FAMILY BROWSE
Mary Kircher Roddy

mroddyn3@msn.com   www.mkrgenealogy.com

Introduction

FamilySearch.org has millions of images on its website, many of which are unindexed and not searchable. But if you know how to get into the catalog and browse around, you can find images of birth and death certificates, naturalization papers, deeds, wills, estate inventories and more. FamilySearch adds more such images every month. To take advantage of this ever-increasing bounty, it's important to know how to find these types of records.

Note: there are various ways to get into these records, so in my examples I will show you different entry points in each of them, and you can choose which works best for you.   For this handout I could just give you the links, but I wouldn't be showing you how the catalog works. If you play along with my examples, you'll be able to apply this knowledge to other situations in the FamilySearch.org databases.

Note also: When I refer to "Image" it is the image number for FamilySearch. When I refer to "Page" it is the page number from the county or state record book I'm using. Generally these page numbers are printed or handwritten in the county books.

Example 1 – Los Angeles Death Certificate – access via FamilySearch catalog
Task: Find a death certificate in Los Angeles for Julius Kircher who died in 1922

1. On the main FamilySearch.org screen click Search →Catalog and in the box for "Search By" type in "United States, California, Los Angeles" and click "Search"
2. Scroll down on the page to "United States, California, Los Angeles - Vital records (16)" and click on the link. (Note that the (16) means that there are 16 items in this folder of records.   At the time you are doing this, there might be more)
3. Near the middle of the list of 16 items is "Los Angeles County, California, index to deaths, 1905-1978 and death records, 1889-1960" Click on that
4. It will display a title (Los Angeles County…), some description, and then under "Notes" says: **California, County Birth and Death Records are available online, click here.** That takes you to "California, County Birth and Death Records, 1800-1994" (https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2001287). You can see this has search boxes for names, but note the description of the database – it says "The name index for death records covers Stockton, Lodi and Manteca cities and San Benito and San Joaquin counties." Unless you're looking for records in one of those few specific places, you won't get a hit.
5. Instead of using the search boxes, scroll down to the bottom where it says "VIEW IMAGES IN THIS COLLECTION " and click on "Browse through 69,099 images"
6. You will see 4 items in the list concerning Los Angeles, namely "Los Angeles," "Los Angeles, Long Beach," "Los Angeles , Los Angeles," and "Los Angeles, Pasadena." The first is Los Angeles County and the other 3 are specific incorporated cities within that county. Search first where you think you "know" where the event took place, but be willing to expand your search if you don't find what you are looking for. (They might have lived in one town, but died when they were visiting friends in another town.) For my example, click on "Los Angeles, Los Angeles"

Note: You need to know the year of death to use the death certificate index. If you don't know the death year, read below in **Example 1a – California Death Index**.

7. You will see 3 columns of titles starting with "Birth and Death Registers 1935…", then "Birth certificates 1906", etc… In the far right column, about 2/3 of the way down, you'll see "Death index 1877-1887 vol 1, A-K. Following that are the indexes for the various years up through 1962. Find the year of death, and the first letter of the surname you're searching for. Note that for some ranges a year is listed twice (ie 1914-1916 and 1916-1918). Usually the first of these goes through June, and the second batch for the year goes July-December.

8. In my example I looked for a Julius KIRCHER who died in 1922. I will look in "Death index 1921-
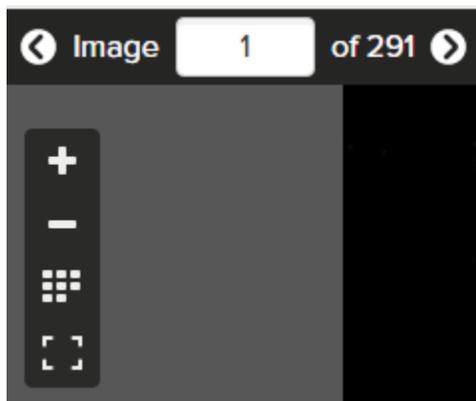
1922 vol 17, A-K" Once I click on that "film" I see something that looks like the picture to the left. This tells me there are 291 images. You can see the +, - and array buttons. Click on the array of little squares to get an overview of the film. Click the - button to zoom out. The little black squares you'll see when you're zoomed out are the start of each letter. Within the letter the names are organized by the first 2 letters. I'm looking for KI, so I need to get down to the K section, and pass through the KA's and KE's to get to KI's. If I go to Image 281, I can find Julius KIRCHER with a date of death of February 16, 1922.

