

# HISTORICAL NEWSPAPERS CHEAT SHEET

COMPILED BY JAMES M. BEIDLER

## 4 Things You'll Find in Old Newspapers

### 1 Birth, marriage and death details

Especially from the late-19th to mid-20th century, look for obituaries of the deceased (before and after that, mostly prominent citizens were honored this way). Papers also might carry regular lists of deaths, probate cases, marriage licenses issued, and births.

### 2 Seemingly mundane happenings

Especially in small towns, newspapers covered everyday events you won't find in today's news: Birthday parties and social club meetings (often with names of attendees), out-of-town visitors, residents' minor illnesses and injuries, and more. In addition to names, search for employers, clubs, churches and street addresses.

### 3 Details on family stories

Turn to newspapers when you can't document an ancestral event or you suspect your ancestor was involved in a newsworthy occurrence (such as a crime or local celebration).

### 4 National and local news

Read up on events that affected your ancestors' lives, such as epidemics, droughts and the raising of local military units.



## What is a Newspaper?

The US Newspaper Program, a nationwide effort to preserve newspapers on microfilm beginning in the 1980s, defined a newspaper as:

- a primary source of written information on current events connected with public affairs
- intended for a general public
- formatted in a specific way (masthead but no cover, no less than three columns per page, etc.)
- serial (published at regular intervals, whether daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

## CITING NEWSPAPER SOURCES

Format	Full Source Citation
Authored newspaper article, digitized online	Western Newspaper Union News Service, "Four Persons Killed: Train Hits Auto at Scene of Many Fatalities," <i>Akron Weekly Pioneer Press</i> , 12 November 1915, p. 1, col. 1; digital images, <i>Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection</i> ( <a href="http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org">http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org</a> : accessed 3 November 2013).
Newspaper obituary from Chronicling America website	"Obituary of Wm. M. Brownlee," <i>The Abingdon Virginian</i> , 13 November 1863, p. 3, col. 3; digital images, <i>Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers</i> , Library of Congress ( <a href="http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov">http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov</a> : accessed 16 July 2013).
Newspaper article from microfilm	"Assyrians Are Held," <i>Daily Texarkanian</i> , 22 May 1913, p. 2; microfilm image.
Newspaper clipping	"Bellevue, Ky.," <i>The Cincinnati Enquirer</i> , Cincinnati, Ohio, 29 September 1916, p. 10, col. 8.

# TYPES OF NEWSPAPER RECORDS

## VITAL EVENT NOTICES

Search for listings of births, marriage licenses, and deaths, along with milestone wedding anniversaries and divorce notices.

MARRIAGE LICENSES	
Following are marriage licenses issued during the last 48 hours by Probate Judge Ralph H. Gaw:	
John A. Hammond, Emporia.....	over 21
Lenora H. Lane, Topeka.....	over 21
Walter A. Porter, Kansas City, Mo.....	over 21
Mabel H. Lyon, Topeka.....	over 21
Edward Giffes, Bennington.....	20
Edna Ostlander, Bennington.....	35
Oscar Taylor, Kansas City, Mo.....	32
Roberta Dorsey, Kansas City, Mo.....	28

The Topeka State Journal (Topeka, Kan.), March 26, 1920

## OBITUARIES

Obituaries can contain valuable, unique information about deceased ancestors. They may be printed with local news, rather than in an obituaries section. You also might find a "card of thanks" to family and friends after a funeral, or a tribute published on a death anniversary.

