CHEAT SHEET

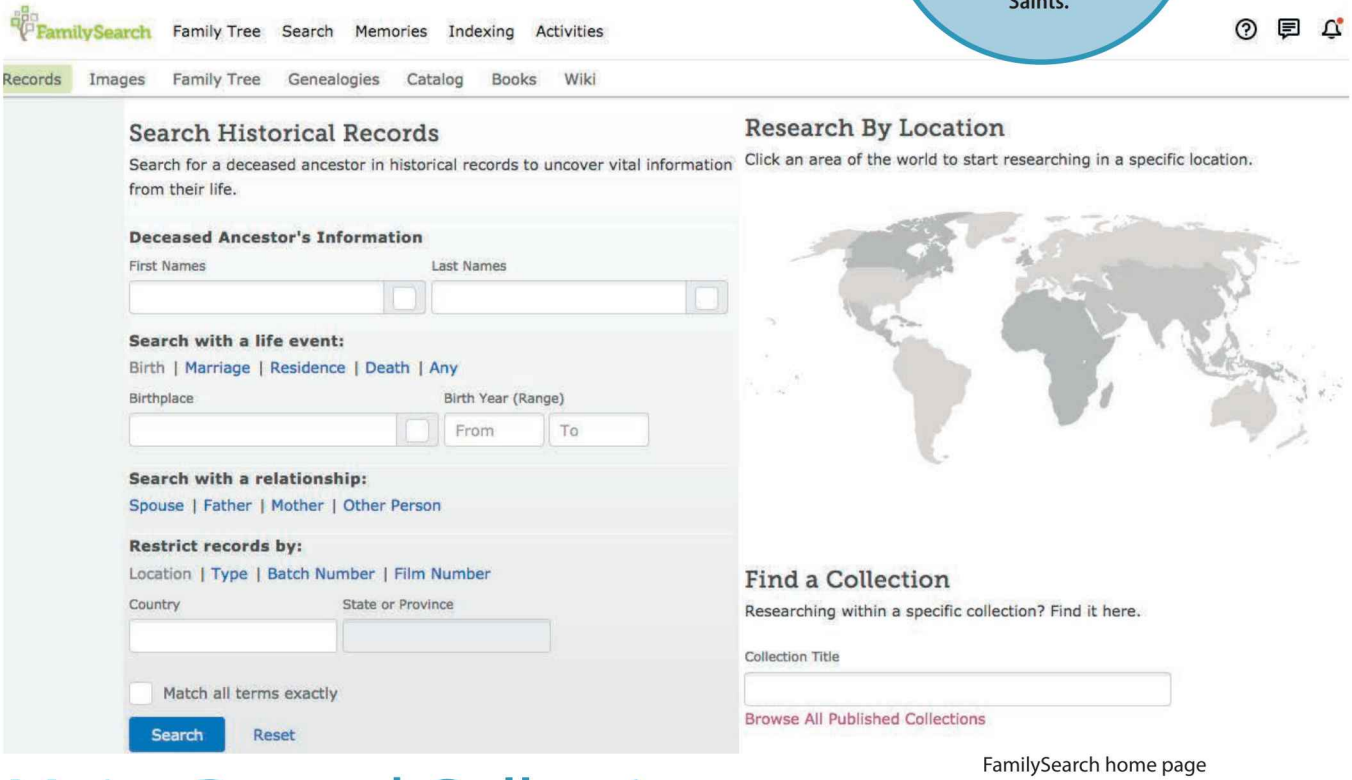
FAMILYSEARCH

EDITORS OF FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE AND DANA MCCULLOUGH

AT A GLANCE

Launched: 1999
Names in Records: 7.2 billion
Registered Users: More than 1 million
Names in Family Tree: 1.2 billion

A nonprofit organization, FamilySearch is owned and operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



FamilySearch home page

Major Record Collections

US CENSUSES

- 1790–1940 federal censuses
- Various state censuses

US VITAL RECORDS

- Birth, marriage and death indexes for various cities and states, including New York, Texas, Ohio and California
- Social Security Death Index
- Find A Grave Index
- BIllionGraves Index

US PROBATES AND WILLS

- Various state records
- Freedman's Bank records

US MILITARY RECORDS

- WWI and WWII draft registration cards
- WWII enlistment records
- Civil War service and pension records
- Marine Corps muster rolls
- Revolutionary War pension and service records

