



Descendants of the Lacemakers of Calais

Searching the French Archives Online

France is divided into administrative divisions called departments (in French Départements). There are numerous record types held by them available online to family history researchers for free.

There are numerous websites that will explain in English, how to access and read the French records available online including:

<https://frenchgen.com/arch/>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/french-genealogy-records-online-1421952>

Two of the departments that are most relevant to researchers looking for their lacemaker ancestors in France are those in the far north of France on the coast of the English Channel adjacent to Belgium:

Nord (59) for places such as Lille, Douai and many more, and

Pas de Calais (62) for Calais including St Pierre-lès-Calais, Boulogne-Sur-Mer, Pihem and others. Both departments have websites with parish and civil records (birth death and marriage), censuses, military records, and maps. While the two websites are different in appearance, format and operation, they are relatively easy to use. Of course, they are in French and if you do not read French, you can access them in English using a browser that includes a translation function. Google Chrome is one such browser that provides an excellent translation of the websites' pages.

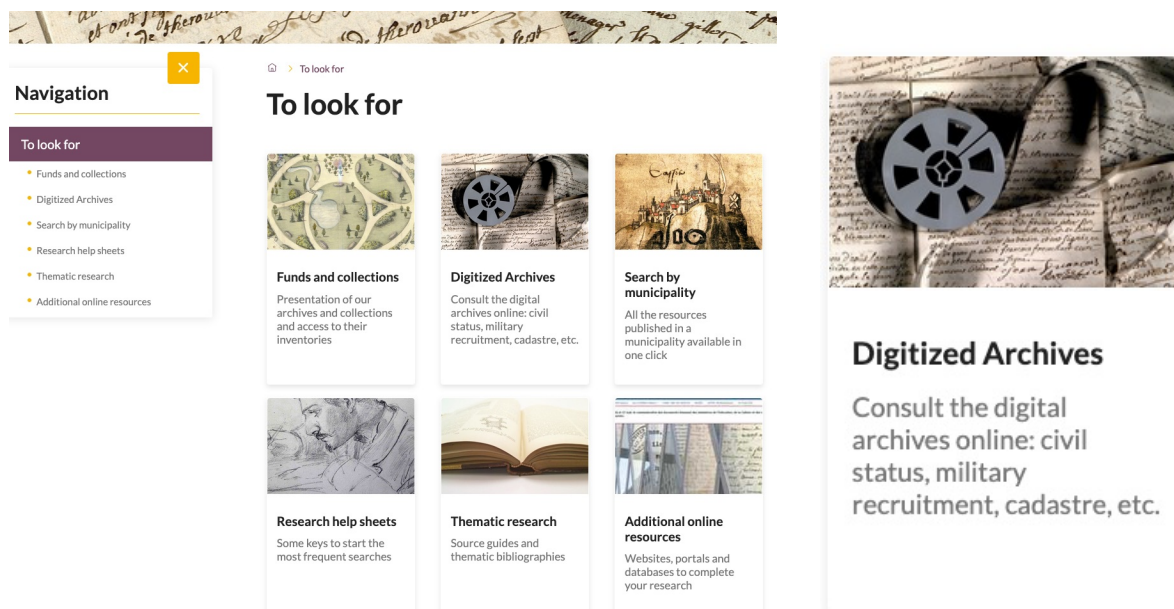
The Nord website address is https://archivesdepartementales.lenord.fr/?id=archives_online

To access the records, click on the main menu tab labelled CONSULTER in the French language version or TO CONSULT in the English language version and then click on the relevant tab from the drop-down menu.

The Pas de Calais website address is <https://archivespasdecalais.fr/Chercher>

These notes are for the English version with the French equivalents in brackets.

The web page titled **To look for (Chercher)** provides access to the website records with navigation via the left-hand menu or the titled panels on the right.



To access the records for bmd events, censuses, maps, and others,

- click on the menu tab or panel labelled **Digitized Archives (Archives numérisées)** and then
- click on the relevant archive type from the menu.

These include:

- **Marital status (État civil)** (more correctly termed “civil status”) for records such as birth, marriage and death records

<https://www.lacemakersofcalais.com.au/>



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- **Population census (Recensement de population)** for censuses taken generally every 5 years in Calais and St Pierre-lès-Calais from 1820 to 1896
- **Maps and plans (Cartes et plans)** for plans of the towns and villages showing roads and the other infrastructure

Some very helpful guide notes are provided via the **Research help sheets** tabs on the left and along the bottom of the page.

