

Strategy for Organizing Your Waldensian Claims Results

This suggested Strategy for Organizing the Waldensian Claims Records applies to the **Exile Inheritance Claims Records**, which on this site are in the PDF format.

Because there are only 7 volumes of Claims records (1 for each of the major communities), you only need 1 file into which you copy and paste the acts with the surname you are searching. If you were researching the **Janavel** family, for instance, you might name that computer file **JANAVEL – Claims**.

(In contrast, because there are hundreds of volumes of **Notary Records**, when you search the Notary Records we recommend that you create a **folder for the surname** and then a **separate file for each community** for that surname. Details for the Notary Records are found in that section of this site.)

If you copy and paste only the acts with **CLAIMANTS** who have the same surname you seek, all the acts should be manageable in just one file. Be certain, however, to copy the name (community), page, and date of the Claims file each time you begin searching the Claims volume for another locality.

Copying and pasting every act mentioning someone with your ancestral surname as a “neighbor” (owning land that is adjacent to land of the particular claimant named at the first of the act), then you will have dozens, maybe even hundreds of acts in your file that add nothing at all new to what you know about your ancestor.

Once you have finished searching the PDF files of **all 7 of the Claims volumes** for the surname you seek and have pasted and copied into the surname file on your computer *all* the acts mentioning a **Claimant** with that surname—with all the various spellings of the name—you are ready to organize the details you have found and form the people mentioned into families.

If you have not yet searched the PDF files and made that surname file, do so now.

STEP 1 - On your computer, open the **surname claims file** you created before scanning and pasting the acts with the **claimant** being someone with the surname you seek.

For example, if you were researching the **Janavel** family, you would first open the file, **JANAVEL – Claims**. That will bring up your file of all the acts from the 7 volumes of the Claims series that contain the name Janavel.

The Janavel family is usually referred to as from Rorà because that is where the captain gained his acclaim. But your search of the Exile Claims for Rora will find no Janavel claims at all. It is almost certain that *your direct ancestor will have filed a Claim in no more than 2 or 3 towns*. But it is also crucial that you **search for the surname in all 7 volumes** so you can be sure. Many had claims from their paternal

ancestry but also from their maternal ancestry, and if the maternal side came from another community, your ancestor could have made Claims in both places.

STEP 2 - Skim through each act in your surname Claims file, highlighting **in bold** the *full name of every CLAIMANT* who has the surname you are researching.

In the Claims records, the surname you seek is undoubtedly mentioned as a “neighbor” (that is, owning a property adjacent to the property of the Claimant in the particular act) many, many times in each volume, but not in a way that adds useful information to your search. To simplify your search, we suggest that you *not* highlight all those “neighbor” mentions of the surname.

Your entire focus for now is on the surname, not on your direct ancestor. That comes soon.

STEP 3 - When you finish highlighting every **claimant** with that surname in the entire file for that community, **look through the file for the full name of the specific direct ancestor you are seeking**. Not everyone with the same name is likely to be your ancestor, of course. But for now you are trying to identify everyone with that same name so you can then determine which acts refer to your own specific ancestor and which refer to someone else with the same name.

As you skim through the file, add *italics* to every person with the same full name as your own ancestor; that is, add *italics* to the **bold** you added to that name in Step 2.

You now have everyone with the same full name as your ancestor in **bold** and *italics*, like this: ***Giosuè Gianavello***. This makes the names stand out on your computer screen, making it easier for you to spot them as you begin your analysis.

STEP 4 - When you have finished Step 3, try to *identify which acts refer to your own direct ancestor*. If you are quite certain that a person named in an act is in fact your own ancestor, **add a color to that name in that act**—maybe red, for instance.

For example, if you find a will of a person who seems to be your ancestor, you would want to **put his or her name in the color** you have selected; **if the child who is your known ancestor is named in the will (or whatever other kind of act), put that child’s name in the same color** as well. If you ancestor’s wife is also named—**the mother of the child who is your ancestor—put her name in the color**, too. We suggest that you use the color to show your own direct ancestors only—not their brothers and sisters, cousins, or others.

STEP 5 - When you have worked through the entire file for that surname in that community and have all your new apparent ancestors highlighted in color, you are ready to begin putting the people into tentative families. Work through the file one more time, working from the end backwards to the beginning of the file, **making a sketch pedigree of your new ancestry**.

Put the name of the ancestor you were seeking—the one you found as you finished working through the Parish Registers—at the bottom of a sheet of paper (or a pedigree chart if you have or want to purchase one). Then trace that person's direct ancestry backwards through the file. This gives you a visual glimpse of your new ancestral line. You should add that person's father and mother and also their other children. Then add the father's parents and other children, and then the mother's parents and their other children. Continue in this manner until you reach the beginning of the file.

STEP 6 - When you have sketched the pedigree of your family through all 7 of the Claims volumes, then begin making **sketch family group records** (or enter the details onto a printed family group record if you prefer).

It is recommended that you NOT add these families to your computer program yet; for now, these are considered *tentative* new ancestors!

You should end up with a sketch family group record for each family of your new ancestry.

STEP 7 - As you worked through the records, you may have noticed occasional acts that indicate how long a couple had been married, or perhaps even the year of their marriage; or an act indicated how old a person was. Such details are very helpful in helping you estimate dates for your new ancestral families for whom exact dates are not given in surviving records.

STEP 8 - When your new ancestral families are identified in this way, with dates (exact or estimated), if you have found no acts suggesting that these may NOT be your ancestors, you are ready to add these new ancestors to your genealogy program.

STEP 9 - **Choose another ancestral Waldensian surname**—you should normally gain a new one with each new family you identify unless the wife's maiden surname is not given in any record or unless both husband and wife had the same surname (which did happen fairly frequently)—**and begin your search again through the records for that surname.**