

GENTREK: International Genealogical Index

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How many times have you reinvented the wheel? This metaphor applies especially to genealogical research. It is important to survey what research has already been completed on your ancestry afore delving into intensive research on your own. One of several sources you should consult is the **International Genealogical Index** (IGI).

Where is the IGI? It is kept and updated in Salt Lake City, Utah, by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints -- (LDS), or the Mormons. Many public libraries and several genealogical libraries have also purchased the IGI in CD format. If none of these is local to you, then access is also available at any Family History Center (FHC). Although FHCs are located in LDS meeting houses, they are open to the public. Be sure to call for their hours of operation in your location because they are staffed by volunteers whose schedules vary widely. Then again, you can search the IGI online at www.familysearch.com.

What is the IGI? The International Genealogical Index is the world's largest collection of genealogical records. Information comes from individual research and original records.

The index contains:

Names of millions of deceased persons from throughout the world.
Dates and places of births, christenings, and marriages.
Names from records of people who lived between 1500 and 1885. Other records have been submitted by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Is the IGI on the Internet the same as the IGI at a family history center? Yes. However, the Internet and family history center versions have the following differences:

Information is displayed differently in each version.
The Internet version is updated more frequently and contains more information.

First the Statistics

First edition: 1969
Latest edition: 1993
Latest addendum: 1994
Total name entries: 240 million
Period covered: 1500 to Present
Record sources: Government, Church and Personal Records
Majority of Countries Represented: Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, United States and Wales.

Information contained in the IGI

- ~ Vital records of births, christenings, or marriages.
- ~ Records in regions around the world.

The International Genealogical Index is an index to vital records from around the world. No, it is not complete, but it may have just the family you are researching. Some of the data are microfilm copies of original records. Some original records may have been updated by record custodians, so you might find more accurate information in the original records. In some cases, you can obtain official copies of the original records by contacting the appropriate record custodian. The IGI lists many of these.

Much of what is in the IGI is original research by contributing family researchers. As with anything involving the possibility of human error, you may encounter discrepancies. I have heard some researchers say, "I won't use _____ as a source because their data are all wrong." (You fill in the blank.) If all the data were wrong, it wouldn't be used by anyone! Most of it is solid, however. We all make mistakes -- in recording, in remembering, in judgment -- you name it. A successful genealogist verifies all data, regardless of source.

Using the International Genealogical Index:

Type in a person's name. You can type either a first name, last name, or both names.

Optional. Type any other requested information that you know.

Optional. If you are looking for a specific record and know its batch, sheet, or film numbers, type them in.

Optional. If known, select an event in the person's life, such as birth, christening, or marriage.

Type the date the event occurred.

Select the region of the world where the event took place.

To begin the search, click **Search**.

Note: To conduct a search, enter at least your ancestor's first name or last name and the region.

In addition to using a person's name to search for information, you can search for records based on important events in the person's life, such as marriage or death. This can help you focus your search and reduce the number of extraneous records you find during a search.

How to Search the International Genealogical Index

Required Information

What Searches Are Invalid?

Tips for Searching the International Genealogical Index

Search for Children of the Same Parents

Narrow Your Search

Return to International Genealogical Index Search

Required Information

You must enter at least:

An individual's last name and region.

OR

An individual's first name and region.

Invalid Searches

FamilySearch will not search for:

Middle names. FamilySearch will ignore middle names unless you check the **Use exact spelling** box. When you check **Use exact spelling**, the search will look for the individual's first, middle, and last name exactly as you listed it. If you check **Use exact spelling**, you may **not** list parents, spouse, event, or year. You may not get the results you want if you list parents' names and a spouse's name in the same search. Most records from the International Genealogical Index contain either parents' names or a spouse's name but, **not both**.

Searching the International Genealogical Index

You may search for any combination of first and last names for the individual, parents, and spouse. You may search for an individual's first name, last name, or first and last name within a region, country, and state or province. Up to 200 results will be displayed on a page. Click **Next** to look at the other results. For common surnames, fill in additional fields to improve your search results. You will get better results if you enter an individual's first name and last name. First and last names are standardized so that spelling variations are retrieved in the results.

Search for Children of the Same Parents

To search for children of the same parents, enter:

The region.

The father's first and last name.

