



## Judy Records

# Diane L. Richard investigates a website containing records of hundreds of millions of U.S. Court Cases

I LEARNED ABOUT THIS WEBSITE VIA THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of Jewish Genealogical Societies, IAJGS Public Records Access Alerts List, <https://lists.iajgs.org/mailman/listinfo/records-access-alerts>, which was referencing a blog post by Dick Eastman, EOGN (archived here, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200920144039/https://blog.eogn.com/2020/08/24/a-new-free-online-resource-of-360-million-united-states-court-records>). Both the access alerts and EOGN are invaluable when seeking to learn about genealogically relevant news.

The short version of this website = FREE to access United States Court Cases. As we go to press, that means access to almost 600 million cases, and the count increases monthly. It's important to realize that this database can only access what jurisdictions have made available in the public domain; as stated by the website, "court records accessibility in some jurisdictions is very limited." Read more on the terms page, [www.judyrecords.com/terms](http://www.judyrecords.com/terms).

The info page also provides links to other legal databases, many of which are free, [www.judyrecords.com/info](http://www.judyrecords.com/info).

### Simple to Use

As you can see from the image of the main page, it is a simple search box. You can put in it whatever you want. One of my go-to search terms is "Wake County." What was fascinating to me is that I expected references to North Carolina courts, Federal Circuit courts, etc., and I did not expect references to Iowa, Arkansas, Washington, Georgia, and beyond.

What I did find challenging is that I couldn't effectively figure out how to bound a search to a specific time period (a few years, decade, etc.). As a test, to my previous search, I appended the word "slave" (as the terminology used at the time where now enslaved is used), which brought up a much smaller collection of cases, mainly from the Supreme Court of North Carolina. This information then gave me some context on what is currently included for "Wake County" in "North Carolina," which is also helpful. I also searched on "North Carolina" "Free Person of Color" as I knew these results would be pre-Civil War. Don't forget to search on slight variations such as "Free Persons of Color," which will yield different results based on the term used in the original case and/or case summary. Additionally, awareness of other terms which may have been used is essential. There were numerous hits when one searched on "North Carolina" "Free Negro."

As mentioned above, remember that individuals from one location/state may be a party to or mentioned in a court case in another, even out-of-state, jurisdiction. And, many of the entries, at least those reviewed for North Carolina, do not include date information. Other resources will need to be consulted to ascertain "when" the court suit occurred.

For any found cases, details are given as to which court, which case,

and a summary of case particulars. Researchers will then need to use other resources to explore the original case documents. Full source citations to the sources is NOT provided on the website.



Details available for a dower case in North Carolina.

### Conclusion

This is a simple tool, a work in progress, which might help you go fishing, especially when seeking seemingly lost ancestors who may have just moved elsewhere. Family conflicts and lawsuits often fill in knowledge gaps regarding who is living where, how they are related to others, and so much more. You have nothing to lose by spending a few minutes searching for your target family members, and you may just stumble across something beneficial. 🍷

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