Using Chronicling America for Genealogical Research
Find your ancestors in the newspapers

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Webinar Tips
Use the Q&A panel to ask questions.
This presentation will NOT be recorded.
National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)

A joint venture between the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities
What is in Chronicling America?

- Part of the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)
- Newspapers from 48 states and Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands.
- 19,817,104 pages from 3765 titles.
- We expect to have 50 states and more US territories.
- We will continue to expand the collection for the foreseeable future.

https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/
Years available, 1777-1963
Copyright

- All newspapers included in the collection are in the Public Domain.
- Everything published before Dec. 31, 1926 is in the Public Domain.
- Everything published after Dec. 31, 1963 is considered to be under copyright protection.
- Anything published between those dates might be under copyright.
- This requires research.
- Some third party material might not be in the Public Domain.
Who decides what is included?

- In most cases, title selection is done by a local institution (one per state).
- They also oversee digitization.
- National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP) partners.
- Usually a state historical society, library, or archive, or public university library.
- Criteria for selection varies.
Some considerations for inclusion

- Availability: does the title still exist and in what condition?
- Is it a “paper of record?”
- Historical significance.
- Diversity: geographic, ethnic, religious, political.
Scanning

- Most of our images were scanned from microfilm.
- Most of original paper copies have been destroyed.
- Quality of the microfilming process can affect the quality of the digital image.
Image formats

- Two image formats to download.
  - JPEG2000
    - Higher resolution, more memory.
  - PDF
    - Lower resolution but less memory required.
    - Better for printing.
OCR, Optical Character Recognition

- This is what you are searching.
- It is a transcript created by computer software without direct human intervention.
- It can vary in accuracy.
- Age and condition of the newspaper pages can impact OCR accuracy.
- Some non-English content poses special problems.
- You can see it by clicking on the Text link on the toolbar.
Image Quality

This produced

This
Whereas

This produced

This
NEWSPAPER HISTORY
How newspapers evolved

1800

1900
1800

- 4 pages
- Mostly business and political stories.
- Paper is expensive and printing is labor intensive.
- No reporters, editor wrote most of the stories.
- The readership is mostly merchants and government leaders.
1900

- 8 pages
- Paper is cheaper and printing more automated.
- Greater literacy.
- The news is still mostly economic and political.
- There are now sports stories, book reviews and wedding announcements.
- Some are starting society and women’s columns and pages.
- Readership is still an “elite” but the elite is larger.
Bigger cities have bigger papers

- They now have reporters and are able to use wire services.
- There is usually still an editor but there are more staff making judgments.
- Many small town papers are still limited to 4 pages.
1960

- Major metropolitan papers are now sometimes hundreds of pages.
- Paper is now very cheap and printing is heavily automated.
- There is a much greater variety of news coverage.
- Coverage is more comprehensive.
Minority Press

- Focused on religious and ethnic groups that see themselves as ignored or misrepresented by the bigger papers.
- Many non-English language publications have appeared for new immigrant groups.
- There are trade and labor titles.
Don’t believe everything you read

- Papers often got things wrong in the past.
- Many had strong political agendas.
- They reflected the prejudices of the time.
- Some content maybe very offensive.
- Also spelling changes
  - Aeroplane – Airplane
Title Essays

The evening herald., April 20, 1921, Image 1

About The evening herald. (Klamath Falls, Or.) 1906-1942

Image provided by: University of Oregon Libraries; Eugene, OR

In 1905, Fred Cronemiller and his wife launched a home-published newspaper, the Evening Herald, in the southern Oregon community of Klamath Falls, located just east of the Cascade Mountains. Two years later, Ed Murray and Wesley O. Smith bought the paper and, with the help of a linotype machine, turned the tabloid into a four-page broadsheet that ran every day except Sunday and cost five cents a copy. Murray and Smith had managed other papers in this town of 6,000, and sought to turn the Herald into the leading local newspaper.

