

THE LIMITS OF ONLINE INDEXES

And When and How to Get Other Media (Like Microfilm)
to Access Primary Source Documents.

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How good is FamilySearch indexing?

*“Probing an online index at FamilySearch”
in August/September 2014 issue of
Internet Genealogy*



- 2 indexers plus an arbitrator
- Beginning indexers do not start with handwritten records—that's for advanced readers

How can we find out what kinds of errors are going on?

This is a test!

- Compare index to microfilm: Can you find all the same entries?
- Use a well-researched family (author's)
 - *Online index*: Hungary Catholic Church Records, 1636-1895 (no images)
 - *Microfilms*: 7 Catholic parishes in 4 villages in Hungary extensively researched by author

Family name: Linseder

1. Microfilm searches resulted in **39** baptismal records.
2. First online search: 16 variants on spelling of surname with the **common letters** L, i, n, e and r → Lin*er → 15,149 results
3. Second search: 4th position can vary with c, s, t and z → Linc*er, Lins*er, Lint*er and Linz*er → 543, 512, 3863, and 902 results → **only 24 of 39 records**

Going fishin'

4. **Dropped surname and used other information** (known from the microfilm searches) e.g. names of parents, years of baptisms, first names of children, etc.

→ **retrieved 14 of 15** missing baptisms:

- **First letter** of surname misread by indexers: Instead of L, it was S, Z, and D.
- **Ending** was misread so *er wasn't picked up when indexer read "es".
- **More variations** for the letter in the 4th position of Linseder: g, d, df, r and e.
- **"Illegible"** entry so recorded info is only partial or marked with an "X" as completely illegible.

Finding #15

5. Took the date of #15's baptism (obtained from microfilmed readings) and **searched just on the name of the village for that date**

→ Found 2 records, both reported as completely illegible = no names for child or parents.

Author also notes that there was a location error (including Croatia in Hungarian records) but states that those kinds of errors are likely to be the most rare.

What to take from this:

Be systematic in your search strategies!

1. Do wild card searches. Use multiple strategies re spelling variants, dropping surname; evaluate what's working.
2. Look at other types of records from the same parish (marriage, death, communion) to find more individuals.
3. Missing baptismal records not always due to indexer error. Could be missing records in original books.
 - Read description of microfilm in FamilySearch catalog
 - Check other sources to know what's available.
4. Finally, **go to the microfilm! → image of original record, direct evidence**

What to take from this?

Well, what's the plan?

All records were indexed but at least two would have been impossible to find.

- Conclusion: Never stop with indexes; use them as clues.
- Genealogical research goals are not determined by available resources, but by what kinds of proofs are needed.
- Then all available resources are considered as places to search, starting with online but not ending there.
- The highest priority: original records and where you can find them.

Why not stop with indexed record?

Reason #1:

Because relatively little information is extracted for index.

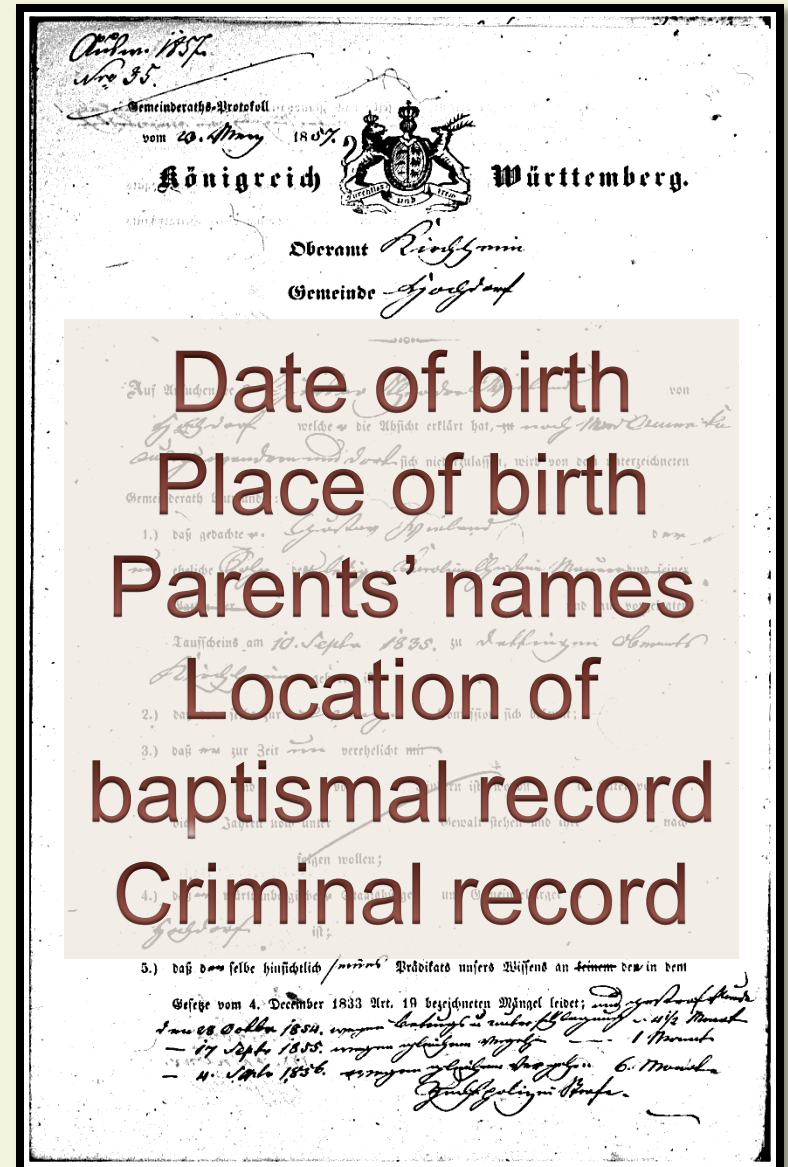
Reason #2:

Extracted information is incorrect.

Ancestry.com: WEI (Wuerttemberg Emigration Index; records are microfilmed & indexed but not digitized)

- Home record for Gustavus Wieland, arr. 1857, and,
- WEI record for Gustav T. Wieland, arr. 1857.
- **Research Question: Are they the same person?**

Microfilm Images

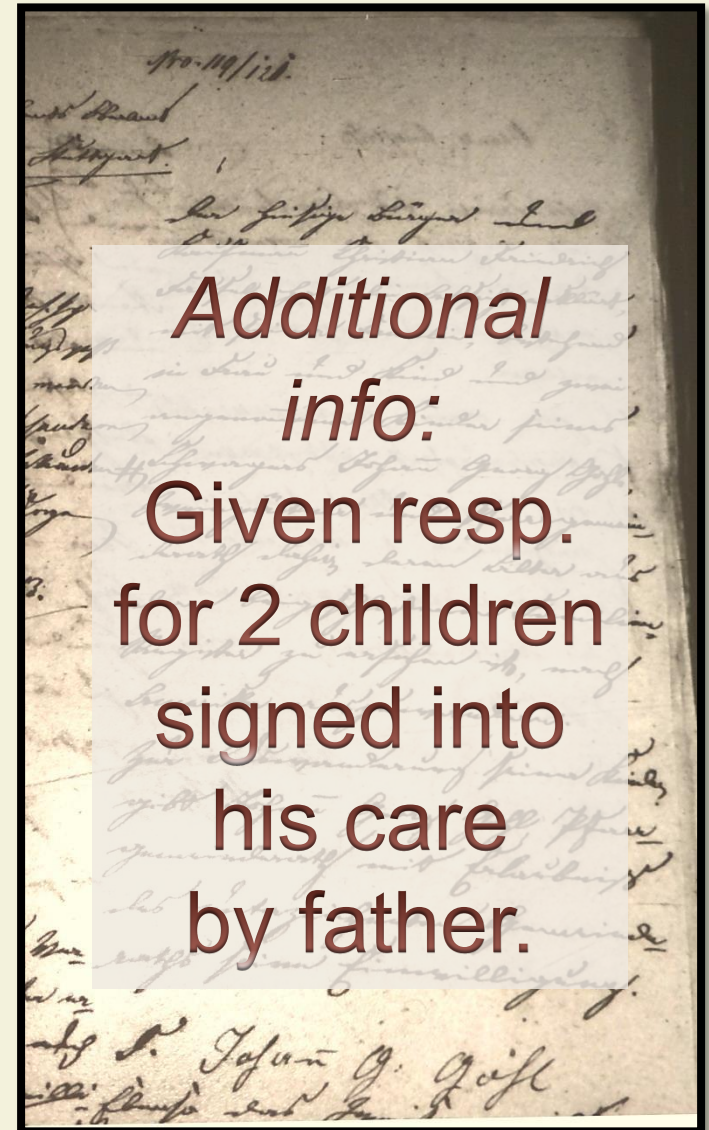


Microfilm Images

Reason #3:
To get additional information
on family.

