THE ANCESTOR HUNT

Contents for this Issue:

**Check out the Gold Premium Program Discount
And**

The New EBook Bundle

Please Note: Hot Links are in BLUE

Articles Published Since Last Issue

- *FamilySearch New and Updated Collections – May 1-15, 2025*
- *Ancestry New and Updated Collections – May 1-15, 2025*
- *MyHeritage New and Updated Collections – May 1-15 2025*
- *FamilySearch New and Updated Collections – April 1-30, 2025*
- *Ancestry New and Updated Collections – April 1-30, 2025*
- *MyHeritage New and Updated Collections – April 2025*
- *1,035 Free Mid West States Institutional Record Collections*
- *1,215 Free Mid West States Online Photo Archives*
- *1,265 Free Online Military Records from the Mid Atlantic States*
- *1,295 Free Southern States Institutional Record Collections*
- *1,295 Free Southern States Online Photo Archives Available*
- *1,465 Free Online Military Records from the Western States*
- *1,510 Free Online Criminal Records from the United States*
- *140 Free Online Criminal Records from the New England States*
- *140 New England Institutional Records*
- *185 Free Online School Record Collections from the New England States*
- *2,480 Free Online Military Record Collections from the Southern States*
- *2,535 Free Online Military Records from the Mid West States*
- *2,730 Free Online School Record Collections from the United States*
- *220 Western States Institutional Records*
- *240 Free Online Criminal Records from the Western States*
- *255 Free Online Criminal Records from the Mid Atlantic States*
- *3,000 United States Institutional Record Collections*
- *310 Free Online Criminal Records from the Mid West States*
- *315 Free Online School Record Collections from the Western States*
- *4,205 Free Online Historical Photo Archives from the U.S.*
- *450 Free New England States Online Photo Archives Available*
- *540 Free Online Military Records from the New England States*
- *590 Free Online Naturalization Collections from the New England States*
- *635 Free Mid Atlantic States Institutional Record Collections*
- *680 Free Online Criminal Records from the Southern States*
- *695 Free Online School Record Collections from the Mid Atlantic States*
- *7,375 Free Online Military Record Collections from the United States*
- *705 Free Mid Atlantic States Online Photo Archives Available*
- *870 Free Western States Online Photo Archives Available*

New From The Newspaper Corner

- *Advantage Archives Adds 1 Million Historical Newspaper Pages – March 2025*
- *British Newspaper Archive Adds/Updates 138 Titles – April 2025*
- *Chronicling America Updates – April 2025*
- *Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection Adds/Updates 11 Titles – May 2025*
- *Find My Past Adds/Updates 137 Historical Newspaper Titles – April 2025*
- *Georgia Historical Newspapers Spring 2025 Update Adds 58 Titles*
- *Illinois Digital Newspaper Collections Adds/Updates 30 Titles – May 2025*
- *NewspaperARCHIVE Update – April 2025*
- *Newspapers dot Com Update – April 2025*
- *Oregon Online Historical Newspapers Summary*
- *Veridian Adds/Updates 313 Titles – May 2025*
- *Wisconsin Online Historical Newspapers Summary*

Strange Newspaper Ads

No More Rain-Soaked Cigarettes! MANY are the inventions devised to insure a dry smoke, but it has remained for a clown appearing with a circus in England to solve the problem. An umbrella over the smoke keeps off water and a spigot drains off excess moisture.

WHY WALK AROUND HALF DEAD WHEN WE CAN BURY YOU FOR ONLY $22.00 WE USE CHOICE PINE COFFINS — TOMBSTONE UNDERTAKERS — BOOTHILL still offers fine view plots from $12.00 ask about our layaway plan

Useful Articles from Other Sources

- *10 Ethical Dilemmas in Genealogy: Navigating the Minefield of Family History*
- *10 Weird Taxes Our Ancestors Paid*
- *12 Steps for Finding Ancestors' Marriage Records*
- *12 Unconventional Ways to Stay Focused (That Actually Work)*
- *1890 Census Substitutes*
- *5 Genealogy Tasks That You Should Add to Your To-Do List Today*
- *5 Ways to Use Online Historical Maps for Genealogy*
- *7 Top Tips for Breaking Down Brick Walls in German Genealogy*
- *Break Down Brick Walls with These Expert Tips*
- *Case Study: Overcoming Same-Named People in Genealogy Records*
- *Collaboration in Genealogy: Your Secret Superpower*
- *Confessions of a Find A Grave Photo Volunteer: How to Explain to Cemetery Caretakers Why You're Climbing Trees for the Perfect Headstone Shot*
- *DNA Match Spreadsheet*
- *Find a Grave: Optimize Your Search Results*
- *From Hoarder to Historian: Organizing Your Family Artifacts Like a Pro*
- *How Can I Become a Genealogist?*
- *How to Discover Your Ancestor's Occupation*
- *How to Navigate Dead Fred's Genealogy Photo Archive*
- *How to Pass On Research: What to Include in Your "Genealogy Will"*
- *How to Research Orphaned and Adopted Children in Your Genealogy*
- *How to Store School Memorabilia*
- *How To Use Catholic Christening and Baptism Records Around the World*
- *How to Write a Family History Story That Lasts: 10 Simple Steps*
- *Indexing: Celebrating the Past, Looking to the Future*
- *Inside the 1880 Census*
- *Mastering the Art of Deciphering Old Handwriting*
- *Mitochondrial DNA: Connecting Generations*
- *Sephardic Jewish Ancestors: How To Trace Your Roots*

- *The Art of Explaining Your Hobby to Non-Genealogists Without Seeing Their Eyes Glaze Over*
- *The Emotional Rollercoaster of Finding an Ancestor's Will: From Excitement to Utter Confusion in 10 Seconds Flat*
- *The Genealogical Proof Standard: An Expert Explanation for Guiding Your Research*
- *The Sideways Strategy Most Family Historians Miss*
- *Tracking Ancestral Migrations: Research Strategies and Tips*
- *Understanding Translation vs. Transliteration*
- *Upcoming Changes to FamilySearch Indexing*
- *US Military Rank and Insignia: How To Decode Your Ancestor's*
- *Using WWII Army Enlistment Records for Genealogy Research*
- *Why My Vacation Photos Are All of Tombstones: A Genealogist's Travel Guide*
- *Why Were So Many Births, Marriages, and Deaths Not Officially Recorded?*
- *Working with Patronymic German Last Names*
- *Your Ancestors' World: Unlocking Family History Through Historical Context*
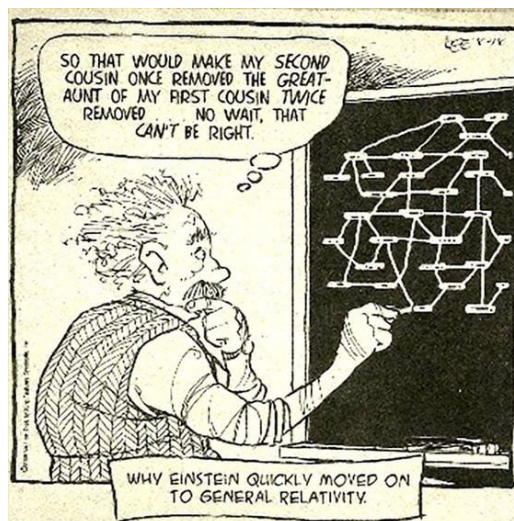
Check out The Ancestor Hunt on Social Media

Monthly Raffle

This past month (April 15th through May 14th), I offered a raffle for all subscribers.

