

Ancestral Quest v11

By James Taylor

Ancestral Quest (AQ) can justifiably claim to be the 'granddaddy' of family history programs. It's published by Incline Software, a Utah company founded in 1994, which has also developed versions for other publishers. Among its offspring are *Ancestry Family Tree* distributed by Ancestry.com, and the free *PAF (Personal Ancestral File)* published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, both based on a licensed version of AQ 3.0. There are a couple of other published titles that are also licensed versions of AQ. Incline Software claims that AQ has become the most widely used genealogy software program in the world, if you include programs derived from it, and they might be right.

New Drop Line chart

Among the new features in version 11 is the useful ability to produce what most people think of as a 'family tree' by printing Drop Line charts, showing direct line of descent between an ancestor and a descendant, spreading, if necessary, over several pages. It can also produce its reports in PDF format which, being readable with the free Adobe *Acrobat Reader* software, means that you can email them to any computer owner anywhere. Compact PDF files are also ideal for uploading to your website.

Book report with photos

Other reports include Pedigree (with photographs), Family Group, Ancestry and Descendant (these last two are in the indented 'waterfall' configuration). Apart from a global selection of fonts there is no control over the formatting for printing, which is relatively basic. Most reports can be produced as PDF and TXT files and the narrative Book report can also be produced as RTF

and *WordPerfect* files. The Book report can include notes, sources and, putting it one up on *Family Tree Maker*, photographs, but it's not as versatile or attractive as *Legacy's*. There's also an Individual Summary, similar to the Family Group.

A choice of home views

AQ can offer a choice of 'home' views. There's the now-standard Pedigree view, showing an individual's ancestors. You can reveal basic data and photographs for everyone shown and you can use it to navigate around your tree. The Family view shows parents and children for the selected individual. The Name List view now has a couple of new features. You can customise it to show extra fields (it comes with Sex, Event, Date and Place columns). You can also sort on any column just by clicking on the column head. A more sophisticated sort facility operates on up to three fields.

Share with relatives - on the web or CD

You can also organise your file for upload to your own website (with provision for hiding information about living people). AQ does all the work, preparing a set of pages in HTML, listing your family in a text-only report (no charts) and including a GEDCOM file for downloading by anyone interested. You can go further by letting chosen others update your file and share in the changes. You need to upload a NetFam 'collaboration file' to a central server on the internet. No one can see this collaboration file or make changes to this file, unless you give them rights to do so. At the time of writing the service was free; this may have changed by now. Alternatively, and useful to those without web pages or web access, AQ offers advice on how to transfer your files to CD-R/RW, including photos, scanned documents, audio clips and video clips. You can also put the demo version of AQ on the CD, so

that your relatives can get the full genealogical experience without having to buy anything. The free demonstration copy is limited to entering up to 120 individuals, but can be used as a viewer for larger databases created by other users.

Overview

Ancestral Quest is a workmanlike, easy-to-use all-round genealogical program suitable for beginner and expert alike. It produces a good range of reports, with some reservations about formatting for heirloom quality. Its unique collaboration feature will appeal to many who prefer to work in a team. AQ must also now have one of the most comprehensive and easy-to-use source documentation systems anywhere. ■

Available from:
Incline Software at www.ancquest.com as a download at \$34.95 (approximately £19.50) or on CD at \$37.95 (approximately £21) plus \$9 (approximately £5) postage and packing. It runs under *Windows 95/98/ME/2000/NT* and *XP* and needs 8Mbytes random access memory (RAM) and 10Mbytes hard disk space.

You can add photos to the Pedigree chart.