

25 Obscure Databases You Need To Know About!



http://www.internet

According to Diane L. Richard, sometimes the road less travelled can lead to genealogical success — even on the Internet!

Obscure Databases You Need To Know About!

WITH SO MANY RESEARCHERS starting their research in the records of the US or Canada and then often shifting to the UK and then possibly France or Germany or Poland or Russia and having access to records available through Ancestry.com or FamilySearch, it is easy to get a bit of tunnel vision and not look beyond these larger countries or into the records of countries from whom fewer emigrated.

And, if you don't look further, you are missing out on some great national archives and genealogy society databases and other online repositories that provide access to records for locales where there may only be a small percentage of people doing research and yet, if you are one of those people, access to such information could be critical to your research.

Remember that many archives only have interfaces in the national language of their country (e.g., Portuguese for Brazil, Spanish for Chile, Ukrainian for the Ukraine, etc.) and that some archives webpages that were previously available, appear to not be "available" and may become available once again — The National Library of Tunisia, www.bibliotheque.nat.tn, and the National Archives of Georgia, <http://archives.gov.ge>, to name two.

In the future, maybe an English-language interface will become available or the website will once again be active. And, in some cases, your archives of interest might not yet have digital material online (e.g., National Archives of Pakistan, www.nap.gov.pk/default.asp, the National Archives of Korea, www.archives.go.kr/english/index.jsp, or the National Archives of Cuba, www.arnac.cu). Do bookmark these websites and revisit them in the future. Just about every National Archive has an initiative in place to digitize historic documents and make them available via the internet. Even if they don't, you can still learn about the holdings of that archive.

If these National Archives and libraries are not doing digitization directly, do remember that FamilySearch, <https://beta.family>



Home page for the National Archives of Egypt.

search.org, is digitizing documents on a world-wide basis and has such records as Samoan baptisms and burials, South African church registers, vital records for India and the Philippines, records for just about all the Central and South American countries already available online.

Hopefully, after exploring this selection of worldwide databases, you'll be ready and willing to flex your fingers and use your mouse and keyboard to start searching for little known and maybe even obscure archives and databases that would pertain to your own ancestors!

Now, in no particular order, here are some of these "little known and maybe even obscure archives and databases" which I have come across. This list is by no means exhaustive in terms of what is available around the world, nor for any identified country — these are just examples of what you might find. At the end of the article, I do talk a bit about where you might learn more about national archives and libraries and whether the one that interests you has a web presence.

St. Kitts-Nevis National Archives
www.historicbasseterre.com/Index.asp
Interface: English

The website displays images showing the changes in Basseterre over the years. There are many

stored pictures from the St. Kitts collection, in addition to clippings from newspapers, and other items, including maps. The site is a work in progress, with information being uploaded on a consistent basis.

Note: As we go to press, the website is up and running, though many of the images and documents are not visible. Hopefully, this issue will have been resolved as you are reading this article.

National Archives of Egypt
www.nationalarchives.gov.eg/nae/ar/index.htm

Interface: English and Arabic
The site contains about one million records; documents in the Arabic language and their images. You can search or make use of the Subject Index — all of this is currently only available in Arabic! This means that if you don't have the Arabic language installed on your computer — you won't be able to browse or search the databases.

Czech Archives
www.actapublica.eu

Interfaces: Czech and German, though some words in English for the registration interface.

The Moravian Provincial Archives in Brno (Czech Republic) is in the process of placing online digitized records from their collections.

Currently, there are items from

Obscure Databases You Need To Know About!



Above: Home page for the National Library of Jamaica.

Right: An example of an "Award" found on Greece's General State Archives website.

Brno, Plzni, Praz and St. Pölten. You will first need to register — the items with a * are required, and are first name, last name, e-mail, username, password and repeat of password.

The Trebon Regional Archive
http://digi.ceskearchivy.cz/index_main.php?doctree=1n&lang=en
 Interfaces: Czech, German and English

This site has a digital archive which has a very nice English-language interface. You identify what you would like to look at, e.g., Churchless/Civil Registers. Then choose a locale, e.g., Pisek, then choose which item (in this case, the options are Book 1 or Book 2) and then you are taken to digitized images of the contents. There is also a great site-wide search engine (choose the tab at the top) where you can search across all the included archives or select one of particular interest.