Congratulations to the Raffle Winner!

And what did they win?
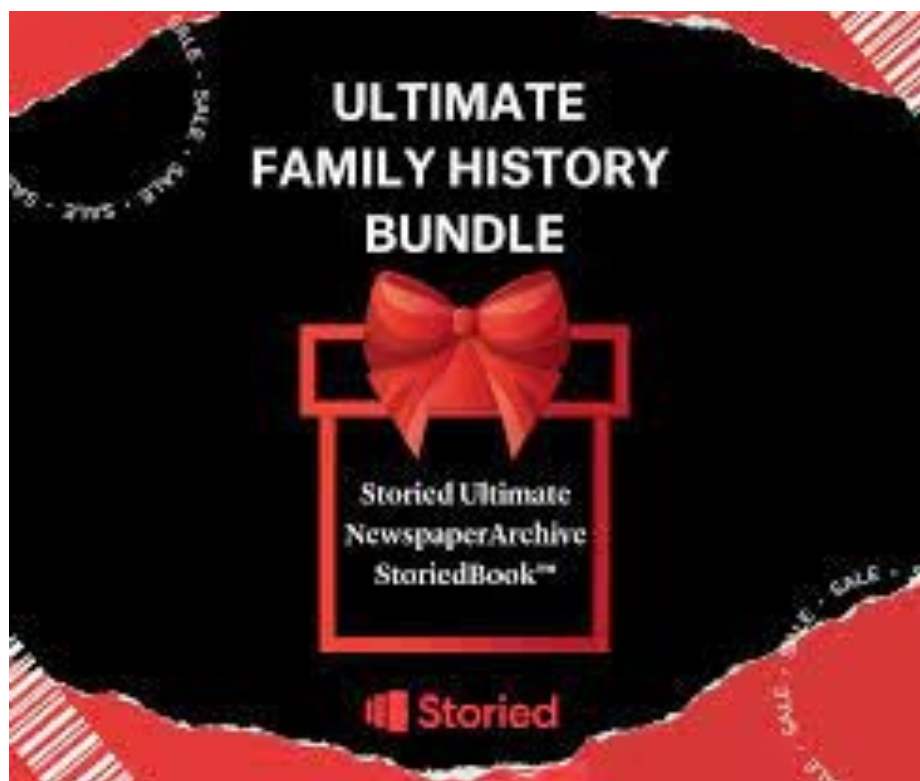
Yes. A full year of Storied Ultimate—for free. Includes a full year of Storied, a full year of NewspaperArchive, and also the publication of your very own StoriedBook!

I have been a user of NewspaperArchive for over a decade, and have found hundreds of articles about my ancestors and relatives. I started using Storied over the last year to capture written stories, clippings, and photos of my ancestors (and myself). And I really like it. It is so easy.

So I wanted to share these tools, and with the cooperation of the folks at Storied we are doing this.

To get an idea of what the winner is receiving and the details of all the options, please go to **STORIED**

Next month's raffle will be for the same Storied Prize and will include Existing Subscribers as well as new subscribers

The eBook Bundle
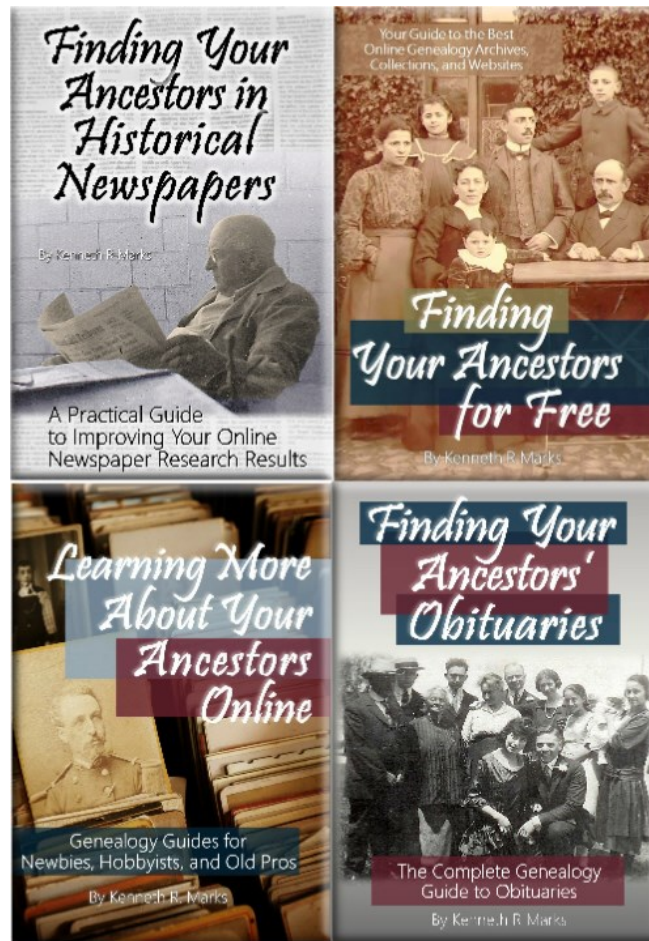
If you were to purchase all 4 from Amazon as paperbacks, you would pay $75.00 plus sales tax and shipping. If you were to purchase these as eBooks through Amazon, you would pay $36.00 plus sales tax.

By purchasing all 4 eBooks here, you will receive a 25% discount (and tax is included). The price is $27.00. All you need to do is purchase below. After doing so, I will email you links to all 4 books that you can download as a PDF (for each one).

Just go to **eBook Bundle** to see more details and to purchase.

All 4 books are still available in paperback at Amazon:

- Finding Your Ancestors for Free: Your Guide to the Best Online Genealogy Archives, Collections, & Websites **https://amzn.to/3GPcbf1**

- Improving Your Online Newspaper Research Results **https://amzn.to/4fMRZZI**

- Finding Your Ancestors Obituaries: The Complete Genealogy Guide **https://amzn.to/3JxiiWB**

- Learning More About Your Ancestors Online: Genealogy Guides for Newbies, Hobbyists, and Old Pros **https://amzn.to/3kUrebJ**

The Sideways Strategy Most Family Historians Miss

This article is shared with permission from Marc McDermott's **Genealogy Explained** website. I strongly urge you to subscribe to his website at **https://www.genealogyexplained.com/subscribe/** IMO his blog is one of the very best to follow daily.

Most family historians get it wrong from day one.

I did too.

We obsess over extending our ancestry into the distant past. We hunt for ancestors to fill up our trees, often defining success by the number of people we've collected.

But here's the truth: You're missing the real treasure.

I recently came across a genealogist with 50 years of experience who shared something profound.

They started like we all do—trying to trace their lineage as far back as possible. They filled binders with pedigree charts. They went back as far as they could, despite the evidence being questionable.

And then they realized something.

All that impressive information? Not that interesting.

