

## ***Ewing in the Census***

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This is a tiny, tentative step at the inception of the Ewing One-Name Study (EONS) Project.

Like most of you, I became interested in the name Ewing while searching for my own family roots. Gradually, this personal interest has evolved into a wider interest in Ewings generally, where they came from and who they have become. Recently, I have been prowling about the web and have found some web sites that have some easily accessible census data. In this article, I share some of the interesting things I found there.

### **2000 U.S. Federal Census**

The U.S. Federal Census maintains a web site with data about the frequency of various surnames found in the 2000 U.S. Federal Census.<sup>1</sup> One can download information for all of the 151,671 surnames found in 100 or more individuals by the Census, along with some statistics regarding the ethnic distribution of each name. I tried to download all of these, and could have done it if I had a little more patience, but Excel can easily chew and digest only 65,536 rows of data, which I figured was enough to illustrate the point I was trying to make in this article, so I limited myself to these.

I looked through the top 65,535 names for common variants of Ewing, and found those in Table 1. As you can see, Ewing was the most common of these, and was the 969<sup>th</sup> most common name found in the census. There were 32,925 Ewings enumerated, which is not quite twenty-four Ewings per 100,000 people. Of these, 78.68% identified themselves as non-Hispanic white, 17.11% as non-Hispanic black and 1.64% as Hispanic. The file also showed the percentages of those who identified themselves as Asian and Pacific Islander (0.56%), American Indian and Alaskan Native (0.43%), and 'two or more races' (1.57%), but I left this information out of the table to make it a little easier to read.

I also found Yuen and Yuan, which might be construed as variant spellings, but these two names were 89% and 96% Asian respectively, so I think we can safely conclude that these names are not related to Ewing, despite the somewhat similar pronunciation. I have actually met a few Hispanic Ewings, so I was not too surprised to see that there were some in the Census, but I was quite surprised to see that 7.75% of the Ewenses (how in the world should I say that?—I mean to refer to the folks named Ewens as opposed to those named Ewen) reported themselves to be Hispanic, whereas only 2.47% of the folks named Ewen (without the 's') called themselves Hispanic, and smaller proportions of the folks from each of the other variants did so. I was also interested to see that the majority of the folks named Ewings (with the 's') identified themselves as black. Indeed, most of the Ewing variant surnames have a significant fraction of folks who identify themselves as black, which makes me puzzled and slightly embarrassed that as far as I know, we do not have any African-American Ewing members of *Clan Ewing*—there must be plenty of them who are eligible for membership. I think their participation would make our organization more vital. Perhaps we should think about whether we have unintentionally discouraged them from joining us, and look for ways to make sure they know they would be welcome.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.census.gov/genealogy/www/freqnames2k.html](http://www.census.gov/genealogy/www/freqnames2k.html)

**Table 1: From the 2000 U.S. Federal Census**

name	rank	count	nr/100k	% white	% black	% Hispanic
EWING	969	32925	23.93	78.68	17.11	1.64
MCEWEN	4422	7420	5.39	84.46	11.24	1.71
MCEWAN	11795	2432	1.77	89.06	6.74	2.01
EWEN	14168	1945	1.41	90.18	5.19	2.47
EWAN	23346	1017	0.74	82.69	10.42	1.18
EWINGS	33690	638	0.46	41.54	52.82	1.72
HEWINS	34342	624	0.45	79.81	15.71	< 4.00
MACEWEN	40139	514	0.37	97.47	< 4.00	< 4.00
EWENS	50686	387	0.28	81.65	7.24	7.75
EWIN	51233	382	0.28	69.90	24.08	2.09
MACEWAN	56826	336	0.24	97.02	0.00	< 4.00

These figures make me understand in part why we have had so little luck recruiting Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project participants with variant name spellings—the pool of these is smaller, at least in the U.S. It was surprising to me to see how rare the Ewin spelling variant is; we have three participants named Ewin in the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project—almost three-quarters of a percent of the Ewins enumerated in this census. If we had as large a fraction of the Ewings, we would have almost 300 of them in the project. Still, McEwen / McEwan is under-represented in the project. Together, there are almost 30% as many of them as Ewings in the census, and if we had a proportionate number of them participating in the project, we should have a couple of dozen. As it is, our only McEwan is a New Zealander.

