



## Dozens of Needles

- My project/passion: The Ganges Families Histories Project: [thegangesfamilies.com](http://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- Now, with AI, a billion pages+ of HAND WRITTEN historical documents have been transcribed.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](http://www.familysearch.org/en/search/full-text)

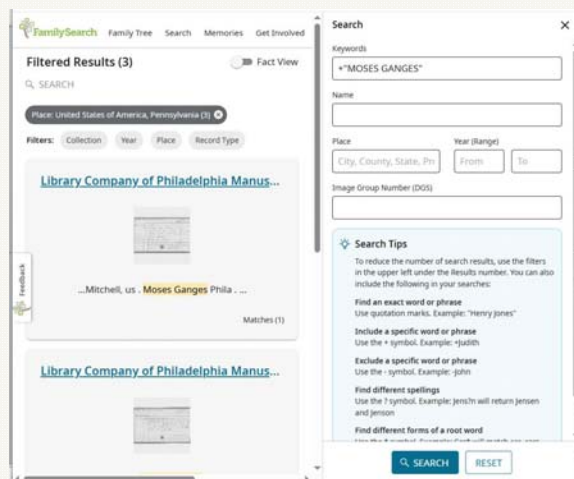
## Really?

- Just look for what you're looking for

## Really?

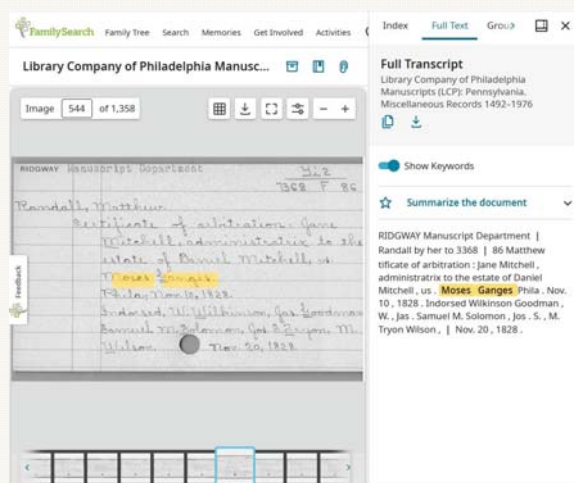
- Just look for what you're looking for
- Top results include places in Michigan and Ohio

## Really?




- 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?



- 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

Name

Place  
 Year (Range)


Image Group Number (DGS)


 SEARCH

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

## Threading the Needle

FamilySearch Family Tree Search Memories Get Involved


Filtered Results (1,589) 

 SEARCH

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)

[Berks, Pennsylvania, Deed Books 1815-1...](#)

 SEARCH 

**Search**

Keywords

Name

Place  
 Year (Range)

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: "jadh"

**Exclude a specific word or phrase**  
 Use the - symbol. Example: "john"

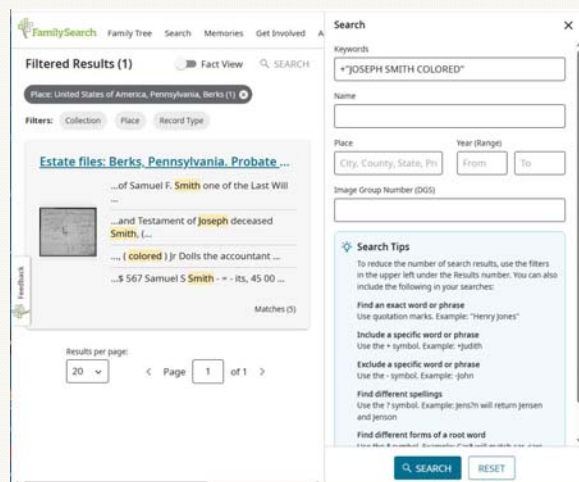
**Find different spellings**  
 Use the ? symbol. Example: jensh? will return jensen and jenson

**Find different forms of a root word**  
 Use the \* symbol. Example: Jack will search for jack, john, and joshua

- 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



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- Let's search for it

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FamilySearch Family Tree Search Memories Get Involved Activities

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Start your search

Keywords

Name

Place  
 Year (Range)  
 From  To

Image Group Number (DGS)

- 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) Fact View SEARCH

Year: 1800, 1820 (3)

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

Filters: Collection Year Place Record Type

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

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

Alms House Daily Occurrence Docket: Philadelphi...  
 ...from on board the *ship Ganges* - served ...

Search

Keywords

Name

Place  
 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:

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 Use quotation marks. Example: "Henry Jones"

Include a specific word or phrase  
 Use the + symbol. Example: +judith

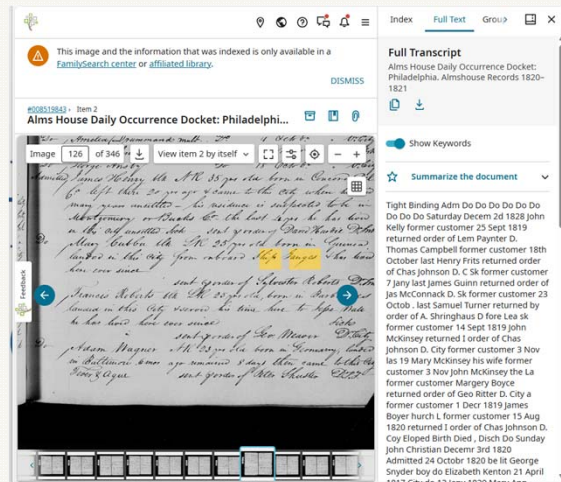
Exclude a specific word or phrase  
 Use the - symbol. Example: -john

Find different spellings  
 Use the ? symbol. Example: jens?n will return Jensen and Jensen

Find different forms of a root word  
 Use the \* symbol. Example: Car\* will match car, cars, carriage, carpenter, etc.

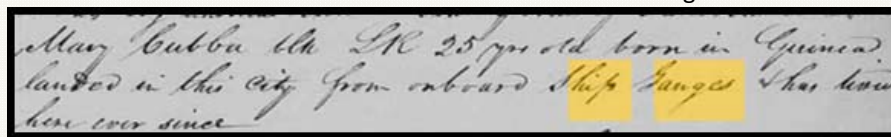
- Search things other than personal names
- Here, the *Ganges* that rescued the Ganges
  - USS *Ganges*
  - Sloop of war *Ganges*
  - Ship *Ganges*
- Search done at HSP
- Filtered for Pennsylvania, 1820's
- Alms House?

## Really?



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



- 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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SrmzPIVreCk&t=218s)
- **Levi (Lahy) Ganges profile**  
<https://thegangesfamilies.com/2020/07/13/lahy-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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rB1L6zkb1o&t=1790s)