## What Is The "Watch Feature" In FamilySearch?

Wallace Carroll, a genealogist colleague and Assistant Director of Nauvoo Family History Center in Nauvoo, Illinois, has brought to my attention an important feature in guarding, expanding and controlling your FamilyTree in FamilySearch through its "Watch Feature. It is needed because Family Tree is a powerful Wiki that is a shared tree and does not belong anyone person.  We are literally all working on the same tree which is totally different from other websites such as Ancestry, MyHeritage, Findmypast, etc. in which it is solely controlled by a single individual but mistakes can sometimes occur. But in Family Tree because its primary purpose is to focus on temple ordinances, that is important and necessary to be a shared tree because it offers an open edit in which anybody can change something which can yield some more accurate benefits.  These benefits can be summarized: 1) You can learn about and make changes for errors and/or learn of new vital information and new sources and 2) you can easily learn who is working on your lines for further collaboration. This collaboration factor can be a powerful ingredient for expanding your genealogical research findings. And with the sources of documentation added by others, ones FamilyTree on FamilySearch can be a dynamic platform through the collective efforts of others in which temple ordinances are achieved without errors so families can be intact in the hereafter for the eternities!

**Basic "Watch Features"**

There are at least two ways to utilize the "Watch Feature" in Family Tree to discover changes to the records of people in FamilySearch Family Tree.  The first and simplest is to turn on the "Watch Feature" for each person in Family Tree that you want to follow.  At The Family History Guide website, I searched for "Watch Feature." The first match was to Project 1: **Family Tree**, Goal 6: **Changing Information**.  Choice F **Use the FamilySearch Watch List to be notified when others make changes to data for an ancestor** explains the feature.  After step 7 is an excellent BYU video **Using the Watch Feature in Family Tree** by Kathryn Grant which provides a visual presentation using multimedia. Kathryn addresses six essential questions of the "Watch Feature" in a straight-forward manner.

| What is the Watch Feature? | I set a watch and now what happens? |
|---|---|
| Why do we need it? | Using the Watch List |
| How do I set or remove a watch? | Setting watch notification preferences |

**Another "Watch Feature" Opportunity**

There's also a second way requires more effort at first, but can be more thorough and complete.  There are three Windows genealogical software programs, Ancestral Quest, Legacy Family Tree and Roots Magic that can synchronize their local records with corresponding records in Family Tree. This can take a while, but once done, a list can quickly be created of each Family Tree record that has changed since the list was last created.  Of course, the first time the list will include every record, but once each record has been reviewed, the list will not be very long if it has not been too long since the list was last run. Then each change can be reviewed one by one.

**Closing Comments**

Be thankful that Family Tree in FamilySearch is a Wiki for the ultimate accuracy of its genealogical findings and for the opportunity to learn in a timely manner, whenever changes take place in your Family Tree so you are always up-to-date whenever changes occur through the "Watch Feature."

In conclusion, the need for maintaining a master family tree outside of Family Tree is an important consideration.  Please peruse the November 11th Facebook group posting entitled: Use A Genealogy Software Program To Manage Your Personal Family History Data for information about the best three software applications that can interface seamlessly with your Family Tree in FamilySearch.