



# Biography & Genealogy Master Index Navigation Guide

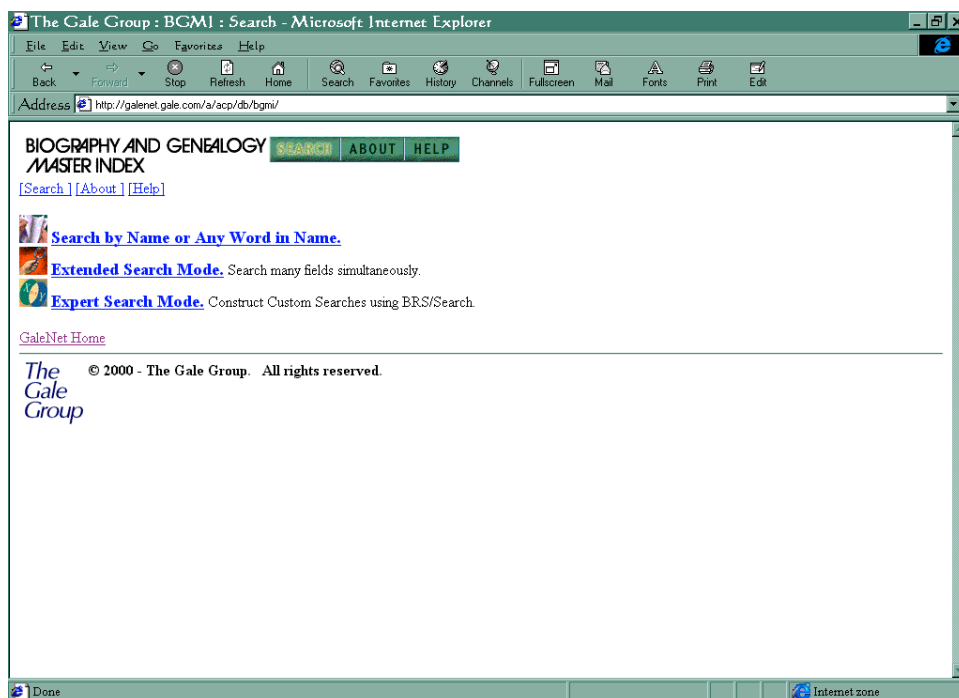
## About

*Biography and Genealogy Master Index (BGMI)* is the best place to begin a search for information about people. It indexes current, readily available reference sources, as well as the most important retrospective works that cover individuals, both living and deceased, from every field of activity and from all areas of the world. Searching *BGMI* will enable you to quickly determine which publication to consult for biographical information. In cases where *BGMI* provides multiple listings for the same person, you can choose the most convenient source or locate multiple sketches to compare and expand information furnished by a single listing. The total number of biographical sketches indexed by *BGMI* now exceeds **12** million.

Sources indexed in *BGMI* are of several types:

- Biographical dictionaries and who's whos, which supply information on a number of individuals.
- Subject encyclopedias, which include some biographical entries.
- Volumes of literary criticism, which may contain only a limited amount of biographical information but give critical surveys of a writer's works.
- Indexes, which refer the user to a body of information found elsewhere.
- *BGMI* indexes only reference works containing multiple biographies; it does not index periodical articles or books of biography about a single individual.
- Each year, 450,000 citations are added to the *BGMI* database. These are obtained from approximately 180 volumes and editions of 113 biographical dictionaries, including new titles as well as new editions of previously indexed sources.

You'll find these elements in *BGMI* entries: Name, Years Of Birth and Death, Number Of Source Citations, Source Citation(S): The title, subtitle, edition, number of volumes, author or editor name, series name, place of publication, publisher, year of publication, reprint information, distributor, title change, and notes on arrangement of entries, source title code, and portrait note, as applicable.





### **Getting started**

The initial search screen, shown above, offers seven search strategies. To choose one of the six named searches, click on the icon or link for that search. If you want to use the "What do you want to know search?" enter your search terms in the search box and click the search button. This search performs the same as the full text search.