The Traditional Approach Fails Us

The traditional genealogy approach is broken. Full stop.

Going backwards in time feels productive. Each generation you add seems like an achievement.

A win.

But what are you really winning?

Names on paper. Dates in boxes. Facts without context.

You end up with ancestors you can't connect with. People who exist only as data points. Is that really what you're after?

I doubt it.

The obsession with pedigree creates the illusion of progress. But it's empty calories.

Genealogical junk food.

Meanwhile, the real feast is elsewhere.

The Sideways Strategy

Here's what works instead:

Once you identify your great-grandparents, stop going backward.

Instead, work sideways.

Track down the descendants of their siblings—your grand aunts and uncles and their children. Map out the cousin lines.

Why?

Because living relatives possess what dead ancestors cannot give you: context, stories, photos, and artifacts that bring your family history to life.

This is how you transform genealogy from a sterile collection of facts into a vibrant family narrative.

The Sideways Strategy Most Family Historians Miss

The Ticking Clock

This strategy comes with urgency built in.

Your dead ancestors will always be there. The records aren't going anywhere.

But your cousins? They're getting older every day.

When they pass, they take whole encyclopedias of valuable family information with them.

Forever.

Let that sink in.

The cousin who knows exactly who's in that unlabeled photo from 1952? The one who remembers the family scandal your grandparents never spoke about? The one who saved every letter their mother ever wrote?

They won't be around forever.

This isn't theoretical. This is happening now.

Finding Your Cousins

Start with what you know.

Identify your great-grandparents. Then map out all siblings and their children.

Those children's descendants are your prize.

Once you've identified potential cousins, reach out. Be direct but respectful.

A simple message: "Hi, I believe we share great-great-grandparents through [name]. I'm researching our family history and would love to connect."

No need for complexity. Clarity wins.

The Treasure Hunt

When you meet your cousins (virtually or in person), come prepared.

What you're looking for:

Family Photos

"I have never failed to find at least one gobsmacking treasure of a photo in there."

That's what our 50-year genealogy veteran discovered. Every single time.

That photo album gathering dust in your cousin's closet? It contains images of your ancestors you've never seen. Guaranteed.

The best part? Your cousin probably thinks there's nothing interesting in there. They're wrong.

Personal Documents

Look for:

- Letters
- Diaries
- Military papers
- Birth and marriage certificates
- School records
- Employment history

These documents contain details you'll never find in public records.

Record these conversations (with permission). These oral histories are priceless.

The Sideways Strategy Most Family Historians Miss

Family Stories

These are gold.

Stories passed down through generations reveal the character of your ancestors. Their personalities. Their triumphs and failures.

Record these conversations (with permission). These oral histories are priceless.

The tools your ancestor used in their trade.

These objects connect you physically to your past in ways a census record never will.

Personal Artifacts

The pocket watch your great-grandfather carried every day.

The recipe book your great-grandmother annotated.

The tools your ancestor used in their trade.

These objects connect you physically to your past in ways a census record never will.

Documenting Your Discoveries

Capture everything. Leave nothing behind.

Bring a portable scanner or set up a camera with a tripod. Document everything your cousin shares.

Create a system immediately:

1. Label every photo with names, dates, and locations
2. Transcribe handwritten documents
3. Record the provenance of every item
4. Cross-reference with your existing research

Organization matters. What looks obvious today will be confusing in six months.

The Real Value Proposition

Let me be clear about what you gain from this approach.

One page of family history about your great-grandfather's daily life as a farmer is worth more than an entire volume documenting your connection to royalty.

Why?

Because that farmer is actually connected to you.

You share his DNA, yes. But more importantly, you share the legacy of his choices. His values. His struggles.

That's your true inheritance.

The stories of ordinary people doing ordinary things reveal extraordinary truths about who you are and where you come from.

Creating Priority and Urgency

Make a list of your oldest living relatives right now.

Not tomorrow.

Today.

Rank them by age and health status. This is your contact priority list.

Start at the top. Work your way down.

Every month that passes is another risk that someone on that list takes their knowledge with them permanently.

Do not delay this work.

The Sideways Strategy Most Family Historians Miss

The Wider Narrative

As you collect information from multiple cousin lines, patterns emerge.

You'll discover:

How different branches interpreted the same family events

Regional and cultural influences on different parts of your family

Recurring traits, talents, and tendencies across generations

The real impact of historical events on your family

This lateral view creates depth that vertical research never can.

You stop seeing ancestors as isolated individuals and start understanding them as part of an interconnected human story—your story.
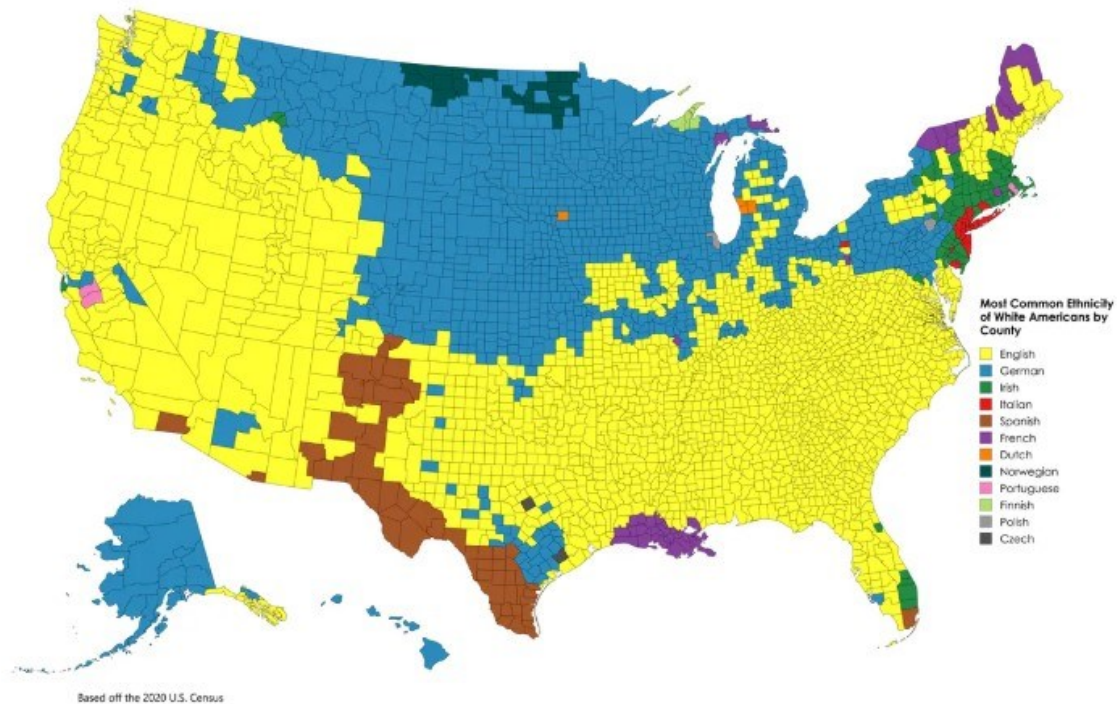
Taking Action Now

Don't overthink this. Execute.

This is the truth of genealogy.

Names and dates will wait.

Stories won't.

