



Genealogy
Clan Strachan Society

December
2006

CLAN STRACHAN SOCIETY (WWW.CLANSTRACHAN.ORG)

Using Online Pedigree Databases

by Garry Bryant, Clan Strachan Genealogist (June 2008)

Recently I was going through an old file when a note caught my attention concerning an email response on www.Rootsweb.com.

The email was excellent in that the person listed their sources to back-up their point of view concerning a woman's maiden name.

Taking those sources in hand I researched the statements and I must say I concur with this person's point of view.

This research opened three more family lines to research. Since these three families are the first two generations in America and very early, a great deal has been written about them and posted on the internet.

Not willing to accept the research posted I used the sources (when listed) and quickly did the research. Some of the data was correct, but some was not, and yet some data was out right wrong!

I have previously stated that the online genealogies without sources to back-up the data, are just myth.

Yet some of the pedigrees posted online are done very well.

Nonetheless, most online genealogical sources are a shot-in-the-dark concerning the accuracy of these pedigrees. So why bother from a research perspective?

THE ANSWER: When one hits a brick wall, an online pedigree can give theories to test, and perhaps get one unstuck.

Just don't accept the data found as being gospel.

Added by Jim Strachan (December 2017)

From a Scottish perspective, when doing genealogy research, one must keep in mind that virtually every male in Scotland is named either William, John, David, George, or James.

Among the STRACHAN family, the aforementioned is true. Also, the family has a large number of Alexanders.

When doing research in Scotland, one must be careful not to assume that, for example, a John Strachan in Aberdeen must be your

ancestor. It is good practice to cross reference other family members if possible.

When discussing uncertain family connections, it is good practice to use **conservative general probabilities** (i.e., high, moderate, or low probability) when assuming a family connection.

To this end, a genealogy with a large number of high probabilities may in fact yield a genealogical pedigree with a low probability of being accurate.