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🔍 **Full-Text Search Cheat Sheet: FamilySearch.org**

🔢 How to Sharpen Your Searches

Goal	How to Do It	Example	Effect
Find an exact word or phrase	Use **quotation marks**	"Henry Jones"	Only results with *Henry Jones* together.
Include a specific word	Use **plus sign (+)**	+Judith	Forces *Judith* to appear in results.
Exclude a specific word	Use **minus sign (-)**	-John	Removes results mentioning *John*.
Find different spellings	Use **question mark (?)** for 1 letter	Jens?n	Finds *Jensen* and *Jenson*.
Find word variations	Use **asterisk (*)** after the root	Car*	Finds *car*, *cars*, *carriage*, *carpenter*, etc.

🛠️ Bonus Tips

- **Use Filters**: After searching, use the filters on the **upper left** to narrow by:
  - Collection (e.g., Wills, Freedmen's Bureau)
  - Date range
  - Location
- **Combine Techniques**: Mix quotation marks, plus signs, and filters for maximum precision.
- **Review the Document Itself**: AI transcription can misread handwriting. Always verify!

📚 Example Advanced Search

Goal: Find *Henry Jones* but exclude references to *John*:

```
"Henry Jones" -John
```

Goal: Find someone whose name could be spelled *Jensen* or *Jenson*:

```
Jens?n
```

Goal: Find documents mentioning *carriage*, *carpenter*, or *cars*:

```
Car*
```

🔍 How to Search for Two Surnames Together

If you want to find documents where **both surnames appear**, you can:

- **Use the plus sign (+) before each name**

Example:

```
+Taylor +Burns
```

✅ This search will **only return documents where both "Taylor" and "Burns" are mentioned**, even if they are not side-by-side.

- **Use quotation marks if they must be together in a phrase**

Example:

```
"Taylor Burns"
```

✅ This search will **only return documents where "Taylor Burns" appear exactly in that order, side-by-side**.

Tip: Usually, using `+Name +Name` is better for finding both names anywhere in the document, especially in wills, deeds, and contracts where names may appear separately.

📖 Why Use Full-Text Search?

Full-Text Search unlocks mentions buried deep inside unindexed documents like:

- Wills
- Probate inventories
- Freedmen's Bureau records
- Deeds and land claims

Perfect for finding enslaved ancestors, lost family members, or hidden community connections.

🔗 Quick Links

- [FamilySearch Labs: Full-Text Search](#)