Finding Records of Your Ancestors in FamilySearch.org

FamilySearch has millions of birth, marriage, death, census, and other records available online. Most of these are indexed, making it easy to search for records that identify your ancestor.

Searching for Records of an Ancestor

Start with an ancestor that you know something about, and find records that will identify more family members. Start simply by entering a name in the search boxes on the FamilySearch home page. Then filter your search, and find different records by adding more information or deleting some of your search details.

1. On the FamilySearch home page, click **Search**.
   On the Search screen below, see the various filters and links you can choose. Search with different information that you know.
2. In the name fields, enter the name of a deceased ancestor, and click **Search**.
3. See if you can recognize your ancestor in the first page of search results.
4. If there are too many results, add more information to better focus and narrow your results.

   Under Restrict record by, you can do the following:

   • Click **Location**, and enter a country where your ancestor lived. If your ancestor lived in different countries, try a different search for each country and time period where the family lived.
   • Click and select a **record type**, if you are searching for only a specific kind of record. (For example, if you want a marriage record only, click **Marriage** in the record type.)

   Under Search with a life event, try the following:

   • Click **Birth**, and enter a birth date and place.
   • Click **Marriage**, and add a marriage place and range of years.
   • Click **Death**, and add a death place and range of years.

   As you add these filters, it may be helpful to close other filters.

   See the following table for more suggestions.

5. (Optional) To limit your search to exact spellings and places, click **Match all terms exactly**.

Tips for Varying Your Search

As you search for historical records about your ancestors, it helps to try your search in a variety of ways.

• Do not add too much information or use too many filters at a time. This may severely limit your search results.
• Try a variety of searches. Each kind of search may return different records about your ancestor.
• Expect the results to match the information you entered. For example, birth information may return birth records, and other records that have birth information, such as a death record, census record, marriage record, and more. Birth, death, and marriage records may have the parents' names.
• Searches can only return information that has been indexed. If an index was sparse, even though a record was rich in information, your search can only retrieve what was indexed. For example, sometimes a census index may only show the head of household, even though many family members are on the census record.

- To find records of more siblings and children, try searches 6 and 7.

	Enter This Information in the Appropriate Search Box	Types of Records That May Appear in the Search Results
1	Your ancestor's **First Names** and **Last Names**. Try this search first. Try spelling or name variations, such as nicknames, etc. Try searching for the names of different family members.	Birth, marriage, death, census (for many times and places).
2	**Birth** information. Under Search with a life event, click **Birth**.	Birth, death, marriage, or census records.
3	**Death** information. Under Search with a life event, click **Death**.	Death, burial, or cemetery records.
4	**Marriage** information. Under Search with a life event, click **Marriage**.	Marriage records.
5	**Names** of any person in the family. - If you can't find the person you are looking for, try searching for different family members. - Enter the name in the First Names and Last Names boxes. - Entering birth information and a place of residence can be helpful.	Census records (with all household members), as well as records for that person).
6	**Child's names** and **parents' names**. Enter the child's name in the names boxes. Under Search with a relationship, click **Parents** and enter their names.	Birth, marriage, or death records of the child.
7	**Parents' names** only. Under Search with a relationship, click **Parents**. Do not enter names in the First Names and Last Names boxes.	Birth or death records of **all** the parents' children.
8	**Names** and **spouse**. Enter a husband or wife in the names boxes. To enter the spouse's name, click the **Spouse** link.	Marriage record of the couple and birth, death, and marriage records of the children.
9	**Any** (place and time). Click the **Any** link, and enter the place and time period they lived there.	Many types of records for the time and place. (This is a good general search.)
10	**Residence** (place and time). - Enter the place and time period when your ancestor lived there. - Try this search for each place where your ancestor lived.	A variety of records, often including census records.
11	**Match all terms exactly**. Click **Match all terms exactly** to limit your search to exact spellings of names and places.	Search results will match exactly the spellings and information entered in the search.

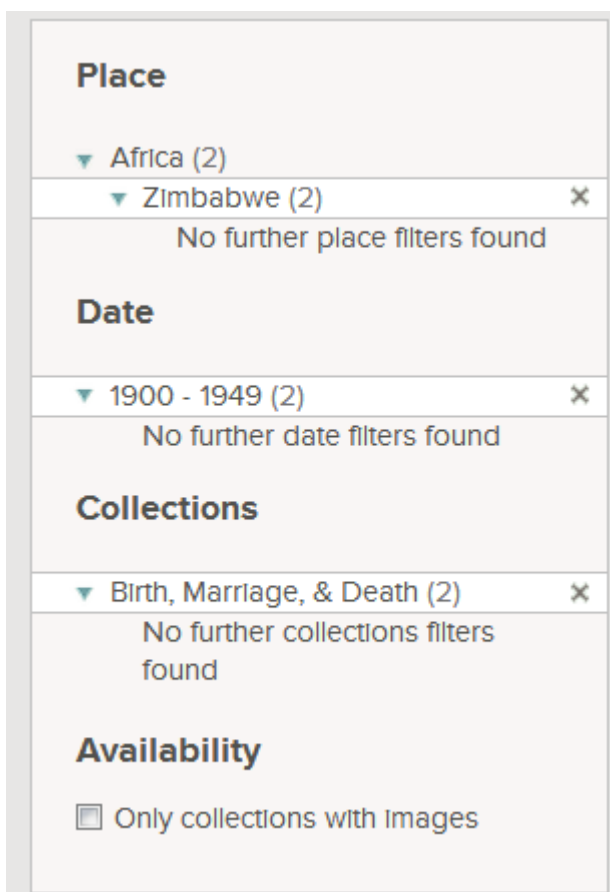|	Enter This Information in the Appropriate Search Box	Types of Records That May Appear in the Search Results
12	Under Restrict records by, choose one or more of the following: • **Location** and enter the country. • **Type** and select a record type. • **Batch number** (from the International Genealogical Index, or IGI). Use these filters to limit your results.	Search results are limited to the specified country, record type, or IGI batch.

Searching by Collection

You can search for records by collection.

1. On the FamilySearch home page, click **Search**.
2. Scroll down, and click **Browse All Published Collections**.

3. Select the place, date, and collection.
4. (Optional) If you want the search results to list only collections with online images, click **Only collections with images**.
   In the example below, the place **Africa**, the dates **1900-1949**, and the collection **Birth, Marriage, and Death** have been selected, as well as **Only collections with images**. Only collections for that time, place, and record type that have images will be displayed.

5. In the search results, click the collection you want to search.

6. Enter the name of an ancestor and event or relationship information. Vary your searches as discussed above.

Tips for Browsing Image-Only Collections

Image-only collections have not yet been indexed, but they may be browsed by looking page-by-page at the images. When you see a list of collections, click the **Browse Images** link to the right of the title.

Use these tips if you need to search a collection that has not been indexed:

• At the top of the image, move from image to image by clicking **Previous** or **Next**, or by entering the number of the page where you want to go.

• Look for an index at the beginning or ending of the collection to help you navigate to your record.

• Notice how the records are organized, and see if you can get more quickly to the record you want. For example:

   - Census records are organized by place. Look for the place where your ancestor lived, and then look for your ancestor's name.

   - Church records are often organized by date of the event or recording of the event. Try to go to the date when your ancestor's event occurred, and then look for your ancestor's name.

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