

More on Why Surnames Change

By Allin Kingsbury

In an earlier article, I discussed patronymics and how surnames derived from patronymic names eventually will lead to an ancestor whose last name will be different than that of his children. (See PAFinder volume 15 page 5, 13, 21, and 29 Jan. through Apr.) This article addresses other causes for last names or surnames to differ between children and parents. When a family historian encounters the proverbial brick wall in his or her research, it may be explained by a change in surname.

Translation of Names

When an ancestor immigrates to a place where the language is different from his or her native tongue, there is a temptation to translate the name into the new language so it will have the same meaning.

One of my ancestors was surnamed Cherry. It could easily be an English name. However, he lived in Pennsylvania in the 18th century. The family intermarried with individuals with German names like Grove (Groff) and Erb and English-sounding names like Bennett and Hopkins. I found the will of the earliest Cherry ancestor in Pennsylvania, and instead of being signed Jacob Cherry, the name on all his other records, he signed his name as Jacob

Most of the people were illiterate and did not care or even realize that there were differences in the spelling of their name.

Kirsch. Of course "kirsch" is the German word for "cherry." Many other names were swapped for the English equivalent. For French immigrants, Mr. Blanche became Mr. White; Mr. Noir became Mr. Black, and Mr. Roy became Mr. King.

Integration Creates New Surnames

Names sometimes changed to help individuals fit into a new society. In most cases this was done as an individual arrived at the port of entry

Another problem that necessitated a name change was a name that could not be pronounced when read in the language of the new country. Many European languages used additional or differing characters in their alphabets. For the characters with diacritical marks above a letter, the marks usually would be dropped so the name could be written in the English alphabet. The result was that the name would be pronounced differently, which often would offend the family members who were used to the pronunciation in the old country. In many cases the family would accept the new pronunciation, but in the extreme cases, the

families would change the name.

Name changes were most prevalent with families coming from Eastern Europe where the Cyrillic alphabet was used. Many Cyrillic letters are unrecognizable to Westerners. Although there are accepted ways to convert names to the English alphabet, the names will either look similar and be pronounced differently or have a similar pronunciation but look so different as to be unrecognizable.

Patronymic endings on names from Slavic countries often marked individuals as being Russian or Polish. To avoid discrimination, prevalent in the 19th century, and help find jobs, families would create a surname that sounded American (or native to their adopted country). A business associate related the origin of his family name. His parents fled Poland in the 20th century. The family name was Lalconawics in Poland. They had no intention of going back to Poland, so they changed the name to Lake, which sounded American to them. It had a semblance of the former family name, but not enough to help a genealogist follow the

family to the old country. The only help for the genealogist in such cases is a document linking the family to the old name.

I asked another friend about the origin of his surname. He told me that his ancestor came from Scotland, working his passage as crew-member of a ship bound for America. Upon arrival, he was asked his surname, and he gave the name of the highest mountain in Scotland. He never told his children why he fled Scotland, and the name he picked offers no clues to his former identity in Scotland. Whether he escaped an orphanage or poor farm, escaped as a criminal, or sought relief from an abusive stepfather, the family can only imagine the reason their ancestor fled to America and never looked back.

Spelling Variations

Spelling was not an important consideration to the priests and clerks who recorded names in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Most of the people were illiterate and did not care or even realize that there were differences in the spelling of their name. In France, the variant spellings of Audet, Audette, Odet, or Odette would be pronounced the same in the

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French language. The family of one of my ancestors in England had the surname Frad. Earlier records from the parish where the family lived had the family name recorded as Fradd, Frod, Frodd, Fraud and several other spellings. It would be difficult for most individuals to create a list of possible spellings that included all the variations. As time went on and schools began to bring literacy, agreement on the spelling of names did not always follow.

Adulterations of Names

An American reading a French name would pronounce the name much differently than a French-speaking individual. For example, the French surname name Taillon would be pronounced “tyo.” An English-speaking individual might write the name as Tayo. Salois might be written as Salaway and Rochefort actually became Rushfort when the bearer of the name went to the Carolinas. Almost every language from the European continent has similar problems where adulterations are likely to occur.

