



Getting the Most Out of Findmypast

Donna M. Moughty
14909 Secret Harbor Place
Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202

Email: moughty@mac.com
Facebook: [DonnaMoughtyGenealogy](https://www.facebook.com/DonnaMoughtyGenealogy)

Website: www.moughty.com
Twitter: [@DMoughty](https://twitter.com/DMoughty)

[Findmypast](#) is part of DC Thompson Family History, a subsidiary of the UK (Scotland) based publishing company involved in magazine, newspaper and comic book publishing. Their Family History division includes recognizable names such as the *British Newspaper Archive*, *Genes Reunited* and *Twile*. All of these sites are run independently.

Overview of Findmypast

The largest collection of records for Findmypast are in the UK and Ireland collections. In 2012, Findmypast moved into the US and Canadian market, becoming a partner in the digitization and indexing of the 1940 census. According to their website, today they have 18 million registered users and 8 billion records. Their model is to actively partner with libraries and archives including FamilySearch, the British Library, the New England Historic Genealogical Society, FamilySearch, the National Archives (UK) and Eneclann among others to identify and digitize records.

Options to Subscribe

Findmypast offers two [subscription packages](#); Essential British and Irish for \$10.75/month (\$129/year) and the Ultimate British & Irish for \$14.92/month (\$179/year). Both of these packages include records from other locations. They also offer Findmypast Library Edition for libraries, schools and archives. Findmypast is available at the Family History Centers of the LDS church and many libraries with genealogical departments.

Search Strategies

When you search on Findmypast (or any other database) think about what information you are seeking. Rather than searching all of the databases, select the specific collection that focuses on your research question. You can select All Collections of records from the drop down *Search* menu, and then filter by location and date. Don't forget to read the section *Learn more about these records* so you understand what is included. You can learn more about creating a research plan [here](#).

Record Collections

Spend some time exploring the various record collections. Although there are core records that appear on many websites, Findmypast has unique collections not appearing elsewhere.

Church Records

Parish records in England go back into the 1500s (these are Church of England records) and Findmypast's Catholic Heritage Archives covers Roman Catholic records in the UK, Ireland and the United States. Currently they have US records for the Archdiocese of New York, Philadelphia,

Baltimore and Chicago, as well as the Dioceses of Cincinnati and Cleveland. Considering how difficult it is to access Roman Catholic records in the US, these records are very valuable. Their records also include Non-Conformist churches, Presbyterian and Quaker records among others which will vary according to locality.

Newspapers

Findmypast in collaboration with the British Library has the world's most comprehensive newspaper collection for the United Kingdom (and its Commonwealth) including Ireland. This is a 10 year project to digitize six million pages dating from 1700 to 1953. The digital images have been indexed through OCR (optical character recognition) allowing you to search for your ancestors. Each week additional pages are added to the collection. They have expanded into the US with 120 million pages covering every state and over 100 titles covering every Province in Canada. The Global historical newspapers cover some papers from China, Denmark, France, Germany, Jamaica and South Africa.

PERSI (Periodical Source Index)

PERSI is an index of articles and records in historical, genealogical and ethnic publications and is maintained by the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana. It currently has over 2.5 million entries. In the past, if you found an article and the publications was not available to you locally, you would write to the Library and request a copy for a small copying fee. When Findmypast took this over they began obtaining permissions to digitize the articles and connect them to the Index. Due to copyright laws, not all articles are online, but many of the major publications and journals going back into the 1800s are available. You'll find PERSI in the Search menu under [Newspapers and Periodicals](#).

1939 Register

In the UK in 1939, with a war looming, the government decided to do a registration of every civilian in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It was to be used to issue identity cards, to organize rationing and more. This is an important document as the 1931 census was destroyed in a fire and the 1941 census was never taken. After the 1921 census (which Findmypast is indexing to be available in early 2022), the next surviving census is 1951 (which under law won't be released until 2051). You can search the [1939 Register](#) by name or address, and obtain information such as the full date of birth, marital status, occupation and neighbors. Make sure you read the "Learn More," and "Search tips." Some individuals are redacted if they would be less than 100 years old and there is no proof of their death.

Family Trees

You can build your tree online, or upload your family tree using a GEDCOM to Findmypast and they will provide hints to records on their site. They have recently added a feature where they will provide a hint to people in other trees who they believe match the individual in your tree. You can review the record (matching information to your tree) and if you believe there is a connection, you can message the person who manages the other tree through their anonymous messaging system. You will not be able to see their tree (nor can they see yours).

DNA

[DNA at Findmypast](#) is done in conjunction with [LivingDNA](#), another UK based company. LivingDNA has a detailed breakdown of Great Britain into 21 sub-regions. It has recently added a "Relatives" section with your matches and includes a list of shared matches. Connection is through an internal messaging system. They do not have a family tree at LivingDNA but state that

one is coming in 2021 which will “display your matches in a way that is simple to understand, and is based on your genetics.”

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*Information and Links are accurate as of March 8, 2021
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