

Mesa FamilySearch Library  
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James L. Tanner

## **Understanding the new Developments in FamilySearch Family Tree**

FamilySearch Family Tree has been undergoing a dramatic development. New functions of the program provide valuable ways to organize and do research.

FamilySearch.org is a large online genealogy website centered on millions of digital copies of original source records. The program also provides the structure for a unified family tree program where users can collaborate with their relatives in entering information about their ancestry. Additionally, each of the individuals in the Family Tree are linked to a search in the indexed source records of the Historical Record Collections.

Beginning in October 2013 FamilySearch entered into separate agreements with each of the other large online genealogy database programs, Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com and findmypast.com. The essence of the agreements with these three other online subscription databases was that FamilySearch.org would provide access to its expansive collections of original source records. In exchange, the other three databases would provide free access to the program to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In addition, access to the programs would also be free at FamilySearch Centers around the world. The arrangement between the various companies was clarified at the RootsTech 2014 Conference in Salt Lake City Utah.

The most interesting developments taking place in the larger genealogy programs is the automatic searching for sources in uploaded user maintained family trees. If you upload your family tree to Ancestry.com or MyHeritage.com, the programs provide an automated research system that provides suggested original source documents for anyone found in the family tree. This process is being continually upgraded and has become a significant enhancement for those who subscribe to the services.

Entries made by the users in the FamilySearch Family Tree program are supplemented by the ability of the users to add their own sources including copies of the original source documents, stories about their ancestors, and any photographs that they may have. All of this can be shared. In addition, the program provides a structure for recording detailed genealogical information about each individual and family. Since the program is a user driven unified family tree, this means that anyone can add individuals and families to the program, edit all the entries, edit all relationships, merge duplicates and add sources for each fact or event.

A relatively new program added to the FamilySearch.org website is a program called Puzzilla.org. This is a unique tool for analyzing information concerning your

ancestors in FamilySearch Family Tree. When you open the program, it immediately downloads information concerning your ancestors in FamilySearch Family Tree. The information appears in the form of a fan chart with dots representing each of the ancestors. Clicking on any one of the dots will show basic information about that ancestor. However, the power of the program is most evident if you view the descendents of a remote ancestor. The program has two main functions, first to show the limits of the entries in the Family Tree program and secondarily to demonstrate inconsistencies or problems with your ancestors' information.

FamilySearch Family Tree provides a significant amount of additional information in the Descendancy View. In this view, the individual entries are screened for obvious entry errors such as dates that do not match with reality and missing sources. The Descendancy View is also a valuable tool for finding individuals who are missing complete information such as ages that don't match and other problems with the content.