



Willowtree Research Genealogy Services

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FamilySearch Sleuthing

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OVERVIEW

FamilySearch is a powerful website that is growing all the time! See

<https://www.familysearch.org/about> for more details.

There are (as of May 2024):

- 16 billion Searchable Names (an at least another 35 billion unindexed)
- 5 billion digital images published
- 604,496 digital books online
- 3 billion sources in the Tree
- 1.6 billion people in the Tree (As Connie Knox puts it – we are each a grain of sand, the Tree is the beach)
- At least 500 million records added per year

< 10% of the records overlap between FamilySearch and Ancestry/FindMyPast/MyHeritage/others.

PROS & CONS

One of the biggest advantages of a collaborative family tree is that it avoids duplication of work by sharing the research among many.

One of the biggest frustrations is that some of those others may make mistakes or changes.

THE BASICS: FamilySearch Website is <https://www.familysearch.org/>

Only 40% of holdings are searchable – 60% is unindexed!

FIRST, you will need to have a free account to use FamilySearch. NO PERSONAL INFORMATION IS SOLD OR SHARED IN ANY WAY. Look through the About tab (way at the bottom of the homepage) for a quick overview.

SECOND, decide on your goals, because there is so much on this site it's almost dangerous! Having a focus will help.

HOMEPAGE – Personalized for each user so it is essentially YOUR homepage!

- NEWS: Items of interest are at the top. Be sure to keep clicking Next to see them all.
- ADDITIONS: Things others add are shown on your homepage, such as photos or documents.
- OPPORTUNITIES: Volunteer opportunities.
- RECOMMENDED TASKS: On the right-hand side. You can get right to researching and there are several 'Getting Started' helps and videos.
- Shows your SEARCH HISTORY – your last 50 people looked at.
- TO-DO LIST: You can create your own list and see them at log in.
- INTERESTING: Things you might want to buy, create, or watch.

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Across the **TOP LEFT RIBBON** – (EVERYTHING ABOVE THE GRAY LINE REMAINS VISIBLE EVERYWHERE)



- Click on FamilySearch or the tree emblem to the home page.
- We will quickly walk through each tab as we explore. As you use them, you'll become proficient.
- Notice after clicking on the tab that your options are usually repeated on the 2nd row.



SETTINGS –

The **TOP RIGHT RIBBON ICONS:**



LOCATIONS – Information on researching at a FamilySearch Center.



SELECT A LANGUAGE – Change the language you are viewing with one click.



HELP – A pop-up screen giving various places to go for help: Help and Learning, Community, Contact Us & Helpful Resources. Note the Research Wiki and the Helper Resources. Use keywords to find what you need. Very extensive!



CHAT – Another pop-up screen with a communication center just for chats. Especially useful during RootsTech. You can find any other registered FamilySearch user as well.



NOTIFICATIONS – Items FamilySearch thinks you will be interested in, for example – anniversaries of birth, marriage, and death of living family and ancestors, RootsTech announcements, new tools, etc. The red dot appears when you have new Notifications to view.

YOUR PROFILE –

- Settings, Family Groups, Contacts, Source Box, and Sign Out.
- Under Settings: Tabs across the top for Profile, Account, Notifications, and Permissions.
- You have many privacy choices.
- Notice your individual Helper Number (under Account).
- Be sure to click Save Changes as needed.

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FAMILY TREE:

FamilySearch's Family Tree is the world's largest collaborative family tree and EVERYTHING is FREE.

The duplication problem: by some estimates there are still over 890,000 duplicates!

How could such a thing happen? Created in 2012, the site was designed to be open-sourced and to create one world tree with a record for every person ever born. The first data had been collected by LDS church over the previous 150 years. Its component parts:

- **Church Membership Records** – Many duplicated as children and later adults.
- **Ancestral File** – this info was submitted by church members (many inter-related) and again ended up with many duplicates.
- **Pedigree Resource File** – separate but related to Ancestral File.
- **International Genealogical Index (IGI)** – info was extracted from record sets throughout the world, but gathered by the same generations of church members.
- **User-Uploaded GEDCOMs** – ended because it made the tree confusing to use, duplicate info.

All these ponds got dumped into the collaborative Family Tree ocean. FamilySearch wanted to allow people to merge things themselves rather than doing it with technology.

Family history research was historically done alone, but now collaboration can happen nearly instantly. By working together, we can solidify everything back several generations. The changes we all complain about stop coming once everything is sourced and all events are supported.

In the opinion of many genealogists, FamilySearch is not the problem it's the solution.

FOLLOW – FamilySearch > Family Tree > Following

Set to FOLLOW someone from within any Tree view. Or from any Person Detail page by clicking the star.

Get a weekly emailed list of any changes made to those people you FOLLOW, catching mistakes early.

ENTERING YOUR FAMILY INTO FAMILY TREE – Homepage > Family Tree (in top left ribbon).

- Begin by adding yourself, parents & grandparents, designating each as LIVING or DECEASED.
- **No one can see LIVING people except the person who enters them, no exceptions.**
- Family Tree will ask you whether close matches it finds are the same person as the name you are entering.

