

## How to Search for Your Ancestors in the Notary Record Files

The abstracts of the **Notary Records** on this site use the **PDF** format. That is the simplest and most universal way to make them available. It does not require you to use a particular word processing or database program. All you need is a web browser and the free Adobe Reader application.

At this point in your search, *your focus should be on the surname* you have chosen to search, rather than on the **specific ancestor** you seek.

Before beginning to search these files, you should have completed the following:

- Decided (a) which Waldensian **surname** you are searching, (b) which **community** your ancestor lived in, and therefore **which set** of Notary Records you wish **to search first** (usually, the set where he or she lived).
- Listed as **many ways to spell** the surname as you can find or think of.
- Decided which **consecutive “key letters” in the surname** to use as you search—letters that are always found together in all (or almost all) of the spellings of the surname, but letters that are not found together in very many other Italian words. (You can adjust this “search term” as you go if it is finding too many other words or is missing other spellings of the surname).
- Created a **surname folder** in your regular computer word processing program in which you can “paste” the acts as you find them. For example, if you descend from the Janavel family, you might call the folder **JANAVEL**.

Most Waldensian surnames will result in many acts naming someone with that surname, so we recommend that **within your surname folder you create a surname file for each community**—you will need ultimately to search all communities to be sure you have not missed any important act naming your ancestors. Fortunately, the computer easily does most of this work for you!

For example, after you created the **folder** called **JANAVEL**, you would then create a **file** inside the folder for each community as you search it; for instance, **JANAVEL – Rora**, with another file called **JANAVEL – Luserna**.

As always in genealogy research, you **work from the known toward the unknown**—you work from the most recent records, systematically backwards toward the earliest record.

Therefore, when searching the Notary Records, you should **always begin with the volume with the highest number and work systematically back through the series to the volume with the lowest number**—that is, from the volume for the most recent years (usually about 1709) backwards to the volume starting about 1609.

We will first provide a brief overview of the search capabilities on this site and then help you through the actual search process.

The abstracts of the **Notary Records** on this site are presented in the **Adobe PDF format**. All web browsers have the capability to find a name or portion of a name in a PDF file. There are two ways to search a PDF file: **Basic Search** and **Advanced Search**.

The **Basic Search** is easier to use and so that is what we will demonstrate.

**CAUTION:** It is likely that the surname you seek will not be mentioned in every volume of every locality. Don't let that discourage you. Your goal is to find all the acts that do mention someone with that surname. If a particular volume doesn't contain that surname (or even a whole set of volumes do not mention it), don't give up. You will find the surname in many volumes as you continue searching.

STEP 1 - Know the **surname** you will search and which **community** you wish to begin with.

STEP 2 - To access the Notary Records for that community, go to the Notary Records section and **then click on the name of the community**.

STEP 3 - Click on the **highest-numbered volume** for that community.

STEP 4 - When the first record from that volume appears on your screen, you will notice a small box near the upper-center of the screen. Type in that box **the letters you chose** from the surname you are searching.

Remember that the *Notary Records are in Italian*, so **choose letters from the Italian variations of the surname**. Then press ENTER.

STEP 5 - If the computer finds an act with those letters in it, it will stop and show that part of the act. Be sure that the letters highlighted are really part of the actual surname you are searching. If the computer stops often on other words with those letters together, you might want to try another set of letters. Experiment until you find letters that pick up the surname you seek and not too many others.

STEP 6 - If the surname you seek is shown, then **return to the top of the volume; highlight the volume number and years (if shown)** and press **Ctl+C** (which **Copies** the highlighted words).

STEP 7 - Without exiting from this site, open the new file you created for this surname in this location (for example, **JANAVEL – Luserna**) and press **CTL+V** (which **Pastes** the highlighted volume number and year(s) from the notary record file to your own computer file).

STEP 8 - Then return to the community volume; be sure the key letters are still showing in the box near the top center of the screen and press ENTER again. The computer should

return to the act you found the first time. Now, **highlight the whole act** and again press **Ctrl+C**. *Be sure to include the page number and the date.*

When you have done that, click on the name of your surname file again; it will appear on the screen again and you again press **CTL+V** to “paste” that act—with your ancestral surname in it—into your own surname file.

**CAUTION:** Sometimes, with some word processors, the COPY and PASTE process transfers all the words properly but may not accurately transfer the graphs (genealogy charts) after the text of the act. You may need to compare the graph in the Notary Record volume and adjust what was copied to your own file so that the graph in your file accurately reflects the original.

STEP 9 - Continue this process until you have finished searching the volume. Then, clicking on the **next-highest-numbered volume**, repeat Steps 3 through 9 above for that volume.

Continue this process until you have completed all the volumes for that community.

STEP 10 - When you have copied to your surname file all the acts from that community, analyze the results according to the **Suggested Strategy for Organizing the Results of Your Search**.

STEP 11 - After you have followed the **Suggested Strategy** to organize all the families with that surname in that community, choose another nearby community and follow each of the above steps. You need to be thorough—searching every volume in at least every nearby community—to be sure you find all the acts that help you accurately identify your ancestry.

**NOTE:** It is most important that you check the nearby communities. For example, most of the surnames from Angrogna also appear in acts in the Luserna San Giovanni series as well as in the Luserna series; and many of them also appear in the Torre Pellice series. Many from Torre are named also in those towns as well as in Bobbio Pellice and Villar Pellice, and *vice versa*.

STEP 12 - When you have done all this for each community in the area of your ancestors with this surname, **choose another of your Waldensian surnames**—you should gain one new surname in each generation unless the spouse’s surname is unknown or unless both spouses had the same surname (which does happen because the Waldensians were restricted to such a narrow area for so long).

**NOTE:** If you have extensive computer experience, you may wish to try the **Advanced Search**, available in Windows Explorer, Firefox, and Safari. (Chrome does not yet support this feature.)

To access the **Advanced Search**, click on the down arrow to the right of the **Find** box and choose **Open Full Reader Search**. . The Advanced Search window will open to the left of your document. At the bottom of this window, click on **Use Advanced Search Options**. In the box

labeled **Return Results Containing:** select **Match any of the words** then type each of the names, separated by a space, (or portions of the names) into the box labeled **What word or phrase would you like to search for?** If you are searching for whole names, click on the box labeled **Whole words only**. If your search includes portions of words, leave this box unchecked.

If you have any matches, they will appear in the **Results:** box in the Advanced Search Window. To see the match in your document, click on the match listed in the **Results:** box.

Advanced Search is a very powerful search tool that allows you to find the occurrence of *any number of variations* of your surname. For example, to find all of the various spelling of Cardon, simply enter **Card Cord** into the search box. Of course you could also enter each of the many variant spellings but that would be a lot of unnecessary typing.