England Research Using FamilySearch.org

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There are three different things to use on the FamilySearch website when researching family in England. One of the three is divided into five types of data sets. We will cover each of these, then look at search strategies and finding record sets on the website. All of this is available on www.familysearch.org. These three places and five subsets are:

1. "Search" on FamilySearch is divided into five subsets, namely
   a. Historical Records
   b. Wiki
   c. Catalog
   d. Books
   e. Genealogies
2. Maps are important for understanding and determining jurisdictions for English records. This information is at http://maps.familyseach.org.
3. The FamilySearch Tree pulls historical records and genealogies together into a single global tree and allows anyone to add to or modify the tree.

"Search" on FamilySearch
Historical Records Searches
Search by name and event – Type in the name of an ancestor, select an event (such as birth) and enter a range of years, then click search. If this gives too many results, note the options down the left side and select another piece of information to narrow down your results (gender, parents, spouse, etc.)
Search by name and locality – There are two ways to do this.
   1. enter the name and then the place (county only or exact parish).
   2. enter the name and click search, then click on "Location" in the left margin and select the location from a list of the locations in which that name appears in the records being searched.
Restrict results to England - Click on the British Isles on the map on the Record Search screen, then pick England. Enter your search terms and results will be limited to just England record collections.

Wiki
There are nearly 83,000 articles in the FamilySearch Wiki. Search the Wiki to answer questions about difficult topics like parish chest records, poor law, probate

records and jurisdictions, etc. Or search the Wiki to read about a parish or county (shire) to find out how to do research in that place or what records exist for that place.

Catalog Searches
Places – Type in the name of a parish or other locality and if that is one of the jurisdictions in the catalog, options will appear.
Keywords – combine localities and record types or localities and selected events or localities and surnames. For example, Rigby and Lancashire (12 results).
Jurisdictions and other important information can be found on Maps (see below).

Books
Family History Books is a collection of more than 150,000 digitized genealogy and family history publications from the archives of some of the most important family history libraries in the world. You can search the contents of all the books or any single book in the digitized collection.

Genealogies
This is a collection of genealogies from contributed sources. It is different from the FamilySearch Tree (see below). This contains information from the Ancestral File, IGI, Pedigree Resource File, and Community Trees. These come from submitted information from patrons of the library and genealogical groups around the world. Many people are unfamiliar with the Community Trees (see http://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Community_Trees_Project).

Maps
There is an extensive mapping tool available for England on FamilySearch. Record keepers (governments, religious groups, or other) generally create records based on a jurisdiction. Thus, a religious group may have records kept by a congregation and a different type or set of records kept by a regional grouping of congregations such as a synod, diocese, or stake. To locate records, one must know the jurisdiction in which to look. Any one place may have records kept by the town, the county, the state or province, the country, and sometimes other jurisdictions such as school districts or voting districts. The purpose of the FamilySearch maps is to tell the researcher the various record-keeping jurisdictions which apply to any one specific place. To use this tool, go to http://maps.familysearch.org. A map and a search box will appear. Type the name of the place your ancestor lived (village or parish), and the map will highlight places by that name in England. Select the proper one, and it will show you all of the jurisdictions which apply to that place as well as the surrounding parishes.

Trees
To use FamilyTree on FamilySearch, you must be a registered user. Registration is free (FamilySearch is a free website). No credit card or banking information is ever

requested or used. The information in the tree is freely available to anyone (after registering). Some of the information in the FamilyTree comes from Historical Records or Genealogies, and some is unique since individuals can add information directly into the FamilyTree. This is a valuable collection and everyone is encouraged to add information they know so others can benefit.

Different Ways to Search

There are many different ways to search records. There are even different places to search the same records. While this is at first confusing, it gives the researcher greater flexibility in searching. If one type of search doesn't work, try another type of search. A different type of search may yield slightly different results.

For example, many of the search screens on FamilySearch have a check box next to a search box. Check the box when you want to limit results to the exact spelling of the search term you enter. CAUTION: this is dangerous and should be used only when you get too many results. Many people fail to realize that correct spelling is a fairly recent concept. A name spelled Read, Reed, Reid, or Rede may all refer to same family. For example, a 1604 entry in Lancashire said: *Alyce Cockshot and Lettis Cockshut, twin daughters of Mr. Edmond Cockshutte, were baptized*… In one single entry, the surname is spelled three different ways.

When you go to Historical Records search, the first screen will search all the historical record collections. If you pick a single Historical Record collection, such as the 1881 census, you will have different search options and may get different results than when you searched all record sets.

Most genealogists tend to enter everything they know about an ancestor on the search screen before clicking the button to start the search. In most cases, you want to start your search with less information and only add additional pieces of information to your search when you get too many results. If the name is unusual, you may want to search by name only and leave everything else blank even when you know the additional information. When you know exactly when your ancestor was born, you may still want to enter a range of years because the record keeper may not have known when the ancestor was born and the record created may be off a little.

Recommendation: Don't give up when your first search attempt fails. Try different spellings. Try leaving out some information. Try expanding the range of years. Try adding something. Try adding or deleting the "exact spelling" option. Try search a single database instead of all databases at once. In other words, persist and be flexible.

To see what historical record collections are available on FamilySearch, click on "Search" near the top of the FamilySearch home page, then select "Records" from the drop down list. This will cause a search screen with world map to appear. Click on the British Isles on the world map, then select England from the list of countries that

appears. This will take you to England only search screen. Near the bottom of the page, there is a link that says "List all ___ Collections." Click on that phrase and you will get a list of all England record collections on FamilySearch. Click on any one to search just that collection, or to see a link that allows you to read a more complete description of what that collection includes.

Selected England Record Collections of Interest

England and Wales Census (1841-1911)
England and Wales Non-Conformist Record Indexes, 1588-1977
England and Wales, Birth Registration Index, 1837-2008
England and Wales, Death Registration Index, 1837-2007
England and Wales, Marriage Registration Index, 1837-2005
England, Bristol Parish Registers, 1538-1900
England, Cheshire Bishop's Transcripts, 1598-1900
England, Cheshire Parish Registers, 1538-2000
England, Cheshire, Land tax Assessments, 1778-1832
England, Cheshire, Marriage Bonds and Allegations, 1606-1900
England, Cheshire Workhouse Records, 1848-1967
England, Cornwall and Devon Parish Registers, 1538-2010
England, Derbyshire, Church of England Parish Registers, 1538-1910
England, Devon, Parish Registers, 1538-1912
England, Dorset, Parish Registers, 1538-1936
England, Essex, Parish Registers, 1503-1997
England, Kent, Parish Registers, 1538-1911
England, Kent, Register of Electors, 1570-1907
England, Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, Parish Registers, 1603-1910
England, Lancashire, Parish Registers, 1538-1910
England, London Electoral Registers, 1847-1913
England, Middlesex, Westminster, Parish Registers, 1538-1912
England, Norfolk Bishop's Transcripts, 1685-1941
England, Norfolk Register of Electors, 1844-1952
England, Norfolk, Parish Registers, 1510-1997
England, Sussex, Parish Registers, 1538-1910
England, Warwickshire, Parish Registers, 1538-1900
United Kingdom, Chelsea Pensioners' Service Records, 1760-1913
United Kingdom, Merchant Navy Seamen Records, 1835-1941
United Kingdom, Militia Service Records, 1806-1915
United Kingdom, World War I Service Records, 1914-1920