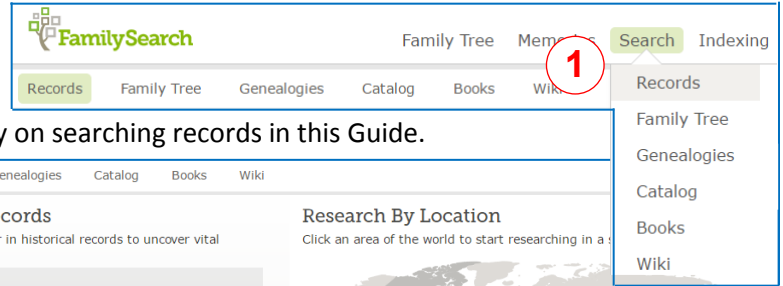# Searching Records with FamilySearch

SEARCH HISTORICAL RECORDS

1. Go to FamilySearch and hover over the "Search" tab. Click "Records" from the drop down list. We will focus only on searching records in this Guide.

FamilySearch allows you to search records:
2. By First and Last Names.
3. With a life event (Birth, Marriage, Death, Residence, Any).
4. By relationship (Spouse, Parents, or Other Person).
5. By Location, Type, Batch Number or Film Number,
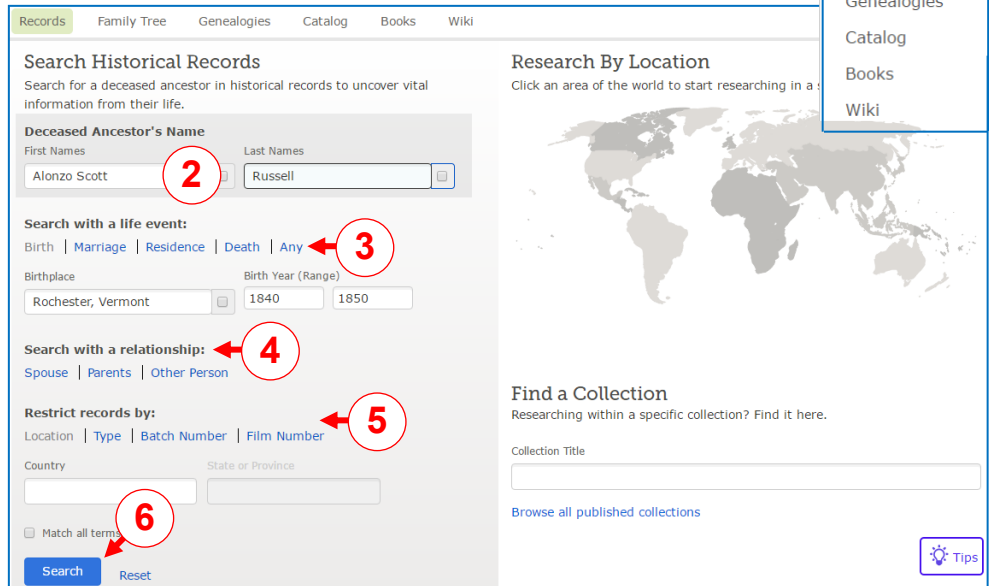
You can leave fields blank or estimate information. Unless you are looking for a specific record, it is often better to leave many search fields blank, even if you know the information. FamilySearch may contain records about this individual, but not all records contain all of the information that you know. Entering less information may help your search criteria match records for the individual more closely and increase the likelihood that the records will appear near the top of your search results. If you do not find the person you are searching for, you might find the tips on the various search methods that follow useful.

Search by First Names and Last Names.