Choose wisely.

U.S. Ethnicity Map Based on 2020 Census

Map created by reddit user *Mission-Guidance4782*

8 Reasons You Can't Find Squat About Your Ancestors Online

Whether you search online, or offline at libraries, courthouses, or archives, many times our ancestors can be elusive.

Sometimes they just cannot be found. Whether it be a birth date, census entry, or death date – or anything else of interest to us – we just can't seem to "score."

There are lots of reasons why we aren't successful, but many are because of our own limitations – and especially because we are just too limited in our thinking, and sometimes either inexperienced or unwilling to try new things.

Below are just a few reasons why we can't find our ancestors online:

- **They aren't there!** Yes, this is a possibility. I have a great-great aunt, Carrie Marks, who shows up only in one record – the 1880 U.S. Census. She is documented as the daughter of Louis and Caroline Marks, aged 11, born in California. One would think that at age 11, she would have shown up in the 1870 census at age 1, right? Nope – she is not there with the family. Had she not been born yet and the age 11 reference in 1880 was wrong? Was she in a hospital at the time of the census? Unfortunately, there is no 1890 census to help and by that time she could have married and changed her name. Even more worrisome is that since her mother's name was also Carrie – maybe it was a census taker error. Maybe she didn't exist at all. Then again, maybe I just haven't found her yet.

- **Have you expanded your search?** Just searching one or two online sources, such as Ancestry.com or FamilySearch just isn't enough. Yes, these are huge resources, but just as everything isn't online, all the online stuff isn't in their collections either. There are tons of other resources. Thousands of online collections are not named Ancestry or FamilySearch.

- **Do you do only exact searches?** People who write down others' names often write them wrong. And then if there is an index created, it can be mistranscribed or mistyped. There are very few if any documents available online that were written by the ancestor themselves. They are generally recorded by someone else from first or second-hand (or worse) information. So you need to be creative with your name searching by deliberately searching for names misspelled or using wildcard searches. Yes, I said deliberately misspell search terms. You will be surprised at what you will find.

- **Do you combine searches and omit surnames?** For example – if you can't find the surname in a collection – do you search for the husband's first name and the wife's first name also, in a specific geographic area? As an example, since their surname was often mangled, I often searched for husband "Ben" and wife "Jennie" (with a blank surname) in California because that is where they lived. This may have given me quite a few folks who didn't have the correct surname – but all I needed was one! The right one!

- **Have you looked beyond document collections?** Sure census records are popular, and draft cards and naturalization, land, and immigration records too. But how about newspapers? I have found new names of extended family members stated in newspaper obituaries and other articles just as much as finding a family together in a census. Check out the **Newspapers** page on this site for much more information regarding searching newspapers. They are a very underrated resource for you to find stuff. Besides you might find out that your great great uncle was an ax murderer! Exciting!

- **Are you aggressive?** Or do you just give up too easily? Sitting around waiting for shaky leaves or smart matches? Have you uploaded your tree to FamilySearch, WikiTree, Ancestry, My Heritage, etc.? Then are you just waiting around for "cousins" to contact you – or the services themselves to shake a leaf on your screen? Ain't gonna cut it. You have to be an aggressive as well as a creative researcher. And get out of the house if you can. Get to libraries, archives, courthouses, and genealogical societies. There is a ton of material that can be accessed that is not digitized or is only available at the institution in a binder somewhere.

8 Reasons You Can't Find Squat About Your Ancestors Online

- **Do you have a research plan?** Or do you just search ad hoc, searching broadly for the same thing again and again? What's the old quote? "The definition of Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." That applies here. Yes, collections change and are updated. But gee – get yourself a plan. Here's an **Example of a Template** that Caroline Pointer created for Evernote that you can adopt (with or without Evernote) regarding planning for research. Yes, it seems like a lot of work when you'd rather be surfing for ancestors. But it is time well spent and I assure you that a research plan will make the difference between finding or not finding some ancestors. Guaranteed!

- **They aren't there – Part 2 Really.** They aren't there. Nobody wrote stuff down back then. Records weren't kept of births in many countries or local villages and towns. There were no marriage certificates. Gravestones have been buried due to wars and such over time. Babies weren't born in hospitals and there were no mortuaries. Not every family had a Bible that they recorded information in. Men didn't carry around a draft card and there was no Social Security.

So that's it for now. A few reasons why you haven't found some folks. But you can't give up – with a few exceptions – ancestors who have lived any time in the last 200 years or so should be able to be found somewhere – and you are just the person to find them. Right?

All you need to do is PLAN, BE AGGRESSIVE, THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX, and BE PERSISTENT.


Memes to Live by
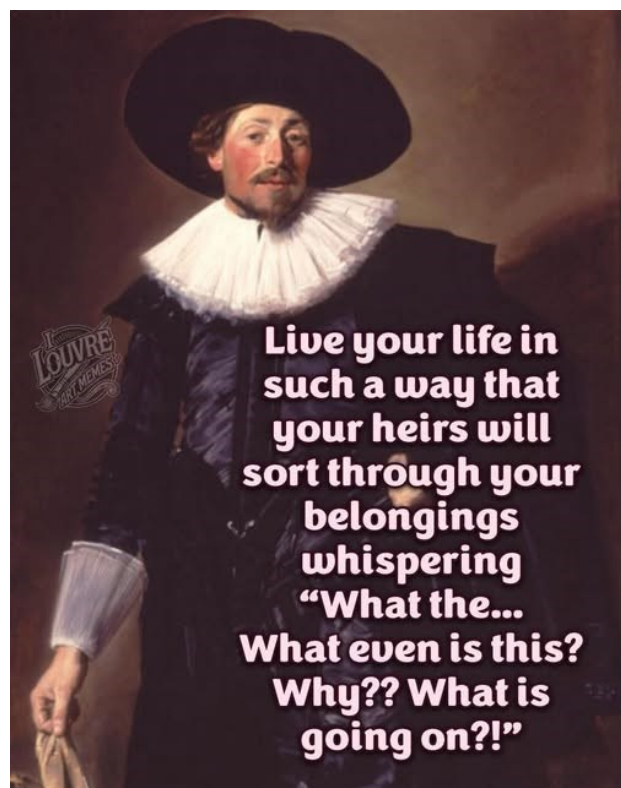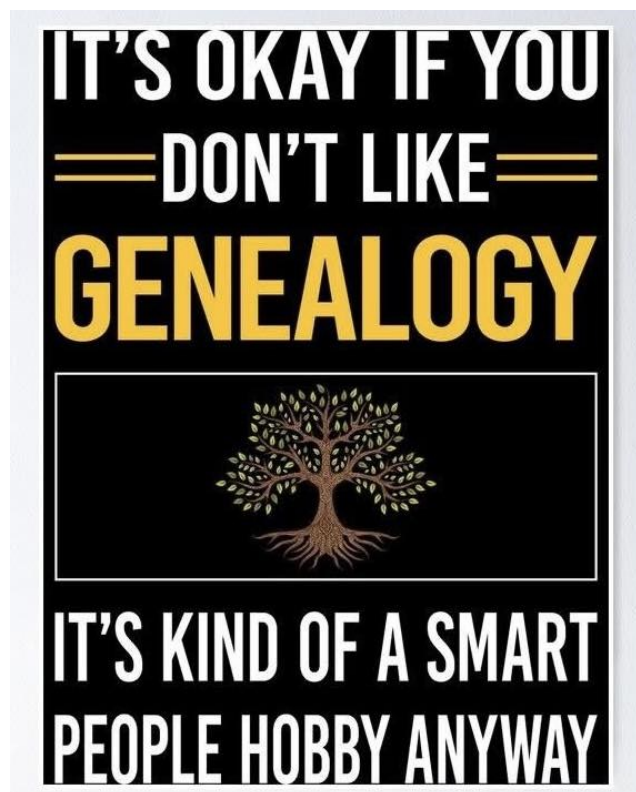
Finding Free Collections in Each U. S. State

