

Welcome to this first issue, from **RootsBasic™** www.rootsbasic.com



If you have a specific question about how and where to find sources for your family tree, or wonder about genealogy classes online (run by certified genealogists), drop me an email and I'll include my answers in the next issue of TreeTips. - Celia

Note: All web links in the newsletter go to free sites

TreeTip #1: About SURNAMES

There are several sources of information on Surnames on the web, both common and unusual surnames. Here are several sources to start you in your searches:

➤ <http://www.nationaltrustnames.org.uk/>

For those of you searching for ancestors in the United Kingdom/Great Britain, type in the specific surname and watch for information about where families with that surname lived, by numbers on census returns of 1881 and 1998. This may help you narrow down your search to several specific areas. If the areas don't quite make sense to you (they often show the major town rather than list the county), pull up the following map of Great Britain, as a guide to help you see which county is where: www.abcounties.co.uk/counties/map.htm This site is maintained by the Association of British Counties. Remember to search in nearby counties, as the boundaries changed over time. And, use variants of your surname – remember that your ancestors weren't at all interested in how their names were spelled, or couldn't write their names!! Or the Census taker may have heard it wrongly, or written it oddly, etc. Finally: *Use the **HELP** link in the top right corner of the page, which may answer any questions.*

➤ <http://www.one-name.org/>

This is the site of the Guild of One-Name Studies, which provides website links and information for specific surnames registered with them. Currently there are over 7500 individual surnames websites or contact persons listed. If you do not find your surname(s) listed, do a simple Google search with <yoursurname, family website> to see if there are any good links to follow. For example, one of my ancestors has the surname of "Terwilliger" – this name originated with specific early Dutch settlers in the United States. Although the surname is not on the Guild list, typing in "Terwilliger family website" showed several excellent sources for me to find historical information on my ancestors as well as contact persons who were able to help me fill in a few gaps!

➤ two similar surname search sites here:

<http://genforum.genealogy.com/surnames/>

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/> The latter site could be a bit confusing for first-timers on the site, but Rootsweb has many many excellent links. The first link under "Search Engines and Databases" is the Surname list search. Remember that if you have any confusion or difficulties – *use the **HELP** link!*

TreeTip #2: The WorldGen Web Project

- <http://www.worldgenweb.org/>

A free site helping individuals search surnames/ancestors in different countries of the world. You will want to begin your search by exploring the Regional and Country Websites that make up the WorldGenWeb Project. Each website contains important resource and reference information that will help you trace your family history as well as maintaining a system for submitting surname queries. Many also have country or country-specific email lists that are FREE and open to anyone interested in the region. Check out this site for your specific country, and post a message or list the surname you are searching. And of course, don't forget to - *use the HELP link!* Sometimes the Help link is somewhat disguised and called *Frequently Asked Questions or FAQ*.

- <http://usgenweb.org/>

The USGen Web Project is particularly helpful for those of you searching in the United States. Some of the states' sites are very detailed and thorough, others are only partially filled in. However you may contact the volunteer coordinator of any state, and request further information – just remember that they are volunteers, so do make your request as clear/detailed/specific as you can.

TreeTip #3: About History

- <http://vlib.iue.it/history/index.html>

Developing your family tree is much more interesting as you search out information on the history and experiences of the area or country. This is the link of the World Wide Web Virtual Library History Central Catalogue, maintained by the European University Institute, Florence Italy. Articles, websites, interesting links abound. Unfortunately some of the links may not be working – a common problem on the web; however, simply type in the information you are looking for as a “search” (google, yahoo, etc.), and you may well find the correct website. This site is grouped in four major sections: History by Continents, History by Eras and Epochs, History by Topics, History by Methods and Materials. Fascinating.

- <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html>

Here is my favourite site for Canadian information: history, photos, newsletters, and a myriad other items may be found on this site. Click on the left-hand link, “On Our Website”, and browse through topics – by alphabet, by topic, by media, by product type. There is much to find and immerse yourself in on a rainy day in the fall!! An amazing collection. On the Home page, you will also find a link to the Canadian Genealogy Centre which has a great deal of helpful information for beginners on searching records. Check it out. **Tip:** *Most countries have similar archives – I searched by typing “Library and Archives Canada” to find this site.*

Happy searching!

- Celia

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