



DID YOU KNOW?

You have access to **80%** more data than 50 years ago—

ALL ONLINE!





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Church Magazines

LOWER LEFT AND TOP: PHOTO
ILLUSTRATIONS BY LESLIE NILSSON

Imagine a mother and father gathering their children around a dinner table for nourishment and feelings of love and belonging. As the family members sit down, there's joy on their faces from being together and perhaps some happy anticipation of the delicious meal to come.

In much the same way,
Heavenly Father has
asked us, His
covenant

children, to gather our ancestors. As members of God's family, in a future heavenly day we'll sit down together in peace and love. We'll nourish each other and feel the joy of togetherness.

To create this beautiful picture, we need to act. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said: "As you follow the promptings to learn about your family history, you may discover that a distant relative shares some of your facial features or your



FAMILY HISTORY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

FAMILY HISTORY MISSIONARIES

There are many opportunities for seniors to serve as family history missionaries all over the world. Image capture is just one example. Some require language ability but not all. Some missions would be particularly appropriate for missionaries who might enjoy historical records or a more introverted missionary experience. To learn more about these opportunities, visit familysearch.org/mission.



interest in books or your talent for singing. This could be very interesting and even insightful. But if your work stops there, you will sense that something is missing. This is because to gather and unite God's family requires more than just warm feelings. It requires sacred covenants made in connection with priesthood ordinances."¹

Our Heavenly Father has inspired the development of many types of technology that have made this gathering faster, easier, and more accurate. President Eyring continued: "We do not know what marvels God will inspire people to create to help in His work of gathering His family. But whatever marvelous inventions may come, their use will require the Spirit working in people like you and me. This should not surprise us. After all, these are beloved sons and daughters of God. He will send whatever inspiration is needed to give them the opportunity to return to Him."²

DID YOU KNOW?

You can serve as a family history missionary anywhere in the world! Or in your own home—full or part time.

WE NEED MORE!

Preserving Records

The Church's miraculous work of gathering and preserving records is picking up speed, with 300 camera teams spread across the globe. Once the images are acquired, they undergo a quality-check process. Then they can be indexed, making the information easier to search and work with.

Joy Rife and Raelynn Klafke of Texas, USA, served about six months in Melbourne, Australia, as record preservation missionaries, digitally capturing various records at an archives center. Sister Rife says of their experience:

"Prior to coming to the archives, some of the records had been stored in a room with a leaky roof and an open window, while some were well taken care of and stored properly.

"As we opened the records, there was a clear realization that some of these names had not been seen or spoken for many decades, sometimes 150 years. At times there were clear promptings if we had missed a page.

"Many images are captured in quick succession, without actually reading the names they contain. But sometimes we were inspired to read the names on a page. When this happened, we saw our own family names in the record.

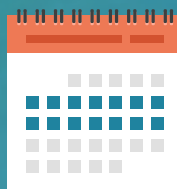
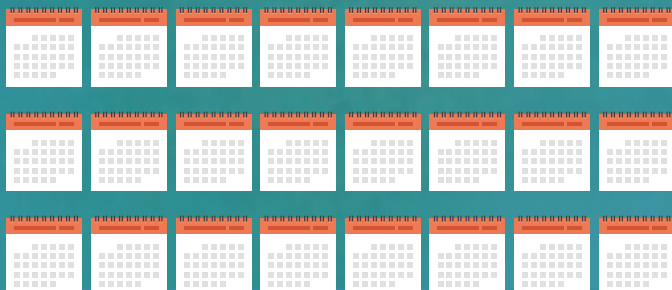
"What a blessing to make images available for people around the world to find their own families!"

FamilySearch reports that as of 2016, 320,000 people are helping with indexing, processing millions of images per year. Families can then quickly utilize these records. Still, camera teams are far



Over **140** **MILLION** records are captured each year.