If you follow The Ancestor Hunt, you know that we specialize in curating and presenting links to Free Online Genealogy Records, Collections, and Indexes by genealogical category. Everything that is online for free has not been captured in our link lists, as some specific categories and resources have not been curated as yet, or we may never do. However, there are archives, libraries, unique document collections, and specialized genealogy websites throughout the state. With the lists below, you should have exposure to the great majority of free online resources for the state. Also included are links to each of the 24 categories curated by The Ancestor Hunt.

[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Alabama](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Montana](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Alaska](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Nebraska](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Arizona](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Nevada](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Arkansas](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in New Hampshire](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in California](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in New Jersey](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Colorado](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in New Mexico](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Connecticut](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in New York](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Delaware](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in North Carolina](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in District of Columbia](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in North Dakota](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Florida](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Ohio](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Georgia](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Oklahoma](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Hawaii](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Oregon](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Idaho](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Pennsylvania](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Illinois](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Rhode Island](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Indiana](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in South Carolina](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Iowa](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in South Dakota](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Kansas](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Tennessee](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Kentucky](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Texas](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Louisiana](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Utah](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Maine](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Vermont](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Maryland](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Virginia](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Massachusetts](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Washington](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Minnesota](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in West Virginia](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Mississippi](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Wisconsin](#)
[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Missouri](#)	[Finding Free Online Genealogy Collections in Wyoming](#)

The Gold Premium Program from The Ancestor Hunt
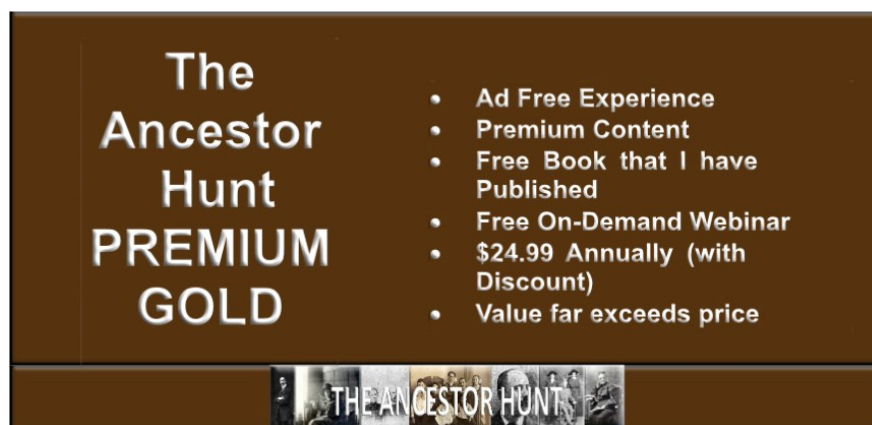
Take advantage of the discount! Details at the bottom of the page.

The Ancestor Hunt Gold Premium level service is intended to provide members with an added level of service. Subscribers to the Premium service will receive:

- An ad-free experience while using The Ancestor Hunt website each year that you are a member
- A Book of your choosing that I have published will be delivered each year that you are a member
- An On-Demand Webinar of your choosing that I have created will be provided each year that you are a member
- Premium Content will be provided as it is published

Here are the details of how it will work:

Ad-Free Experience

Upon successful registration, you will need to log in to The Ancestor Hunt website with your email address as your Userid and a Password of your choosing. The Login link will be on the upper right side of each page on the site. You will need to log in so ads will not be served while you are on the site and to receive Premium Content.

Free Published Book and On-Demand Webinar

After you register, I will send you an email requesting which book you wish to be mailed to you and your mailing address. Only U.S. residents will be mailed the paperback version. If you choose an eBook or are an international member, you will be provided a link where you can download the PDF version of the book. You also will choose the On-Demand Webinar. A link to the chosen On-Demand Webinar will be emailed to you.

Premium Content

As I create premium content, members only will be able to access that content.

Cost

The annual cost is $29.99. There are no refunds if you cancel during any year you are a member.

Value

The normal price of a paperback is $19.99 plus tax and shipping. The normal price of an hour-long On-Demand Webinar is $15.00. You also receive an ad-free experience and premium content. Thus you are receiving $34.99 of value plus the value of an ad-free experience and Premium Content.

Registration

To register, please go to the Premium Page at **https://theancestorhunt.com/premium.html**

Discount for Monthly Newsletter Subscribers

Enter the Discount Code TAHSUBS to receive a 20% discount. Only for Newsletter Subscribers

Free Online Genealogy Website of the Month – Library of Congress Digital Collections

The Library of Congress (LOC) Digital Collections are large and growing. Currently there are 501 different collections. You should definitely incorporate this massive set of collections into your genealogy research. They are divided into 15 different topics (the number of collections is in brackets):

American History [213]

Art & Architecture [56]

Geography & Places [32]

Government, Law & Politics [163]

Literature & Poetry [17]

Local History & Folklife [65]

Performing Arts [105]

Religion & Philosophy [18]

Science & Technology [26]

Social & Business History [42]

Sports & Recreation [10]

War & Military [87]

Women's History [16]

There are currently over 3 million items in the collections. There is plenty of material to search for and discover. The Library of Congress holds another 22 million items yet to be digitized, so there is a lot to discover online in the future.

There are three topics that are quite useful, although many of them might have pertinent information that can assist us. On the surface, Local History & Folklife, War & Military, and Geography & Places is where I started, to see what might advance my research.

The collections with many different types of maps are quite helpful and extensive. Take a look at the list of these digital collections. You may find some real gems that can assist you in your research.

To examine the contents, go to: **LOC.gov/collections**

English Given Name Nicknames

When searching for given names in old newspapers, you will discover that given names are very often replaced by nicknames. It is to your benefit as a researcher to search for nicknames as well as "official" given names. It is very possible that nicknames were published in newspaper articles in lieu of full given names.

