



How to use FamilySearch.org: For Beginners

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I'm new to family history and want to get started on familysearch.org. This handout is meant to help answer this scenario. FamilySearch.org has so much to offer and so much is packed into a few tabs. Give it some time and you'll see your family in a whole new way. It's never been easier!

FREE ACCOUNT

The first thing you need to do is set up a free account. Go to familysearch.org and click "Free Account" in the upper right-hand corner. Fill out the information and click "Create an Account."

FAMILY BOOKLET

The Family Booklet is probably the easiest way to get started on familysearch.org once you have your account. Click "Family Booklet" and sign in and then you can start filling things out. The booklet will build out your family as you enter in data. Start with you, then describe those closest to you. If you'd like to order a booklet and do it that way just click "Order booklet" and then you can fill it out by hand.

THE "FAMILY TREE" TAB

The Family Tree is a powerful online tool for connecting families across generations. Remember, all information about living individuals is private. In the Tree you can now view your family in several meaningful ways. Go to familysearch.org and click "Family Tree."

1. Landscape – this is the classic view that allows you to view your family and print pedigree charts. To print, just click the "Print" in the upper right-hand corner. Notice when you click on an individual, a summary window opens so you can see the "Memories," "Sources," and "Discussions." Hints have now been added to this view as well.
2. Fan chart – the fan chart lets you see 7 generations of your family on one page. Again, "Print" in the upper right-hand corner that lets you Save, Print, and Share your chart easily.
3. Portrait – This view shows the photos of you and your ancestors. This way you can easily see what photos you have and what photos you still need. Be sure you have "Portraits" checked to see your family in this view.
4. Descendancy – this view makes seeing multiple generations easy. You will find icons next to

the names of those in your Tree which helps you decide what to do next. Click “Show” to see what icons you can display. Use the blue hints to find names you can add to your Tree. The purple research suggestions will give you clues as well.

5. What’s New – this will help be stay up to speed on all the changes that are happening.

More:

- <https://familysearch.org/ask/#/>

- https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Descendancy_Research

THE “MEMORIES” TAB

The Memories tab brings living memory to life. We all have photos, memories and stories and now you can preserve everything forever for free on familysearch.org. No more shoeboxes! Be sure you share what you have so everyone can benefit from the memories that make up who they are.

1. Photos – you can upload thousands of .jpg, .tif, .bmp, and .png photos here up to 15M per image. Scanning photos and slides can be easily done with a phone and then uploaded. Once uploaded be sure to tag them and link them to your Tree. Click on the “People” tab to see what other members of your family have been uploading. Then, create an album. You can also search uploaded photos by clicking on the “Find” tab.

2. Stories – everyone has a story and you can now upload them here. If you have a story in electronic form you can easily cut and paste it in and tag the individuals mentioned and attach photos.

3. Documents – If you have documents in .pdf form or other records, upload them here and tag those mentioned.

4. Audio – FamilySearch now has free apps for Droid and iOS. These apps let you add memories in a simple way. One of the great app features is the audio tab which allows you to interview people and sync the audio files with the website. If you have .mp3 and m4a files you can easy add them to the site, similar to adding photos, and tag who is in each file.

More:

- Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reZ5nNhztYI>

- <https://familysearch.org/mobile/tree>

- [The Stories That Bind Us](#), by Bruce Feiler

THE “SEARCH” TAB

FaimlySearch.org has millions of page views every day and now has published over 5.3 billion records. The great thing about all of these records is that they are now hinting in the Family Tree. This makes sourcing our ancestry much easier.

1. Records – you can easily find images here as you browse through U.S. census images or modern day obituaries. Vast quantities of civil registration and Church records are here as well from all over the world... including China!

2. Genealogies – this area includes records from all over. It includes data from the Ancestral File, the Pedigree Resource File and other user submissions.
3. Catalog – this area allows patrons to browse the vast resources of the FamilySearch catalog. Many items can be accessed at 4,890+ family history centers throughout the world.
4. Books – FamilySearch has now published over 200,000 books online. These books are made available for download on the website. The descendency books in this area of the site are immensely valuable.
5. Wiki – the FamilySearch Wiki is like Wikipedia for family history. If you are trying to find more information about a given area of research, check out what this area has to offer.

More:

- Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITzQ7z-2jWw&list=PLD22C493E525CC8D7>

THE “INDEXING” TAB

FamilySearch Indexing is the largest volunteer indexing workforce of its kind. In fact volunteer indexers in 2013 reached a milestone of one billion records indexed and arbitrated since the launch of indexing in September of 2006. Anyone can index and help out in the process. Two separate indexers index the same batch (group of images) and then an arbitrator checks for accuracy. A new browser based indexing tool is in the works and should be released soon. New tool developments will allow more records to be made available from FamilySearch’s vast unpublished record holdings.

More:

- Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkDfe7QDXQY>

- <https://familysearch.org/indexing/>

NEXT STEPS

Whether you are just getting started or you are an experienced researcher, FamilySearch has something for everyone. Sign up today or if you already have an account, upload, find, and share!

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