The mother's first name (the mother's last name is optional).

Narrow Your Search

You may now use the following to make your search more specific:

Event

Year range (If you select a year range, you must provide a year in the year box.)

Year

Country

State or province

Use exact spelling (If you check **Use exact spelling**, you may not list parents, spouse, event, or year.)

Batch number

Film number

Batch and film number

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If you choose birth or christening as the event, you must also enter one of the following options:

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Last name, region

First name, last name, region

First name, last name, father's first name, region

First name, last name, father's last name, region

First name, last name, father's first and last name, region

First name, last name, mother's first name, region

First name, last name, mother's last name, region

First name, last name, mother's first and last name, region

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If you choose marriage as the event, you must also enter one of the following options:

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Last name, region

First name, last name, region

First name, last name, spouse's first name, region

First name, last name, spouse's last name, region

First name, last name, spouse's first and last name, region

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If you choose death as the event, you must also enter one of the following options:

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Last name, region

First name, last name, region

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Use the film or batch number to search for other family members.

If you find a record with a film or batch number, search for the film or batch. You may find other family members in the same film or batch. For example, if you found Alan Kensington on film number 1417888, do another search using only the film number. See if you can find other family members on the film. **Note:** If a record contains both a batch number and a film number, then use only the batch number for your search. Film number searches are valid only when there is no batch number.

Details about Each Part of the Screen

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First Name field:

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Type the first name of the person you are looking for. Examples: Sarah, Ann, Edward.

Do not type identifiers or titles, such as Jr., Dr., Miss, Captain, Sir, and so on. Do not type middle names or initials. (They do not always appear in the IGI records, and the search may disregard them.)

Last Name field:

Type the last name of the person you are looking for. Examples: Smith, McDonald.
For a woman, try typing her maiden name first. Then try a second search using her married name.

Father and Mother fields:

Type the first and last names of the father and mother of the person you are looking for.
To search for a person, you do not need the father's and the mother's names. You may have only one or any combination of the names. For example, you may have the father's first name and the mother's first name. If you want to find information about a father or mother, type their names into the **First Name** and **Last Name** fields.

Spouse fields:

Type the first and last name of the person's husband or wife.
Use a wife's maiden name.

Event field:

Click on the **Event** field, and select an event (birth, marriage, all records, *etc.*) in the person's life for which you think a record was made. If you chose **Other** from the event lists, FamilySearch Internet will search for information found in census records, wills, adult christening records, and any other miscellaneous records. Focus your search by entering additional information about the event in the Event Range, Year, and Country boxes.

Year Range and Year fields:

Use the **Year Range** and **Year** fields to indicate when the event you selected in the Event field occurred. Example: If you select a date range of "+ or -10 Years," and type 1880 in the **Year** box, FamilySearch Internet will find only records created between 1870 and 1890.

Region and Place fields:

Records in the IGI are organized by geographical regions (Britain, Finland, and so forth). To reduce your search time:

Click **Regions**, and select a region to search. Click on the region where you think the person was living at the time of the event you selected. Depending on the region you choose, other boxes may appear, such as **Country** or **Province**. Select the appropriate items from the lists.

IGI Source Numbers:

You can find a record in the IGI by entering its batch number, serial/sheet number, and film number. To find source numbers:

First, search for a person's record by using other information, such as his or her last name and birthplace. When you find the record, write down its source numbers. The next time you want to find the record, enter the source numbers. You may also want to use the numbers to find other relatives. Go to *Use the Film* or *Batch Number Search for Other Family Members*.

Exact Spelling Check Box:

To find records with the person's name spelled exactly as you have entered it, click the *Use exact spelling* box. If you use the exact spelling feature, type only the name of the person you want to find. Do not enter names of parents or spouses, and do not select an event. Include an event date only if needed to limit your search results. If you use the exact spelling feature, be sure to enter the individual's complete name as it would appear in the record, including middle names and initials. When you don't click the *Use exact spelling* box, FamilySearch Internet searches for the name you typed and any close matches. For example, the search results for the surname "Nelson" would include Nelson, Nelsen, Nielson, Nielsen, *etc.*

Search Button:

Enter information into the search fields; then click *Search* to begin a search.

Clear Button:

To remove all the information from the search fields, click *Clear*.

