

Touched by the SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

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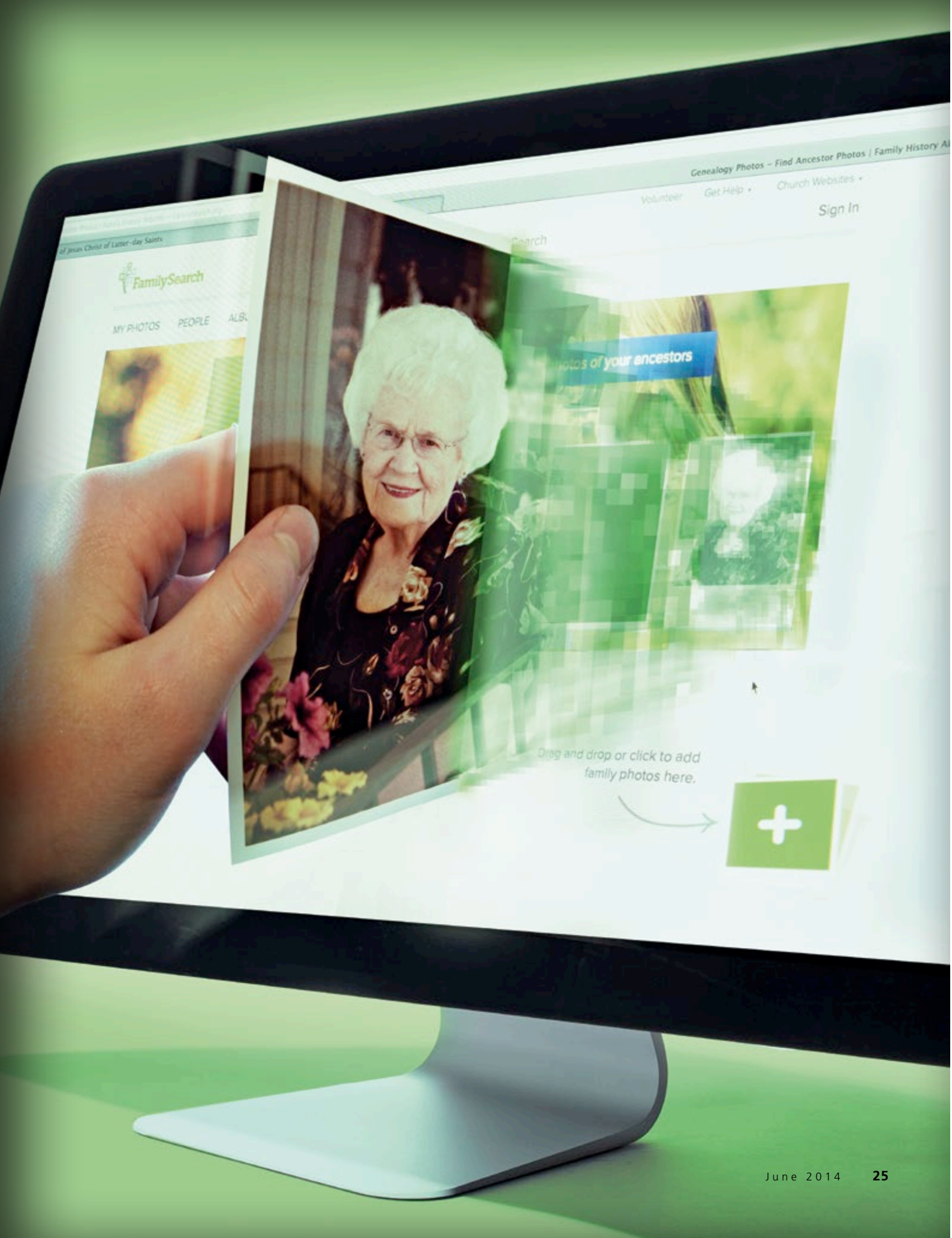
While working on a Personal Progress value project involving family history, 13-year-old Amanda D. of Utah, USA, came across a document written by her great-grandmother Genevieve, who died in 1989. In it, Amanda's ancestor bore her testimony of the gospel and encouraged family members to strengthen each other in the gospel and to pray for one another. Amanda never knew her great-grandmother, but now she has been able to share her great-grandmother's testimony with other family members through the wonders of technology. The first step Amanda took was to post her find as a story on her family tree at FamilySearch.org. From now on, anyone looking for her great-grandmother on the website will find not only Genevieve's vital information but also her personal testimony and picture. The second step Amanda took was to post her great-grandmother's testimony on social media directly from the family tree for her entire family to see.

Amanda is just one of thousands of youth in the Church today whose hearts have been touched by the spirit of Elijah. These youth are following the admonition of Elders

*Using new tools,
family members
of all ages can
now work together
to receive the
blessings of
family history and
temple work.*

Richard G. Scott and David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, both of whom have promised the youth protection from the influences of the adversary as they immerse themselves in this work.¹

The promise of the spirit of Elijah, found in the scriptures, says, "And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers."² Elder Bednar has described the spirit of Elijah as a "distinctive influence of the Holy Ghost [that] draws people to identify, document, and cherish their ancestors and family members—both past and present."³ What is the importance of connecting with our ancestors? President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has explained that unlike those of us who have received a testimony of the gospel and are able to be baptized, our ancestors who receive a testimony in the spirit world cannot be baptized for themselves. "Someone in this world must go to a holy temple and accept the covenants on behalf of the person in the spirit world. That is why we are under obligation to find the names of our ancestors and ensure that they are offered by us what they cannot receive there without our help."⁴



Search

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



MY PHOTOS PEOPLE ALB

photos of your ancestors

Drag and drop or click to add family photos here.