Time it takes to capture images by **MICROFILM— 2 YEARS**



**DIGITALLY SCANNED—
2 WEEKS**

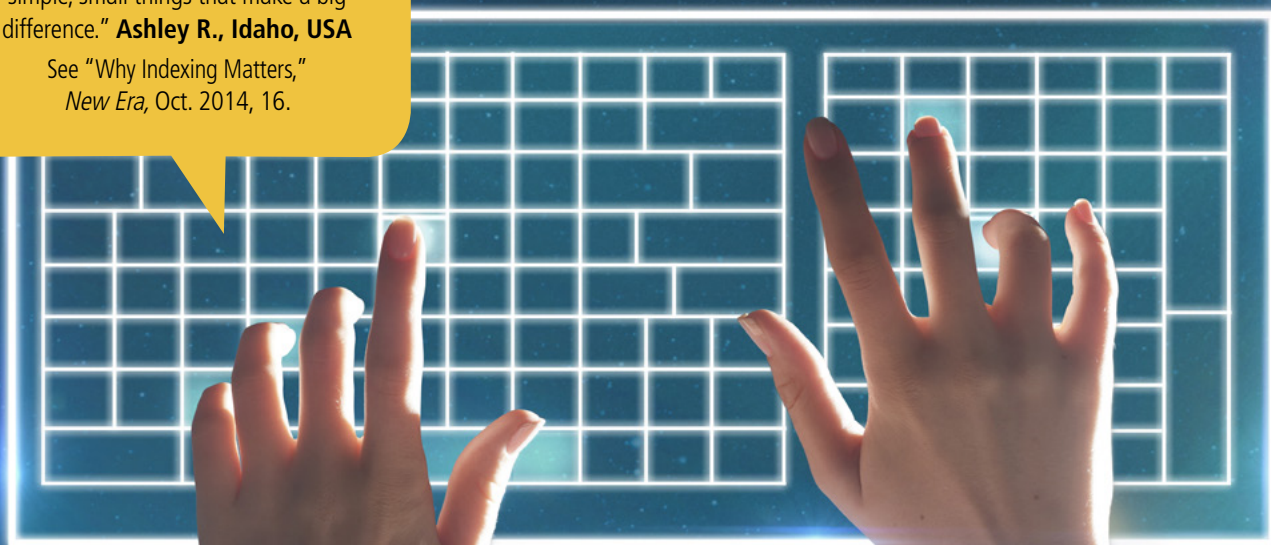
Over **275** camera teams are digitizing records in **48** countries.



“Indexing taught me that some of the most important things we can do are simple, small things that make a big difference.” **Ashley R., Idaho, USA**

See “Why Indexing Matters,” *New Era*, Oct. 2014, 16.

Indexing matters!



TOP: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LAMBERT/GETTY IMAGES

outpacing what is indexed. However, by increasing the number of indexers and by forming partnerships with other genealogical groups, the goal is to index these records in a single generation—20 to 30 years. Miracles have happened over and over in the past in regard to this work, and they will happen again, and as many times as needed.

Did Aunt Mary Really Do It All?

Many Latter-day Saints, especially those whose families have belonged to the Church for generations, assume that their family

history work has all been done. Sometimes these families have an Aunt Mary or Uncle John who devoted years to this research, completing beautiful, meticulous books full of family group sheets and pedigree charts. These faithful people combed through every possible source they could find and often considered the work finished.

And so it might have been—at the time. But consider the fact that we currently have about 80 percent more data in FamilySearch than was available to Aunt Mary. The dead ends she encountered may possibly now have new information for them. And more is being added all the time, at an astonishing rate. Camera teams are capturing about 500 million records per year. That's well over one million records per day.

Billions more records are being added as FamilySearch creates partnerships with other genealogy databases, such as Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com, FindMyPast.com, and Geneanet.org. FamilySearch is often able to trade access to new records with these partners, opening up even more availability.

With such a wealth of new data, it would actually be surprising if a person was unable to add to Aunt Mary's work. The speed at which records are being added to the collection is nothing short of miraculous, demonstrating that God's hand is in the work.

Making Family History Come Alive

Sharing things to the "Memories" section of FamilySearch can do something very important. It can help us turn our hearts to our fathers. An image of an ancestor helps us to remember that these were real, live people with hopes and dreams, with families, struggles, heartaches, and joys much like our own.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can access FamilySearch on your cell phone.

