



What's New in Family Tree for 2016

Ron Tanner, Group Product Owner
ron@familysearch.org

Introduction

FamilySearch, which was founded in 1894 as the Genealogical Society of Utah, is dedicated to preserving the records of the family of humankind. Our purpose is simple: help people connect with their ancestors by providing easy access to historical records and allow people to work together to document and preserve their shared family histories.

The goal of Family Tree is to gather the most accurate, sourced, and complete genealogy of humankind and to make this information freely available to everyone. By sharing this information, we hope to eliminate duplicate research and allow those who are interested in family history to focus their efforts on finding new ancestors. Because FamilySearch has been preserving information for over 100 years, you can trust that this documented genealogy will continue to be available for years to come.

FamilySearch Family Tree

Family Tree is unique among the many other genealogy databases available today. Unlike most systems, where users have their own private trees that are often not shared with others, Family Tree is a single, shared pedigree of humankind. Everyone works together on the same genealogical entries for their shared ancestors. The Family Tree is collaborative and open, allowing users to fix erroneous data, even if they did not contribute that information.


To help in moving towards accuracy, Family Tree provides flexible and reusable sourcing, editable conclusions that can be tagged to sources, reasons to explain why the conclusion is accurate, and a change log to easily recover from erroneous editing. Family Tree also provides discussions and user-to-user messaging to allow collaborative communication and notifications when an identified ancestor is modified.

Security is important to FamilySearch; therefore, no living information you enter is shared with any other users. And you can choose what contact information you want to show to other users of the system.

2015 Notable Features


Several features have been added to Family Tree in 2015. The most notable for 2015 are:

- **Mobile Record Hinting.** Now on the Family Tree mobile application you can receive hints for matching records in FamilySearch. Clicking on the hints will show the hints along with indexed information. Clicking Review allows you to bring up the quick attach tool to attach the source to all relevant ancestors.
- **Mobile Add, Delete and Edit Ancestor.** Now in Family Tree mobile application you can add new people to the tree and edit vitals, spouses, parents and other ancestor information. You can also delete persons that you have added to the tree.
- **Mobile Descendancy Task List.** On the Family Tree mobile application you can go to an ancestor and from there click to see any tasks that can be done for their descendants. These tasks include temple opportunities now and will eventually include data problems, suggestions, and record hints.
- **Tip Tray.** Several views across Family Tree and in FamilySearch now have a tip tray which provides a list of topics about what can be done on that particular page. The intent of tips is to help you remember what activities you can do at this place of the product

and how to perform those actions. A tip can be found pressing on  tip icon found at the bottom right of pages where these are available.

- **View My Relationship.** This feature allow you to view your relationship to that person in the tree. This version only provides this capability for the first 4 generations of your line.
- **Improved Dead to Living workflow.** Previously users had to contact support to change a person in the system to living after a user had marked them as deceased. Now if a user who marks a person as deceased realizes they were incorrect they can mark them as living, without contacting support, if they are the only contributor on that person.
- **Dismiss Research Suggestions.** For a selected set of research suggestions you can now dismiss them with a reason and they will no longer show up for that specific ancestor.
- **Redesigned Landscape View.** The pedigree view was completely redesigned to show portraits as well as hints, data problems, and research suggestions. The landscape view also supports keyboard and mouse scrolling as well as alternate spouses and being able to add children to a couple. The landscape view nodes that shows couples will also resize if you chose to turn off some icons such as research suggestions or marriage information. This can allow more nodes to be shown on the screen at once.
- **Portrait View updated with Indicators.** The portrait view has been updated to show the same hints, data problems, and research suggestion icons.
- **Research Suggestions and Data Problems on Person Detail Page.** The research suggestions and data problems now show on the person detail page along with the hint of matching records.
- **Partner Record Search.** There are now links on the person detail page that you can click to automatically search for matching records on FamilySearch, Ancestry, Findmypast, and MyHeritage.
- **Delete Person Restriction.** Now a user cannot delete a person unless they are the only contributor of this person. They can have a support case automatically created where support can review the request and delete the person if it is appropriate.
- **New Family Members Relationship Experience.** The Family Members section of the person detail page has been updated to use a new way to adjust relationships between

spouses, siblings, children, and parents. The tree now will bring up fly-outs, keeping the user in context of the family, and allows the change of multiple relationships at one time. For example, you can replace a spouse in a relationship and have all the children's parent changed in one request.

- **Additional Spouse Icon added to Descendancy View.** Now in the descendancy view, with the portraits turned off, you will see a new spousal indicator  next to spouse's name so they will not be confused with children.
- **User Messages.** You can now send a message to any registered user who has made a contribution to Family Tree. Clicking on the contact name allows you to send them a message which will result in an email to their external email system. In addition, you have a messages inbox to reply and interact with other users.

2016 Planned Features

Family Tree continues to add new features to improve your experience and to help accuracy. Here is a list of some of the major features we planning to work on in 2016:

- **Shutdown NFS Systems.** After a significant amount of work, we expect to shut off the new.familysearch.org systems that have been keeping NFS and Family Tree synchronized. This will remove many roadblocks and issues for Family Tree. For example, there will no longer be any issues with merging two people together or failing in restoring a specific person. Contributions by FamilySearch will significantly decrease and those deleted relationships will not keep coming back.
- **Performance and Scaling Improvements.** We will also be moving to a new and larger computing environment (cloud based) that will help us improve scaling performance. This will help us keep the site working appropriately even on busy days, like Sunday.
- **Sources on Living Persons.** There is no reason that a living person should ever have to be researched after they are deceased. We want to allow users to document themselves and their living relatives with sources and other information in a secure way so as not to compromise their identity and still have proper documentation.
- **Sharing of Living Persons.** This is a complex and desirable feature to be able to have families work together on their living as well as their common deceased ancestors. Imagine families looking at the same living tree with all their siblings, nieces, nephews, and cousins along with their spouses and children. And while looking at the same persons they see the same photos, stories and other memories. Changes can be made by shared relatives and everyone that can see these living will see the immediate changes.
- **Potential Impedance Features.** In an effort to discourage the change of good information in Family Tree we will be investigating several potential impedance features. If you have any ideas, let us know on feedback or send me an email.
 - **Allow Immediate Notifications.** Send a message immediately when a user changes a conclusion on a person I am watching or any conclusion that I have made. This will allows you to immediately review the change and see if correction needs to happen.
 - **Show all contributors.** Show all contributors for a person in the tree so the user may understand all the relatives that are interested in the changes on the person.
 - **Show me any change to My Contributions.** Show you a list of any conclusions that you have contributed in the tree that have been changed.

Conclusion

The FamilySearch Family Tree, included in the www.familysearch.org website, allows all users to correct any bad data, add sources to conclusions, and collaborate on ancestors. By using Family Tree, we hope to reduce research duplication and to preserve for generations the most accurate representation of common ancestors.