CANADIAN RECORDS

- Censuses
- Passenger lists

UK RECORDS

- Birth, marriage and death register index
- 1841–1911 Censuses
- WWI service records

IRISH RECORDS

- Civil registration indexes
- Valuation Office books
- Tithe Applotment Books

GERMAN RECORDS

- Births, baptisms, marriages and deaths
- Germans to America Index (1850–1897)

MEXICAN RECORDS

- Baptisms, marriages and deaths
- 1930 census records

IMMIGRATION RECORDS

- New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and New Orleans passenger lists
- Border-crossing records from Canada and Mexico
- US passport applications
- Naturalization records and indexes for various states

NEWSPAPERS

- Obituaries from GenealogyBank and various publications

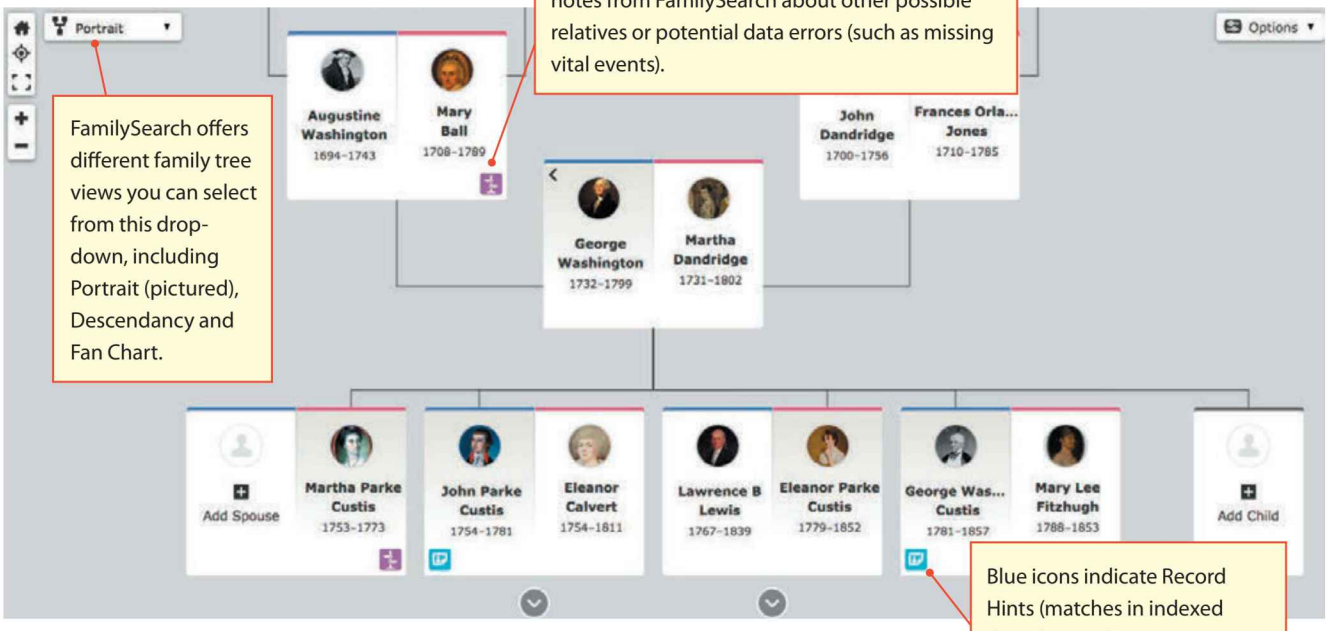
OTHER RECORDS

- International Genealogical Index (IGI)
- United States Public Records, 1970–2009

THE FAMILYSEARCH FAMILY TREE

With more than 1.2 billion names, the **FamilySearch Family Tree** is an excellent resource for genealogists around the world. Unlike other online tree websites wherein each user has his own family tree (such as Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com> and MyHeritage <www.myheritage.com>), FamilySearch combines its users' family "trees" into just one global Family Tree.