TIPS:

- *An accurate suggested match brings along ANY RESEARCH ALREADY ATTACHED to it! This prevents adding a duplicate that will have to be fixed / merged later.*
- *Summary Card – Names are almost always clickable ANYWHERE and brings up the Person's Summary Card. From there you can click the **Tree icon** (placing that Person in root position) OR click **Person** to open the Person Details Page.*

[See Step by Step directions for editing and correcting problems in your extra handout.]

WORKING IN FAMILY TREE –

- **Tree** – Opens your own tree (with root person), in whatever view you last used it.
 - Tree Views: Portrait, Landscape, Descendancy, or Fan Chart.

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- Within the Fan Chart, hover / click on small fan icon to move that person to center.
- Can see color-coded Fan Chart views filtered by Birth Country, Family Lines, Sources, Stories, Photos, Research Helps, and more.
- **Person** – Opens a Person Details page, sometimes called the Person Profile (default is your root person).
- **Recents** – This opens a drop-down box holding the last 50 people you viewed.
 - Click Name for person profile or Tree icon for tree view.
 - **TIP: You can quickly add an Unconnected Person from this box.**
- **Find** – Opens a search dialogue box – SEARCHES ONLY WITHIN FAMILY TREE, NOT RECORDS! [NOTE: You can get to this same place by going to **Main Page > Search > Tree.**] You can ‘Find by Name’ (with lots of additional options to search with) OR ‘Find by ID.’ Use this to see if people are already in the tree!
- **Following** – Opens an up-to-date list of people you are Following any time you like.
- **My Contributions** – Opens up everything you have contributed by volunteering with FamilySearch. Three ways to view these: Stats, My Changes, or Private People.

TIPS:

- *Can add a new page without closing the one you’re on. Click on name, Summary card, then CONTROL-CLICK (on a PC) or COMMAND-CLICK (on a Mac) to open a new tab above. This is useful if you are in the middle of adding a person or merging a duplicate and want to check something without losing your place.*
- *Personal ID numbers (PIDs) – Many areas have a PID that is clickable to copy it automatically! You get a message “ID copied”.*
- *The PID also appears at the very end of the URL for each person. So, you can always find it there as well. You can erase that one and paste in another PID right in the URL box to go to a known person.*
- *DON’T add a placeholder with a name of UNKNOWN! Instead add a child and choose the ‘Unknown mother’ or ‘Unknown father’ option. This can be fixed later far more easily.*

REMEMBER, ALL MISTAKES CAN BE FIXED!

SEARCH: Home page > Search tab > Choose which type of Search you need

NOTE: THINGS NOT INDEXED ARE MOSTLY NOT INCLUDED IN SEARCHES!

NEW!! Search FULL TEXT using AI –

- **Just announced at RootsTech 2024 with the potential to revolutionize family history!** Having this automatic searchable transcription available is a huge timesaver!
- Not 100% accurate. AI technology can make mistakes or struggle to read handwriting.
- Data sets available so far:
 - US Land and Probate records
 - Mexico Notary records
 - Australia Land and Probate records
 - New Zealand Land and Probate records
 - US Plantation records

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- Must SIGN IN to your account to access. This is a NEW Experimental Lab site – <https://www.familysearch.org/en/labs/>. Click TRY IT. Then BOOK MARK THIS PAGE.
- In the Search field, can use Keyword OR can click Advanced and add an Ancestor name. FOUR filters are available: Collection, Year, Place, or Record type. Matches are highlighted.
- Reviewing an individual result shows the highlighted original document in a viewer AND the full AI transcription at the right.
 - Try using both place and name fields with the name in “quotes”
- Download options:
 - Add the record to Source Box or attach to a person (using their PID).
- Note the citation. You can copy and paste it wherever needed, such as a weblink in Ancestry.
- OTHER NEW EXPERIMENT TOOLS IN THE LAB:
 - Merge Analysis View (understand the nuances of a merge)
 - Family Group Trees (to let family members see your tree containing living people)
 - Find Help with AI Search (explore how AI-assistance might help you)
 - Together (build stronger family connections)
 - Profile Quality Score

Search CATALOG –

- This searches the online catalog of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. FamilySearch is the exact same thing! *TIP: If you ever plan an in-person trip to FHL use this Catalog search to prepare in advance.*
- Click “Add to Print List” for interesting items, then print your list when finished.
- Search by Place, Surnames, Titles, Author, Subjects or Keywords. See what records there are for your location or by keyword. All holdings are in the Catalog, even those not in a Collection.
- Catalog entries tell all media formats available.
- OTHER Catalogs searchable to the right, many of them digital:
 - OCLC WorldCat – great for manuscripts and where they are held.
 - ArchiveGrid – online repository for your search location.
- Many catalog entries will refer you directly to OCLC World Cat to help find a library nearer to you holding your item.

Search the Research WIKI – FamilySearch.org > Search > Research Wiki.

