



Geneweb Secrets

Handling Names

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Geneweb has many options to deal with variants in people's names like *married* names, *nicknames*, *stage* names or alternate spellings, but one should be aware that it impossible for any software package to handle every possible situation. Rather, you should remember what you are really trying to achieve when coding name information. There are 3 main objectives: Reference, Display and Search.

Reference:

By this I mean that the official name, as it appears on the birth certificate, should be recorded.

Display:

This means choosing the name that is displayed on Geneweb pages as a reference (and link) to the individual in his role as a *parent*, *child* or *sibling*), or as a label in Geneweb's elegant genealogical trees. This should be representative but not too long.

Search:

How to make the individual easy to find. On the one hand, this means anticipating "First_name/Family_name" pairs that people are likely to enter in the search box on the home page:

To navigate in this database, you can do your search:

- by person

first name surname or public name or alias

first name

surname

For example: obvious search entries like "Bill Clinton", "Babe Ruth", "Marilyn Monroe" or "Nicolas Sarkozy" are quite different from those people's actual names.

One should also think about the entries that will be placed in Geneweb's "First Name" and "Last Name" indexes... remembering that many fields - like "aliases" - are not used as index keys.

- by the list of all by

- by place / surname - birth - death - marriage -

Remember, you can always use the **NOTES** to complement the information in the standard fields.

Simple Names

Before we get into the options provided by Geneweb to handle special cases, it is useful to consider the obvious. We think of a person's name as being made up of two parts: some *first names* followed by a *family name* (or *surname*). For example "James Earl Jones" is made up of these two parts:

- **James Earl**: the first names
- **Jones**: the surname

In Geneweb, these two pieces of information would be entered in the "First name" and "Surname" fields of the Modify Person Form (as well as selecting "M" for Sex).

First name	<input type="text" value="James Earl"/>	Occ	<input type="text"/>
Surname	<input type="text" value="Jones"/>	Sex	<input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F <input type="radio"/> ?
Public name	<input type="text"/>		
Photo	<input type="text"/>		

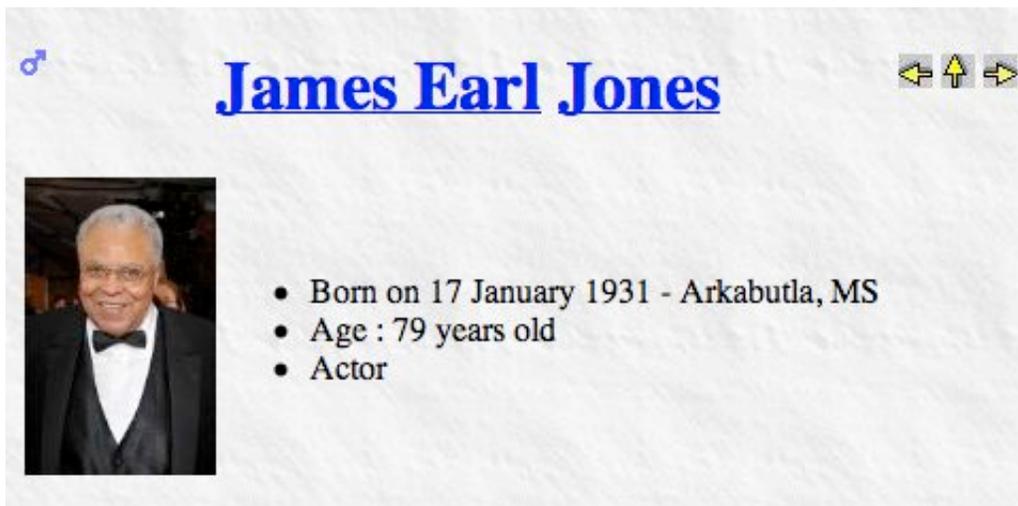
In GEDCOM format, this information corresponds to this line:

```
1 NAME James Earl /Jones/
```

A more complete GEDCOM description would look like this:

```
0 @I1@ INDI
1 NAME James Earl /Jones/
1 SEX M
1 BIRT
2 DATE 17 JAN 1931
2 PLAC Arkabutla, MS
1 OCCU Actor
```

Here is the top of the corresponding Geneweb page (the photo was added via the "send image" link on the Update Form) :