Technology Is Speeding Up the Work

Amazing developments in technology allow us to accomplish the work of salvation more easily than ever before for millions more people who have lived on the earth. Just as the automobile and the airplane have been major contributors to advancing the work of the Lord in modern times by reducing the difficulty of travel in spreading the gospel, the Internet and computer technology are advancing family history and temple work at an unprecedented rate by enabling us to find, preserve, and share our family history information more easily and more quickly. We can find records in minutes that, until recently, were not available to most family history researchers. The accessibility of these records also means that instead of relying on just one or two family members to research our family's past, we can now all contribute to the work.

The website FamilySearch.org was introduced to the world in May 1999. It was an instant success, experiencing more than 1.5 billion hits by October of that year. Back then, users could perform a basic search for an ancestor in limited databases and compiled genealogies, such as Ancestral File and the International Genealogical Index (IGI). Today we can search over 3.5 billion records in databases containing actual images of records, add sources to individuals in our family trees, and directly process temple work on FamilySearch.org. The new features of adding photos and stories to our family members on the tree enable individuals young and old to become instantly engaged in the work. Their hearts turn as they discover pictures of their relatives and read facts about them in both record and story forms. Constance Lewis of Utah said she was brought back into doing family history work when two of her grandchildren—ages 12 and 14, one in Atlanta and one in San Diego—were fired up by their wards to do family history work by using Family Tree on FamilySearch.org.

Today it is possible to examine your own family tree and then make corrections or eliminate incorrect information instantly. You can also add records from the historical collections as sources to individuals in your tree, all from your computer at home or at your local family history center.

Become Involved in Your Family History

Family home evening may be a great time to introduce your family to your ancestors by using the interactive fan chart on FamilySearch.org, a colorful visual presentation of your family tree with a display of your four direct lines. Bruce Bolingbroke of Utah and his family experienced a powerful family home evening using the fan chart. For each of Brother Bolingbroke's grandparents' lines, they were able to identify the first ancestor to migrate to America. They discovered that their ancestors came from seven different countries, some even crossing with the Pilgrims to the original colonies. After studying the fan chart, they looked into the stories and photos of their ancestors. In one of the stories, they discovered a testimony of the restored gospel given by Brother Bolingbroke's second great-grandfather, who had immigrated to the United States from Switzerland. His testimony had been recorded near the end of his life. Through these experiences, the family felt the spirit of Elijah and an increased love and appreciation for the work.

Collaboration has become a valuable part of doing family history. Both young and old are meeting online as they share information about related ancestors. The family tree on FamilySearch.org displays the names of those who have contributed information or a source for an ancestor, so it's possible to click on the contributor's name and find contact information. As photos and stories are added for an individual or an entire family, collaboration can bring added information to the family tree.

Nanette Sorensen from Utah and her aunt collected photos from Sister Sorensen's great-aunts and great-uncles and uploaded the photos to the family tree. Because these photos had been scanned in preparation for a family reunion, it was easy to put them on the tree as well. Sister Sorensen and her aunt didn't know who some of the individuals in the photos were, but after the images had been on the tree for a week or so, others had viewed them and were able to correctly identify them. This process brought family history to life for Sister Sorensen, and her heart has been turned to her fathers.

Access to searchable records on FamilySearch.org is made possible through the vigilant work of indexers throughout the world. Many youth, both inside and outside of the Church, are involved because of their agility with computers. As indexers examine a digital image for names, dates, and locations, they enter the information into a computer program. In this way, a person can be found in a document because his or her name is linked to a digital image. Everyone is invited to be involved in indexing. Directions are found at FamilySearch.org. As indexers realize that each name represents a real person, their hearts are often turned to the work and they begin a search for their own family members.

Under the Get Help menu on FamilySearch.org, there are hundreds of training videos that can quickly put you at ease about the different functions of the website. The videos can be repeatedly reviewed until a concept is firm in your mind. If you still have questions, round-the-clock technical support is available so that you can talk or “chat” with someone in real time.

Family history helps us turn our hearts to our fathers.



Find the Joy in Family History and Temple Work

The process of preparing and submitting names for temple ordinances is now easily done online. If you have difficulty accomplishing all of the temple ordinances yourself, you may choose to release names electronically so that selected ordinances can be completed by others. The information is sent all over the world, and the work may be accomplished in several temples on different continents in a short time. You can track the progress of names online and know when and where the work has been completed. The many added features of FamilySearch.org are there to help us experience the blessings of family history and temple work.

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said, “I have learned that those who engage in family history research and then perform the temple ordinance work for those whose names they have found will know the additional joy of receiving both halves of the blessing.”⁵ Family members of all ages can now work together to receive those blessings.

Young Amanda was able to feel a special connection to her great-grandmother Genevieve when she discovered that her ancestor had loved dancing, just as Amanda does today. They both discovered the world of dance at the same age. From Genevieve’s journal, Amanda learned that her great-grandmother had also experienced the awkwardness that comes with those teenage years. Because of these discoveries, Amanda says she can now feel her ancestors cheering her on during difficult times. It’s as President Thomas S. Monson has said: “We discover something about ourselves when we learn about our ancestors.”⁶ That is part of the blessing of turning our hearts to our ancestors. ■

NOTES

1. See Richard G. Scott, “The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 94; David A. Bednar, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 26–27.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 2:2; see also Malachi 4:5–6; 3 Nephi 25:5–6; Doctrine and Covenants 110:14–15.
3. David A. Bednar, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” 25.
4. Henry B. Eyring, “Hearts Bound Together,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 78.
5. Howard W. Hunter, “A Temple-Motivated People,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 4–5.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 21.