- All-encompassing and extremely valuable feature, filled with informative articles – over 103,000! Even if you don’t choose to use the Tree on FamilySearch you WILL use the Wiki.
- This wiki is COLLABORATIVE. However, beginning July 1, 2024, only FamilySearch employees or those who go through specific training can make changes.
- A great first stop especially when investigating a new place or new subject.
- Search by location by drilling down through the map. Click on a list item to read it.
- Devon Noel Lee of Family History Fanatics calls the Wiki the Experienced Genealogist’s Secret Weapon!

GUIDED RESEARCH – Here you can go straight to the place name and the type of record you need. Plus, there are suggested steps listed, too. EXPLORE THIS!

Main Wiki page > (on the left side list) Guided Research > World map

- This tool lists where records for all geographic areas can be found!

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- The entire Wiki is not just information that is found on FamilySearch but also from various Partner sites! For example, it might direct you to a database on Ancestry.com.

TIP: The most used and attached records on FamilySearch are Birth, Marriage and Death records. FamilySearch has developed partnerships with libraries, governments, and archives worldwide. Check FamilySearch before you order any costly vital records certificates! It might save you \$\$...

MORE SEARCH METHODS are found in your **EXTRA HANDOUT**.

MEMORIES: From within the Tree, click on the person for whom you want to add a Memory.

The **MEMORIES** tab leads to options of: Overview, Gallery, People & Find.

- Memories lets you see your gallery of items attached to people in your tree. Can search for people, filter by close relatives added by you or items not yet attached. Very useful.
- Here is an informative, illustrated, FamilySearch WIKI article on how to add Photos & Documents as Memories:
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Putting_Photos_and_Documents_as_Memories_in_FamilySearch_Family_Tree

TIP: Take a screen shot of all sources NOT found in FS and upload those in Memories. Be careful with copyright. Fair Use would cover a few items from a collection, probably, but not a whole collection.

GET INVOLVED:

OVERVIEW – This page simply explains how the Opportunities and Indexing process works.

YOUR OPPORTUNITIES – This page shows you how using YOUR time and talent stacks up. It keeps a running tally for you. From here you can go straight to:

- **QUICK NAME REVIEW** or **FULL NAME REVIEW** or **VERIFY PLACES** – These are the in-person components to check the computer indexing. It's an easy process.
- **INDEXING** – This is primarily how records are made searchable. Remember there are BILLIONS of un-indexed records on FamilySearch just waiting for that indexing process. Volunteering gives you practice in reading old documents while you “pay it forward” to the genealogical community.

YOUR IMPACT – another place to access those volunteer opportunities, giving more details of your helping history.

INDEXING – where you go to perform the actual indexing.

ACTIVITIES: <https://www.familysearch.org/discovery/>

- There are many to choose from, with more being added.
- They include explorations or discoveries on the meaning of your name, happenings the year you were born, locating all Tree relatives with various war records. Can switch to discover the same types of things for other family members or ancestors.

SOURCES: Linking all your FamilySearch Sources to the Tree is your best way to keep track of them. The tool used by FamilySearch is the **Source Linker**.

Go to any person in your Tree, click Sources tab along the top. Or, when you click on a name and get the Summary Card – click sources right there rather than in the person detail screen.

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Several people may be named in a Source. You can link each person in a specific record to that Source. FamilySearch has an alert saying UNFINISHED ATTACHMENTS. This is a very helpful way to remind you that not everyone mentioned in a record has been attached to that same source.

For multiple paged sources, just attach the first page so that people can get to the beginning. Make a note in the Reason Statement of how many images cover this person.

COLLABORATION IMPROVES FAMILYSEARCH

We collaborate by working together without becoming upset. How to reconcile when someone makes changes to “your people”?

- Keep an open mind (is it “remotely possible” that your info is wrong?). Remember no one is aiming to frustrate and anger you. Work together, show your sources, stay kind and treat it as an opportunity! The other person may be naïve or uninformed.
- Use the FOLLOW feature extensively and contact people who make inaccurate changes with proof of why the truth is something other than they’ve posted.
- Your best bet is to make sure YOUR changes are documented well and add ALL your sources. In your “reason statement box,” compare the incorrect data to other sources to show why their source is incorrect. The change may go back and forth a few times, but eventually the other person will get bored, so keep persevering and keep reverting to those documented changes.

Collaboration happens through many activities within the Tree. [See details on these in your EXTRA HANDOUT.](#)

MERGE THOSE DUPLICATES
STANDARDIZE PLACE NAMES & DATES
VERIFY PLACES – Volunteer collaborative opportunity
EDIT VITAL INFORMATION –
TAG SOURCES –

DETACH INCORRECT SOURCES –
ADD DATES TO SOURCES TIMELINE –
DELETE DUPLICATE INFORMATION –
DELETE UNHELPFUL NOTES –
DELETE A PERSON –

WE CAN ALSO HELP FAMILYSEARCH DIRECTLY THROUGH:

CORRECTIONS – Email Devsupport@familysearch.org with suggestions for improvement.