If you are researching birth, death and marriage records via the **Marital status** tab, you have two options to gain access to the record:

- if you know the full name of the person and the date of the event, you can go to the **Parish and civil status (Actes paroissiaux et d'état civil)** documents, or
- if you know the surname but not the event date, you can search for them using the **Decennial civil status tables (Tables décennales)** which are alphabetical indexes of names and dates of the event record and which generally cover 10-year periods.

If you first use the indexes to find the name and date, you then return to the **Parish and civil status** tab to find the actual record.

Navigation

To look for

- Funds and collections
- Digitized Archives
 - Marital status
 - Military recruiting
 - Population census
 - Succession tables
 - Child welfare
 - 1789 grievance books
 - Tax rolls of 1569, 1759 and 1779
 - Cadastral maps
 - Maps and plans
 - Iconographic collections
 - Great War Press
 - 1914-1918 War collection
- Search by municipality
- Research help sheets
- Thematic research
- Additional online resources

To look for

Digitized Archives

Marital status

Marital status

The following sets are currently available in digital form:

- Decennial tables of civil status documents (1792-1942)
- Baptisms, births, marriages, deaths and burials: parish registers (from 1553, for the oldest, to 1792), civil status registers (approximately 1793-1912, until 1942 for the municipalities of Ablain-Saint-Nazaire at Journy)
- Marriage dispensation files from the Boulogne-sur-Mer Official (17th - 18th centuries)

Some additional digitized sources can also be consulted via the inventories of the [funds and collections](#) concerned: [analysis of the marriage contracts of Gros d'Arras \(1801-1887\)](#) from the [Béthencourt collection](#) (2 J 8-17).

In order to comply with the recommendations of the National Commission for Informatics and Freedoms, [only ten-year tables over 75 years old can be put online](#). With the exception of the gaps in our collection, the decennial tables up to 1942 are therefore available.

The civil status documents after 1912 that we keep are currently the subject of a [campaign of digitization and online publication](#). They will be gradually put online according to the alphabetical order of the municipalities and in compliance with the [deadlines prescribed by the law](#) and the recommendations of the CNIL ([Single authorization 29](#)): deaths (25 years), marriages (75 years), births with references marginal (100 years).

Decennial civil status tables

Consult the decennial tables of births, marriages and deaths digitized from 1792 to 1942

Parish and civil status documents

Consult parish records (baptisms, marriages and burials from 1553 to 1792) and civil status (births, marriages and deaths from 1792 to 1912)

Marriage exemptions

Consult the scanned marriage dispensation files of the Boulogne-sur-Mer Office.

This tab opens a search page where you enter search parameters such as relevant place, year, and event type.

Place

cal

List

(enter at least three letters)

Year

In

(as four digits)

Search by type of act

☐ Birth
☐ Baptism
☐ Wedding
☐ Death
☐ Burial
☐ Table

Search by dimension

To research

Effacer

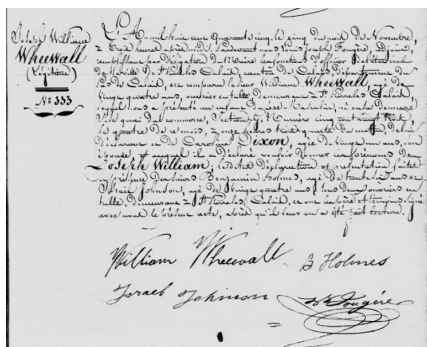
Under **Place** enter the first 3 letters of the place and wait a few seconds, then select from the drop-down list. For example, enter "cal" for both Calais and St Pierre-lès-Calais.

Under **Year** the drop-down box allows selection of exact years or ranges of years. Then click on the yellow **To research** box.

A list of search results opens. Select the relevant document.



Depending on the record type you will find information such as the name of the person, names, ages, occupations and addresses of the parents and or spouse, date when the event occurred which often varies from that of the record, the names and occupations of the witnesses, and other details.



Unfortunately, while the browsers will get you to the records using the English translation functions, they will NOT translate the hand-written birth, death and marriage records that are on the digitized films.

A “how-to-translate” explanation of the Pas de Calais birth and death records is in the journal Tulle Issue 116 on pages 31 to 33. While the wording of the records can change slightly over the decades, they generally follow the same format.

Caution:

The Department of Pas de Calais places restrictions on the reuse of the data available on its website.

The documents may only be used, including reproduction, freely and without a licence for personal use. Commercial use is only permitted by obtaining a licence from the Department as noted on the website <https://www.archivespasdecalais.fr/S-informer/Conditions-de-reutilisation>