

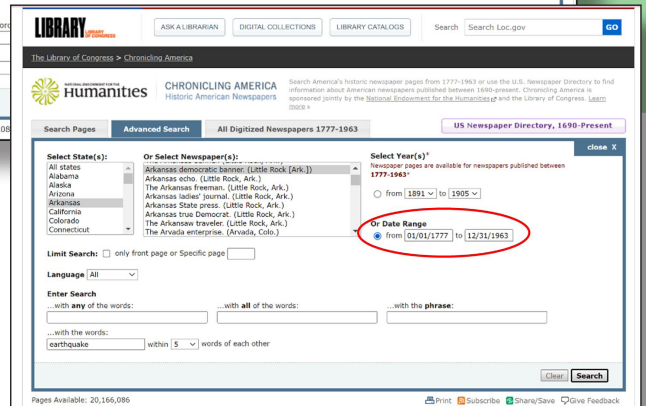
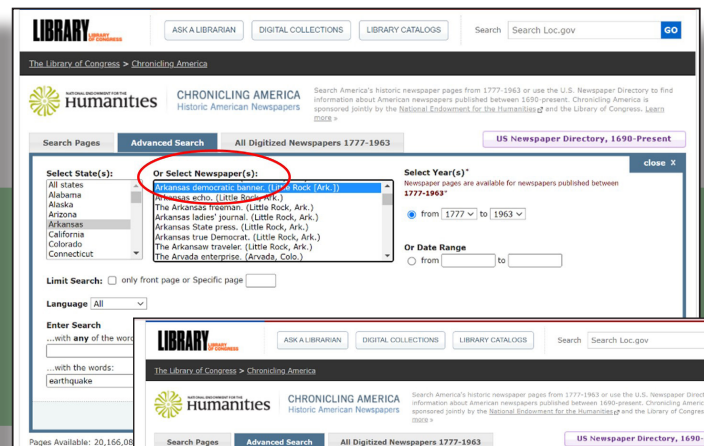
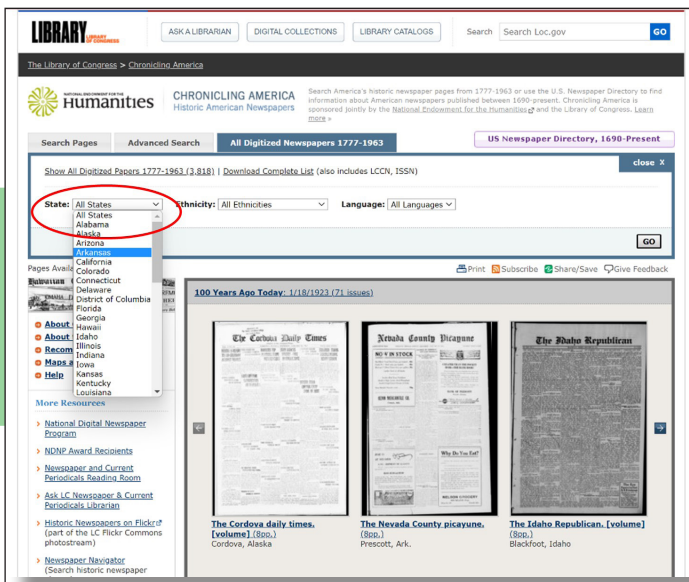
# Genealogy Research using **Chronicling America** Newspapers

Searching for relatives in historic newspapers requires a different set of tools and tricks than more general research. In this guide we offer advice on narrowing your searches based on location, time period, and biographical information. We also give tips and tricks to searching for Black relatives and how to search for relatives belonging to a specific ethnic group or community.

Go to [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov) to start searching for your ancestors in historic newspapers.

## Searching by Location:

- Narrow your search by location to reduce the number of articles returned. More common names will return more hits, therefore, use additional filters to find only relevant relatives.
- If you already know the town your family lived, use the “All Digitized Newspapers 1770-1963” tab and select the state to see a list of towns and counties with digitized newspapers. Use the “Advanced Search” tab to select a specific newspaper in the city your family lived. [Hold Ctrl (Windows) or Cmd (Mac) to select multiple titles].
- Hint: Newspapers often acted as a community bulletin, printing the names of people traveling to and from the area. It may be useful to keep a wider search range to track the movement of a family member across the U.S.



## Searching by Time Period:

- In both the basic search and advanced search options you can narrow your search by year. To further narrow your date range (i.e. month, specific day) use the Advanced Search. This will allow you to filter out the results of unrelated people and search only relevant mentions of your family member.
- To search for papers from a specific day, set the “from” and “to” dates to the same date, (i.e. 12/1/1902 - 12/1/1902).