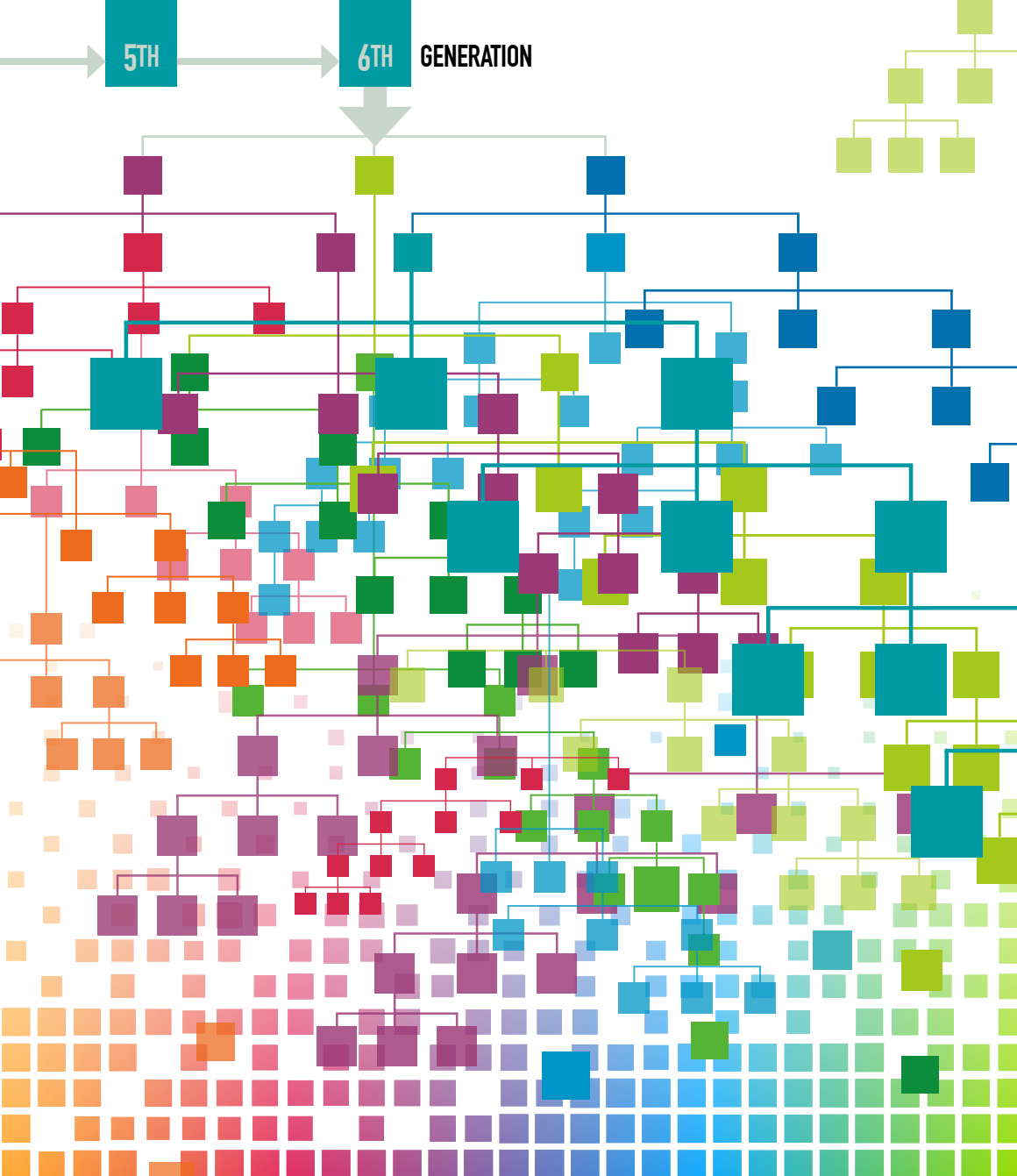
**DOWNLOAD
THE APP!**



5TH

6TH

GENERATION



WHO ARE MY COUSINS—EXACTLY?