His death certificate number is 1429. Write that down.

9. Above the page images you will see:

California, County Birth … Death Records, 1800-1994 ▾ | Los Angeles, Los Angeles › Death index 1921-1922 vol 17, A-K ›

Click on that middle part "Los Angeles, Los Angeles". If you use the back arrow on your browser you will be farther back in the search than you want to be.

10. You're now back at the screen from Step 7, above. For my example there are 5 listings for 1922 death certificates – "Death certificates 1922 no 1-1100," "Death certificates 1922 no 1100-3750," etc. I want the second one with certificate number 1429 on it Since 1429 is approximately 330 above 1100, I'll type 330 in the image box for that film. I see image 330 is for certificate 1411, so I either page forward or guess again, and eventually get to image 349 and there is Julius' death certificate. Success!

Example 1a – California Death Index, access to the catalog via a Google search
Task: Find a listing for Julius Kircher in the California Death Index to determine his date of death

Say for example I didn't know Julius' year of death. I could try FindAGrave, a tree on Ancestry, a family bible, a newspaper obituary search, or something else to find it. If I couldn't find a death year in any of those places I could use the California Death Index to find it. The California Death index has been divided 1905-1939 and 1940-1997.

1. Do a Google Search using the search string "familysearch california death index". The first 2 hits you get should be for the 1940-97 (https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2015582) and 1905-39 (https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1932433). I picked the earlier time frame.

2. This leads to a searchable index, so I type "Julius" and "Kircher" in the appropriate boxes and hit enter. The first hit is "my" Julius. I can click on the camera to see the image, and I find that Julius died in the city of Los Angeles on February 16, 1922, and his STATE death certificate number is 6342. (An explanation of the various fields on the California Death Index can be found at https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/California_Death_Index_1905-1939_(FamilySearch_Historical_Records)

3. Note: What I have found here in example 1a is the **date of death** and a STATE death certificate number. The actual certificates which are available on FamilySearch that I explained in the example above are COUNTY records. Do NOT try to use a STATE certificate number to search in COUNTY records. You won't find what you're looking for. But using the state index provides the date of death, which you can then use to search the county indexes.

Example 2 – Probate Record, Somerset County, NJ
Task: Find a will for Michael A'hern who died in Somerset County, NJ about 1907

1. On the main FamilySearch.org screen click Search →Catalog and in the box for "Search By" type in "United States, New Jersey, Somerset" and click "Search"

2. Scroll down on the page to "United States, New Jersey, Somerset - Probate records (3)" and click on the link. Click on the first one, Probate records, 1794-1945; indexes, 1804-1972. There are no search boxes, but in the notes it says "**New Jersey, Probate Records are available online, click here."** Click on the word "here"

3. That will bring you to New Jersey Probate Records, 1678-1980, where you can "Browse through 1,913,824 images" Click to Browse. Find Somerset County. Click

4. In the first column, items 15, 16 and 17 are "Estate index 1804-1972 vol A-H," "Estate index 1804-1972 vol I-S," and "Estate index 1804-1972 vol T-Z." Pick your volume (A-H for my example).

5. Click on the array icon to zoom out and get an overview of the film images. Image 6 tells you how "To Use Index" and Image 7 explains the "l-m-n-r-t Index" and how to use it.

6. In my example I am looking for Michael A'HERN. The first l-m-n-r-t letter in his surname is "r", and the first initial of his given name is M, so the l-m-n-r-t index tells me I will find him in Section 64.

7. Zoom out again using the array to understand how the film is put together. You can see the section numbers in the upper right hand corner of the page. The top number is the section number from the l-m-n-r-t Index. Depending on how many names you have, there might be multiple page 64s or whatever.