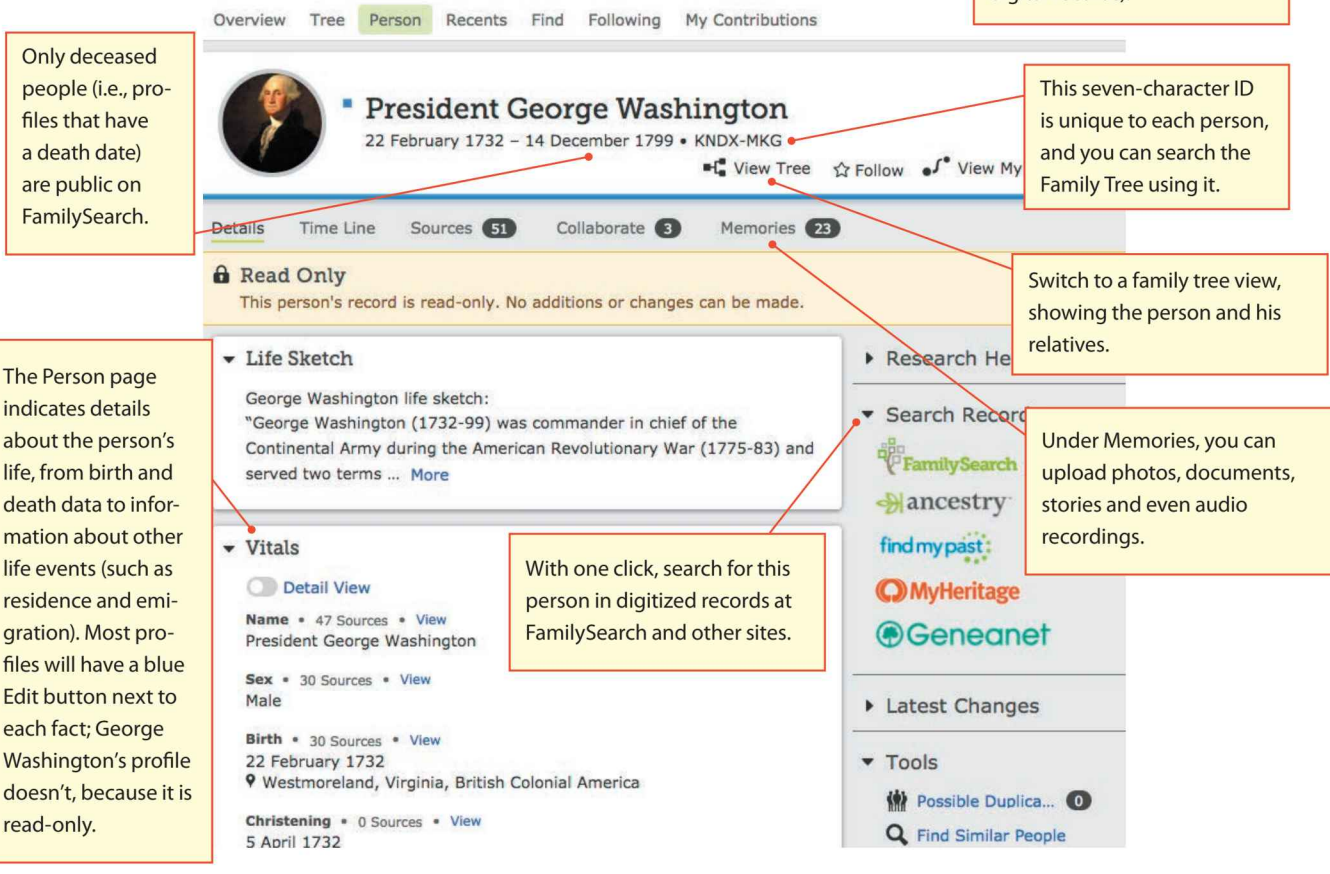
Remember:
Any user can edit and view profiles of deceased individuals on the FamilySearch Family Tree. Set up notifications to keep track of changes others have made.



Purple icons indicate Research Suggestions: notes from FamilySearch about other possible relatives or potential data errors (such as missing vital events).

FamilySearch offers different family tree views you can select from this drop-down, including Portrait (pictured), Descendancy and Fan Chart.

Blue icons indicate Record Hints (matches in indexed digital records).



Only deceased people (i.e., profiles that have a death date) are public on FamilySearch.

This seven-character ID is unique to each person, and you can search the Family Tree using it.

Switch to a family tree view, showing the person and his relatives.

The Person page indicates details about the person's life, from birth and death data to information about other life events (such as residence and emigration). Most profiles will have a blue Edit button next to each fact; George Washington's profile doesn't, because it is read-only.

With one click, search for this person in digitized records at FamilySearch and other sites.

Under Memories, you can upload photos, documents, stories and even audio recordings.