## Search by Biographical Information:

- Death - common search terms: obituary / necrological / death notices / death record / dead / funeral / interment. Death notices did not always have an article heading. Therefore, searching a last name with "obituary" will not always return results. Instead, search for a last name with "died" or "dead". Using the Advanced Search tab, use the dropdown filter "within 5 words of each other" to instead search within 10 or 50 words of each other. If you are still not getting the expected results, try adjusting your search strategy. Full names were not always printed in the papers. They may use a mix of first or middle initials only with the last name. For married women, they may only be listed as "Mrs. Husband's Name." To narrow down searches, use names of related family members, as notices often say who is left behind, either spouse or children, of the person who died. Other identifying features may be used if you get too many search results, like the title of the person's job or their birth location.
- Estate notices, intestate (died without a will) - details of wills or probate records were often publicised in newspapers.
- Births, marriages, divorces - finding specific dates from other records (i.e. census records, marriage records, social security records) will help you narrow your date range for related articles on Chronicling America.
- Draft notices and where to report - in Arkansas during WWI, draftees reported to Camp Pike in Little Rock.
- Illnesses - the papers often reported when people were ill in the community board sections of the paper.
- Members of an organization or club (ex. Arkansas Press Association, Free Mason) - social club, charitable organization, fraternal organization, church group, guild, community group, civic group (Note: obituaries often make note of groups and communities a person was involved with).
- Businesses, accidents, sports, and gossip are other common ways to find information about relatives.
- Immigration - With people moving long distances and not having a way to contact their relatives, friends would place ads in newspapers looking for relatives and asking them to contact family. These ads included details about family members, when they immigrated, and physical appearance.
- Historic business records are uncommon unless records were donated to an archive. Newspapers can provide information about a business through ads or in editorials about events such as grand openings or a fire at a business.

**Mrs. Janie Christopher, widow of the lamented, George Christopher died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. J. M. Garland at Emmet yesterday morning. Her remains were interred in the Snell Cemetery. She leaves several children and a host of friends to mourn her death.**

Death notice, example

### BIRTH DAY ANIVERSARIES

#### W. D. HALE

W. D. Hale of Laneburg celebrated his 50th birth day last Sunday, August, 13th. All of his children and grand children and many of his friends were present to help to make the day one of joy and gladness for Mr. Hale. We trust that he may live to enjoy many such occasions.

#### F. NEWTH

Frances Newth was 80 years old last Sunday. He is strong and vigorous for one of his age. His mind is clear as a bell and he can discuss any subject with you as intelligently as when he was fifty. We wish Mr. Newth many more happy birth days yet.

Birthday anniversary, example

### NOTICE

In The Probate Court of Pulaski County, Arkansas  
In The Matter of The Estate of  
C. Franklin Brown, deceased  
No. 33688

Last known address of decedent:  
1019 Cross St., Little Rock, Ark.  
Date of death: March 10, 1958

The undersigned was appointed administratrix of the estate of the above-named decedent on the 17th day of March, 1958.

All persons having claims against the estate must exhibit them, duly verified, to the undersigned within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or they shall be forever barred and precluded from any benefit in the estate.

This notice first published 21st day of March, 1958.

Freedā H. Brown  
(Administratrix)

1019 Cross Street  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
(Mail Address)

3:21-28;4:4-11 4t

Estate notice, example

## Black Arkansans research tips:

- Historic terms are often different than what we use today. They may contain harmful language that is no longer used but was common at the time. Take this into account for your search strategy and use words that were typical of the time period you are searching. Example, negro or colored instead of Black or African American.
- Historic newspapers typically included the race of non-white people in articles, so searching negro/ess or mulatto along with a name may help you narrow down your search if the person has a common name.
- Researching in 1789-1865: searching for the names of enslaved people can be difficult.
  - › Estate notices were typically published in newspapers, listing the estate of someone who had died including any enslaved people. While they don't usually list the names of enslaved people, if you know who the person worked for you can search the estate names and find out where the enslaved people moved after the death of their previous enslaver.
  - › "Fugitive slave" ads were another common location to find the names and descriptions of enslaved people as well as where they might be moving to. The ads typically included keywords like: runaway, fugitive, ran away, ranaway, reward, run away, slave. Use these ads to track people as they resisted slavery and moved around the country.
- Missing people following the Civil War: Ads were posted in newspapers looking for missing family members. Searching for related names of your relative may turn up these results and give further information about the missing family member. The ads often included as much biographical information as they could, like family members and where they were born or who they were enslaved by.