Abigail (Abby)	Emory (Em)	Mordecai (Cai)
Abraham (Abe)	Esmeralda (Esme or Emmy)	Nathaniel (Nat or Nate)
Addison (Addie)	Ethel (Eth)	Nova (Noe)
Adelaide (Addie)	Eugenia (Genie or Gina)	Obadiah (Obie)
Agatha (Aggie)	Everly (Ev or Evie)	Octavia (Tavy)
Aiden (Aid)	Felicity (Flick or Lissy)	Ophelia (Lia or Effie)
Alaric (Al or Ric)	Ferdinando (Nando or Ferdie)	Orion (Ry)
Albert (Al or Bert)	Finnegan (Finn)	Oswald (Ozzie)
Alexander (Alex)	Florence (Flo)	Paisley (Pais)
Amaryllis (Amy or Ryllis)	Frederick (Fred)	Percival (Percy)
Amaya (Maya)	Freya (Frey)	Persephone (Percy or Sephie)
Ambrose (Amby)	Garrison (Gary)	Phineas (Finn)
Araminta (Minty)	Genevieve (Gen, Genny, or Eve)	Phoenix (Nix)
Arthur (Art)	George (Geo)	Priscilla (Pris)
Atlas (Atty)	Gerald (Gerry)	Quentin (Quinn)
Augustus (Gus)	Gertrude (Gertie or Trudy)	Quinn (Quinn)
Avery (Ava or Aves)	Grayson (Gray)	Randolph (Randy)
Bartholomew (Bart)	Gwendolyn (Gwen)	Rebecca (Becky)
Basil (Baz)	Harold (Hal or Harry)	Reginald (Reg)
Beatrice (Bea or Trixie)	Harper (Har)	Rosalind (Rosie or Lindy)
Bellatrix (Bella or Trixie)	Harriet (Hattie)	Ryder (Ry)
Benjamin (Ben)	Henrietta (Hetty or Etta)	Sawyer (Saw)
Bernadette (Bernie or Bette)	Horace (Horry)	Seraphina (Sera or Phina)
Bertram (Bertie)	Hudson (Hud)	Sienna (Sien or Enna)
Brayden (Bray)	Huxley (Hux)	Simeon (Sim)
Briar (Bri)	Ignatius (Iggy or Nate)	Skylar (Sky)
Brielle (Bri or Elle)	Indigo (Indie)	Sullivan (Sully)
Callahan (Cal)	Isadora (Dora or Isa)	Susannah (Susie, Annie, or Sukie)
Calliope (Callie)	Isla (Isy)	Sylvester (Syl or Sly)
Cameron (Cam)	Jaxon (Jax)	Tabitha (Tabby)
Cassiopeia (Cassie or Pia)	Jeremiah (Jerry)	Talia (Tali)
Cassius (Cash)	Jonas (Joe)	Tatum (Tate)
Catherine (Cate or Cathy)	Josephine (Josie)	Thaddeus (Thad or Tad)
Christopher (Chris)	Juniper (June or Juni)	Theodora (Theo, Dora, or Teddy)
Clarence (Clare)	Kai (Kai)	Theodore (Theo or Ted)
Clementina (Clemmie or Tina)	Kaia (Kai)	Theodosia (Theo or Dosie)
Clementine (Clemmie)	Kinsley (Kin or Kins)	Tristan (Tris)
Cornelius (Neil)	Lachlan (Lach or Locky)	Valencia (Val or Lenci)
Cuthbert (Cuth or Bert)	Landon (Lan)	Vera (Vee)
Dahlia (Dahl)	Lavinia (Vinnie)	Vernon (Vern)
Daniel (Dan)	Leonard (Len or Leo)	Virgil (Virg)
Darian (Dare)	Leopold (Leo or Poldy)	Virginia (Ginny or Virgie)
Declan (Dec)	Lionel (Leo)	Walter (Walt)
Delphine (Del or Delphi)	Lucinda (Lucy)	Weston (Wes)
Dolores (Lola)	Lyric (Lyra)	Wilfred (Wil or Fred)
Dorothy (Dot or Dolly)	Maddox (Mads)	Wilhelmina (Minnie, Willa, or Billie)
Ebenezer (Eben)	Margaret (Maggie or Meg)	Willow (Will or Willa)
Edmund (Ed or Eddie)	Marlowe (Mar or Lowe)	Winifred (Winnie or Freda)
Edward (Ed)	Matilda (Mattie or Tillie)	Winston (Win)
Edwina (Eddie)	Matteo (Matt or Teo)	Zane (Z)
Elias (Eli)	Maxwell (Max)	Zebedee (Zeb)
Elijah (Eli)	Millicent (Millie)	Zenobia (Zen or Bee)
Elizabeth (Liz or Beth)	Minerva (Minnie)	Zoey (Zo or Z)
Elowen (Ellie or Wen)	Montgomery (Monty)	Zora (Zo)
Emerson (Em or Emmy)		

The New Silver Premium Program from The Ancestor Hunt

If you don't want a free book or webinar and want to save some money, you can choose the Silver Level.

Subscribers to the Silver Level Premium service will receive:

- An ad-free experience while using The Ancestor Hunt website each year that you are a member
- Premium Content will be provided as it is published

Here are the details of how it will work:

<u>Ad-Free Experience</u>

Upon successful registration, you must log in with your email address as your Userid and a Password of your choosing. The Login link will be on the upper right side of each page on the site. You will need to log in so ads will not be served while you are on the site and to receive Premium Content.

<u>Premium Content</u>

As I create premium content, members only will be able to access that content.

<u>Cost</u>

The annual cost is $11.99. There are no refunds if you cancel during any year you are a member.

<u>Value</u>

You are receiving an ad-free experience and Premium Content for less than $1 a month.

<u>Registration</u>

To register, please go to the Premium Page at **https://theancestorhunt.com/premium.html**

OCR Challenges in Historical Newspapers: A Problem 300 Years in the Making

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Make no mistake, one of the reasons it can be so darn hard to find what you are looking for in historical archives boils down to three letters: O-C-R. But is it really the OCR's fault?

Bringing printed words on a 200-year-old piece of paper to your computer screen is one thing, but getting a computer to recognize the letters on the page is definitely another. But is technology really to blame? Not entirely. Poor searchability results from a series of problems that began a century or two before the first computer was even invented.

While the digitization process can create its own technological challenges, it has to share the blame with factors rooted in the practices and materials of the past. Many of the obstacles researchers encounter when searching for digitized newspapers stem from design and production decisions made 100, 200, or even 300 prior.

There are a number of things that complicate acquiring decent OCR coverage in an old newspaper. Including:

Fonts and Typography Variations

For over two centuries, newspapers employed fonts that lacked the uniformity seen in modern typography. Printers frequently used ornate or inconsistent scripts, often mixing fonts within the same sentence or article. These stylistic choices reflected the craftsmanship of the time, but today, they present significant challenges for OCR software, which relies on consistency to recognize characters accurately.

A font change in the middle of a word, sentence, or headline often causes OCR to misinterpret text. For example, a name like "Samuel" might be partially rendered in one font and partially in another, leading OCR to misread it as "Samvel" or "5amuel."

There were typographical styles that were used in print that have fallen out of practice long ago. One example is the "S/F/7 issue" and the medial S This problem arises from the historical use of the medial s, a typographic character resembling the letter "f" or a crossed "7". The medial s was commonly used in the middle of words, while the more familiar "terminal s" appeared at the end. For instance, The word "Congress" might appear as "Congrefs or "Session" could look like "Sefsion."

Though these rules were intended to make printed text clearer, they were inconsistently applied. Printers frequently used the medial s in unintended places or omitted it altogether. By the late 19th century, the medial s fell out of use, but for newspapers predating 1900, this feature remains a major OCR stumbling block.