At this time Klamath County was a growing area, as evidenced by the paper’s advertisements boasting cheap mill lots, the region’s livability, and a low incidence of malaria. In 1912, there were two other local dailies: the Klamath Falls Express and the Evening Chronicle. Both papers were purchased and then canceled by Sam Evans, who in that
SEARCH STRATEGIES
The Advanced Search Tab

Select State(s): All states, Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut


Select Year(s)*: Newspaper pages are available for newspapers published between 1777-1963*

Or Date Range: from ______ to ______

Limit Search: only front page or Specific page

Language: All

Enter Search

...with any of the words:   ...with all of the words:   ...with the phrase:

...with the words: within ______ words of each other
Location: Geographic Limits

- Select State(s): All states, Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut

- Limit Search: only front page or Specific page

- Language: All

- Enter Search:
  - ...with any of the words:
  - ...with all of the words:
  - ...with the phrase:

- With the words: within 5 words of each other
The All Digitized Newspaper tab
A list of all titles published in a State
The Link to the map and other features is on the homepage
An interactive map of titles by time and location
Click on the dot and that will give you a title
We also have this additional database: the US Newspaper Directory
All Newspapers

This has a listing of all Newspapers published in the United States, 1690 to today. These are Library Catalog Records.

This is not limited to what is in our collection or what is digitized. You can limit it to only digitized content.

Select “Online Resource” from the Material Type menu.

Some maybe behind a paywall.
This is our newspaper directory
Here is a list of all the newspapers published there at that time:

1. Rogue River courier. [online resource] (Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon) 1907-1918
2. Rogue River courier. [online resource] (Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon) 1886-1927
3. Rogue River courier. (Grants Pass, Or.) 1907-1918
4. Rogue River courier. (Grants Pass, Or.) 1886-1927
5. The Oregon observer. (Grants Pass, Or.) 1877-1927
About The Oregon observer. (Grants Pass, Or.) 18??-1927
Grants Pass, Or. (1877-1927)

Title:
The Oregon observer. : (Grants Pass, Or.) 18??-1927

Place of publication:
Grants Pass, Or.

Geographic coverage:
- Grants Pass, Josephine, Oregon | View more titles from this: City, County, State

Publisher:
H.J. Richmond

Dates of publication:
Where to find other titles

HOLDING: Oregon Hist Soc Libr, Portland, OR
Available as: Microform
(Duplicate run: v.9:no.46-v.36:no.49 1901:01:05-1927:12:28, Holdings incomplete)
Last updated: 10/1998

HOLDING: Univ of Oregon Libr, Eugene, OR
Available as: Microfilm Service Copy
Dates:
- <1892:2:13-1911:1:25>
- <1912:2:7-1927:12:28>
Last updated: 07/1997
Available as: Microfilm Master
Dates:
- <1892:2:13-1903:2:28>
- <1904:2:20-1905:2:29>
- <1905:1:14-7:5>
- <1916:1:5-12>
- <1921:12:1-1923:10:10>
- <1925:6:24-9:30>
Date limitations
Other limits

Limit Search: [ ] only front page or Specific page [ ]

Language [ ]

Enter Search
...with any of the words: [ ]
...with all of the words: [ ]
...with the phrase: [ ]

...with the words: [ ] within 5 [ ] words of each other
Search fields

Select State(s):
- All states
- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut

Or Select Newspaper(s):
- All newspapers
- The Abbeville banner. (Abbeville, S.C.)
- The Abbeville bulletin. (Abbeville, S.C.)
- The Abbeville messenger. (Abbeville, S.C.)
- The Abbeville press and banner. (Abbeville, S.C.)
- Abbeville press. (Abbeville, S.C.)
- Abbeville progress. (Abbeville, Vermillion Parish, La.)
- Abendblatt der Illinois Staats-zeitung. (Chicago, Ill.)

Select Year(s)*
Newspaper pages are available for newspapers published between 1777-1963*

Or Date Range
- from [ ] to [ ]

Limit Search: [ ] only front page or Specific page

Language: [ ] All

Enter Search
...with any of the words:
...with all of the words:
...with the phrase:
...with the words:
[ ] within [ ] words of each other
When searching for individual’s names

Enter Search
...with **any** of the words:

...with **all** of the words:

...with the **phrase**:

...with the words: [within 5 words of each other]
THE MORE YOU KNOW THE EASIER IT WILL BE
The more you know about your subject the easier they are find

- Name.
- Where did they live?
- When did they live there?
- Occupation or professional title.
- Did they use initials (C. R. Walker)
- Names of spouse, parents, other relatives.
- Women were often referred to by their husband’s name.
- Mrs. John D. Price. (her name was Martha).
- The Census has this information.
Other resources

- Genealogical groups: local and national
- Local historical societies.
- Local public libraries.
- The Library of Congress has a Local History and Genealogy Division.
- https://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy
So why would this person be in the newspaper?