Dit Names

A “dit” name (pronounced “dee”) is an alias given to a family name. We hear of an individual using an alias in our time to disguise identity or preserve privacy. The dit name, however, is an alias used by every member of a family. The term “dit” comes from the French and means “also known as.” The practice of using “dit” names was common in French-speaking areas such as France, Southern Louisiana and Quebec, and also in areas

where there are clans or septs such as in Scotland.

A example of a “dit” name is Jean Jarret dit Langlois. Jean is the given or Christian name of the individual. Jarret is a patronym referring to an ancestor by that name. Langlois, the “dit” name, is the name of a place, presumably where the family had lived or originated. A female member of the family would be called Marie Jarret dite Langlois. The term “dite” (pronounced “deet”) is the feminine form of the word used in all female names.

The problem with this “dit” name is the we may find Jean Jarret dit Langlois recorded in various records also as Jean Jarret, Jean Langlois or even Jean Langlois dit Jarret. After a few generations it could be forgotten which name is the alias and some family members could use Jarret and others use Langlois as a surname.

In areas where a family name was so prevalent the dit name served to distinguish a particular branch of a family, distinguishing them from other families using the same surname. The second name could be from a number of origins such as:

- Surname used in the military
- Place of origin
- An estate owned or inhabited by an ancestor
- The full name of the ancestor (i.e. Gaston Guay, Gastonguay, or Castonguay)
- The first name of an ancestor (George, Robert, etc.)
- The original name (in local language) during the process of standardizing names to French

The trail to the original name could become even more obscure for an individual surnamed Welcome. His French-Canadian ancestor was surnamed Fontaine. One of the “dit” names in Quebec was Fontaine dit Bienvenue. If you check your French-English dictionary, bienvenue in French is equivalent to Welcome in English.

Conclusions

As you can see, name changes can make the discovery of the origin of a family extremely difficult. Knowledge of the reasons that a name may have been changed or created may help. In some instances where the connection to a former identity has been deliberately obscured, the task of uncovering the truth may be impossible. In other cases, a clever discovery of a spelling change or conversion to an English form of a name may connect a family with their ancestors. There are many books and articles on the history and origins of names which may help shed light on your “brick wall.”

Persistence and attention to details is important to your success. If an ancestor lived among an enclave of immigrants from the same country or if he arrived in America at a time when people were fleeing a war or religious persecution in Europe, the knowledge of these clues may be significant to your research. Be alert for possible name changes. Name changes are usually not documented. You probably will not find a name change unless you suspect that there is one.

Good Luck!

News For Genealogists: Family History Workshop for the Deaf

The Family and Church History Mission and the Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held a one week family history workshop for the deaf in Salt Lake City beginning June 21. Classes were available daily at 9 to 10:20 a.m. and 10:35 a.m. to 12 p.m. with a choice of three to five topics for each of the periods. Classes were taught by skilled genealogists from the deaf community. Deaf and sign language interpreter volunteers were available afternoons in the library.

Wayne Metcalfe, director of acquisitions for the Family and Church History Department, opened the conference with an address about the worldwide digital data acquisition of family history information. Dr. Tom Jones, of Gallaudet University and a joint editor of the National Genealogical Society Quarterly, followed with a lecture on “Solving (Genealogical) Problems with Original Sources.”

Ask Dr. PAF — “I Give No Answers Before Their Time!”

By Dr. Cornelius D. PAF

Adding Possibly Related Individuals

QI have found some information about a person who might be a brother of my great grandfather. I am gathering more data about him but I haven't been able to connect him to my family. I would like to keep him in the data file rather than on separate pieces of paper. How should I do that so that I can include him in the family when I finally find the connection?

AIt is possible to add him to your PAF file with the ADD command from the “Menu” bar. The brother will be in the file but won't be connected to anyone. He will be shown in the Individual List so you can find him using Search. If you find more of his family, you can link them to him in the usual way.

When you do find the connection and want to link him as a brother to your great-grandfather you can do that. You just add him as an existing individual and a child to your great-grandfather's parents.