8. Look at image 259. If there are many, many of one surname in a particular area, that surname will get its own section. In this instance, for the surname, Coddington, you will find it in Section 200.

9. So how do you find Section 200? Zoom way out in the array. You can see the Black covers of the books. A&B are together in one book. C&D are together in one book. If you zoom all the way out in the array, there are 25 thumbnails across. C&D is about 11 lines, estimate what the midpoint is and click on a thumbnail and then page forward and backward until you find Section 200.

10. But back to my example, Michael A'HERN on Section 64, image 50. This tells me I will find him in Proceedings Index Volume 1, page 48, block 4

11. Click on Somerset to get back to the list of records

New Jersey Probate Records, 1678-1980 ▼ Somerset › Estate index 1804-1972 vol A-H ›

12. In the third column of the list of records I see Proceedings index 1804-1972 vol 1-3, Proceedings index 1804-1972 vol 4-5, etc… up to vol 13-14. Per the table in step 10, I need to find Vol 1, page 48, block 4. Click on that book, zoom out in the array to guesstimate where page 48 is. It's Image 55 of 1091 images.

13. There are 10 blocks on the page and Block 4 for Michael A'hern is as follows:

14. This tells me that his application for probate is in "Applications for Probate, Vol 9, page 246" and it gives me the Will Book and page for his will and the Inventory book and page for his Inventory.

15. Click on Somerset to get back to the list of records

New Jersey Probate Records, 1678-1980 ▼ Somerset › Proceedings index 1804-1972 vol 1-3 ›

16. If you look at the records , you will see that the records FamilySearch has available do not include Applications for Probate Book 9, Will Book R and Inventory Book S. But from getting this far, I know that Michael A'hern did not die intestate. There is a will. It may now be worth it to me write to the county and get the records, and I will be able to tell them where to find it.

Example 3 – Naturalization Record, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

Task: Find a naturalization record for John CORRIGAN. I think it occurred in 1892, based on other records.

1. On the main FamilySearch.org screen click Search →Catalog and in the box for "Search By" type in "United States, Pennsylvania, Luzerne" and click "Search" Scroll down on the page to "United States, Pennsylvania, Luzerne – Naturalization and citizenship (5)" and click on the link.

2. Note, items 1, 2 and 3 all cover the time period where of 1892 where I'm trying to find this record for John Corrigan. I will start with the first one, but if I don't find it there, I might have to look at one of the other items. The first item is "Admissions 1850-1906; Index 1850-1897." Click on the title.

3. There is no "Click here" or "Browse to see the records." But notice that the drag-down bar on the right of the screen has lots of room to go down. Drag it down to the first item under film notes, "Alien docket admissions 1850-1897" You can see a camera icon on the right of those listings. Magic! Click on the camera.

4. The description for "Alien docket admissions 1850-1897" says it's the first item on the film. Zoom out to see the thumbnails. I can see that Image 5 is where the records start. As I look at Image 5, I can see they seem to be arranged by year, and all the names beginning with A are grouped together. So I will need to find the start of the C's and then page forward until I get to the year I'm looking for, 1892. Eventually I work my way to image 40. I find John CORRIGAN on the right hand page, January 25, 1892, record #19.

5. Click the back button on the browser to get to "Admissions 1850-1906; Index 1850-1897." Scroll down until I find "Certificates 1890 (no. 472-493) Certificates 1891-1894" which is on Film 1750271. Click on the camera icon.

6. Click on the array and zoom out a few clicks (to where you get about 10 thumbnails across), so you can still see the pages. Notice that most of these records appear to be 3 pages – a cover sheet plus 2 pages. Some have only the cover plus 1 other page.

7. Zoom out a little further in the array (16 thumbnails across). You can see that Item 1, the first part of the film finishes out 1890. You can see a black square for the end of Item 1 and right next to it another black square for the beginning of Item 2. The page after that tells you this is for 1891. Zoom back out until you see the black square starting Item 3 (Image 598).

