



Help! Why can't I find my ancestor's surname?

Carol Baxter

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How often have you sat looking at a historical register or in front of a computer screen expecting to see your ancestor's surname only to discover that it's not there? You check every spelling you can think of without success then give up the search unaware that the entry is there but that you lack enough knowledge about English letters and sounds to find it. *Help! Why can't I find my ancestor's surname?* is the solution to your problem. It describes the distortions that can occur between the time your ancestor thinks about saying his or her surname to the time you search for the surname in an online index. It explains that these distortions are rarely random and displays sound charts and surnames tables showing how and why the distortions occur. It includes lists of spellings for every letter and sound—as many as two dozen for a single vowel sound in some instances. And it provides guidelines you can follow to help find those elusive surnames. This book is a gateway to a new world. Once you have read it, you will think about surnames in a completely different way. No longer will you be flailing in the dark, making stabs at spelling possibilities. When you follow its instructions, you will find that some of those previously abandoned surname searches are now successful. Carol Baxter, the History Detective, is a Fellow of the Society of Australian Genealogists and an adjunct lecturer at the University of New England. She is the internationally-acclaimed, award-winning author of five historical 'true-crime thrillers': *An Irresistible Temptation*, *Breaking the Bank*, *Captain Thunderbolt and his Lady*, *The Peculiar Case of the Electric Constable and Black Widow*. She is also the editor of many publications dealing with Australian colonial records and the author of another two genealogical 'how to' books: *Writing Interesting Family Histories* and *Help! Historical and Genealogical Truth: How do I separate fact from fiction?* More 'how to' books are in the pipeline.

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