

“A Nation Talking to Itself”: Intro to Newspaper Research

Elizabeth Hodges, ©

Senior Librarian

Genealogy Center - Genealogy@ACPL.Info

Basic Online Searching Tips & Tricks

- Start with a broad search
- Begin with a surname, geographic location, and date range
- Add search criteria
 - Terms associated with who you are searching for
 - Wildcard, Truncation, and Proximity Searches:
 - <https://libguides.mit.edu/c.php?g=175963&p=1158594>
- Watchout for OCR mistakes
- Incorporate abbreviations for first names or military ranks (i.e. Capt for Captain) for even more results:
 - <https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/use-abbreviations-in-your-newspaper-searches-to-find-50-more-ancestor-articles/>
- Try including hyphenated words:
 - <https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/use-abbreviations-in-your-newspaper-searches-to-find-50-more-ancestor-articles/>
- Be willing to research offline:
 - If the newspaper in the geographic location and timeframe you are researching hasn't been digitized, don't be afraid to reach out to the local libraries, state archives, and historical societies to track down the newspapers you need!

Offline Research

- Roughly 70-85% of newspapers in the U.S. are not online, but that shouldn't stop your research!
- If the newspaper in the geographic location and timeframe you are researching hasn't been digitized, don't be afraid to reach out to the local libraries, state archives, and historical societies to track down the newspapers you need!
- The Library of Congress' U.S. Newspaper Directory, 1690-Present is a simple, easy to use resource for finding repository locations and format (i.e. microfilm, physical paper, etc.) of historical newspapers in the U.S.
 - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles/>

- Additional tips on using this resource:
<https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/the-easiest-way-to-find-every-historical-newspaper-in-america/>

Online Newspaper Resources

Note: This is only a fraction of newspaper resources you can find online, but hopefully this list can get you started.

Free Newspaper Resources:

- Ancestor Hunt
 - This is a phenomenal collection of resources such as articles on doing newspaper research as well as a summary of online historical newspapers for the entire US and Puerto Rico, Canada, various European countries, as well as summaries on special US collections such as African American, Indigenous and Native American, Jewish American, and American Labor and Union newspapers.
 - Newspaper Research Articles: <https://theancestorhunt.com/newspapers.html>
 - Newspaper Links: <https://theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html>
 - Obituary Index Collections (U.S.):
 - <https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/3890-obituary-and-obituary-index-collection-links-from-the-us/>
 - Obituary Index Collections (Canada):
 - <https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/325-obituary-and-obituary-index-collections-from-canada/>
- Elephind
 - <https://elephind.com/>
 - This is a great tool to search across multiple collections at once.
- Chronicling America - Library of Congress
 - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
- Internet Archive - Newspapers:
 - <https://archive.org/details/newspapers>
- Library and Archives Canada
 - <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/newspapers/newspaper-collection/Pages/newspapers-collection.aspx>
- FamilySearch Catalog:
 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>

Subscription Based Databases:

- Newspapers.com **
- GenealogyBank**
 - My colleague Allison Singleton did an entire program on GenealogyBank:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDOR7ZoIIg8&list=PL8AE558B5D8661B31&index=24>
- Newspaper Archive**
- British Newspaper Archive via FindMyPast
 - These are both subscription based databases that have partnered to digitize British and Irish newspapers.
 - However, this partnership has resulted in the creation of a **free** collection of 19th century British newspapers (not Irish) that is searchable and viewable on FindMyPast without a subscription.
 - <https://search.findmypast.com/search/british-newspapers?modifiedfacets=true&exactnames=true&exactkeywords=false&accesstype=free%20to%20view>

**If you are visiting the Genealogy Center in person, these three databases can be accessed for free from our “on-site databases” page: <https://acpl.lib.in.us/explore-genealogy/our-resources>*