8. We know from searching the index that John Corrigan's record is Certificate number 19 in 1892. Since each certificate takes about 3 sheets, 3 x 19 = 57, plus the starting image of 598 for 1892 = 655. That's not my guy – 655 is the cover for Dominic Callahan. Zoom out to the array a little, so you can see the cover sheets. You should be able to recognize them by now – they only have a little writing on them. If you click on the cover sheet on image 648 you will see that is the one we're searching for, John Corrigan. The next image(s) will be Corrigan's, until you get to coversheet 20. JC has just 1 paper, his naturalization document. Score!

9. The document I have found here is only his final naturalization. I might have to try one of the other items on FamilySearch that I described in Step 2 above to see if I can find his petition for naturalization, if I want that document.

Example 4 – Deed, Erie County, NY – access via clicking on the map
Task: Find a deed for the acquisition of a house and lot by Louisa LAWSON in Erie County, NY in 1873.

Another way to get into the records besides using the catalog is to click on the map on the main FamilySearch search page (https://familysearch.org/search/). Pick your continent or country, and use the dropdown menu that appears to get you to the state (or country.)

1. For this example, click on USA on the map and New York in the dropdown list. The top section displayed is New York Indexed Historical Records. Further down, you'll see New York Image Only Historical Records.   These are divided by category (Birth, Marriage and Death; Census and Lists; etc). Scroll down to "Probate and Court" to find "New York Land Records, 1630-1975 (8,129,310 records)". Click on the link.
2. On the next screen, click where it says "Browse through 8,129,310 images". Click on a chosen county - for this example use Erie.
3. Louisa LAWSON acquired property in Erie in 1873. I should find her listed in the "Deed index-grantee 1860-1874 vol 2, L-Z"
4. Once I get into the film, and zoom out to see the array, the records start on image 4. There is no index. What am I to do? – 2 choices
    a. I can scroll through the images to come up with a theory as to how this book is put together. Image 4 (Ledger page in the upper right 437-1) has surnames beginning with LEA.   This continues onto Image 5, (Ledger page 437-2) on the left and Ledger page 439-1 on the right showing surnames beginning with LAC, LUB, LEC, LIC. This leads me to believe that it is some kind of a 3-letter system: I'll get names beginning with L, then a vowel, and the 3rd letter is A. Next up is names beginning with L, then a vowel, and the 3rd letter is B or C. Since I want an LAW name, I'll hop forward until I stumble upon the LAW names on Image 43, Ledger page 467. There is Louisa.
    b. In the Erie County Land Records, there are numerous Grantor and Grantee index books. Maybe I can find the index for the L names in another one of these. If I open up "Deed index-grantee 1893-1897 vol 5, K-Z" and zoom out to see the array of thumbnails, image 4 looks like a book cover. Zoom in and I see it has "**Division Tables to Graves Tabular Initial Indexes.**" When I look at the instructions shown, I need to look at the L table (Lawson begins with L) read across the top line "A" (the second letter in Lawson), all the way across to the W (3rd letter), and I will find Lawson on 468. Note, this isn't exactly where I found Louisa LAWSON in the Grantee index covering 1873 but it's close enough to get me in the neighborhood.
    c. I don't know why there was no index for my L volume. If I look at the A-K volume for the Grantee deed index 1860-1874, the Graves index for A&B is on Image 4, for C-F is on Image 150 and G-K is on Image 337. Why did the L index disappear? No idea. But if you can't find the index for your volume, try another in the same series, for example a grantee or grantor index for a different set of years.
5. So, back to the index page of "Deed index-grantee 1860-1874 vol 2, L-Z", Image 43 (ledger page 467) for Louisa LAWSON. The page is set up with the first letter of the given name (in Louisa's case "L" in a series of columns (ABCD, EFGH, IJKL, etc) and the remainder of the given name ("ouisa") in the Grantee column, followed by the last name. I find two records for L-ouisa LAWSON on this page. In both instances the Grantor is Isaiah H Hughes. One is in Liber (Book)

326, page 289 and the other is Liber 324, page 9. The index gives me the date of the instrument, the date of record, and a brief description.

