

Secrets for Success: How to Harness the Power of FamilySearch's Full-Text Search

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Objectives

- Review the Standard Research Process
- Introduce FamilySearch's Full-Text Search tools
- Explain best practices for using Full-Text Search
- Enable you to gather and connect your family members in FamilySearch Family Tree

The Standard Research Process

- **Gather** known information—start with yourself, then ask your relatives
- **Choose** a research goal—ask a specific question
- **Find** new information—search historical records
- **Evaluate** new information—decide what the evidence means and whether it is reliable
- **Share** new information—learn even more



Full-Text Search

FamilySearch Labs – Expand your search with full text

- Direct link: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>
- Access to billions of un-indexed document images
- Search every word in the text
- Use different parameters to find exact words and phrases
- Focus search to include specific years, record types, locations, and collections

Best Practices for Using Full-Text Search

Find words or phrases:

Elijah Taylor = Elijah OR Taylor

“Elijah Taylor” = Elijah AND Taylor within a word or so of each other

+Elijah +Taylor = Elijah AND Taylor on the same image

+Elijah -Taylor = Elijah BUT NOT WITH Taylor on the same image

Wildcards replace certain letters:

? replaces one letter (Ta?lor = Taylor, Tailor, Taelor)

* replaces multiple letters or no letters (Ta*r = Tar, Taylor, Tamer, Tanner, Taber, Tapper)

Additional tips:

Try searching for the name of the person you are interested in by putting their name in quotes in the name field and leaving all other fields blank. Then, filter by place – country, state, county. If you still have too many results, filter by year – century, then decade. Next, try adding additional keywords or phrases or searching with wildcards. Look at every result. The years given in the record titles may not directly apply to the record match. You never know when your ancestor might be mentioned!

When searching for women, try using the name of the husband, father, brother, son, or guardian as the main search. Put his name in quotes, then filter by place. Add +wife +Nancy or other relationships and names to narrow the search to those records containing information about the women in question.

When searching for enslaved individuals, use the slaveholder (or potential slaveholder) as the main search. Put his or her name in quotes, then filter by place. Add +Negro +slave or other search terms. You can also try adding the first name of the enslaved person after the + sign.

When searching for Free People of Color, try putting “Free Person of Color” in quotes in the keyword field. Add + and their first name. Remember that it is very important to filter by place. Try searching court records, especially as many counties required FPC to register their identities at the courthouse.

Search Tips

To reduce the number of search results, use the filters in the upper left under the Results number. You can also include the following in your searches:

Find an exact word or phrase

Use quotation marks. Example: "Henry Jones"

Include a specific word or phrase

Use the + symbol. Example: +Judith

Exclude a specific word or phrase

Use the - symbol. Example: -John

Find different spellings

Use the ? symbol. Example: Jens?n will return Jensen and Jenson

Find different forms of a root word

Use the * symbol. Example: Car* will match car, cars, carriage, carpenter, etc.

Key Records by Century

| | |
|--|---|
| 20th Century (1900s) | U.S. federal census records (1900-1950) Vital records Military records Social Security records (after 1937) Newspapers Funeral programs or cards Passenger lists Passport applications County histories City directories Slave narratives |
| 19th Century (1800s) | U.S. federal census records (1850-1880) Vital records Military records Freedmen's Bureau Freedman's Bank Land and probate records Manuscript collections Cemetery records Church records Court records |
| 18th Century (1700s) | Land and property records Probate records Tax records Manuscript collections |

Many of the earlier records are extremely difficult to search because of the lack of full-name indexes. Now, with FamilySearch's Full-Text Search, these records *and everyone mentioned in them* are easily accessible. The key is knowing how to search.

Gather and Connect Your Family in FamilySearch Family Tree

Other Relationships feature

Use the "Other Relationships" feature to add individuals mentioned in historical records to Family Tree, even if you don't know their full names. This will allow the computer to assign a personal identification number to them so you can link people together if you know their relationships. You can also add source material and memories. Available relationships include:

- Apprenticeship
- Employment
- Enslavement
- Godparent
- Household
- Neighbor
- Relative

Sample Search Process

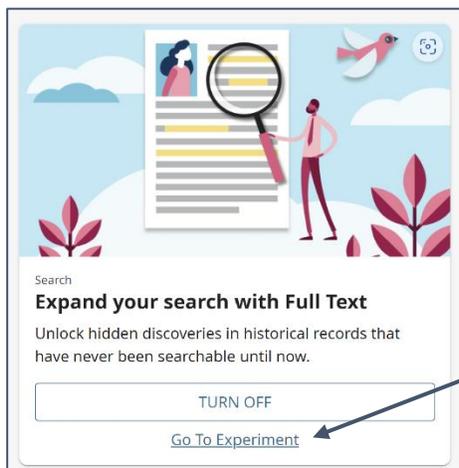
John Smith

1. Go to FamilySearch Full-Text Search by locating the FamilySearch Labs tile on the FamilySearch.org logged-in home page and selecting “View Experiments,” or at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>.



