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Why Use the FamilySearch Catalog?

- Billions of records, many digitized and available online for free
- Numerous Family History Centers worldwide provide access to records not available from home
- Learn about possible records in any locality to further research and break through brick walls

Types of Searches

- **Place** – use this search to locate all of the records for a specific locality.
 - U.S. searches: enter United States, then name of state, county, or city; don't use "county" in the search.
 - Alternately, enter the county or city and select from the options that appear.
 - Other countries: enter the name of the country in English, then the state, province, and town name in the country's language.
 - For the British Isles, search with and without "shire" for complete results.
 - Alternately, enter the city or town name and select from the options that appear.
 - Tip #1: Spell place names correctly, the catalog will not recognize incorrect place names.
 - Tip #2: Search for records at each jurisdictional level: country, state, county, and town.
 - Tip #3: Use the "Places within" feature on the results page to see other jurisdictions such as state, county, or city/township.

- **Surnames**– use this search to find histories, biographies, or genealogies that mention a specific surname; the search will also find the surname used in a title.
 - Enter several variants of the name for the best results.
 - Combine the surname search with another search such as place or keywords if the surname is common.
- **Title** – find specific titles of books, journals, microfilm, maps.
 - Enter words in the title, can be out of order or missing words.
 - Similar to a keyword search, but the search terms must be in the title.
- **Author** – locate all titles attributed to individual authors.
 - Enter first name and surname for best results.
 - Can enter just a surname or first name if needed – will have more results.
 - Authors can be listed in multiple ways, complete names or just initials.
- **Subjects** – uses the Library of Congress subject headings.
 - Use for broad searches: Native Americans, Civil War, Quakers.
 - Think of known ancestor information such as religion, nationality, language.
- **Keywords** – will search all catalog entries containing the search terms: authors, titles, subjects, film notes, etc.
 - Enter search terms then filter by year, category, or language to reduce the number of results.
 - Tip: Use the keyword search for finding family histories for a common surname.
- **Call Number** – use if you already have the call number to locate specific information for publication such as the author, title, date and place published.
 - Helpful to quickly locate the catalog entry for a specific book, journal, or other publication.
 - Tip: if searching locally at the Family History Library, jot down the call # for each book searched. At home use the catalog to quickly locate the book and create a full source citation.
- **Film/Fiches Number** – use this if you have the microfilm number from an indexed record to locate the original image.
- **Book Search** – to find all books or periodicals that have been digitized by FamilySearch, click “Books” under “Search” on the FamilySearch home page.
 - Search by author, title, or key word such as a surname or place.
 - Some publications are copyrighted and can only be viewed at the Family History Library or at a Family History Center. Keep a list of the publications to view when at one of these locations.

Filtering Results

- **Availability**
 - **Any** – find all records held by FamilySearch: at the Family History Library, Family History Center or online.
 - **Online** – filter results to show only those available to view from any location.
 - **Family History Center** – filter results to show those available from the Family History Library or a specific Family History Center. Many microfilms and microfiches are located in Family History Centers worldwide.
- **Year** – use for title, surname, or keyword searches: filter results by century, then decade.
- **Category** - use for title, surname, or keyword searches: choose from selected categories such a family trees, geographic aids, church history, migration and citizenship, institutions, etc.
- **Language** – use for title, surname, or keyword searches: select the language of the record containing the search term.

Tips for Better Research Using the FamilySearch Catalog

- **Locate and look at the original image:** Many indexed records on FamilySearch do not have the image attached. To find the original microfilm follow these steps:
 - Find the FHL microfilm number in the source citation.
 - Copy and paste this number into the Film/Fiches category on the FamilySearch Catalog.
 - From the results page, click on the camera icon to view the digitized microfilm.
 - View the first image in the microfilm to see the physical source.
 - Create a source citation for the image: who created the source, what is the source, when was the source created, where in the microfilm is the source (image number), where in the world is the source (location of physical source).
 - Use the indexed date to locate the record in the digitized microfilm. Skip ahead in the film by entering specific image numbers.
 - Attach the source to an individual in FamilySearch: create a title, input notes, and add the source citation.
- **Use the catalog to find new sources to search**
 - When researching in any location, do a place search to see what records are available.
 - Browse the titles looking for information that will help your research progress.
 - Pay attention to histories, gazetteers, maps, and other books or microfilm that give context to the location.
 - Create a research plan based first on online records, then those available at Family History Centers.

- Keep a running list of those microfilm or books that can only be accessed at a Family History Center to be viewed during the next visit.
- Books that are only available at the Family History Library can often be viewed at other libraries. Click “view this catalog record in WorldCat for other possible copy locations” to see if it is at a library nearby. Use interlibrary loan at your local library to order a copy.
- **Create a print list of books and microfilm**
 - From the details page of any book or microfilm, click the blue box labeled “add to print list.”
 - Continue adding records, then print or copy and paste the list details into another document. The system will not save the print list.
- **View WorldCat** from the home page of the catalog to search books, DVDs, CDs, and articles.
 - Search collections and services of more than 10,000 libraries worldwide.
- **View Archive Grid** from the home page of the catalog to find archives and libraries worldwide
 - Zoom in or out on the world map.
 - Search by keyword to find possible unique collections for your surname or locality.

Additional Resources

1. Elder, Diana and Nicole Dyer. *Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide*. FamilyLocket Genealogists. 2018.
2. Elder, Diana. “The FamilySearch Catalog.” *FamilyLocket*.
<http://familyloket.com/the-familysearch-catalog-a-researchers-best-friend/>
3. *FamilySearch Wiki*. “Abbreviations in the FamilySearch Catalog.”
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Abbreviations_in_the_FamilySearch_Catalog
4. *FamilySearch Wiki*. “Deciphering FamilySearch Catalog Entries.”
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Deciphering_FamilySearch_Catalog_Entries
5. *FamilySearch Wiki*. “Introduction to the FamilySearch Catalog.”
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Introduction_to_the_FamilySearch_Catalog
6. *FamilySearch Wiki*. “FamilySearch Catalog Places Search.”
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/FamilySearch_Catalog_Places_Search
7. *FamilySearch Wiki*. “Places Search Subject Subdivisions.”
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Places_Search_Subdivisions