6. Click on Erie to get back to the records

New York Land Records, 1630-1975 ▼ | Erie › Deed index-grantee 1860-1874 vol 2, L-Z ›

7. The deeds are in chronological order by name and vol (same as Liber/Book), so I search for 1873, vol 326. (Note – some of these volumes are out of order in the list, but they are all there. If you can't find your volume, look up or down a few lines to find it.)
8. Zoom out to the array and you can see these are double page spreads, 2 pages per image. I'm looking for Vol 326, page 289. Divide 289 by 2 = approximately 145. Use that for my image number and then page forward or backward until I find it (Image 150).

Example 5 – Homestead Record, Saskatchewan, Canada – access via catalog (NOT map!!!)
Task: Find a homestead record for Andrew DONOHUE

Why am I sending you to the catalog instead of the map to get into the records? The Saskatchewan Homestead Records are available through the map access (FamilySearch.org/Search →click on Canada →use the dropdown to pick Saskatchewan → scroll down to "Saskatchewan Image Only Historical Records" and then "Other" you will see a link to "Saskatchewan Provincial Records, 1879-1987" and when you click on that, a link to Browse 1,506,449 images. BUT THERE'S NO INDEX!!!! It might take you years to browse through 1.5 MILLION records. Cue the Austin Powers theme ;-)

However if you go to FamilySearch.org/Catalog/Search and type in Canada, Saskatchewan and scroll down to "Canada, Saskatchewan - Land and property (11)" and open that up, you will find "Saskatchewan homestead records, 1870-1930, and index." When you click on that link, under Notes you'll find "For an online index, click http://www.saskhomesteads.com/search.asp (as of December 19, 2008)." This is a link to an external index. This index is NOT mentioned on the map link to the homestead records. You will only find it if you search via the catalog.

1. The link to the online index takes you to http://www.saskhomesteads.com/search.asp My biggest hint with this is use "Starts With" The name in my example "Donohue" can easily be spelled Donohoe, Donahoe, Donahue, etc. Even if I type in the exact spelling of the person, and that is what is on the record, my experience has shown me that it does not necessarily come up. But I will try Starts with Donoh to pick up at least a couple of possible spellings. My result is the 6th one down. File Number 1967946. Note, it also gives me an alternate spelling of "Donahoue"
2. I can click on the link provided with the file number 1967946, but that sends me to a Saskatchewan agency where I can spend $15-$17 to get the file.
3. But since I've got the file number, let me take that back to FamilySearch where they have all the homestead records and see if I can find it for free. Back to the Catalog entry for Saskatchewan Land records (11 items) and item #8 is "Saskatchewan homestead records, 1904- ; applications for letters patent (from the homestead files), 1900".
4. In the Notes section it says "To view digital images of these Saskatchewan Provincial Records, click here. Not available on microfilm." When I click "here" I can browse that same set of 1.5 Million records from the Provincial records, but now I know where I'm going! The files are

arranged in numerical order and I see my batch, "Homestead files 1909 no 1967651-1968147" in the middle of the middle column.

5. When I click on the batch of files, I will need to sign in to FamilySearch to look at the records. Anyone can establish a free sign-in account with FamilySearch.

6. Zoom out in the array and you can see that each file number has a File Folder for the first page and then some number of sheets. The number of sheets "in" each folder appears to be 6-20. The number is quite variable. 1968147-1967561 = 586 packets if every consecutive number is used. (If you investigate the folder numbers you will see that is not the case.) There are 1112 images. I can play with math, count the packet folders, or just use successive approximations to get to the folder I want, #1967946.

7. Yada yada yada, finally I find image 841 is the cover for folder 1967946. There are 19 pages. More names than just Andrew Donohue, but I know the folder number is right, so I scan through and I can download and read the entire homestead record, for free. Score!

But remember, we only got here, because we used the catalog, not the map for entry into the records. If I'd used the map, my (yet non-existent) granddaughter will still be browsing the 1.5 Million records in 2026.

Example 6 – More buried records, Washingon, USA – access via map
Task: Explore buried image only collections in Washington State

1. Click on the map on the main FamilySearch search page (https://familysearch.org/search/). Pick USA, and use the dropdown menu to get Washington. Scroll down to "Washington Image Only Historical Records" then down to the division, "Other" to find "Washington, County Records, 1803-2010" You can see there are 6.8 Million records.

