



Going Dutch

Finding Families in Online Records of the Netherlands

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The majority of post-1811 records for the Netherlands have now been indexed; and these indexes are available in multiple places online. Not all records for the Netherlands are indexed. Not all indexes are the same; you should consider looking at each website.

A note on Dutch names: There are four possible elements: given name, **patronymic**, **tussenvoegsel**, and surname. A **patronymic** is a sort of middle name taken from the father's given name (i.e. children of Jan would have a patronym of Janse). A **tussenvoegsel** is an element that is not part of the surname, but is a descriptive element attached to the surname. Example: Jan **van** Dijk. The **tussenvoegsel** is **van**, mean of (literally, Jan of the dike). In the telephone book, Jan van Dijk would be listed under D rather than V. The **van** is attached to the surname and is lower case. Other **tussenvoegsels** include **de**, **het**, **van de**, and others.

Further reading: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Netherlands_Names_Personal

RECORD TYPES

There are two main record types in the Netherlands:

Church Records (depending on location, late 1500s to 1811)

Church records form the earliest nearly complete listing of vital events (baptism, marriage, and some burial) that occurred in a church. The building block of jurisdictions in the Netherlands is by church parish. These records are handwritten and may be in Dutch or Latin. Early records can be difficult to read. Records were kept after 1811, but most digitally available records and indexes only go to 1811, as their use pales in comparison to civil registration records.

Church records are organized by religious denomination. It is not uncommon for smaller communities to all be of one faith. Larger towns and cities will more likely have multiple faiths. Sometimes handwritten indexes were created, particularly for larger towns and cities.

Further reading: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Netherlands_Church_Records

Civil Registration Records (1811 to present; privacy restrictions apply)

Civil registration was introduced in the Netherlands in 1811. This mandated the registration at the civil government of all births, marriages, and deaths, regardless of religion. Compliance was fairly high. These records are organized by community, then by record type. Many volumes contain an end-of-year index either in the front or the back of the book. Towns were also required to create handwritten 10-year indexes of all births, marriages, and deaths within their municipality (called *tienjarige tafels*). Civil registration records are restricted due to privacy laws for the following years: Births – 100 years; marriages – 75 years; deaths – 50 years.

Further reading: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Netherlands_Civil_Registration

Let's look at the main nation-wide indexes available for the Netherlands:

NATIONWIDE INDEXES (POST 1811)

The three main websites are:

WieWasWie (www.wiewaswie.nl)

WieWasWie was the first website that compiled indexes from various city and provincial archives into one database.

Pros:

- Robust Dutch and English website options
- Multiple people search capability (\$)
- Wildcard search availability
- Ability to search using correct Dutch naming patterns
- Ability to narrow on several fields, including role in the record, location, and time frame
- New feature – LINKS – helps to connect people in the indexes faster (in Dutch only)

Cons:

- Incomplete indexes
- Subscription required for full searching capability (approximately \$20 for a year)
- Some records only in Dutch; requires knowledge of some Dutch vocabulary
- Restrictions on free searches (including exact search)

OpenArchives (www.openarch.nl)

Pros:

- Robust Dutch and English website options
- Multiple people search capability
- Wildcard search availability
- Ability to search using correct Dutch naming patterns
- Ability to narrow on several fields, including role in the record, location, and time frame
- In many cases, original images are attached directly to the index
- Contains millions of non-vital records, such as census, residence, and notarial records

Cons:

- Incomplete indexes
- Some images are incorrectly linked
- Some records only in Dutch; requires knowledge of some Dutch vocabulary

FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org)

Pros:

- Due to a partnership, contains most of the indexes from OpenArch
- Major FamilySearch only collection includes Amsterdam births
- When placed into Family Tree, record suggestions can lead to other indexed records

Cons:

- Incomplete indexes
- Any search requires a (free) FamilySearch Account
- Very few images linked to the index
- Search parameters are less refined than those of WieWasWie or OpenArch

NATIONWIDE INDEXES (PRE-1811)