Another approach is to add him to the family where you believe he might belong, but give him the parent link of “Challenged.” You do this by highlighting the name of the maybe relative in the “Family View” screen and right click on the name. Choose “Edit Parents Link” (left click) and change “Relationship to Parents” to “Challenged,” then click on “Save.” The word “Challenged” will be shown after the child's birth date in the children's area in the “Family View” screen.

Custom Reports

QI am making custom reports of the descendants of my ancestor who came to the US for all of my cousins and their children -- but-- why do I have to select every person whenever I want to make another report? There must be a way to save the report that I haven't discovered as of yet.

AThe Custom Report consists of two separate parts: the list of names to be used in the report and a “Report Layout” template with the desired fields to be printed. This allows the same report layout to be used with any set of data. When you have selected the names that you want in the finished report, you can save that list and when you have completed creating your layout fields you can save the report Layout.

When the name selection has been completed, you will see the “Find Individual” screen again with the number of selected records. Click on “Save” in the “Filtered List” box. Another dialog box will appear. Unfortunately the box says “Save Filter” and “Filter Name.” It really will save the list if you give it a title with no more than 22 characters.

If you want to save a filter, (helpful if it is a long one), you do this after you have setup the filter that you want, but before you click on “OK” to have the filter do the search. Click on “Save.” This time the “Save Filter” box will ask for “Field List Name.” (The PAF program is mixed up, not you.) It also can't be too long: no

more than 22 characters.

When you create the “Custom Layout” template, you can save it with a title that again has no more than 22 characters.

To print the same report at a later time: after you click on “Print,” and “Custom,” click on “Open” under Report Layout and double click the name of the layout that you want to use. The “Reports and Charts” screen now has the name of your report in the title box.

To find the names for the list, click on “Select.” In the “Filtered List” box click on “Retrieve” (only useable button). The new dialog box will be named “Open Filter.” Your “Filtered List” name will be in the box. Remember that it really is the list containing your selected names, not the name of the filter you used to select the names. Double click on the name you want to use.

You are back to the “Find Individual” screen with the name of your Filtered List added to the title bar. Verify that the number selected in bottom of the “Filtered List” box is what you expected. Click on “OK.”

You have returned to the “Prints and Charts” screen and the number selected should be the same as in the previous screen. Click on “Preview.” If everything is OK, click on “Print.”

If you want to add new names to the Filtered List, this can be done after you have retrieved the list. This won't be a permanent change until you save it again. To keep the same name for the list, click on “Overwrite” rather than “Save.” If you want to change the layout, this can be done when you are in the “Custom” screen. Click on “Save As” if you want to keep the original layout to use for other filtered lists.

Read each screen carefully as you are creating new lists, but don't be led astray with the names of saved filters and filtered lists.

Verify Name Spelling

QI really miss the feature that will make me verify new place names when I enter them. In previous versions that feature has helped me several times when I was entering an unfamiliar place name. Can I find it PAF 5.2?

AYes, the feature is still there. From “Tools/Preferences,” click on the “General” tab if it isn't already appearing. The third item in the left column is “Verify New Names.” If there isn't a check mark in the box, click on the box, or press “Alt-V.” Now you will be asked to verify that the spelling of a new place name is correct.

Genealogy Quote:

One of the pleasures of reading old letters is the knowledge that they need no answers.

George Gordon Byron 1788-1824

English Poet



Software of Interest: Free Google E-mail

Google has a new e-mail service called *Gmail*. Many e-mail services are free such as HotMail, Juno, MyWay.com, and Yahoo. The Google service has a few features not found in products offered by its competitors. The most significant feature is the one gigabyte of free storage that comes with the service. Google recommends that you put all messages into their archive. For most individuals, it will take many years to fill up one gigabyte of storage space. Another nice feature is the powerful Google search engine which can quickly find a message in the archive.

The service has some innovative features which include:

- All messages are stored on the Google server. This is an advantage because you can access all messages while travelling and even when using a borrowed computer. With most other services, old messages are stored on your hard disk, provided you have the room to keep them.

- All messages are stored in "conversation order." An item in the inbox may be a single e-mail or it may be a complete conversation of e-mails consisting of the original message and all replies to the message. When a message is received, it is combined with any previous conversation and the complete conversation is placed in the inbox.

