**Too Many Old Newspapers: How Do You Find Your People? Handout**

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**A Case Study from 1886.**

* We had family data that showed a couple who died in their early 20s
* They had lived in Salt Lake City; had been married just over 3 years
* The older relatives didn’t want to talk about the case
* I looked for newspapers at that time and place and found two candidate papers, the Deseret News and the Salt Lake Tribune
* Found the couple and their story in each newspaper; indeed, there had been a kind of scandalous situation – both papers gave the incident major coverage
* The result: I found exactly what I was looking for, with little difficulty and for free
* Tip: sometimes there are newspaper “pay sites” for a newspapers, but that same newspaper may also be available on a free site – therefore, double-check

**Online Lists of Online Newspapers**

* Wikipedia has a “List of Online Newspaper Archives.” This list is many pages long and seems to be fairly comprehensive. It groups the newspapers by country and (within the US) by State.
* Elephind.com -- This site lists over 2700 online sites world-wide. It lists them by their collections.
* Google News – lists many titles world-wide.

**Problems in Finding the Relevant Newspaper for Your Needs**

* \*\*\*\*\*PROBLEM: There is no central place for making your query; you need to search each of the many sites individually
* PROBLEM: Many/most of the online newspaper sites are “pay sites” so they prefer that you pay them for their data -- however, some will permit you to check their index of names, and may show you that they have data for your target person, but then you need to pay to get the actual data
* So, you need a good strategy to find your target people

**The Best Strategy for Finding People**

* \*\*\*\*\*Identify your target person’s location for the time period where you think the data may be
* \*\*\*\*\*Match the time period with the location
* Then, look for a newspaper published in that location in that time period
* Ideally, you will search within a specific US State and County in a specific year\*\*\*\*\*
* As you define your search parameters, think of the events that might be in the newspaper: deaths and obituaries; marriage reports; births; probate data; 50th anniversaries, wartime casualty lists

**Sites for Finding Historic Newspapers**

* \*\*\*\*\*Family Search WIKI – go to the individual WIKIs for a State’s Genealogy; then, go further to view the WIKI for the County where your people lived. On this site, when you get to the county level, you should be able to identify the most relevant online Newspaper collections and/or sites.
* \*\*\*\*\*Linkpendium.com - - go to the individual State and view the categories for Newspapers and Obituaries; then (most important), go to the individual County page and view the same categories there. At the county level, you will find a rather comprehensive listing of the online Newspapers available along with the sites or collections that have that data; also, the site indicates whether the site is for pay or not.
* \*\*\*Google – insert keywords such as “historic newspapers” and the name of the county or town

**Examples of the Use of This Methodology**

* The Salt Lake City case that we covered earlier – Both the Family Search WIKI for the county and the Linkpendium data for the county would have noted the availability of the two newspapers that we used
* Looking for death data for Jonathan Tracy in Warren County, IL. I had census data showing him living there in 1850, but he was missing from the 1860 census. The target time period was “between 1850 and 1860” and the location was Warren County, IL.
* I looked at the Linkpendium site for Warren County and found a variety of newspapers. I bypassed the ones “for pay” and started to look at the others. By inserting the name “Jonathan Tracy” I found an obit for him in the Monmouth Atlas in 1855. This obit provided excellent data: age, date of death, and family relationships.
* Another case study for Jonathan Tracy. The time period was 1810-1830; he was in the Ontario County NY/US census for that time period. The question: “Could we find any more data about him or his family during that time period?”
* I used the Family Search WIKI. I went to Ontario County, looked at the Newspapers category. The WIKI noted a collection, the Old Fulton NY Post Cards site, which has a collection of 400 old NY newspapers. A few in Ontario County were listed for that early time period. I clicked on the link for the Fulton site, inserted the name Jonathan Tracy, and get several hits.
* One useful hit shows him there in 1817. A letter for him is at the local post office. It can be picked up by either Jonathan Tracy or Israel Owen. Tracy’s wife is surnamed Owen so Israel must be another relative. Great info.
* I checked the Linkpendium site to see if it would have helped. Although it listed a number of newspapers, it didn’t mention the Fulton site – the different sites offer different possibilities.

