

This month's presenter was Jim Stuber on all things www.familysearch.org and the Family History Centers.

Both entities are run by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) but available for anyone to use. There are 4800 Family History Centers in 1498 countries and the archives they have contain 2,400,000 microfilms plus microfiche and books.

The online presence is www.familysearch.org and is available free for anyone to use from any PC in the world. There are over one billion records online. Jim talked about and demonstrated the web site by using the key words at the top of the screen.

"Family Tree" and "Memories" are used if you place your genealogy online at the web site. Storing and accessing your submitted genealogy is free (unlike some other options) but anyone can change your submitted genealogy. The change may be for the better or may introduce wrong information.

"Indexing" is where information is available about the current projects which are taking records stored on microfilm and placing them online for searching and viewing. So far in 2015 almost 170,000 people from around the world have been involved in indexing projects, and about 150,000,000 new records are coming online each year.

"Search" has several sub-categories.

- "Records" is where you search to find individual records based on whatever information you know, e.g. name, date and place of life events. Unlike Ancestry.com, familysearch does not give you other possible records pertaining to that person. On the right hand side of the screen is a link titled [Browse All Published Collections](#). Click on that to view all the collections that have been indexed and are available online through indexing projects. As of today there are 1981 collections and new ones are added almost daily. If there is a number by the individual collection that means it has been indexed. If the records are only available to browse one by one, it's says "Browse".
- "Genealogies" searches individual records entered by users of familysearch in the past and may not be as reliable as later efforts.
- "Catalog" lets you search the 2,400,000 microfilms and find those associated with your ancestor's past, and are mostly organized by location. Key in a place name and click the blue "Search" icon. The films are then categorized by type of record. Click on a category to expand for the individual films. Once you find a film of interest, you order it to be delivered to your local Family History Center. You have to set up an account on familysearch.org (free) and designate the specific Family History Center you use. There is a charge of \$7.50 for each film you order. There are about 1,000 films of local and regional interest kept permanently at the Green Tree Center, the one closest to us. If the film is already there you get a message to that effect and you can go there and view it for free. If the film has been indexed and placed online, you are given a link to that online collection.
- "Books" searches the online archive of books held at Salt Lake City, but the access times are very slow. www.archive.org and books.google.com are more functional if a book has been scanned on those sites.
- "Wiki" has articles of genealogical interest on localities all around the world, often including what physical records and online data sources are available for that locality and where they might be stored and accessed.

The Family History Center closest to us (and the largest one in the area) is located at 46 School Street in Green Tree. The phone number is 412-921-2115. It's open and staffed year around with volunteers (except our vacation month of August) on Tuesdays from 10:30 to 6:30, Thursdays from 10:00 - 8:00, and Saturdays from 10:00 - 1:00. There are three PC's, multiple microfilm readers, one microfilm reader with printer, and one microfilm reader connected to a PC that copies microfilm images to a flash drive. The three PC's located there can access for free multiple genealogy sites that you would otherwise have to pay to access. Here is a list and brief description of those sites:

<https://familysearch.org/ask/salesforce/viewArticle?urlname=Free-premium-family-history-websites-available-in-the-Family-History-Center-Portal-1381815050504&lang=en>