FEEDBACK – www.getsatisfaction.com/familysearch These are forums where knowledgeable users can provide help or explanations. The product managers for FamilySearch also frequent the forums, offer suggestions, and bring ideas and problems back to the team to be addressed. Be certain to copy all URLs from the top of searches, or make screen shots, etc. to describe your situation and how it happened. That way they can duplicate what you did and fix the problem.

ADVANCED SKILLS:

HELPS FOR UNINDEXED COLLECTIONS & IMAGES – Image indexes were done by the person who photographed an Image set: when indexes are found inside the record those are also photographed. These can be helpful. Always be alert to what you are looking at. Is it the original record OR something created later? Images and Pages are not the same numbering system. Be careful! Do this after all other searches have come up empty.

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WAYPOINTS – Waypoints are logical chunks of larger groups of images. They are often State>County>Town>Parish and so on. The waypoints differ by collection. Search lists are often sortable by column heads with one click! Can filter by Collection name. Be certain to read the Collection details page AND the “Learn more about this collection” from the Wiki. Be thorough.

BATCH NUMBERS or BATCH FILES – This is an internal number representing an archive and type of record, assigned by those doing the photography. If a family stayed in one location for long, then records for several generations might easily be contained in a single batch file!

Find the Batch File number at the right of an individual record. Go to the FamilySearch Wiki for a list to decipher the letter preceding the numerals. So, change the P (births) to M (marriages) to begin looking for other family names!

Telling the system to look just in this parish for specific names can often yield only ONE result – YOURS! This method uses the Batch number to reconstruct families.

FILTER BY COLLECTION – Cast a broad net, then sift through the search results to laser focus your search results. Click the Collections Tab to group your results Click on Show All to see more than the top 5 ranked by number of responses. After searching a collection, delete it from the top list to eliminate it from the results.

EXACT SEARCHING – Uses the “exact” tools in the search boxes. EXACT means it will be matched exactly with these 4 **exceptions**:

- Ignores diacritic marks
- Ignores spaces
- Ignores capitalization
- Ignores punctuation

Manipulate your results by trying different ways to search. But use EXACT carefully. It will hide data and give fewer results. Some of those name variants might have been your person!

SEARCHING WITH WILD CARDS – This is the opposite of EXACT searching. Introduces MORE variability and more results. **What are WildCards?**

ASTERISK: Matches zero to an infinite number of ambiguous characters. For ex.: Stan* = Stan, Stanley, Stanislaw, and more. Can use multiple * in one name. Ex. *Ius*k = Czelusniak, Gelushnik, Celusnik, etc. Smart!

QUESTION MARK: Matches one, and only one, ambiguous character. Ex.: Eli?abeth = Elisabeth, Elizabeth.

Choose where to put these depending on where the characters are in your name that are more likely to be mis-transcribed. Often this means vowels. When you find something, you can correct, DO IT!

DNA HELPS: <https://www.familysearch.org/home/dna-testing>.

This section is factual only, aimed at answering questions and sharing information on DNA. Lots of helps here, even though FamilySearch is NOT a DNA testing company.

THERE ARE TWO WORK-AROUNDS TO ADD YOUR DNA RESULTS TO FAMILYSEARCH –

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Use Custom Facts!

Create your own custom facts to attach your DNA results directly to a living person.

Use Memories!

Save DNA results as PDFs, DOCs, or JPGs (such as screenshots) into Memories.

MORE STUFF:

HELP CENTER – <https://www.familysearch.org/help/helpcenter/>

Top right of every page. Going here is a quick way to access lots of the extra features.

WHY GO TO A FAMILYSEARCH CENTER IN PERSON?

If you need in-person assistance, this can be the place to go. Also, some images are only available onsite at a FamilySearch Center. OR you can park in their parking lot close enough that you can access their wireless network. The Center's system is called **Liahona**. The password is **alma3738**. Signing in takes one to the LDS page. Navigate to FamilySearch and then sign in as usual using your personal FamilySearch username and password. Then navigate to the records you wish to download, or screen shot as you ordinarily would.

BLOG – <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/>

Lots of helpful information on certain areas or certain record types. You can subscribe at the top right. A few articles a week are published.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

1. **Clean Up Your Family Tree on FamilySearch**
(Family History Fanatics) (11 min, 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNSYBkjdyEg&list=PLcVx-GSCjcdko9AI71HQacLC4po7I7959&index=9>
2. **FamilySearch Hidden Records: Full Text Search:**
(Genealogy TV – Connie Knox) (16 min, 2024)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-D6c1fVU3LQ>
3. **Finish Adding Sources to the FamilySearch Family Tree**
(Family History Fanatics) (9 min, 2021)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CojgVqTY3c&list=PLcVx-GSCjcdko9AI71HQacLC4po7I7959&index=26>
4. **Fixing Sticky, Tricky Problems in Family Tree**
(BYU Family History Library – Kathryn Grant) (51 min, 2020)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqyENhrKApE>
5. **Full Text Search from FamilySearch | A Quick Tutorial**
(Family Tree Magazine) (9 min, April 2024)
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkWZYU7xA3vvKCRXI79eqRu31KgbxiCbY>