♂

James Earl Jones



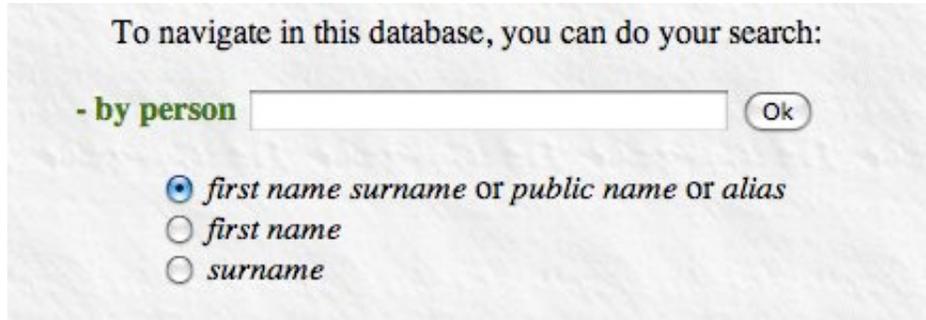
- Born on 17 January 1931 - Arkabutla, MS
- Age : 79 years old
- Actor

The name shown in large letters at the top of the individual's page has particular importance for both **display** and **search**. It is the *principal name* that will appear whenever the individual is referenced on other pages,

either as a *child*, or a *parent* or a *spouse*. It is also the name that should be used in HTML links between user-provided pages and Geneweb pages. Finally, its parts are the **only** elements entered as keys for searching via the Name lists.

Search

To find people, one needs to enter a name in the search box on the *Home* page.

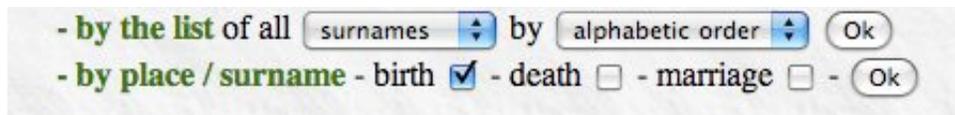


Using the first option, you would enter the full *principal name* "James Earl Jones". Note that spacing, case and accents are disregarded, so that "Jamès EARL jJones" would have worked just as well. When you use the other two options, you are directed to lists of individuals who share the given first name or surname, as the case may be. The lists give additional information (dates or relatives) to help find the desired individual. Note that the index of first names is based on the concatenation of all the first names in the *principal name*. Therefore, neither "James" nor "Earl" alone would work.

On the same topic, notice that the *principal name* name at the top of an individual's page is actually composed of **two** LINKS corresponding to the 2 name parts, in our example: "James Earl" and "Jones". Clicking on the first part leads to an index of "James Earls" and clicking on the other to an index of all "Jones's".

Later, we shall see that when a Public Name is specified, it replaces the *principal name* as the heading of the individual's page with the *principal name* - in smaller letters - placed below. However, the *principal name* retains its role as primary reference and this is noticeable because its parts serve as HTML links whereas the Public Name has no link..

The complete index of surnames (or first names, or place names) can also be browsed from the Home page.



Creating HTML links

Knowing the two parts of the *principal name*, you can create URL requests (or HTML links) for an individual: the first and last names being coded as "p" and "n" parameters [the first names separated by "+"]. For our example:

```
http://localhost:2317/a1?lang=en;p=james+earl;n=jones
```

- **http://localhost:2317** -> stand-alone request to GWD listening on port 2317
- **a1** -> name of database
- **lang=en** -> English display

- **p=james+earl** -> first names "James Earl"
- **n=jones** -> surname "Jones"

Similarly, we can link someone else's Geneweb database. The examples below access pages on the ROGLO database:

Albert Einstein
<http://roglo.eu/roglo?lang=en;p=albert;n=einstein>
 Pierre Elliot Trudeau
<http://roglo.eu/roglo?lang=en;p=pierre+elliott;n=trudeau>
 Bill Clinton (you need to know his *principal name*)
<http://roglo.eu/roglo?lang=en;p=william+jefferson;n=blythe;oc=2>

Occurrence numbers

If there are several individuals with the exact same (*first+last*) name, Geneweb uses occurrence numbers (oc) to distinguish them, the first individual having oc=0. By default, if "oc" is absent, the system assumes oc=0. This request for "James Earl Jones" is equivalent to the one shown previously:

`http://localhost:2317/a1?lang=en;p=james+earl;n=jones;oc=0`

In the *ROGLO* example for President Clinton, the "oc=2" indicates that there are other *William Jefferson Blythes* in the database. Note that, for efficiency, Geneweb normally relies on internal ID numbers - which replace the *first+last+oc* combination. This is the internal link I found for Albert Einstein in ROGLO, but it can change if the database is reorganized and the second link using the *principal name* is preferable:

<http://roglo.eu/roglo?lang=en;i=999240>
<http://roglo.eu/roglo?lang=en;p=albert;n=einstein>

Geneweb's reliance on the *first+last+oc* combination is further explained in the [official documentation](#).

