

## FamilySearch.org

FamilySearch is a genealogy organization operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was previously known as the Genealogical Society of Utah (or "GSU") and is the largest genealogy organization in the world. FamilySearch maintains a collection of records, resources, and services designed to help people learn more about their family history. FamilySearch gathers, preserves, and shares genealogical records worldwide. It offers free access to its resources and service online at FamilySearch.org, one of the most heavily used genealogy sites on the Internet. In addition, FamilySearch offers personal assistance at more than 4,500 family history centers in 70 countries, including the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In the search section of familysearch.org anyone can search for records of an ancestor. See below for instructions. Use of the Family Tree section requires a (free) registered account. The Family Tree section allows users to collaborate on a single, shared, worldwide family tree (currently with about a billion names in it).

The resource is maintained to support the process of obtaining names and other genealogical information so that Latter-day Saints can perform temple ordinances for their kindred dead.

In February 2014, FamilySearch announced partnerships with Ancestry.com, findmypast and MyHeritage, which includes sharing massive amounts of their databases with those companies. They also have a standing relationship with BillionGraves, in which the photographed and indexed images of graves are both searchable on FamilySearch and are to link to individuals in the family tree.

The FamilySearch.org website offers free access to digital images of genealogical records. These images can be searched along with a number of databases. FamilySearch.org also contains the catalog of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. The library holds genealogical records for over 110 countries, territories, and possessions, including over 2.4 million rolls of microfilmed genealogical records; 742,000 microfiche; 310,000 books, serials, and other formats; and 4,500 periodicals. The microfilm and microfiche can be ordered and viewed at over 4,000 library branches (called Family History Centers) worldwide. FamilySearch also offers research help through the Family History Research Wiki, Forums, digitized books, and online free family history courses through the Learning Centre.

Access FamilySearch here: <https://familysearch.org/>

After you browse to FamilySearch, click on **Search**. The **Search** page opens as shown in Figure 1.

