

FamilySearch.org and Family Tree

FAMILY TREE—over 1 billion names in a free collaborative Tree submitted by approximately 22 million users—that means there is a good chance your ancestors are already in the Tree. See what exists.

FIND—Use Find to learn which of your ancestors are in the Tree. Follow the “direct pedigree child” until your ancestor is not in the Tree. You may add your “missing child” and his or her descendants.

ADD, REMOVE, REPLACE—Can add children, parents, or spouse. You can remove or replace; always provide a reason this info is correct. Can also Add using Source Linker from searching historical records.

TREE—See the pedigree for any ancestor using any of four Tree views: Landscape, Fan, Pedigree, and Descendancy.

PERSON—Look at an individual ancestor with vital info, spouse, children, parents, and siblings.

SOURCES—See what sources already exist for your ancestors. Copy what you don’t have. Add what you have that is not in the Tree. Can copy urls and paste. Existing source entries can be edited.

MEMORIES—Consists of Photos, Documents, and Stories. See what exists for your ancestors. Copy what you don’t have. Add what you have that is missing. No one can change your Memories. Tag, Title, and Describe entries.

PROFILE PICTURE—Edit, replace, remove. One selection for all “cousins.”

COLLABORATE—Check on Notes and Discussions for your ancestor. Your notes can be changed but not your Discussions.

WATCH—Click Watch to become **Unwatch** for your ancestors and FS will send you a weekly email of any updates. You will always be in the know.

RELATIONSHIPS—View the generations between you and your ancestor

LIFE SKETCH—Review, write, or contribute to a description of your ancestor.

TIMELINE—Review a supplied timeline. Use options to customize.

EDIT—You can add new information or improve what exists. Use “Reason this info is correct.”

RECENTS—Lists yourself and most recent 50 ancestors reviewed for easy return.

RESEARCH HELPS and HINTS—Consider any Helps and See what records FS has already found

LATEST CHANGES and SHOW ME—See who your cousins are and what they have contributed. Click on a patron-cousin name to communicate with them. All entries are logged in MESSAGES.

TOOLS—Check for Possible Duplicates, Merge by ID, Report Abuse.

PRINT—you may print pedigrees and family groups.

LIGHT BULB TIP—Click if you see a Lightbulb icon in lower right.

SEARCH RECORDS—Use wild card searching with * when ancestors hide. Expand the 4-year range for birth date. Use another name from the family. Search by parents only. Use TYPE to select a specific record category.

BROWSE ALL PUBLISHED COLLECTIONS—See the specific collections that are included in the FS Online Search Records. You may search within a specific collection.

GENEALOGIES—Submit your GEDCOMs for preservation. Nothing you submit will be changed and you can access it anytime you have Internet access.

CATALOG—Deed and probate records are powerful records that do NOT appear in the FS Published Collection yet many are accessible by searching the FS Catalog.

1. Enter the desired jurisdiction, usually a County such as Butler. Select the desired county from the provided list of counties and click Search.
2. From the provided list of record types, select Land and Property for deeds and Probate for estate and probate records.
3. Look for the Government entries as Recorder of Deeds or Register of Wills.
4. Generally, the list will start with Indexes. Look to the Right to see if a Camera icon exists. If so, click on the camera and you will have online access to images that correspond to the microfilm copy.
5. Use the forward arrow to move forward in the index or enter an image number and hit Enter.
6. After you find entries in the Index for your ancestor, return to the list of Deed Books or Probate Books to see if a camera icon exists for the desired Book. If so, click on the camera and find the needed records.
7. For successful results, copy the url of the record to paste it as a Source entry for your ancestor.
8. You may also create a “Snipit” of the record image to add as a Memory for your ancestor.

BOOKS—Over 350,000 books are online using Search Books.

WIKI—Over 88,000 articles that describe that lists websites, provides research strategies, and suggests records and resources to help you find ancestors from all over the world.

HELP—Located in the Upper Right corner are several Help features including a Help Center where Knowledge Documents are available and Contact Us where you can submit an email, use chat, or call 866 406-1830 for assistance.