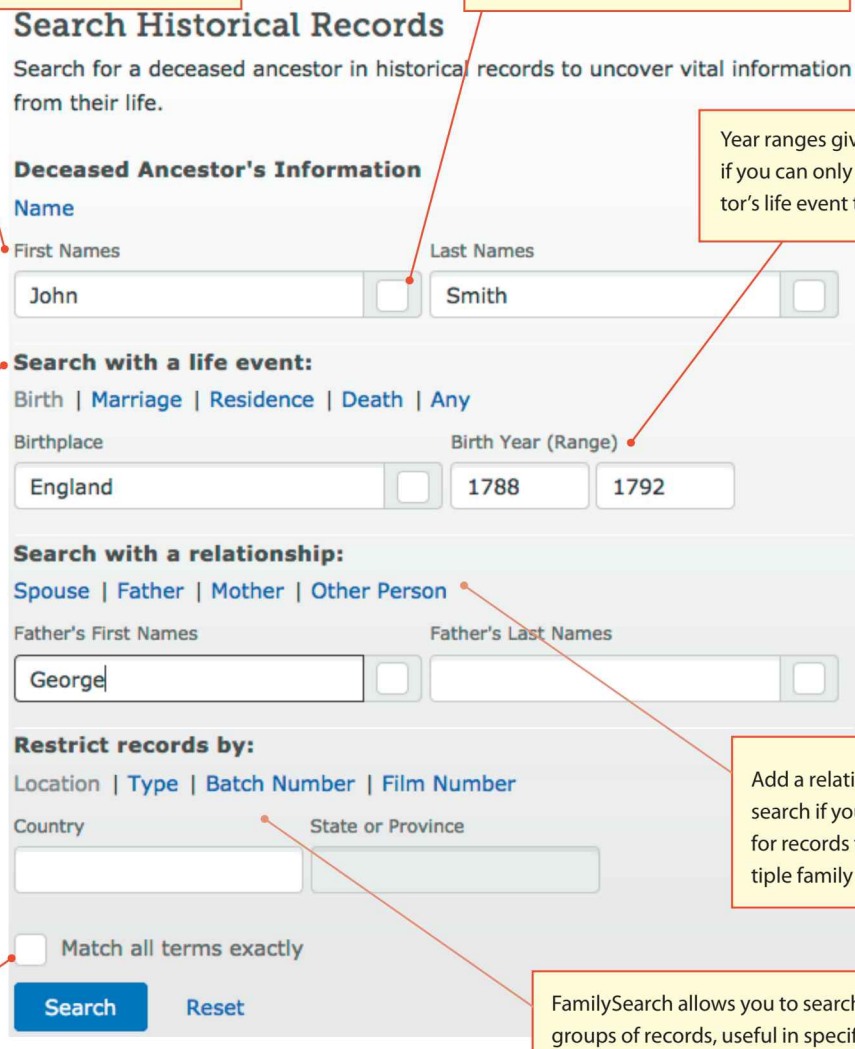
Using the Main Search Form

The main search form <www.familysearch.org/search> allows you to search all of FamilySearch's indexed records at once. This can be a blessing and a curse. With too broad of a search, you'll have to sort through millions of results (many of them irrelevant). But with too narrow of a search, you'll risk missing important records. With the right fields filled in, you can deftly navigate FamilySearch's more than 7 billion indexed record results.

FamilySearch is totally, 100% free. However, the site has additional features only for LDS Church members.

The search form has separate fields for first and last names.

To limit your search to only results that match a field exactly (e.g., that have the same spelling), click the box behind it.



Year ranges give you some coverage if you can only guess when an ancestor's life event took place.

You can search by life events, notably birth and death dates and places. Remember that adding more life events to your search will result in fewer record matches. Any records that don't include this information will be omitted.

Add a relationship to your search if you're looking for records that include multiple family members.

With one click, you can ask FamilySearch to show only results that exactly match all the fields you entered above. Use this feature sparingly (particularly when searching with multiple fields), since this will substantially limit your results.

