![FamilySearch logo]

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 COLLETIONS

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.

Q 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.