

OVERCOMING SEARCH CHALLENGES

This is going beyond searching for names in the typical search fields on Ancestry or Family Search.

It requires FOCUS.

Know what you are looking for in your research.

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Targeted Search by Place and Date (Quaker Record) Unindexed or Partially Indexed Records

In a recent live stream episode on **Genealogy TV** called "[Research Skills](#)," I briefly talked about finding an ancestor who was not indexed in a (partially) indexed record. I say partially because only the subjects were indexed, not all people mentioned.

Search Event, Date, and Place on Ancestry

Time and place are key to finding those ancestors who are not found through traditional search.

The process is the same regardless of a partially indexed record or a totally unindexed record.

Here is an example using a Quaker Record (Society of Friends) that was **partially indexed**. In other words, some people are not indexed!

- Start with what you know. **Name, Event, Date, and Place**. For this example, **Margaret Clark, Marriage, 1816, Randolph Co., North Carolina**.
- **Background Information:**
 - Margaret Clark was "removed" from a Quaker Meeting (religious organization) for "Marrying out of unity" which meant she married outside the Quaker customs. In this case, they went to the local Justice of the Peace to get married, instead of marrying within the Quaker traditions. Being "removed" from the Society of Friends was called being "disowned."
 - **Civil records** showed a marriage bond for **Margaret Clark and John Henley married in September 1816**.
- Knowing that background information, this marriage should be noted in the Quaker records, so I went looking.
 - **Ancestry > Search > Card Catalog**
 - **Keyword "Quaker"** and filter to the **United States** (left side).
 - I wanted the **Records, not the Indexes**, so I choose "**U.S. Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935**." Right-Click... Open in a new tab.
 - Instead of using the search box, we need to get really specific. **This is the difference between searching a specific record group and searching an entire collection.**
 - In the screen shot below, I'm using the right side "**Browse this collection**." I did not use the search box on the left here.
 - I filtered to **North Carolina, Randolph County and the Back Creek Monthly Meeting**. (Monthly Meetings are where Quakers met and kept their records for the local Meeting House.)

- Knowing this marriage would likely be recorded in both the Men's and the Women's Minutes, I chose to start with the Record Group that would have the 1816 marriage event. I started with the Women's Minutes thinking it might produce a faster result.
- Opening in a new tab, **Women's Minutes, 1793-1892**, the first page showed some front matter (read it), and dates on this page are from 1793. This is image 1. I need 1816.

Search > Birth, Marriage & Death

U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935

Search Match all terms exactly

First & Middle Name(s) Last Name

Day Month Location

Lived In City, County, State, Country

Any Event City, County, State, Country

Add family member: Father Spouse Child

First & Middle Name(s) Last Name

Father X

Spouse X

Child X

Keyword

e.g. pilot or "Flying Tigers" v

Event Type

Browse this collection

To browse this image set, select from the options below.

Meeting State
North Carolina v

County
Randolph v

Monthly Meeting
Back Creek Monthly Meeting v

Title

- Men's Minutes, 1792-1840
- Men's Minutes, 1840-1870
- Men's Minutes, 1870-1903
- Minutes, 1902-1917
- Minutes, 1917-1935
- Records, Births, and Deaths, Vol 02, 1767-1909
- Records, Vol 03, 1896-1935
- Records, Vol 03, 1896-1935
- Women's Minutes, 1793-1892
- Women's Minutes, 1793-1892, Vol I
- Women's Minutes, 1793-1892, Vol II

Reading the Bottom Matter on Ancestry

Let's back up for a minute. Before searching, scroll down to the "About" section of the record collection or group to learn more about the record set. Get in this habit no matter what platform you are researching on.

In the earlier Quaker records, there was an explanation as to why my ancestor was in the image and not in the index. It helps to read the bottom matter.

To find this record set go [here](#).

