Genealogy in Newspapers

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I.   Objectives

   A.   Learn the history of newspapers
   B.   See what can be found in newspapers to help build your family tree
   C.   Pick up tips for searching
   D.   Explore SLCL newspaper databases and other resources

II.   History of Newspapers

   A.   Timeline
   B.   1850-1950: golden age of newspapers
   C.   Usage gradually eroded

III.   Why use newspapers?

   A.   Information is not limited to a form
   B.   Can help prove connections
   C.   Discoveries can lead to other research/findings
   D.   Give a look at the community/context
   E.   Put "meat on the bones"

IV.   What is in a newspaper that can help with genealogy research?

   A.   News articles
   B.   Obituaries
   C.   Burial permits
   D.   Births
   E.   Marriages
   F.   Divorces
   G.   Anniversaries

H. Legal notices

I. Family reunions

J. Social news

K. Club officers and members

L. Achievements

M. Military news

N. Politics

O. Businesses

P. Sports

Q. Classified advertisements

R. Product advertisements

V. Tips

A. In what format does the newspaper exist?

1. Print

2. Microfilm

3. Transcription

4. Digitized*

B. Cite your source

1. Complete newspaper title

2. City and state

3. Date

4. Edition

5. Page number

6. Column number/letter

7. Database and access date or film information

8. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace* by Elizabeth Shown Mills

C. Be aware of name changes and mergers (example-*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*)

1. Daily Missouri Democrat, 1853-1868

2. Missouri Democrat, 1868-1872

3. St. Louis Democrat, 1873-1875

4. St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 1875-1986

D. Problems with digitized newspapers
1. <u>O</u>ptical <u>c</u>haracter <u>r</u>ecognition (OCR) may not be able to read print
2. May pick up similar letters
3. Deliberately misspell keywords?

E. More tips
1. May need to try other search terms if not getting results in a database such as maiden name, address, etc.
2. Be flexible, may have to perform multiple searches
3. Can use quotation marks and wildcard asterisk in many databases
4. May need to browse the newspaper instead of keyword search
5. Urban vs. rural papers
6. Rural–look for nearest town
7. Women's first names often not used
8. Items like marriages and births were often "filler" so might not always find
9. Many families could not afford an obituary or chose to publish one
10. Obituaries generally start in the latter half of the 19th century
11. Immigrant obituaries may be in foreign language papers

VI. SLCL newspaper databases
A. Slcl.org->Research & Learn->History & Genealogy->Online Genealogy Resources
B. Newspapers.com (home access)
1. Papers search
2. General search
3. Browse search
C. Newspaper Archive (in-library use only)
D. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers (home access)
E. Heritage Hub (home access)
F. Access World News (home access)
G. Other databases: Ancestry Library Edition, Find My Past, Fold3
H. St. Louis Post-Dispatch Access

VII. Other resources

A.	Library of Congress/Chronicling America

B.	State Historical Society of Missouri Digital Newspaper Project/Newspapers on Microfilm

C.	Missouri Historical Society Library

D.	Also–Legacy.com, Smalltownpapers.com

E.	Out-of-town libraries and historical societies

F.	International newspaper websites

G.	Wikipedia list of online newspaper archives

## VII.	Indexes & print resources

A.	Online indexes

    4.	SLPL Post-Dispatch Obituary Index

    5.	SLCL History & Genealogy Indexes–St. Louis County Watchman, Westliche Post, etc.

B.	Print materials

    1.	Newspaper lists

    2.	Indexes and clippings books

C.	Guides

    1.	*The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy* edited by Loretto Dennis Szucs and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking

    2.	*Family Tree Historical Newspapers Guide: How to Find Your Ancestors in Archived Newspapers* by James M. Beidler

    3.	*How to Find Your Family History in Newspapers* by Lisa Louise Cooke

## VII.	Conclusion

A.	Newspapers can help build a family tree and reveal how ancestors lived

B.	They are easily accessible

C.	You never know what you might find