National Library of Jamaica
www.nlj.gov.jm/
 Interfaces: English, Spanish and French
 Jamaicans can now access historical materials, including maps, photographs and plans, which are stored on the website of the National Library of Jamaica (NLJ) via its digital portal,



<http://web1.dloc.com/ufdc/?h=nlj>. The digital collections now available include: Picture Dis, Jamaica Unshackled, dLOC (The Digital Library of the Caribbean) and the Slave Trade.

General State Archives, Greece
www.gak.gr/frontoffice/portal.asp?cpage=NODE&cnode=1&clang=1
 Interfaces: English and Greek
 The digital archive collections area currently has three online archives: Award, Public Welfare Property Funds and an Engraving Collection. You can search in the digital archives using a basic or advanced search. I didn't see a way that you can browse the collections, although, in the left-hand navigation area, you can click "view" for the archive of interest and learn more about its holdings. From these descriptions, I identified some terms that I could then

search on. When you find an entry, it will tell you what collection it is from and also provide a description (though the latter is in Greek).

Inje University Genealogy Library & Family History Library [Korea]
<http://genealogy.inje.ac.kr> or
<http://jokbo.inje.ac.kr>
 Interfaces: English (though essentially limited to introductory material) and Korean
 This website has 500+ digital Korean genealogies. In association with the Utah-based organization Family Search, the library has digitized about 2,400 documents and created the Digital Genealogy Library, which allows users to search for their genealogical records.

NETHERLANDS ARCHIVES
GenLias
www.genlias.nl/en/page0.jsp
 Interface: English and Dutch
 The information in GenLias is taken directly from the Civil Register, the most important Dutch source for genealogical research covering the period since 1811. It is a joint project of the regional history center and archives in the Netherlands and overseas. Eventually it will be an index to all marriages between 1811-1922 along with a lot of births and deaths. You can search on one person, two people, limit yourself to a region, type of document or period. The types of records included are parish and civil vital records

Zeeuwen Gezocht [The Zeeland archives]
www.zeeuwengezocht.nl/default_E.htm
 Has a database of 6.9 million records which includes marriage, birth, and death records from public and private records in archives in the province of Zeeland from the 16th century to 1811.
 There is a list of digital resources for the Netherlands and Belgium maintained at
<http://genealogy.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://geneaknowhow.net/digi/resources.html>.

Obscure Databases You Need To Know About!

Archives of Haiti Genealogy Society

www.agh.qc.ca/indexen.html

Interfaces: English and French
 Currently, the online database contains 117,869 records holding 603,671 names for years 1776 to 1976 for select parishes. You can search on these records by inputting a surname or there is an advanced search (Recherche avancée), all in French, where you can also enter first name, type of event, the person's role (e.g., father, mother, etc.), a year range and several other options. I searched on the surname RICHARD and there were 566 "hits" which were arranged alphabetically and then chronologically.

Israel Genealogical Society (IGSSA)

www.isragen.org.il

Interfaces: English and Hebrew

Some of the databases found on this website are:

- 1915 Census of Tel Aviv, www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/153/6574.asp
- Change of Names in the *Palestine Gazette* (1921-48), www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/153/4971.asp
- British Mandate Census 1922 for Petah Tikva and Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, www.isragen.org.il/siteFiles/1/153/4979.asp.

In 1922, the British undertook the first census of the mandate. At that time, the population stood at 589,177 Muslims, 83,790 Jews, 71,464 Christians and 7,617 persons belonging to other groups. The database currently includes the lists for Petah Tikva and Tel Aviv-Jaffa residents. It is believed that the remainder of the census has been lost.

Montefiore Censuses

www.montefioreendowment.org.uk/census

Censuses of the Jewish inhabitants of the Holy Land, Alexandria, Sidon (Saida) and Beirut, were compiled by Sir Moses Montefiore between the years 1839 and 1876. Years 1839, 1840, 1849 and 1855 have been completed and work

www.internet-genealogy.com



Left: Death notice for Hendrick Petrus Cornelius Zwanepoel, 10 March 1901, as found in the Genealogical Society of South Africa virtual eGSSA archive for the National Archives, shown above.

and an estate cover sheet which also gives the name of his surviving spouse, Johanna Hendrieka Martina Zwanepoel.