**George E. Hiersemann.**  
After four years of patient suffering, George E. Hiersemann passed away from the home, 1139 Twelfth avenue, at 3:15 yesterday afternoon. Tumor of the brain was cause of death.  
Mr. Hiersemann was born in Buffalo, Iowa, Jan. 23, 1880, and came to this city in 1902, entering the livery business. He continued in this business until 1910, when he sold his establishment, owing to failing health.  
He was married to Miss Theresa Free in Rock Island Sept. 18, 1907, and she, with one daughter, Elizabeth, survives him. He also leaves four sisters, Mrs. Frank Kautz of Moline, Mrs. William Cox and Mrs. O. Miller, of Rock Island, and Mrs. John Leyden of Goodland, Kas., and two brothers, Charles of Blue Grass, Iowa, and John of Buffalo, Iowa.  
His long illness was marked by his patient and cheerful suffering, two operations being necessitated during that time, but through all his affliction Mr. Hiersemann bore up bravely and patiently. He was a devout member of St. Mary's church, Moline and of Leo Council No. 716, K. of C.

Rock Island Argus (Rock Island, Ill.), Sept. 29, 1916

## SOCIAL COLUMNS

Social columns might contain the latest gossip, news on social clubs, attendees at parties, out-of-town visitors and more.

**LOCAL CHURCH MATTERS.**  
**Ask for Pastor's Return.**  
Rev. J. P. Sampson, presiding elder of this district of the African Methodist Episcopal church, last evening conducted the fourth quarterly conference of the Loring-street Methodist church. A unanimous vote was passed asking that the pastor, Rev. C. H. Yearwood, be returned next year, and this sentiment was very much in sympathy with that of Rev. Mr. Yearwood. The reports for the past quarter of the secretary and treasurer were read and accepted and a general retrospect was given of the past three months' work.  
The young women's class of Memorial church will give a reception to-morrow evening at 8 o'clock to their teacher, Mr. Laudenslager, who graduated this month from the training school and closes his work with the class. A final union lawn fete will be held Saturday afternoon and evening on the church lawn. A sale of ice-cream, candy, aprons, etc., will be conducted from 3 to 10 p. m. Band music will probably be furnished by the Springfield musical club.  
The Sunday-school of Wesley church will have its annual picnic at Riverside grove Saturday. A long list of athletic events has been arranged for the day. A lawn party and supper will be held at the church to-morrow afternoon, beginning at 4. At 8 in the evening a reception will be given to Rev. Dr. C. E. Rice, pastor of the church.  
The Cheerful Workers of Hope church will meet this afternoon at 4:30 with Miss Lillian Murphy on Homer street. A reception for members of the cradle roll and their mothers will be held at 123 Buckingham street Friday afternoon from 3 to 5. All children of the church under five years will be welcome.  
The Dorcas society of Asbury church will meet Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the church. The official board of the church will meet to-morrow evening at 7:45. The junior league of the church will have a picnic at Glendale Saturday.

Springfield Republican (Springfield, Mass.), June 21, 1904

## GENEALOGY COLUMNS

Newspapers sometimes published histories of local families.

**REMARKABLE LINEAGE**  
**UNIQUE METHOD OF A KENTUCKY FAMILY TO PRESERVE GENEALOGY.**  
Louisville, Ky., May 5, 1901.  
Editor Herald:  
While walking through the wilderness of this world, I happened to find a family of people in Edmonson County, Kentucky, near Mammoth Cave, that had the strangest peculiarity of any family, even in that strange and peculiar county. Their distinctive peculiarity is the method by which they preserve their genealogy—a method that is sui generis and without a parallel.  
The name of the progenitor of this family was Meredith. This man had three sons—Pig, Jack and Sam. In the process of time there was born unto Pig Meredith a son whose name was Pete. Therefore, Pete, being a grandson of the original Meredith, was called Pete Pig Meredith, or, briefly, Pete Pig when ordinarily addressed. Pete has a son of the name of Toad. Now, for all practical purposes, Toad Pete answers for his name. But if he wishes to give his full name it is Toad Pete Pig Meredith. Jock has a son, Bill, who is called Bill Jock, etc. Thus the Christian name of the father becomes the surname of the son. Now it happens that Pete also has a son of the name of Pig. His name is Pig Pete, while his father is Pete Pig. Whether one finds a Toad Sam or a Sam Toad, the original name of Meredith is maintained.  
The same fashion obtains when the daughters marry. Suppose, for instance, Jane Meredith marries and there be a son in her family named Sam. This son is called Sam Jane Meredith whatever be the name of Jane's husband. By this method the genealogical tree may be preserved ad infinitum.  
There appeared in the papers recently a genealogy of William McKinley in which the lineage was traced back almost to the tertiary period. With the history of some of our modern great men, on account of its close proximity to a prehistoric period, it is easier to trace a genealogy than to maintain one.  
J. H. PILAND.

