

Read All About It! Techniques to Find Your Ancestors in the Newspapers

Melanie McComb, Senior Genealogist, melanie.mccomb@americanancestors.org

Types of Newspaper Articles to Look For

- Birth Announcements
- Engagement and Bridal Shower Announcements
- Business Advertisements
- Crime Related Articles (Arrests, Trials)
- Death Notices
- Obituaries & Funeral Articles
- Land Sales
- Local Interest/Historical Stories
- Marriage Announcements/Licenses
- Probate Notices
- List of Persons with Mail at the Post Office

Search Tips

- Use known nicknames
- Abbreviated names/initials (ex. J.B. Connolly)
- Proper addresses (ex. Mr. Connolly)
- For women, use the husband's name (Mrs. James Connolly)
- Search by location (including street address)
- Use variations for surnames
- Use multiple keywords to narrow results (ex. name, location, occupation, etc.)
- Use library catalogue to look up newspaper abstracts that have been typed up
- Research in newspapers outside the area where the ancestor died (ex. past residences, where current family members, where they attended school)

OCR Transcription Errors

- “m” transcribed as “rn”
- “e” transcribed as “c”
- “l” transcribed as “1”
- “o” transcribed as “c”

Newspaper Databases (available remotely to American Ancestors members)

These databases can be accessed by logging into AmericanAncestors.org and navigating to our Partner Databases From Home Page - <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/partner-databases>

- Irish Newspaper Archives
<https://www.irishnewsarchive.com>
- NewspaperArchive
<https://newspaperarchive.com>
- Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers
https://go.gale.com/ps/start.do?u=milin_b_nenghist&p=NCNP&aty=ip

Newspaper Databases on AmericanAncestors.org

- Boston Evening Transcript: Genealogy Pages, 1911-1940 -
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/1655/boston-evening-transcript-genealogy-pages-1911-1940>
- Boston Pilot: Irish Immigrant Advertisements (Search for Missing Friends), 1831-1920 -
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/510/boston-pilot-irish-immigrant-advertisements-search-for-missing-friends-1831-1920>
- Christian Intelligencer: Death Reports of Reformed Dutch Church, 1830-1871 -
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/70/christian-intelligencer-death-reports-of-reformed-dutch-church-1830-1871>
- Christian Intelligencer: Marriages (Reformed Dutch Ch.), 1830-1871 -
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/181/christian-intelligencer-marriages-reformed-dutch-ch-1830-1871>
- New Hampshire Gazette: Newspaper Abstracts, 1756-1769 -
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/1654/new-hampshire-gazette-newspaper-abstracts-1756-1769>

- **New Hampshire: Marriage and Death Notices Published in Newspapers, 1848-1856 -**
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/153/new-hampshire-marriage-and-death-notices-published-in-newspapers-1848-1856>
- **New York Evening Post: Death Notices, 1801-1890 -**
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/1656/new-york-evening-post-death-notices-1801-1890>
- **New York Evening Post: Marriage Notices, 1801-1890 -**
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/155/new-york-evening-post-marriage-notices-1801-1890>
- **Otsego County, NY: Newspaper Records, 1808-1831 -**
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/208/otsego-county-ny-newspaper-records-1808-1831>
- **Portsmouth, NH: Abstracts from Newspapers, 1776-1800 -**
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/480/portsmouth-nh-abstracts-from-newspapers-1776-1800>

Newspaper Databases (Free at Home)

- **Ancestor Hunt**
<http://www.theancestorhunt.com/newspaper-research-links.html>
- **Chronicling America (1789-1963)**
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america>
- **Cyndi's List**
<http://www.cyndislist.com/newspapers>
- **Elephind**
<https://elephind.com/>
- **Google News Newspaper Archive**
<https://news.google.com/newspapers>
- **Newspaper Finder**
<https://newspaperfinder.com>
- **Small Town Papers**
<http://www.smalltownpapers.com/>

Newspaper Databases (Subscription Required)

- British Newspaper Archive
<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>
- Eastern European Newspaper Archive <https://adt.arcanum.com/en/>
- GenealogyBank
<https://www.genealogybank.com>

Publications

Beidler, James. *The Family Tree Historical Newspapers Guide: How to Find Your Ancestors in Archived Newspapers* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Family Tree Books, 2018).

Marks, Kenneth. *Finding Your Ancestors in Historical Newspapers: A Practical Guide to Improving Your Online Newspaper Research Results* (Rockatech Books, 2024).

Milner, Anita Cheek. *Newspaper Genealogy Columns: A Preliminary Checklist* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1986).