
Dig Deeper Into FamilySearch

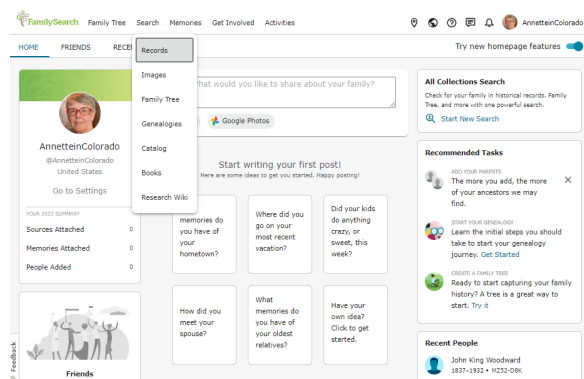
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The FamilySearch website is an amazing gift to genealogists. Run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it provides access to millions of records of genealogical significance free of charge. They have been gathering records from around the world since 1894 and continue to do so today. The website is a treasure trove of resources, but in order to make the best use of them, we need to do more than simply put a name into a search form.

Sign up for a free account

When you first go to the FamilySearch website (<https://www.familysearch.org/en/>), you will be asked to sign up for a free account, and then you'll be asked to sign in every time you access the website.



Many ways to search

The search menu on the FamilySearch home page gives us choices of searching records, the Family Tree, genealogies, the catalog, books, and the research Wiki.

In this presentation, we will concentrate on searching records by location and by collection, as well as using the Family Search catalog and the

Research Wiki. These search methods give us the ability to do targeted searches for resources that are most likely to give us the information we're looking for about our ancestors.

Targeted searching allows us to take charge of the research process and not to be at the mercy of FamilySearch's algorithms. Helpful as those algorithms may be in an initial search for information about an ancestor, they are limiting when we are seeking more advanced records beyond censuses and vital records.



Searching records

Putting an ancestor's name into the general search box is only going to scratch the surface of the records we might need. And what will turn up in the first few search results pages will generally be the basic records for an ancestor, like census or vital records. Once we've gathered those records, we need a way to get to the more advanced kinds of records that will deepen our understanding of an ancestor's life and be more likely to help us solve difficult

research problems.

We can find those records by searching by location and searching in specific collections.

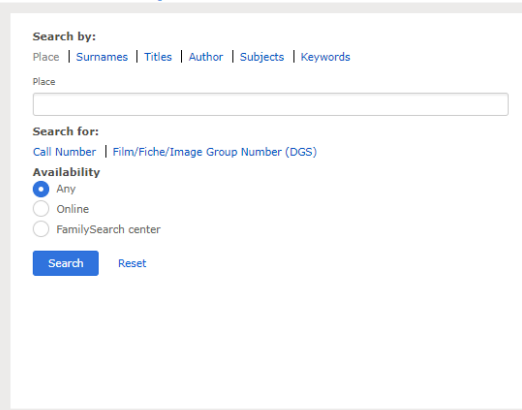
Searching by Location

When we search by location, we can limit our search to only those record collections that are in an ancestor's state or county—or in the case of research in records outside the U.S., an ancestor's country or smaller region within a country. When we select an area to search in, we're taken to a page that shows all the indexed historical records for that place, so we can begin to see what collections might be useful in answering our research question.

FamilySearch Catalog

Search the catalog of genealogical materials (including books, online materials, microfilm, microfiche, and publications) made available by FamilySearch online and in libraries and centers worldwide.

[Learn more about the catalog and how to access materials.](#)



When we search by location, FamilySearch also gives us access to its collections for that location that have been digitized but not yet indexed. This gives us the ability to browse these collections, just as if we were looking at a roll of microfilm and opens up more possibilities for finding information on our ancestors.

Catalog

The FamilySearch Catalog can be searched by place or keyword. Searching the catalog can take us to collections that might contain information we're looking for, but that aren't going to show up in a general search. Here we can find digitized county

histories, land records, church records, and much more. We can also find books and other printed material.

Search Results

For example, a search for Barnstable County, Massachusetts, returns this search results list:

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- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Almanacs (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Archives and libraries - Inventories, registers, catalogs (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Biography (6)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Buildings, dwellings, etc. (3)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Business records and commerce - Statistics (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Cemeteries (10)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Cemeteries - Maps (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Church history (2)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Church records (5)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Court records (2)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Court records - Indexes (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Description and travel (6)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Directories (2)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Genealogy (10)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Genealogy - Guidebooks (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Genealogy - Periodicals (2)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Guardianship (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - History (22)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - History - Indexes (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - History - Maps (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Indigenous peoples (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Land and property (139)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Land and property - Maps (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Maps (3)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Militia (2)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Naturalization and citizenship (2)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Obituaries (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Occupations (4)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Probate records (65)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Religion and religious life (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Statistics (1)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Town records (2)
- ▶ United States, Massachusetts, Barnstable - Vital records (5)

Print List

Each item in the list is a link, so if we want to look at land and property records, click on “Land and property,” and the links to each individual record collection will be shown.

Research Wiki

The FamilySearch Research Wiki is an incredibly valuable online tool. With articles on hundreds of genealogical topics, ancestral locations, and historic time periods, it should be our first stop when we start a new research project. We can search for places or topics in the Wiki.

Wiki articles are contributed by FamilySearch users, so not every article has in-depth coverage, but most are packed full of useful information that can save us time

and effort in our research. Articles about U.S. counties, for instance, generally include the dates at which recordkeeping began, links to collections on FamilySearch and other websites, information on boundary changes, and much more.

Resources

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