- The address auto-complete feature lets you start typing the address and if the address is known to the program, the program will complete the address automatically.

- To screen incoming messages and discard junk e-mail, the user can create custom filters to block unwanted messages. The filter design process is both flexible and powerful. A carefully designed set of filters can block most unwanted messages. Blocked messages are not eliminated, but instead of going to the inbox, they go to the "Miata newsgroup" section which can be checked periodically to see if any wanted messages were accidentally blocked.

One feature, relevant ads and pages, is something that you probably will not like. However, it is the price you pay for this free service. Advertising related to key words in the messages is displayed in pop-up ads. For example, if a message happens to men-

tion a Ford truck, you may see an advertisement for Toyota or General Motors truck. The word "genealogy" may trigger ads for genealogy products. If a message mentions kids trying pot, you may see an ad for potting soil. The trigger for the ads does not understand much about word usage. There are some e-mail services which are not free that are free from annoying advertising. A few services like AOL charge for their services and subject subscribers to advertising.

Google does provide some privacy for those who use the service. Google does not collect data about your e-mail to sell to third parties and advertisers will not be told to whom their ads were displayed.

The number of new G-mail accounts has been limited so that Google can control the quality of service and avoid being overwhelmed by a surge in new subscribers. This is done by only accepting new subscribers invited by an existing Gmail user during the test period. After a new subscriber is given a Gmail account, the subscriber is allowed to invite two additional individuals to subscribe. Those unlucky enough to not know a G-mail user will have to wait for better times.

Gmail is in beta test and the system is occasionally down. Once Google has the bugs fixed, the system should be available to anyone. For more details and beta test status, go to: <http://gmail.google.com/gmail/help/about.html>

Quotable Definition:

Epitath: A belated advertisement for a line that has been permanently discontinued.

Irvin Shrewsbury Cobb 1876-1944
American Journalist

Recently Published: The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records

Anyone who has seen the Barbour Collection wishes that there were similar records for other states. Lucius Barnes Barbour led a project to compile all the birth, marriage and death records for the entire state of Connecticut when he was the Connecticut Examiner of Public Records from 1911 to 1934. The records cover the period from the earliest colonial times to about 1850. For many of the other states, there are no vital records for this same time period. The effort took 23 years beginning in 1911. More than 14,000 pages of records were typed on old-fashioned typewriters. These records were then cut into individual records and put in alphabetical order and retyped. The collection was microfilmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and has been available for many years.

Lorraine Cook White, an editor for Genealogical Publishing

Company has published town-by-town transcriptions of Barbour's collection of vital records in a series of books. Each book contains the birth, marriage and death records for one or more towns. The name entries are in alphabetical order for each town. Records usually give the individual's name, date of event, names of parents, names of children, names of both spouses, and occasionally include age, occupation, and place of residence.

The Barbour Collection consists of 55 volumes covering all the 137 towns in Connecticut. Individual volumes can be purchased. Prices vary with the size of the volume and range from \$23.50 to \$45.00 per volume. The volumes were printed as they were released and a few of the volumes released earlier are out of print. For more information or to order online, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/34k2q>.

Stranger Than Fiction: Everyone Needs a Surname

Everybody seems to take for granted that a person has a surname. It is inconceivable that anyone could not have one. In Mongolia, the people have done without surnames for more than sixty years. The people seemed to get by on a first name basis from the time Mongolia was conquered by the Bolsheviks and a puppet ruler was installed in a palace across the street from the Russian embassy. The people of Mongolia were stripped of all surnames. All the ancient records of genealogy were confiscated by the government.

After 60 years of Stalinist style government, the younger generations have no knowledge of the surnames used by their ancestors and very little knowledge of their family history. Most individuals that could remember family surnames have died.

The government of Mongolia has recently decided that every-

one of the Mongolian citizens should join the twenty-first century by using their surname. Mongolians were instructed to learn their surnames from records and from interviews with elderly family members. Those who failed to register would not receive a national identity card which entitles the person to vote and travel.

