

WieWasWie: Indexed Records Online

The Netherlands” “How to” Guide, Beginning Level: Instruction

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GOAL

You will learn how to find records about your ancestors in the Netherlands and find documents associated with those records.

INTRODUCTION

WieWasWie is a collective database from numerous provincial, regional and city archives in the Netherlands and some of its former territories that includes over 100 million persons from many types of records. There is no fee to search the records, although one must have a paid subscription to search for two people at once or to use partial searches or wildcards. The most important record types for the beginning researcher include baptism, birth, marriage, death, and burial records. These records cover the period from the 17th into the 20th centuries. However, not all records in this time period are included. The critical date for Dutch research is 1811, when civil registration was imposed upon the Netherlands by the French. Before that time, church records are the primary source of records, although a few areas had already begun civil registration.

Keep in mind that this is a work in progress, and that information is being added to the database. Most of the marriages from the civil registration time period (post-1811) have been indexed; however, many of the births and deaths have not. Coverage is much sparser prior to 1811. If you do not find your ancestor, it may be that his particular records have not been indexed yet.

WieWasWie is available in Dutch and English. However, the researcher should know some Dutch terms. Use the key words list on the FamilySearch Wiki page, found at the following link: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Netherlands_Language_and_Languages

HOW TO

Before you begin using the website *WieWasWie*, you must understand the following concepts about Dutch names.

Dutch names

Dutch names are characterized by the wide variety of items that might be unfamiliar to people who are not familiar with such names. One of the most common is an additional element called a *tussenvoegsel*, usually translated as ‘prefix’ or ‘insert.’ For example, in the name Dick Van Dyke, the ‘van’ is the *tussenvoegsel*. It is NOT part of the surname! It is a separate element. When searching in Dutch websites, be aware that there will be a separate search box for the *tussenvoegsel*, labeled in English as “Prefix”, in addition to the given and surname search

boxes.

The Dutch sometimes used a patronym, which is a name based on the given name of the person's father. This could be a 'last name,' such as Jan Willems, or it could be used as a 'middle name' such as in Jan Willems Zijlstra. In both cases, Willems comes from his father's name, which would be Willem. This system is particularly common in the northeastern part of the country. Keep in mind, though, that not all people will have a *tussenvoegsel* or patronym.

Dutch names often exhibit a wide variety of spellings, particularly in the 16th to the 19th centuries. For example, the surname Hendricks may have been spelled Hendriks, Hendrickx, Hendrix, Hendricx, Hendrics, or Hendrikx, just to name a few. If you are using the free version, keep in mind that it only allows for **exact** searches, meaning you may miss matches if the surname or given name is spelled differently.

Using the website

To use the website, follow these steps:

1. Go to the following link: <https://www.wiewaswie.nl>.
2. When you have brought up the website, you should see a page with three boxes, blue, red, and orange, respectively. The website will default to Dutch. As some features are only available in Dutch, it would be useful to learn how to use the site in Dutch. For the English version, click on the word "English" in the upper right side of the website.
3. Click on the link in the blue box "Advanced search" located underneath the search box.
4. Type the relevant information into the search boxes and click 'Search' at the bottom of the page. Keep in mind that it will only allow for an exact search. This means that if you enter in the name "Pieter van Rijn", it will not return results containing any additional information, even if the person's name is Pieter Jan van Rijn. In order to search for two people at a time, to use the "starts with" feature, or to use wildcards, you need a paid subscription.
5. Keep in mind you can also limit your search results by entering in a year span in the "Period" section as well as by province or even town. To limit by province, select "The Netherlands" in the "Country" dropdown menu, and then select the province in the "Region" menu. To search by town, type in the name of the town under "Place". Lastly, you can determine the type of record to be searched. Click on the dropdown menu next to "Search in". These options will be listed in Dutch, but the translations are available directly to the right of the dropdown menu under the heading "About the record types".

Remember that without a subscription, you must enter in the information exactly correct. Any misspellings will influence the results.

Expanded search options

With a subscription, you may expand your search options. The following options are available:

- Wild card search: Enter the wild card “*” for multiple letters. For example, a search for Hendri* will return Hendriks, Hendrickx, and any other spellings that begin with Hendri. A search for J*n will return Jan, Johan, Johann, and others. Enter the wild card “?” for a single letter. For example, a search for Jans?en will return both Janssen and Janszen.
- Partial name searches: Click on the option “starts with” next to any search box to return results with a particular combination. For example, a partial name search for Hagen will return results including Hagenbach, Hagenbeuk, etc. A partial search for the first name “Gertr” will return results including Gertruda and Gertrud. This is especially important for people with multiple given names like Gertruda Maria Hubertina, as an exact search will **not** return that result.
- Add a person: Click on “Add a person”. You can use wild card or partial name searches in the add a person search.

Viewing results

Once you have entered in your information and clicked on “Search”, the results list will appear. Above the blue search box, you will find the total number of results found for your search criteria. Under the results box, you will find a list of each item under the heading “Documents”. The first 10 results will be shown. Remember that this is an abbreviated list – not all indexed information will appear on this screen. The following tips will help you in understanding the results:

- To show the results in chronological order, click on the heading “Date”. You can also show the results alphabetically in any other field by clicking on the heading of that field.
- If you have too many results, you can refine them. Look in the left column under the heading “Refine result”. You can refine by year span by entering in the years under “Period” and clicking “Refine”; by province by selecting the province under “Collection region”, by source type, or by role (i.e. father, groom, etc.).
- The date listed is written in European format, not in American format. This means that the date 06-12-1823 is 6 December 1823, not 12 June 1823.
- To view a result, click on the surname of the entry. It will be listed in bold. Here you will see all indexed fields for that entry.
- If a scanned image is attached to the indexed record, you will see an icon to the right of the surname field. To view the scanned image, click on the surname of the entry. You will see a thumbnail image of the scan to the right of the indexed information. To view the image, click on “View image”. In most cases, you will be directed to another website where the image is housed.

Registering or ordering a subscription

To register and to purchase a subscription, click on the blue button ‘subscriptions’ in the upper right-hand corner of any page. You must first register before purchasing a subscription. To register, click on “Sign up” under the section marked “Subscribe”. Enter in your email address

and create a password. Here you can choose to create a free account, or register for a monthly (costs about 6 dollars a month) or yearly (costs about 22 dollars a year) subscription. When done, click on “Sign up”.

Further information

To view a seven-minute video on how to use *WieWasWie*, click on the following link: <https://familysearch.org/learningcenter/lesson/using-the-dutch-website-who/885>. To view the handout, click on the link “Course Handout” underneath the video box.

PRACTICE

Let’s search for Douwe Jans de Vries who married on 16 March 1826 in Harlingen. Douwe is a male.

1. Go to www.wiewaswie.nl. For English, click on the word “English” found at the top right of the website.
2. In the blue box, click on the link “Advanced search.”
3. Enter the information into the search box. For the name Douwe Jans de Vries, enter “Vries” in the Surname box, “de” in the Prefix box, “Douwe” in the Firstname(s) box, and “Jans) in the Patronymic box. In the Place box, type in the town of “Harlingen”.
4. You now see a list of returns that match your search criteria. In many cases, there will be a list of people to choose from. We narrowed our search so that we received only one return. Click on “Vries, de” under the column “Surname”.
5. You should now see extracted information from Douwe’s marriage record. You will also notice that a document is available for viewing. If you click on the thumbnail of the document, you will be taken to an external website, *AlleFriezen*, to view the document.

ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the guide. [Click here](#) to try out the Activity.