## 1990 U.S. Federal Census

The census bureau also has some surname data for 1990 available on the web,<sup>2</sup> but it is not nearly as detailed and is not based on the actual census, but rather on a 1990 Post-Enumeration Survey (PES), which was undertaken to estimate the amount of undercount in the census. The PES covered only a 7.2 million record sample, which was pared down further to 6.3 million because nearly a million of the records in the sample were missing crucial data. It is important to realize that there is no guarantee that the frequency data in this sample data corresponds to the overall frequency of surnames actually present in America. There is a *Documentation and Methodology* link on the web site for those interested in more details about this.

That said, Table 2 is a summary of the Ewing data available there. The rightmost column in the table did not appear on the web site, but was calculated by multiplying the frequency number in the second column by 1,000 to arrive at a number per 100,000 to facilitate comparison with the previous table. Rounding and low numbers made this exercise meaningless where the asterisks appear in the table.

<sup>2</sup> [www.census.gov/genealogy/names](http://www.census.gov/genealogy/names)

Notice that this sample had about fourteen Ewings per 100,000 names, whereas in the 2000 Census there were nearly twenty-four per 100,000. Surely this is not a result of any remarkable fecundity among Ewings or ongoing immigration, and I have an idea that this is just a reflection of the fact that Ewings were under-represented in the areas surveyed for the PES. I do not think we can or should make too much of these data, but it is also interesting to see that the relative position of Ewin is very much higher on this 1990 data than in the 2000 Census.

**Table 2: From the 1990 Post-Enumeration Survey**

name	% freq	rank	calc/100k
EWING	0.014	852	14
MCEWEN	0.003	3912	3
MCEWAN	0.001	13985	1
EWEN	0.001	17780	1
EWIN	0.000	20263	*
EWAN	0.000	22298	*
EWINGS	0.000	27733	*
HEWINS	0.000	28894	*
EWENS	0.000	40800	*
MACEWEN	0.000	46483	*
MACEWAN	0.000	not found	*

## The National Trust Web Site

In the February 2008 issue of the *Journal* I spoke briefly about a cool web site with free information from the 1881 census of Great Britain and the 1996<sup>3</sup> British Electoral Register.<sup>4</sup> The link I gave before no longer works, but this resource is still available, having been relocated to the National Trust Web Site.<sup>5</sup> One can search for any name and the web site will deliver maps of Great Britain, with counties color-coded to reflect the relative frequency of the name. In the map there are links to *Frequency and Ethnicity* and *Geographical Location*. Table 3 was prepared by performing searches on each of the variant spellings I previously found in the 2000 U.S. Federal Census, going to the *Frequency and Ethnicity* link and dividing the statistic reported there as 'occurrences per million names' by 1,000 to convert this to 'nr/100k,' so as to facilitate comparison with the other tables in this article.

<sup>3</sup> This date is given in the definitions section of the *help* page, but the tables are displayed with the 1998 date. I have no idea why this is.

<sup>4</sup> Ewing, David N. EONS: The *Clan Ewing* GOONS Initiative, *J. Clan Ewing*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (February 2008). pp. 28-31.

<sup>5</sup> [www.nationaltrustnames.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrustnames.org.uk)

The 'ethnicity' part of this information did not seem very useful to me, as it was obtained by making a judgment about the ethnicity of the forename each Ewing had, not the ethnicity of the person. Presumably, our member Thor Ewing would have been counted as 'Nordic' in this scheme, even though he identifies himself as ethnically Scottish. In any case, 99.09% of the forenames Ewings had were 'British or unknown.'

Table 4 was prepared by performing searches on each of the variant spellings I previously found in the 2000 U.S. Federal Census, and going to the *Geographical Location* link, where I converted 'occurrences per million names' to 'nr/100k' as above. The page reached via the *Geographical Location* link has comparison data for surname frequency in other English speaking countries, but this is not based on census data. The U.S. figures used come from 1990 telephone books; the others are from electoral registers in 2002 and 2003. Interested readers can find details about this (and many more statistics) by going to the web page and checking the *Help* link. In order to interpret Table 4, you will need to understand what I have called 'index' because I could not easily fit 'as % of GB 1998 rate' into the table. Basically, this index shows how prevalent these names are with respect to their prevalence in Great Britain in 1998. Obviously, Great Britain in 1998 has exactly the same prevalence as Great Britain in 1998, so the index is 100 for every name. An index of 200 would mean that a name was twice as prevalent in a location with that index than in Great Britain in 1998, and an index of 50 would mean that it was half as prevalent. So, you can see that Ewing is over four times as prevalent and Ewen is less than ten percent as prevalent in Northern Ireland than in Great Britain in 1998.