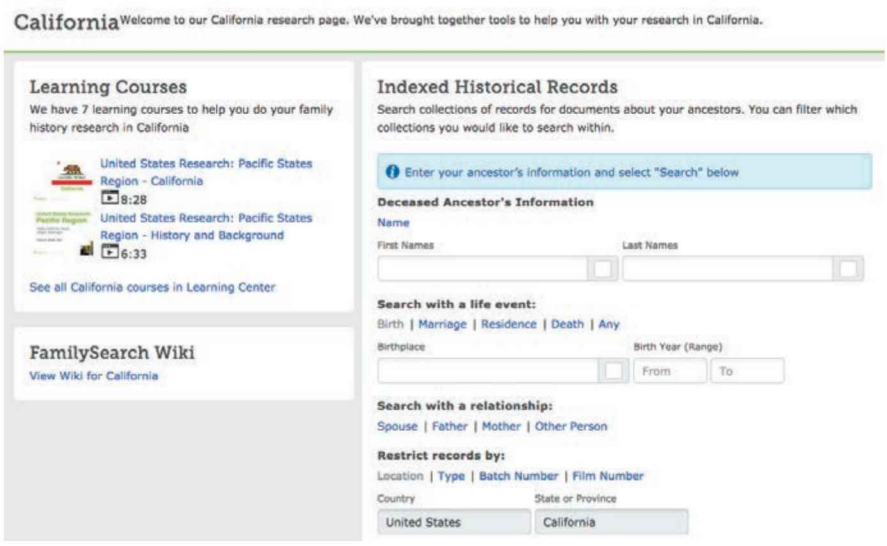
FamilySearch allows you to search only for particular groups of records, useful in specific cases:

- **Location**: If you know the record you're looking for comes from a specific country or state/province
- **Type**: If you want to limit your search to a specific kind of record, such as censuses or marriage records
- **Batch** or **Film Number**: If you have these details from when the records were originally microfilmed (such as by browsing digitized images or viewing microfilms in person at archives or Family History Centers)

Researching by Location

Drill down to record collections from specific places. From the main search page, choose a region from the clickable world map, then select a country or (for the United States and Canada) state/province.

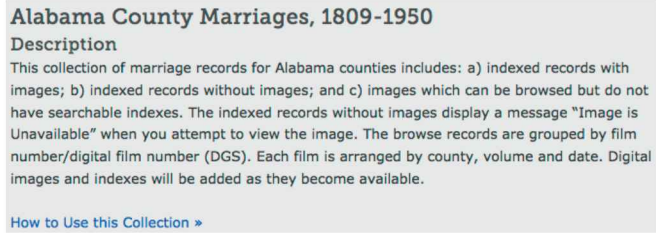
You'll be directed to a landing page (see right) with a form that searches just records from that location, plus (if available) information about current indexing projects and links to relevant Learning Center courses and FamilySearch Research Wiki pages.



Searching Individual Collections

Visit <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/list> (above) to target which of FamilySearch's 2,800-plus records collections you'd like to search. Filter by place or time period, or keyword-search collection titles. You can also sort collections by name, number records or date last updated (useful if you want to target new or recently indexed collections). Collections with camera icons have linked record images; collections that are browse-only are labeled as such.

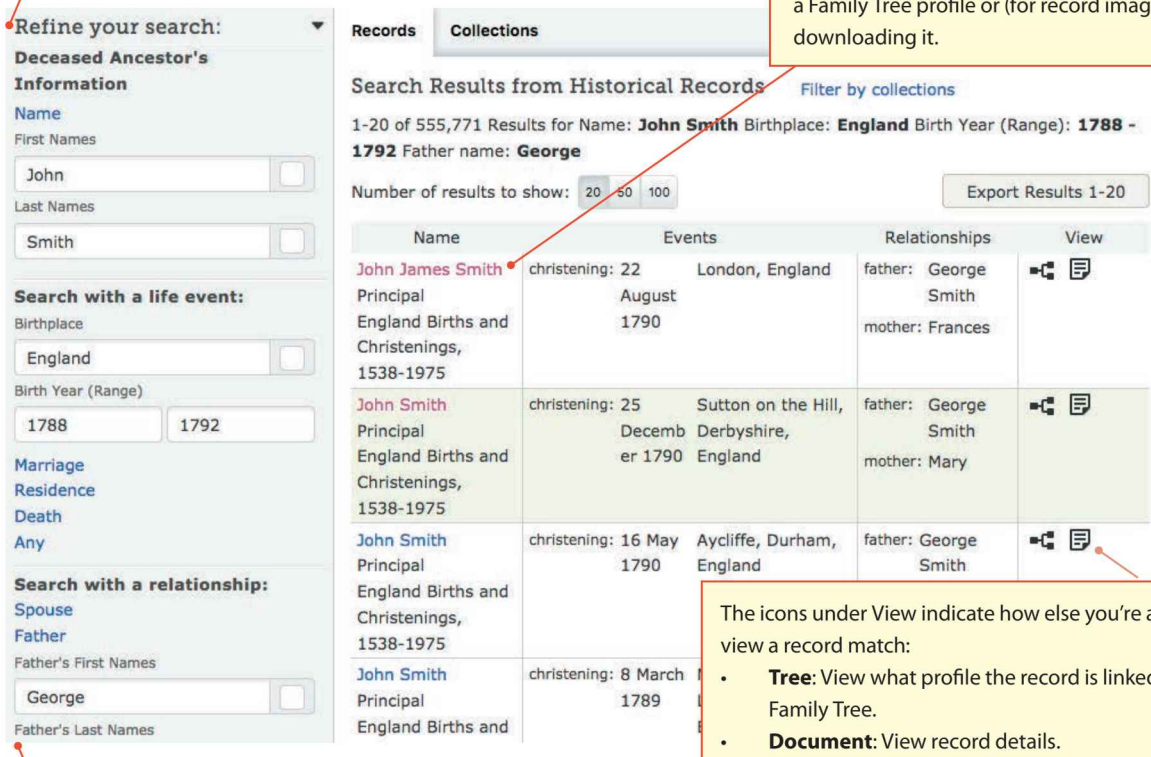
Click on a collection name to bring up a summary (see right) and search form. The resulting page also includes citation details and (if available) a link to browse record images.



