

What's New on FamilySearch?

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Introduction

FamilySearch was founded in 1894 as the Genealogical Society of Utah and is dedicated to preserving the genealogical records of humankind. Our purpose is to help people connect with their ancestors by providing easy access to historical records and empowering people to work together to document and preserve their shared family histories.

FamilySearch.org provides free access to billions of names in historical records that can be searched and readily used. Users can preserve their personal artifacts when they upload photos, audio, stories, and documents. All of this information is stored in the Granite Mountain Vault. FamilySearch also provides a shared common tree to document the genealogy of all humankind. Using the records in our collection, the hinting feature helps users find their ancestors and extend their genealogy in the common tree.

2018 Notable Features

Several features have been added to FamilySearch.org in 2018. The most notable are:

High-Speed Possible Duplicates. The match system has been updated to calculate a possible duplicate within a few minutes of a duplicate being created. We are also using the same system that the user enters information in to create a new person to see if one matches.

Updated Family Tree Interface. The Family Tree is updated for better performance and user interface updates, such as the Time Line view, and clickable directives, such as edit conclusions.

New 7 Generation Fan Chart. The new fan chart now provides up to 7 generations of a family. It has options to highlight persons in the fan chart that show the 9 most common birth countries, number of sources, stories, or photos. This can lead to discovery experiences or places where we need to add more information.

Home Page Discovery Experiences. On the FamilySearch.org main web page, if users have not signed in, we will provide a discovery experience to let them know what information we may have about their family. Then when they do register for a free account and sign in, we can show more detailed information about their ancestors.

Multiple Image Stories. Now on stories you can add up to 10 photos to help highlight and tell your story about a personal experience, an event, or your experiences with or about an ancestor.

Google-able Family Tree. FamilySearch is working to help users find out more about their ancestors. We are working with Google and other search engines to walk portions of our single community tree and then provide information about ancestors in the search results. Then when users click, they can see basic information about an ancestor and then click to go into Family Tree to see all the information available.

New Person Portraits. We have updated the Family Tree person portraits to be simpler and more useful for users. We have found that there are very few persons that have more than one portrait, and when they do, users often see portraits that are confusing or not relevant to the person. We have simplified the creation of portraits, making them independent of tags, and now only one single portrait is allowed for all users.

Sources on Living Persons. Family Tree now allows attaching sources onto living persons. We do not currently allow the attaching of memory sources to reduce the risk of living information, such as driver licenses, birth certificates, and other private records being accessible to others. In the future, we will provide private memories that will keep these documents safe.

Hinting for Living. Now that Family Tree allows sources on living people, we will begin providing historical record hinting for living people in your family lines.

(Church Members Only) Ordinances Ready. This is a new feature added to the website and to the Family Tree mobile app that allows members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to have the system search for ordinances that need to be done for their relatives.

Planned Future Features

FamilySearch.org continues to add new features to provide more information and to improve your experience. Here is a list of some of the major features we're working on for the future:

Image Search. We are working on a new capability to look at the image information we collect as part of scanning images, and by using this information, we can help to narrow down a set of images in a collection that may be about an ancestor you are searching. This allows users to not have to look at entire rolls of images, but just a selected subset. We will not prevent users from seeing entire rolls, should they desire.

Historical Records Users Corrections (Names). We are beginning the first steps of allowing users to correct information that has been previously indexed on records. We will begin this work by allowing users to enter corrected names of persons recorded in historical records. The updated name will be used in searching and in displays as well as the original indexed name. Further into 2019, we will include corrections for dates and places.

New Discovery Experiences. We will continue to update www.familysearch.org/discovery with web discovery experiences that mirror many of our Family History Discovery Centers, such as Compare

a Face. And we will add additional experiences that will help individuals and families discover, understand, and come to know their ancestors and family.

(Church Members Only) Auto Reservation Expiration. Today the 2-year reservation expiration is performed manually by FamilySearch engineers. In 2019 we will be automating this capability by showing an expiration date on the reservation list and then unreserving expired reservations automatically. A notification message will be sent to users 21 days prior to the expiration. There will be automated expirations for 2-year and 90-day expirations.

(Church Members Only) Ordinances Ready Expansion. Ordinances Ready was delivered first on mobile Family Tree, then on the website under Temple lists. Today Ordinances Ready will look for ordinances in: 1) your reservation list; 2) ordinances you have shared with the temple; 3) related ancestors in the temple file; and then 4) a deceased person in the temple file. Ordinances Ready will be expanded to include the following areas to look for related family names that need ordinances: family reservation list, ward shared temple list, and stake shared temple list.

(Church Members Only) Global Temple File. Today ordinances that members share with the temple are sent to their temple district when the temple requires ordinances to provide to patrons. There are areas where many members are finding ordinances and sharing them with the temple, resulting in significant names being available but only being done in one district. The temple inventory system will be updated to share these ordinances across all temples that can perform ordinances in their language rather than for a specific district.

(Church Members Only) Ward List Generation. To assist ward members in helping other members in their ward, Family Tree will provide a list of ordinances that have been shared to the temple file from ward members. Users can then reserve these ordinances from the temple file and perform them on behalf of their ward members.

(Church Members Only) Stake List Generation. Family Tree will also provide a list of ordinances shared to the temple file from stake members, allowing members to assist others in their stake in completing ordinances for their family members.

(Church Members Only) Family Reservation List. As part of our effort to help families do family history together, Family Tree will be working on a family reservation list, where invited family members can share reservations from their personal temple list to the family reservation list, allowing all members of the family to see and print cards from the family reservation list.

(Church Members Only) Reservation Limit. To help all members have an experience where they can take a deceased family member to the temple, Family Tree will be limiting the number of reservations that a single user may reserve at one time. When implemented, the users that have more reservations than the limit will not be able to reserve additional persons until they have gone below the limit. Reservations shared with the temple are not counted against this limit.

Conclusion

The FamilySearch.org site is a free site where all users are invited to come and discover their family, find billions of names in historical records, and enter their genealogy and memories of their ancestors. Users who do this will have their records preserved for generation after generation, and all such records are available to anyone. By doing this, we all can better understand where we came from and the legacy left by our historical relatives. In this place, we can preserve our own legacy for our future generations.