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6. **Guide to FamilySearch**

(Genealogy TV – Connie Knox) (23 min, 2024)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yN_ss-zaRvk&t=1s

7. **How to remove people from the wrong family on FamilySearch**

(Family History Fanatics) (6 min, 2019)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0hOegP4Btg&list=PLcVx-GSCjcdko9AI71HQacLC4po7I7959&index=17>

8. **Navigating Image Waypoints Using Image Sets**

(Family Search) (6 min, 2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzg6rsBusk8>

9. **Overview of FamilySearch**

(FamilySearch) (53 min, 2024)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kvl82l4bg4>

There are MANY other official FamilySearch videos found on their YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@familysearch>

10. **Searching on FamilySearch**

(FamilySearch) (54 min, 2024)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ePZCgUj7Bs>

11. **The Source Linker on FamilySearch.org: Basics & Beyond**

(BYU Library – Kathryn Grant) (76 min, 2024)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48yoEQ0t0ow>

12. **Using the Batch Number**

(FamilySearch) (6 min, 2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvwgsA9i9g4>

13. **Your Guide to FamilySearch (maybe the best FREE genealogy website)**

(Genealogy Hints – Aimee Cross) (22 min, 2023)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmobwEF5yiE>

PLAYLIST – She has 18 FamilySearch videos, too

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCOHvB5d5Xvli1X_I6uIdyS7A-E10kG7



Willowtree Research Genealogy Services

Laura Street Chaplin, Owner / Genealogist

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EXTRA STEP BY STEP HANDOUT

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TREE EDITING:

MERGE DUPLICATES – from a Person Detail page

Motto: Merge duplicates whenever you find them to improve the Tree!

FamilySearch generated duplicates:

- Look to the far right for possible duplicates identified by the FamilySearch algorithm. Then click a listed Possible Duplicate.
- Study the details and THINK about the best way to do the merge. There will be clean up involved no matter what!
- A Good Rule of Thumb: Resolve children first, then the parents. You can easily fix duplicates in immediate family later.
- Walk through the three-step process, reading all suggestions and alerts.
- Review the merge, carefully comparing the two identities.
 - The most important consideration is RELATIONSHIPS because names or place names may change, census can be slightly off, etc. but relationships should be firm clues.
 - Children will automatically transfer over, although you can Undo. Same for Sources.
 - Anything in green is something already moved over for you automatically.
 - Be sure to confirm all the changes before you complete the merge.
- Be certain the two people are a match, then complete the merge.
- Be sure to list a brief statement in the reason box, giving your reasoning / sources. Include names with PIDs in your detailed reason statement.
- A drop-down box shows who last changed the person's information. You can click and send that person an email directly, making it easy to communicate.

If the algorithm did not find any but you strongly suspect a duplicate:

- Go the Person Detail page of the suspected DUPLICATE and click on their ID to copy it.
- Go to the Person Detail page for the Person you want to KEEP.
- At the right side, under Tools, click on **Merge by ID**.
- Paste the ID of the potential duplicate in the search box.
- Compare and follow the same steps as above for FamilySearch-generated duplicates.

To have the algorithm search more widely for possible duplicates:

- Go to the Person Detail page for the Person you want to KEEP.
- At the right side, under Tools, click on **Find Similar People**.
- From the list generated, click on any likely candidates.
- If you think you've found a duplicate, click on ID to copy it.
- At the right side, under Tools, click on **Merge by ID**; paste the copied ID in the box.
- Compare and follow the same steps as above for FamilySearch-generated duplicates.

FIX WRONG RELATIONSHIPS –

Motto: Make sure you can prove it!

It is simple to break relationships. Do it if you can make a good case. If you can't be certain (even after further research), simply leave a discussion question and let it wait until later.

- To change Parent / Child Relationships you must click the icon for the child in the parent/child section (rather than the husband/wife section for your Person).
- To change Spouse Relationships, you must click the icon for the marriage event in the husband/wife section for your Person).
- You have a choice to Remove or Replace the relationship in question. Pick the one that will fix the problem most easily.
- Insert your reason for removing the person from these parents.

USE FAMILY TREE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

The RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS (or HINTS) point you to possible errors and to the “lowest hanging fruit.”

- Found to the far right on most Family Tree person pages.
- Hints are also found on your personal home page immediately upon logging in. I stop there every time!

How do you process the hints? How do you attach the new information to your tree? These are usually fairly accurate but still need human intervention to make sure before you attach them.

First, view the relationship to you to see who the hint person is.

Remember - A hint may refer you to a partner site, such as FindAGrave.

Next, click Record Hints available ICON. Examine each one in detail.

- Right click on the person's name, which opens a link in a new window.
- Get familiar with the person.
 - Look at the Sources given.
 - Who else is already attached to this hint?
- If you can conclusively prove the hint is NOT a match, click to ignore, BUT THEN also go to the suggested match person. Click NOT A MATCH and be certain to add a REASON!