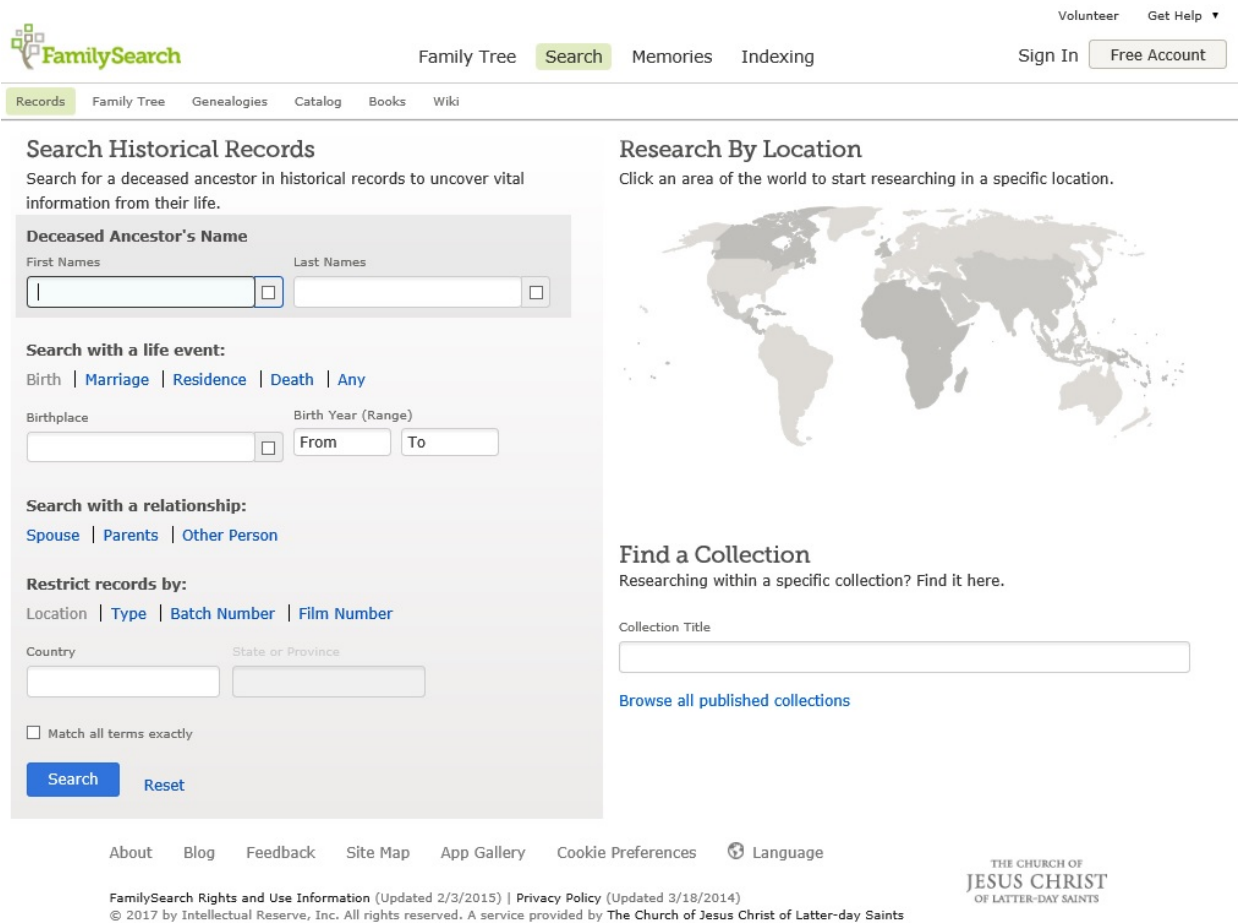


Figure 1. The Search page at FamilySearch.org

As you can see, there are different ways to search. The following paper by Leslie Huber shows you how to use the **Search** page.

## How to Search the FamilySearch Site

March 6, 2017 By [Leslie Albrecht Huber](#)

FamilySearch is bursting at the seams with great records—some of which almost certainly have new information about your family. Their digitized collections from across the world include church, vital, census, land, probate, military, and immigration records as well as many other types of records and histories that can help you uncover your family tree.

How do you unlock the door to find them? All you need is a good search. You can access FamilySearch's main search screen at <https://familysearch.org/search/>, or from the bar at the top of the screen, select **Search** and then **Records**. From here you can see that there are a few different ways to search. It's not rocket science—anyone can manage it. But a little extra background knowledge and a few insider tips can streamline your effort and get you on the fast track to success. So that's exactly what we've provided here!

## A) The Basic Search: Search by Individual

Looking for a specific person in FamilySearch's vast collections is the staple of most people's searching. To search this way, focus on the Search Historical Records box on the left of the main search screen, and follow these simple steps:

1. Fill in information about your ancestor. It's easy to assume that the more detailed information you put in about your ancestor, the better. Actually, the opposite is generally true. Here are two secrets to searching success:
  - o Put in as little information as possible that brings up a reasonable amount of results.
  - o Experiment with your search criteria. This is important even if you are convinced you have the details exactly right. Errors in the records or indexing might mean your ancestor doesn't appear exactly as you think he or she she should. And sometimes what you know to be the absolute truth about your ancestor turns out to not be so true after all! Try different spellings of names, widen the date ranges, or delete some search criteria. Also, avoid checking the box that says "Match all terms exactly."
2. Push search to get a list of results. In the example here, we entered information for Charles Mulford. Results look like this (only the top match is shown here):

Search Historical Records  
Search for a deceased ancestor in historical records to uncover vital information from their life.

