

Finding FamilySearch Records

Laurel Smith

laurel.smith@gfo.org

GFO Open House

March 2021

Hints and Existing Sources

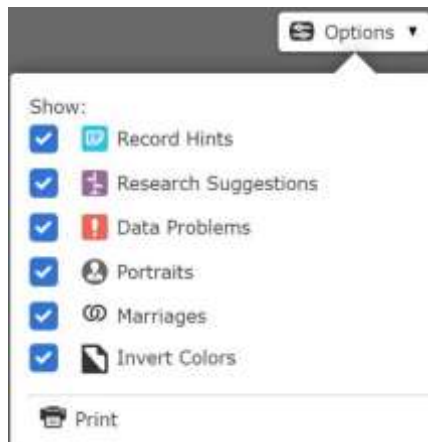
Hints are generated around the information entered for the person, their parents, spouses, and children. New hints are added regularly as new collections and connections are made—sometimes within seconds.



How to get hints:

- You must have a free account.
- You must be signed in.
- The person you want hints for must be in the Family Tree.

Find your parents (or grandparents) in the Family Tree—or add them if not found.



Adjust your viewing options
Become familiar with the icons

Go to the individual's profile page and click "Sources."

Evaluate what's there before adding more.

Mine the sources already attached

- Are they complete? Are there unfinished attachments?
- Are attachments correct? Fix if not!
- Look to see if there are any unattached "Similar Historic Records."

Next, check the Record Hints.

Incorporate hints if appropriate

Then, check the new sources to see if there are any Similar Historic Records.

Finally, click on FamilySearch under "Search Records."

Strategic Searching in Indexed Records



It's fine to start with a broad search
Then, narrow in on the results using tools and filters.

Search > Records > Search Historical Records

Name options include using an alternate name
– GREAT for women and nicknames!

Do not enter too much information!

Search with a Life Event

The default is birth, but you can use marriage, death, residence, any, or a combination.

The location should be limited (at least) to a country, and can be limited to a state, county, or city.

Suggestion: Try entering the person's name, and for Life Event, use "any" and enter the state and possibly the county (if in the U.S.) or country if outside the U.S.

Other Options:

Search with a Relationship: Spouse, parent, or "other person"

Restrict records by Location or Type, Batch Number, or Film Number

Filter by collection (on the left or at the top)

Helpful icons in the View column

Searching tools include:

Exact

Wildcards

* (zero to several characters)

? (one letter)

Ideas:

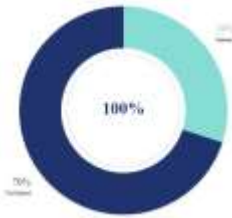
Enter a surname, state, father's given name, and mother's given name to find children.

Remember:

Dates are exact—so be careful with the dates you pick.

FamilySearch automatically searches for name variants. A search for William will bring up results for Wm., Bill, and W.

Unindexed Records



Only 30% of the digitized material on FamilySearch is indexed!
Don't overlook the 70%

How to find the records you need.
Try different approaches. One method alone may not provide every collection.

Approach 1: Search > Records > Research by Location > click on the country in the map > select the state or region and look over the information provided before drilling down to a county or smaller area.

- Learning Courses
- Wiki: Read about the records available for the time period. Especially note the dates of record sets, record loss, boundary changes (are you looking in the right place for the time?)
- Image-Only Historical Records (goldmine!)
- Catalog Material (filter by category)

Approach 2: Search > Catalog > Place
Enter country > state > county
For FamilySearch records, select "Online"
(although "Any" may suggest valuable sources)
Be sure to look for records in all jurisdictions
(state, county, township, city/town)



Approach 3: Browse All Published Collections
Use the filters on the left for Place, Date, Collection Type (Show only collections with images)
Use the column headings to look for the newest/most recently updated collections.

When you find a collection of interest, take time to read about it.
The page may have a link telling how to use the collection.
There may be known issues or problems disclosed.
Become familiar with the icons.



Indexed



Partner site



Available



Restricted



Not Digitized

Restricted images can fall into 3 categories dependent on FamilySearch licensing agreements.

- Available only at the Family History Library (FHL) in Salt Lake City
- Available at FHL and Family History Centers (FHC) located worldwide
- Available at FHL, FHC, and affiliate libraries—GFO is an affiliate library.

Images Available

To view these images do one of the following:

- Access the site at a [family history center](#).
- Access the site at a [FamilySearch affiliate library](#).

Don't be intimidated by a line like this: Browse through 6,997,828 images

Image sets are often broken out into subsets: alphabetically, by date, title, or location.

There may be separate set of images that is the index.

The film you want may have its own index at the beginning or end.

Look for a table of contents.

Do the images have page numbers? (page numbers and image numbers are different)

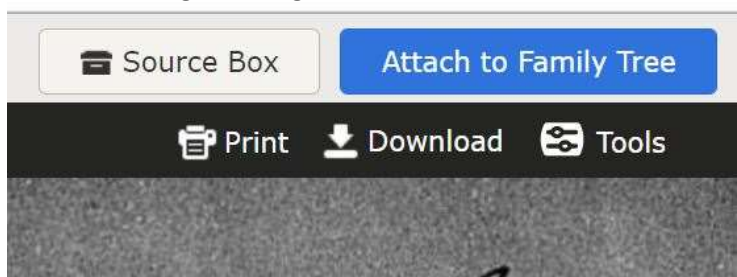
Thumbnail images can show separation in content.

Tools for viewing the images



- Breadcrumbs or waypoints help you navigate the collection.
- Arrows and image number control movement within the image set.
- Controls on the left to enlarge or shrink the view, switch to thumbnails or single image.
- Bottom icon for Full Screen.
-

Tools for saving the images



- Add the source to your Source Box
- Attach to the Family Tree
- Print
- Download to your computer
- Change the view (rotate, lighten or darken, invert)

Tools for citing the record



- Image Index confirms there is no index.
- Information about the source is provided.

Always download and save what you find. It may not be there tomorrow.

Check back often for new data sets.

Have fun, and happy hunting!