Morning Herald (Lexington, Ky.), May 6, 1901

# TYPES OF NEWSPAPER RECORDS

## CLASSIFIEDS

A newspaper's classified ads might go on for pages and include a variety of notices:

- job postings
- job-seekers looking for positions
- lost and found items
- property for sale
- real-estate auctions
- probate and other court notices


## ADVERTISEMENTS

Search for names and addresses of businesses where your ancestor worked to find advertisements. Ads also might tell you where your relatives likely shopped and what they paid for groceries.

**A Tribute--  
To Our Policeman!**

The uniformed man who walks his beat, every day to combat lurking danger, is an officer of the city, working for you. All through the stillness of the night . . . when homes are dark and stealth is on the prowl . . . your watchful Policeman is going his rounds. Smiling, rosy-cheeked, a mountain of security clad in blue, he shepherds the little children across the street. He is their friend, their protector, their laughing pal, on occasion . . . and who of us would have it any other way! So let's be considerate and really warm-hearted toward our fine Policemen. The Cop, please remember, is one of our most dependable citizens!

**CRITZ**  
Chevrolet Co.  
300 W. Broadway, NLR  
Phone 3204



**We Salute Our Town!**

Arkansas Democrat (Little Rock, Ark.),  
Dec. 31, 1950

**SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS** on the PRESENT STATE of the AFFAIRS of the NORTHERN COLONIES.

**BANCROFT WOODCOCK**, Goldsmith,  
Hereby informs the publick, that he has set up his business in Wilmington, near the upper market house, where all persons that please to favour him with their custom, may be supplied with all sorts of gold and silver work, after the neatest and newest fashions.  
N. B. Said Woodcock gives the full value for o'd gold and silver.

**ISRAEL MORRIS** Whip-maker,  
STILL continues to make and repair horse-whips, at the house of Joseph Saul, chair and spinning-wheel maker, in Market-street, opposite the lower end of the Jersey market, after the best and neatest manner, as usual; and has now made by him, for wholesale or retail, a neat assortment of the following whips, viz. Whole hunters, half hunters, silver and white mounted ditto; large and small silver mounted switches, white mounted ditto, crop whips, jockey, silver mounted, and white mounted ditto, thongs and lathes, women's best tortoise-shell handle whips, bone, horn, vellum, and wire handle womens' ditto, &c.  
N. B. The said Morris sells no whips but his own make; he has lately got a large nail-struck with the buck, and his name round the border, which he puts in all his mens whips, that are large enough to take so large a nail; and on the left side cuts the first letters of his name, I M. 5s. 1/2. 3 m.

Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia, Pa.), May 30, 1754

## NEWS ARTICLES

Newspapers covered national and local news. Read not only for mention of your family, but also to get context for their lives.

**New Store Opens Today.**

People's China Store Opens With Line of China, Crockery, Etc., A. B. Overholt, Manager.

Arthur B. Overholt announces the opening of a new venture for Kalamazoo today. He said to a reporter yesterday, "I have for some time contemplated the move which I have made, because I have felt the growing demand for some time of an exclusive China and crockery store of this kind. By the word exclusive I don't mean 'high price,' but a stock comprised of China and crockery the price of which being within the reach of all.

"I also added a fine line of tin, granite ware and kitchen utensils in order to satisfy the numerous demands for a store of this kind.

