

Using Newspapers in Family Research

A Journalist's Perspective

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Research Strategy

- Newspapers are written for **today**
- **Any given area will be covered by multiple publications** at city, county and state levels as well as morning and afternoon
- **Large newspapers have/had multiple editions** not all of which are archived
- Newspapers came and went. **Check the dates and see what papers were in publication**

More Research Strategies

- Check **multiple spellings** for names
- Articles are **only as good as the source** (and the reporter)
- Don't forget about **newspapers covering ethnic communities**
- **Check trade publications & Community newsletters**
- Check **small town newspapers first**

News for the Family Historian

- News (state and local) – some from out of area
- Profiles – Articles focused on people
- A look back – articles about history
- Community briefs columns
- Notices
- Advertisements (Classifieds and display)

Types of Notices

- **Obituaries & Death Notices**
 - Obituary facts come from different sources
 - Only as accurate as source and writer
- **Births**
 - Hospitals stopped submitting births in 1990s
- **Marriage & Engagement**
 - Marriage licenses and wedding announcements
- **Real Estate Transfers**
 - Entire publications for this type of notice
- **Legal notices** (Wills, estates, property sales)
 - Locate the “paper of record”
- **Crimes**
 - Usually short notices

Sources for Newspapers

- **Online archives**

- Newspapers.com (paid)
- Library of Congress - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> (free)
- Newspaperarchive.com (paid)
- Online archives from the newspaper itself (some paid)
- Ancestry.com & Other genealogy websites (paid)
- Google News archive - <https://news.google.com/newspapers> (free)

More Sources

- **Online newspaper guides**
 - Online Guide to Historical Newspapers
<https://sites.google.com/site/onlinenewspapersite/Home/>
 - Wikipedia – List of online newspaper archives
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:List_of_online_newspaper_archives
 - Historical Newspapers and Indexes on the Internet: A Genealogy Research guide
<http://www.researchguides.net/newspapers.htm>
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More Sources

- **Libraries & Archives**
 - Local libraries
 - Microfilm, microfiche and bound volumes
 - State libraries and archives
 - University libraries
 - Historical & Genealogical societies
 - Printed books of newspaper columns by local columnists

Questions?