2. Pick any county. These records are a mishmash of Census rolls, estate files, homestead records, probate cases, declaration of intention and more. In the section of "Washington Image Only Historical Records" there are sections for "Census and Lists," "Migration and Naturalization," and "Probate and Court." The collection of 6.8 million records in "Other" contains things such as census, naturalization and probate records but is not dispersed into those categories – it is all lumped together in "Other."

3. Editorial comment – OTHER is not an appropriate category. It is like the "To be filed" folder on top of my genealogy filing cabinet. I shouldn't have one, and neither should FamilySearch. Rant over.

So in Example 5, I told you "Don't use the Map," and in Example 6 I say "Use the map." The only right answer is "Do both." You just don't know what is there unless you try to unlock all of the buried treasure in FamilySearch.

Example 7 – Understanding County Indexes
Task: Explore some of the other types of indexes used in county record books.

As FamilySearch continues to add digital images of the county records books, users need to be aware of the many different indexing systems contained in these books. Few of them are a straight-up A to Z alphabetical index. Here are some examples of the various indexes you might run across:
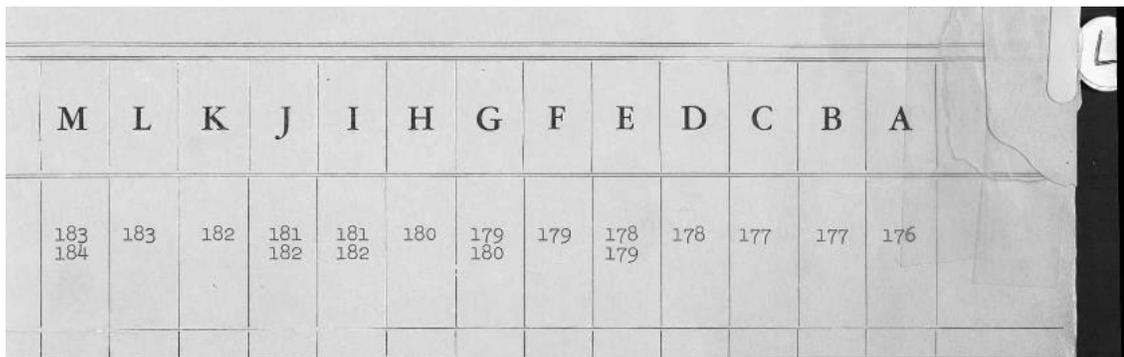
1. **West Virginia Will Index** – The example below is from FamilySearch for West Virginia Will Books, 1756-1971 Hampshire Index to wills, v. 01 1907-1969
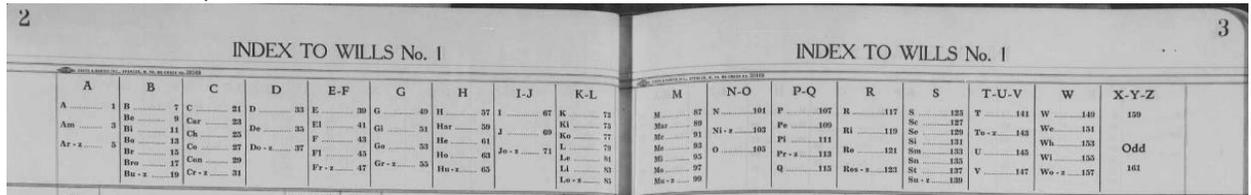
    You can see the index above across the top of every page, they list the letters, so even on the A names pages you can see the S index pages. But let's look at this. There is S on page 125. Sc is 127. Se is 129, etc. But note this is NOT a straight up alphabetical index. The S page is not just from Sa and Sb. It is the S+ the letters that aren't specified. So things like Sa, Sh, Sp, Sl. Whoever put this index together for the county saw that there are a lot of SC names, a lot of SM, ST, etc. so they get their own pages. There aren't so many SA, SP and SH so they've combined them.   This list only sorts the surname, and all the first names are put together.

