

Using an Internet Browser with newFamilySearch

The new FamilySearch system is a wonderful new tool that marks the beginning of a new era for genealogy research. It is a departure from the programs many are accustomed to, such as PAF or Reunion, which run a Windows or Macintosh program on a personal computer to manage your family history. The newFamilySearch.org system is entirely based on using an Internet browser on your computer that accesses programs running on central computers called servers. Since the new system uses browser technology extensively, often with complex features appearing on your screen, you may find yourself confused by some of the windows as you navigate around the program. This document is intended to reduce some of the confusion.

You may already be familiar with the use of a browser such as Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Mozilla's Firefox, Netscape's Navigator, Apple's Safari, or Opera. All of these programs are browsers that allow users to access information or programs over the Internet. Although they all serve the same purpose, they usually have some slight difference that will occasionally result in differences in how they display the information on your screen. Programmers do not always design their applications to work well in all of the different browsers.

Whenever you decide to access the Internet on your computer, there are generally two functions you are performing, 1) E-mail, and 2) surfing the web. To surf the web requires opening your browser (which usually opens to a default web site called your home page) and entering the name or address of the place you wish to go. Often you will have a list of favorite places to go that show up as bookmarks or links.

At the very top of your browser screen there will be a blank space to enter the address (known as a URL). This space should not be confused with the space where you enter your Google or Yahoo search items.



A browser address entry line

When you enter <http://new.familysearch.org>, you are instructing your browser to connect you to the log-in page of the new FamilySearch system. If it is your first time, the log-in page will take you through the registration process to establish your personal username and password. Be sure to write down your username and password so you will not forget it. All subsequent times you go to the log-in page, you will enter your personal ID and password and will be taken directly to the newFamilySearch home page. Until you decide to turn off the option to see the training instruction window, it will always appear on top of the home page.

Using an Internet Browser with newFamilySearch



The newFamilySearch.org log-in page

Unless you are well versed in how a browser-based application can work, you may find yourself frustrated by the various ways that information will be displayed on the screen, and wondering how to navigate around the system. Until you are comfortable with the system, it will be best to maximize the home page by clicking on the middle box of the three little boxes in the upper right corner. This will cause the entire screen to be filled with the nFS home page.



