Family Search – Finding Image Only Records

Image only collections are records that haven't been indexed yet. They can contain valuable information about our ancestors, but are more of a challenge to find our ancestors in. FamilySearch has millions of these records for you to go through.

Records
Under the main search menu, select records.
You can search 2 ways under records for image only collections.
1. Browse by collection – you can search for a specific collection such as Tax Lists or City Directories, or you can browse by collection and filter by place and date to get to what you are looking for.
   Once you find a collection area sort by the records column to find collections that allow you to "Browse Images". These are image only collections and haven't been indexed yet.
2. Browse by location – click on area of the map that you are interested and browse to the level you want. For the U.S. the lowest level is the state level. If you scroll down, you can find image only collections at the state level. To go to a county or city level use the card catalog for getting to image only collections.

Catalog
Under the main search menu, select "Catalog". You can search by Place, Surname, Titles, Authors, Subject, Keywords.

If you search by Place, the search will narrow your results to all the records for the place and it will group them by record collection type. For example, if you search for Latah County, Idaho, United States – the results will be grouped by church records, cemetery records, probate records, real estate records, etc. It does make it easy to find all the records FamilySearch has for a place with one search.
Click on a collection to see the microfilms associated with it. Some microfilms can only be viewed while in a FamilySearch library or one of their affiliates. If there is a camera icon, then it is viewable online – either at home or at a FamilySearch Library.
If there is a magnifying glass next to the camera icon, then that microfilm has been indexed and is searchable.

Note under the Film column for the microfilm there may be an item listed. This is where the records noted begin. You need to make sure you scroll to that item when looking at these images.

Images
From the main search menu, select "Images". These are unindexed microfilm images. They have taken the images from the catalog results and broken them into their individual items here. It starts you with a simple search by place. You can also click "More Options" to add a date and life event.

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On the results you can filter by a variety of items on the left. Also, in the upper right corner you can click on a Map view or click on Show to edit the columns you are looking at. If you show the "Image Group" column, then you can see the DGS number and item associated with the result.

If you are searching in the catalog and get a microfilm with lots of items to scroll through, note the DGS and item number. You can then search for that DGS number under the advanced search options for images. It will bring up that film broken into its items and then select the specific item you want. It may make it easier to get to items from the catalog.

When looking at the microfilm images, use the grid view to try to find an index, or to find a pattern to the images to make them easier to get through. You may have to search through many images to find your ancestor.

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