

Be Cautious when using FamilySearch.org's Search Genealogy

By Joe Petrie

I intended this article to be informative about one feature of the new FamilySearch.org software. Specifically it is about the Search Genealogy software. The Search Genealogy software accesses two files: Pedigree Resource file and Ancestral file. The information in both files is from submissions by FamilySearch users.

FamilySearch.org has the following information and caveats about the files and especially about the accuracy of the information. (Please note that rather than cover both files, I have used only the information for the Pedigree Resource file.)

"Pedigree Resource File (PRF) is a growing collection of user submitted genealogies. It shows individuals' names; family relationships; and dates and places of birth, marriage, and death. No merges, corrections, or additions are made to genealogies submitted to Pedigree Resource File. The most current version of the Pedigree Resource File is available for free on the Internet as part of [FamilySearch Genealogies](#).

"Use Pedigree Resource File to discover what genealogical research has already been done. Use it to guide you towards original records. As with all compiled genealogies, Pedigree Resource File has significant limitations (see below) and more accurate information should be sought from the original records.

"Submitters are responsible for the accuracy of the information. FamilySearch does not check the accuracy of any contributed genealogy.

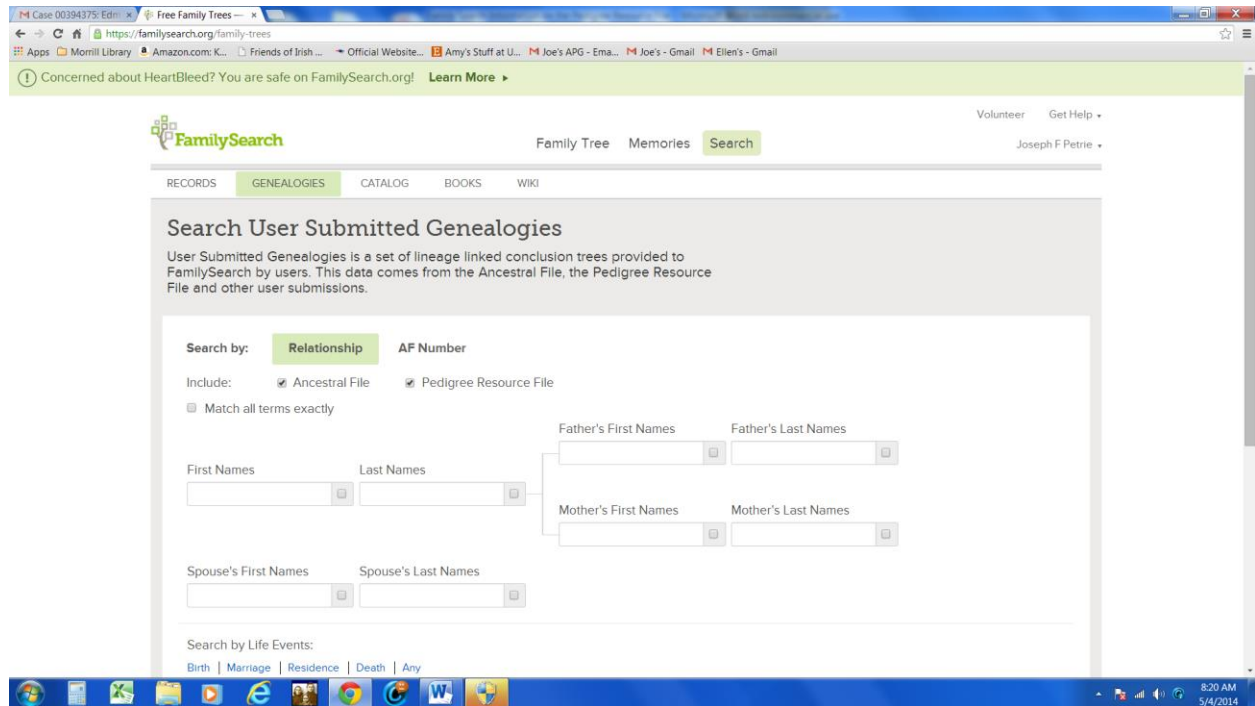
"Information in Pedigree Resource File is second-hand. Verify the information before accepting it.

