A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FAMILYSEARCH

Cass County Public Library – Genealogy Branch <u>www.familysearch.org</u>

What is FamilySearch?

Familysearch.org is a non-profit genealogy organization run by the Church of Latter-Day Saints. This database is home to over 300,000 digitized family history books, ongoing index projects, and millions of digitized records. Users also have access to the catalog of Utah's Family History Library, including over 2.4 million microfilmed genealogical records and much more.

FamilySearch has established itself as a *free alternative* to Ancestry. They provide access to many of the same basic records and collections unique to FamilySearch as well. Due to changes in policy, <u>you must be signed in to your personal account in order to search and view records</u>. An account is free and easy to set up.



Searching on FamilySearch



Accessing the Search Forms

Without clicking, place your cursor over *Search* in the navigation bar at the top of the page. As seen to the left, a dropdown list will open with links to the main pages and basic search forms for FamilySearch's various resource collections. You can select one of these by clicking on its title in the list.

If you simply click on *Search* rather than choosing an option from the drop-down list, you will be taken to the search form for FamilySearch's historical record collections. (*See page 2*)

Search Navigation Bar



(as it appears on any of the pages listed below)

Records (see below)

FamilySearch is home to over 2,200 digitized and indexed record collections, several of which are unique to the database. This also provides access to and the ability to search record collections held at partner institutions.

Family Tree

This is an ongoing, collaborative project among FamilySearch members. Similar to *WikiTree*, it is based on crowd-sourcing and user contribution. Members are able to edit existing information and contribute their own to the project. The *Family Tree* can be searched by logging into your personal account and selecting it on the search navigation bar. (*It is not included in this guide*.)

Genealogies (see page 7 of this guide)

This resource collection contains trees and genealogies submitted to FamilySearch by its members. Descriptions of the various types of contributed genealogies, such as pedigree resource files and one-name studies, can be found to the right of the search form on the *Genealogies* page.

Catalog (see page 8 of this guide)

Because of its connection to the Family History Library (located in Salt Lake City, Utah), FamilySearch users can search the repository's vast holdings by selecting Catalog in the navigation bar. This resource provides access to over 2.4 million microfilmed genealogical and historical records; users can locate microfilm numbers, which are necessary to request microfilm loans through FamilySearch.

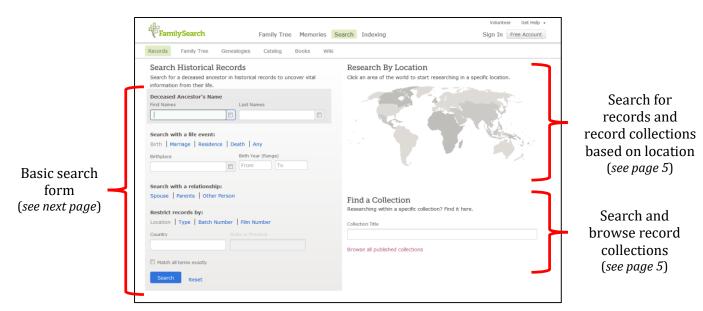
Books (see page 10 of this guide)

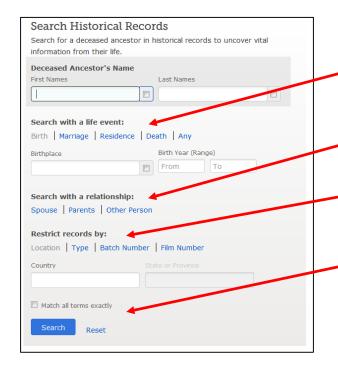
Hundreds of CCPL's genealogy and history books are included in this over 325,000-volume digital collection from libraries across America. These books can be searched by title or keywords and *viewed in full online for free*.

Wiki

This informational wiki (like Wikipedia) is collaboratively edited by FamilySearch and its members. It currently contains over 85,000 articles on a variety of genealogical topics and locations. (*It is not included in this guide.*)

Searching Historical Records





Search Filters

Search with a life event allows you to add the date and location of various life events like a marriage, death, or residence.