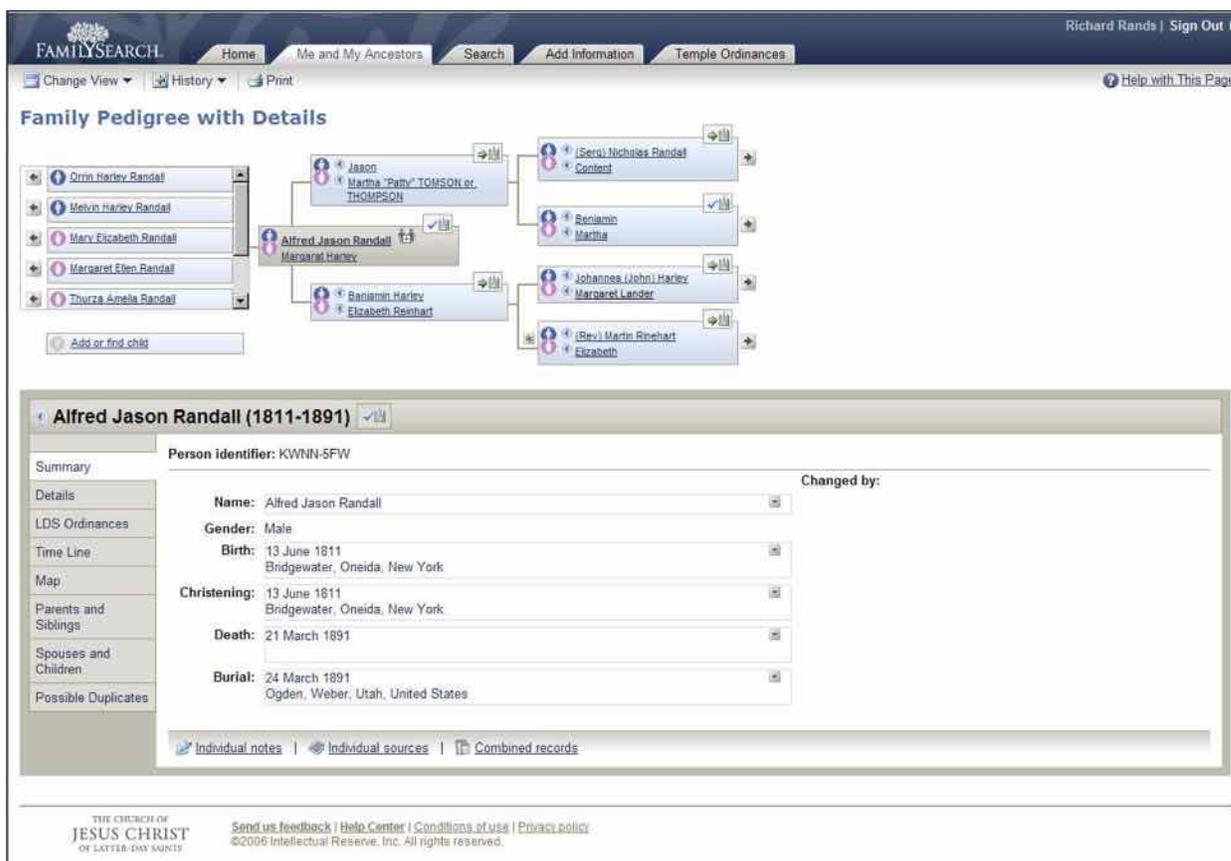
nFS Home Page

The nFS home page serves as the table of contents for you to choose what function you wish to do. Note that there are 10 items in the table of contents, one of which is at the bottom center of the screen under the image of the temple. There are also five tabs across the top representing the most commonly used items in the table of contents.

Using an Internet Browser with newFamilySearch

The tabs will always remain visible on your screen and will make it easier to navigate between the most frequently used functions in nFS.

When you are performing the main functions of the nFS system, the screens you will use typically will appear as new versions of the main screen. For example, when you select Me and My Ancestors, the nFS home page is replaced with the Family Pedigree display on the upper half and one of several detail screens on the lower half of your screen. Depending on which detail screen you chose, you may have to scroll up or down to see the entire display. As you switch from one detail screen to another, or you move from one individual to another, the main screen will always be refreshed with the new information.



The screenshot displays the newFamilySearch interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for Home, Me and My Ancestors, Search, Add Information, and Temple Ordinances. The user is identified as Richard Rands. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled "Family Pedigree with Details" showing a family tree. The tree includes individuals such as Orrin Harvey Randall, Melvin Harvey Randall, Mary Elizabeth Randall, Margaret Ellen Randall, Thuzza Amelia Randall, Jason Martha "Patty" TOMSON or THOMPSON, Alfred Jason Randall, Benjamin Harve, Elizabeth Reinhart, (Sera) Nicholas Randol, Benjamin Maria, Johannes (John) Harve, Margaret Lander, and (Rev.) Martin Reinhart, Elizabeth. Below the pedigree, a detailed view for Alfred Jason Randall (1811-1891) is shown. The details include:

Alfred Jason Randall (1811-1891)	
Summary	Person identifier: KWNN-SFW
Details	Name: Alfred Jason Randall
LDS Ordinances	Gender: Male
Time Line	Birth: 13 June 1811 Bridgewater, Oneida, New York
Map	Christening: 13 June 1811 Bridgewater, Oneida, New York
Parents and Siblings	Death: 21 March 1891
Spouses and Children	Burial: 24 March 1891 Ogden, Weber, Utah, United States
Possible Duplicates	

At the bottom of the interface, there is a footer with the text: "THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS" and "Send us feedback | Help Center | Conditions of use | Privacy policy ©2006 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved."