OCR software struggles to differentiate between the medial s and the letter "f," often leading to errors that render a search ineffective. A search for "Congress" in an older newspaper might fail if OCR interpreted it as "Congrefs." Researchers need to be aware of this historical nuance and adjust their strategies accordingly.

The Quality Of The Original Materials

Digitizing historical newspapers involves creating high-quality images of the original materials. However, the process is affected by several factors that contribute to OCR challenges:

Most newspapers were printed on low-quality paper designed to last only a short time. Over decades or centuries, the paper often becomes brittle, faded, or stained, obscuring text and reducing OCR accuracy. Tears, folds, and smudges further compound the issue.

The ink used in historical newspapers often fades unevenly, with some parts of a page more legible than others. In cases where ink bled through the paper, OCR may pick up text from the reverse side of the page, creating confusing or inaccurate results.

Printing was a labor-intensive process that relied on manual typesetting. Errors such as transposed letters, inconsistent spacing, or uneven impressions were common. These irregularities can cause OCR to misinterpret characters or miss entire words.

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The Unstructured Layouts Of Early Newspapers

The unstructured layout of historical newspapers wasn't merely a design choice—it was a product of the priorities of the time. Editors and printers focused on maximizing the amount of text in the available space and grabbing readers' attention, rather than considering the future challenges of digitization. Their goal was to deliver information efficiently, not to preserve it for searchable databases. This historical context highlights the ongoing interplay between the past and present in the pursuit of accessible historical records, where modern OCR tools grapple with design decisions made centuries ago.

Newspaper layouts of the past were highly irregular, with narrow columns, articles that jumped across pages, and a mix of headlines, advertisements, and images interrupting the flow of text. Fonts varied widely in style and size, often changing mid-article or even mid-sentence. This chaotic arrangement reflected the constraints and creativity of the time but created complexities that continue to challenge efforts to digitize these materials accurately. Unlike structured documents, historical newspapers were intentionally dynamic, aiming to capture attention and convey as much information as possible within the available space.

These design choices pose significant challenges for OCR technology, which depends on predictable patterns to process text accurately. The lack of structure often leads OCR to misread text sequences, skip sections, or combine unrelated elements, such as blending an obituary with an adjacent advertisement. While advanced digitization techniques, such as zoning and manual corrections, can improve results, the inherent disorder of historical newspapers remains a fundamental obstacle. These layouts, a reflection of their time, continue to shape how researchers access and interpret digitized archives, reminding us that some challenges in preserving history are as old as the records themselves.

But Don't Blame It ALL On The Original Materials

While the condition and printing processes of historical newspapers play a significant role in OCR accuracy, they aren't the sole factors. Even content in pristine condition won't yield reliable OCR results if the digitization process isn't carried out with care. Poor resolution, misaligned scans, or shadows on the digital image can introduce errors that obscure even the clearest of original materials. Conversely, while best digitization practices can enhance the readability of most documents, they cannot fully compensate for poor-quality originals. The final quality of a digital image—and its OCR interpretation—will always be limited by the quality of the original materials.

However, it's essential to recognize that the roots of many OCR challenges date back to the newspapers' publication. Printing inconsistencies, unique typographical styles, and typesetting errors made long before digitization was possible still echo in today's searchable archives. These historical quirks remind us that OCR isn't just reading text—it's interpreting centuries-old decisions and practices, bridging the past and present in ways that highlight both the marvel and the complexity of preserving history.
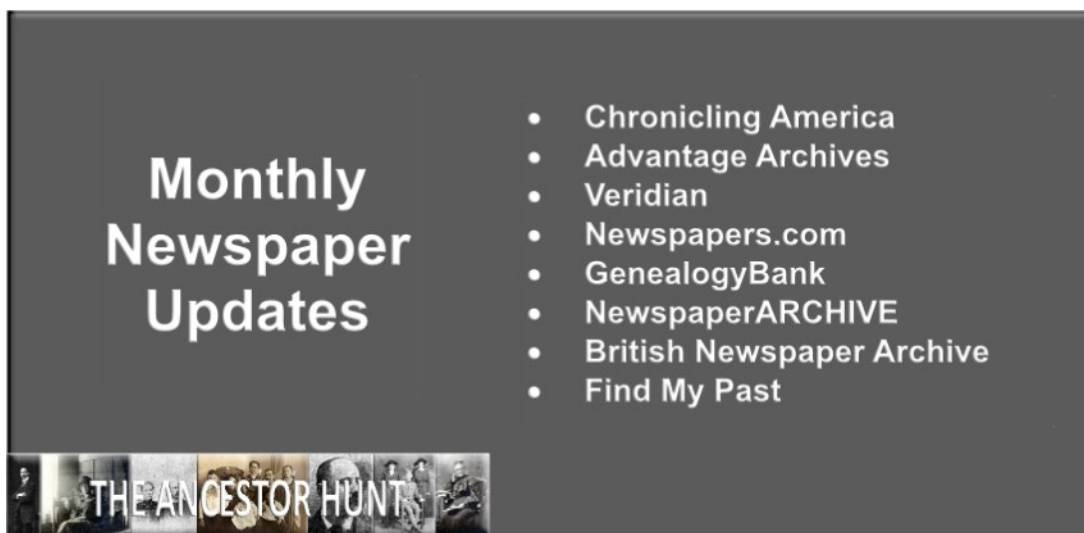
The New Advantage Archives Directory

Check out the new Community History Archives directory and much more at https://communityhistoryarchives.com/

Online Newspaper Database Updates for April/May

Over 1,000 New titles were added by various Free and Subscription databases in the last month. Here are links to all the updates:

Chronicling America - https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/chronicling-america-updates-april-2025/

Advantage Archives - Not Yet Published

Veridian - https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/veridian-adds-updates-313-titles-may-2025/

Newspapers dot com - https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/newspapers-dot-com-update-april-2025/

GenealogyBank - Not Yet Published

NewspaperARCHIVE - https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/newspaperarchive-update-april-2025/

British Newspaper Archive - https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/british-newspaper-archive-adds-updates-138-titles-april-2025/

