

Don't Neglect Newspaper Obituaries To Open Doors for "Invisible" Vital Records: Technology to the Rescue!

Ever get stuck in searching for your ancestors? Newspapers can be a valuable resource for locating hard to find ancestors when civil or church records are unattainable. Many community newspapers today have digital archives of back issues. Some examples of things you may find in newspapers that could be valuable for family history research include the following info: **City Research, Obituaries, Wedding Announcements, and Historical Context**. By checking the newspaper index, you can learn if your ancestors were mentioned briefly somewhere in their paper. It is also important to see if the city newspaper has a local section that referenced a surrounding town where your ancestor(s) may have lived.

Newspaper obituaries are one of the most valuable genealogical resources available in newspapers. Obituaries can provide you with information on an ancestor's date and place of birth and death, where they were buried, places they may have lived throughout their lives, notable things they may have accomplished, and family relationships. In addition to the local paper in the area where the person died, obituaries are often published in newspapers in the town or towns where the person lived or grew up.

The information found in newspaper wedding announcements may vary. Sometimes wedding announcements were published with the intent to announce the engagement of two individuals and their intent to be married. Other times wedding announcements were published after a couple's marriage to serve as an acknowledgment that they had been married. Whatever the purpose or format of the wedding announcement in the newspaper, you can typically find the names of the bride and groom, the names of their parents, the place they were (or were going to be) married and the date of their marriage.

Even if your ancestor is not specifically mentioned in the newspaper in the time and place where they lived, the newspaper itself can provide you with information about what your ancestor might have experienced in everyday life. This can lead you to other sources about events and places that may prove helpful in your further research.

To You Need Motivation to Locate "Lost" Ancestors?

If so, please read on to learn of appropriate resources about "how to" locate specific newspapers for your research successes!

Use FamilySearch for Newspaper Obituaries

FamilySearch has a robust section covering the entire 50 states at https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Obituaries. There are separate listings for each state so you can focus in quickly on what newspapers and their supporting information might be available. In addition, online sources are also identified along with prime sources for obituaries.

United States
Obituaries

United States Wiki Topics



Beginning Research

- Research Strategies
- Record Finder

Record Types

- Adoption
- Bible Records
- Business Records
- Cemeteries
- Census
- Church Records
- Colonial Records
- Correctional Institutions
- Court Records
- Directories
- Emigration & Immigration
- Funeral Homes
- Genealogies
- Land & Property
- Military Records
- Naturalization & Citizenship
- Newspapers
- Obituaries
- Occupations
- Online Records
- Online Records by State
- Periodicals
- Probate Records
- Religious Records
- Taxation
- Town Records
- Vital Records
- Voter Records

United States Background

- Biography
- Church History
- Gazetteers
- Handwriting
- History
- Maps
- Migration
- For Further Reading

- [Historical Geography](#)

Ethnicity

- [African Americans](#)
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- [Minorities](#)

Local Research Resources

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- [Societies](#)
- [US Family History Centers](#)



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6.35 Ohio
6.36 Oklahoma
6.37 Oregon
6.38 Pennsylvania
6.39 Rhode Island
6.40 South Carolina
6.41 South Dakota
6.42 Tennessee
6.43 Texas
6.44 Utah
6.45 Vermont
6.46 Virginia
6.47 Washington
6.48 West Virginia
6.49 Wisconsin
6.50 Wyoming
6.51 District of Columbia (D.C.)

Online Resources

- **1815-2011:** [United States, Genealogy Bank Historical Newspaper Obituaries, 1815-2011 at FamilySearch](#) — index
- **1899-2012** - [United States, Obituaries, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1899-2012 at FamilySearch](#) — index and images
- **1980-2014** - [United States, Genealogy Bank Obituaries, 1980-2014 at FamilySearch](#) — index and images
- **2001-2014** - [Currentobituary.com index, 2001-2014 at FamilySearch](#) — index
- [America's Obituaries and Death Notices](#) by Newsbank - (\$), must have a subscription, offered for free at most Public libraries
- [U.S., Obituary Collection, 1930-2017](#) (\$) index
- [Legacy.com](#) is a free website containing thousands of obituaries.

