

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HOW TO USE NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers are a valuable source of information for events, individuals and other topics at the local level. They can provide researchers with eye-witness accounts of topics that may not be found in another medium. There are many sources available today that provide access to historic newspaper collections.

ARCHIVAL NEWSPAPER COLLECTIONS

There are a number of locations in Texas that have newspaper archives, often containing newspapers from small communities as well as large cities.

- Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin
 - <http://www.cah.utexas.edu/collections/newspapers.php>
 - http://www.cah.utexas.edu/documents/services/newspapers_fa.pdf
- National Archives Southwest Region, Fort Worth
 - <http://www.archives.gov/southwest/>
- Texas State Library, Austin
 - <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/news.html>
- Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches
 - <http://www.sfasu.edu/libweb/etrc/collections/newspaper/index.asp>
- Texas Tech University Southwest Collection, Lubbock
 - <http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/Collections/NewspaperLists/newspape.htm>

ONLINE NEWSPAPER SOURCES AND ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

A number of different institutions have digitalized their newspaper archives. Various web sites now offer archives which can be accessed online. However, most of these services are only available through a paid subscription.

- <http://www.dallasnews.com>
 - 1885-1977 archives available by subscription
- <http://www.refdesk.com/tx.html>
 - List of Texas newspaper web sites
- <http://www.newspaperarchive.com>
 - Archives available by subscription
- <http://news.google.com/archivesearch>
 - Google archive search
- <http://www.loc.gov/rr/news/lcnewsp.html>
 - Library of Congress

OTHER NEWSPAPER SOURCES

- *Texas Newspapers, 1813-1939*
 - This is a union list of newspaper files available in offices of publishers, libraries and a number of private collections.
 - Publisher: Houston, San Jacinto Museum of History Association, 1941
- Libraries often have newspaper archives of local newspapers.
- Library clipping files or vertical files

INFORMATION TO LOOK FOR IN NEWSPAPERS

While articles about some events or individuals may be easily found, other research topics can be more difficult. Besides news articles, there are a number of other types of articles that can contain pertinent information:

- Wedding announcements
- Birth announcements
- Obituaries
- Funeral announcements
- Advertisements
- Editorials
- Business information
- Commemorative issues (centennial issues, etc.)

ANALYZING NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

- A newspaper from the period being investigated may contain biases of which the researcher should be aware.
 - Articles may enhance certain aspects of the community.
 - Consider what information was excluded in addition to what was reported.
 - Secondary articles, written after the event by an individual who did not experience it, may contain bias from a later time period.
- As with any other document, balance newspaper articles with other sources. Compare newspaper accounts with other accounts of the topic being researched.
- Articles may contain inaccuracies, so compare information in articles with other primary and secondary records.
- Some community newspapers may not report events significant to the topic because it was not considered newsworthy. If almost everyone in the town was at an event, it may not be reported since residents already knew all about it.