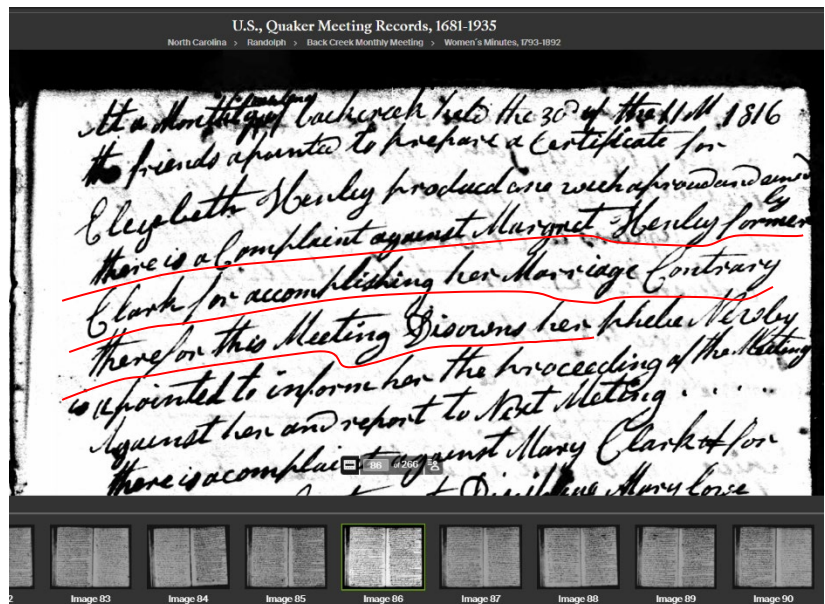
Margaret Clark Found in the Women's Minutes

After discovering that the images were in chronological order, I was able to skip ahead, reading the minutes near the 1816 marriage date until I found her on image 86. This says "There is a complaint against Margaret Henley formerly Clark for accomplishing her Marriage Contrary therefore this Meeting Disowns her..."

About this Quaker Record Set on Ancestry.

Why does my ancestor's name appear on an image, but is not part of the index?

It is possible that names of members which appear in various documents were not indexed. This occurs primarily when members were named to committees or attended weddings. Quaker marriage certificates were signed by all witnesses present at the time of the marriage. These names were only recorded in the minutes in the early years, and were not indexed. Non-Quakers were permitted to attend weddings and signed the marriage certificate, as a result some of the witnesses at a Quaker wedding were not members of the Society of Friends.



Hop, Skip & Jump Method (FamilySearch - Civil War Record)

This will work on Ancestry too but is great on FamilySearch. This also depends on where the records are located. In some cases, they'll be on both platforms.

In this scenario, we're looking for a **Civil War soldier** named **George Snider**. We know he was from **Steubenville, Jefferson County, Ohio, born about 1845**. We know he was in **Company L of the 1st Virginia Mounted Volunteer** unit.

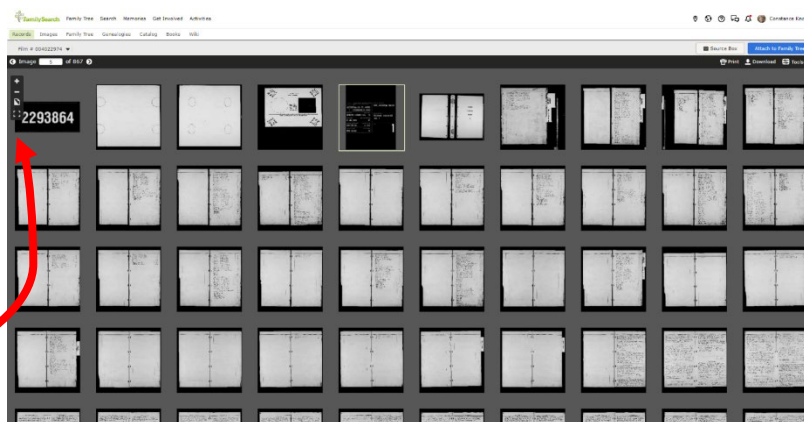
Unindexed Records – Note: You won't find your ancestors in hints or a search because they aren't indexed in these records. But don't be shy, you might be able to find them. So how do you search for them?

