



The FamilySearch Catalog

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PART I. For Now: 2 Versions

A. For the time being there are two versions of FamilySearch.org online:

1. The old “classic” version in basic blue (to access the Family History Library Catalog) (the catalog is still updated nightly with new acquisitions)
2. The updated site (still under development) shows a black silhouette of a family holding hands looking at a aqua vista of mountains and valleys (to access the newer FamilySearch Catalog version use the **Catalog** tab)
3. In the FamilySearch Blog article “FamilySearch.org Website Changes—22 February 2012” it was announced “We will be closing the old website in the next few months to focus our efforts on the future.”
4. As the old site is taken down, the old Family History Library Catalog will be moved over to a virtual server and still be available until more of the planned updates to the catalog are implemented at the new site.

To search the old FHLC:

1. Go to the updated site using the *www.familysearch.org* URL
2. Click on the **Catalog** tab and notice it says :

FamilySearch Catalog is in **BETA** . You can still visit the previous version.

3. Click on the blue “previous version” link to go to the old catalog (wherever it may end up)
4. You’ll see the eight available searches (blue buttons)
 - a. Place Search
 - b. Surname Search
 - c. Keyword Search
 - d. Title Search
 - e. Film/Fiche Search
 - f. Author Search
 - g. Subject Search
 - h. Call Number Search

plus a link to a tutorial called “*The Family History Library Catalog Overview*”

5. Hover your mouse/cursor over any of the search buttons and you’ll get basic advice on how to use that type of search.

To search the FS Catalog on the new site:

1. Go to the site using the *www.familysearch.org* URL
2. Click on the Catalog tab (below the “Discover Your Family History” banner). This brings up two boxes. One box is labeled *Search* (it no longer displays Place Search by default—but is instead empty). Click on either the box or the drop-down arrow to pull down a list of what appear to be the same eight search options: Place-names, Last names, Titles, Author information, Subjects, Call numbers, Film numbers, Keywords (beta).
3. CAUTION: These new searches do NOT operate in exactly the same manner as those in the old catalog. The search *For* box changes depending on the type of search you select from this list.
4. Currently, there is no tutorial on how to use the new version of the FSC [FamilySearch Catalog] at the updated site which is still evolving with many features still to be added.
5. The catalog search at the new site is based on an entirely new catalog search engine developed by FamilySearch. At this time, the new catalog search system has advantages and disadvantages when compared to searches made in the old system.

B. FHLC SEARCH USAGE: (clearly shows people do NOT know how to use it!)

1. Place Search = 36.3 %
2. Surname Search = 27.6 %
3. **Keyword Search = 8.2 %**
4. Title Search = 5.5 %
5. Film/Fiche Search = 10 %
6. Author Search = 2.8 %
7. Subject Search = 5.4 %
8. Call Number Search = 4.2 %

C. The old FHLC originally included only information about resources found in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. It now has a Locations button in the Topic Details screen that allows you to see various institutions that have a copy of that item. Example: do a place search on Nelson [County], Kentucky and select the topic of Cemeteries then click on the Show Locations button and notice one item is listed as available at the Orange California Family History Center.

In time, the new FamilySearch Catalog [FSC] will include entries for materials [on paper or microform] found at the 4500+ Family History Libraries/Centers world-wide plus links to important materials in “affiliated” institutions. The new FS Catalog also includes links to the view the item online if a digital version is

available (at FamilySearch or other “affiliate” locations) plus some entries include links to FamilySearch Wiki articles explaining how to use the materials in that FS Catalog entry. Record search results may in the future also include a link back to the FS Catalog entry from which they were indexed/imaged thus showing more about the source for that information.

PART II. The Eight Types of Searches: Old vs. New

See the FamilySearch Wiki article titled “Introduction to the Family History Library Catalog” and the related articles for each type of search (last updated in August 2011).

A. PLACE SEARCH

1. Old = whenever you did a Place Search you knew to also do a Keyword Search
2. Old = allowed truncation of place names down to four-letters but not wildcards
3. Old = the names of countries are in English in the catalog
4. Old = the names of states, provinces, counties, etc. are in the country’s language
5. Old = geopolitical divisions are neither current day nor likely to be as they were when your ancestor’s identifying event occurred, instead they have been set by the library catalogers at the boundaries as they were at a specific point in time (example: Poland’s counties are listed as they were in the 1960s since in 1975 Poland doubled the number of its geopolitical divisions)
6. Old = The catalog is U.S. & Canada centric in that states/provinces are listed as the largest unit (with no USA or Canada attached to them)
7. Old = the *Part of* box is optional, but helps eliminate places with the same name
8. Old Search = Place & Part of > Place Search Results where you click on the result for the place level you wanted > Place Details lists all the topics for which the FHL has records pertaining to your selected place (unfortunately it does NOT list the number of records available per topic for that place or which are new) and has a View Related Places button for smaller and/or larger geopolitical divisions for the selected place (if the FHL has any records from those divisions) > Topic Details list the records available per topic with links to each plus a new Location Details button to Family History Centers **and other repositories** with copies of that record > the Title Details screen has the information and links entered by catalogers (red links to digitized sources and green links to sources located in other repositories) and a button to View Film Notes if that source is available on microfilm or fiche.
9. New Search = Place-names is no longer the default search mode > type the place name starting with the largest geopolitical unit using commas to separate place levels (state, county, town) > as you begin typing a pick list appears of likely

matches > click on your choice from this list to ensure correct search results > going back and highlighting your place choice in the box brings up a list of smaller units under that designation (example: if you chose Tennessee, Campbell [Co.] from the pick list then highlight your choice in the *For* box you get a list of towns in Campbell County [TN] for which the catalog has records) > once you have the geopolitical levels desired displayed in the *For* box and click on the *Search* button > a new screen appears with your search terms listed in the green area on the left and the topics for which the FSC has records appear in an alphabetical list on the right (was alphabetically by topic-location and location-topic intermixed—but now all the examples I have checked are consistently location-topic) > NOTE: the numbers in parentheses after each topic indicate the number of matches available for that place and topic (something we have been requesting for years—print this page and check these numbers against later searches for that location to identify new material in the FSC!) > Click on any topic and it expands within the list leaving the other topics visible and expandable > this list of records under the topic includes the record title and author but no longer does it display availability in the FHL, FH Centers, or elsewhere (just beginning to be added by the FS catalogers) > shift + click to see the details screen for that entry (opening it in a new window/browser tab) to see details of where that record is available.