**\*\*\*Various Newspaper Online Collections**

* NewspapersUSA.com -- 130 Million pages on the internet
* Newspaper Archives.com – 127 million pages, and available on My Heritage
* Newspapers.com (subsidiary of ancestry.com) - 57 Million pages
* Fulton Post Cards – 30 Million pages; fultonhistory.com
* Chronicling America (Library of Congress) - 7 million pages; www.loc.gov/chroniclingamerica/index.com
* Other Sites; Genealogy Bank; Newspaper Bank; and others, etc.

**Looking Only for Obits**

* \*\*\*Use this site: ObitsArchive.com

**Tracking Celebrities or Prominent People in Newspapers**

* Many more opportunities with well- known people
* Sam Pettis, a prominent musician of the 1920s, had a lot of newspaper coverage

**Beyond the Online Newspapers: the Denise Manning Case Study**

* She was looking for an ancestor in a small IL county. No available data seemed to be online. Not only no newspapers, no other relevant online records – period.
* She went to Jo Daviess County to see what she could find.
* In the local library, she found a genealogist who had been indexing old local newspapers for 1878 – he had the data she needed
* Because this was a small obscure county/town with a small obscure newspaper, chances are that this paper would never be online.
* Therefore, sometimes we need to look at offline newspaper sources\*\*\*\*\*

**Finding the Historic Newspapers that May Be on Microfilm (or Paper)**

* \*\*\*\*\*PROBLEM: There are many sizable collections of microfilmed newspapers, but again there seems to be no central place to find them
* We may need to look in small local libraries or larger regional collections
* \*\*\*\*\*However, our rule is the same: Look for a LOCATION AND TIME PERIOD.
* Example: Logan County, IL Newspapers. Near to Lincoln, IL, in Springfield IL, there is the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; it has a vast microfilm newspaper collection of 100,000 reels, equivalent to 30 million pages.
* For Logan County, their microfilm collection is amazing – they have microfilms for 24 different Logan County newspapers representing all time periods, even including a German-American paper. Note: NONE of the Logan County newspapers is online.
* As for ethnic newspapers, there were 82 German language newspapers published in IL. None are online, but the Springfield Library has 18 of them on microfilm.
* Other major microfilm repositories:
	+ IN State Library – 100,000 reels, 30 million pages;
	+ OK – 30,000 reels;
	+ Central Research Library, a consortium of Harvard, Yale,
	+ and a number of other big libraries.

**Looking for a Comprehensive List of All Newspapers Ever Published in US**

* \*\*\*\*\*Yes, there is such a list, compiled by the Library of Congress
* This list is online, at the LOC’s Chronicling America site
* This master list contains 153,000 titles. You can go to this site, and then select a State or a county, and thus get a list of all the newspapers ever published there.
* \*\*\*\*\*They also tell you in their “Holdings” category for each newspaper the location of any repositories that “hold” that paper.
* Logan County example. I select Logan County, and find a list of 99 newspapers.
* \*\*\*Virtually all of these papers are on microfilm somewhere: at local libraries, or in larger collections – but none are online.
* \*\*\*Also, an alternate method to find the many Library of Congress newspapers is to go to a site called “Stanford Visualization Project.” Go to Google and put these words in and you’ll be able to find the site, which provides a US/States map, and then maps the many different newspapers by year and by location.

**Today’s 10 Takeaways**

1. There are many pages of Online historic newspapers
2. No Centralized way to find your target data
3. Ancestor’s Location and Time Period are critical data points to find target data
4. Family Search Wiki is an excellent finding aid
5. Linkpendium is also an excellent finding aid
6. Google can be an excellent finding aid
7. To find obits, use ObitsArchive.com
8. Microfilm collections greatly outnumber the Online newspapers
9. Library of Congress website lists ALL old newspapers, AND the repository where they can be found
10. You can find people in the old newspapers