Find My Past - https://theancestorhunt.com/blog/find-my-past-adds-updates-137-historical-newspaper-titles-april-2025/
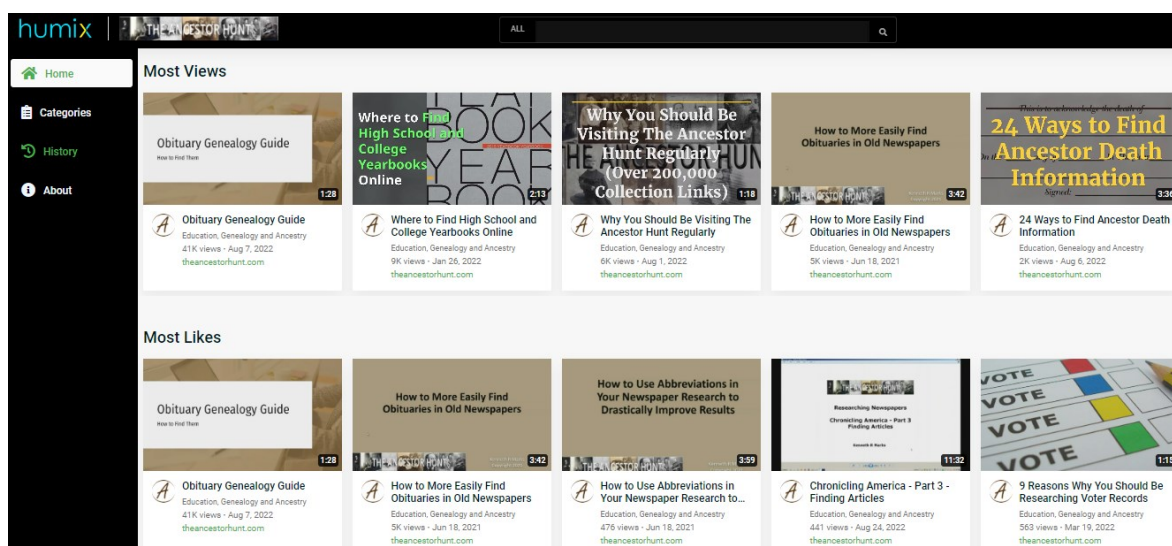
The By Location Page

The easiest way to access a particular state's or province's list of collections and categories is via the **BY LOCATION** page.

This page has a dropdown for each state or province, with a link to the online collections links for every category available.

Video Channel

There are now over 60 videos. Check them all out at

The Ancestor Hunt Video Channel

Place Finders

Do you often find yourself wanting or needing to know what county a city is located in or what places might be found in a specific county?

You could do a Google search but what if you had a handy list that included a list of all the cities, other places, and ghost towns that identified their corresponding county along with a list of the counties in a state that listed all of the places in that county?

What is a place? Besides cities and towns, you will find that the names of other places may vary from state to state. Most states have Census Designated Places, Unincorporated communities, Indian Reservations, and ghost towns. Other places may be known as villages, hamlets, historic districts, townships, boroughs, municipalities, and more.

Each state has a list of all the places in the state and their corresponding county. Each place has a link to a page that includes information about that place. The page may include geographical information, historical information, current information about the place and its surroundings, and much more.

Included also for each state, is a Downloadable PDF with two lists: A list of places and their corresponding county, and; A list of counties with the places that are in that county.

Check out **Place Finders**

27 Ways to Find Ancestor Marriage Information

- **Marriage Indexes** – whether online or in a book at a library/archive – these provide dates and the location of marriage. But since they are indexes that are most likely entered from marriage certificates, you always have to keep in mind that transcription and typing errors can occur.
- **Marriage Certificates** – this is the best document for establishing date and location of the marriage. Usually they are completed and signed by the person performing the ceremony. Often they were called "Marriage Returns" when the officiant "returned" the signed certificate.
- **Marriage Licenses** – these are tricky because they do not evidence that a wedding actually occurred – so further research is required to ascertain that fact. Please notice that on many licenses it indicates the number of previous marriages for the individual. On several occasions I have found that ancestors had previously been married, which was a total surprise to me.
- **Cemetery Records** – although dates and location of marriage are not included – many times husband and wife are buried next to each other, so if you did not know a person was married – look at the person next to them – if they are the same name they might have been married to that person, so at least you can get more clues. This may seem obvious, but depending on how the naming was engraved – it may have been a son or brother. Also, interment cards and plot deeds may reference a married couple.
- **Draft Cards** – the applicant enters a contact person and often parenthetically enters the word "wife." No marriage dates or locations but at least an indication that they were married, and the given name of his wife will be helpful for further research,
- **Naturalization Records** – Exact marriage dates are included.
- **Military Records** – For next of kin information, the spouse's name and contact information is included, if not the actual dates and location of marriage.
- **Pension Applications** – military or not, evidence of marriage is required for beneficiary certification, so a copy of the marriage certificate is required.
- **Census Records** – well you won't find anyone's marriage dates in census records. But that "M" or "S" will indicate if they are married or single. And even a "W" for widowed, or "D" for divorced will tell you if they were married. Often an "M1" or M2" will indicate whether they are on their first or second marriage. Questions such as "years married" or "age at first marriage" are helpful for tracking down marriage dates.
- **Immigration and Travel Records** – often the "Married or Single" question is included so at least their marital status is indicated..
- **Death Certificates** – the marital status is included as well as the name of the surviving spouse, but not the date of marriage or how many years they were married.
- **Church Records** – just as churches maintain birth and christening records, marriage records are also often available.
- **Personal Bibles** – many families recorded marriage date information in the family Bible.
- **Marriage Licenses and Other Announcements in the Newspaper** – marriage license announcements, as well as weddings and engagements abound in newspapers. Tons of marriage related information can be found in newspapers, in the vitals section, society pages, women's sections as well as the local interest sections.
- **Passport Applications** – the name of a married woman's husband is included for early 20th century passports. And sometimes, place and date of marriage is included.
- **Divorce Records** – dates and locations of marriage are included in divorce records. Divorce indexes are usually not as detailed, as they often do not include the actual marriage date, but only the number of years married.
- **Wills and Probate Documents** – although dates and location of marriages are not often included, at least the name of the spouse is available.
- **Dowry and Pre-nuptial Documents** – the name of the spouse and often date and location of marriage is included. I have a dowry document from the 1800's that includes this information.
- **Cohabitation Registers** – for marriages and children born to those in slavery.
- **Personal Collections** – wedding invitations, wedding programs, and personal letters citing a family wedding.
- **Land Deeds** – may identify spouse if both parties names are on the deed.
- **Court Records** – may include spouses names, and possibly widow or widower's name.
- **Marriage Banns** – recorded announcements of intended marriages are often maintained by churches and town records.
- **Marriage Bonds** – written guarantees or promises of payment made by the groom or another person.
- **Consent Papers** – generally required if the bride or groom was underage. Usually kept with the marriage license by the local government entity.
- **Newspaper Obituaries** – sometimes, the date of marriage was included in the written obituary printed in newspapers.
- **City Directories** – Often city directories include the first name of the spouse of the person, and also if the person is widowed, the name of the deceased spouse.

Get the Quicksheet PDF (with clickable links) by Downloading HERE

Help Your Ancestors Live Forever - Write Your Family History And Write Your Own History While You're At It

One of my goals in my personal genealogy is to make sure that my ancestors are remembered. Many had no descendants, so absolutely no one alive remembers them. That's sad to me, which is why I created a couple of family history websites. But recently I have been seeking even better ways to memorialize their lives. Their stories are important to be documented, which might explain why I am such a fan of newspaper research.

In any case, here is my favorite tool that I have discovered that provide a unique means to memorialize our ancestors.

And guess what? We need to produce our own autobiographies. We aren't getting any younger and memories do fade.

Storied
The Next Chapter in Family History™

Build your family tree with historical records and bring it to life with vibrant, collaborative stories

Get a 20% Discount for NewspaperArchive and Storied by using the "**TAH20**" coupon code.

Compare Pricing for Storied
Check out our pricing compared to other popular genealogy sites.

	Price per month
Storied	$4.99/mo
Other	$24.92/mo
Other	$24.99/mo

$0 $5 $10 $15 $20 $25

Price per month