**Deceased Ancestor's Name**  
First Names: Charles  
Last Names: Mulford

**Search with a life event:**  
Birth | Marriage | Residence | Death | Any  
Birthplace: Illinois  
Birth Year (Range): 1857 - 1861

**Search with a relationship:**  
Spouse | Parents | Other Person

**Restrict records by:**  
Location | Type | Batch Number | Film Number  
Country:   
State or Province:

Match all terms exactly

Search Reset

Search Results from Historical Records

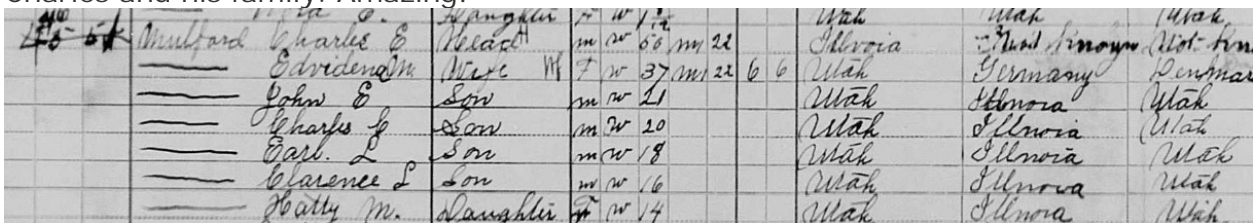
1-20 of 201 results for Name: **Charles Edmond MULFORD**, Event: **Birth**, Place: **Springfield, Sangamon, Illinois, United States**, Event Range: **1857-1861**

Number of results to show: 20 50 75

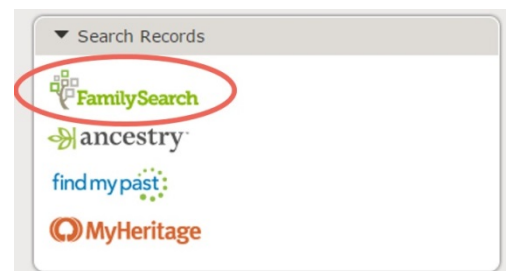
Export Results 1-20

Preview	Name	Events	Relationships	Details	Image
▶	<a href="#">Charles E Mulford</a> Head United States Census, 1910	birth: 1860 Illinois residence: 1910 Fruita, Wayne, Utah, United States	spouse: Edvidena M Mulford children: John E Mulford, Charles C Mulford, Earl L Mulford, Clarence L Mulford, Hatty M Mulford, Walter O Mulford		

3. If you think one of the items on the list is a match, select **Details** or **Image**. Details will bring up a transcription of the record, while Image will bring up the actual record. Choosing image in this example brings up the 1910 census with Charles and his family. Amazing!



There's also another way to search for individuals. If you are using Family Tree, go to the Person screen. On the right side of the page, from the Search Records box, select **FamilySearch**. The details of this person will automatically be used to fill in the search fields.



Keep in mind that only collections that are indexed are searchable. FamilySearch has many online records that aren't yet accessible by searching this way.

## B) Search by Location

Instead of looking to see what records your particular ancestor is included in, you can search to see what records exist for a particular place. Here's how:

### Research By Location

Click an area of the world to start researching in a specific location.



1. From the main search page, look at the map on the right side. Click on the area of the world you are interested in.
2. From the pop-up box that appears, choose a more exact location, such as a specific US state or country in Europe.
3. On the next page, type in your ancestor's name to search indexed records only in that place, and follow the steps in section A to locate your ancestor in those records. OR scroll down to see a list of record groups from that area that aren't yet searchable but are available for browsing. You may be able to find more information about your ancestor in these browseable records.

## C) Search by Collection

The final option on the main search screen is to search by collection. This works best if you already know there is a certain type of record—such as vital records for a particular county or a specific census record—that you would like to search.

### Find a Collection

Researching within a specific collection? Find it here.

Collection Title

[Browse all published collections](#)

To search by collection:

1. Type in the collection title, or browse their collections.
2. From the collection page, search for your ancestor following the tips in section A above, if that's an option, or browse the records if it's not.

## The Sad Case of Unsuccessful Searches

What if you search but don't have any luck? If your ancestors don't materialize from these searches, all is not lost! Remember that FamilySearch doesn't have every record out there, and not all of their records are indexed. As the video below explains, try the location and collection search to [find records you might need to browse](#) or even order in on microfilm. Try [FamilySearch's partner sites](#). And don't forget to check back often. The holdings available at FamilySearch are constantly growing. So who knows? Maybe the record offering the key to figuring out your family tree is in the record group coming online tomorrow.