VIEWING SEARCH RESULTS

Change your search terms by adding/ removing options or modifying fields, then click Update.

Click a name to open a new window that has details about the matching record. You'll also have the option of adding the record to a Family Tree profile or (for record images) downloading it.



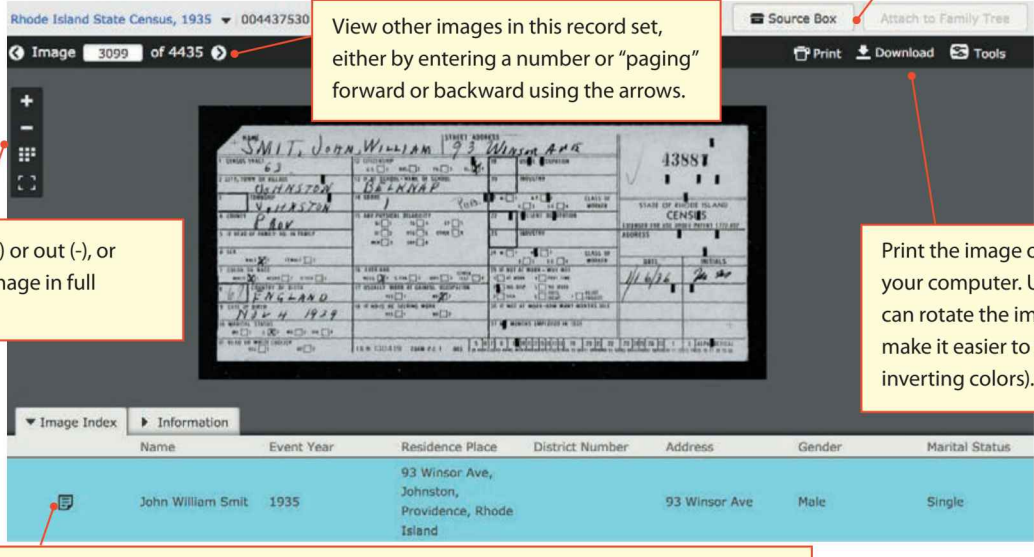
Scroll down for filtering options, including collection, record type, and birthplace.

The icons under View indicate how else you're able to view a record match:

- **Tree**: View what profile the record is linked to in the Family Tree.
- **Document**: View record details.
- **Camera**: View the digitized record image.

Viewing Record Images

Add the record to your quick-reference Source Box or attach it to a profile in the Family Tree.



View other images in this record set, either by entering a number or "paging" forward or backward using the arrows.

Zoom in (+) or out (-), or view the image in full screen.

Print the image or download it to your computer. Under Tools, you can rotate the image or adjust it to make it easier to read (such as by inverting colors).

If an image is indexed, it will be annotated with that text. Images that include multiple indexed records (such as censuses) will highlight each part of the index on the image.