"We'll strive to please all the people all the time."

Kalamazoo Gazette (Kalamazoo, Mich.),  
May 28, 1910

Responding to young letter-writer Virginia O'Hanlon, New York's *Sun* editor Francis Pharcellus Church confirmed the existence of Santa Claus in 1897.

## EDITORIALS

Read about the most hotly contested topics of the day (from zoning debates to politics) in editorials and letters to the editor.

Dear Editor:

It seems to us that the city has enough to handle without trying to hog any more territory. Talk about the benefits we will gain, when the city cannot even take care of the people you have in the City.

You talk about the advantages to the city of Fairbanks, that is just what it will amount to when you consider there is 10,000 people in the city at present, and there is about 20,000 in the so called bedroom areas. We all know where the tax money will go. It seems odd that last summer when we wanted some road work on Badger Road, we were just a secondary community, but when you need more tax money, we are promoted to first class citizens at once. You say if it wasn't for Fairbanks we wouldn't be here. You should say, "If it wasn't for Ladd and Eielson Fields that Fairbanks wouldn't be here." We know of several families that have moved out in this bedroom area to get away from your so-called advantages of living in Fairbanks.

PAUL W. WHITE

Clear, Alaska  
January 3, 1960

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (Fairbanks, Alaska), Jan. 9, 1960

Images courtesy of GenealogyBank, Newspapers.com, and Chronicling America

# FINDING ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

## Search Newspapers.com

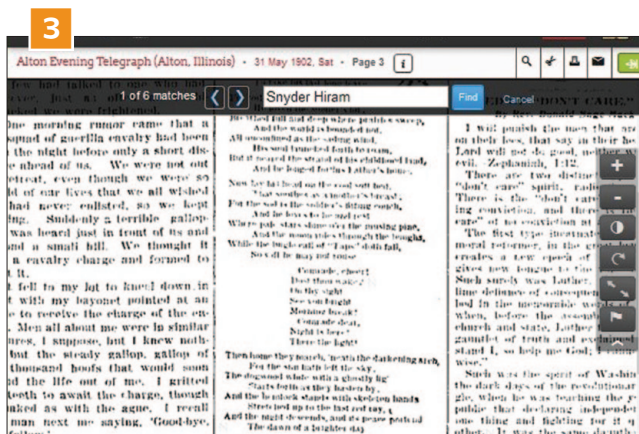
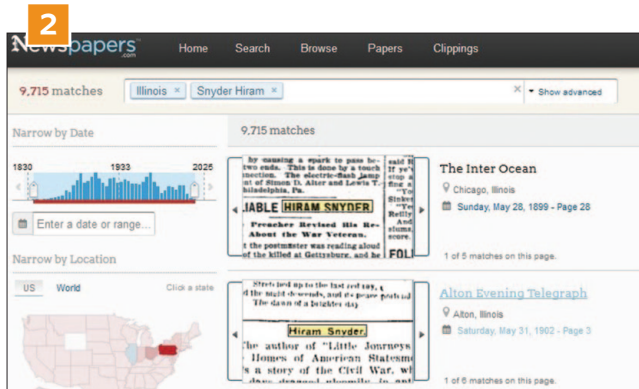
Newspapers.com <[www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)>, a subsidiary of Ancestry.com, contains more than 300 million pages from 5,000 newspaper titles. Access to papers after 1923 may require an additional Publisher Extra subscription.

**1 Enter your search terms.** Search either from the main page or by clicking the Search tab on the main toolbar. Adding a place of publication helps target your results.

**2 Review your results.** Use filters on the left to narrow your search by state, year range and newspaper. This lets you cut through to the most relevant results.

**3 Select a result.** Results show you a preview of your keyword in a newspaper, plus the name of the publication, its location, and the date of the issue and page number where it appears. Click to see the full page.