10. New Search Options = In the new FSC search system you do not have to go back to the catalog home page each time you want to start a new search. Change your search right from the topics results screen by using the aqua-green area on the left of the screen showing your original search terms. Click anywhere in the *For* box and a partial list of smaller geopolitical units appears under the one chosen. Or highlight the place in the *For* box then begin typing a different location over it (starting with the largest geopolitical unit—like the name of a state to see the counties available under that state—again using commas to indicate a place level change). If you chose a different type of search from the pull-down list in the *Search* box, the *For* box empties automatically.

11. New Title Details Page Options = Clicking on a title (in blue when a topic is expanded to show the underlying titles in the new search system) brings up a Title Details screen with additional options. There is a print button in the upper right corner of the Title Details screen. There is a *Back to search results* link on the left side of the screen under the record title. The author's name may be in blue as a link to other works by that author in the catalog. Subject headings under Subjects are also blue links to hopefully help you find more records about the topic being researched. Don't overlook the *About this record* section at the bottom of the Record Details screen. This may contain a link to the FamilySearch Research Wiki

with further information on how to use that record. It may also tell you if a microfilm's circulation is restricted.

B. SURNAME SEARCH/LAST NAMES SEARCH

1. Old = You are limited to searching for one surname at a time (no clustering allowed) and the explanation on how to use the search (located below the search box) recommends the use of Keyword search to search on multiple surnames and other identifiers. It also recommends you use Author and Title searches to find biographies and autobiographies. This is why I have recommended for years that searchers do five searches when looking for surnames: Surname, Keyword, Author, Title, and Subject!

NOTE: Searching on two surnames in the surname search box returns no matches when there are records in the FSC for each of those surnames.

2. Old = Surname search results max at 100 matches per page and you must use the "Get records from number" box at the bottom of the page to return additional results. The *Show Locations* button appears at both the top and bottom of the results page. This locations list is incomplete and will grow as the holdings of more and more FH Centers are entered into the main catalog and more resources become available online. At the bottom of the Surname search results screen there are three additional buttons: *Show Locations*, *Order results by title*, *Order results by author*, *Order results by surname*.

3. New = Even though the pull-down list of search options says *Last names* (plural), searching on more than one surname in the search box brings back no matches when, in fact, there are family history books in the collection with those names in the title and content (Subject headings).

4. New = When you search on just one surname and get a list of results, an additional green area appears on the left side of the screen categorizing your results (Year, Category, Availability, Language, etc.). Notice the numbers in parenthesis after the filters in each of these categories. These are the number of items that match that filter. Clicking on any filter further limits your results list. NOTE: These numbers may exceed the total number of matches found by your search.

5. New = The title details screen includes a link to view a digital image of that item, if included in the filters mentioned above.

6. New = ? Sometimes allows wildcards (but can't appear in the first three letters).

C. TITLE SEARCH

In both old and new search systems you can use more than one word in any order that appears in the title.

1. Old = Using wildcards in the old search system doesn't work: it returns matches that ignore the wildcard and does NOT find the matches for which the wildcard was inserted. Example: searching on REN*ICK finds RENICK but does not find RENNICK.

2. New = Using wildcards in the new search system works to some extent. Examples: searching on ren?ick finds RENWICK and RENNICK but **not** RENICK and searching on REN* now finds matches when before it found none

D. AUTHOR SEARCH

An Author Search in the new system has less functionality than the old system because in the new system it requires an exact match. You can use wildcards. Use both the old and new catalogs for this search.

E. SUBJECT SEARCH

1. Both the old and new catalogs use the Library of Congress Subject Headings (found under "Authorities") searchable online at: <http://id.loc.gov/search/> for ideas on how to structure this type of search.

2. The more words you type the more specific the results will be, but you also run the risk of missing a subject you would like to find (which is why the LOC Authorities search tool listed above is so valuable).

3. You do not have to enter the search terms in any specific order in a Subject search (see the FS Wiki article titled "Family History Library Catalog Subject Search") and you can use wildcards.

F. KEYWORD SEARCH

1. Both old and new systems allowed keyword searches for place names and people names. However, many searchers never think to search on such useful words as CD (the kind that have searchable databases on them), collection, index, or place name + genealogy (a catch-all term in the catalog).

2. Advice: use both the old and new systems for now. (FSC allows wildcards.)

G. FILM/FICHE NUMBER SEARCH

1. Both the old and new system do NOT allow the use of commas or wildcards.

2. The new system still misses some items that are in the FHLlibrary.

H. CALL NUMBER SEARCH

1. The Family History Library Catalog and FamilySearch Catalog use a Modified Dewey classification system.

2. The old system was case and spacing sensitive.

3. The new system is no longer case sensitive, but is still spacing sensitive. In addition, the new FS Catalog Call Number search allows the use of wildcards (after 8 characters/spaces—just recently began to be enforced).

4. You can see books and other items that appear on the shelves in the library by searching on a partial call number or a call number with a wildcard on the end.