



Dozens of Needles

- My project/passion: The Ganges Families Histories Project: thegangesfamilies.com
- 135 enslaved Africans freed in Philadelphia in 1800, 126 indentured with surname Ganges
- Given firm places, dates and unusual surname, can we learn more about these people?
- Yes, since 2018 using the usual suspects.
- Today, an unusual, usual suspect.

Millions of Haystacks

- Large, full text searchable databases have been around for awhile, e.g. newspapers.com
- Structured, printed sources, not haystacks.
- Think of a single hand written page as a haystack containing important historical information.
- Imagine if you could search a billion of them for topics YOU are interested in.
- You can.

FamilySearch Full Text Search

- FamilySearch is LDS' online family history site.
- Includes a large digital archive of primary sources.
- Now, with AI, a billion pages+ of HAND WRITTEN historical documents have been transcribed.
- All full text searchable.
- For free (with an account)....
- www.familysearch.org/en/search/full-text

Really?

Full-Text Search

Unlock hidden discoveries in historical records that have never been searchable till now. Check back often as we keep adding millions of images. More information below.

Start your search

Keywords: +MOSES GANGES

Name:

Place: City, County, State, Province, or Country

Year (Range): From _____ To _____

Image Group-Number (DGS):

- Just look for what you're looking for

Really?

Results (25)

Filters: Collection, Year, Place, Record Type

Monroe, Michigan, Deeds 1886-1889

Appearance Docket: Perry, Ohio, Appear...

Search

Keywords: +MOSES GANGES

Name:

Place: City, County, State, Pn

Year (Range): From _____ To _____

Image Group Number (DGS):

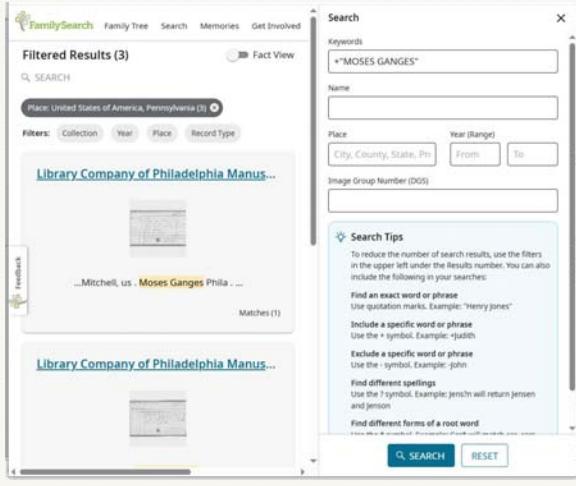
Search Tips

To reduce the number of search results, use the filters in the upper left under the Results number. You can also include the following in your searches:

- Find an exact word or phrase
- Use quotation marks. Example: "Henry Jones"
- Include a specific word or phrase
- Use the + symbol. Example: +adult
- Exclude a specific word or phrase
- Use the - symbol. Example: -john
- Find different spellings
- Use the ? symbol. Example: Jen?n will return Jensen and jenison
- Find different forms of a root word

- Just look for what you're looking for
- Top results include places in Michigan and Ohio

Really?

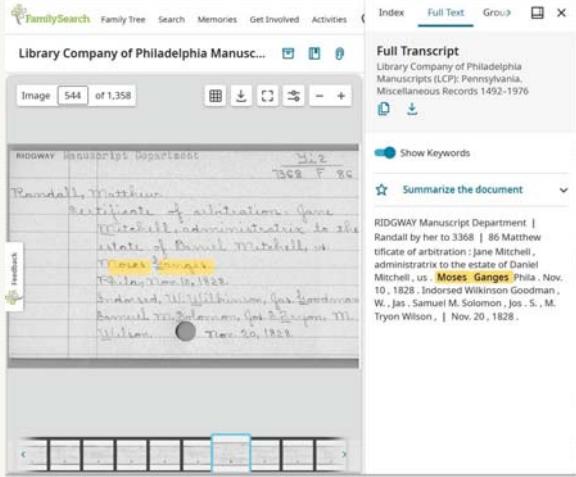


The screenshot shows the FamilySearch search interface with the following details:

- Search Bar:** The search term is "+MOSES GANGES".
- Search Tips:** A sidebar provides search tips for refining queries, including:
 - Find an exact word or phrase (using quotes: "Henry Jones")
 - Include a specific word or phrase (using the + symbol: +John)
 - Exclude a specific word or phrase (using the - symbol: -John)
 - Find different spellings (using the ? symbol: Jench will return Jensen and jenson)
 - Find different forms of a root word (using the * symbol: Jensch will return Jensen, Jensen, and Jensch)
- Results:** The results page shows three items, all titled "Library Company of Philadelphia Manus...". The first result is a thumbnail image of a document page.

- Just look for what you're looking for
- Top results include places in Michigan and Ohio
- Filter to Pennsylvania
- Three results
- Select the first

Really?