### **All Searches**

When you enter terms in more than one field, the search engine automatically uses the AND search operator, looking for documents that contain the term(s) in the specified field(s). Within any field in which more than one word is entered, the search engine assumes the AND search operator unless the OR search operator is specified.

You can get help for any of the search options within a search by clicking on the link for that search or using the Help button.

### **Search by Name or Any Part of Name**

This search allows you to search by an individual's name. BGMI editorial policy states that an individual's name is entered into the BGMI database exactly as it appears in the source publication. As such, several versions of an individual's name may appear. For those situations, enter the various forms of the individual's name to retrieve all possible records. Ex. *Clinton, Bill* or *Clinton, William*. When an individual better known by a pseudonym or stage name is profiled and the alternate names are provided, search on all known versions of the person's name. Ex. *Ruth, Babe* or *Ruth, George Herman*.

*Complete Name or Any Word in Name* - enter a complete name or a word or combination of words known to be part of the individual's name. If you are searching by full name use the following format: Last Name, First Name.

*Last Name* – This option allows you to search by last name only.

*First/Middle Name/Initial*- This option allows you to search by first and/or middle name and by initials. When using more than one initial be sure to include a space.

*Prefix/Suffix* – This option allows you to search by prefix or suffix.

### **Extended Search Mode**

Through the Extended Search Mode, you can construct searches that enable you to search many fields simultaneously. You may enter terms in a single field, in several fields, or in all of the fields. You can search by the name fields listed above and also:

*Birth/Death Year* – These options allow you to search by an individual's birth or death year. Be sure to use a 4-digit year.

*Source Title or Title Code* - The Source Title or Source Code is searchable by the complete title of the source publication as well as by the source code denoting title and edition year (if applicable) as assigned by the editors. Within the Source Title or Source Code field, enter a complete title, any word or phrase contained in the title, or the source code. You can get a complete list of all sources included in the database by clicking the link below the search field.

*Portrait Available* - Within the Portrait Available field, enter Yes to identify records on which at least one source citation contains the phrase "Biography contains portrait," indicating that there is a source that includes a portrait with the biographical profile.

*Free-Text* – This option allows you to search the entire text of all the entries in the database.



## **Expert Search Mode**

Through the Expert Search Mode, you can construct search queries to identify records that meet very specific criteria which may not be searchable using the available predefined search options. Generally, searches conducted using the Expert Search Mode are more complex than those conducted using the predefined query options. An example of a complex search is: Artists and others involved in art that were born during the 1930s.

### *Constructing A Search*

In the Expert Search Mode, search queries are constructed using the BRS/Search query language, which is easy to understand and use. To build a search query, you need to identify the following three concepts: the term, the field(s) in which the term(s) should appear; the Boolean search operator(s) to define the relationship between the search terms.

BRS/Search queries are formed as follows:

value.field.

where value is the term and field is the two- or three-letter code designating the field name. Note the period separating the value and its field, and the trailing period at the end of the query.

For a list of the field codes, select the Help button (at the top of each Help page and at the top of introductory pages within each database) and then the Field Names and Descriptions list for that database.

Search terms may be connected with Boolean search operators such as AND, OR, WITH, ADJ, etc.

### *Sample Searches*

Using the sample search criteria mentioned above, here is an example of a complex query using the Expert Search Mode:

To identify artists and others involved in art that were born during the 1930s

(@YB >= 1930 and @YB <= 1939)and art\$.ti.

To identify individuals that have reigned as King or Queen during the Middle Ages, construct your search like this:

(king or queen).na. and (@YB >= 0500 and @YB <= 1500)

## **Search Tips**

- By default, the search engine finds only those entries containing all of the words you specify; make sure to use the Boolean operators below if you want to search differently.
- Be specific. If you're looking for information about ancient Rome, enter both of those words in your search. If you enter just Rome, your search may give you essays that discuss modern Rome or Rome, N.Y., but not ancient Rome.
- Find an exact phrase with the help of double quotes (" "). You can narrow your searches by requiring that the search terms appear as a phrase in the order that you typed them. Simply enclose your phrase terms in double quotes (" ").
- You can also mix phrases and single search terms in the search box.
- Use plural or other word endings. For example, if you are looking for discussions of murder, search for various forms of the word using the OR operator as the connector, e.g. murder or murderer or murderous.