The best website (though far from complete) for pre-1811 nationwide indexes is **FamilySearch**. The coverage is spotty, and these indexes focus on baptisms and marriages. For other indexed records, try:

- Looking up the town name in the FamilySearch Catalog. Some printed and published books containing indexes exist and are available at the Family History Library. Look at the church records themselves. If the church has indexed their own records, it will be listed as either a *klapper* or an *index*.
- Look at the town, city, and provincial archive website. Each province has its own provincial archives, and these archives have their own indexing projects. Many major cities (such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, etc.) have their own city archives, containing indexed records.
- Do an internet search for the word *klapper* (old Dutch word for index), followed by the name of the town. Make sure the town you are looking for is where the church was. If you have a specific record type (i.e. baptisms or marriages), include those words (in Dutch) in your search. IGI

ORIGINAL IMAGES: CHURCH RECORDS AND CIVIL REGISTRATION

The most complete national-level website for images of church records and civil registration records is **FamilySearch**. This website contains most church records until 1811, and civil registration records usually through approximately 1900 (in some cases, later). Many of these records are not indexed, and most of those that are indexed are not linked to the index.

You should **always** find the original record when you find an index. Indexed records only have specific set information indexed out of the record. In most cases, the original record may include more information than the index. For example:

- Original church baptism records usually list godparents, which are usually close relatives of the child
- Original church marriage records list marital status (single or widowed), as well as usually listing the place of origin for a single person marrying
- Original church burial records may list age as well as the name of the relative paying for the burial
- Original civil birth records may include age and occupation of the father, age of the mother, in some instances birth place of the parents, names of witnesses (possible relatives), and the signature of the father.
- Original civil marriage records could include occupation, age, and/or birthdate and place of the bride and groom; residence of the couple's parents; death dates and places of the couple's parents; information about any children being legitimized by the marriage; information about any previous spouses, including death dates and places, names of witnesses, and signatures of the bride and groom.
- Original civil death records could include occupation, age, birthdate and place of the deceased, names of surviving or previous spouses, names and residences of parents, and name of the informant (which may be a relative).

ACCESSING ORIGINAL IMAGES ON FAMILYSEARCH

There are two ways to access civil registration records on FamilySearch:

FamilySearch Historical Collections

The historical collections have organized each province of the Netherlands into two sections: Church Records and Civil Registration. These are organized in clickable folders by jurisdiction and record type. To access them:

1. Go to FamilySearch. Click on Search.
2. In the map, click on Europe. Scroll down and select Netherlands.
3. On the right side, under the search box, you will see two sections: Indexed Historical Records and Unindexed Historical Records. **Please note:** a record collection will appear in Indexed Historical Records if at least one record has been indexed. This is not an indication the entire collection is indexed. Look through both collections until you see the one for your province and for the record set you are interested in. You may need to click on "Show all collections" to find it. (example: Netherlands, Overijssel Province, Civil Registration, 1811-1960). Click on the collection you are interested in.
4. Look through the alphabetized list of municipalities and select the item of interest. If you are looking for church records, you must first choose the religious denomination. Within each municipality, you will see a list of all available digitized records for that location, organized by record type and time period. Select the entry of interest.
5. You will now see the set of images for the record type and time period. You now should browse through those records until you identify the record of interest. Remember the record sets should be organized chronologically within each record type.

FamilySearch Catalog

Each location that created a record (civil registration municipality or town with a church) is listed in the FamilySearch Catalog. To access these records:

1. Go to FamilySearch. Click on Search. Then in the menu at the top of the page, click on Catalog.
2. Enter the name of your location in the Place Search box. A list of possible matches appears as you type. Select the one that matches the place, including province, of your location.
3. Select the record type from the list of records available.
4. From the catalog entry, scroll down past the information section to find the Film Notes. This section provides detailed information of what is available on each film. To the right of each film, you will see three possible icons. A magnifying glass means at least one record has been indexed on that film. A camera indicates the record is digitally available. To access the digital film, click on the camera. Follow step 5 above to find your record.