- If the hint IS a match, review and attach the source.
- As you review:
 - 'PLUS' icons refer to new information.
 - Going into your pedigree view in your tree might be helpful.
 - When you move the new info over sometimes you can go ahead and edit right there before adding. Such as by standardizing place names and dates.
 - Hints are also available in pedigree view and in portrait view.
 - Try the Descendancy view to see the hints in a different way.
 - From Fan Chart can highlight someone and click for their person page. *Remember – the color coding in the fan chart can lead you straight to the people with HINTS!*
- ALWAYS: Click on any link that directs you to the original images.
 - When viewing original images use arrows to advance and go back.
 - Occasionally you might be pointed to an incorrect page (especially in an unindexed collection hint) but be sure to check a few pages both forward and backward and you may find the hint referred to.
 - An easy way to do this is to click on the small squares to see a newsreel view.
 - IF you find something correct nearby THEN write an explanation INCLUDING THE CORRECT URL in the reason box for that Source attachment. (Just copy and paste the URL.)

AN EXTRA TIP: Use ANCESTRY.COM in tandem with FAMILYSEARCH to find wills and probate records.

- *Can jumpstart by starting with Google and go straight into Ancestry!*
- *Wills are likely in Ancestry. But the Probates may be in FamilySearch. Go in through locations. Don't forget the Browse Only collections. Target your state and county. Look for an Index covering the years you want.*

HOW TO INDEX:

1. Sign into your account.
2. Indexing > Web Indexing > page will load up. Your batches will now show up.
3. When just starting out, filter to BEGINNING. You can progress in difficulty as you go. You can work up to being a Favored Viewer.
4. Choose your project. Read all project instructions and information. EVERY TIME!

Use all the various HELPS available:

- Zoom in using + or – buttons. Can move around within the screen.
- Can adjust the image by rotating, adjust the brightness or contrast, or even invert the image.
- The REFERENCE IMAGE might be several pages before your page so you can bring that up for comparison and be sure you know what you're doing.

Should this image be indexed?

- Click yes or no. No – if it is blank or there is no extractable data.

- Make sure all those in the batch (always a small number) are unique records, not duplicates.

Data Entry:

Then fill in the fields provided. If you're unsure what it means, click on the '?' symbol. Lots of helpful ideas. Sometimes the project instructions tell you something different, so be careful.

Not every field can be filled in on the form so you can mark it Blank. Can use either a Keyboard shortcut like Ctrl > B or click the icons up top. In this case, the X.

Once all your information is entered in, doublecheck. When all finished and you've done your best, click SUBMIT. If you get in over your head, just click to return the batch.

ANALYZE SEARCH RESULTS IN A SPREADSHEET – Researchers often want to manipulate their search results in ways that the FamilySearch site cannot accommodate. Such as sorting search results, tagging results, or advanced analysis of records.

Exporting the search results into a spreadsheet enables you to accomplish these things.

This feature is only available if you're logged in. Top right side – Export Search Results. You can name the file and save it to your hard drive.

The search string is there at the top, as a link. You can use it over and over, adding the new results. It's automatically done as EXCEL since that is so common.

MORE SEARCH METHODS:

NOTE: THINGS NOT INDEXED ARE MOSTLY NOT INCLUDED IN SEARCHES!

Search RECORDS –

- General search of all indexed records, by collection.
- OR Zoom in on the interactive map.
 - Shows ALL records available, even the unindexed ones!
 - Indexed Historical Records search is at the top right.
 - Image-Only Historical Records are below that.
 - Another advantage is that the pages give links to the Wiki and other learning opportunities (at left).
- Once you do a Search (adjusting filters accordingly) – click on the row for a likely record to open.
- From search results list, try clicking the Collections tab at top. Can often find what you want quicker that way by eliminating Collections you know cannot be what you want.

Search IMAGES –

- Default is by PLACE BUT make sure to click the additional search options.
- Very flexible. More and Advanced search options give the ability to search by Date, Life Event, Record Type, DGS Number, Creator, Custodian, and Keyword!
- You can also search IMAGE GROUPS (must select a place first or will get an error message).

- Searching through the WIKI also lists the Image-Only unindexed records you can browse. Zoom into records using locality desired. Choose one and scroll through the images, often grouped alphabetically or in some other way. Drill down to the record desired.

Search FAMILY TREE –

- Very similar to a general search on Ancestry.com
- This searches ONLY the Family Tree entries NOT records; searching either by Name or PID.

Search GENEALOGIES –

- ONLY searches genealogies that have been submitted.
- See the thorough description (scroll to bottom of search page) to see what is included.
- Very similar to Ancestry Family Trees – beware, be careful, and VERIFY!
- Can filter by all sorts of criteria – remember to click on More Filters to use all the ammunition you have.
- You can upload your own Gedcom here (see at bottom right). But this does NOT add it to Family Tree, just preserves your research for others to see. You can remove it at any time.