**4 Click the Print/Save button to save the article** as a JPG or PDF. Use the scissors icon to “clip” an article and save it to your account, attach it to your Ancestry family tree, and/or share it via email or social media.



## Overcome Optical Character Recognition Search Problems

Optical character recognition (OCR) technology translates newspaper page images to text. This allows you to search for any word in a digitized newspaper. But poor-quality images, ink splotches, and damaged or faded pages can cause OCR to “misread” the paper—so your searches may not work. Here’s how to outsmart OCR:

- **BE FLEXIBLE.** Try another family member’s name or a street address. Shorten your search string: *Seeger cigar* instead of *H.A. Seeger Cigar Manufacturer*.
- **USE WILDCARD CHARACTERS** if the site allows it. *Ladenk\** finds *Ladenkotter* and *Ladenkutler*; *Seeg?r* finds *Seegur*, *Seegar* and *Seeger*.
- **ALLOW FOR HYPHENATION.** OCR may not pick up words that are hyphenated, especially on separate lines. Try searching with broken words: *Charles Smith field* or *386 Broad way*.
- **SEARCH FOR VARIANT SPELLINGS**, keeping in mind these common OCR character mixups:

B and H	S and 5	i, l, 1, /, ! and I
B and R	Z and 2	o, O and 0 (zero)
B and 8	Fb and h	n and r
D and G	c, e and o	r and n
D and O	cl and d	rn and m
G and 6	h and k	v and y
S and 8	h and n	



# FINDING ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

## Search GenealogyBank

GenealogyBank <[www.genealogybank.com](http://www.genealogybank.com)>, a subsidiary of NewsBank, contains more than 8,000 titles from all US states. The site also has historical books and documents, plus the Social Security Death Index. Access to more-recent papers may require an additional NewsLibrary subscription.

**1 Navigate to the database.** Scroll down on the home page and click "Newspaper Archives, 1690-2016." You'll see a page called Historical Newspapers & Articles for All 50 States.

**2 Enter your search terms.** Use the name fields to search articles indexed by name. Also try names and other terms in

the keyword field to search the full text of articles. To limit your search to one or more states, click either the US map or the boxes next to state names. If you click on the name of the state, you can choose cities to focus your search. Then click on Begin Search. Each time you change parameters and hit Begin Search, a new list of results is generated.

**3 View your results.** Click on an article headline to view it. You can save and/or print the article image using options above the page viewer.

1

**Historical Newspapers & Articles For All 50 States**  
Featuring complete copies of each newspaper with 2+ billion articles.

Enter your ancestor's name below and we'll search historical newspapers to help you learn more.

**Last Name**  **First Name**   
 Exact Search  
 Include Keywords  
 Exclude Keywords  
 Date Range  to   
 Date  
Added Since:

**Search U.S. Newspaper Archives By State**

Check your selection to search U.S. newspapers by state, city, or newspaper title.

<input type="checkbox"/> Alabama	<input type="checkbox"/> Montana
<input type="checkbox"/> Alaska	<input type="checkbox"/> Nebraska
<input type="checkbox"/> Arizona	<input type="checkbox"/> Nevada
<input type="checkbox"/> Arkansas	<input type="checkbox"/> New Hampshire
<input type="checkbox"/> California	<input type="checkbox"/> New Jersey
<input type="checkbox"/> Colorado	<input type="checkbox"/> New Mexico
<input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut	<input type="checkbox"/> New York
<input type="checkbox"/> Delaware	<input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina
<input type="checkbox"/> Dist. of Columbia	<input type="checkbox"/> North Dakota
<input type="checkbox"/> Florida	<input type="checkbox"/> Ohio
<input type="checkbox"/> Georgia	<input type="checkbox"/> Oklahoma
<input type="checkbox"/> Hawaii	<input type="checkbox"/> Oregon
<input type="checkbox"/> Idaho	<input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input type="checkbox"/> Rhode Island
<input type="checkbox"/> Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina

[Newspaper Search Tips](#)  
**Begin Search**

2

Enter your ancestor's name below and we'll search historical newspapers to help you learn more.

