![FamilySearch logo]

Tips and Tricks for Using FamilySearch's Historical Record Collection

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FamilySearch is a free website dedicated to helping people find their ancestors. Currently there are more than 2.5 million rolls of microfilm containing records from countries all over the world available at the Family History Library and FamilySearch Centers. Staff and volunteers are working to digitize the microfilm collection as well as capture digital images of records housed in libraries and archives throughout the world. In order to make these digital images searchable, the FamilySearch Indexing program has a large volunteer workforce helping to index them.

Currently, there are more than two thousand digital collections online. Many of the collections are indexed, some are unindexed. This presentation will show you how to search the indexed collections and how to use the unindexed collections. Digital collections that are unindexed can be used effectively to find additional information about an ancestor

BACKGROUND

Tips to Identifying collections available in Records at FamilySearch.org.

- Collections without a camera and with a number in the Records field are only indexes.
- Collections with a small camera next to the title and a number in the Records field are indexed collections and link to a digital image.
- Collections with only a small camera and Browse Images in the Records field are unindexed collections.
- Collections with a large camera next to it are images from partner websites. FamilySearch has partnered with commercial family history websites so that individuals who use FamilySearch.org have access to more name indexes. This means that an index can be searched at FamilySearch.org but access to the digital image may be available only at a subscription website. Partner websites are available free in the Library and at FamilySearch Centers.
- There are two different cameras shown next to digital collections. The smaller camera on the left is used for a digital collection available at FamilySearch. The larger camera on the right is an image available at a partner website.

SEARCHING INDEXED COLLECTIONS

Go to www.familysearch.org, choose Search, and then Records. There are **three ways** to begin searching indexed collections:

1) Begin a search using the fields under Search Historical Records. A search from this page will search all indexed collections for an individual. **To limit the number of hits in your search**, put in a date and a locality where your ancestor lived. A broad search may bring up matches in records where you may not have searched for an ancestor.

2) **To limit a search by locality**, click on search and the records tab. On the right of the screen will be a map of the world. Click on a continent and a box will appear where you can choose either a country, state, or province. When you choose a state in the US, you will click on the words United States or a state and Start researching in . . . You can search all indexed collections for this locality using the search fields at the top. Underneath the search fields is a place where you can Filter by collection. The top five collections are listed with a box to check on the left. There is also a place where you can click to Show all 87 Collections (or whatever the current number is)

3) **Browse All Record Collections** by scrolling down below the world map to select the blue link Browse All Records Collections. This search will list all record collections (both indexed and unindexed) for a locality. After clicking on a continent, you can narrow down your search by smaller localities. You also have options to search by country, state, province, parish, or subject and time period. When you use the Filter by collection name box you can filter your search by entering a locality or subject. On the bottom left there is also a box **to limit your search to only collections with images**.

TIPS FOR SEARCHING INDEXED COLLECTIONS

- When searching for an ancestor, don't fill in every box of a search page—using less information gives better results. Don't use exact years of birth in a search, add 2-5 years for variations of age in census records.
- Use alternate spellings, abbreviations, nicknames, exact and broad searches. Checking the box by a name, date, or place is an exact search. Leaving a box unchecked is a broad search.
- 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 at FamilySearch.

USING BROWSABLE COLLECTIONS

Go to www.familysearch.org, choose Search and then Records. There are three ways to find unindexed collections:

1) Search the FamilySearch Catalog. All of the digital collections available at FamilySearch are listed in the catalog under the locality where the record was created. If a collection is digitized there will be a red note in the Notes section with a link to the collection.

2) **To limit a search by locality**, click on search and the records tab. On the right of the screen will be a map of the world. Click on a continent and a box will appear where you can choose either a country, state, or province. When you choose a state in the US, you will click on the words United States or a state and Start researching in . . . Scroll down to the Image Only Historical Records section. The collections are sorted by topics such as Birth, Marriage, and Death; Migration and Naturalization. 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.

3) **Browse All Record Collections** by scrolling down below the world map to select the blue link Browse All Records Collections. This search will list all record collections (both indexed and unindexed) for a locality. After clicking on a continent, you can narrow down your search by smaller localities. You also have options to search by country, state, province, parish, or subject and time period. When you use the Filter by collection name box you can filter your search by entering a locality or subject. On the bottom left there is also a box **to limit your search to 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 right 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 | California, Death Index, 1905–1939 › 1930–1939 › Aabel, Arnold–Hetterman, John › ◄ Image [1] of 819 ► 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.

TIPS

Identify one individual you want to find information about so you don't get sidetracked. Create a research log and bookmark websites you want to use again to find other ancestors.

- Keep a research log so you know what collections were searched and the day they were searched. This will help to identify whether a collection was updated after it was searched.

- Copy the URL of the images you find and add them as sources to your tree or on your research log.

- Study the first few pages of a collection to determine how the collection is organized and whether the record set has its own internal index.
- Once you find an ancestor, scroll through the pages before and after to see if the record has multiple pages.

CONCLUSION

- FamilySearch.org has a number of unindexed collections. 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.

LEARN MORE

- To learn more about FamilySearch's extensive digitization program, view videos about the Granite Mountain Record Vault and the digitization process:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KLea_DPxb4 and:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYkLKAPzCfQ (or search for Granite Mountain Record Vault at YouTube.com).
- To learn more about our indexing process, go to FamilySearch.org and click on Indexing at the top of the page.