Easier Viewing on FamilySearch.org

- We're looking for **George Snider**. We know he was in **Company L of the 1st Virginia Mounted Volunteer** unit.
- **Search Tab**
- **Catalog**
- Search **Jefferson, Ohio** > **Search** button.
- In the list of record sets, open **Military Records**.
- Choose **Soldier's discharge records, 1864-1946**.
- Click under **Film / Digital Notes, Soldier's Discharge Records, v. 1-2, 1864-1946**, location FHL, note the format shows a camera, meaning there are images online.

If you can find a record set on FamilySearch, sometimes it is easier to use the **Hop, Skip & Jump** method because of the number of images visible at one time.

- This viewer is easier because of the grid view.



upper left corner of the viewer.

- Look at the **front matter** in the images to be sure you're in the right place. Double-click an image or click the paper icon in the upper left corner to zoom in.
- In this example above, found [here](#), within the front of this book (images) there are several pages of indexes on images 7-35. This is great! It gives us clues as to where to find our ancestors. Many books like this have some sort of index in the front matter or sometimes in the back of the book.

Schellert George	Co. I, 4 th Regt Det Rec Coops	14
Stonebraker John D.	Co. K, 5 th Ohio Cavalry	22
Sullivan James	Co. G, 52 nd Ohio Infy	34
Scott Robert	Co. D, 126 th Regt Ohio Infy 2-ols	28
Stewart John J.	Co. L, 1 st N. Va. Cav.	29
Sparks James M.	Co. D, 157 th C.M. Co.	30
Smith Anam N.	Co. I, 1 st Regt N. Va. Vet. Cav.	81
Smith Jeremiah Sr.	Co. E, 64 th Ohio Infy 2-ols	31
Smith David G.	Co. G, 2 nd N. Va. Vet Infy	38
Snider George	Co. D, 1 st Virginia Mounted Volunteers	35
Snider George	Co. K, 1 st N. Va. Det Cav 2-ols	35
Scott David M.	Co. E, 50 th Ohio Infantry	24
Swinchart Manford	Co. K, 98 th Ohio Infantry	41
Smith Daniel R.	Co. I, 4 th Ohio Det Cavalry	129

- In this case, they are grouped by the first letter of the surname, but notice there is a Scott after a Sullivan, so the names are **not in alphabetical order**.
- We find George Snider listed on **image 26**. There are **two references to a "George Snider"** and they both appear in the book on **page 35**. Remember, image numbers typically don't correspond to page numbers but are often close.
- Let's find page 35.
- Using the **Hop, Skip & Jump** method, make sure you're on the grid view instead of the single page view.
- Jump ahead several rows of images and double click an image to see what book page you're on. Use the arrows on the FamilySearch viewer when you get close to page 35.¹ You'll find page 35 on image 55.

Unindexed Records - Be Aware!

Sometimes records are **loose and unorganized**.

Sometimes the **numbers, alphabetical order, or dates start over again** within the same roll. Look for those front matter images to help guide you.

Sometimes the **images are in reverse order**. This is called "**tails out**."

Sometimes **page numbers skip, or pages are missing**.

¹ Soldier's Discharge Records, v. 1-2, 1864-1946, images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 31 Oct 2023), entry for George Snider, p. 35; citing FHL 2293864, Image Group Number 4022974. Also, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L92C-N998-4?i=54&cat=1122613>

Evaluating This Record (Civil War Discharge)

