



Greetings!

Hello! I am Charlie Wilson, registrant of the Southgate one-name study and volunteer Publicity Manager for the Guild of One-Name Studies. Each month I hope to provide some interesting reading and temptations to dig deeper into your surname bearers.

One-name studies don't just collect all the births, marriages and deaths. There is so much more to studying a single surname. This month I'd like to suggest you take a look at wills and probate records.

Full disclosure. I love wills.

If you do not, then skip to the end for [Guild News](#) and [An unusual resource you may not have heard of](#).

But perhaps I can convince you with a brief example of how wills can really enhance your knowledge of an ancestor ...

Steward Southgate, yeoman, d.1765, Leicester, MA.

The inventory of Steward's estate (filed with his will) includes:

6 puter poringers (see right)
10 bushels of bad potatoes
3/4 lb of chocolate
Bayley's Dictionary
Surveying instruments
2 waistcoats
His Camblet Coat
Glasss
and on and on ...

["Porringer, Unidentified 'W.N.' Mark"](#) by Unknown is licensed under [CC BY 3.0](#)

Before I had Steward's will, I knew the basic details of his life. Names, dates, places.

Now I can imagine the man, in his spectacles, smart woollen coat and waistcoat, successful, wealthy, but still owning the trappings of a hardworking life, sitting at his desk with a porringer of something tasty (perhaps hot chocolate?), perusing his dictionary. It's a great image. Although I am rather envious of his possessions - THREE best beds!

Wills can also provide genealogical detail where no other records exist, solve puzzles and enliven your trees with salacious gossip! I'll save that last example for another time ...

I will admit that finding and reading wills can be tricky at times. The [FamilySearch Wiki](#) has extensive guides, just search for "Probate Records".

And to help you read the wills when you find them, I highly recommend the [National Archives old handwriting tutorial](#) - it includes a letter written by Elizabeth I!

Guild News

During September we had ten new one-name study registrations. They are listed below. Do any appear in your own research? If so, the registrants would love to hear from you and they can be contacted by searching for the surname here:

Guild of One-Name Studies

BEMAND
RENTON
LANYON
BELEW
BUSS

GALLEY
TUCK
WARR
DISTON
BOULTBEE

Our featured study this month is [STERRY](#). The website for this study includes work based on an incredible 100 years of research material in the form of biographies, articles, photos and more.

An unusual resource you may not have heard of

Do you have ancestors in New Zealand? In which case, take a look at the [Wilson Collection](#). Datasets collected by Diane Wilson during 40 years of research have been added, so that with a single search you can find all manner of records relating to your ancestor. For free!

Wishing you success in your research this month

Charlie.