- Try using synonyms for your original words. For example, "nervous breakdown" or "mental breakdown" or "nervous disorder" or "mental instability".
- The search engine is NOT case sensitive.

### **Punctuation**

*Hyphen* - A hyphen (-) used between two words is considered part of the term. If you are searching for a word or phrase that normally contains a hyphen, include the hyphen and enclose the word or phrase in quotes.

*Period* - When a period (.) is integral to a search term, it is best to enclose the term in double quotes.

*Apostrophe* - Apostrophes (') are not recognized by the search engine and should be deleted from search terms.

### **Wildcards**

The \$(dollar sign) and?(question mark) are used to truncate search terms to broaden the search results by enabling the searcher to indicate that all forms of a search term should be retrieved.

Usually the \$ is specified at the end of term, signifying a root form of the term. The search retrieves all forms of the word. The term "faith\$" retrieves records that contain such terms as "faith," "faithful," and "faithfulness."

The ? (question mark) is used to replace individual characters within a word or number to retrieve various forms of a word or number. The number of characters replaced by the ? is not limited. The term wom?n retrieves listings that contain either "woman" or "women"

Use of the \$ and ? in a single word is possible as well. For example: gentlem?n\$

### **Boolean Operators**

*AND* - Use the AND search operator to retrieve documents that contain both of the specified search terms. This operator places no condition on where the terms are found in relation to one another; however, both terms have to appear somewhere in the field you are searching. For example, a full text search for apples AND bananas will find any essay that contains mention both of apples and bananas.

*OR* - Use the OR search operator to retrieve documents that contain one or both specified search terms. This operator places no condition on where the terms are found in relation to one another; however, one or both terms must appear somewhere in the field you are searching. For example, a full text search for apples OR bananas will find essays that mention apples, essays that mention bananas, and essays that mention both types of fruit.

*NOT* - Use the NOT search operator to retrieve documents that do not contain the specified term. For example, a full text search for apples NOT bananas will find essays that mention apples but not bananas.

### **Navigating the Results List**

After you've entered your search you will get your results list (see below). The search results page is your "hit list;" it shows all the documents that matched your search terms. You can see how many citations appear for each entry by the Ref column. On the results list below, there are 50 results to a page. You can change the number of results that appear on the results page by adjusting the Number of results per page on the search screen.

To view a document click on it's title. See the image on the following page for an example.

### Navigating Documents

Once you have selected a document from a results list, it will be retrieved and displayed. Each entry will contain one or more citations for the individual you have chosen. See below for an example.

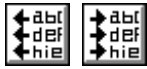
## Navigational Icons



Home Icon: May appear anywhere. Returns you to the home page.



Search Icon: Returns you to the original search form.



Previous and Next List Icons: Returns you to the previous or next list of documents.



Document List Icon: May appear while viewing a document or in this help page. Returns you to the most current group or list of documents.



First and Last Document Icons: Returns you to the first or last document in the current list.



Previous and Next Document Icons: Returns you to the previous or next document in the current list.



Document Icon: Returns you to the most currently viewed document.



Bottom of Document Icon: Returns you to the bottom of the current document.



Text Reference Link Icon: Returns the target document (or the target itself if you are viewing the target document).



Text Target Link Icon: May appear in the text of a document referred to by a text reference link (described above). Returns you to the top of the target document.



Media Reference Link Icon: Returns the object of the link.



Previous Search Link Icon: Returns you to the previous search link document.



Search Link Icon: Returns the first document that contains the search link terms.



Next Search Link Icon: Returns the next search link document.



Top of Document Icon: Returns you to the top of the current document.



Navigational Icon Help Icon: Returns this help page.

## Dictionary

The dictionary icon is always available to check the spelling or meaning of any word in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*.

- For more information on *Biography and Genealogy Master Index*, please visit the Help and About sections in the database.