- [GenealogyBank](#) - (\$), searchable images of historic newspapers.
- [Obituary Daily Times](#) at Rootsweb - searchable index.
- [Chronicling America, Historic American Newspapers](#) at The Library of Congress
- [USGenWeb Project](#) - may contain obituary transcriptions or indexes
- [USGenWeb Archives Project](#). - may contain some obituary transcriptions by location.
- [GenDisasters](#) contains newspaper articles about train wrecks, tornadoes, fires, accidents and other explosions. Often these articles contain detailed death information.
- [Mennonite Obituary Index](#) - index of many Mennonite obituaries.
- [Genealogy Buff - Library - Genealogy Data Files](#)
- [ObitsArchives](#) is a large collection of Newspaper obituaries in the United States. Can search by all sources or by location.
- [OldDeathRecords.org](#) contains transcribed obituaries and death notices from the 1800s to about 1960, and necrology lists from various sources.
- [List of Surnames in the All-Year Obituary Indexes for Various Primitive Baptist Church Periodicals](#)
- [Obit City](#)

Sources for Obituaries

Obituaries have only been specifically indexed online for the past few years. You will find that obituary indexes will usually only date from the late 1960s or 1970s. However, many obituaries have been published in newspapers and the number of online collections for newspapers is growing. You may wish to see [United States Newspapers](#) and [Digital Historical Newspapers](#).

For additional sources you might try the following:

- The Library of Congress [Chronicling America, Historic American Newspapers](#). This site also contains the US Newspaper Directory, 1690 to Present, with the locations of the repositories of most of the newspapers published in America.
- [Public Libraries](#) links to obituary search engines in all states and the U.S. Virgin Islands and has search tips and suggestions by locality.
- [Cyndi's List](#) contains many links to obituary-related sites. Scroll down and click the topics Obituaries or Newspapers.
- Use a Google search to look for online obituaries. To do this you need to find the name of the paper in the location where you think the death took place. Websites [Newspapers- USA and Worldwide](#) and [News and Newspapers Online](#) help you see if there was a paper near the locality. Once you find the name, type the name of the location and the word newspaper or obituary.
- Many funeral homes publish obituaries on their websites. These can usually be located with a Google search on the person's name.
- [FamilySearch Research Classes](#) Online
- Local genealogical and historical societies, public libraries, and some newspaper publishers maintain clipping files of obituaries. Printed abstracts of obituaries can also be found in various published sources, such as genealogical periodicals. A bibliography of published sources is:

Jarboe, Betty M. *Obituaries: A Guide to Sources*. Second Edition. Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall, 1989. [WorldCat 19372997FHL 973 V43](#) An appendix describes obituary indexes available at major libraries.

- [1980-2014 United States, GenealogyBank Obituaries, 1980-2014 at FamilySearch](#) — index and images

The Family History Guide Offers Invaluable Training with Unique Research Tips and Tricks

The Family History Guide continues to be a valuable resource for training end-users of “how to” use key websites to maximize your time and energy in fully exploring what information is available for your original research solutions. The Family History Guide features two levels of exercises at <https://thefhguide.com/project-9-united-statesf4.html#goal-f4> on **how to research newspapers online**. Included are videos and step-by-step how-to tutorials to speed up the learning curve for more successful inquiries.

Closing Comments

Don't limit your newspaper inquiries to just to USA newspapers. For example, the *British Newspaper Archives* is a collaboration between the *British Library* and genealogy website *Findmypast*. This site is digitizing up to 40 million newspaper pages from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. If you don't use the Internet in your research, you may never find invaluable information within just a few mouse clicks on your computer/tablet/smartphone which could be a game-changer in enhancing your pursuit of achieving genealogical success and joy. You don't necessarily have to surf the Internet aimlessly. The postings included on this Facebook group will offer you many opportunities to assertively brain-storm with vital links readily available for your genealogical adventures. Never say NO as there are answers available for most of our family history searches. We may not find these family search encounters quickly but patience is truly a virtue for both short-and-long-term growth. And with “how to” information regularly being posted on the Facebook group, your chances for success are significantly increased. Especially is this true if you have a spiritual attitude about genealogy even on a “bad good hair day.” An important attribute for all genealogists is by pondering, praying, and fasting about your challenges, the gift of the holy ghost can be a companion to motivate you to greater aspirations and achievements by actively pursuing your research options rather than giving up.

Good luck and please don't hesitate to share your successes with us in the appropriate comment sections of this Facebook group. We all need encouragement especially whenever it comes from others who are successful! For success when shared, it can be as contagious as the common cold.