Search BOOKS –

- Here you can search the entire Digital Library which includes books scanned by FamilySearch from major genealogical institutions – including Allen County Public Library, the Midwest Genealogy Center (Independence, MO) and many more!

DETAILED WAYS TO COLLABORATE:

MERGE THOSE DUPLICATES

TIPS:

- *Duplicates of living people can only be merged by those who created the records.*
- *You cannot merge records of a living person with a record of a deceased person. If necessary, change the death information on the living person then go thru merge.*
- *Open all the details. Read reason statements. Keep the version with the preferred reason statement.*
- *Memories do not display on the merge screen. However, all memories, notes, discussions, and sources are merged automatically to the surviving person.*
- *For more training, go to HELP CENTER, type in keywords you want to learn about.*

STANDARDIZE PLACE NAMES & DATES

Enter all your names, places, and dates as standardized according to what the algorithm would use.

VERIFY PLACES – Volunteer collaborative opportunity

- You sign up, then receive just 10 place names at a time to verify what the standardized version should be.
- These places can be from all over the world. Only volunteer for places where you are somewhat familiar or risk messing it up even more!
- Be sure to consider dates. These will be shown when applicable.
- It's fine to skip one. This place name will just be re-circulated.

EDIT VITAL INFORMATION –

- Again, try to standardize them, making names, dates, and places as complete as possible.
- Remember to add your reason statements.

TAG SOURCES –

- Go through Sources to make sure they are tagged to the correct Facts. This makes the source support clear.

DETACH INCORRECT SOURCES –

- We all make mistakes, but be certain it's wrong. Then view source and click detach.
- Leave a reason stating how you know this is wrong.

ADD DATES TO SOURCES TIMELINE –

- Can sort Sources according to the year they took place.
- For Sources from other websites or unindexed images you must add the dates manually to sort in the Timeline.

DELETE DUPLICATE INFORMATION –

- Consolidate to the most complete names or dates or places and delete the others.
- Use reason statement of “most complete information, eliminating duplicates.”

DELETE UNHELPFUL NOTES –

- Such as, “migrated from GEDCOM files” or similar, that don't really make any sense.

DELETE A PERSON –

- This is deliberately set up as harder to do, for good reasons.
- Easiest if **YOU** are the only person who has edited someone. Just DELETE person. (*NOTE: The process still requires you to put in a reason statement.*)
- **IF others have already edited**, the button will say, “Delete Person Unavailable.” You will have to contact FamilySearch to open a case. Put in your contact info and what your request is. Give a very good reason why the person needs to be deleted. You will need to include the PID for the person in your explanation.
- If you can't delete, but you know it are wrong, just take out the relationships to others in the tree so that the wrong person is no longer connected to anyone else.



Tips and Tricks for Using FamilySearch's Historical Record Collection

FamilySearch.org is a free website dedicated to help people find and document their ancestor's lives. Currently there are more than 2.5 million rolls of microfilm containing records from countries all over the world available in the Family History Library, FamilySearch Centers, and online. FamilySearch is working to digitize the microfilm collections, as well as capture additional digital images of records housed in libraries and archives throughout the world.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH

Identify one individual you want to research and set specific goals to remain focused in your research. Create a research log and bookmark websites you want to use again to find other ancestors.

- A research log helps track which collections were searched and the results of the search. This will help to eliminate redundant searches.
- Copy the URL of the images you find and add them as sources for people in your tree or on your research log. Other family members may also be in the record.
- Save records to your FamilySearch Source Box (found below your sign-in) if you want to refer to them later.
- Study the first few pages of a collection to determine how the collection is organized and whether the record set has its own index.
- Once you find an ancestor, scroll through the pages before and after to see if there is more information connected to this record.
- There are two different camera icons shown next to digital collections. These indicate whether FamilySearch.org, or another website, has an image of the record. Always look at the image.

INDEXED VERSUS UNINDEXED COLLECTIONS

If no results are found in an initial search, do not assume there are no records about that ancestor on FamilySearch.org. A basic search and record hints are made available only after records have been indexed and become searchable by the computer. More than 70% of the records are unindexed, because FamilySearch is acquiring records faster than they can be indexed. Digital collections that are unindexed can be browsed to find additional information about an ancestor.

To make these digital images searchable, the FamilySearch Indexing program has a large volunteer workforce helping to index the records. Anyone can help! Explore the Overview and Find a Project to index below the **Indexing** tab on FamilySearch.org.