Standard photos

The *first_name/last_name/oc* triplet is also used, albeit in a different format to access the standard photos. Geneweb keeps these in a folder with the name of the database (here: *a1*) in the "bases/images" folder and our James Earl Jones photo is stored as:

`.../bases/images/a1/james_earl.0.jones.jpg`

The divider here is the *underline* character and the occurrence number is "0". If there was a second James Earl Jones, his photo would be stored as:

`.../bases/images/a1/james_earl.1.jones.jpg`

Handling name variants

Geneweb has many fields which deal with variations in people's names (nicknames, regal titles, double-barrelled names, showbiz aliases, etc...). These are entered in the Modify a Person [Form](#) (Click to see) and these are documented [HERE](#).

In databases of prominent people (Kings, Queens and Presidents), TITLES are important. For example, [ROGLO](#) relies heavily on them - as well as additional user created indexes - to allow users to locate people... it would be almost impossible to find data on someone like Queen Elizabeth II otherwise.

But I have no experience with the use of TITLES; so I won't talk about them. I will concentrate instead on judicious use of the first 2 blocks of fields.

Married Names

In many cultures, women adopt their husband's surname upon marriage. Thus, Cecilia *Hart* who married our actor James Earl Jones, would be also be known - and searched for - as Cecilia *Jones*. Similarly, *Margaret Roberts* is better known under her married name: *Margaret Thatcher*.

In Geneweb, this is handled automatically. For married women, name search can be done using either her *principal name* or by combining her *first name* part and the *principal surname* of her husband. Note that in the surname index, married women only appear under their maiden names.

The GEDCOM files exported by other software may either the SURN tag or an *ad-hoc* one to record married names. For example:

```
1 NAME Cecilia /Hart/  
2 SURN Jones
```

or

```
1 NAME Cecilia /Hart/  
2 _MARNM Jones
```

When importing this into Geneweb, the first case would code "Jones" as a *surname alias* and would simply ignore the MARNM line or put it into the Notes.

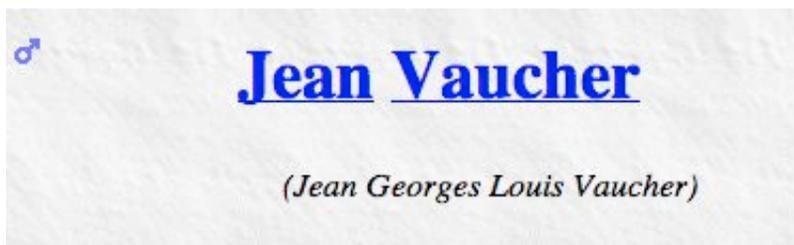
Usual first name

Quite often, culture dictates that persons be given many first names (often those of the grandparents), but they are generally known by only one (or 2) of them. My own birth certificates gives my full name as "Jean Georges Louis Vaucher" but no one knows me as anything else than "Jean Vaucher".

In Geneweb, there are two ways to handle this, using either the "First name alias" or the "Public name." The [Geneweb documentation](#) recommends the first method but in most cases I think the second is better. *Why* will become clear later. This is what the documentation says:

We suggest to put the common first name in the first name area. The other first names (complete first names, other possible first names, other spelling of first names, etc) must rather go to the area "first name alias" (below). The names with number as for noble and royal persons must rather go to the area "public name".

Applying this method to my own case, my web page show up as:



With my (shortened) principal name at the top and the full name below. This is the only place where my full

official name will appear. In other places, as a *parent* or in a descendant, I would always appear as "Jean Vaucher".

Genealogical data is often imported or exported in GEDCOM format. Exported to GEDCOM, my data looks like this, on a single NAME line with the preferred first name in quotes:

```
0 @3@ INDI
1 NAME "Jean" Georges Louis /Vaucher/
1 SEX M
```

This correspondance works both for export and subsequent import. It also works when the preferred appellation involves two or more consecutive words - even if they are not at the beginning of the list. For example:

```
0 @3@ INDI
1 NAME Jean "Georges Louis" /Vaucher/
1 SEX M
```

But there is a **PROBLEM** if the "First name" is not a subsequence of the "First name alias." In that case, the official list - coded as "First name alias" - is not exported to GEDCOM and will be lost [I suspect that this is not the case, when backing up a database by extracting a GeneWeb *source* file, but I've never tried it]. Example:

First name	Jean Louis	
Surname	Vaucher	
Public name		
Image		
Qualifier		Inse
Alias		Inse
First name alias	Jean Georges Louis	Inse
Surname alias		Inse

when exported gives (losing Georges):

```
0 @3@ INDI
1 NAME Jean Louis /Vaucher/
1 SEX M
```

Generally, this needs not be a problem as the usual first name(s) is part of the full list... or we can make sure it is. But it's a reminder that trying to use "First name aliases" to record nicknames like "Shorty" or "B.J." is not a great idea. It is better to mention them in the **Notes** area.

The First name OPTION:

When importing a GEDCOM file, there is an **option** to treat the first of the "First names" as the usual first name for all individuals. That is to treat

```
0 @3@ INDI
1 NAME Jean Georges Louis /Vaucher/
1 SEX M
```

as

```
0 @3@ INDI
1 NAME "Jean" Georges Louis /Vaucher/
1 SEX M
```

At first sight, this seems a useful option... leading to more compact lists, but I suggest you don't use it. First with a small database, it is easy to put in quotes the usual first names of the people you know.

When you have a large database or import data from various sources, this means that the people you know will be lost in a sea of others with the same first name. It makes them hard to find and it also makes it very hard to link new people to existing ones or to find duplicates. For the small proportion of people you really care about or that have personally known, it is easy to add quotes to the usual first name.

Public Name

The other option for a **preferred** first name is to leave the full list in the "*First name*" area and to enter the preferred one as the "*Public name*". In this case, the Public name (with the surname) will appear in all references to the individual... BUT it will not be entered in the search indexes, nor will it be used to locate the standard photos or in external HTML references. Those roles are reserved for the *principal name* which is still based of the *first+last+oc* combination.

The *public name* has its own GEDCOM tag: **GIVN** which works both for import and export of data. Importing GEDCOM files which use this convention automatically sets the "preferred name." Unfortunately, data with this TAG often duplicates the first names in the NAME line. This *public name* option is the one I recommend for the bulk of individuals in large databases: mainly distant ancestors and people you have imported from other databases. The problem with these "strangers" is trying to link them to people in your established trees as well as identifying and combining information from duplicates. This option keeps full official in the indexes and displays facilitating *duplicate* identification. This is why I strongly discourage the "first name" import option.

In my own databases, I use a mixture of the 2 *preferred name* methods: the first for the people I know best and the second for the others.

Surname Aliases

The occasions to use Surname aliases are rarer. Generally, they are used to provide a shorter version of the family name either to ease search or to make for more compact listings.

Take, for example, the current president of France: born Nicolas Paul Stéphane Sarközy de Nagy-Bocsa, he is better known as Nicolas Sarkozy. Skipping over the first name problem, (ROGLO used *technique 1*), we need a surname alias.... BUT, now the choice is which version to use for the Surname and which for the Alias. Remember, the aliases are not put in the indexes nor are they used for display; they serve only for search. In this case, the formal surname is not too long for displays and ROGLO chose the shorter version as the *alias*.

Take a different example, in the Iberian tradition, surnames are a composition of the parents' (and even grandparents') names. In the following examples (taken from Wikipedia), the main surnames are underlined:

```
Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa (Spanish convention)
José Eduardo Santos Tavares Melo Silva (Portuguese convention)
```

The usual surnames derive from the father (patriarchal bias) and the individuals would be known as Felipe Calderón and José Silva. Since the surname combination changes with every generation, there might be little

advantage in entering the full official surname in the indexes and we might decide to use the usual short version as the "Surname" and the official version as the "Alias." This means that family descendants would be together in the indexes.

Lookup

Final word

It is not possible for a software package to cater for every possible situation. Don't try to fit in every possible nickname or surname spelling; concentrate on two things:

1. **Display:** What name do you want displayed in references to the individual (as parent, child or sibling). This should be representative but not too long as it can mess up graphical tree representation.
2. **Search:** How to make the individual easy to find. This means using Aliases for the most common cases (i.e. Bill Clinton or Marilyn Monroe) yet keeping longish strings of first names and last names in the indexes.

Remember, you can always use the **NOTES** to complement the information in the standard fields.

NPFX - Yes
GIVN - Yes
NICK - Yes
SPFX - No
SURN - Yes
NSFX - Yes
Source Citation - Yes
Note Structure - No
SOURCE - Source Citation - yes
SOURCES - Source Citation - yes