**Last Name**  **First Name**   
 Exact Search  
 Include Keywords  
 Exclude Keywords  
 Date Range  to   
 Date  
Added Since:

3

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Home > Newspaper Archives > Search Results > [Previous Result](#) Result 2 of 30 [Next Result](#)

This item refers to Snyder; Hiram. [No Headline]  
Page: 9 Date: Friday, May 5, 1916 Paper: Daily Illinois State Register (Springfield, Illinois) Page: 9  
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HIGHLIGHTS:  Snyder; Hiram find

Wagoner, Veroy...  
Eberlein, Carrollton; treasurer, Mary  
idd, Chesterfield; warden, Rose E. Dun-  
can, Palmyra.  
The M. L. A. society will meet Mon-  
day afternoon at the Methodist church.  
Mrs. N. L. Jones and Mrs. Fred Fish-  
back will act as hostess.  
Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Whiteside are  
spending a few days in St. Louis.  
Mrs. Frances Sharon has gone to Kan-  
sas City to spend the summer with her  
son, Fred Sharon, and wife.  
The funeral of Mrs. Perlina Snyder,  
widow of Hiram Snyder, took place from  
the Baptist church in Eldred Saturday.  
She was aged about 70 years and died  
of heart failure.  
Carrollton, Ill., May 2.—Mrs. eHnry  
Schafer spent Friday in Jerseyville

chased the Mrs. J. M. Ahrens property  
and will soon take possession of his  
new home.  
Frank Courtney, a Civil war vet-  
eran, was a patient in the Litchfield  
hospital, where he received treatment.  
Mr. Courtney has been ill for some  
time, although he was able to be up.  
Mrs. Letitia Smith, who has been a  
guest of her daughter, Mrs. H. P. Wil-  
loughby, for several weeks, had the  
misfortune of falling and breaking her  
wrist recently. She is now improving  
as rapidly as can be expected of a  
break.  
Mr. and Mrs. Chris Koller of Benld  
were Staunton visitors Friday.  
Mrs. Arthur Little of Benld was a  
Staunton visitor Wednesday.  
Charles Klett was called to Carlin-

# FINDING ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

## MORE DIGITIZED NEWSPAPER WEBSITES

- **Accessible Archives** \$ <[www.accessible.com/accessible/index.html](http://www.accessible.com/accessible/index.html)>
- **Ancestry.com** \$ <[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)>
- **BC Historical Newspapers** <[open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers](http://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcnewspapers)>
- **British Newspaper Archive** \$ <[www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)>



- **California Digital Newspaper Collection** <[cdnc.ucr.edu](http://cdnc.ucr.edu)>
- **Chronicling America** <[www.loc.gov/chroniclingamerica](http://www.loc.gov/chroniclingamerica)>
- **Elephind.com** <[www.elephind.com](http://www.elephind.com)>
- **Findmypast** \$ <[www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)>
- **Fold3.com** \$ <[fold3.com](http://fold3.com)>
- **GenealogyBank** \$ <[www.genealogybank.com](http://www.genealogybank.com)>
- **Google News Archive** <[news.google.com/newspapers](http://news.google.com/newspapers)>
- **Legacy.com** <[www.legacy.com](http://www.legacy.com)>: search online obituaries
- **MyHeritage** \$ <[www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)>
- **Newspaper Archive** \$ <[newspaperarchive.com](http://newspaperarchive.com)>
- **Newspapers.com** \$ <[www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)>
- **New York Times Article Archive** <[www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html)>: Nonsubscribers get free limited views of articles before 1923 or after 1980; pay per view for articles from 1923 to 1980.
- **Obitfinder.com** <[obitfinder.com](http://obitfinder.com)>
- **Obitsarchive.com** \$ <[obitsarchive.com](http://obitsarchive.com)>
- **Old Fulton NY Postcards** <[fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html](http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html)>
- **The Portal to Texas History** <[texashistory.unt.edu](http://texashistory.unt.edu)>
- **ProQuest Historical Newspapers** <[www.proquest.com/products-services/pq-hist-news.html#accordionOne](http://www.proquest.com/products-services/pq-hist-news.html#accordionOne)>: Access this service through subscribing public libraries.
- **Small Town Papers** <[www.smalltownpapers.com](http://www.smalltownpapers.com)>