2. **The Campbell Index** – The example below is from FamilySearch for Montgomery County, Maryland wills.
    https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L979-X9HZ-2?mode=g&wc=SNYK-YWL%3A146535001%2C147028301%3Fcc%3D1803986&cc=1803986

    So for this there are 2 page spreads with all the letters of the alphabet running left to right ZYX..CBA. On the right hand side of the page is a tab with a letter on it. (You may have to scroll up to see the tabs) The tab is for the first letter of the surname and the boxes are the first letter of the first name. So with a surname beginning with A and a first name beginning with A, you'll find those names on Page 1 of the index. Per Image 3, surname beginning with A, first name beginning with J are on pages 6 & 7, probably because there are so many J's – Johns, James, etc. Per Image 5, surnames beginning with B, first names beginning with A are on pages 14 and 15. Per Image 24, illustrated above, if you are looking for David LYNCH you have to go to page 178.

On this particular film, the Key is at the very beginning of the film, Image 1 – Image 54. The actual index of names begins on Image 55 (Page 1). This is where you will find the entry for Archibald ALLEN and Amelia ALLNUT, for example.

3. **Burr's index** - The example below is from FamilySearch for Talbot County, Maryland probate administrations.
   Example at https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9S1-47XT?mode=g&i=9&wc=SNYV-SPJ%3A146535201%2C146840701%3Fcc%3D1803986&cc=1803986
   Look at Page 6. This tells you this is the Burr Index. This one is based on the first 3 letters of the surname. There are First letter tabs that stick out A, B, C. If you were working with an actual book, you could pinch that tab and open it to the start of the Ms or Ss or whatever you wanted. Then on the pages themselves there are cutouts. On a microfilm or a digitized film you can sort of see them.

If you zoom out to see the thumbnails you can see the page-flipping letter tabs. A, B, C, so you can sort of see where the letter starts. If you want M, figure that is in the middle of the book, you're looking for a tab in the middle. Find the M's and you can see how the letters are broken up.

4. **General Index** –The example below is for Itasca County, Minnesota Land Records.
   https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-8933-Q46G?mode=g&i=3&wc=MQB2-K68%3A344407101%2C344424801%3Fcc%3D2030516&cc=2030516


This is pretty much a straight-up alphabetical index based only on the first letter of the surname. There doesn't seem to be any further breakdown, so you'll be looking through all the As in your index book. They are chronological by the date of FILING. I have looked through many of the
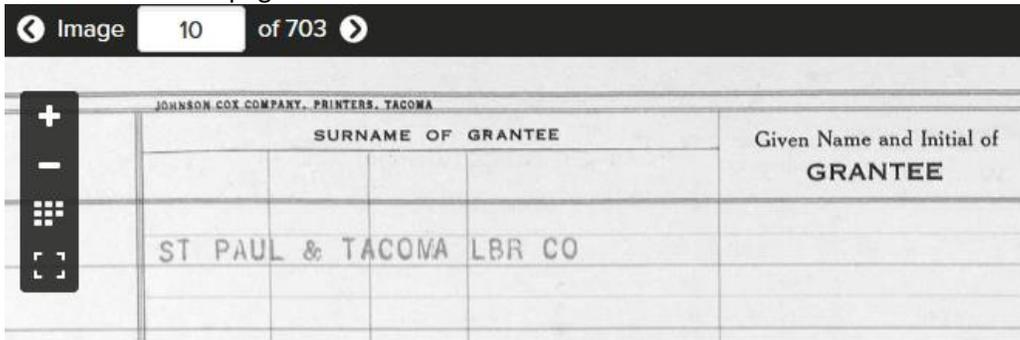
grantor/grantee indexes for various time frames but didn't come up with any refinements on a First-Letter-of-the-Alphabet index. You can zoom out to the thumbnails to see the letter tabs on the right side of the book, and zoom in once you find the letter you want.

