PURSUING YOUR ELUSIVE ANCESTORS
IN THE USGENWEB ARCHIVES
By Randy Seaver

Have you visited the USGenWeb Archives (**http://searches.rootsweb.com/htdig/search.html**), which are different from the USGenWeb sites for each state and county. I touched on these Archives in another article, but they deserve a separate listing because of the content and organization. Rootsweb hosts many of the USGenWeb Archives, and has a separate search engine for them. All of the Archives data are in text files, which can be downloaded to your computer and hard drive if you want.

Follow this trail:

1) After you are on the **USGenWeb Archives** page, click on the **"USGenWeb Archives"** link in the middle of the page.

2) This link takes you to the introductory page for the Archives. Here you can see the different USGenWeb projects currently in work, plus links to a web page for each state. Click on one of the states - say, **New York.**

3) On the **New York Archives** web page, there is a list of Counties. As an example, click on the Jefferson County link.

4) The **Jefferson County** link takes you to a list of the Archives content available for that County. For this County, there are a number of topics that have archive files - they are highlighted in Blue. Scroll down and click on the "Will Records, Probates and Indexes" link - (**http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/ny/jefferson/wills/willstoc.htm**).

5) There is now a list of the text files available in the Archives for Jefferson county NY probate records. Click on one of the files and you can see the file content. At this point, you could do a **[File] [Save As]** for this web page and save the file to your computer hard drive. If one of these files is for one of your ancestors, you probably have a gold mine of data.

Obviously, not all of you have this County, but you can see the usefulness of approaching the USGenWeb Archives this way rather than through the Search engine on the **USGenWeb Archives** page.

The Archives do NOT contain all of the files available for a given State or County. The Jefferson County NY Archives pages have a link to the **Jefferson County GenWeb** page. At the County page you will find links to other non-text files (either HTML or PDF, usually) which can be searched.