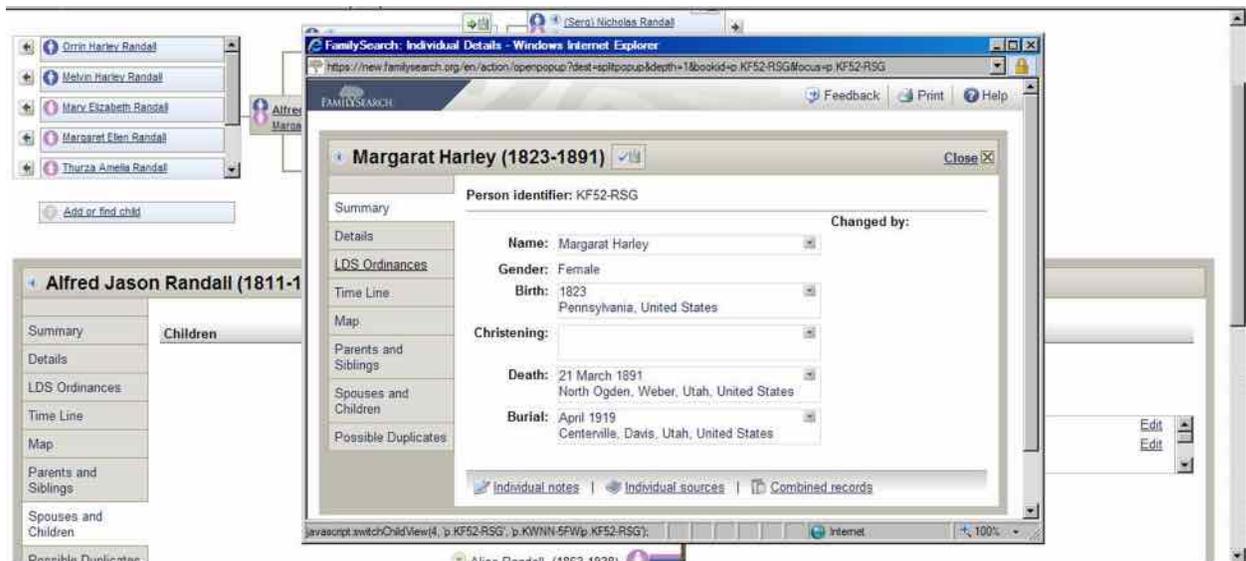
nFS Pedigree with Details screen

You will note that many items, such as names, or functions such as Edit, Add or Find will be underlined on your screen. Anything that appears underlined is a link that you can click to navigate to another screen. If you click on a name, the detail screen will be loaded with that individual's information. If you click on an Add or Find link, you will be taken to the sequence of screens that allows you to add new information or search for someone to link to your family line.

In most instances when you click on an underlined link, the subsequent screen will be a box that opens on top of the main screen. In most cases, you will still be able to see

Using an Internet Browser with newFamilySearch

some portion of the main screen around the edges of the box. This is called a pop-up box, and is completely separate from the main screen behind it. Pop-up boxes are used by programmers to display information that is considered temporary, and will most likely be closed relatively soon without having any effect on the information displayed on the main screen. When a pop-up box is closed, the system does not have to refresh the main screen, thus saving the time you would have to wait for the central computer to get back to you.



nFS main screen with a pop-up box

In most cases, when you are finished with a pop-up box, there will be a prominent button somewhere inside the box (often in the lower left or upper right corner) that will allow you to close the box and return to the main screen. The button will be labeled with Done, Exit, Close, or Cancel. It is best if you get in the habit of using these clearly marked buttons when you need to exit a pop-up box. You can also close the box by clicking on the tiny X in the upper right corner of the box, but if you become too used to closing the pop-up box this way and inadvertently click on the X in the upper right corner of the screen rather than the pop-up box, you may find yourself exiting out of the entire nFS system and will need to log-in all over again.

A nice feature of the pop-up box is the ability to click on the blue banner across the very top of the box and drag it around on your screen. And in some cases you can actually change the size of the box by dragging the boundaries in or out.

Unfortunately, there is at least one pop-up box in nFS that does not have a prominent button to close it when you need to exit. For example, when you are searching for duplicate records for an individual, you will have a pop-up box displayed called the Search Results box. If you discover that none of the possible matching records is a valid duplicate, the only way to close this particular pop-up box is to click on the X in the upper right corner of the box. Remember not to click on the X in the upper right corner of the screen.

Using an Internet Browser with newFamilySearch

One last note about the pop-up boxes in nFS: You may be tempted to minimize a pop-up box, perhaps to look at something on the main screen that is hidden by the box, or to come back to it later. The nFS system is designed to prevent a pop-up box from being minimized and to always remain in the foreground. If you click on the minimize button, it will minimize and instantly restore itself. Only if you minimize the nFS system as a whole, will you then be able to minimize the pop-up box as well.

Keep in mind that nFS is still evolving, and will become more and more polished as a system.

Richard Rands