## NEWSPAPER RESEARCH RESOURCES

### Websites

- **The Ancestor Hunt** <[www.theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html](http://www.theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html)>
- **CanGenealogy** <[cangenealogy.com/newspapers.html](http://cangenealogy.com/newspapers.html)>
- **Cyndi's List: Newspapers** <[cyndislist.com/newspapers](http://cyndislist.com/newspapers)>
- **Historical Newspapers, The FamilySearch Wiki** <[www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Historical\\_Newspapers](http://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Historical_Newspapers)>
- **The Online Historical Newspapers Site** <[sites.google.com/site/onlinenewspapersite](http://sites.google.com/site/onlinenewspapersite)>: a directory of links to historical newspaper collections

### Books

- **African-American Newspapers and Periodicals: A National Bibliography** by James P. Danky, editor, and Maureen E. Hady, associate editor (Harvard University Press, 1998)
- **American Newspapers, 1821-1936, A Union List of Files Available in the United States and Canada** by Winifred Gregory (H.W. Wilson Co., 1937)
- **Chronological Tables of American Newspapers, 1690-1820**, American Antiquarian Society (Barre Publishers, 1972)

- **The Family Tree Historical Newspapers Guide** by James M. Beidler (Family Tree Books, 2018)
- **Finding and Using African American Newspapers** by Timothy N. Pinnick (Gregarth Publishing Company, 2008)
- **The German Language Press of the Americas, Third Edition**, 3 volumes, by Karl J.R. Arndt and Mary E. Olsen (K.G Saur, 1976-1980)
- **Guide to Collections Care: Paper, Photographs, Textiles & Books** by Gaylord Brothers (2014)
- **History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820** by Clarence S. Brigham (reprinted, Greenwood Press, 1976)
- **How to Find Your Family History in Newspapers** by Lisa Louise Cooke (Genealogy Gems Publications, 2012)
- **Newspaper Indexes: A Location and Subject Guide for Researchers** by Anita Cheek Milner (Scarecrow Press, 1977)
- **Searching for Your Ancestors in Historic Newspapers** by Claudia C. Breland (self-published, 2014)
- **Trade Union Publications, 1850-1941**, by Lloyd G. Reynolds and Charles C. Killingsworth (Johns Hopkins Press, 1944)

# FINDING OFFLINE NEWSPAPERS

## ChroniclingAmerica

The Library of Congress' Chronicling America website <[chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov)> hosts a large, searchable collection of digitized newspapers. But another important feature of the site is its directory of US newspapers published since 1690 <[chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles)>. You can search for newspapers published in your ancestor's state, county and city, and specify publication years and keywords in the title. Results display libraries that hold the newspaper. Visit the library website for details on ordering copies or borrowing microfilm through interlibrary loan.

All states + from 1789 to 1924 + enter one or more search words

Pages Available: 12,086,479

### Search U.S. Newspaper Directory, 1690-Present

This directory of newspapers published in the United States since 1690 can help identify what titles exist for a specific place and time, using keywords to locate specific titles. Titles currently listed are:

Browse the Directory by newspaper title:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Select where the newspaper was published:

Tennessee Davidson Nashville

Select when the newspaper was published:

from 1800 to 1900

Enter keywords:

## WorldCat

Searching WorldCat <[www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)>, a database of the holdings of libraries around the world, can help you find microfilmed newspapers. Just enter your search terms, such as a publication place or words in the newspaper title. On your results page, use the Format filter to view only newspapers. Then click a result to see participating libraries that have at least a partial run.