**Table 3: From the web site of the National Trust**

name	1881			1998		
	rank	count	nr/100k	rank	count	nr/100k
EWING	1582	2777	0.103	2090	2885	0.077
MCEWEN	2189	1948	0.072	3330	1692	0.045
MCEWAN	931	4625	0.171	884	6864	0.184
EWEN	3169	1276	0.047	2903	1995	0.054
EWAN	5092	683	0.025	6959	691	0.019
EWINGS	12858	196	0.007	13237	288	0.008
HEWINS	9060	325	0.012	9365	464	0.012
EWENS	6222	545	0.020	7102	672	0.018
EWIN	14119	166	0.006	12656	309	0.008
MACEWAN	19368	56	0.002	13476	281	0.008

Note: MACEWEN is too infrequent to have statistics.

To me, the most striking thing about these figures is how many more McEwans than Ewings there are in Britain compared to the United States, and an even more impressive difference between Britain and Northern Ireland. Notice also the huge preponderance of McEwens in Canada, where that spelling appears to be favored over McEwan, which is the favored spelling in Great Britain by 4:1. It is also

interesting to me that these names are all well represented in all of these English-speaking countries except the Republic of Ireland, where they are nearly absent.

The *Geographical Location* link on the National Trust web site also lists the states and provinces within each of these countries that have the greatest prevalence of each of the names. In America, these are Kansas for Ewing, Maine for McEwen, Utah for McEwan, Vermont for Ewen, and Montana for Ewan. Interestingly, Ewings (with the 's') was found at its greatest prevalence in Washington, D.C., where the index was 872, more than triple the rate in the rest of the country.

Why are there more McEwen / McEwans than Ewings in Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, whereas there are more Ewings in the United States and in Northern Ireland? And what has kept almost all of them, McEwen / McEwans and Ewings alike, out of the Republic of Ireland? Why are McEwan and Ewan found more often in western U.S. states and McEwen and Ewen found more often in New England states? I stumbled and mumbled a bit, and tried to cook up some speculation for myself about these questions, but then finally confronted the fact of the matter, which is that I really do not know. So here is a challenge: if any of you reading this do know, or have some ideas or information about the subject you would like to share, how about writing an article for the *Journal* about it?

**Table 4: From the web site of The National Trust**

name	Great Britain 1998		Great Britain 1881		Northern Ireland		Rep. of Ireland	
	nr/100k	index	nr/100k		nr/100k	index	nr/100k	index
EWING	0.077	100	0.103		0.384	438.4	0.003	3.8
MCEWEN	0.045	100	0.072		0.039	86.1	0.000	0.0
MCEWAN	0.184	100	0.171		0.103	56.8	0.001	0.4
EWEN	0.054	100	0.047		0.005	9.0	0.000	0.0
EWAN	0.019	100	0.025		0.000	0.0	0.000	0.0
name	Australia		New Zealand		U.S.		Canada	
	nr/100k	index	nr/100k	index	nr/100k	index	nr/100k	index
EWING	0.079	90.3	0.105	119.8	0.240	273.2	0.123	140.1
MCEWEN	0.083	184.3	0.194	431.9	0.057	126.9	0.246	545.6
MCEWAN	0.186	102.5	0.286	158.0	0.019	10.2	0.123	67.8
EWEN	0.036	68.9	0.070	132.0	0.015	28.7	0.063	119.1
EWAN	0.000	0.0	0.030	160.4	0.008	41.9	0.012	64.7

*David Neal Ewing has been a member of Clan Ewing in America since 1996 and has served as its Chancellor since 2006. He previously served as Chair of its Board of Directors from 2004 to 2006. He is also Administrator of the Ewing Surname Y-DNA Project, which he founded in 2004, and he is a regular contributor to the Journal of Clan Ewing. Dr. Ewing has a private practice in clinical geriatric neuropsychiatry in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He received his M.D. degree from the University of New Mexico and did his residency training at the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan.*