Runaway slave notice, example

## Arkansas newspapers on Chronicling America up to the abolishment of slavery (1865):

*The Arkansas Advocate* (1830-1837)  
*Southern Shield* (1840-1870)  
*Arkansas Intelligencer* (1843-1858)  
*Washington Telegraph* (1843-1865)  
*The Arkansas Banner* (1843-1851)  
*Arkansas Democratic Banner* (1851)  
*The True Democrat* (1854-1857)  
*Arkansas True Democrat* (1857-1862)

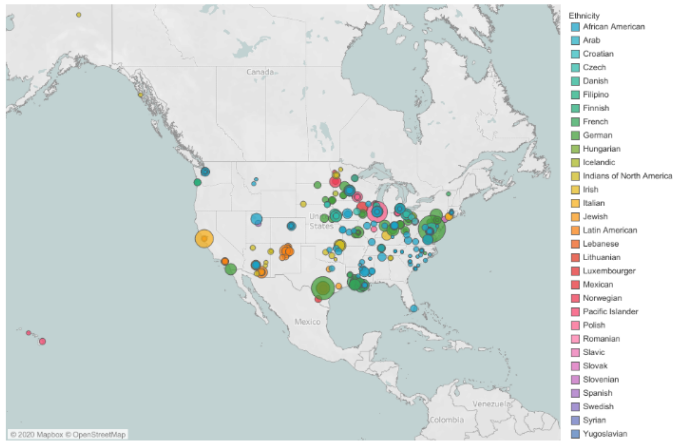
*Des Arc Citizen* (1858-1860)  
*The Van Buren Press* (1859-1912)  
*The Constitutional Union* (1860-1861)  
*The Daily True Democrat* (1861)  
*Des Arc Semi-Weekly Citizen* (1861)  
*The Des Arc Weekly Citizen* (1861)  
*True Democrat Bulletin* (1862)  
*True Democrat* (1862-1863)

## Ethnic Community search tips:

If you want to learn about a certain ethnic community, you can check *Chronicling America* to see if any of their newspapers were digitized. This can be done by looking at the list of titles *Arkansas* has digitized, or looking at the data visualizations page to see what ethnic papers are listed as digitized for *Arkansas*.

This visualization features a map that shows locations for digitized newspaper titles for special audiences / ethnic communities available in *Chronicling America* published between 1890-1963. Ethnicity and audience values are based on authorized [Library of Congress Subject Headings](#) that are available in associated newspaper records.

[View the interactive map >](#)



<https://www.loc.gov/ndnp/data-visualizations/>

You can also search for news about the community by searching within newspapers from the town, county, or surrounding areas.

Use words for that community that were used at the time, which are often different from the terms used for race and ethnicity today. Some of these words now have negative or discriminatory connotations that did not necessarily exist when the terms were first used.

See the thesaurus (<https://edsitement.neh.gov/media-resources/race-and-ethnicity-keyword-thesaurus-chronicling-america>) for an idea of the words to use in your research. (i.e. for the Jewish community, Jew, Hebrew, Israelite, and Semite were commonly used to describe Jewish communities, schools and businesses.)

## Other Search Tips:

- Use the advanced search box “with any of the words” to list out different spellings of names if you know your relative spelled their name differently or they had a name that was commonly misspelled. Names were frequently Americanized with immigrants from Europe and elsewhere, sometimes by American officials as on immigration forms or census records. The family themselves may have Americanized their name over the years, as their pronunciation or spelling was adjusted to fit the English language (i.e. Margit to Martha, Schmidt to Smith).
- Some professions were used as a prefix for names, like postmaster, Dr., lawyer, etc. or used to describe the person. If you know a relative’s job, you can use that to narrow your search by including it with their name.
- Full names were not always printed in newspapers. People may have only been referred to by their surname/last name, or first initial and last name. Searching using only a surname may be the best way to find someone if their full name does not turn up results.

**For more tips, tricks, and tools for searching *Chronicling America*, download our comprehensive research guide at <https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/adnp/>.**

The National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP) is a partnership between the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Library of Congress. The Arkansas State Archives is a state partner for the NDNP. Content digitized as part of NDNP is freely available to the public at [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov). Don’t see a newspaper? Get in touch at [statearchives@arkansas.gov](mailto:statearchives@arkansas.gov).