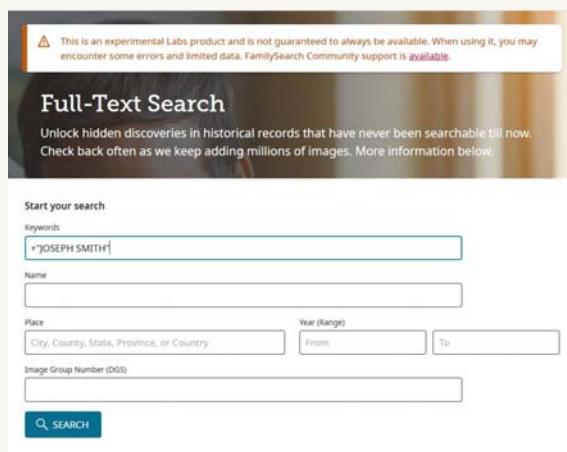


The screenshot shows the FamilySearch 'Full Text' view of a manuscript page, with the following details:

- Page Number:** Image 544 of 1,358
- Transcription:** RIDGWAY Manuscript Department. *3/2*
Randall, Matthew
Certificates of administration Jane
Randall, administrator in the
estate of Daniel Mitchell, vs.
Moses Ganges, Nov. 20, 1828.
Informed, W. Wilkinson, Jas. Goodman,
Samuel M. Solomon, Jas. S. M.
Tryon Wilson, Nov. 20, 1828.
- Summary:** RIDGWAY Manuscript Department | Randall by her to 3368 | 86 Matthew
certificate of administration Jane Mitchell,
administrator in the estate of Daniel
Mitchell, us. **Moses Ganges**, Phila. Nov.
10, 1828. Indorsed Wilkinson Goodman,
W., Jas. Samuel M. Solomon, Jas. S., M.
Tryon Wilson, | Nov. 20, 1828.

- Just look for what you're looking for
- Top results include places in Michigan and Ohio
- Filter to Pennsylvania
- Three results
- Select the first
- Wow!
- Library catalog card
- Search target is handwritten on the card.

Threading the Needle



This is an experimental Labs product and is not guaranteed to always be available. When using it, you may encounter some errors and limited data. FamilySearch Community support is available.

Full-Text Search

Unlock hidden discoveries in historical records that have never been searchable till now. Check back often as we keep adding millions of images. More information below.

Start your search

Keywords: +JOSEPH SMITH

Name:

Place: City, County, State, Province, or Country

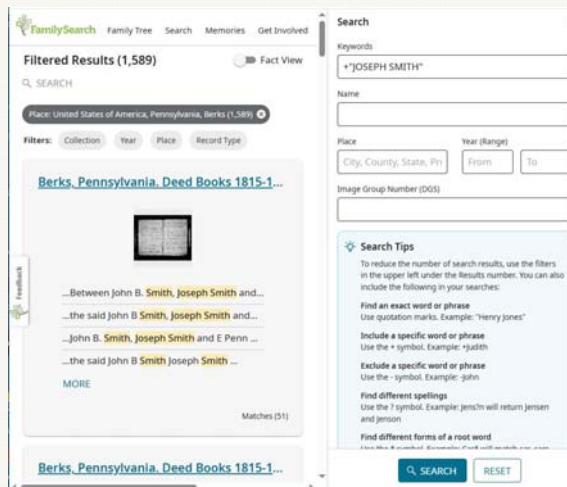
Year (Range): From: To:

Image Group Number (DGS):

SEARCH

- Jalal Ganges changed his name to Joseph Smith, Berks County

Threading the Needle



Filtered Results (1,589)

Place: United States of America, Pennsylvania, Berks (1,589)

Filters: Collection, Year, Place, Record Type

Berks, Pennsylvania, Deed Books 1815-1...

...Between John B. Smith, Joseph Smith and...
...the said John B Smith, Joseph Smith and...
...John B. Smith, Joseph Smith and E Penn ...
...the said John B Smith Joseph Smith ...

MORE

Matches (51)

Search

Keywords: +JOSEPH SMITH

Name:

Place: City, County, State, P... Year (Range): From: To:

Image Group Number (DGS):

Search Tips

To reduce the number of search results, use the filters in the upper left under the results number. You can also include the following in your searches:

- Find an exact word or phrase
- Use quotation marks. Example: "Henry Jones"
- Include a specific word or phrase
- Use the + symbol. Example: +John
- Exclude a specific word or phrase
- Use the - symbol. Example: -John
- Find different spellings
- Use the ? symbol. Example: Jens?n will return Jensen and Jenson
- Find different forms of a root word

SEARCH **RESET**

- Jalal Ganges changed his name to Joseph Smith, Berks County
- Filter to Pennsylvania, Berks
- 1,589 results
- What attribute of Joseph Smith might be unique to him?

Threading the Needle

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch search interface with the following details:

- Search Bar:** Contains the keywords **+"JOSEPH SMITH COLORED"**.
- Results:** Shows **Filtered Results (1)** for **Place: United States of America, Pennsylvania, Berks (1)**.
- Filters:** Includes **Collection**, **Place**, and **Record Type**.
- Results List:** Shows an estate file for **Samuel F. Smith** with a will and a colored accountant named **Joseph Smith**.
- Search Tips:** Provides guidance on using search filters, exact words, specific words, and different forms of words.
- Results Page:** Shows **Results per page: 20**, **Page: 1 of 1**.

