

# Facets of FamilySearch

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## About FamilySearch

It's all about family. FamilySearch is a nonprofit family history organization dedicated to connecting families across generations. FamilySearch believes that families bring joy and meaning to life.

A FREE SERVICE TO ALL

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

### The core products of FamilySearch are:

- Family Tree
- Memories
- Historical Records
- Record Indexing

### Family Tree

This is where you will find the various views of your pedigree chart (landscape, portrait, fan, descendancy). This is also where the individual pages for you and your ancestors are found. You may include records for living persons, but they are not visible to anyone but you (private spaces). The Family Tree is one shared tree for all humankind. Hopefully, there is only one record for each person who ever lived. We, as their descendants, work cooperatively to make their records as accurate as possible.

### Memories

In the memories section of FamilySearch, you and others may upload pictures, stories, documents, and audio clips having to do with your family history. Each upload may be linked to the record for the individual(s) to whom they pertain in the Family Tree, thus making it easy to go from the memory to the person's record; or, from the person's record to their memories. These memories are visible to anyone with a FamilySearch account, and can be also be searched.

### Historical Records

Historical Records is a gold mine of information! Here, simple searches can be performed of the indexed records provided through a variety of sources. There are also un-indexed records that can be found and searched, or browsed, through the catalog, the user-contributed genealogies, and books. The access to these records is regulated by the owners of each of the collections. Historical Records also includes the Research Wiki.

### Indexing

Hundreds of thousands of volunteers from around the world contribute to this transcription effort, making valuable genealogical records feely searchable online. "Since FamilySearch indexing began in 2006, this unprecedented crowdsourcing effort has produced more than one billion searchable records." (FamilySearch)

## FamilySearch mobile apps

Install via Google Play Store (free)

- FamilySearch Tree – Android (by FamilySearch)
- A Memories App by FamilySearch – Android (by FamilySearch)

Install via Apple App Store (free)

- Family Tree by FamilySearch – iOS (by FamilySearch)
- A Memories App by FamilySearch – iOS (by FamilySearch)

## Working in Historical Records

Historical Records can be searched directly from the Person Details page of a person in the Tree by locating the box on the right of the screen labeled “Search Records.” Click on FamilySearch. This will cause another browser tab to open with the search criteria auto-populated and a list of potential records concerning your ancestor.

From the top of the FamilySearch page, you can also hover over the word ‘Search’ and click on ‘Records.’ Once there, you can search the indexed records by entering your own search criteria. Alternatively, you can click on a location on the map to search only that location. There is also ‘Find a Collection’ where you can enter the title, or part of the title, of a historical records collection to be taken directly to the index for that collection. ‘Browse all published collections will take you to the complete listing of available historical records collections, both indexed and un-indexed. There are many refining options for all of the searches.

Using “Help Center,” enter search terms to find useful articles with instructions for using the different areas of historical records. You will also see links to lessons and the Research Wiki that are relevant to your search.

- “searching historical records”
  - Options and Tips for Searching FamilySearch Historical Records; Searching historical records by place; Browsing all published collections in historical records
- “catalog”
  - Searching by place in the catalog; Searching the catalog by subject; Searching by keyword in the FamilySearch.org Catalog; Searching catalog by microfilm or microfiche number
- “books”
  - Searching for online books on FamilySearch.org; Viewing rights for online books on FamilySearch.org

You can also discover known issues about various records collections by using the search term “known issues.” For instance, this search will return the following article: “Historical records collections information and known issues.” Adding ‘Italy’ to the search will return articles specific to that country.

## Working with the FamilySearch Catalog

To work in the catalog, hover over the word ‘Search’ at the top of the FamilySearch page. Click on ‘Catalog.’ This will take you to the FamilySearch Catalog search page. There are several different ways the catalog can be searched; including by place (default), surname, title, author, subject, film number, etc.

Accessing digitized records can be done in a number of ways. You may need to use creative search techniques and paths to locate images.