The deadline for the registration of surnames has past. More than two and a half million individuals now have official surnames. Nineteen percent of these people claim to be members of the Genghis Khan clan, or the Borjigid. The name means "wolfmaster", and comes from the blue-gray wolf from which all clan members claim descent. There are about 1,300 Mongolian surnames, but there was no requirement that one prove lineage to claim a surname. One does not have to be a Mongolian to understand why being of the same family as Genghis Khan would be so popular in Mongolia.

Spider Webs:

Popular Given Names, Language Translation, Genealogy Society Directory, Essex County Massachusetts Wills, The National Archivist

Popular Given Names

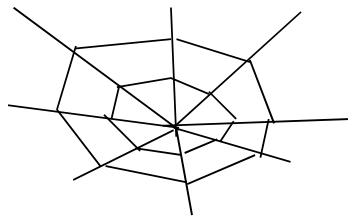
The U.S. Social Security Administration has published online tables of given names ranked by popularity. The tables are created by decade, by state and by year (beginning in 1990). Data for the tables comes from 5% sampling of social security card applications. The earliest data is for people born at the end of the nineteenth century and continues into the twenty-first century. To visit the site, go to: www.SSA.gov/OACT/babynames

Language Translation

There are a number of free Internet sites which offer free computer language translation. They work better for old documents than for letters which may use slang or idioms which do not translate well. A new Web site offers translation of Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, two Chinese languages or Russian into English and from English into any of these languages. The Chinese translations will require a "language pack" to display the Chinese characters. To use the service, you type a phrase, sentence or longer text or copy and paste it into a text field. The translation for short sentences and phrases is almost instantaneous. To translate your text, go to: www.freetranslation.com/

Genealogy Society Directory

Local genealogy societies can be helpful with information about local history, local records collections and local genealogists for hire who can look up records. Many national societies are organized to



help individuals with family history research dealing with ethnic groups such as Quakers, Moravians, French Canadian, and Germans from Russia. Also, if you are new to an area, you may want to find a local society that you can join so that you can get to know other genealogists and participate in meetings and seminars..

The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) is a non-profit organization comprised of hundreds of genealogical and historical societies, family associations, and libraries. Today FGS members include more than 550 societies which have a combined membership of over 500,000 members. FGS maintains a directory of genealogical organizations known as FGS Society Hall Online which can help you locate the society that you want. The FGS Society Hall site has a search engine that can find FGS member genealogical societies by society name, keyword, city, state, and/or ZIP code. The directory includes information about the organization and contact information. Visit this Web site at: www.familyhistory.com/societyhall

Essex County, Massachusetts, Wills

Settlement of Essex County, Massachusetts began in 1630 when Governor Win-

throp arrived with a large group of English colonists. Many wills for this county are now online. The wills were transcribed and published in ASCII text, with the spelling, punctuation, and grammar of the original document preserved. The Web site had only about 200 wills from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the site started. To visit the site, go to: www.rootsweb.com/~maessex/wills

The National Archivist

The National Archivist provides online access to a unique and extensive collection of online databases of interest to genealogists doing research for families in the United Kingdom. Some of the databases consist of digital images of original registers, entry books, indexes, and publications. All records are reproduced under license from The National Archives and other organizations. Some of the records are free of charge while others require a fee to view. Fees start at 20 pence per document (about 32 cents in US funds).

Records on the Web site include:

- Army List 1798
- Births, Marriages and Deaths at Sea 1854 - 1890
- Harts Army List 1840 and 1888
- Index to Death Duty Registers 1796 - 1903
- Index to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes 1858 - 1903
- Indian Army & Civil Service List July 1873

Spiderwebs (continued from page 61)

- Kelly's Handbook (To the Titled, Landed & Official Classes) 1901
- Peninsula Medal Roll 1793-1814
- Registers of Names of Passport Applications 1851-1862 and 1874-1903
- The Bengal Civil Service Graduation List 1869
- The Clergy List 1896
- The Dental Surgeons Directory 1925
- The East India Company's Commercial

Marine Service Pensions List 1793 to July 1833

- The Indian Office List 1933
- Waterloo Roll Call 1815

Visitors to the site may search the databases free of charge. This will confirm that there is a document for the person with the appropriate date and place. To view the original documents, a prepaid account must be set up which has credits that can be used to view documents. The minimum amount required to set up an account by credit card

is £7.00. A complete list of fees is found at: www.nationalarchivist.com/faq.cfm#cost

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Let Your Computer Keep You Organized

By Charlotte Kennedy

Have you ever uncovered a new document that conflicts with the data you have and spent hours or even days looking for that piece of paper with the data that you originally put into your database? You now have two conflicting source documents and need the original documents to resolve the problem. Many years ago, I spent a whole weekend looking and looking through all my papers which were filed by surname, trying to locate the papers needed.. I immediately realized that owning a copy of a census is not good enough if I have to waste my time to find this little piece of paper.