Ancestry.com: WEI (Wuerttemberg Emigration Index; records are microfilmed & indexed but not digitized)

- Record for Christian F. Fausel, arr. w/daughter; in U.S. by 1859.
- WEI: Christian F. Fausel with family, arr. 1854.
- **Research Question: Are they the same person?**



Finding useful microfilm: From the Index

▶ Louise Klinkart Germany Marriages, 1558-1929	birth:	10 March 1779	Orb	father: Leopold Klinkart mother: Johanne Franz spouse: Gottlieb Wieland other: Georg Wieland, Margarethe
	marriage:	13 February 1811	Schorndorf, Württemberg, Germany	

Spouse's Birthplace:	Orb
Event Date:	13 Feb 1811
Event Place:	Schorndorf, Württemberg, Germany
Father's Name:	Georg Wieland
Mother's Name:	Margarethe
Spouse's Father's Name:	Leopold Klinkart
Spouse's Mother's Name:	Johanne Franz
Indexing Project (Batch) Number: M91735-6 System Origin: Germany-EASy , GS Film number: 1184630	

Look for film number on full record right here

Finding useful microfilm: From the Catalog

Not all microfilm are indexed, much less digitized, so how do I find film that could help my research?

FamilySearch has 2.4 million rolls of microfilm containing approximately 3.5 billion images.

Total number of records indexed: 1.2 billion.

Over 2 billion records available only on microfilm.

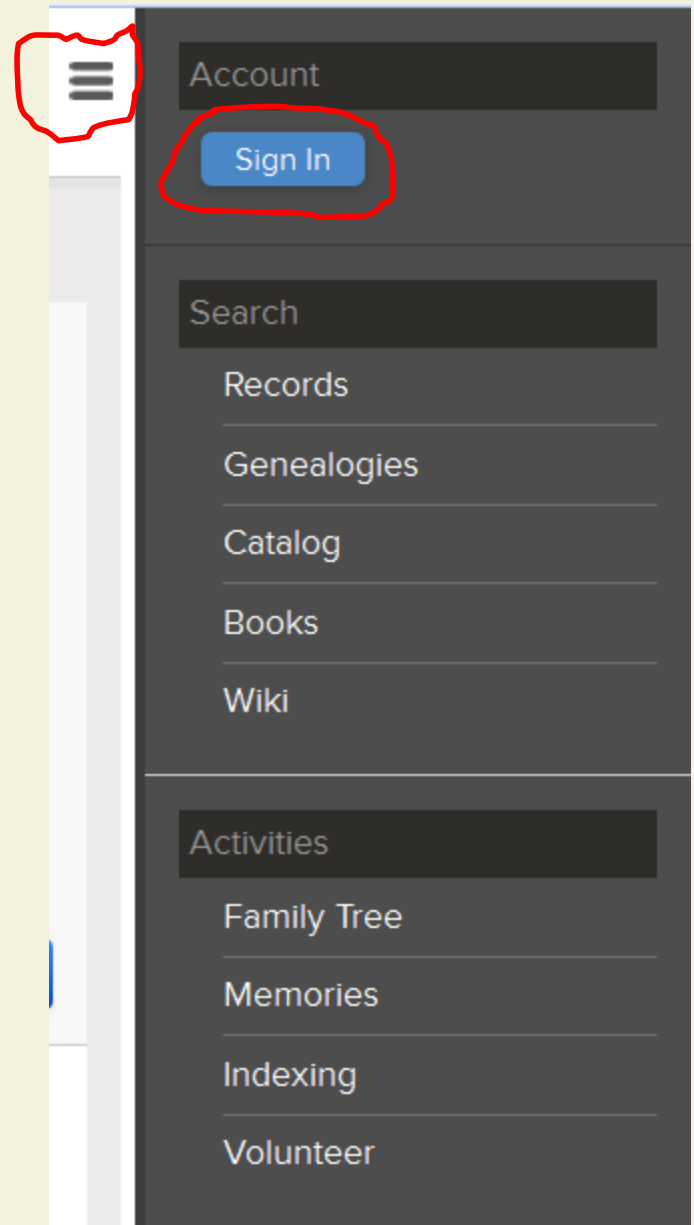
Ordering microfilm online: Sign in

Sign in to your FamilySearch account.

It's free.

Benefits:

- Ordering film.
- Increased access.



Finding microfilm in the catalog

- What do I need? →
 - What's the research question?
 - What records are available?
 - Where can I find them?



<https://familysearch.org/catalog-search>

- Default catalog search on *FamilySearch* is Place Name. Use just a single term and let FS suggest possibilities. Select yours from the list.
- There are 8 types of searches: Keyword is helpful when not successful with other search types; a surname search for family histories; film number search to get right to the catalog page for a microfilm.