SEARCHING INDEXED COLLECTIONS

Go to www.FamilySearch.org, choose **Search**, and then **Records**. There are three ways to search indexed collections:

1. Using the fields under **Search Historical Records** will search indexed collections for an individual. A broad search may bring up matches in records where you may not have searched for an ancestor. To limit the number of hits in your search, put in a date and a locality where your ancestor lived.
2. **Research By Location** by clicking on the map of the world. Click on a continent and a box will appear where you can choose either a country, state, or province. View [Learning Courses](#) specific to this locality. Search all [Indexed Historical Records](#) for this area using the search fields at the top. Below the search fields you can [Filter by Collection](#). The top five collections are listed, or you can [Show All Collections](#).
3. **Find a Collection:** Below the world map, if you know the title of the collection you may enter it in the box or select the blue link [Browse All Published Collections](#). You may filter by Collection Title, Place, Date, or Collection Type. You may limit your search by checking the box below the Title field to show only collections with images. These results will display indexed as well as unindexed collections

TIPS FOR SEARCHING INDEXED COLLECTIONS

- When searching for an ancestor, do not fill in every field on a search page---using less information yields better results. Do not use exact years for dates. Add 2-5 years for variations of age or event in records.
- Use alternate spellings, abbreviations, nicknames, exact and broad searches. Checking the box by name, date, or place is an exact search. Leave the Exact Box unchecked for a broad search.
- Because names may be misspelled or improperly indexed, try various spellings. Also, search by initials.
- Use **wildcards** to search for misspelled names. Wildcards are special symbols used to replace an unknown letter or letters in a word. A question mark (?) replaces one character. An asterisk (*) replaces zero or more characters. You must provide at least one character to use a wildcard in FamilySearch.

For Example:

?earl = Searl, Hearl, Pearl, Bearl, Kearl, etc. or

Ha*n = Hanson, Hansen, Harrison, Hampton, etc

UNDERSTANDING ICONS ON FAMILYSEARCH



The record is attached to a person in Family Tree.



The camera means FamilySearch.org has the image.



Click to show what the indexer recorded.



The Camera over a webpage means the image is on a Partner Website.



This Collection is searchable.



The film reel means the record is only available to be viewed as a film in the Family History Library.



Computer generated **Record Hints** from Indexed collections.



A key over a camera means the image can only be viewed at a Family History Center, due to permission and copyright agreements.

USING UNINDEXED BROWSABLE COLLECTIONS

Go to www.FamilySearch.org, Below the **Search** tab there are multiple ways to access unindexed collections:

1. Search the FamilySearch **Catalog**. All digital collections available at FamilySearch.org are listed in the catalog under the locality where the records were created. If a collection is digitized there will be a red note in the Notes section with a blue link to the collection. Filter search results by Place, Surname, Titles Author, Subjects, and Keywords. Also, search for Call Number, or Film/Fiche Number. Records may be found under different jurisdictional levels. Open the search **Places Within** option on top of the page to drill down to the county or city level, etc.
2. Search | **Images** includes recently acquired records collected worldwide. Technology now allows collections to be made available online within 24 hours of capture. Use a place search or click to open Show More Search Options and Advanced Search to filter results by Date, Life Event, Record Type, DGS (Digital File number), Creator, Custodian, or Keyword.
3. Under the Search | Records tabs, is **Research By Location**. Select the desired Country, State or Province from the world map you plan to search. Scroll down below Indexed Historical Records to browse unindexed **Image-Only Historical Records** The collections are sorted by topics such as Birth, Marriage, Death, Migration and Naturalization, etc. Under the topic name is the title of each collection. On the right you will see the number of images in the collection and when it was last updated. Choose any of the collections to browse through. Also see links to records in the Wiki and Catalog.

ICONS USED TO IDENTIFY COLLECTIONS

Collections **without** a **camera**, but containing a **number**, are only [Indexes](#).



Maine Births and Christenings, 1739-1900

686,480

Feb 22, 2020

Collections with a **camera** and a **number** are collections with a link to a [digital image](#).



Pennsylvania Civil Marriages, 1677-1950

209,880

Jan 30, 2017

Collections with a **camera** over a **webpage** are images from [Partner Websites](#).



Currentobituary.com index, 2001-2014

8,885

Dec 20, 2016

4. To **Find A Collection** below the world map, type the Title, or select [Browse All Published Collections](#). This search will list all record collections (both indexed and unindexed) by locality. Filter your search by Place, Date or Collection Type. There is an option to **Show only collections with images**.
 - Choose an **unindexed record** collection (identified by [Browse Images](#) in the record column) and click on the blue link with the title of the collection. This will take you to a description of the collection. To go directly to the collection, click on [Browse Images](#).
 - After clicking on Browse Images, you will see a list of jurisdictions or record sets that are part of the collection.
 - Choose the jurisdiction or record set you are interested in seeing. This will display the first image of the record set.
 - Use the navigation bar (just above the image) to scroll through the record set. Use the collection title to choose a different record set. Use the arrows and image numbers to scroll through the current record set.
 - As you browse through the images, use the Tools to enhance them.
 - To return to a different record set, click the collection title in the bar above the image.
 - To return to the main FamilySearch page and choose a different collection, click the FamilySearch icon at the top of the page.
5. The **Research Wiki** provides more than 95,000 articles about genealogical topics and places, with links to historical record databases, other websites, and helps. Search by topic or place.

CONCLUSION

- [FamilySearch.org](#) has a number of unindexed collections. These can still be searched and can provide a great deal of family history information. Because FamilySearch continues to index and digitize new collections, the number of these unindexed collections will continue to change. Check back often to see what new collections are available to search and browse.

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