Search with a relationship allows you to add the first and last names of relatives.

Restrict records by allows you to restrict your search results to a specific location, type, batch number, and film number.

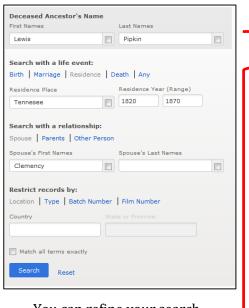
Match all terms exactly restricts your search results to only those that match the information you've entered exactly. Checking the box next to the name and/or life event field will search for results that match the information entered there exactly, giving you a more customized search.

Some Search Tips

- Start with a basic search, keep it simple with a first and last name, birthdate, and a general location.
- Don't fill every field in the search form, only enter the information that will help find the record type you are searching for (i.e. only enter a death date if you are looking for records related to their death).
- Experiment with different search filters and the "Restrict" options.

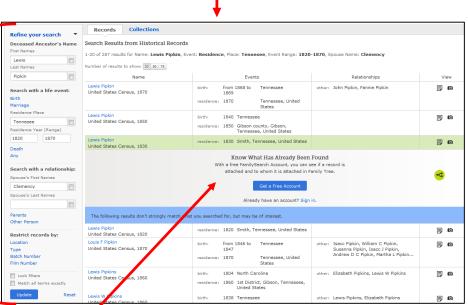
If your search is unsuccessful...

- Change your search terms: try a different spelling variation, remove filters (including the "match exactly" option) to perform a more general search, adjust the range of years searched, etc.
- Try searching a single record collection at a time to reduce search results.
- If you are unsure of spelling variations or what information to enter into the search form, try browsing the record collection images.



You can refine your search results by adjusting the settings provided here

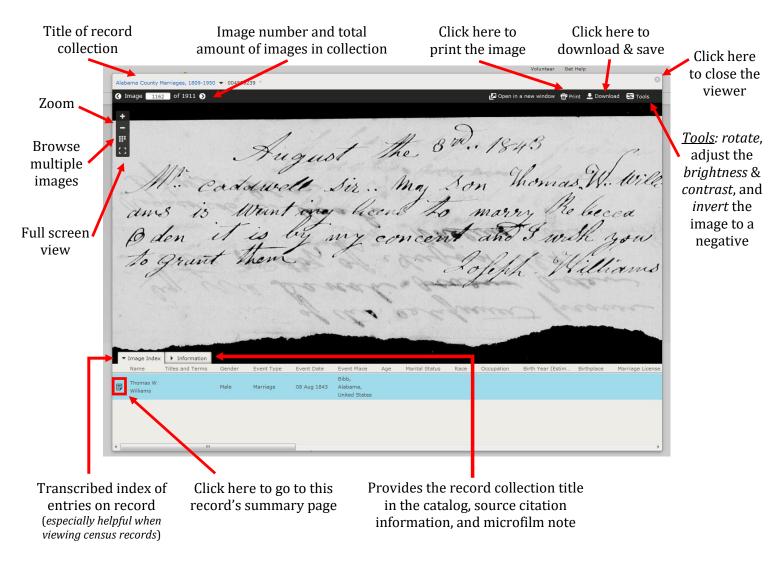
Example Search: the results for a basic search for *Lewis Pipkin* with a *residence*, *year range*, and *spouse's first name*