1. Use the 'Search Records>FamilySearch' option from a Person Details Page.
  - a. example: Starting on the details page for Charles Clark Morgan (KLF4-8Q3), click on FamilySearch on the right of the page. There is a result naming Charles as the father on a delayed birth certificate for Wilford C. Morgan. Click anywhere in the blank space for that record. This opens the information about the record, including the image. Clicking on the image will enlarge it. Beneath the image is the film information where the image is found.
2. Beginning from 'Search>Records,' enter your own search criteria. Then click 'Search.'
  - a. example: Margaret Orr, death place: Minnesota, death year: 1885. Two records from the 'Minnesota Deaths and Burial, 1835-1990' collection are returned. Click anywhere in the blank space on the line for the first return. The indexed information becomes visible with a note that there is no image available. However, below that note is a film number (1403140). You can now go to the catalog and search by film number. This returns two items, with 'Items 1 - 5: Vital records and indexes, 1868-1945' being the one you want to view. Using the same film number, you locate the specific item. Clicking on the camera icon will allow you to browse the images to locate the image from which the information was indexed.
3. Hover over 'Search' at the top of the FamilySearch page, click on 'Catalog.'
  - a. example: search by place: "Vaud." Select drop-down option "Switzerland, Vaud." Click on 'Search.' There are many options, but click on Switzerland, Vaud – Biography' where you will then click on "Le livre d'or des familles Vaudoises..." A scroll down the page shows there is a camera icon, but no magnifying glass. Click on the camera icon. Many images load into the screen. This is an un-indexed collection, and must be browsed.
  - b. Other icons you may see are a film reel, meaning this item is still only on film; a camera icon with a key above it, meaning this item is digitized, but can only be viewed in a family history center or at a FamilySearch affiliate library; a camera icon in a box, meaning this collection belongs to someone other than FamilySearch, but can still be viewed.
  - c. Some collections are digitized but not yet viewable or searchable. This may have to do with restrictions imposed by the collection owner; or may be due to where in the process the digitizing is before making it available. If it has a DGS number, it has been digitized.

Refer to the articles in the Help Center for additional instructions for searching the catalog and viewing images.

## Books

Hover over the word 'Search' at the top of the FamilySearch page. Click on 'Books.' You can search by surname, title, location, author, etc.

1. Sample search: "Ezra Nason" returns 1,010 results. Clicking on the title, "Life and times of John Huss, or, The Bohemian Reformation of the fifteenth century," loads the book in ExLibrisRosetta reading window. It cannot be searched in this format, but can be read or browsed. However, in the upper right corner is an option to download the entire book. Doing this will save a PDF format copy which can be searched.
  - a. Clicking on the search return titled "The American descendants of Henry Luce of Martha's Vineyard, 1640 to 1985; Index" brings up a message telling you you do not have sufficient rights to view the requested object. This is a restriction imposed by the copyright owner. You may be able to view it in a family history center. It may, or may not, be downloadable.

## Research Wiki

Possibly the most underutilized resource in the family history world! Clicking on ‘About the Wiki’ in the menu on the left side of the screen provides a wonderful overview of what the Wiki is and how it can be used. While there is no family data in the Wiki, you may be led to information that will help you determine what you need to do next. You may learn some history surrounding an ancestor’s life events, and there may be links to databases; either in FamilySearch or outside the FamilySearch system.

1. Sample search: ‘Vaud’ (select Vaud Canton, Switzerland Genealogy from the drop-down menu). this page has a button linking to online records for Switzerland. It has a contents box showing what you can find on the page. There are many relevant and potentially helpful links on the right-hand side of the page. This is an example of a location page, though this one is quite brief.
2. Sample search: ‘German handwriting’ returns a results list including pages in the Wiki that may be helpful in learning about German handwriting. One is “Deciphering German Script..” Another is “German Handwriting.” Clicking on the latter, we see examples of lettering and links related to this search.



If you ever feel lost in the site,  
or overwhelmed by the amount  
of information, just click on the  
FamilySearch logo to return  
to your Landing Home Page.  
You can regroup from there!

Working in FamilySearch provides nearly limitless opportunities and resources to further your family history research. The environment is safe and offers a well-rounded experience, whether you are a serious researcher, or just want to gather information, pictures and stories. The cooperative nature of the Tree allows multiple users to contribute in expanding the knowledge and records available to all members of a family. As FamilySearch enters more partnerships with related organizations and companies; and as the indexing efforts continue, the data available at, and through, FamilySearch continually increases. It remains a free resource and service.

Truly, where FamilySearch is concerned, change is the only constant!