- Unfortunately people often became newsworthy because of an unfortunate event.
- Sensational accident or crime
- Scandal and gossip.
- Involved in politics or community organizations.
- There are many other reasons but these are going to be easiest to find.
So now you are ready to start your search
**Thumbnails**

- The orange rectangles (highlights) show the locations of the search terms on the page.
- The exact matches should appear first.
- Larger fonts get extra points (headlines).
- So does the number of times the term(s) appear on the page.
- After exact matches the search looks for similar spelling (Fisher, Fish, Fishing).
What to look for

- If you are searching a full name: John Parker
- Look for highlights that are close together or overlapping at the top.
- If it is in the headline even better.
- Then other highlights in the same column below.
- The person will usually be referred to by their full name first John Fisher then as Fisher later in the story.
Scattered highlights

- If you see highlights scattered about on the page.
- These are less likely to be accurate returns.
- It is possible this is something you are looking for.
- Depends on the time and effort you are willing to put in.
SEARCH STRATEGIES: EXAMPLES
Uncommon names are sometimes easier to find

**Riffelmacher**

Translation from online software

- Riffelmacher wanted out
- a pair of pants out of the closet
- take, came across one in the closet
- kept a stored handgun, this one
- lub himself and met the woman so badly
- Lich in the abdomen that after kur
- different time
- a w a
Common Names: John Beach

John Beach

Major John Beach

Major John Beach, one of the oldest and best known citizens of Wapello county, died at his residence near Agency City, at 6 minutes past 2 o'clock, on Monday morning, August 31st, in the 63rd year of his age.

Major Beach was a son-in-law of Gen. Street, the latter being the first agent of the Sac and Fox Indians at the Military Post, which was then located near the present site of Agency City. Upon the death of Gen. Street, Major Beach was appointed as his successor about 1838 by President Van Buren, which office he held until the Indians were removed from this section, and possibly longer.

He was probably better posted about the early history of Wapello county, and in fact of the Des Moines Valley, than any one of our pioneers, and it is hoped that his manuscript data touching these matters will be preserved and pass into the hands of our Old Settlers' Society for publication.

After retiring from his Indian aven...
It helps if your ancestor was a celebrity

- I was helping a patron who was searching the Arizona papers for an ancestor.
- This fellow appeared often in our search results.
- This is Harry Wheeler.
- Last of the old west gunfighter/lawman.
- Lived in Arizona and his career spanned turn of the 19\textsuperscript{th} to the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.
- Very well known at the time and was written about frequently in the papers.
Problem was we were looking for this guy

- Frank Wheeler also a lawman in Arizona at the same time.
- Also a long and storied career, just not as “romantic”.
- We did find many mentions of Harry turning up in the searches.
- A regular problem when searching for common names.
- As we learned more about Frank, we found other people involved in the various incidents.
- We used their names to search; including the unfortunate Mr. Butts here.
Birth and Death Announcements

• These became more common as newspapers expanded.
• These became more frequent in 1880s and 1890s.
• Frequently this depended on the whims of the Editor.
• They often preferred friends and prominent citizens.
• Sometimes these had to be paid for.
• They were often lacking in detail.
• Usually printed on the same page.
Try different searches because you never know what you will find.

- Try different combinations of terms.
- Add to your list of terms as you learn more.
- Time and effort can pay off.

Bisbee daily review. [volume] (Bisbee, Ariz.) 1901-1971, October 15, 1909

Long Walk Wins Wager.

Los Angeles, Cal.—After having completed a foot-journey across the continent to Seattle, Carl Livingston, a youth of Tulsa, Okla., is on his way home to claim a wager of $100. He arrived here on the steamer Hanalei. A condition of the wager was that the youth must return with $1,000 earned on the trip. He has $750 of the amount and expects to earn the rest before he gets home, as he still has 70 days before the time limit expires.
Questions

National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)
https://www.loc.gov/ndnp

Chronicling America
https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/

Ask a Librarian (Research Questions)
https://ask.loc.gov/newspapers-periodicals

Follow Chronicling America on Twitter @ChronAmLOC

Technical Questions: ndnptech@loc.gov

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