Note: This message will not be present when logged into your personal account

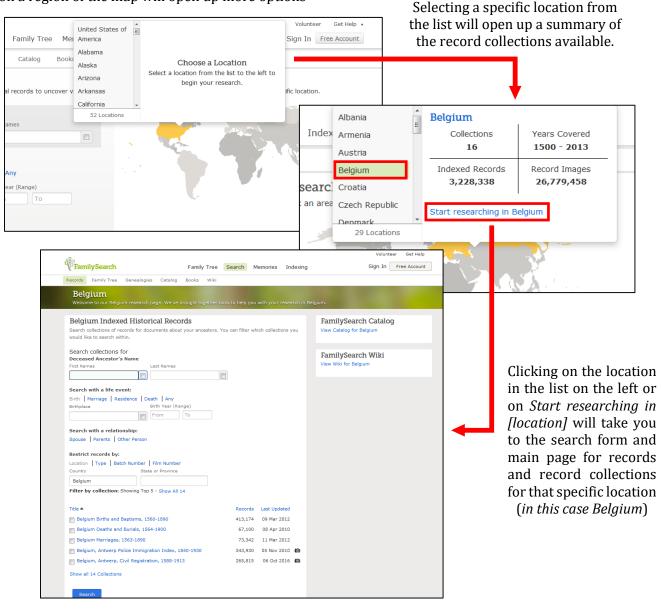


How to Use the Image Viewer

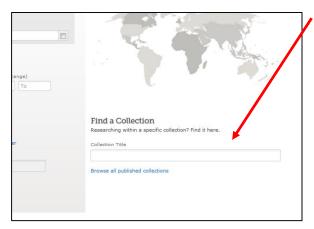


Research by Location

Clicking on a region of the map will open up more options

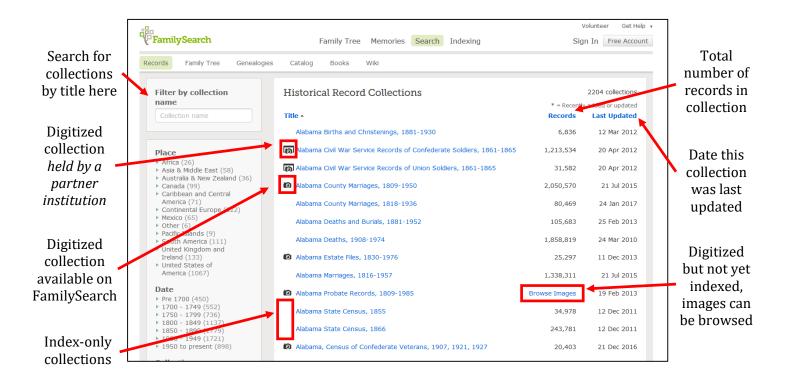


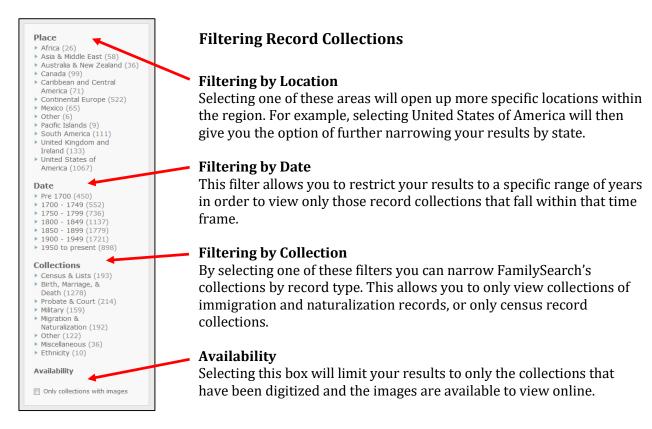
Browsing Record Collections



On the *Records* search page, beneath the "Find a Collection" header you will find a link to *Browse all published collections* (seen on left). Similar to Ancestry's Card Catalog, this allows you search for and browse record collection titles. Individual record collections can be searched for by keyword in the blank provided. The column on the left side of the screen provides filters to help find collections focused on a particular location, record type, and date. You can also restrict your results to collections with images.