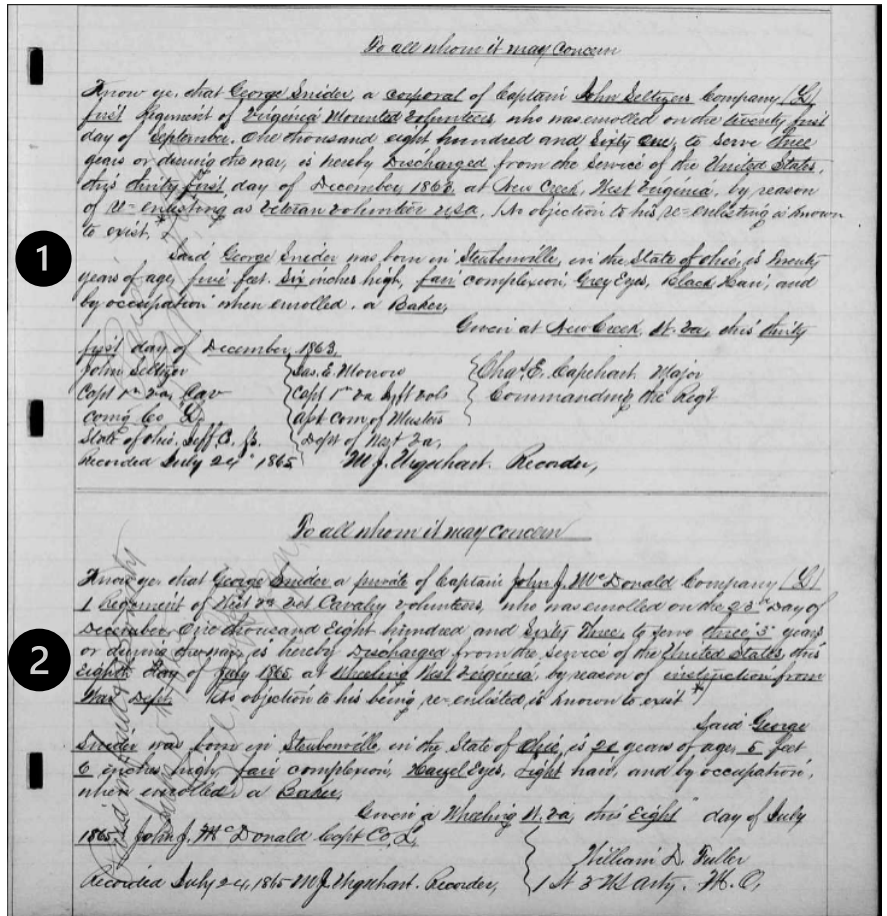
There are two George Snider's on this one page 35.

Are they the same guy?

Click the image to go to FamilySearch to see the image up close (right side).

We need to compare the data from these two records to determine if this is the same guy or two different people by the same name.

The comparison is on the next page.



Comparing the Data

1

2

Name	George Snider	George Snider
Rank	Corporal	Private
Under	Captain John Seltzer	John J. McDonald
Company	L	L
Regiment	1st	1st
Unit	Virginia Mounted Volunteers	West Virginia Volunteers
Enrolled	21 Sep 1861	23 Dec 1863
To Serve	3 years	3 years
Event	Discharged	Discharged
Service to	US	US
Discharged	21 Dec 1863	8 Jul 1865
Place Dis.	New Creek WV	Wheeling WV
Reason	Reenlisting	Inst. War Dep.
As	Vet. Vol. USA	
Objections	No	No
B. Place	Steubenville, OH	Steubenville, OH
Age	20	20
Est. B. Yr.	1843	1845
Height	5'6"	5'6"
Complexion	Fair	Fair
Eyes	Grey	Hazel
Hair	Black	Light
Occupation	Baker	Baker
Recorded	24 Jul 1865	8 Jul 1865
Commander	Chas E. Capehart, Major	John J. McDonald Cpt. Co L.

2

Additional Information: West Virginia becomes a state on 20 June 1863.

Knowing that West Virginia is born from Virginia during the Civil War helps explain why there are two different states.

If the age is from when he originally entered service and not the age at the time of the document entry, then he was 20 when he entered into service and his birth year would be estimated to be about 1845.

The only other difference is hair and eye color and that could be a matter of interpretation. He is the same guy! See also, SNIDER, George. Steubenville, Ohio. 18. November 12, 1862, Clarksburg, WEST VIRGINIA. July 8, 1865. Re-enlisted as a Vet., Vol., December 23, 1863, at New Creek, WEST VIRGINIA., under General Order #191, War Department Series of 1863. Corporal.³

² West Virginia, "Soldiers Discharge Records, vol. 1-2, 1864-1946, unindexed list in semi alphabetical order in front matter, George Snider, p. 35, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org> : accessed 31 Oct 2023), path: search card catalog for Jefferson, Ohio, military records, Soldiers Discharge records, 1864-1946, front matter indexes images 7-35 for "S", then Snider.