Frequently Asked Questions

May I download the record? **Yes.** You can download a GEDCOM file from the Internet.

See Dae's excellent article on GEDCOM in this month's issue of *Internet Genealogy* (March 2007).

Why are some fields blank? A blank field indicates that the original source record had no information pertaining to that field.

Something on the record is incorrect. Can I do anything to correct it? The information in the International Genealogical Index reflects what was received from the original record or submission and cannot be changed. An alternative to correcting the information is to submit the accurate information to the Pedigree Resource File. See Dae's presentation on the Pedigree Resource File on www.ShoeStringGenealogy.com.

How do I see more information? The Internet has no more information available for this index. You may want to visit a family history center, where you may be able to look up a microfilm containing the original record and find additional information about the person or the person's family.

How to Use the Pedigree Chart

To use the Pedigree Chart, click the:

- 1~ Individual's name to see detailed information about that person.
- 2~ Family link to see a family group record for the individual.
- 3~ Arrows at the right side of the pedigree chart to see the names of more ancestors.
- 4~ Download link to download the records shown on the pedigree. The records will be in GEDCOM format, which can be used with Personal Ancestral File and other family history record-keeping software.
- 5~ Browser's File menu, and select Print to print the record.

Pedigree Chart Tips

Find the source, and check the original record. Information in the International Genealogical Index comes from many different sources. To verify the accuracy of the information or to see if the original source contains more information, you may want to check the source if it is listed. To do this:

- 1~ Click on one of the individual's names.
- 2~ Read the Messages section on the IGI record. It contains information about the source.
- 3~ Read the Sources section on the IGI record. It may list either the batch or microfilm number where the information came from.
- 4~ If a film number is listed, click it to go to the Family History Library Catalog and find the film you will need to order.
- 5~ Print the film notes, or write down the film number.
- 6~ Go to a family history center, and order a copy of the record.
- 7~ Compare the information on the original record to the information on the IGI record. 8~ You may have to pay a small fee to order a copy.

Study family relationships. Click Family links, and look at family relationships to determine if this is the person you are looking for.

How Do I Download This Information onto My Computer?

You can download four generations of an individual's pedigree at one time. The downloaded file will be in GEDCOM format, which you can use with Personal Ancestral File and most other family history record-keeping software. The file will contain the following information:

Each individual shown on the screen and his or her spouses and children.
The brothers and sisters of each individual whose parents appear on the screen.
The information needed to preserve the relationships between the individuals.
Any sources and notes that were included for all of the above individuals.
Downloading requires JavaScript-enabled browsers such as Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator.

To Begin Downloading:

- . 1~ Display the pedigree chart that you want to download.
- . 2~ Click the Download link.
- . 3~ If you have problems downloading, see Download Troubleshooting Sheet.
- . .

When Should I Use the IGI Family Group Record Screen?

Use the IGI Family Group Record screen when you want to:

- . Print a copy of the record.
- . Download the record.
- . Locate a copy of the record on microfilm.
- . .

How Do I Download a Family Group Record?

You can download information from IGI records to your computer. Downloading requires JavaScript-enabled browsers such as Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator. The information will be downloaded in GEDCOM format, which can be used with Personal Ancestral File and other family history record-keeping software.

To Begin Downloading:

- . 1~ Display the family group record that you want to download.
- . 2~ Click the Download link.
- . If you have problems downloading, see Download Troubleshooting Sheet.
- . .

IGI Family Group Record Tips

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- . 2~ Read the Messages section on the IGI record. It contains information about the source.
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- . 4~ If a film number is listed, click it to go to the Family History Library Catalog and find the film you will need to order.
- . 5~ Print the film notes or write down the film number.
- . 6~ Go to a family history center and order a copy of the record.
- . .

Compare the information on the original record to the information on the IGI record. You may have to pay a small fee to order a copy.

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IGI Batch Number Indices: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hughwallis/>
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Summary

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The information in the IGI comes from original records photographed and indexed into the large database in Salt Lake City, Utah. Transcription errors are possible. Information can be searched several different ways and additional members of a family may be discovered by examining the same Batch N^o of one you've found. You can download files, in GEDCOM format, from Individual records or Family Group records. You now have another useful tool in your Genealogy Toolkit!
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