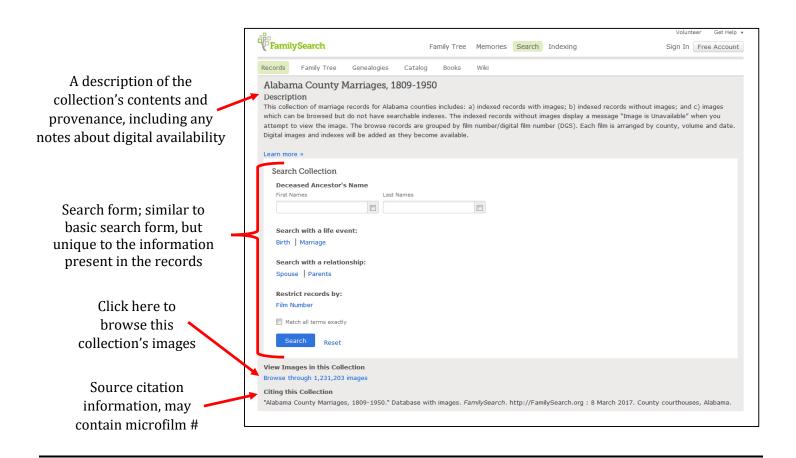
Some collections are *index-only*. These will not have a camera icon next to the title. On the other hand, *some of the fully digitized collections in the database have not yet been indexed*, these will not have an amount listed in the record column. (*See the image below*)





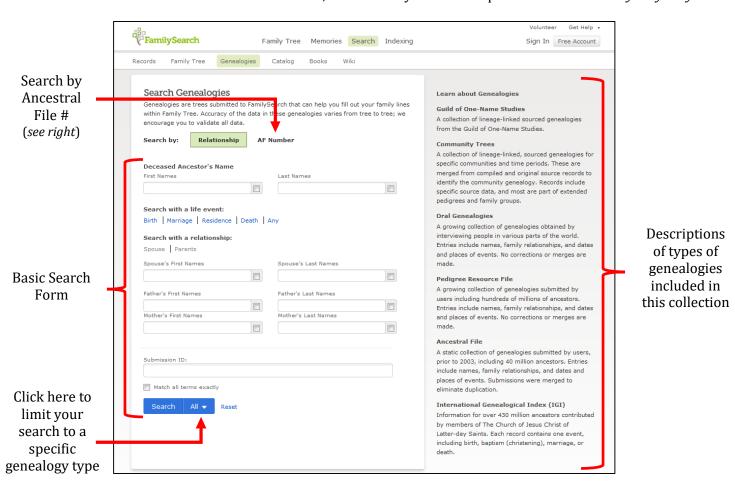
Searching Within a Specific Collection

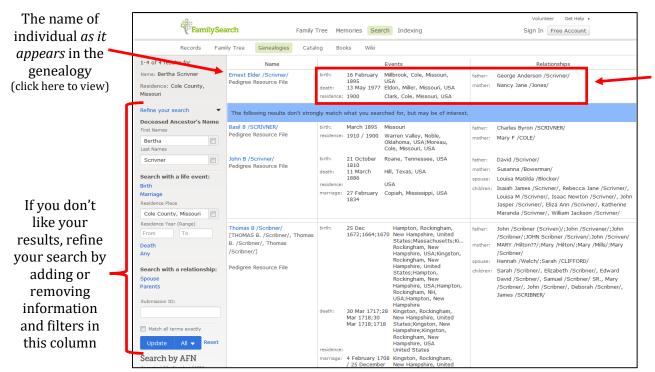
If you are having trouble filtering your search results when using the basic search form, it may help to search one record collection at a time. This can be done by clicking on the title of the collection when browsing or searching as shown above. For an example, we have chosen the collection *Alabama County Marriages*, 1809-1950, included in the list of collections seen in the image above.



Searching Genealogies

This is a collection of user-contributed information, and as such you must keep in mind that accuracy may vary.