³ <https://www.ohiocivilwarcentral.com/1st-regiment-west-virginia-cavalry/>

Borrow the Book (FamilySearch-WorldCat)

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch Catalog page for the book "Civil War soldier discharge records, Jefferson County, Ohio". The page includes a navigation bar with "FamilySearch" and various menu items like "Family Tree", "Search", "Memories", "Get Involved", and "Activities". Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for "Records", "Images", "Family Tree", "Genealogies", "Catalog" (selected), "Books", and "Wiki". The main content area features a "BACK TO SEARCH RESULTS" link, a "PRINT" button, and a "Catalog Print List (0)" link. The book title is prominently displayed, followed by a "Add to Print List" button. Below the title, the following details are listed:

- Statement of Responsibility: compiled by Mary E. DiThomas
- Authors: DiThomas, Mary E. (Main Author)
- Format: Books/Monographs
- Language: English
- Publication: Mingo Junction, Ohio : M.M. Sisler, [1987?]
- Physical: 6 leaves.
- Subject Class: 977.1 A1

Under the "Notes" section, a red box highlights the text: "View this catalog record in WorldCat for other possible copy locations" with a globe icon.

The screenshot shows the WorldCat page for the same book. The page includes a search bar with "Items" and "Search for books, articles, and more". The navigation bar includes "Home", "Libraries", "Topics", "Lists", "About", and "For Librarians". The location is set to "Wilmington, North Carolina, US". The book title is displayed, followed by the author "Mary E. DiThomas (Composer)". Below the title, there are links for "Print Book, English, [1987?]", "View all formats and editions", and "Publisher: M.M. Sisler, Mingo Junction, Ohio, [1987?]. A "Show more information" link is also present. A red arrow points from the highlighted text in the FamilySearch screenshot to the "Borrow" button on this page. The "Borrow" button is located in a box that also displays "Borrow from Columbus Metropolitan Library near Wilmington, North Carolina" and "490 miles away".

Searching Collections vs. Records Sets

Often genealogy websites like Ancestry, FamilySearch and others will take record groups and lump them together into a “Collection” or subject.

This is not a bad thing, but if you know what you’re looking for, it might be better to research the specific set of records within a collection.

Here we can see the different records within this AP World Collection.

Browsing This Collection

- [The AP World, 1943-2001 \(Unindexed\)](#)
- Be sure to see “**Related Data Collections**” too!

Search > Newspapers & Publications

Associated Press, The AP World, 1943–2001

Source Information

Associated Press
Ancestry.com. Associated Press, The AP World, 1943–2001 [database online]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013.

AP

Original data: Associated Press. *The AP World*, 1943–2001. Magazines, booklets and bulletins. Associated Press Corporate Archives, New York, NY

Browse this collection

To browse this image set, select from the options below.

Drawer Title

- AP World Box 1, 1943-1954 (Folders 1-13)
- AP World Box 2, 1955-1967 (Folders 14-24)
- AP World Box 3, 1967-1978 (Folders 25-33)
- AP World Box 4, 1978-1991 (Folders 34-43)
- AP World Box 5, 1992-2006 (Folders 44-53)
- AP World Box 6, 2006-2011 (Folders 54-58)

About Associated Press, The AP World, 1943–2001

The AP World Magazine began publication as The AP Interoffice in 1942 and by 1944 had developed from a mimeographed staff bulletin into a printed and illustrated magazine. With the January 1945 issue, it was renamed The AP World. Intended for both AP staff and member newspapers, the magazine has documented the work of AP journalists, described technological innovations in news transmission from the Speed Graphic camera to High Definition video and spotlighted coverage of major stories, such as World War II, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the Vietnam War and the Moon Landing. The magazine has also featured bureau profiles and company news, including governance and operational changes, staff achievements and historical pieces.

Related data collections

[Associated Press, Stories and Newsfeatures, 1937-1985](#)
This collection includes AP news stories (1937-85), which were selected by librarians for microfilming to create an internal news archive of over 700 reels.