The frustration from this experience led me to create a spreadsheet database listing my documents. At the time, the only place in my genealogy program to refer to sources was in "Notes." My computer had no hard drive and my data was stored on 5.25 inch floppies. I kept adding source information to this database as well as making improvements to the format. Many of the column headings used today have been added over the years as I discovered the need for more specific information. The result was that I could quickly find the document that I needed. This is an ever maturing system, which has been modified to meet changing needs.

Organizing Documents

A person with many research documents and nothing documented in their genealogy program has a huge task ahead to organize the documents and list them in a database. This task is extremely important for several reasons:

1. Without the help of a database, finding a document among a large collection of documents becomes extremely difficult and time consuming.
2. Should one die, the task of organizing and cataloging may appear overwhelming and the documents may be thrown out by relatives.
3. The disorganized state of the data may discourage others in the family from continuing the work after a death.

Again I cannot express how important it is to have complete document/sources entered into the database for future generation and for current use.

The time saved by setting up my database made it possible for me to spend additional time to scan the documents and store the images on CD-ROM.

Excel Database

My database begins with the Document/Source List on an excel worksheet. As I started my data entry, I assign a Document/Source number in the first column and I mark that number on the document. All documents have a number and the number is there in the first column to avoid any problem with duplicate numbers or double entries. Next, I identify the family in column 2 by entering the corresponding name of one of the major families in my pedigree. In column 3, I enter a Soundex code to identify the specific family within the major family branch of my pedigree chart.

Columns 4 through 6 are state, year and date of the document, if applicable. I

prefer (YYYY/MM/DD) which sorts well in the Excel or Access programs. Columns 7 through 15 describe the source, and include (7) Source Title:, (8) Category, (Vital Record, Census, Surname Book, Periodical), (9) Type: (Book, Microfilm, Microfiche, Web site, e-Mail), (10) Original or Copy of Original: (O or C), (11) Extract or Transcription of Original (E or T), (12) Author(s): (Surname, Given Name), (13) Publisher, (14) Volume and/or Page or Pages, (15) Date Written or Published: Some of these columns could be combined, but are separated for flexibility to sort by specific fields.

Columns 16 through 21 describe the repository and include the same information listed on another spreadsheet in the database called the Repository List. This spreadsheet has all repositories listed. The two spreadsheet pages are linked by the abbreviation in column 16 so there is no need to enter the repository data twice. These columns include:

16. Repository Abbreviation (Examples: RLD-FHL, SLC-FHL, Fiske-LIB, SEG-LIB, CAK-LIB)
17. Repository Name
18. Repository Street Address
19. Repository City
20. Repository State
21. Repository Phone

The next 12 columns provide additional information needed to find the original source document, copy, or relate it to an individual. They are filled in when applicable. They include:

22. Call Number (Library Code, Microfilm

and Microfiche Number)

23. County
24. City
25. English Parish
26. Surname Given Name on Document (Surname, Given Name)
27. RIN Number: (Record Identification Number)
28. Document Book Number (Place filed for Original Document/Source)
29. Year Document/Source Recorded or Document Number Assigned
30. Document Scanned (Yes)
31. Document Data Entry in Genealogy Program (Yes)
32. Document Extracted or Transcribed (Census, Wills, Deeds)
33. Copy Document Filed (Specific Surname Book, and/or Census Files)

I also have added columns to indicate that individuals have proof of lineage to prove eligibility for membership in various lineage societies. These include DAR, Mayflower, 17th Century Colonial Names, and so forth.

