

Researching Old Newspapers Online

By Halvor Moorshead

One of the most useful resources available to the family historian is old newspapers – almost everyone gets mentioned in the newspaper at some time or another.

The problem has been that, unless you a specific date, searching is extremely difficult. However things are changing:

- Almost all archived newspapers are already microfilmed
- It is believed that 140,000 titles starting in 1600s are potentials
- Statistics are scarce
- Internet Genealogy's estimate is that 200 million pages are now available online.
- Every word can be searched
- 2-5 Million new pages are being added each month
- One of Family Chronicle's authors has rewritten the history of USS Constitution as a result of newspaper research – two new captains have been found!

Smith/Sanders/Moorshead Rule is used for estimating the number of names in a database.

- The surname Smith accounts for 1 percent
- The surname Sanders accounts for 0.1 percent (one in a thousand)
- The surname Moorshead accounts for one in a million

Paper of Record – 21 million pages

- www.paperofrecord.com

They were the first people who tried this in 1999. Conceived Bob Huggins in an Ottawa restaurant, PaperofRecord.com is the pioneer of searchable newspaper image documents. The Toronto Star, (Canada's largest newspaper with a circulation 650,000) became the first newspaper in the world to have its entire history from 1892 to present, digitized. 1945 is available free.

Proquest

www.proquest.com

A GREAT resource but tough to access it. Available through schools, universities and some libraries. Was available through Godfrey Library but no longer.

- New York Times (1851-2001)
- Wall Street Journal (1889-1987)
- Washington Post (1877-1988)
- Christian Science Monitor (1908-91)
- Los Angeles Times (1881-1984)
- Chicago Tribune (1849-1984)
- Boston Globe (1872-1922)

Finding the Right Newspaper!

There is a bewildering tangle of sources. Take Google News Archive. Search for Moorshead. This is what you are offered – 768 hits

<http://news.google.com/archivesearch>

1. Philly.com - \$2.95
2. NYT Archive \$4.95 (but \$7.95 for 100)
3. Fastcase - \$4.99
4. Washington Post - \$3.95
5. LexisNexis - \$3
6. Worcester Telegram & Gazette Archives - \$1.95
7. Fairfax Digital (Australia) FREE but 2004 and no image
8. LexisNexis - \$3
9. LexisNexis - \$3
10. Loislaw - \$24.99 (but is actually legal research)

Obits Archive.com

- www.ObitsArchive.com
- Maybe 23 million names
- \$2.95 per article 100 for \$19.95

NewsLibrary.com

- www.newslibrary.com
- Modern Newspapers
- \$2.95 per article – 50 articles \$19.95

Ancestry.com

Cost is part of membership

- Ancestry.com's Historical Newspapers
- www.ancestry.com
- Have a lot of newspapers but most are recent
- They wildly exaggerate the number of names – by a factor of 5

Newsbank

- www.newsbank.com
- Now GenealogyBank
- Historical Newspapers 1690-1977
- Estimate 100 million names
- \$89.95 using the code in IG

NewspaperArchive.com

- www.newspaperarchive.com
- Claims 63 million pages – Seems to check out
- Our Estimate 700 million names!
- \$99/year or \$24.95 for a week

Godfrey Library - \$35/yr

- www.godfrey.org – note org – not com

Includes

NewspaperARCHIVE Elite

America's Obituaries (NewsBank)

US & World Newspapers (NewsBank)

19th Century Newspaper Collection (Accessible Archives)

African American 19th Century Newspaper Collection (Accessible Archives)

The London Times which is superb

U.S. News Archives on the Web

Part of Library of Congress

<http://www.ibiblio.org/slanews/internet/archives.html>

Purports to be list of what's available but it is far from comprehensive – in fact most seem to be missing. Very few old newspapers listed

Small Town Newspapers

<http://www.smalltownpapers.com/index.htm>

- Claim 250 newspapers from 1865 to present
- Hard to figure out
- Searching difficult

These notes and articles are online for you at

www.internet-genealogy.com/lectures.htm or

www.familychronicle.com/lectures.htm

Articles:

Newspapers Online by Marc Skulnick from Internet Genealogy April/May 2006

“Read All About It” Old Newspapers Online by Dave Norris October/November 2006