

Getting Started with FamilySearch

With over a billion records from a variety of sources, FamilySearch is an excellent free resource for exploring family history.

Do you need an account?

Creating a free log-in is optional, but you have much better access to online records with an account.

Search for Records

Click on **Search** and select *Records* from the menu

- Enter the name and life events such as birth marriage, residence, death, etc. (try including more or less information to vary results)
- Add life events by clicking on the event title
 - ✓ By default search results include exact results *and* those similar to each term
 - ✓ Check the box next to the field to match terms exactly
 - ✓ Check *Match all terms exactly* to match every field entry (note that this may eliminate results in which those fields are empty)

Too few or too many results? Refine your search!

From the search results page:

- Edit and add to search terms
- [Filter the results](#) by collection (e.g., United States Census, 1930), sex, and year or place of birth, marriage, residence, death, etc.

Learn from Research Wikis

The FamilySearch Research Wiki is an online guide to genealogy databases and websites which also provides research strategies. Each Wiki is hyperlinked for more information or to find specific records for the topic. To access, click on *Search* at the top of the page and select *Research Wiki* from the pulldown menu.

Useful resources include how to:

- Research ancestors from specific countries, counties, etc. (search by location on the [Wiki homepage](#)) – Location guides.
- Use various record types by location – [Records guides](#)
- Research specific topics - Topical guides
- Details about individual collections - [Historical Records Collections](#)
- Local [Family History Centers](#) and PPLD Special Collections (Pike's Peak Library District, an affiliate library) – provide access to restricted collections not available from home

Is there a FamilySearch app?

Yes. The FamilySearch Family Tree app will allow you to:

- View and edit your family tree
- Access personalized research “hints”
- Search and view records
- View a map of your ancestors
- And more!

More information is available on the [FamilySearch website](#).

Tip: When using the Research Wiki, search for places and topics, not people. The Wiki will help you navigate to research records from the locations where your ancestors lived. Learn [more about the Wiki](#), including tutorials, and research guides.

Grow Your Family Tree

FamilySearch family tree differs from many other tree-building websites. It is a shared Wiki tree not an individual tree. Every person entered into the tree has a single profile; modifications are collaborative. By definition a Wiki is a crowdsourced collaborative place to gather information. *Crowdsourcing* is defined as the obtaining ideas/content by soliciting contributions from large group of people, especially the online community. *A free FamilySearch account is required to use the FamilySearch family tree.*

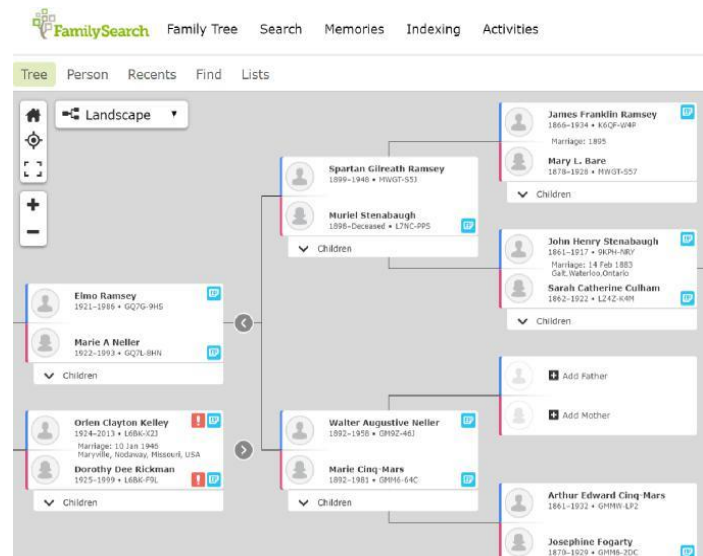
Add Yourself: Click on *Family Tree* and select *Tree* from the menu. Your name appears as you entered it during account creation.

Work Backward: Add your parents and continue working backward. FamilySearch will suggest potential matching profiles already created by other users.

View and Edit Ancestor Profiles Click on a name to access that ancestor's profile. View additional details, attach records, add photos and stories, and collaborate with others to discover and document your ancestor's story. To prevent others from adding inaccurate information to the tree, see the Family Tree section of handout.

Note: Information about living people, including yourself, is not visible to other users.

Tip: *Other users may have already constructed a significant portion of your Family Tree through common ancestors. While this is an opportunity to share research with other genealogists, it also means that you should verify the research completed by others.*



Explore Genealogies

- Ancestral File: a static collection of genealogies submitted by users prior to 2003; Submissions were merged to eliminate duplication.
- Community Trees: a collection of lineage-linked, sourced genealogies for specific communities and time periods. These are merged from compiled and original source records to identify the community genealogy.
- Guild of One-Name Studies: a collection of lineage-linked sourced genealogies
- International Genealogical Index (IGI): 430+ million ancestors contributed by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Each record contains one event.
- Oral Genealogies: spoken lineage-linked genealogies from localities throughout the world.
- Partner Trees: a static collection of lineage-linked ancestor trees submitted and curated prior to 2020 by users of MyTrees.com, RootsFinder, and American Ancestors.
- Pedigree Resource File: a collection of genealogies submitted by users. No corrections or merges have been made.