The Research Log

The second spreadsheet in the database is my Research Log where I record each document found on research trips. These trips would include trips to my computer to read e-mail and look at Internet sites. Its purpose is to list documents searched to prevent looking at the same documents at a later time. The fact that a document was searched and information about a family was not found is very important. This data is entered as research is done.

The file begins with five columns related to the research trip and status:

1. Research Status (Needed, Data Entry, Empty if complete)
2. Surname & Given Name Needing Research
3. Search Date
4. Searched By
5. Items Found , or Nothing Found

The remaining columns in the Research Log are identical to columns 1 through 25 in the Documents/Source Excel Worksheet. Information entered in the Research

Log can be then copied into the Document/Source File as Document/Source number is assigned after the document is found. Until a document is found, these entries comprise a "To do" list which can be printed as a report for research trips.

My database is kept as an Excel Workbook containing 4 worksheets in the workbook. They are the Document Source List, the Research Log, the Repository List, and a list of Source Tags used in PAF documentation (not discussed in this article). I have split the database into four separate worksheets for the major branches of my family. This works well for me because the families come from different parts of the country.

Using Access for Reports and Searches

Access is a database program that is sold by Microsoft and part of Microsoft Office. Many individuals that have mastered word processor and spreadsheet programs have yet to use a database program. However, Access is a powerful program and can generate just about any kind of custom report that you may want from your database. You can link Excel spreadsheets to the Access program which gives you the ease of data entry and the flexibility of spread sheet data manipulation plus the power of report creation found in Access.

I like Access for reports because it will not corrupt my Excel database. The same reports could be generated by sorting and manipulating an Excel file, but a mistake, such as not selecting all columns before sorting, is fatal and requires retrieval of the most recent backup of the data. A person can to do reports with Excel, but the data must be backed up or manipulation done on a copy of the file with a different file name. Word processor tables could be used for reports, but the number of columns is limited and spreadsheet users, you will be unhappy with the limitations.

When working with sorted data, remember that numbers are sorted in text format which means that "11" will follow "1" and "2" will be after "11." When entering numbers or dates, you can avoid any sorting problems by using leading zeros. My document numbers start with "0001" and can continue to "9,999." Dates also have leading zeros. March 1, 2004 is written as "20040301" in my system.

Some of the reports that I could generate using Access are:

- A list of documents about a specific family (major or minor)
- Census records for a single year and/or a single state
- Source documents from a specific periodical
- Land records for a single surname

There are no restrictions to the number and type of reports that can be generated. Access reports can be converted to Excel files which can be loaded into my Palm Pilot or laptop computer and taken on genealogy research trips.

Access also can be used as a powerful search engine. In Excel you can search for key words or phrases with the "Find" command, but you get one instance at a time. Access can search using multiple criteria and return a list of matching items formatted as a table.

Filing my data

Originals or copies of my Document/Sources are filed in acid free plastic sleeves which are identified with the document number. They are filed in strict numeric order, broken up into books. Books are numbered along with the first and last document number contained in the book. [for example: Book 1: 00,001 to 00,050]

Scanned images of the documents can be stored on CD. The images should use document numbers (using leading zeroes) as the file numbers. This way, the files will be displayed in document number order and easily found. The CDs are more compact than paper and can be taken on trips to be viewed with a laptop computer.

Conclusion

There is no excuse not to have a system to list and find your documents. You will save time as your inventory of documents grows. There are many ways to accomplish the task. Excel and Access have worked very well for me. Microsoft products are expensive and one could do the same tasks with Open Office which is free.

Most important to me is the flexibility I have found with my system. If I need to use some new pieces of data to find documents, I can add new columns to my database, and once that data is entered, I can use it to generate new reports.

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SV-CGG meets monthly, except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building, 875 Quince Avenue, Santa Clara, CA. We offer classes and sponsor guest speakers at meetings to help family historians with computer technology and research techniques. Membership dues are US\$15 per year (US\$20 for Canada and US\$25 for other international). Members are offered classes at meetings, mentor help, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* (a monthly newsletter published each month there is a meeting).

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Personal Ancestral File 2.3.1 Macintosh (diskette or CD version)	US\$6
Personal Ancestral File 3.01M MS-DOS (diskette)	US\$15
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