



FamilySearch is the largest genealogy organization in the world. Millions of people use Family Search records, resources, and services each year to learn more about their family history. FamilySearch provides service to all at no cost: 4+ billion names from all over the world, 4,745 FamilySearch centers worldwide, and 24/7 free expert phone and online service (<https://familysearch.org/about>).

FamilySearch is an ambitious effort to create a family tree for the entire human race.

Concern. Undoubtedly the biggest concern for family genealogists is the fact that FamilySearch is open to anyone to add information to the Family Tree even if the information is incorrect or undocumented.

Possible remedies:

- 1. Maintain your own family tree and contribute your research to FamilySearch.** Create your own family tree that can only be edited by you and make sure you contribute your research to FamilySearch. We recommend using Ancestry.com or MyHeritage.com and making your tree available for public view (not editable) so others can benefit from your research. Ancestry and MyHeritage are partnered with FamilySearch which has tools to interact with these two programs. This is critical to avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort in research and temple ordinance work.
- 2. FamilySearch maintains the history of all changes.** In FamilySearch, anyone can add their research information on a given ancestor whether it is correct or not. The last entry is the entry that shows up; however, FamilySearch maintains the history of all changes made to Family Tree. This greatly benefits individuals researching a given ancestor because the research efforts of several people are consolidated into one place: the FamilySearch database.
- 3. Family relationships matter most.** For those concerned with temple work and giving ancestors the opportunity to accept these saving ordinances, the family relationships are what matter most. Connecting the right people together in marriages and families is what counts in temple work. While we should always strive for accuracy in the dates and places, getting the relationships right is paramount.
- 4. Look at it from an ancestor's perspective.** If you had a son or a daughter lost in the mountains, wouldn't you want as many friends and family helping to find him or her? Let's say one of your friends found your child. You would surely be grateful to that person as you would to every person for their efforts even though most sought your child out in the wrong places. Likewise, our ancestors, especially those seeking the blessings of the temple, surely desire as many of their relatives as possible to look for them. FamilySearch enables the ability to crowd source the research efforts among large groups of people, some of whom will make mistakes. Surely our ancestors feel a deep sense of love and gratitude

toward every individual's efforts to seek them out. They understand the need for this to be a collective effort on a large scale. They understand that mistakes will be made.

5. **Scale.** Which is better? One person or a few people working on a single family tree with little or no errors or potentially hundreds and thousands of relatives working on the FamilySearch Tree with more errors? The sheer magnitude of family history work demands an approach that allows for exponentially more to be accomplished even though there may be a greater number of errors. Over time, these errors will diminish as technology continues to evolve and training increases.

Concern: **FamilySearch is open for anyone with a FamilySearch account to view stories, photos, audio, and documents of any deceased ancestor.**

Possible remedies:

1. **Each ancestor's life should be valued and honored.** One way to honor our ancestors is to offer them the opportunity to accept the saving ordinances of the temple. Another way to honor them is to ensure that the experiences that shaped their lives are preserved and shared for the benefit of their posterity.
2. **Preserve a genuine and true account.** We should strive to preserve a true and accurate account of our ancestors including the key lessons learned from both the highs and lows and the strengths and shortcomings of their lives. Even seemingly negative experiences can be shared in an appropriate way and can be turned into positives for an ancestor's posterity. At the same time, sometimes not enough facts are available and we are left to speculate. Such speculations should be avoided and the golden rule should always be applied. We should preserve and share ancestor experiences the way we would share our own experiences.