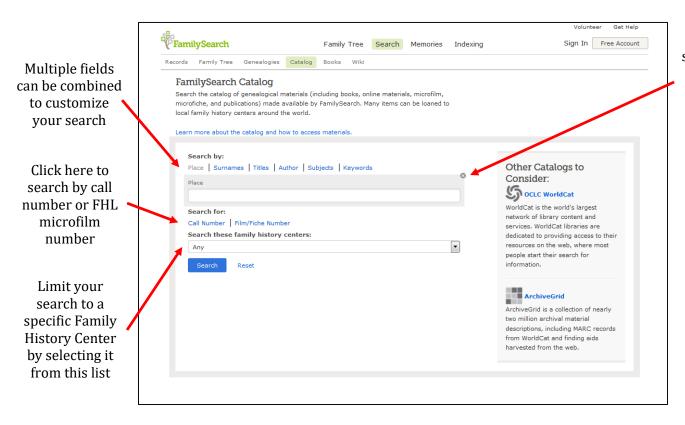




A summary of the information provided for this individual in this genealogy

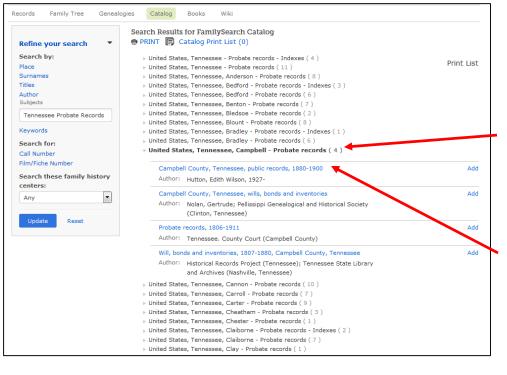
Any results below the blue bar shown above may not match the information you've entered, but may be related to the person you are searching for. *Keep in mind*, you will only find results for individuals who are included in a genealogy that's been submitted to FamilySearch.

Searching the Family History Library Catalog



Remove a search term by placing your cursor over it and clicking here

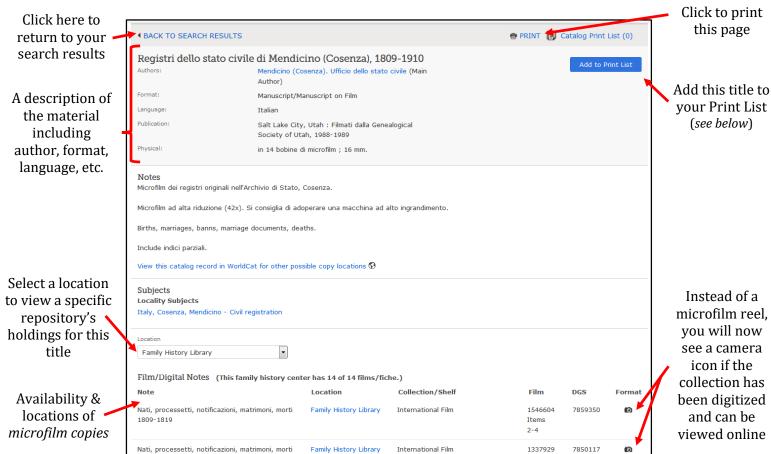
Example Search: "Tennessee Probate Records" entered in the *Subjects* field



The search results (seen on left) are provided as a list of subject headings pertaining to probate records for Tennessee counties.

Each will include the total amount of materials for that subject in parentheses. Selecting one of these will open up a list of available titles within that subject heading.

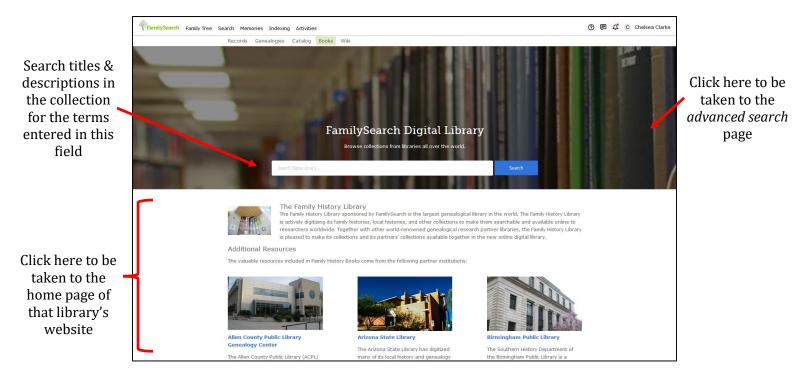
Click on the title to be taken to the detail summary page where you can find a description of the material, availability, microfilm notes, and more (see below).



FamilySearch's catalog search allows users to create a **Print List** while searching. This is a list of titles you would like to save and compile (and later print) for your personal reference. Clicking the *Add to Print List* button in the top right corner will add the title you are currently viewing to that list.

