

# USING THE FAMILYSEARCH CATALOG

## VBGS HOW-TO GROUP

NOVEMBER 1, 2021

### ABOUT FAMILYSEARCH

[FamilySearch](#) is a non-profit organization sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) to promote family history.

You do not need to be a member of the Church to use the resources and there is no fee (just sign up for a free account).

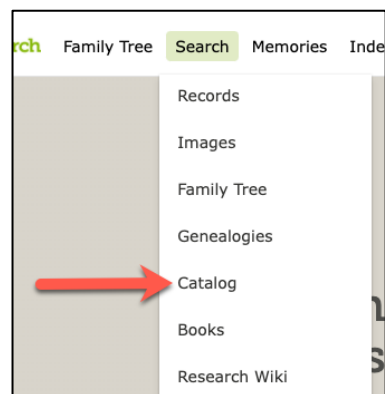
Under the FamilySearch umbrella are FamilySearch.org, Family History Centers (5,400 around the world), the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, and the RootsTech conference.

### ABOUT FAMILYSEARCH.ORG

- 9.1 billion searchable names in historical records collections
- 4.8 billion digital images
- Over 500,000 digital books
- 400,000 visitors a day to website (2020)
- Sept. 2021 - Completed digitizing 2.4 million rolls of microfilm in their collection representing 200 countries and 100 languages

### ABOUT THE FAMILYSEARCH CATALOG

- Describes the holdings of FamilySearch.org, the Family History Library, and some Family History Centers
- Contains listings of all physical and digital sources (microfilm, microfiche, books, digital images)
- Contains items that are indexed and many that are not
- Not the same as the "Historical Records Collections" which is a subset of the total holdings



## BENEFITS OF THE CATALOG

- Find everything in one place
- Find resources not in the historical records collections
- Helps to plan trips to the FHL in Salt Lake City
- Best for focused research & digging deeper or exploring available records for research planning

## HISTORICAL RECORDS COLLECTIONS

- Groups of similar records pulled together in a collection
- May or may not be indexed
- May or may not have images
- Images may or may not be associated with the index or a particular microfilm
- ***Many items in the Catalog are not in collections and won't be found using the Records search***

## CATALOG SEARCH OPTIONS

- [Place](#)
- [Surnames](#)
- [Titles](#)
- [Authors](#)
- [Subjects](#)
- [Keywords](#)
- [Call Number](#)
- [Film Number](#)

### [Main Catalog Search Screen](#)

**FamilySearch Catalog**  
Search the catalog of genealogical materials (including books, online materials, microfilm, microfiche, and publications) made available by FamilySearch online and in libraries and centers worldwide.

[Learn more about the catalog and how to access materials.](#)


**Search by:**  
[Place](#) | [Surnames](#) | [Titles](#) | [Author](#) | [Subjects](#) | [Keywords](#)


Place

**Search for:**  
[Call Number](#) | [Film/Fiche/Image Group Number \(DGS\)](#)

**Availability**  
 Any  
 Online  
 Family History Center

**Other Catalogs to Consider:**

 **OCLC WorldCat**  
WorldCat is the world's largest network of library content and services. WorldCat libraries are dedicated to providing access to their resources on the web, where most people start their search for information.

 **ArchiveGrid**  
ArchiveGrid is a collection of nearly two million archival material descriptions, including MARC records from WorldCat and finding aids harvested from the web.

## SEARCH BY PLACE

- Probably the best method for most searches since records are usually tied to specific locations
- Places are arranged from largest political unit to the smallest:
  - Country > State > County > Town
- Items that cover two or more locations are usually listed under the larger entity
- Results are a browsable list of resources by subject heading
- Click arrows to expand the subject
- If the author is the name of a government agency, usually original records are available

## SEARCH BY SURNAME

- Finds resources about the family of interest, not everything that mentions that family
  - Family histories
  - Family society newsletters
  - Biographies
  - Diaries
- Surnames are subjects
- Can narrow down by adding a location or keywords

## SEARCH BY AUTHOR

- Author Name
- Author Number
- Author can be a person or entity
- Click on author names from catalog results to find everything they have

## SEARCH BY TITLE, SUBJECTS, OR KEYWORD

- Titles don't have to be exact
- Subjects are nested
  - Maps vs. Germany – Maps
- Keywords pick up entries with that word in the description or title, subject, author, notes, etc.

## SEARCH BY FILM NUMBER OR CALL NUMBER

- Go directly to a microfilm or book of interest
- Find records referenced on third party sites (Ancestry, MyHeritage)
- Can use the old microfilm number or the new DGS (image group number)

## SEARCH RESULTS

Catalog items fall into these general types:

- Published items – physical copy
  - Books at the FHL that are on the shelves
- Published items – digital versions
  - Books, newsletters, etc. that have been scanned from microfilm or a physical copy and available to view online
- Unpublished items – physical copy
  - Microfilm that is not yet online, can be viewed at the FHL
- Unpublished items – digital film images; no index
  - Browsable images of microfilm
- Unpublished items – digital film images; indexed in a historical records collection
  - Search for records that are attached to image or browse images

Read the description and notes areas for details on what the record sets contains.

## VIEWING IMAGES

- If record has a searchable index:
  - May have image number or link directly to image
  - May not have image number but link to the film roll and you will have to browse
- If there is no searchable index:
  - Check beginning/end of images to see if there is a written index in the volume
  - Otherwise, browse through pages noting any patterns in dates, surnames, geographic areas, etc.
- Always view the beginning images of the roll to know what the original source is
- Some microfilms have different “items” (think of this as sections)
  - Different record groups on the same microfilm; sometimes completely unrelated
  - Must scroll to the right section if records aren’t indexed



**Item is on microfilm at the FHL**



**Images are browsable**



**Images are browsable; records are indexed**



**Images are viewable with restrictions (usually you need to be at a Family History Center)**



**Images are viewable at a partner site (e.g., Fold3)**

## GETTING HELP

[Record lookup service](#) – if you find an item not available online (books or microfilm) and would like the FHL to obtain an image for you (if you can't go to the library or to a Family History Center)

[Virtual genealogy consultations](#) – free 20-min meeting on Zoom to give you some guidance on research

[FamilySearch Wiki](#)