Tips for Using FamilySearch.org

We all like tools and resources that are easy-to-use, help us quickly find the results for which we are hunting—and, did we say, free? As the largest holder of world-wide records with 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, FamilySearch in recent years has taken gigantic strides to bring these records online. Concurrently, over 300 camera and scanner teams across the globe are capturing records digitally and volunteers across the world are indexing records for quicker access.

By default one will search historical records when using the Search feature; however, one can also Search using four other important categories: (1) Genealogies consisting of Ancestral File, Pedigree Resource File, and the International Genealogical Index (IGI); (2) the FamilySearch Catalog of its microfilm and printed resources; (3) over 300,000 Online Books; and (4) the FamilySearch Wiki consisting of over 84,000 research articles.

Despite the availability of so many online collections, we may still experience searches with too many results, not the right results, or feel like we are searching for a needle in a haystack. This presentation shares tips for using FamilySearch to structure your online search in such a way to more likely solve your research problems and enhance your research experience. After finding your desired Search results, the FamilySearch Tree is a great place see what others have found and to share and preserve your own conclusions in a manner that promotes collaboration.

Tip 1—Use Life Event and Relationship filters

Searching with only the given and last name provides too many unrelated results. For example, a search for James Lynch has more than 300,000 results, beginning with page after page of 1940 U.S. census entries. This is frustrating if one is looking for his marriage record in Iowa. After entering his name, select “**Marriage**” from “Search with a Life Event” and enter **Iowa** for the place of marriage and **1855 to 1870** for year range. His 1860 marriage to Ellen Jaquiss is the fifth result. Further, going to “Search with a Relationship” and entering **Ellen** as spouse will show his marriage as the first result.

Tip 2—Use Residence and Restrict Records by Type

Often search results will initially come from the 1940 census, then the 1930 census, then the 1920 census, and so forth when you are really interested in results from the 1880 census. Or instead of census results, you see unwanted entries from other record types you are not currently researching or have already researched. One approach is to use “Residence” from “Search with a Life Event” and enter **Appanose, Iowa** for place and **1880** for year to narrow the search to the 1880 census. Then use “Restrict by Type,” in this case selecting “**Census**.” For James Lynch, this approach renders a single desired result.

Tip 3—Use Wild-cards *

The asterisk (*) is a researcher’s best friend when query responses fall short of expectations. FamilySearch permits wild-card use with only one letter. An example is **H*** when looking for the surname Hamsing or alternatively ***sing** or **H*ing**. Also, use phonetics for name spelling.

Tip 4—Use Wild-cards ?

The question mark (?) is another powerful wildcard. The question mark takes the place on any letter. When a search for George Money failed to produce a desired result, the surname was

entered as M?ney and the result was realized in George Maney. Another example is Jam?son so Jamison and Jameson will appear together as results.

Tip 5—Search by First Name Only

On occasion surnames are so severely miswritten or misindexed that searching by surname will never achieve the desired result. Use only the given names of members of the family, especially family members with less popular names—Gertrude instead of Mary. Also enter a residence and year to narrow the desired search. Review the index and image result to verify locating the intended family.

Tip 6—Use Parent Only Searching for Finding Married Names

It is often difficult to trace a female child from one census to the next because she marries, and without available marriage records, you don't know her married name. When you know the names of the parents, leave the given and last names blank in the primary name fields. In "Search with a relationship," select **Parents** and enter the first and last name of the father and first name of the mother. Look for results that match with expected children. Especially look for married daughters. Once you have the married names of daughters, finding additional records is straight-forward. Also, when you find the death records of children, you frequently learn the maiden name of the mother.