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WorldCat connects you to the collections and services of more than 10,000 libraries

## Create a Newspaper Chronology

A newspaper chronology can help you keep track of local papers published during your ancestor's lifetime, so you can conduct a thorough search for related articles. Keep this document in an Excel spreadsheet or Google Sheets. Note the name of each newspaper in the area, with columns for year ranges. Fill in the appropriate columns to reflect when each newspaper was published, and color-code them to help you more easily distinguish them. You can add notes about websites that offer digitized versions or libraries that hold microfilm.

	A	B	C	D	E
	Date Range	1850-1859	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889
1	Name of Newspaper				
2	The Omaha Republican (daily)		1864		
3	Western Bugle	1852-53			
4	Omaha Arrow	1854			
5	Papillion Times			1874	
6	Omaha Daily News				
7	Omaha Daily Herald (evening)				1874
8	Examiner				
9	Newspaper - 8				
10	Newspaper - 9				
11	Newspaper - 10				

# NEWSPAPER RESEARCH TIPS

## 1 WATCH FOR REPRINTS.

An old adage in the news business says “there are no new stories, only new reporters writing about them.” Articles over time may discuss the same events or concepts, sometimes with new details. Some of these repeats may look like cut-and-paste jobs from earlier articles, while “facts” in these pieces may have evolved over time. Keep this in mind as you make your way through newspapers, and keep track of conflicting information that appears across issues or publications.

## 2 LEARN A LITTLE LATIN.

When referring to when events occurred, old newspaper articles often use the abbreviations *ult.* (for the Latin *ultimo*, meaning the previous year, month or week) and *inst.* (for *instant*, meaning the current time period).

## 3 REMEMBER TO FACT-CHECK.

While obituaries and other coverage related to deaths can help with research in a number of ways, obituaries sometimes include incorrect information. They also may omit data that might be considered embarrassing to the deceased or the survivors. Use obituaries in conjunction with other genealogical records (including obituaries in other publications) to ensure the document is accurate.

## 4 FIND PATTERNS.

When browsing old newspapers, look for consistent formats. For example, marriages notices may always be on page 2 and society news on the last page. This will help you tune out irrelevant information and more quickly find what you need.

## 5 PARDON TYPOS.

For the record: In the 19th and early 20th century, typographical errors were difficult to correct because the “hot type” process meant either creating a new piece of leaden type or “chipping off” part of the existing lead. Typos in the 21st century may come more from lack of copy editors and a rush to produce the news—modern newspapers have no mechanical alibi.

## 6 SEARCH FOR ALTERNATE VERSIONS.

Changes and corrections made to different editions of the same day’s newspaper may not have been microfilmed (and therefore may also remain undigitized). Keep this in mind if you notice an error in an old newspaper.

## American Newspaper History

**1690s**

The first known newspapers are published in the modern United States.

**1730s**

German papers, the first foreign-language publications, begin publishing in Philadelphia.

**1800s**

Newspapers become the preferred medium for news amongst most Americans, beginning a “golden age” for newspapers.

**1830s**

Newspaper publication soars; many titles target specific groups such as immigrants, workers or abolitionists.

Benjamin Franklin became publisher of *The Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1728.

**1840s**

Newspapers begin using wire services like the Associated Press, which allow stories to more quickly disseminate.

**1910s**

World War I leads to the closure of some German-language newspapers, such *Der Deutsche Correspondent* in Baltimore.

**1920s**

Radio broadcasting enters the mainstream, initially threatening newspapers.

**1950s**

Television begins to compete for advertising revenue and shift the way people consume their news.

**1970s**

Widespread inflation leads the cost of newspapers to skyrocket.

**2000s**

Print newspapers struggle in the internet age, with many publications shutting down or moving to digital-first (or digital-only) models.