Two Hidden Secrets to Find a Ton More Results from the FamilySearch Catalog

Full disclosure: I love the FamilySearch Catalog! For those collections that are available online, and the books that have been digitized, there are hundreds of thousands to choose from. For the online collections and books, I can use my PC at home to scroll through digitized page after digitized page, just as if I had my own microfilm reader, only without the hassle. But, there are a couple of hidden secrets that you need to know if you wish to maximize your results. And they are not easy to discover, which is why I am relating them to you now.

Secret 1 - Use Keyword Searches

The first secret relates to searching through the catalog for records. Let's first look at the catalog's search box.

Search by:
Place | Surnames | Titles | Author | Subjects | Keywords

Place

Search for:
Call Number | Film/Fiche Number

Availability
- ⦿ Any
- ○ Online
- ○ Family History Center

[Search]   Reset

What I want to find are Funeral Home records from Los Angeles County, California that are available only online. I am not interested in knowing where the microfilm is located or those that are only available at a Family History Center (FHC).

The logical place to start is to enter the place for which the collections have been digitized by clicking on the "Place" menu item/tab.

The first screen is where I enter the Place, and the Online catalog will show me which collections are available. For entering the place, I click in that box, enter Los Angeles, and then select from the drop downs that are presented, "United States, California, Los Angeles", which signifies Los Angeles County.

Search by:
Place | Surnames | Titles | Author | Subjects | Keywords

Place
United States, California, Los Angeles

Search for:
Call Number | Film/Fiche Number

Availability
- ○ Any
- ⦿ Online
- ○ Family History Center

[Search]   Reset

Here is the screen of results after entering the Place:

Search Results for FamilySearch Catalog
🖶 PRINT 📇 Catalog Print List (0)

Notes
Created 1850, original county
Part of United States, California

Places within United States, California, Los Angeles ▶

- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Archives and libraries - Inventories, registers, catalogs (3)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Biography (19)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Business records and commerce (1)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Cemeteries (1)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Census - 1850 (1)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Church directories (2)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Church records (4)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Court records (2)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Description and travel (1)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Directories (2)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Emigration and immigration (1)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Funeral homes (1)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Genealogy (2)
- ▸ United States, California, Los Angeles - Genealogy - Inventories, registers, catalogs (1)

As you can see, it presents me with (1) Funeral Home collection. Only 1. This is what is presented to me when I click on that line - a collection for Pierce Brothers Mortuary.

▼ **United States, California, Los Angeles - Funeral homes (1)**

Funeral records, 1958-1990
Author: Pierce Brothers Mortuary (Los Angeles, California)

Now for the Secret Trick that will optimize the number of collections returned to you

This time I am going to go back to the main search screen and click on Keywords, ignoring the Place for now.

First, I make sure that the Online button is clicked, and I will enter "los angeles funeral home" in the keyword box and hit "Search". I will show you that screen before I hit Search and then the results screen after I hit Search.

Search by:
Place | Surnames | Titles | Author | Subjects | Keywords

Keywords

Search for:
Call Number | Film/Fiche Number

Availability
○ Any
◉ Online
○ Family History Center

[Search] Reset

Search by:
Place | Surnames | Titles | Author | Subjects | Keywords

Keywords

los angeles funeral home

Search for:
Call Number | Film/Fiche Number

Availability
○ Any
◉ Online
○ Family History Center

[Search] Reset

Holy mackerel! Now there are 30 online funeral home collections for Los Angeles County. The one we found in the very first search appears as the fifth hit in the second search using just keywords. So, entering the place in the Place box doesn't retrieve the optimal number of collections.

Search Results for FamilySearch Catalog

🖨 PRINT 📄 Catalog Print List (0)

1-20 of 30 results

Funeral records, 1898-1991
Author: Pierce Bros. & Co. Funeral Directors (Los Angeles, California); Pierce Brothers Cunningham & O'Connor Mortuary (Los Angeles, California); Pierce Bros. Jones and Hamrock Mortuary (Los Angeles, California); Pierce Bros. Lincoln Heights Mortuary (Los Angeles, California)

Funeral records, 1936-1984
Author: Godeau & Martinoni Funeral Directors and Embalmers (Los Angeles, California); Pierce Brothers Godeau & Martinoni Funeral Directors (Los Angeles, California)

L.D.S. funeral records, 1954-1984
Author: Pierce Bros. & Co. Funeral Directors (Los Angeles, California)

Funeral records, 1940-1945
Author: Pierce Brothers Crane and Eberlee Mortuary (Los Angeles, California)

Funeral records, 1958-1990
Author: Pierce Brothers Mortuary (Los Angeles, California)

Funeral records, 1933-1942
Author: B. E. Dayton, Inc. Funeral Directors (Beverly Hills, California)

Funeral records, 1972-1981
Author: Pierce Brothers Cunningham and O'Connor Funeral Directors(West Hollywood, California)

Secret 1 - Always use keyword searching when looking for online collections from the FS Catalog, and make sure that you click the Online button before clicking on Search. You will receive way more pertinent results.

Secret 2 - Make sure you are always logged in.

When searching in FamilySearch, however you are doing it, you need to first have a free account and be logged in (or signed in). It is really easy to sign up.

But here is the kicker - FamilySearch logs me out all the time when I am using the site, **unbeknownst to me**. I am going to show you the results of a FamilySearch Catalog search, and one of the collections that is in the results list.

The <u>first image example</u> is when I am logged in, and the <u>second image example</u> when I have been logged out, and I will show you the differences.

The differences are stark when you are looking for online collections, which I will discuss.

Funeral records, 1940-1945

Authors:	Pierce Brothers Crane and Eberlee Mortuary (Los Angeles, California) (Main Author)	
Format:	Manuscript/Manuscript on Film	
Language:	English	
Publication:	Salt Lake City, Utah : Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1996	
Physical:	on 1 microfilm reel ; 35 mm.	

[Add to Print List]

Notes
Microfilm of records located at Pierce Brothers Cunningham & O'Connor Mortuary, Santa Monica Boulevard, Hollywood, California.

Includes surname index.

Contains records of funerals, showing name of deceased, dates of birth and death, residence, names of parents and spouse, age, name of physician, cause of death, locations of funeral service and cemetery, etc.

View this catalog record in WorldCat for other possible copy locations 🌐

Subjects
Locality Subjects
United States, California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles - Funeral homes

Film/Digital Notes

Note	Location	Collection/Shelf	Film	DGS	Format
Funeral records	Family History Library	United States & Canada Film	2048361 Item 4	7716983	🔍 📷

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Sorry, I had to minimize these to fit on this page. They look exactly the same, right?

Nope. See at the bottom under "Format"? The logged in image has a camera icon, and the logged out image has a camera with a key.

What's the difference, you ask?

Near the bottom of each collection page under Film/Digital Notes is the name of each sub-collection. If there is a camera icon at the right of the name (in the Format column) then the collections' images are underline browsable online. If there is a camera with a key icon, it is only available at a Family History Center or affiliated library. If there is a film reel icon, then it is only available in microfilm format, not digital. Finally, if there is a magnifying glass icon, the collection is searchable.

Secret 2 - Always stay logged in. And regularly check if you are on the site for a long time, because FamilySearch will log you out regularly if you are on a long time, and you won't even know it unless you look at the top right of each page where it tells you if you are signed in or not.

The Moral of the Story is easy to remember: When searching the FS Catalog, always use keyword searches, and always stay signed in.

That's all there is to optimizing your results that you can browse through - online - at home - in your PJs if you are so inclined!