6. You can search for Ancestors using the Historical Records search screen shown above. Enter the search criteria you know and click "Search."
7. The second entry on Search Results from Historical Records has icons indicating there is a Details page and an Image.
8. Clicking the Name or the Details icon, we find the results below.
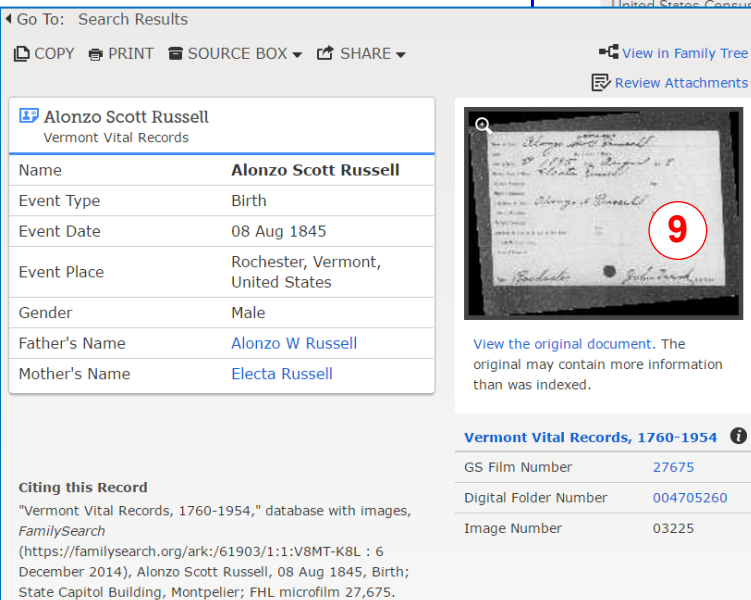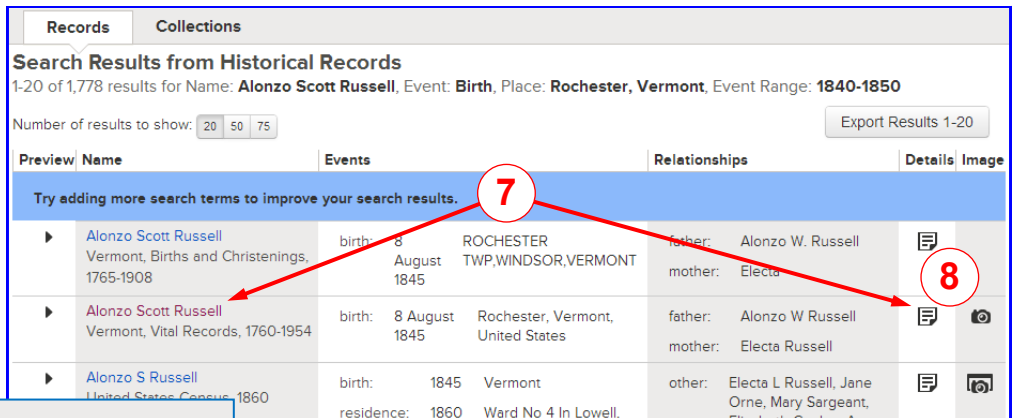
9. Clicking the View the Document link will display the image.
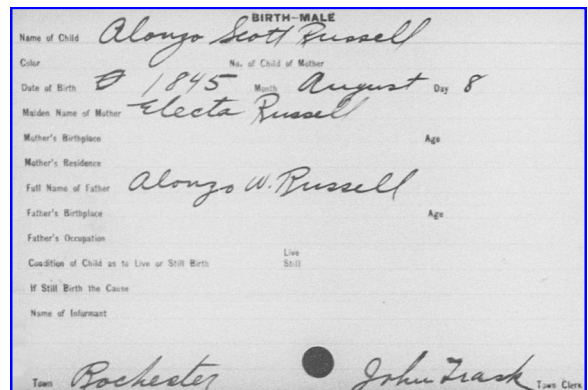
Tips for Searching by First Names and Last Names:

- Enter the name of only one person in the First Names field.
- Try adding or omitting middle names.
- Try nicknames.
- Try spelling the name as it is spelled in the old country and in the new one.
- Leave the First Names or the Last Names fields blank.
- Try searching by Relationships.
- When searching for a woman, search with her maiden name to find records that were created before her marriage; use her married name to find records created after marriage.
- Try your search with just her first name and the names of her spouse and her parents.
- Try using wildcards. Enter "*" to replace multiple consecutive characters. Enter "?" to replace a single character.

Tips for Searching by Life Events:

- Try your search with different or all life events (birth, marriage, death).
- In the place field try searching for a more or less specific place. For example, if you did not find information by searching by town, try the county or state, or try entering just the country name.
- In the year fields, increase or decrease the year range. Fill in both From and To ranges, or the program will populate both with the same year.
- Use a Residence Place to find records that identify where a person was living.
- Use Any Place if you know a date and place for an event other than birth, death, and residence.
- You can include multiple life events in your search, but do this only when you are looking for a specific type of record that contains all of the life events.

Tips for Searching by Relationships:

- Try the search with different types of relationships. (Spouse or Parents).
- When entering the name of the mother or wife, try searching by the woman's married name and maiden name. If you do not know the maiden name, leave the last name field blank.
- A search by Parents may pull up a list of possible siblings.
- Try searching by spouse only.