FamilySearch Labs tile on FamilySearch.org logged-in home page.
Select “View Experiments”

2. Select “Try it” or “Go to Experiment” in the tile that says, “Expand Your Text with Full Search.”



FamilySearch Labs tile called “Expand your search with Full Text.”
Select “Try It” or “Go To Experiment”

3. Put “John Smith” in NAME field (be sure to include quotation marks) and nothing else.

Start your search

Keywords
Ex: "Jane Lee" or Car*

Name
"John Smith"

Place
City, County, State, Province, or Country

Year (Range)
From To

Image Group Number (DGS)

SEARCH

The box called, “Start your search.”
Put the name of your search subject in quotation marks in the Name field. This will be an exact search.

4. Perform the search.

The screenshot shows a search form titled "Start your search". It includes several input fields: "Keywords" with the example "Ex: 'Jane Lee' or Car*", "Name" with "John Smith", "Place" with "City, County, State, Province, or Countr", and "Year (Range)" with "From" and "To" sub-fields. There is also an "Image Group Number (DGS)" field. At the bottom left, a blue button with a magnifying glass icon and the text "SEARCH" is highlighted with a blue arrow.

The box called, "Start your search."

Select the Search button.

5. Filter by PLACE – country, then state, then county.

The screenshot shows the search results page with the heading "Results (5,520,750)". Below the heading, there is a "Filters:" section with four buttons: "Collection", "Year", "Place", and "Record Type". The "Place" button is highlighted with a blue arrow.

Filters are located under the number of Results for your search.

Select the Place button.

The screenshot shows a "Filter by Place" dialog box. It has a "Selected Filter" section with two buttons: "United States of America (3,488,083)" and "Nevada (960)". Below this is a "Browse in Nevada" section with a grid of buttons for various counties: Carson City (30), Clark (301), Douglas (11), Elko (30), Esmeralda (72), Eureka (13), Humboldt (25), Lander (13), Lincoln (4), Lyon (6), Mineral (42), Nye (88), Ormsby (27), Pershing (22), Storey (35), Washoe (68), and White Pine (48). At the bottom right, there are two buttons: "CANCEL" and "APPLY". The "APPLY" button is highlighted with a blue arrow.

Select the country, then the state, then the county.

Select the Apply button.

6. Update the search (Select the Apply button).

7. Add KEYWORDS

- a. +wife +Nancy for women (replace Nancy with wife's name)
- b. +Negro +slave for enslaved persons (try other slavery-related keywords or names)
- c. "Free Person of Color" for Free Person of Color

Start your search

Keywords

Name

Place

Year (Range)
 From To

Image Group Number (DGS)

Add keywords. Try using +wife +Nancy or +Negro +slave or other terms.

Click on the Search button.

8. Update the search (Select the Search button).

9. Review results – if you still have too many, filter by YEAR – century, then decade.

[Lincoln, Nevada. Licenses 1871-1873, 1898-1919, Vital Records 1873-1...](#)



.... C Co with the REMARKS . John Smith hereby --- tify that ...

Matches (1)

After reviewing results, add additional filters if necessary.

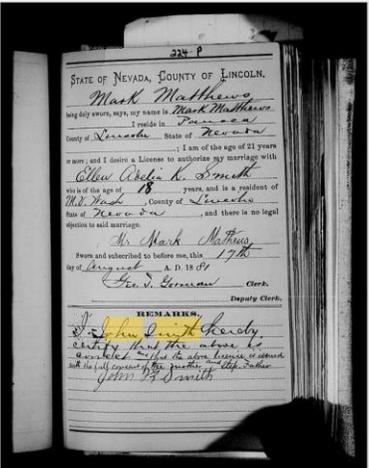
Results (5,520,750)

Filters:

10. View, read, study, and analyze all results.

Lincoln. Licenses Mar 11, 1871–Mar 24, 1873, Apr 16, 1898–Jun 24, 191... CITATION ATTACH TO TREE

Image 450 of 1,900



Full Transcript
 Lincoln. Licenses Mar 11, 1871–Mar 24, 1873, Apr 16, 1898–Jun 24, 1919, Vital Records May 26, 1873–Dec 23, 1887, 1888–1898, Jan 26, 1919–Jun 1, 1936