- Jalal Ganges changed his name to Joseph Smith, Berks County
- Filter to Pennsylvania, Berks
- 1,589 results
- What attribute of Joseph Smith might be unique to him?
- Let's search for it

Threading the Needle

The screenshot shows a digital document viewer with the following details:

- Header:** **Estate files: Berks. Probate Estate Case Fil...**
- Image:** Shows a handwritten will for **Samuel F. Smith**, with a yellow box highlighting the name **Joseph Smith, (colored) deceased**.
- Table:** Shows a table of assets and debts, with the total value listed as **\$117 45**.
- Text:** Includes a **Full Transcript** of the will, detailing the account of the deceased, the amount of the estate, and the distribution of assets.
- Tools:** Includes a **Show Keywords** button and a **Summarize the document** button.

- Jalal Ganges changed his name to Joseph Smith, Berks County
- Filter to Pennsylvania, Berks
- 1,589 results
- What attribute of Joseph Smith might be unique to him?
- Let's search for it

Really?

Full-Text Search

Start your search

Keywords: +SHIP GANGES

Name:

Place: City, County, State, Province, or Country

Year (Range): From _____ To _____

Image Group Number (DGS):

SEARCH

- Search things other than personal names
- Here, the *Ganges* that rescued the *Ganges*
 - USS *Ganges*
 - Sloop of war *Ganges*
 - Ship *Ganges*
- Search done at HSP

Really?

Filtered Results (3)

Year: 1800, 1820 (3)

Place: United States of America, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (3)

Filters: Collection, Year, Place, Record Type

Alms House Daily Occurrence Docket: Philadelphia...
...city from on board Ship Ganges & has ...
Matches (1)

County Prison: Prisoners for Trial Docket: Philadelphia...
...from on board the ship Ganges due course ...
Matches (1)

Alms House Daily Occurrence Docket: Philadelphia...
...from on board the ship Ganges - served ...
Matches (1)

SEARCH

- Search things other than personal names
- Here, the *Ganges* that rescued the *Ganges*
 - USS *Ganges*
 - Sloop of war *Ganges*
 - Ship *Ganges*
- Search done at HSP
- Filtered for Pennsylvania, 1820's
- Alms House?

Really?

This image and the information that was indexed is only available in a FamilySearch center or affiliated library.

Alms House Daily Occurrence Docket: Philadelphia, 1820

Full Transcript

Alms House Daily Occurrence Docket: Philadelphia, Almshouse Records, 1820-1821

Image 1 of 340 View item 2 by itself

DISMISS

Summarize the document

Tight Binding Adm Do Do Do Do Do Do Do Do Saturday Decem 2d 1828 John Kelly former customer 23 Sept 1819 returned order of Lem Pease 18th October last Henry Prits returned order of Chas Johnson D. C. Sk former customer 7 Jany last James Guinn returned order of Jas McConnel D. Sk former customer 23 Oct last Sam'l Turner returned by order of A. Shringhaus D fore Lea 2d former customer 14 Sept 1819 John McKinsey returned 1 order of Chas Johnson D. C. former customer 19 Nov 19 John McKinsey his wife former customer 3 Nov John McKinsey the La former customer Margery Boyce returned order of Geo Ritter D. City a former customer 1 Dec 1819 James Bougher L. former customer 15 Aug 1820 returned 1 order of Chas Johnson D. Coy Eloped Birth Died, Disch Do Sunday John Christian Decem 3d 1820 Admitted 24 October 1820 be it George single boy do Elizabeth Kenton 21 April

- Search things other than personal names
- Here, the *Ganges* that rescued the *Ganges*
 - USS *Ganges*
 - Sloop of war *Ganges*
 - Ship *Ganges*
- Search done at HSP
- Filtered for Pennsylvania, 1820's
- Alms House?

Yes, Really

May Cutba 6th 25 yrs old born in Guinea
landed in this city from onboard Ship Ganges

- Search things other than personal names
- Here, the *Ganges* that rescued the *Ganges*

- Search done at HSP
- Filtered for Pennsylvania, 1820's
- Alms House?

Final Reminders

- Transcriptions are not 100% correct
- Some sources are restricted access, or disappear
 - Family History Center/Affiliates Only
 - Can be removed if terms of access from owners
- Download result when you find something
- Support is informal
- Good search tactics help a lot
- Make it part of your research plan
- NOT JUST GENEALOGY OR FAMILY HISTORY

Questions?

DOCTORMWK@GMAIL.COM
THEGANGESFAMILIES.COM

Additional Resources

- **Julia A. Anderson:** *Utilizing AI and Full-Text Search to Advance Your African American Research*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrmzPIVreCk&t=218s
- **Levi (Lahy) Ganges profile**
<https://thegangesfamilies.com/2020/07/13/levi-ganges/>
- **Furry (Curry) Ganges profile**
<https://thegangesfamilies.com/2023/04/20/furry-ganges/>
- **Genealogy Quick Start on Levi Ganges**
www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rB1L6zkb1o&t=1790s