5. **Split Column Index** – The example below is from FamilySearch for Pierce County, Washington General Index to Grantees 1922-1925,S-Z
https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9YW8-N2C?mode=g&wc=SL6Z-W38%3A180934201%2C187135001%3Fcc%3D1910364&cc=1910364
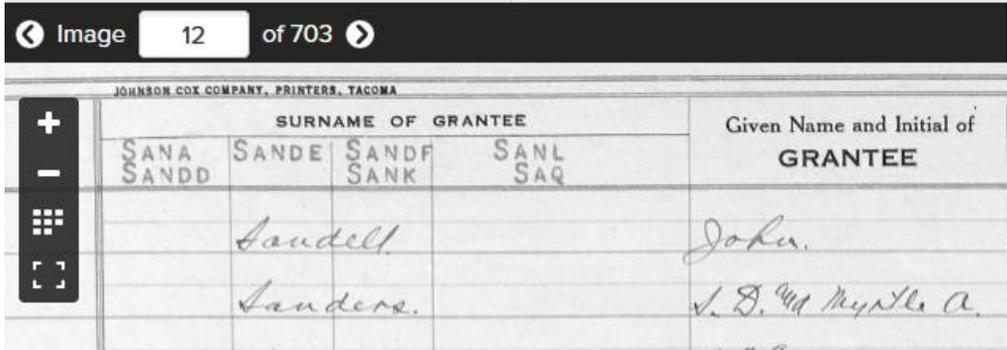
Here are examples of 3 images. On image 4 you can see it has names for names beginning with SAA-SAK, and they are listed in the first column. St, or Saint is in the second column, SAL names in the third column and SAM names in the fourth column
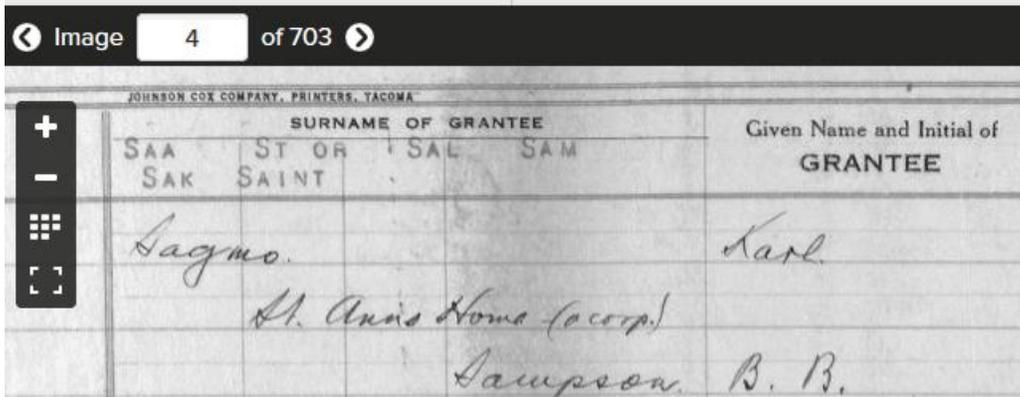
A few images later, you can see that there was one prolific Grantee in the area, the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company, and all the transactions in the year range covered by this volume are recorded on these pages.

Then the index moves on to surnames beginning with SANA-SANDD, then SANDE, etc…

SURNAME OF GRANTEE				Given Name and Initial of GRANTEE
SANA SANDD	SANDE	SANDF SANK	SANL SAQ	
	Sandell			John.
	Sanders.			J. B. M Myrtle A.

This film goes S-Z, it's 703 pages. Figure the S is going to be the biggest, T probably pretty big, X not so much, so you will have to do successive approximations to get to, for instance, T for Thompson. Guess 400. OK, that's Taylor, and the only surname on the page is Taylor. Based on this system, you're probably going to find pages and pages of nothing but Smiths as well.

Below is another example from this same series in Pierce County Washington, for "General index grantee 1959-1988 O-S." These are actually 1859-1888 – (I put in a request to FamilySearch to change the titles, and they are aware of the problem). In this example you can see that they come PrePrinted with the first 2 letters so the person who filled in the book didnt' have to write the entire name.

Interestingly, the title on FamilySearch calls these Grantee indexes, but on the actual printed page in the index it says "Reverse" which is another way to say Grantee. Grantee, Reverse and Indirect all mean the same thing. Grantor, Forward and Direct all mean the same thing.