Surnames and Their Population in England and Wales
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http://www.taliesin-arlein.net/names/

If your ancestors came from England or Wales, this database concerning civil registration will provide a population count of your surname as of September 2002.

Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales began on 1 July 1837. In 1875, registration became compulsory. Prior to this time, it is estimated that six to ten percent of births were not registered.

This searchable database is an extract of an Office of National Statistics database, and contains almost 270,000 surnames, shared by 54.4 million people. The database was established in 1998, and births have continued to be added to 2002. From 1998 to 2002, deaths were not removed from the database. Approximately 1.5 million deaths occurred in this time period. Therefore, to get an estimate of the population of your surname in 2002, search the database, and multiply the result by .93, to factor in the deaths not removed from the database.

The database can also be used to estimate the population of your surname since the start of parish registers. Multiply the search result by 3.5.

To search the database, simply enter your surname or part of your surname. Wildcard characters are supported, with an * representing zero or more characters, and an underscore representing one character.

A search on Moorshead, provides the following result: Surname: Moorshead; Count: 80; Ranking: 38,094.

The ranking provides information about the frequency of the surname. For example, for Smith, we see that it is the most frequent surname: Surname: Smith; Count: 652,563; Ranking: 1.

The database search can also be used to look for possible variant surnames that are present today. A search on "M*Head" provides the following possible variants: Moorehead, Moorhead, Moorshead, Morehead and Morshead.

Search results can either be returned in alphabetical order, or in ranking order, by making a selection below the search box.

If you click on "additional query options" below the search box, you are taken to another screen, where you can view the most frequent surnames, or see what searches have been performed in the recent past.