[Associated Press, Name Card Index to AP Stories, 1905-1990](#)
This collection includes index cards that were used to catalog AP stories by name from 1905-1990.

AP World Magazine (Unindexed)



date is located.

This record (magazine shown) is during WWII from the AP magazine. This can give us context about what is happening around the world at this time.

Look for the dates. In this case this magazine is from Aug-Sept. 1944.

Sadly, this collection is not indexed and needs to be because it is full of soldiers during WWII and dates up to 2011.

Hop, Skip, & Jump (on Ancestry)

You can do the same Hop, Skip, & Jump method using the image numbers. In this case there are 1700 images. If we wanted to skip ahead to the year 1945, toward the end of WWII, we could use the image field to jump forward about 100-200 images at a time to see where we are date-wise. Then adjust forward and backward to find the dates we’re looking for. In this case we need to keep an eye on the filmstrip for the front of the magazine where the issue

Image 478 shows images and stories from the end of WWII (shown on the next page).

Associated Press, The AP World, 1943–2001

AP World Box 1, 1943–1954 (Folders 1-13)



AP World Box 1-13

1945 Jan - Feb / 1945 Nov



Image 478



Image 479



Image 480



Image 481



Image 482



Image 483

Reading the Bottom Matter on Ancestry

Another Example

To find this record set go [here](#).

Before searching for your ancestor search the “About” section at the bottom of the Ancestry Search screen.

Here I wanted to search for John Rogers (1797-1854), but in looking the bottom matter of this newspaper, I see that the dates for this paper are in the 1900’s. Therefore, this search would result in nothing for me.

“This database is a fully searchable text version of the newspaper for the following years; 1917, 1920-1956, 1958, 1900-1977.”

Morning Herald (Uniontown, Pennsylvania)

Search
 Match all terms exactly

First & Middle Name(s)

Last Name

Exact...

Quick Fill Suggestions ✕

HENLEY - KNOX Family Tree 2015 USE THIS ONE

+ John Rogers

+ John Rogers
1797-1854

+ Martha Jane Rogers
1825-1900

➤

Any Event Day Month Year Location

Publication Info

Keyword

Newspaper

Search
Clear search

Browse this collection

Browse By Date

December 1977

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Related data collections

This database is also searchable as part of a larger collection of related databases. Search the larger collection.

All Newspapers & Publications in the Card Catalog

More help

- [How to search Ancestry](#)
- [Finding records](#)
- [Search tips](#)
- [Refining your search to improve results](#)
- [Handwriting help](#)

Source Information

Ancestry.com. *Morning Herald (Uniontown, Pennsylvania)* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2007.
Original data: *Morning Herald*. Uniontown, Pennsylvania, United States Of America.
Database created from microfilm copies of the newspaper.

About Morning Herald (Uniontown, Pennsylvania)

Morning Herald newspaper was located in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. **This database is a fully searchable text version of the newspaper for the following years: 1917;1920-1956;1958;1960-1977.** The newspapers can be browsed or searched using a computer-generated index. The accuracy of the index varies according to the quality of the original images. The images for this newspaper can be browsed sequentially, or via links to specific images, which may be obtained through the search results. Over time, the name of a newspaper may have changed and the time span it covered may not always be consistent. The date range represented in this database is not necessarily the complete published set available. Check the local library or historical society in the area in which your ancestors lived for more information about other available newspapers.

Newspapers can be used to find valuable genealogical information about historical events in the lives of our ancestors. They supply all sorts of clues about vital statistics (birth, marriage, and death announcements), obituaries, local news, biographical sketches, legal notices, immigration, migration, and shipping information and other historical items that place our ancestors in the context of the society in which they lived.

Using FHL Film Numbers

Let's say you find a reference to an FHL number in the source information on Ancestry or some other place. Here we find a death record on Ancestry for John Simmons.

An FHL number means that this is referencing a record at the *Family History Library* (FHL, a.k.a. the Mormon Library). *FamilySearch.org* is owned by the same folks. So we need to go to **FamilySearch.org** to find this record.