Ordering microfilm online: Go to the catalog page

Kirchenbuch, 1569-1900

Authors:	Evangelische Kirche Schorndorf (OA. Schorndorf) (Main Author)
Format:	Manuscript/Manuscript on Film
Language:	German
Publication:	Salt Lake City, Utah : Gefilmt durch The Genealogical Society of Utah, 1973
Physical:	9 Mikrofilmrollen , 35 mm.

Note specific film number before going to catalog page as it may be listed with a group of films, as in all those that pertain to one particular church.

Ordering microfilm online: Before Ordering

Before ordering check for online digital copies.
Look for red ink in "Notes" area of catalog entry.


Notes

Illinois, Chicago, Catholic Church Records are available online, [click here](#).

Microfilm of original at Sacred Heart Mission, Chicago.

Text In English and Latin.

Some dates Indicated on title boards created at the time of filming are In error.

[View this catalog record in WorldCat for other possible copy locations](#) 

Also check the blue hyperlink for other locations.

Check with local FHCs: <http://www.lafhl.org/microsearch.html>



Los Angeles FamilySearch Library

formerly Los Angeles Family History Library

◆ **Microfilm and Microfiche Search by Numbers** ◆

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Microfilm and Microfiche Search by Numbers

Search the **LAFSL books, films, fiche and maps** by content [HERE](#)

Order Microfilm/Microfiche using the Link Below

Use the search engine below to determine by number if a microfilm or microfiche is at the Los Angeles FamilySearch Library or LAFSL.

You may use the OLD online [Family History Library Catalog](#) or the NEW online [Family History Library Catalog](#) to find the microfilm or microfiche numbers before using the search engine below.

Microfilm or Microfiche Number you want:

Ordering microfilm online: Catalog page

Click on
film
number to
go to
ordering
screen.

Film Notes (This family history center has 9 of 9 films/fiche.)

Note	Location	Collection/Shelf	Film/DGS
Taufen 1569-1643 Heiraten 1637-1642 Tote 1636-1643 Taufen, Heiraten, Tote 1643-1683	Family History Library	International Film	1184625
Taufen, Heiraten, Tote 1683-1752	Family History Library	International Film	1184626
Taufen 1753-1798 Heiraten 1753-1802 Tote 1753-1792 Konfirmationen 1753-1810 Taufen 1799-1807 Heiraten 1803-1807 Tote 1793-1807 Taufen 1808-1814	Family History Library	International Film	1184627
Taufen 1815-1855	Family History Library	International Film	1184628
Taufen 1855-1890	Family History Library	International Film	1184629
Heiraten 1808-1900	Family History Library	International Film	1184630
Tote 1808-1881	Family History Library	International Film	1184631

Ordering microfilm online

Verify film number, select rental type, add to cart.

FamilySearch Volunteer Get Help
Family Tree Memories Search Indexing Marilyn Gesch

Online Film Ordering

My Account Your Language: English ▼ News Ordering Help Manhattan Kansa ... (change) 0 item(s), \$0.00

Search

Film Number:

Recent search

Search Results

NOTE: Check the [library catalog](#) for more information and to check for a digital copy before ordering.

Film Availability: Available For Loan

☐ **Film Number:** 1184630

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Short-term Microfilm Loan (?)	\$7.50	US Dollar (USD) ▼
<input type="radio"/> Extended Microfilm Loan (?)	\$18.75	<input type="button" value="Add to Cart"/>

*Applicable state and local taxes may apply.

1 Record for Film 1184630:

1. Kirchenbuch
Evangelische Kirche Schorndorf (OA. Schorndorf)

Ordering microfilm online:

When you are done putting items in your shopping cart:

1. Go to shopping cart.
2. Follow instructions for paying for order.
3. Designate where films should be sent
(your local Family History Center or FamilySearch Center).

What to do when film arrives at FHC

- You will receive an email notifying you that film has arrived.
- Check location and hours of that FHC.
- FHCs are staffed by volunteers who can show you where film is kept and how to load and use microfilm readers.



Don't forget to bring with you....

- If FHC does not have a way to make print copies from microfilm, bring a good digital camera along to take photos of relevant records.
- Practice using the camera; take several shots.
- Record (by camera or pen and paper):
 - Film number
 - Film's "cover page" that names the record (e.g., Catholic records from Chicago)
- Photograph entire page that record appears on (so page numbers are visible as well as context of other records)
- Enlarge image on reader and focus for best resolution; take several photos of enlarged record.
- Have a backup: Bring pen and paper to take notes.