- Brothers and sisters of our direct-line ancestors.
- Descendants of the above.

Thirty-Eight Thousand Cousins

Some mistakenly believe that we are only responsible to do family history and temple work for our direct-line ancestors. However, cousins are also part of our family. We should feel comfortable extending warm family ties to provide family history and temple work for them.

Aunt Mary usually stuck to her direct line, so it's sometimes possible now to find temple opportunities by looking at cousin lines. (Note that for six generations, there are approximately 63 direct-line ancestors versus 38,000 cousins!) Using the descendant view on FamilySearch can simplify this process.

WHAT ABOUT SPOUSES OF OUR DIRECT-LINE ANCESTORS?

- We should do temple work for the spouses of direct-line ancestors.
- Leave the temple work for the ancestors of those spouses to their direct-line descendants.

DID YOU KNOW?

The number of names in FamilySearch has increased from about

2 MILLION

to

179 MILLION

in only

6 YEARS!

A story about them can bring them to life. Even the smallest mention in a newspaper or land record can help them become real to us, and connections and bonds between us form.

Plus, don't forget about the family that's still around us. Take the opportunity to interview relatives and capture their memories while those memories are still fresh.³

Family members of all ages can get involved. Children can help ask questions of grandparents. Teens can record interviews on their smartphones and help scan photos and documents. Maybe one family member can be in charge of organizing and tagging the uploads, while another can share them on social media for the rest of the family to enjoy.

Teenager Mariah Ashcraft says, "My mother is a convert, so not much family history had been done. I started looking through books and sorting pictures on her line. It took me a long time,

but as I entered the names of my ancestors into FamilySearch, I connected their names to their pictures and it all became real to me. I realized I was really doing the Lord's work. He had truly blessed me. Now I have family names to do baptisms and confirmations for in the temple. I feel closer to the Spirit and have a stronger testimony. This experience has not only changed my life but the lives of those beyond the veil."

New technology is flooding the earth. Computer applications are continually being improved, and we might be startled to see what options and features our children will have to work with. Many people carry in their pocket a cell phone with computing power that far outstrips the power of the systems that controlled the first moon landing, an idea that only a few years ago was unheard of. Our Heavenly

Father will bring about the things that are needed to accomplish the work.





REACH OUT FOR HELP

Don't be afraid to reach out for help with family history. Trained volunteers are ready to assist you in a variety of ways via phone, chat, or email. In-person help is available from family history consultants in your ward or stake. To find support options, visit familysearch.org/ask/help.

God's Help Is Real

At the 2017 Rootstech conference, Wendy W. Nelson, wife of President Russell M. Nelson, observed: "President George Q. Cannon, who was counselor to four Presidents of the Church, taught that in these latter days, those who are joining the Church are joining quite precisely because their ancestors have been praying for one of their posterity to join the Church so that they, the ancestors, can receive their essential ordinances by proxy. That's when I invite the missionaries to consider that one of their most effective prayers might be, 'Please lead us to those whose ancestors have already received the gospel on the other side of the veil and who are desperate to receive their ordinances.'"⁴

Let us continue to gather our ancestors together into eternal families, praying always for help and inspiration from the Holy Ghost and our kindred dead. Consider what sacrifice of time is appropriate for you to be able to do more family history and temple work this year. God has prepared a bounteous table of blessings for us for faithfully doing this work. Keep

fresh in your heart the picture of gathering with our brothers and sisters in our heavenly home, sitting down together in peace and love. ■

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, "Gathering the Family of God," *Ensign*, May 2017, 21.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "Gathering the Family of God," 22.
3. For personal history helps and ideas, see familysearch.org/blog/en/52stories.
4. Russell M. Nelson and Wendy W. Nelson, presentation at RootsTech conference, Feb. 11, 2017, lds.org/topics/family-history/familydiscoveryday; see also "Open the Heavens through Temple and Family History Work," *Ensign*, Oct. 2017, 38.