Tip 7—Know the Collections that Relate Specifically to Your Research

Using the general search feature is often sufficient; still, there are times when you will benefit from knowing specifically which collections exist online at FamilySearch. One may click on **Browse All Published Collections** under the world map or under the blue Search button. An alphabetical list of over 2,100 collections will be displayed. Selecting one of the regions on the left under Place will provide an alphabetical list of online collections only for that region. Or you can enter a desired location such as Tennessee in the upper left search box. At the upper right is a column for Records indicating the depth of coverage. You can find a FamilySearch Wiki article that will provide some idea of coverage if you click on the title of the collections and then click on "**Learn More.**" The Last Updated column indicates the more recently updated collections. The camera icon to the left of the title indicates that images are available. If Browse appears in the Records column, record images exist although without an index.

Tip 8—Browsing Can Be a Blast

An interesting German collection is titled: Germany, Prussia, Pomerania Church Records, 1544-1945. Searching for Christian Selchert provides no matches. Below the Search area for the above collection, you see "View images in this collection" followed below it by the link "Browse through 141,103 images." Wow, few people have the tenacity to search through so many images. But that is seldom what is required. For example, when you click on "**Browse through 141,003 images,**" two choices are listed—Mecklenburg- Sterlitz or Pommern. Click **Pommern**. Then 26 districts are listed including **Pyritz** which is selected. Then 80 churches are listed from which **Brietzig** is selected. Then two choices based on year ranges are presented: 1811-1833 and **1834-1873** from which the second is selected.

A page selection consisting of 394 pages is provided, which leaves you to decide whether to

sequentially click through the Brietzig church records or to search by specific page number. With either method, browsing 394 pages is doable for a desired record. In this case, surprisingly, on the third page was the 23 January 1834 marriage of Christian Friedrich Sellchert to Maria Sauermann. The bride and groom were both 28. His father was Gottfried and her father was Johann. In less than 10 clicks, precious information was learned. And image 41 is the birth record of their son Christian Friedrich Sellchert. In fact, records for the entire family of six children were located from this browse collection.

This set of choices is called way-pointing. This collection was fairly easy to navigate because the records were organized by geography and then chronologically. Other records may be organized alphabetically, such as many U.S. county probate records. So don't shy away from Browse collections.

Tip 9—Using Partner Sites

Instead of "View Image," on the index, the message reads: "This image is viewable at fold3.com. By clicking here you will be leaving FamilySearch.org. (fees and other terms may apply) Visit Partner Site." Yikes! First, be assured that clicking on the Visit Partner Site, in and of itself, will not cause any fees to occur. The experience at each Partner Site is different. In some cases, such as fold3.com, you can gain some sense of what is available by seeing how many pages exist. As a patron, first you know something exists. What you do next is your decision. FamilySearch learned from its focus groups that overwhelmingly patrons wanted to know that records were available, if the decision whether to access the records was left to them.

Tip 10—Sign In, No Tricks

Creating an account at FamilySearch is simple, and patron supplied information is never used for any purpose other than family history research. Click "**Sign in to see free images.**" If you already have a FamilySearch user account, merely enter the applicable user name and password; otherwise, click "**Create an Account**" above the sign-in area to easily create an account. Accept a verification email from FamilySearch to activate the account and the desired image can be accessed. There are over 7 million registered FamilySearch users.

Tip 11—Find, Search, Source, and Preserve from the Family Tree

With a FamilySearch user account, you have free access to "Family Tree" containing research information on over one billion persons. The intent of the Family Tree is to have one instance of an ancestor so if 20 descendants share the same 5th great grandfather, each descendant will have access to the same information for that common 5th great grandfather with the ability to review and add source material, research proof summaries, photos, documents, and stories that all 20 descendants can use. A user-to-user messaging feature simplifies collaboration. Activating a "**Watch**" feature results in a weekly message from FamilySearch with notification of changes or additions to any ancestor. Over time, the reliability of Family Tree will increase as more sources and conclusions are added.

Use the Find feature to locate any deceased person in the Family Tree (access to living persons is not provided). For example, the name Lorilla Spencer is entered using "**Find**" with a father Charles and spouse Frank. She is the first result. By clicking on her name, a summary card

appears indicating the number of sources, memories (photos, stories, and documents), and discussions that have been associated or attached to Lorilla. The Family Tree contains over 15 million user supplied photos, documents, and stories of ancestors.