"Submitter information, previously available, is now hidden for privacy reasons.

"Pedigree Resource File contains many errors and unlike the new FamilySearch Tree, corrections are not accepted. Submitters are advised to make another submission that includes corrections. However, both old and new submissions are left in Pedigree Resource File."

The following sample screens show users how to view the file's records. I used information on two of my ancestors: my Petrie grandfather and his father. My grandfather was Edmund Ernest "Ned" Petrie (born 1872 in Glace Bay and died in 1948 in Glace Bay, NS) the eldest son of Richard P. Petrie and his second wife, Agnes O'Brien, both of Bridgeport, NS. Richard was the grandson of the original Cape Breton Petrie family (George and Isobel). Richard's father Edmund was the eldest of George and Isobel's 5 children and the only one not born in Cape Breton. His wife was Margaret Casey, daughter of Richard Peter Casey of Lingan.

The follow screen results when the user selects Search and Genealogies:



I entered the information for Richard P Petrie and submitted it. The following Screen displayed the results. Please note that the first hyperlinked record is from the Ancestral file and the second hyperlinked record is from the Pedigree Resource file. The major differences between the two records are: Pedigree Resource file's record displays coded information for the source while the Ancestral file record displays both the coded and the actual name of the submitter of the record. The submitter was Karyn Lee Zielasco Cooper, another descendant of Edmund and Margaret, specifically their daughter Anne who married Maurice Sheehan. Karyn submitted the information in 2011. The source of the information was my database where the records were actually provided by Francis Xavier MacGillivray of Glace Bay and Ottawa. Unfortunately, Karyn's information was dated. I had provided it to Karyn in the 1990s and it was never updated. Please note that when I gave Karyn the records, I asked her not to publish them - because they had not been validated.

Case 00394375: Edm... Pedigree Resource F...
 https://familysearch.org/search/tree/results?count=20&query=%2Bgivenname%3ARichard+%2Bsurname%3APetrie+%2Bfather_givenname%3AEdmund+%2Bfather_surname%3APetrie+&collection_id=(2%203)
 Apps | Momill Library | Amazon.com: K... | Friends of Irish... | Official Website... | Amy's Stuff at U... | Joe's APG - Ema... | Joe's - Gmail | Ellen's - Gmail

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Refine your search

First Names
Richard

Last Names
Petrie

Search with a life event:
 Birth
 Marriage
 Residence
 Death
 Any

Search with a relationship:
 Spouse
 Father's First Names
Edmund
 Father's Last Names
Petrie
 Mother's First Names
 Mother's Last Names

Search Results from User Submitted Genealogies
 1-6 of 6 results for > Name: **Richard Petrie**, Father Name: **Edmund Petrie**, in Ancestral File and Pedigree Resource File

Number of results to show: 20 | 50 | 75

Name	Events	Relationships
Richard P. PETRIE Ancestral File	birth: 1815 Cape Brenton, Nova Scotia	father: Edmund PETRIE mother: Margaret CASEY
Richard P. Petrie Pedigree Resource File		father: Edmund Petrie mother: Margaret Casey spouse: Agnes O'Brien
Geraldine R /Petrie/ Pedigree Resource File	birth: 14 May 1920 death: 21 February 1985 marriage: 1942;20 NOV 1946 Riverton, NY	father: Brainerd E /Petrie/ mother: Doris M /Hart/ spouse: Harry E /May/
Lilly R. /Pettry/ Pedigree Resource File	birth: 20 August 1881	father: Larkin E. /Pettry/ mother: Sarah A. /Westfall/
William R /Petree/ Pedigree Resource File	birth: about 1868	father: Francis E /Petree/ mother: Julia A.F. /Rierson/ spouse: Mattie /White/
Lilly R. /Pettry/ Pedigree Resource File	birth: 20 August 1881	father: Larkin E. /Pettry/ mother: Sarah /Westfall/