Tips for Search Results:

Click Search to view results. The information that you entered for your search is listed at the top of the search results screen, along with the number of matching records. The records that match your search most closely are near the top of the list. Scan your search results for records of interest to you. Collections that have a camera icon include images. Collections without a camera have only the indexed records. If you do not see the records that you want, you can refine or filter your search results.

How to Apply Filters to Your Search Results in Historical Records:

You can filter your results to reduce the number of records and refine your search.   By applying filters, you can focus the results on exactly what you want to find. The filters are located on the left side of the list of search results below the "Refine Your Search" menu. Tip: Entering less information will increase the likelihood that filters will return the records you are interested in.

SEARCH BY LOCALITY

You can search by location using: A. Historical Records Search Home Page, B. Interactive Map, or C. Browse All Published Collections link.

A. **Historical Records Search Screen** allows you to filter your results. For example, if you are searching for a record in Cork, Ireland, scroll down the Historical Records screen and click Location. Enter **Ireland** in the Country field and **Cork** in the State or Province field. It is interesting to note that there are over three million search hits. You can refine your search by adding names, life events, and relationships. Selecting "Type" allows you to restrict your search to the various record types listed.

B. **Search Using the Interactive Map** on the Home Page.

1. To find information on Ireland, click on the area where Ireland appears on the map.
2. When the pop-up appears, select "Ireland" from the 7 locations that show on the left side of the pop-up.
3. Information on Ireland then appears on the right.
4. Click "Start researching in Ireland."
5. Use the "Search Collections for" form to find the person you are researching.
6. Search with a life event or relationship.
7. Restrict records by Type, Batch or Film Number.

8. You can also view the collections. The top five are listed. Click the link to show all (currently 21 for Ireland) and select the one you want to search by clicking the title.
9. The Learning Center, FamilySearch Catalog and Wiki provide additional resources.

C. Browse All Published Collections:

1. Click the link "Browse All Published Collections."

2. Use the "Filter by collection name" (used "Idaho") to find specific collections you want to search. Enter information and check the results as they appear. Try "Census United" which will bring up United States Census collections.

3. Collections with records that are identified as "Browse Images" have been digitized, but have not been indexed. Instead, the images are grouped, often by localities, dates, or record types.
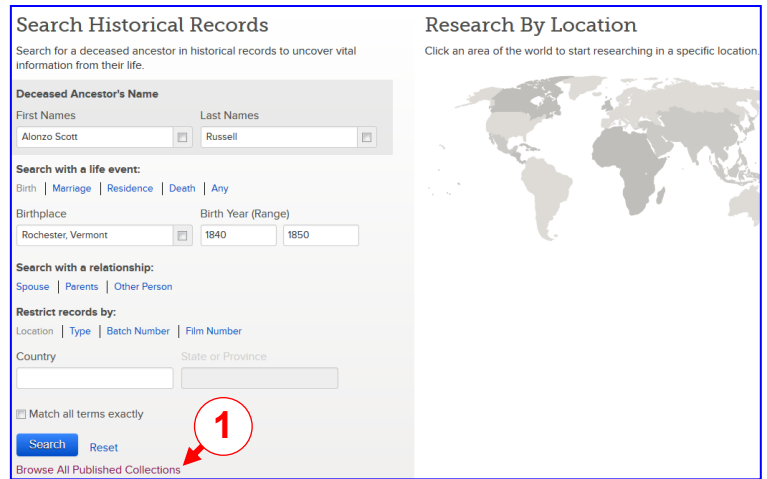
4. Upon finding a "Browse Images" collection, click the name of the collection.

5. This will open a page with the collection description, number of images to view, and source citation information.

6. Click the "Browse through (# of) images" link to scroll through the digital images.

7. When the collection is opened, there may be a way to narrow your search. The options may include: Record Type, County, an alphabetical list of names, a chronological list of dates, etc. Clicking on one of these choices will narrow the images to search.

8. A collection with the number of records listed but without a camera icon will show the indexed data but not the images.

9. A camera next to a collection that has been indexed, indicates that images of the records are available, as well as the indexed data.

10. An asterisk* will show next to the most recently added collections.

- Clicking an indexed collection will display a "Search Collection" page. In order to view the image, click on View Image.

- To view the image of some collections, a sign-in is required. Some images are available for viewing on other sites, i.e. Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com, or FindMyPast.com, Fold3.com, etc.

Information from "Product Support — Searching Records" at FamilySearch.org