Newspapers Online
by Janice M. Sellers, Ancestral Discoveries

Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society
Santa Clara City Public Library, June 21, 2011

Why are newspapers important to genealogists?

- Births
- Engagements/Marriages/Anniversaries
- Deaths/Obituaries
- Legal Notices/Court Cases
- Business News
- Social Notes/Local News/Gossip
- Job Notes/Military Service
- Moves/Relocations
- Photographs
- and more ....

Types of Newspapers

- Nationals: Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Christian Science Monitor
- Large locals: San Jose Mercury News, San Antonio Express, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Newcastle Courant (Newcastle-on-Tyne, England), Winnipeg Free Press (Winnipeg, Manitoba)
- Small locals: Titusville Herald (Pennsylvania)
- Ethnic papers: Jewish Sentinel (Chicago), Edmonton Ukrainian News (Edmonton, AB, Canada)

Subscription Databases at Santa Clara City Public Library

- San Jose Mercury News Historical Archive (1886–1922)
- Ancestry.com Library Edition
- Newspaper Source Plus
- TOPICsearch (EBSCO)

Subscription Databases at Santa Clara Family History Center

- Access Newspaper Archive
- Footnote.com
- 19th Century U.S. Newspapers (through Godfrey)
- 19th Century British Newspapers
- SmallTownPapers.com (through Footnote.com)
- Ancestry.com Library Edition
- WorldVitalRecords.com
Subscription Databases at Santa Clara University

- Hispanic American Newspapers (1808–1980)
- *Los Angeles Times* Historical Archive (1881–1987)
- 19th Century U.S. Newspapers

Free Databases

- California Digital Newspaper Collection, http://cdnc.ucr.edu/
- Catalog of Digital Historical Newspapers, http://ufdc.ufl.edu/hnccoll/
- Rootsweb.com

Portals

- OnlineNewspapers.com, USNPL.com (current papers)

Database Basics

- Is database electronically created, transcribed, or OCR?
  - Electronic: probably fairly reliable index
  - Transcribed: varying quality; depends on who did index
  - OCR: quality of index depends on quality and condition of materials scanned
- Look for multiple access methods: search, browse
- Experiment to see how searches work
  - Uncommon names: basic search
  - Common names: restrict with advanced searches
  - Unexpected lack of results: test with common word or name, e.g., Smith
- If you find something, copy/save it; it might go away
- Check back with databases regularly; they are always adding new items

The Tip of the Iceberg

The vast majority of newspapers (and other records) are still not available online. If you can't find a newspaper online, don't forget to look offline! But that is another class....

Follow my genealogy blog at http://ancestraldiscoveries.blogspot.com/. You can contact me with questions at Janicemsj@gmail.com.