

Old News is Good News: Using Historical Newspapers for Your Research

Taneya Y. Koonce, MSLS, MPH
Tennessee State Library & Archives Workshop
January 26, 2019

taneya@gmail.com | Twitter: [@taneya](https://twitter.com/taneya) | Genealogy Blog: www.taneya-kalonji.com/genblog
Handout available online at <http://bit.ly/taneya-presentations>



This talk covers the benefits of using historical newspapers and highlight strategies to make the newspaper research process even more successful. Improve your newspaper searching skills & learn more about the print, microfilm, and digitized formats available through the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA).

WHY NEWSPAPERS?

Historical newspapers are gold mines of information. They contain a wealth of information to aid you with your research. The following resources give overviews and tips for understanding what kinds of information you can expect to find and various strategies to use.

- FamilySearch Wiki. United States Genealogical Value of Newspapers (National Institute). December 24, 2015. Accessed January 25, 2019. - [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Genealogical_Value_of_Newspapers_\(National_Institute\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Genealogical_Value_of_Newspapers_(National_Institute))
- Harrell-Sesniak, M. Understanding Terms Found in Historical Newspapers. 2013. <https://blog.genealogybank.com/understanding-terms-found-in-historical-newspapers.html>
- Hammond, T. 7 Common Historical Newspaper Abbreviations and Terms. 2018. <https://blog.newspapers.com/7-common-historical-newspaper-abbreviations-and-terms/>
- Using Newspapers to Research AROUND the 1890 Census loss in Genealogy - <https://youtu.be/mSUPxcz8RbI>
- 5 Effective Tips for Research Newspapers - <https://youtu.be/sDFaMo7f3oc>
- Historical Newspaper Search Tips and What to Avoid - <https://youtu.be/VKbE-T8h5lw>
- The 7 MUST USE Abbreviations for Searching Genealogy Records and Newspapers - <https://youtu.be/p0cE-t8WC3Y>

A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

Unique challenges exist when using historical newspapers as a source. First, you must identify which newspaper to search. Then, it can be quite helpful to determine if anyone has done work to create an index, compile abstracts, or transcribe newspaper content. Digitized versions of historical newspapers can also greatly ease your searching. The resources below are helpful when going through this step-by-step approach.

Identifying Newspapers

1. US Newspaper Directory from the Library of Congress - <https://www.loc.gov/ndnp/>
2. Data Visualization: Journalism's Voyage West - http://web.stanford.edu/group/ruralwest/cgi-bin/drupal/visualizations/us_newspapers
3. TSLA website - Newspapers on Microfilm at TSLA - <https://sos.tn.gov/products/tsla/newspapers-microfilm-tennessee-state-library-and-archives>
4. TSLA Catalog – <https://sos.tn.gov/tsla>

Finding Indexes, Abstracts, and/or Transcriptions

Resource: Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center. Index, Abstract, Transcription or Copy? [http://www.genealogycenter.org/Community/Blog/acpl-genealogy-blog/2011/02/19/Index Abstract Transcription or Copy](http://www.genealogycenter.org/Community/Blog/acpl-genealogy-blog/2011/02/19/Index%20Abstract%20Transcription%20or%20Copy)

1. Books in the TSLA Reading Room
2. FamilySearch Books - <https://books.familysearch.org>
3. TNGenWeb Project – <http://www.tngenweb.org>
4. DeathIndexes – <https://www.deathindexes.com>

Digitized Newspapers

1. Tennessee Newspaper Digitization Project & Chronicling America - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
2. 19th Century US Newspapers - <https://sos.tn.gov/products/tsla/19th-century-newspapers-database>
3. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Tennessean - <https://tntel.info/>