BROWSING RECORDS: STEP BY STEP

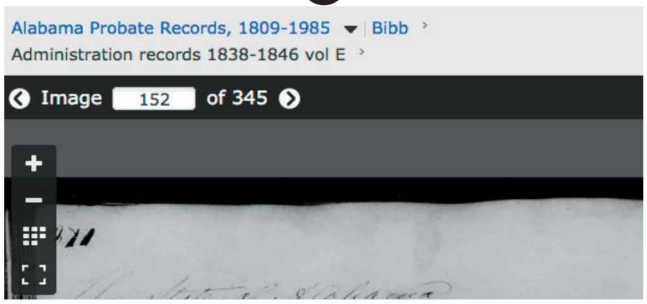
1

Step 1: Choose a collection. Though FamilySearch and its army of volunteers are indexing records every day, you may occasionally need to access collections that are still browse-only. Navigate to the collection using the instructions under "Searching Individual Collections" in this guide. Click Browse Images either from the collection list or from the collection's landing page.

2

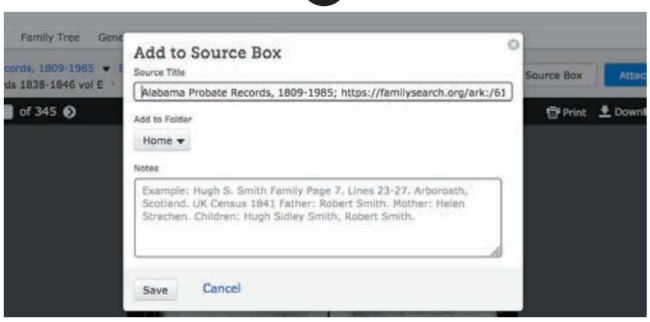
Step 2: Select a volume. You'll be asked to pick from drill-down options, such as locality or volume (which might be organized by record type, year or surname).

3



Step 3: Start with a page, then move forward and backward. By default, you'll begin on page 1 of the record set you've selected. You'll likely need to employ a trial-and-error system to find the page with your ancestor's information. Enter a number in the box, then hit Enter to jump to a different page. Scan the image to see if it applies to your ancestor. If it doesn't, use the arrows to navigate forward or backward until you find the right image—or where the right image *should* be—based on how the volume is organized.

4



Step 4: Save the record. Once you've found a match, download the record to your Source Box, attach it to the Family Tree, or save it to your desktop. You can also print the record.

Volunteering at FamilySearch

If you'd like to give back to the genealogy community, consider donating your time as a volunteer through FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org/help/volunteer>. You can get involved by taking user surveys, donating to FamilySearch (in terms of time, money, or even records or programming skills), or serving as a family history missionary.

But perhaps the most direct way you can make an impact in the lives of other genealogists is by participating in an indexing project. Volunteer indexers help make records keyword-searchable, opening them up for researchers around the world. Select a project and view a step-by-step indexing guide at <www.familysearch.org/indexing>.