8:31 AM 5/4/2014

Tree Details — Fam...
 https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.2.1/MC14-P21
 Apps | Momill Library | Amazon.com: K... | Friends of Irish... | Official Website... | Amy's Stuff at U... | Joe's APG - Ema... | Joe's - Gmail | Ellen's - Gmail

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Richard P. PETRIE [View Individual Summary](#)

1815 - (Ancestral File Number: 1S3W-LC3)

Richard P. PETRIE
 birth: 1815
 death: Cape Brenton, Nova Scotia

Edmund PETRIE
 birth: 1785
 death: 12 August 1858
 Bridgeport, Cape Brenton, Nova Scotia

Margaret CASEY
 birth: 1786
 death: Cape Brenton, Nova Scotia

George PETRIE
 birth: 1750
 death:

Isabelle PETRIE
 birth: 1750
 death:

Additional Information for Richard P. PETRIE

Citing This Record
 "Ancestral File," database, *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.2.1/MC14-P21> : accessed 2014-05-04), entry for Richard P. PETRIE.

Submitted By (1)
 kicooper2649684

Ancestral File is a collection of genealogical information taken from pedigree charts and family group records submitted to the Family History Department since 1978. The information has not been verified against any official records. Since the information in Ancestral File is contributed, it is the responsibility of those who use the file to verify its accuracy. [Learn more >>](#)

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I repeated the Search process for my Petrie grandfather, Edmund E. Petrie – because I suspected Karyn’s the dates for him were incorrect. My Dad had once told me that one of the saddest periods of time for him was 1948 – 1949 because his father, mother and Uncle Michael Petrie of Boston had passed away. Years after my father’s death, I recorded their deaths as 1949. Years later I updated my grandparents’ records using their Death Certificate images on the NovaScotiaGenealogy.org web site. Specifically, I changed Edmund’s birth and death values in my database to the dates on the death certificate image.

My grandfather’s record on the Pedigree Resource file shows the same coded information and date as his fathers’ record. Please see the following:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the FamilySearch website. The main content area displays the profile for Edmund Ernest /Petrie/, born October 1872 and died 1949 in Glace Bay, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada. Below the profile, there is a section for 'Additional Information for Edmund Ernest /Petrie/' which includes a citation for the Pedigree Resource File and submission details (MMS3-LX5, date 5/5/2011). To the right of the main profile, a family tree diagram shows Edmund's parents: Richard P. /Petrie/ (born 1830, died 23 September 1893) and Agnes /O'Brien/ (born 1855, died in Bridgeport, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada). Richard's parents are listed as Michael /O'Brien/ (born 1821, died January 1863) and Elizabeth /Park/ (born 16 October 1828, died 30 March 1911).

I’ll finish with a reminder that FamilySearch is aware that there are errors. Their advice is:

“Use Pedigree Resource File to discover what genealogical research has already been done. Use it to guide you towards original records. As with all compiled genealogies, Pedigree Resource File has significant limitations ... and more accurate information should be sought from the original records.”

There are a few additional notes that I'll cover here:

1. If you'd like to comment on this or any of my over 20 Record/Research articles, please send your comment(s) to me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com including a reference to the specific article(s).
2. Also, your suggestions for future articles are welcome. I am currently working on articles on: a review of the free tutorial software that is available on-line from staff at the New England Genealogy and Historical Society (NEHGS); a review of the free tutorials offered by FamilySearch; and an introduction to genealogy article based on a seminar that I gave for the Friends of Irish Research at the Brockton Massachusetts Council for the Aging's Senior Citizen Center.

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