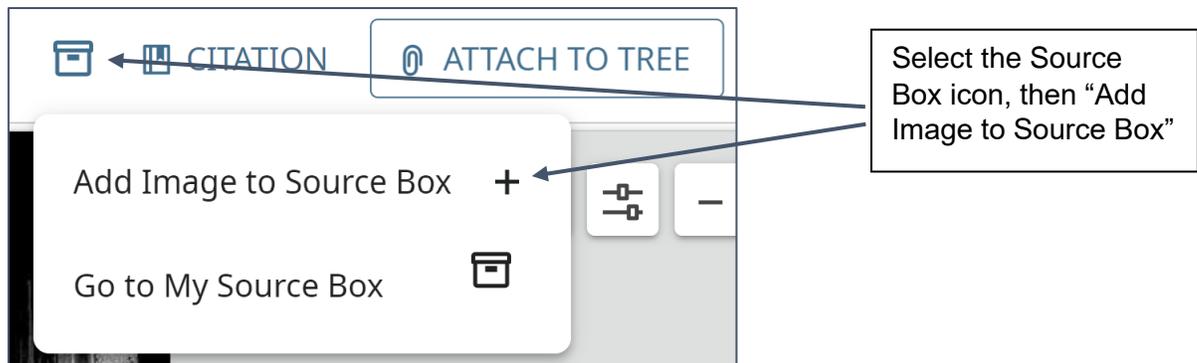
Show Keywords

Summarize the document

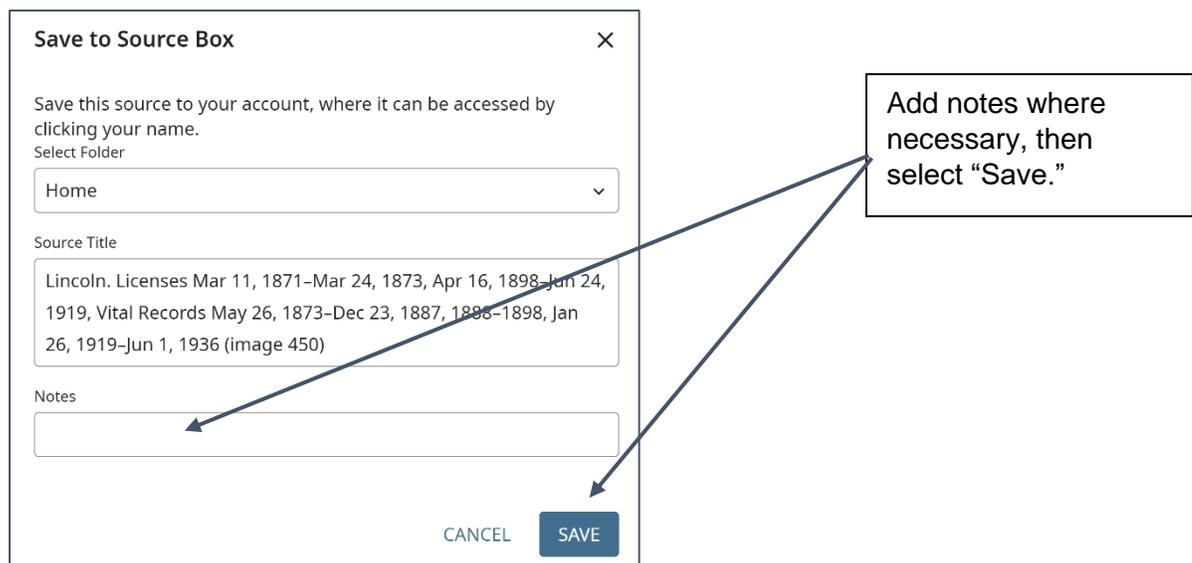
224 . STATE OF NEVADA , COUNTY OF LINCOLN . Mark Matthews being duly sworn , says , my name is Mark Matthews I reside in Pace County of Lincoln State of assassa Nevada I am of the age of 21 years or more ; and I desire a License to authorize my marriage with Ellen Adelia K. Smith who is of the age of 18 years , and is a resident of M. V. Wash County of Livesho State of Nevada and there is no legal objection to said marriage . Mr Mark Mathews Sworn and subscribed to before me , this 17th day of August A. D. 1881 Geo . J. Gorman Clerk . . C Co with the REMARKS . John Smith hereby --- tify that the above is --- meet and that the above license is seed full consent of the other Step Father J Smith

11. Try various keyword combinations and name spellings to find more records.

12. Add pertinent images to source box to easily attach source to people in Family Tree.



13. Save image to Source Box.



14. Locate individual in Family Tree or add individuals from records to Family Tree. Use "Other Relationships" if necessary to give each person an identification number and person page.

15. Attach sources to Family Tree from your source box.

