

Keys to Obituary Research - GSSCC 2021  
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A. What information can be found in obituaries?

- age at death or birthdate
- place of death/burial
- place of birth
- names of parents (maiden name)
- name of spouse and in-laws
- names of siblings (including step)
- names of children
- other relatives
- life events:
  - immigration
  - schools and churches attended
  - military service
  - occupation
  - hobbies
  - other information

Note: information variables can be used as search terms also

B. *Online Searchable Death Indexes and Records* <https://www.deathindexes.com/>

Collection of direct links to databases with death information, including obituaries

Arranged by state:

**Online Searchable Death Indexes and Records**

**A Genealogy Guide**

This website is a directory of links to websites with online death indexes, listed by state and county. Included are death records, death certificate indexes, death notices registers, obituaries, wills and probate records, and cemetery burials. You can also find information here about searching the Social Security Death Index online.

**Select a State...**

<a href="#">Alabama</a>	<a href="#">Illinois</a>	<a href="#">Montana</a>	<a href="#">Rhode Island</a>
<a href="#">Alaska</a>	<a href="#">Indiana</a>	<a href="#">Nebraska</a>	<a href="#">South Carolina</a>
<a href="#">Arizona</a>	<a href="#">Iowa</a>	<a href="#">Nevada</a>	<a href="#">South Dakota</a>
<a href="#">Arkansas</a>	<a href="#">Kansas</a>	<a href="#">New Hampshire</a>	<a href="#">Tennessee</a>
<a href="#">California</a>	<a href="#">Kentucky</a>	<a href="#">New Jersey</a>	<a href="#">Texas</a>
<a href="#">Colorado</a>	<a href="#">Louisiana</a>	<a href="#">New Mexico</a>	<a href="#">Utah</a>
<a href="#">Connecticut</a>	<a href="#">Maine</a>	<a href="#">New York</a>	<a href="#">Vermont</a>
<a href="#">Delaware</a>	<a href="#">Maryland</a>	<a href="#">North Carolina</a>	<a href="#">Virginia</a>
<a href="#">District of Columbia</a>	<a href="#">Massachusetts</a>	<a href="#">North Dakota</a>	<a href="#">Washington</a>
<a href="#">Florida</a>	<a href="#">Michigan</a>	<a href="#">Ohio</a>	<a href="#">West Virginia</a>
<a href="#">Georgia</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota</a>	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a>	<a href="#">Wisconsin</a>
<a href="#">Hawaii</a>	<a href="#">Mississippi</a>	<a href="#">Oregon</a>	<a href="#">Wyoming</a>
<a href="#">Idaho</a>	<a href="#">Missouri</a>	<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a>	

[Chicago Death Records](#)   [Detroit Death Records](#)   [Los Angeles Death Records](#)

[New York City Death Records](#)   [St. Louis Death Records](#)

## B. Online Searchable Death Indexes and Records, continued

### 1. Example: 'Michigan Obituaries, 1820-2006,' collection at *FamilySearch*

**Online Michigan Death Indexes and Obituaries**

- Michigan Death Records and Indexes 1867-1952...
  - [Michigan Death Records, 1867-1897 at FamilySearch](#) (free with registration) index plus scanned images from the death ledgers
  - [Michigan Death Records, 1897-1952 from Michiganology](#) (free) includes scanned images of the death certificates from 1897-1943; 1944-1952 is index only
  - [Michigan Death Records, 1867-1952 at Ancestry](#) (requires payment) includes death registers from 1867-1897; and scanned death certificates from 1897-1952
  - [Michigan Death Certificates Index, 1921-1952 at FamilySearch](#) (free with registration) index only; no images
  - [Michigan Death Index, 1867-1897 at the Michigan Dept of Health](#) index only; free (full index seems to end circa 1885/1886 with only a few entries from 1897-1952)
- Michigan Death Records Index 1971-1996...
  - [Michigan Death Index, 1971-1996 at Ancestry](#) (requires payment) over 2 million entries; index only
- [Michigan Obituaries, 1820-2006 at FamilySearch](#) indexed collection of obituaries from some public libraries in Michigan; has over 1 million images (free with registration)
- [Michigan Newspapers Obituaries Archive - Recent](#) (copies of individual obituaries can be obtained online for a fee) includes: Ann Arbor News (7/1/2004-Current), Grand Rapids Press (8/6/2000-Current), Kalamazoo Gazette (1/1/2005-Current), Muskegon Chronicle (1/3/1997-Current), Saginaw News (2/5/2003-Current), and about 90 more Michigan newspapers
- [Southwest Michigan Obituary Index, 1875-2012](#) at Ancestry (free with registration); has 140,000 entries; for Allegan, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo and Van Buren counties

