

DISCOVER SOCIAL HISTORY IN NEWSPAPERS

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Newspapers offer a rare glimpse into the past unlike any other. They recorded the events that shaped out ancestor's lives, their successes and failures, both happy times and sad. Within newspaper pages we can learn what it was like to live in a community whether it was 50 or 200 years ago. We can gain insight into why and how families migrated, their occupations and who their employers were, who came to visit, and countless other day-to-day events that shaped their lives. Look for clues in your family files, and begin the journey of a lifetime chasing down all those little tidbits that bring your ancestors back to life again!

SEARCH TECHNIQUES

It is best to begin your search using only a surname unless it is a very common one such as Jones or Smith. If a surname search returns too many results, try adding additional search terms such as a location. Some websites offer search boxes such as "Exact Words" or "With the Phrase" where you can enter both a first and last name. Initials sometimes skew the results. If exact search capabilities aren't available, place quotation marks around your search term such as "John Guice" or a place such as "Amelia County." Misspell the surname, or search for variants. Use abbreviations such as "Thos" instead of Thomas, or Abe or Abram for Abraham. Next look for counties or towns where families lived; military events in which they took part or were witnesses to; epidemics; local advertisements, and illustrations and photos.

LISTS OF HISTORICAL NEWSPAPERS AND COLLECTIONS

- U. S. Newspaper Directory 1690 to present, and is arranged by state, county, and city: <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles>
- This may be the most up-to-date worldwide list available. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_online_newspaper_archives
- For U.S. collections see: <http://viewshare.org/views/refhelp/historical-newspapers-online-usa-2>
- Stanford University's Data Visualization: Journalism's Voyage West maps the expansion of U. S. newspapers by using an interactive timeline: http://www.stanford.edu/group/ruralwest/cgi-bin/drupal/visualizations/us_newspaper

- FamilySearch Wiki: https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Digital_Historical_Newspapers
- Advantage Preservation – This company digitizes newspaper microfilm collections from libraries, historical societies, and museums from around the country. Most of the collections are freely available on the internet, but a few organizations only allow their databases to be viewed in house. <http://www.theancestorhunt.com/blog/search-40-million-historic-us-newspaper-pages-for-free#.WS3psty1vbg>

FREE DIGITAL NEWSPAPER COLLECTIONS

- Chronicling of America sponsored by the Library of Congress: Now there are collections from 44 states, and the District of Columbia. Publication dates range from 1789 to 1924. Site continues to grow so check back often. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>
- Google News Archive – Search engine not useful – search by title, date, and then browse page by page. Title List: <http://news.google.com/newspapers> (Some contemporary issues require a small payment for each article.) Use the newspaper directory at Chronicling of America to find local newspaper titles.
- Old Fulton Postcards: An enormous collection of almost 39 million New York newspaper pages, and now those of many other states. Check back often. It is absolutely necessary to read the Frequently Asked Questions section to learn how to properly formulate searches. <http://www.fultonhistory.com>
- Los Angeles Public Library – Collections available to library card holders include *NewspaperArchive.com*; *ProQuest Newsstand* covers over 300 U. S. and foreign contemporary newspapers; *Historical Los Angeles Times* 1881-1990; *Historical Los Angeles Sentinel* 1934-2005; *Newsbank* 1992 and later, and *The San Francisco Chronicle* 1865-1922. <http://www.lapl.org>
- The Stars and Stripes 1918-1919: Library of Congress <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/sgphtml/sashtml/sashome.html>
- Archive.org – They have recently added some historical newspapers. Search for family names in quotes “George Janes” or just a surname. On the results page place a checkmark in the “Search full text of books” box. This allows one to search across all text, microfilm, and video collections. www.archive.org
- Try a Google search for a newspaper title as small county libraries and historical societies may have digitized their local collection. An example: “Monterey digital newspapers”.

SUBSCRIPTION SITES

- GenealogyBank.com – More than 7,000 digitized newspapers. New content added monthly.
- Newspapers.com - Currently over 5,100 newspapers. New content added monthly.
- Ancestry.com – Only available with a paid subscription through “Stories & Publications”
- NewspaperArchive.com – See Los Angeles Public Library in the list of “Free Digital Newspaper Collections” above.
- FindMyPast.com – British, Irish, and U. S. Newspapers. New content added frequently.