FHL Number 857521

- Go to **FamilySearch.org** and login.
- **Search > Records > More Options**
- Under Add Record Options, click on **IMAGE GROUP NUMBER (DGS) OR FILM NUMBER**
- Enter the **FHL number** (In this case, 857521) and click search.
- On the **next screen** search the Surname "**Simmons.**"
- Looking for John Simmons you'll see he is on the list.
- Note the source information or at minimum copy the hyperlink into your research notes.

Source citation for West Virginia, U.S., Deaths Index, 1853-1973

Ancestry record West Virginia, U.S., Deaths Index, 1853-1973

Citation details View record

Associated facts

Media

Name John Simmons

Birth Date abt 1811

Birth Place England

Death Date 29 Sep 1887

Death Place Wheeling, Ohio, West Virginia

Death Age 76

Race White

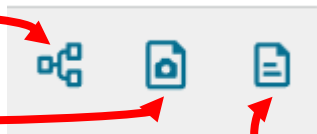
Marital Status Widowed

Gender Male

FHL Film Number 857521

Close Remove

- The **Tree Icon** shows that he is attached to the world tree.
- The **Camera Icon** means there is an image to see.
- The **Paper Icon** means there are more details (indexed).
- If there is a **Key Icon** above the image (not shown), this means that it **can only be viewed at a Family History Library or affiliated FHL library**. Often local libraries are affiliated with the Family History Library. This is due to contractual limitations from the copyright owner of the records where they are giving limited access to the records at an FHL facility.



Add Ancestor Information

NAME ALTERNATE NAME SEX

First Names Last Names

Add Life Event

ANY BIRTH MARRIAGE RESIDENCE DEATH

Place Year (Range)

City, County, State, Province, or Cou From To

Add Family Member

SPOUSE FATHER MOTHER OTHER PERSON

Add Record Options

LOCATION TYPE BATCH NUMBER IMAGE GROUP NUMBER (DGS) OR FILM NUMBER PRINCIPAL

Image Group Number (DGS) or Film Number

857521

Country or Location State or Province

Show Exact Search

SEARCH FEWER OPTIONS

Click on the Details Icon to see the transcript and source.

Results (20) PREFERENCES SEARCH


Collection Sex Race Birth Death

Name	Events	Relationships
Sarah Simmons Principal West Virginia Deaths, 1804-1999	Death 1 August 1854 Wheeling, Ohio, West Virginia, United States Birth 1802	Spouses Thos. Simmons  
John Simmons Principal West Virginia Deaths, 1804-1999	Death 29 September 1887 Wheeling, Ohio, West Virginia, United States Birth 1811 England, United Kingdom	  
Joseph Simmons Principal West Virginia Deaths, 1804-1999	Death 27 March 1878 Wheeling, Ohio, West Virginia, United States Birth 1805 England, United Kingdom	  

John Simmons

Death • West Virginia Deaths, 1804-1999

SAVE
EDIT
SHARE



Available on www.wvculture.org. This image is available through www.wvculture.org. Additional information may also be available.

Document Information ▾

Collection Information
West Virginia Deaths, 1804-1999

Cite This Record
"West Virginia Deaths, 1804-1999," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N93P-C4T : 10 March 2018>), John Simmons, 29 Sep 1887; citing Wheeling, Ohio, West Virginia, County Records, v 3 p 89, county courthouses, West Virginia; FHL microfilm 857,521.

Copy Citation

Name	John Simmons
Sex	Male
Sex	M
Age	76 years
Age	76
Age	76y
Age	76y
Marital Status	Widowed
Birth Date	1811
Birth Year (Estimated)	1811
Birthplace	England
Death Date	29 Sep 1887
Death Date	29 Sep 1887
Death Place	Wheeling, Ohio, West Virginia
Source Reference	County Records

Attached in Family Tree to

John Simmons
1811-1887 • G47G-X9S

Similar Records

John Simmons
Find A Grave Index

Attached To:

John Simmons
1811-1887 • G47G-X9S

In this case, the images are off site at the West Virginia Archives. We won't go there today, but you get the idea of how to chase down an FHL number on FamilySearch.

Of course, we would always want to find the original records and would normally go to this archive in our research process.