for the GenWeb site in the search box.
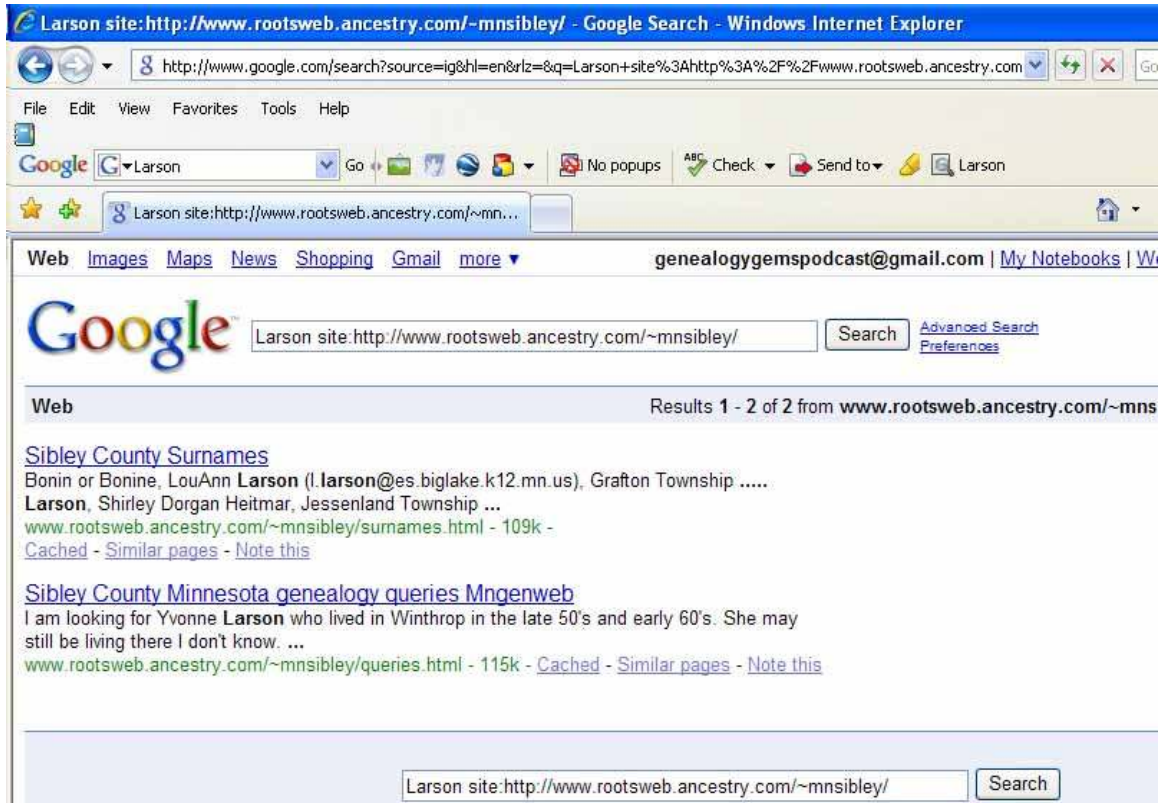
Hit the HOME key which will take your curser to the beginning of the URL.

Now type a keyword, I typed in LARSON

Hit the space bar


And type the word SITE:


Click the SEARCH button





You will receive the search results to the locations within the GenWeb site that have LARSON on the page.  Just click on each result and you will be taken to the page, buried somewhere on that GenWeb site, that lists the surname LARSON.  It would have taken you a VERY long time to locate these individual pages by browsing each page on the website.  Think of the time you will save!


Think of the possibilities!   Surnames, town names, names of businesses where your ancestors worked, the possibilities are endless and the results are focused right in on your

research needs!  And of course, feel free to expand your search criteria as you would with any Google search.  For example:  "LARSON"  "WINTHROP" space site: and the url.

# Research Strategy #5:  *YouTube Video Search*



In the world of genealogy, photographs are a major focus.  Who can blame the genealogist from wanting to see the faces of their ancestors looking back at them?  When you first open an old box from the attic, doesn't your hand first plunge in for the old tin type peeking out amongst the papers?

It's easy to forget that still photographs are not the only images available to the family historian. Video and movies also fall squarely in the category of visual family history.  If you don't think online video is applicable to your genealogy research, think again.