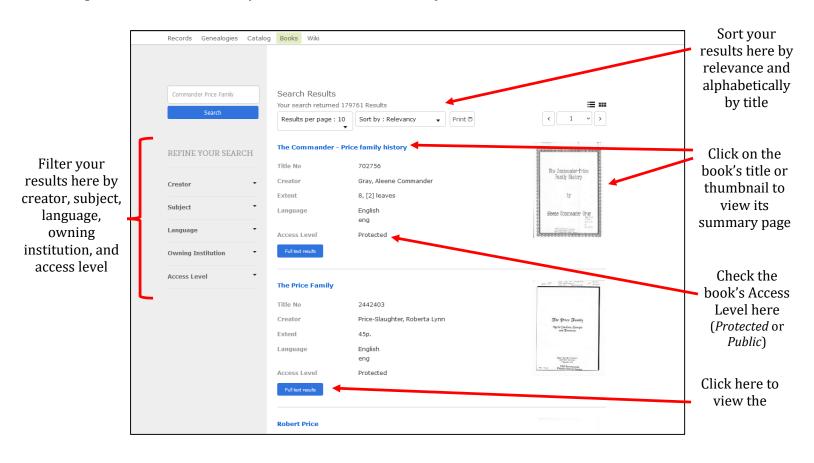
Note: Some of the book titles in the catalog may be available for online viewing in the digital Family History Book collection (*see below*).

Searching the Digital Family History Books



Tip: If you are having difficulty narrowing your search results with a basic search, experiment with the Advanced Search's multiple Boolean search fields. (i.e. "colonial immigration" NOT "Mayflower" for results that include books with the words "colonial" and "immigration" in the title or description but excluding any that have the word "Mayflower")

Example Search: Search results for "Commander Price Family"

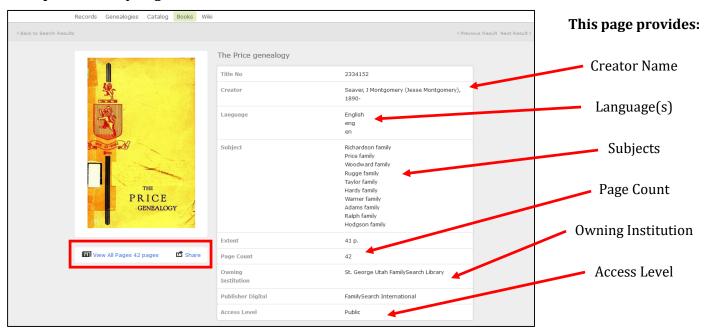


Viewing, Reading, and Searching in Books

Before selecting a book to view, be sure to check its Access Level

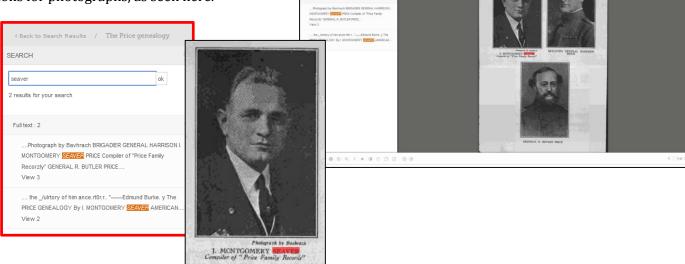
- Protected books are protected by copyright restrictions and cannot be viewed online
 - o Researchers may be able to contact or visit the owning institution for other ways to view the book
- Public books are viewable online through FamilySearch's digital viewer

Example: Summary Page



Example: Keyword Searching Within Books

The search results list shows all of the instances the keyword(s) appear. These results may also be in captions for photographs, as seen here.



Visit the library's locations page (<u>www.casscolibrary.org/locations</u>) for CCPL Genealogy's location, contact information, and hours of operation.

Information regarding our digital collections, access to online databases, submitting inquiries, and more, can be found on Cass County Public Library's Genealogy Resources page, located here: www.casscolibrary.org/genealogy

