Family Search Indexing

Why Index?
Online records typically start with an image. The information on this image was indexed by someone at some point and that made the information on the image searchable. Indexing is a great way to give back to the genealogy community. A record that you index could help someone else break through that brick wall they've been working on. There are millions of images out there that still need indexing. Volunteers are needed to index these images to make information on them available for everyone.

Family Search Indexing History
Family Search indexing started online in 2006. Before that records were indexed on everything from index cards to punch cards to floppy disks. Indexing started in 1921 and in the first 85 years, 900 million records were indexed. There have been over 1 Billion records indexed since. Every week, volunteers index millions of records in multiple languages. Because of the indexing, millions of people world-wide have discovered records about their family history.

The indexing website
First, setup a free Family Search account. It's easy and free.

On the website, click on indexing. You can select web-indexing to go directly to information about your indexing stats. You'll see any new messages, the batches you're working on, and information on your goals.
Next comes selecting a batch. Click on the "Find a Batch" button. You'll select a batch from one of the many projects listed. You can filter the batches by difficulty level and language.
Once a batch is downloaded, the first thing you should do is read the project instructions which pop-up in a window. This gives you an idea of what to expect when indexing the project and any field specific information. Follow the general guidelines and you can start indexing!

Guidelines
Type what you see – this is one of the most important guidelines. Any exceptions to this will be identified in the field help or in the project instructions.

Abbreviations – for names, don't spell these out. Type what you see. For places, if you can figure out what the abbreviation is use that, otherwise, type what you see.

Punctuation – do not index any punctuation unless it's a hyphen or apostrophes that are part of a place or name.

Crossed-out or Corrected information – if the information was crossed out and replaced, then type the replaced information. If it wasn't replaced, then type the crossed-out information. If you can't read the crossed-out information and it wasn't replaced, the mark it as unreadable.

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Unreadable information – you can mark single letters, multiple letters, fields, records, and entire images as unreadable if necessary. Ctrl-U is what you use to mark fields as unreadable.

Type using upper and lower-case letters. Do not type names in all caps.

Field specific guidelines – there are several guidelines for each field that you are indexing. The best thing to do is read the field specific information for the batch you are working on. This gives you information on what to enter for the image type, names, dates, places, gender, marital status, etc.

Processing/Submitting a batch
Now that you've read the guidelines and the project instructions, you've hopefully indexed a batch of images. You can delete all the blank entries if there are any. On the last image, after the last entry, click on the quality check button. If there are no errors, then a window will pop-up asking you to submit the batch. If there are errors, then you can correct each one. Once all the errors are corrected you can submit the batch.

If you can't finish indexing in one sitting, then you can leave the browser open and come back to it later. You can also close your browser out and come back later and the batch will be available for you to continue under the "My Batches" section.

Setting Goals
The indexing program does allow you the ability to set goals for yourself. This is useful for trying to make a habit of indexing on a daily basis. You can see how far you've come as you continue to index more records.

Web program changes

- Available on the web and all tablet devices. No it won't be available on your phone, Family Search thought that screen was just too small for indexing.
- Since it's available on the web, there's no separate program to download or get working.
- Ability to adjust data entry. Do you index entire columns at once or each entry – up to you. You can set it to column, row, table entry instead of just the form.
- Easier to see what's available for projects.
- Ease of selecting which group you are indexing for
- Easy access to project instructions and field help.
- More intuitive layout to screen.

Pamela Brigham 3 Feb 2018