From the Summary card you can click on **“Tree”** and then in the upper left, select from four different type of tree views: Landscape, Portrait, Fan, and Descendancy. Or from the summary card, click on **“Person”** to see spouse, child, parent, and sibling relationships followed by sources. In the “Person” view, on the right panel is “Record Hints” with suggested specific records about your ancestor that FamilySearch has already identified as likely matches.

Also from the right panel, one can click on **“Search Records”** to conduct a consolidated record search. Eureka! With a single click, search results for Lorilla Spencer include her Iowa birth and three census entries. You can quickly attach each applicable record to the person’s list of sources. One can attach key documents, transcriptions, proof statements, and notes. Researchers spend hundreds, even thousands of hours, discovering records and establishing conclusions. The FamilySearch Tree is a place for sharing and preserving this investment and labor of love.

Tip 12—Give Back, Be an Indexer

Click on **“Volunteer”** or **“Indexing”** from the home page to find several ways to give back. Click on **“Start Indexing”** and then **“Find a Project”** to get started. Volunteers receive a small batch of records so indexing is easy to fit into one’s busy schedule.

Please share these tips to help others using FamilySearch to enjoy further research success.

Using FamilySearch Helps, Really Helps

FamilySearch provides extensive genealogical Help capabilities that many never use. Learn how to take advantage of these super features.

Get Help is located at the upper most, right-hand corner, above one's name on every FamilySearch screen. It contains a powerhouse of Help resources. Unfortunately, many users never see it because, well, the upper most, right-hand corner of the screen is one of the least looked at screen locations. Now that you know the "secret" Help location, be certain to take advantage of Get Help. The seven components of Get Help are described in the following seven items.

Help Center permits you to enter your question in a "What do you want to learn about?" search screen or to obtain articles from various categories, including: FamilySearch Account, Family History Center, Family Tree, Search, Indexing, Memories, Mobile, Partners, and Genealogy Assistance.

Getting Started predominantly introduces the FamilySearch Family Tree with articles and short videos.

Contact Us provides specific methods to reach FamilySearch including free phone support at 866 406-1830, email at support@familysearch.org, chat, and locating a nearby Family History Center.

My Cases tracks your contact requests.

Learning Center is the entry point to access hundreds of family history video courses. You can use the Search field to enter specific locations such as Ireland or topics such as Research Skills to narrow your results.

Research Wiki contains over 87,000 articles making it a premiere resource for learning about record collections and the history associated with specific jurisdictions and geographies. Part of your preparation is understanding what, how, where, and when records were collected, archived, and made available for your ancestors. The Wiki will save you much time and effort. And you can contribute your knowledge by writing a new article or adding to an existing article. Either click on a map for your interested geography or enter a location in the Search field. A key resource feature is Online Records where you will find links from record providers

beyond FamilySearch. Note that the Research Wiki is not a surname database nor used primarily for searching specific ancestors although the Wiki may lead you to your ancestor.

What's New is a repository for blog articles about using newer FamilySearch features.



Tips are another stellar Help resource located at the bottom right corner of most Search and Tree screens. Unfortunately, many users never see these Tips because, well, the lower, right-hand corner of the screen is the least looked at screen location. Now that you know the “secret”

Tips location, be certain to take advantage of these powerful tips.

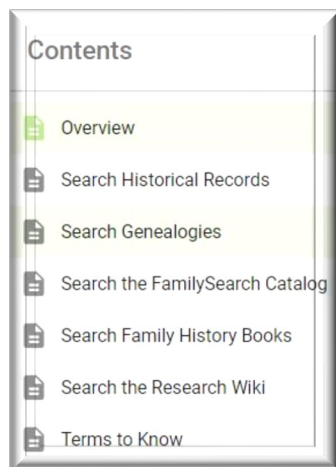
Occasionally, our ancestors play “hide-and-seek.” For example, we know they should be in a specific record collection, living in a specific county in the 1880 U.S. census. They were enumerated, we just can’t find them. How frustrating!



