

Using Historical Newspapers in Genealogical Research

Presented by Laura Cabbage-Draper
lcdgenealogy@gmail.com
lcdgenealogy.com

Before Facebook and Twitter, the local paper was the place to get the scoop on your community. Historical newspapers are indispensable to genealogical research and to learning about your ancestors and their community. The growth of newspaper digitization has resulted in an incredible resource to learn more about our family and provide clues for additional research.

Importance of Historical Newspapers to Genealogical Research

- Vital record substitution
- Clues for additional research (deeds, court cases, etc.)
- News articles may have more details than vital records
- Assemble a FAN club
- Social, occupational and historical context
- A glimpse of ancestors' lives

Possible Newspaper Discoveries

- Obituaries and Death Notices (Died, In Remembrance, Memorials)
- Marriages
- Ship Arrivals and Train Schedules
- Accidents
- Local Advertisements
- Real Estate Transfers
- Tax & Jury Lists
- Election Results
- List of Letters
- Court Cases and Legal Notices
- Police Blotter
- Military Lists, Reports, News from Soldiers
- Church News
- Schools and Graduation
- Anniversaries and Family Reunions

Ethnic Newspapers

- Served a specific ethnic or language group
- Informed their community of news and events
- May contain more details than found in a local newspaper
- Potential language barrier

Tips & Suggestions

- Analyze every article for clues – take good notes and add items to research plan
- Check neighboring towns for newspapers (county seat or market town)
- Read the entire paper to understand the time and place
- Watch for “Papers Please Copy”
- Add 25 or 50 years to an event
- It might take days or weeks for a story to run
- Copy, save and cite the news item!

Newspaper Search Techniques

- Put the name in quotation marks – “John Cabbage”
- Use a woman’s married name – “Mrs. Frank Speck”
- Watch for hyphenated names
- Search Last Name, First Name
- Search for a street name or address
- Search for an organization, church or business name

Finding Historic Newspapers

- Library of Congress – Chronicling America chroniclingamerica.loc.gov
- Google News Archive – news.google.com/newspapers
- NJ Digital Newspaper Project – libguides.njstatelib.org/digitized-newspapers
- NJ Historical Portal – 144.217.79.28/~parkway/
- Libraries – local, state and university
- New Jersey State Archives – nj.gov/state/archives/pdf/newspaperSale.pdf
- New Jersey Historical Society – jerseyhistory.org/newspapers-n/
- New Jersey Published Archives Series – familysearch.org/search/catalog/193642?availability=Family%20History%20Library
- Newark Public Library – digital.npl.org/
- Old Fulton Postcards – fultonsearch.org
- Linkpendium – linkpendium.com
- Cyndi’s List – cyndislist.com/newspapers
- Newspapers.com – newspapers.com
- Genealogy Bank – genealogybank.com
- America’s Historical Newspapers – readex.com/products/americas-historical-newspapers
- Ancestry.com – ancestry.com
- FamilySearch.org – familysearch.org
- My Heritage – myheritage.com
- Find My Past – findmypast.com
- Fold3.com – fold3.com