Use the Digital Library [Books pulldown]

Over 500,000 genealogy books, family histories, maps, yearbooks, etc., are in the library. Books have been processed using OCR (optical character recognition) software to make them full-text searchable. Remember that the quality of the original copy may limit searchability.

Search Books

- Search for the name of an ancestor, a birthplace, or other keyword.
 - ✓ To search for exact phrases, enclose in quotation marks.
 - ✓ Use AND, OR, NOT (capitalized) between search terms.
 - ✓ Wildcards: use the asterisk to replace one or more characters.

To download or print

- Navigate to the book, find download button
 - ✓ Choose page or entire file
 - ✓ Choose format (pdf or jpg)

For a downloadable pdf of out-of-copyright books, also check Internet Archive (non-profit library of millions of free books, movies, software, music, websites, and more) at <https://archive.org/>

Tip: While all items in the digital library are searchable, some may not be viewed in their entirety due to copyright or privacy restrictions.

Enhance Your Research with the Catalog Search

Search the catalog of genealogical materials (books, online materials, publications, microfilm, and microfiche). Not all are online; most are not indexed. A Catalog search finds some digitized records that are not viewable from home. In addition, the Catalog does not access all the newer records. The Catalog section includes records which may only be viewed at a Family History Centre, or at a FamilySearch Affiliate Library. The Catalog may also list records which can only be viewed as a microfilm at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. When using the catalog search on computers at an affiliated library, you will see more catalog documents than are viewable on your own computer.





How to use the Catalog Search

Download a how-to search the catalog at:
<https://cms-b-assets.familysearch.org › 14 › e2 › 67b25f8b255bfab70aaf2491d565 › 8-find-familysea>

Understand icons used in the catalog.

Icons on the right indicate where/how to view records

Record titles in red are hyperlinked to view.

	Reel icon: microfilm only, view at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City
	Camera icon: view on any computer when you are logged into FamilySearch
	Camera icon with key: view at a Family History Center or affiliate library
	Magnifying glass: item has been indexed; click to search the index

Tip: Not all FamilySearch digital collections have been indexed. These Catalog records must be browsed and are not (yet) searchable. To Search for a Family History Center or an Affiliated Library near you, click Find a Center and enter your location at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/centers/about> Call the center/library to confirm days and times open, as online information may not be current.

View FamilySearch Historical Images (records, not pictures)

The Images section contains records that viewable online without restrictions, including the very newest records that have been digitized. Here you will find images produced from FamilySearch's 300+ digital cameras worldwide almost instantly available. The records have not yet been indexed and are browsable only, not searchable. However, some records may have an index in the document itself.

- Search by location
- Filter by date
- Review

Tip: *Too many results or too few? Use the left side bar to narrow and broaden your search. Add or remove dates, use the map to see nearby locations, and click on location links to widen or narrow the search area. Then click Update.*

Explore Genealogies

Resources for Genealogies collection:

- Ancestral File: static collection of genealogies submitted by users prior to 2003; Submissions have been merged to eliminate duplication.
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Use the Cemeteries Search

FamilySearch has an ever-growing database of international cemeteries linked to the online family tree. Search by location, by cemetery name, or by names of individuals. In addition to burials, the cemetery pages contain general information about the cemetery, such as hours and address, as well as links to the cemetery home page (if one exists) for more information.

Subscribe to the FamilySearch Blog

Discover FamilySearch's latest news and features and what records have been added to the collection. Learn how to use historical records, genealogy tools, and heritage travel guides to discover your family history.

FamilySearch In-Home Activities

In-home family activities are designed to help discover, gather, and connect your family—past and present. These activities are designed to help get youth and children involved with family history work.

Current activities include:

- All About Me Box
- My Name
- Time Capsule Questions
- Where I'm From
- Keep a Journal My Way
- My Voice, My Experiences
- Remembering My Photos
- The Year I Was Born
- My Records and Their Records
- Weakness to Strength

Try FamilySearch Experimental Labs (<https://www.familysearch.org/en/labs/>)

Explore emerging FamilySearch experimental features not yet ready for public release. While features may be almost ready to be released, they are not live. They may have bugs or be incomplete.

Getting Started

Click on the *Try It* button for each new experience. Try as many experiments as you like. Most experiments have instruction pages explaining about the feature and type of feedback the FamilySearch teams would like.

Provide Feedback to FamilySearch

User feedback is important to determine the future of each experiment. Try the lab experiments, then provide feedback on how well they went. Use the feedback tab for the experiment's page. Select the emoji that reflects your feelings about the feature. In the comment box, explain why you feel this way and provide feedback. Provide your email so the FamilySearch team can reach out to you for more information about your experience, if needed.