Japan Center for Historical Records (National Archives of Japan)

www.jacar.go.jp/english/index.html

Interfaces: English, Japanese, Korean and Chinese

JACAR is a digital database testifying to Japan's historical relations in Asia as well as elsewhere. This site provides access to official documents — dating from the Meiji era through 1945 — of the Japanese Cabinet, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Army and Navy. There is even a beginner's guide about using the website, www.jacar.go.jp/english/search/search1.html

WORLD WIDE REPOSITORIES

When researching for online digital material for those countries with smaller populations, don't forget to check out some of the available online "worldwide" repositories such as:

- World Digital Library www.wdl.org/en/
- Unesco, Memory of the World http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1538&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (look under "Registered Heritage" to see what documents are part of

continues on 1866 and 1875/6.

The Genealogical Society of South Africa

www.eggsa.org/library/main.php

Interfaces: English & Afrikaans
 eGSSA is the virtual branch of the Genealogical Society of South Africa containing books, documents, family Bibles, gravestones and a postcard collection. The documents collection contains content derived mostly from the various South African archives. The archives currently represented are: Cape Town Archives (KAB), Free State Archives (VAB), National Archives (TAB — records of the former Transvaal Province and its predecessors), Pietermaritzburg Archives (NAB), etc. For example, for the National Archives, there is a collection of "Death Notices and Estate Files" which are organized alphabetically by surname. Looking at surnames beginning with Z, we find a death notice for Hendrik Petrus Cornelius Zwanepoel, died 10 March 1901

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Obscure Databases You Need To Know About!

the online digital repository.

Though neither of these has an extensive collection online, they are both still active projects and so I anticipate that more material will be posted over time.

GENERAL RESOURCES

Obviously, this article only touched on some of the national archives, national libraries, genealogy societies and other research repositories that reside around the world. To learn more about which of these have an online presence, check out these helpful websites:

• National Libraries

www.librarysites.info/national-libraries.htm and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_libraries The latter's links don't always take you directly to the webpage of the library selected, as not all libraries yet have a web presence.

• National Archives

www.unesco-ci.org/cgi-bin/portals/archives/page.cgi?d=1 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_archives and www.archiefnet.nl/index.asp?taal=en Though lists for the archives in the Netherlands, it has an excellent worldwide list of archives, organized by continent and country.

• World Repositories

http://repositories.webometrics.info/directory_rep.asp As we know in the US, not all repositories are under the auspices of a national archive, library or genealogy society. There are many other kinds of repositories and archives that might have relevance to your research.

• Library of Congress Archives Portal

www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html Taken down 16 September 2010 to review content, hopefully once again "live" by the time you are reading this article.

• European History Primary Sources

<http://primary-sources.eui.eu/> An English-language index of

scholarly websites that offer online access to digitized primary sources on the history of Europe, which includes many of interest to family historians and genealogists. You can find these sources by country, language, period, subject and type of source or do a direct search (via a Google interface) of all listed digital resources. A nice feature is that for each website there is an overview of what material it has and then direct links are provided to the collection(s).

• Caribbean Resources

www.candoo.com/genresources/index.html

CONCLUSION

Just because your ancestors came from someplace off the beaten track of emigrants, doesn't mean that you won't be able to gain access to digital materials. As you have seen, many types of materials, from around the world, which wouldn't have been available online just a few years ago, are now available for viewing with just a few clicks of your mouse.

Some archives have better English-language interfaces than others and as far as the documents themselves, what's available online is no different than if you physically visited an archive and pored over original documents; these will always be in the original language in which they were created. So explore the "world wide web" when searching for your ancestors, regardless of where they came from. You never know what gem you might discover!

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Diane L. Richard has been doing genealogy research for over 23 years. Her first research was into her father's family from Lammi, Untamala, Ylistaro, Vaasa Province, Finland. She is currently a professional genealogist and can be found online at www.mosaicrpm.com/Genealogy.