

# FamilySearch Indexing

## A History and Description of Indexing *and* How YOU can be involved in this extensive endeavor!

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### What is FamilySearch Indexing?

**FamilySearch Indexing** is a volunteer project established and run by FamilySearch, a genealogy organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The project aims to create searchable digital indexes for scanned images of historical documents. The documents are drawn primarily from a collection of 2.4 million rolls of microfilm containing photographic images of historical documents from 110 countries and principalities. The documents include census records, birth and death certificates, marriage licenses, military and property records, and other vital records maintained by local, state, and national governments.

Volunteers install proprietary software available at no cost on their home computers, download images from the site, type the data they read from the image via the software, and submit their work back to the site. The data is eventually made publicly and freely available at Family History Centers or at the FamilySearch website for use in genealogical and family history research. FamilySearch anticipates that the number of names and associated genealogical data indexed is expected to accelerate as more people volunteer to index. (from Wikipedia)

### Why do “Mormons” do Family History?

- “...helping to illuminate the importance of each individual life.”

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints emphasizes the importance of the family and the value of learning about their heritage. In addition, the Church teaches that family bonds, the most sacred of all human relationships, can last eternally. Church members believe that through religious rites performed in holy temples, husbands and wives, parents and children can receive the promise that they can be united forever—even after death. They believe that temple blessings are available to those that have died as well as those who are now living. Thus, members of the Church feel strongly motivated to seek information about their deceased ancestors and participate in temple rites in their behalf. They believe that those who are dead retain their identity and free will and therefore can either accept or reject the rites performed for them. (from FamilySearch FAQ)

## **History: The path leading to FamilySearch Indexing**

- **1830** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized in Fayette, New York.
- **1894** The Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) organized.
- **1938** GSU begins microfilming records of genealogical importance.
- **1944** Name changed to The Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- **1961** The first name extraction program, called Records Tabulation, initiated. Performed by Society employees.
- **1963** The microfilm collection is moved to the newly completed Granite Mountain Records Vault for long-term preservation.
- **1976** Name changed to The Genealogical Department.
- **1978** Church deployed name extraction to stake centers, the new program being called Stake Record Extraction. Extractors transcribed data from microfilm to cards.
- **1986** Family Record Extraction Program introduced. Data now entered into personal computers from photocopies of microfilmed records.
- **1987** Name changed to The Family History Department.
- **1998** FamilySearch begins digital imaging of records.
- **2001** Local efforts pioneer the development of indexing application: Alan Stratton.
- **2006** FamilySearch indexing application in present form is introduced.

**2012**

**The Granite Mountain vault currently contains more than 3.5 billion images on microfilm, microfiche, and digital media. It is the largest collection of genealogical data in the world. About 40,000 images are being added each year.**

**About 350,000 volunteers throughout the world are adding over a million records per day to the ever expanding digital index of this massive collection.**

# FamilySearch Indexing:

## I. Getting Started

[Start Here]

<https://familysearch.org/volunteer/indexing>

(System requirements: A Windows, Macintosh, or Linux computer connected to the Internet with a monitor resolution of at least 1024 x 768. A fast connection to the Internet is preferred, however any connection will work. )

- Download Application to your personal computer.
- Register with FamilySearch to receive a username / password.
- Begin indexing:
  - a. Select a batch of 10 to 50 records to download.
  - b. Copy key information from the record to your computer.
  - c. Submit the information you have copied back to FamilySearch.

## II. Becoming a Proficient Indexer ... *Please read the instructions...*

“From The Help Menu”

- The Indexing Tutorial
- The User Guide
- Basic Indexing Guidelines
- Handwriting Tutorials

“Project Specific Instructions”

- Field Help Tab
- Project Instructions Tab
  - Project Home Page
  - Project Updates

### III. Applying Basic Indexing Guidelines

- Type what you see
- Corrected information
- Mistakes on original document
- Blank Lines
- Ditto Marks
- Variations in the records
- Unreadable records
- “Unknown” entries
- Punctuation
- Duplicate images
- Fractions or letters in number fields
- Lookup lists
- Red wavy lines or colored background
- Gender
- Rules on names, place-names, dates and ages

### IV. The Arbitration Process

An arbitrator compares the differences with the document image and either selects the most correct version or types in a new value that more accurately reflects what is on the image. The information submitted by the arbitrator is published on the FamilySearch Web site.

Arbitrators need to:

- Pay attention to details.
- Follow project instructions, even if he or she has a different opinion on how a record should be indexed.
- Be familiar with basic indexing guidelines.
- Be an experienced indexer of many projects.

## V. “There's An App for That” - Indexing on Mobile Devices.

- FamilySearch indexing now has a mobile application available in English that works with Apple iOS (which includes iPod and iPhone) and on many Android devices. It may be downloaded free from iTunes Store or The Android Market.