Online videos are the fastest growing segment on the Internet. Google saw this trend early on and in 2006 bought the one year old website, YouTube.com. Since the acquisition, YouTube as grown by leaps and bounds with every type of video content imaginable.  Here are some examples of video content that would be of interest to the genealogist:

- Original vintage footage of events dating all the way back to the invention of the movie camera

- Other user's home movies

- Family History documentaries created by users that may include your family

- Instructional videos that will help you become a better researcher, create a family heirloom, or learn the latest genealogy software

- Video tours of archives, libraries, and other repositories that will help you prepare for and get the most out of your visit

- Interviews with genealogy experts and vendors

- Entertaining videos that add enjoyment to one of the world's most popular hobbies

### Searching YouTube

Because YouTube is geared to the entertainment-focused user and therefore can contain objectionable content, avoid browsing and concentrate on using the search box. That's your best tool for finding genealogy and history related videos. YouTube does have specific Terms of Use rules and attempts to enforce them as best they can when dealing with millions of videos. They rely on the YouTube user community to assist them in flagging and removing inappropriate content. By using the search box and keywords that are applicable to genealogy, you won't very likely run into objectionable content. But if you do there is a way to "flag" it to alert YouTube so they can take action to remove it if deemed inappropriate.

Watch this quick video to learn how to flag content that violates YouTube's guidelines and help keep YouTube a safe surfing environment.

**VIDEO:** *Flagging on YouTube: The Basics*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZA22WSVlCZ4&feature=channel_page

Start by typing keywords and phrases into the search box and click the SEARCH button.

Once you have conducted an initial search, the "Filters" button will appear on the screen.

Click it and a drop down menu will give you many more options to work with. You can
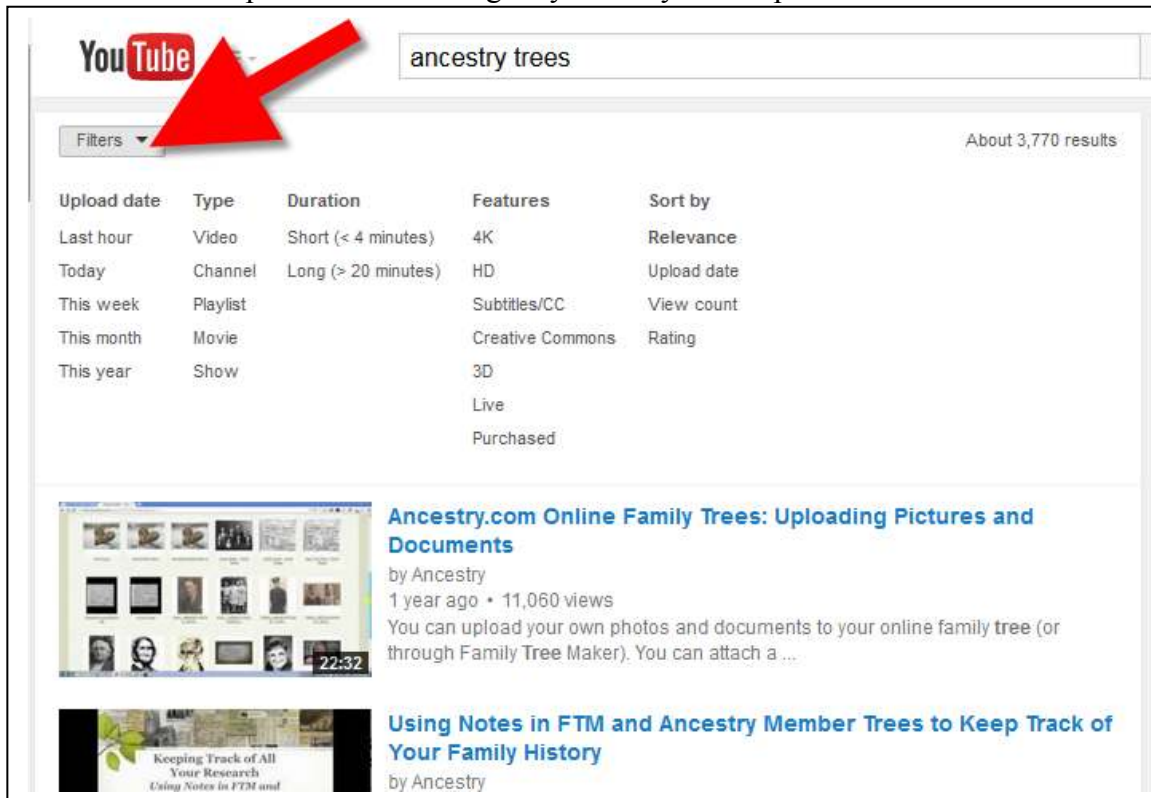


filter videos by:

