

Access to Records

How FamilySearch gives you access to records



FamilySearch Gives Access to Free Records and Paid Sites

Nonprofit FamilySearch.org has a mission to give you the best access to records about families that we can. We charge no fees for record access. When we don't have the images of the records, we link to partner sites that do, some of which may charge a fee. Know that we are continually negotiating to give you the best record access that we can.

Because FamilySearch.org does not own historical records, our access to historical records is determined by:

- The laws that govern access to records.
- Our contract agreements with partner organizations.

When we cannot give full, free access to records and indexes, we then give the best of the following options that our contracts and that the laws allow:

- Access to indexes and images.
- Access to indexes and links to the partner site that has the images.
- Access to indexes and links to the partner site that charges a fee for the image.
- Access to indexes and no images.

Sometimes our contracts limit access to record images in these ways:

- Access for a limited time (such as free access for the next 5 years).
- Access for a limited number of people (such as access to FamilySearch.org members).
- Access in a limited place (such as access at family history centers).

How to Increase Your Access to Records

Because of the limitations described above, you may have access to a few more record images if you do one or both of the following:

1. Sign in to FamilySearch.org.
 - When you sign in as a member of FamilySearch.org, a computer system determines your record access. Images you have access to will automatically be displayed when you search for historical records.
2. Search for records at a family history center.
 - By contract agreement, some record collections are only available at family history centers.

FamilySearch's rights (and your rights) to access records change as contracts and laws change. As you sign in, the computer system will automatically give you access to all the records to which you currently have rights.