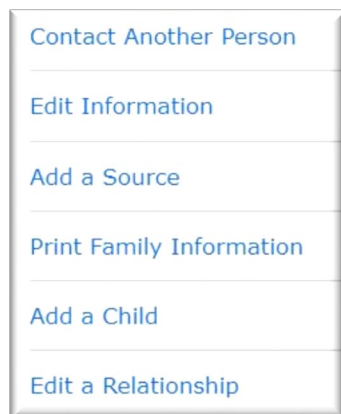
Here are five Tips that every researcher must utilize to achieve desired results when encountering “hide-and-seek” conditions. At times, we get too many results, most or all, that are useless. These tips including Life Event filters and restricting results by Record Type will lead to “first page” desired results. Many ancestor names were captured phonetically, written by record takers with difficult to read handwriting or

with dull writing instruments or disappearing ink. Such ancestor names were indexed the best they could, but not even close to what we are expecting. Wild cards, both “*” and “?” are indispensable in our deciphering sleuthing. And FamilySearch has top-notch wild carding, requiring only one-letter instead of the normal three letters, typically required at the beginning of a name. For example, we can search using wild cards for my missing ancestor, Alfred Hamsing in the 1900 U.S. census, simply as Alfred H* to find him incognito as Alfred Hoursing.

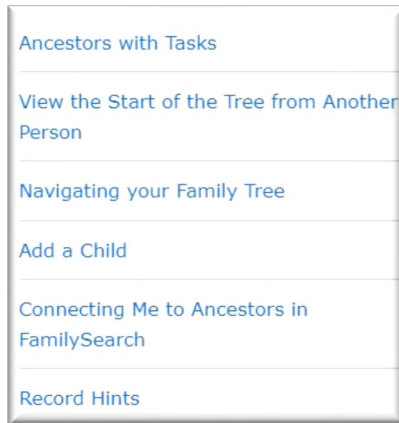
Another powerful search strategy is to Restrict by Record Type for birth, marriage, and/or death. Enter the state for the event such as Ohio for death place and enter the Father's name and mother's first name without any name for the primary person. This somewhat counterintuitive method will frequently result in results for married daughters providing their married name in their death records. Of course, this result leads to many additional record searches using her married name.



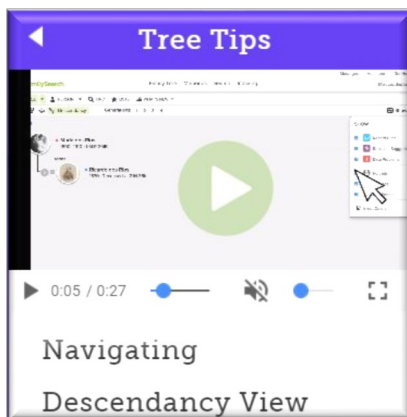
[Click here for additional search help](#) provides another set of tips for searching Genealogies, Online Family History books, and the Family History Catalog.



There are useful Tips associated with the Family Tree from each ancestor's Person Page.

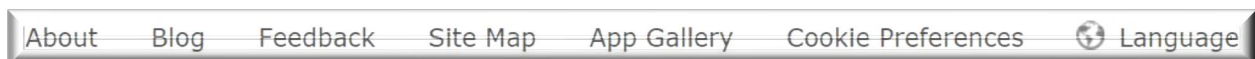


There are useful Tips associated with the Family Tree from each Pedigree Landscape View.



Many Tips include short videos and animation of actions to take.

Another set of Help features is located at the very end of the Home page or any Search Screen. Unfortunately, many users never see these features because, well, scrolling to the very bottom of a screen is something that typically only the most curious people do. Now that you know the “secret” location, be certain to periodically check out the “bottom offerings.”



In **About**, click on Press to find the latest happenings in the world of FamilySearch. Want to give FamilySearch your #1 suggestion, then click on **Feedback**. Not sure how to find specific FamilySearch content? Click on **Site Map**. **Solutions Gallery** describes over 100 Apps created by third parties that work with FamilySearch, many are free. Want to use FamilySearch in a different language? Click on **Language**.