Getting the Most Out of FamilySearch

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This presentation is designed to teach you to employ a variety of search techniques with tips along the way to help you maximize your results on FamilySearch.org and find elusive ancestors in places you may have missed previously. You will also learn about various resources you can use to find help.

IMPORTANT TIPS

- Always search by name first.
- Always view the image of the original record.
- Attach sources to your Family Tree.
- Search using a variety of methods.
- Less is more.
- Log in with your FamilySearch account.

SEARCHING BY NAME

To obtain more results: Search using only one surname but for variety, also try searching with two surnames. It's important to remember, however, many indexed records only contain one surname.

Example 1: Search for Pedro Infante, born about 1917 in Sinaloa, Mexico. Parents are Delfino Infante and Refugio Cruz.

1. **First Names:** Pedro   **Last Names:** Infante.
2. **Birth Year Range:** 1915 to 1920.
3. **Restrict records by Location:** > **Country:** Mexico **State or Province:** Sinaloa.
4. Click on **Search.**

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS PAGE

- **Records:** The list of your search results.
- **Collections:** The list of collections where your results came from. You can filter by collection by selecting the small box next to the title of the collection you wish to see results from. **Click on Show all Results to remove the filter.**
- **Number of results to show:** The quantity of results that will be shown on the page.
- **Name column**: The name of the person in the record that matches your search parameters and the name of the collection from which the result was taken. The dates indicated in this section are the date range of the collection indicated and **not** the date of the actual record.
- **Events:** The type of event indicated in the record, its date and place.
- **Relationships:** Relationships that are indicated in the record.
- **View:** Click on the paper icon to view the indexed information from this result and its source. Click on the camera icon to view the image of the record from where the indexed information was extracted.

- **Refine your search**: Found on the left side of the page. Here you will find other filters you can use. Click on the arrow next to the filter you wish to use and choose from the available option s. Continue clicking on the arrow to drill down to the option you need.

SEARCHING WITH A RELATIONSHIP

Types of relationships searches
- **Spouse:** Search for the person including the name of his spouse(s).
- **Parents:** Search for the whole family using only the parents' names. You can also search using multiple parent names.
- For Hispanic family members try using only the paternal and maternal surnames.

Example 2: Search for Benito Juarez and Margarita Maza. They married in the city of Oaxaca in 1843.

1. **First Names:** Benito   **Last Names:** Juarez.
2. Click on **Spouse.**
3. **Spouse's First Names:** Margarita   **Spouse's Last Names:** Maza.
4. **Restrict records by Location:** > **Country:** Mexico   **State or Province:** Oaxaca.
5. Click on **Search.**

Example 3: Search for all the children Benito Juarez and Margarita Maza.

- Click on **Father.**
- **Father's First Names:** Benito   **Father's Last Names:** Juare*.
- Click on **Mother.**
- **Mother's First Names:** Margarita   **Mother's Last Names:** Ma*a.
- **Restrict records by Location:** > **Country:** Mexico.
- Click on **Search.**
- **Birth Year Range:** You can add information here but remember to not limit it to just the mother's childbearing years so you will also see any marriages or deaths for the children.

Tips for searching by name
- Sometimes you can get a marriage result to appear by focusing specifically on a marriage search.
- Try a wildcard * to substitute for a letter that can be commonly interchanged.
- Always view the image of an indexed record.
- Apply filters when you have too many results.

IMAGES

Finding the image of an indexed record
This search is important because you should **always view the original record** to see ALL information found in the record. Often there will be additional information or important clues not included in the indexed information.

Example 4: You've found this record but want to see the image.
https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FLQC-36J

Start by reviewing the indexed information
- Is there an image attached? You may still need to browse images.
  - Is there a film number?
  - Is there an item or page number?

- What is the date and location of the record?

Finding the image
1. Click on **Browse the Film**
2. Use the image viewer to locate the image. Records are usually in chronological order by the date of the event.
3. The example 4 record can be found on image 429.

USING THE FAMILYSEARCH CATALOG
Use the FamilySearch catalog to find microfilm and digitized images as well as other records that are not digitized, such as microfilms, books, periodicals, or maps. The most used search option is place but you can also search by:

- Surnames
- Titles
- Author
- Subjects
- Keywords

Example 5: Locating military records for Spain.

1. In the **Place** field enter Spain.
2. Click on **Keywords** enter *Registros militares*.
3. Click on **Search**.

Understanding the icons in the catalog
- **Magnifying glass icon:** Some or all the records from this microfilm are indexed. Click on the magnifying glass icon to search by name within this microfilm.
- **Camera icon:** Records are digitized and online. Click on the camera icon to view the images.
- **Microfilm roll icon:** Records are only on microfilm for now.
- **Camera icon with key:** Images are restricted to certain groups of users. These restrictions are imposed by the archives and repositories who provided FamilySearch with the records.

Places Within
Use the catalog's Places Within feature to locate records for cities and towns within a province, state or department. This is especially helpful if you don't know how to spell the name of the town.

Example 6: Find records for a town in the state of Jalisco, Mexico.
1. From the home page of FamilySearch.org pass your cursor over the word **Search** and click on **Catalog** from the drop-down menu.
2. In the field **Place** enter the name Jalisco.
3. Select the option **Mexico, Jalisco** and click on **Search**.
4. Click on **Places within Mexico, Jalisco.**
5. Choose the correct location: **Tequesquitlán.**
6. To go back and choose another town, click on **Part of Mexico, Jalisco** and then return to step 4.
7. To choose another state, click on **Part of Mexico** and then click on **Places within Mexico**.

Why use the catalog?
To verify if a microfilm has been indexed. To locate other items available for your locality or

surname. Remember to search for records at the jurisdictional level that created the records – national, state, county, or city. You must spell the name correctly or use **Places within** … [name of state or province].

Search > Images

This search is best for those areas where FamilySearch is currently capturing images. These images may not yet appear in the catalog.

1. Click on **Search** > **Images**.
2. Enter the name of a place. Choose the option that matches what you need.
3. Click on **Search Image Groups.**
4. Use filters found on the left side of the screen to narrow your results by date and event type.
5. You can view information about a particular image group on the right side of your screen.
6. The image viewer functions the same as in previous examples.

Tips for browsing images

- Always locate the image of an indexed record.
- Look through indexes first, if any. The page number in the index rarely matches the image number.
- Begin with date of the event (birth, marriage, death) working forward in time. If the event is not there, try a few years before or after.
- Take notes or use a research log.
- Be patient. Don't give up.
- Search > Images is best for newly acquired images that may not be catalogued yet.

HELP ON FAMILYSEARCH

There are many places to find help on FamilySearch. Most can be accessed by clicking on the small question mark in the top right corner of FamilySearch. From here you can get to the following:

Help Center: Place with articles and written instructions on many aspects of FamilySearch.

Learning Center: Get here by first going to the Help Center, then Learning Center and then one more time to Learning Center. Here you can watch and download pre-recorded classes on many subjects. To view classes in another language, at the bottom of any FamilySearch page, change the language of the page to the desired language.

FamilySearch Community: A forum where you can ask or help answer research questions. Make sure you are signed in. Choose Community from the Help menu. Click on Groups. Locate and join a group of interest. To post a question, click on Question in the group. Write a short subject line and then in the large Details space write out fully, with lots of specific details, the nature of your problem or question. You may upload an image or include a URL. Once done, click on Ask.

Virtual consultations: Sign up for a free, 20-minute online research consultation. We can help with evidence analysis or translation of key words, or we can help identify a good next step. The goal is to empower you in your research journey.