

QUICK TIPS

A Few Technical Facts About Family Tree

1. Where did the data in FamilySearch Tree come from originally?

The original data imported into *new.FamilySearch* was a dump of all the old data that was in:

- Ancestral File
- Membership Records
- IGI and Ordinance Index
- Pedigree Resource File

In 2012, *new.FamilySearch* became *Family Tree*. *Family Tree* is indeed a melting pot of information. What this means for us today is that there are a lot of duplicates in the system. Users have updated, merged duplicates, and verified much of the information in the system since it was imported, but there is still a lot of work to do.

2. What do those brackets mean in FamilySearch? For example, name: Nancy Jones - born: <1850> place: <Minnesota>

Dates and places in brackets, such as <1842> or <England> are "computer generated" estimates. These estimates were automatically generated when families were submitted to FamilySearch databases, such as *Ancestral File* or *TempleReady*, during the 1980s and through to the early 2000s. Birth information could have been generated from a sibling's birth date or from a marriage record. So, remember the brackets mean that the information could be way off.

3. Why are so many surnames in capital letters?

Surnames that appear in capital letters, such as John SMITH and Elizabeth JONES are nearly always a sign that the data was originally from an old *Ancestral File*.

4. What are all these records in the database that are "floating" and not connected to anybody's family tree?

FamilySearch Family Tree includes all the records from the old extraction projects.

- The church used to go into old 1600, 1700 and 1800 parish registers and volunteers would write down the data for each christening or marriage record.
- Many of these extraction names have completed temple ordinances, while others only have baptisms done, and a few never made it through the system at all and have no ordinances completed.
- All of those extracted christenings were input separately rather than in families. So that's one reason there are so many duplicates.

5. Why are there so many versions of my ancestor's name in the "other information" section of his page?

This technical issue is again, thanks to *new.FamilySearch*. Remember when instead of editing, we just had to "add another opinion"? A lot of these alternate names are left over from that and can include everything from typos to leftovers from merging. This is something else we can clean up.

Hopefully, this information can help decipher some of the techno-clues we see on Family Tree. Thanks to Susan Lott for this information.

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