- Relevance
- Upload Date
- Type
- Duration
- Features (such as Closed Captioning)

And here's the good news: You can also apply the search operators referred to early in this eBook to further define your search! The search engine "under the hood" of YouTube is the same as Google.com.

***Visit the Genealogy Gems Channel at YouTube***

You'll find over 60 genealogy-themed videos at my YouTube Channel:
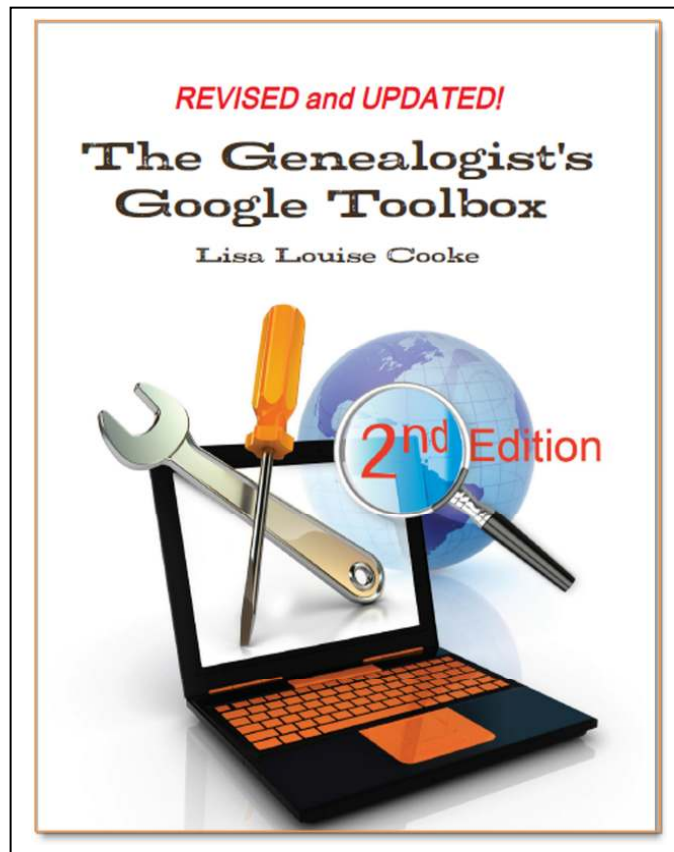
http://www.youtube.com/genealogygems

Be sure to click the SUBSCRIBE button so you will be notified of new videos as they are published!

**Learn more about how to harness the power
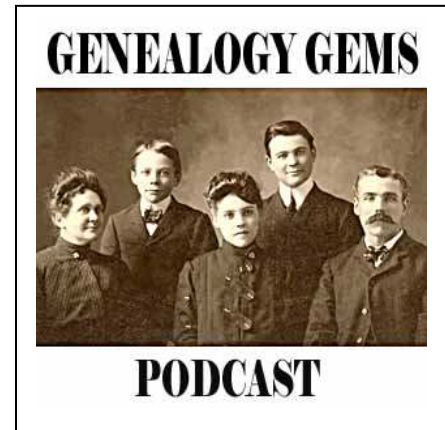of Google for your family history!**

*The Genealogist's Google Toolbox, Second Edition*
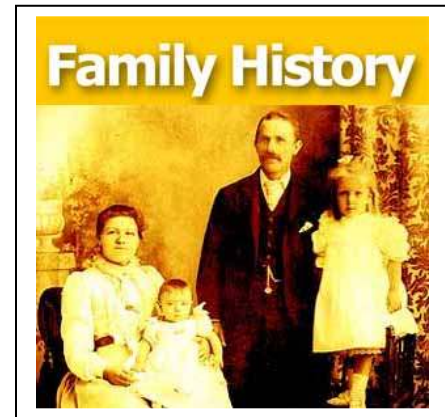**by Lisa Louise Cooke**

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