USING THE FAMILYSEARCH RESEARCH WIKI

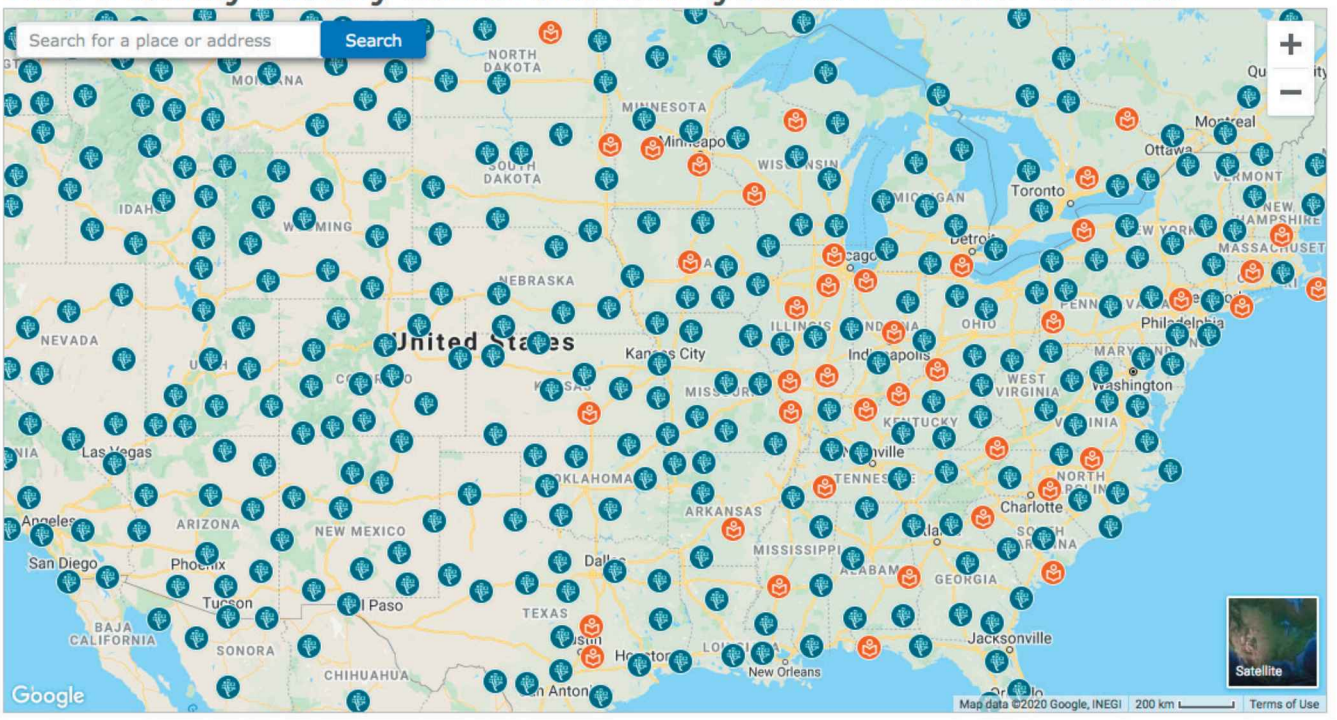
The **FamilySearch Research Wiki** <www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page> is an excellent resource to learn more about the ancestors you're researching, as well as the places and time periods in which they lived. With more than 90,000 articles, the Wiki provides research advice and tips to help you move your research forward.

You can search the Wiki's articles by keyword, or you can browse articles by country <www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Online_Genealogy_Records_by_Location> or by topic <www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Category:Articles_by_Topic>.

The page for Ohio (below), for example, contains links to subpages about specific kinds of records, plus a clickable map that allows you to view county-level wiki entries. Keep scrolling down the page for links to additional Ohio resources, such as Cyndi's List <www.cyndislist.com> and state-specific collections such as Ohio Memory <www.ohiomemory.org>.

VISITING FAMILY HISTORY CENTERS

Find a Family History Center and FamilySearch Affiliate Libraries



Family History Centers (FHCs) are local branches of Salt Lake City's Family History Library. At an FHC, you can find a bevy of records and resources (often about and from the local area), as well as trained staff who can help you find and interpret documents. FHCs—as well as FamilySearch Affiliate Libraries—also have special access to FamilySearch.org, including more digitized records than are available to individual users.

As of 2020, FamilySearch operates more than 5,000 FHCs around the world. Find the location nearest you by typing in an address at <www.familysearch.org/help/fhcenters/locations>. You can also browse the map there; blue dots indicate FHCs, while orange dots indicate affiliate libraries.

Quick Links

Home	<www.familysearch.org>
Records Search	<www.familysearch.org/search>
List of record collections	<www.familysearch.org/search/collection/list>
Blog	<www.familysearch.org/blog/en>
Catalog	<www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>
Digital Library	<www.familysearch.org/library/books>
Family History Center locator	<www.familysearch.org/help/fhcenters/locations>
Help Center	<www.familysearch.org/help/helpcenter>
Indexing projects	<www.familysearch.org/indexing>
Learning Center	<www.familysearch.org/help/helpcenter>
Memories	<www.familysearch.org/photos>
Research Wiki	<www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page>
RootsTech	<www.rootstech.org>
Volunteering	<www.familysearch.org/help/volunteer>

RESOURCES

Cyndi's List: FamilySearch <www.cyndislist.com/familysearch>

***Family Tree Magazine*: FamilySearch Resources** <www.familytreemagazine.com/familysearch>

FamilySearch on Facebook <www.facebook.com/familysearch>

FamilySearch on Twitter <www.twitter.com/familysearch>

FamilySearch on YouTube <bit.ly/familysearch-youtube>

ThoughtCo: FamilySearch Historical Records <www.thoughtco.com/familysearch-historical-records-1421962>

Unofficial Guide to FamilySearch.org: How to Find Your Family History on the World's Largest Free Genealogy Website by Dana McCullough (Family Tree Books)