**Michigan Death Records Indexes, Obituaries and Cemeteries by County**

- Allegan County...
  - [Allegan County Clerk Death and Marriage Search](#) includes death certificates index, 1867-recent
  - [Allegan County Genealogy Indexes](#) (from the Saugatuck Douglas Historical Society) includes obituaries indexes and death certificates from Douglas County
  - Allegan County - for the city of Holland see Ottawa County below
- [Alpena County Obituary and Cemetery Indexes](#) from the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library; also has Alpena Catholic Church records indexed
- Ann Arbor - see Washtenaw County below
- [Arenac County Historical Society Obituaries Indexes](#) PDF files (also includes other genealogy indexes)

### Search screen: *FamilySearch*

Search database or browse (see bottom of screen, use for non-indexed items)

**Michigan Obituaries, 1820-2006**

**Description**  
Index and images of obituary collections organized by county or newspaper and then alphabetically. Extracted information as well as newspaper text is represented. The originals are housed in several libraries and repositories throughout Michigan. Some collections contain obituaries from specific regions.

**How to Use this Collection »**

**Search Collection**  
**Deceased Ancestor's Information**

First Names  Last Names

**Search with a life event:**  
Birth | Marriage | Residence | Death | Any

Birthplace  Birth Year (Range)  From  To

**Search with a relationship:**  
Spouse | Father | Mother | Other Person

**Restrict records by:**  
Location | Type | Batch Number | Film Number

Country  State or Province

☐ Match all terms exactly

**View Images in this Collection**  
Browse through 1,093,937 images

**Citing this Collection**  
"Michigan Obituaries, 1820-2006." Database with images. *FamilySearch*. <https://FamilySearch.org> : 26 June 2020. Grand Rapids Public Library

## B. Online Searchable Death Indexes and Records &gt; FamilySearch, continued

## 1. Search example: Jack Johnson, 1995

camera icon &gt; image

Michigan Obituaries, 1820-2006 <span>Search all collections</span>			
▶ 1 Collections selected			
1-20 of 776 Results for Name: <b>jack johnson</b> Death Year (Range): <b>1995 - 1995</b>			
Number of results to show: <span>20</span> <span>50</span> <span>100</span>		<span>Export Results 1-20</span>	
Name	Events	Relationships	View
Jack Johnson	death: 16 July , , Michigan		 
Other	1995		
Michigan Obituaries, 1820-2006	obituary: 1995 Michigan, United States		

Note: Other people have not been indexed yet.

## Scrapbook page

Note: other types of articles i.e. 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

## B2. Another example at FamilySearch:

'California, San Joaquin, County Public Library Obituary Index, 1850-1991'

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1929846>

C. *GenealogyBank*, <https://www.genealogybank.com/> annual subscription abt \$79 /7 day free trial

1. New issues added recently; note time ranges of issues

Massachusetts	Springfield	Springfield Examiner <b>NEW!</b>	08/01/2012 - 04/21/2016	-	Obituaries
Michigan	Ann Arbor	Michigan Argus	11/25/1892 - 11/25/1892	1	Newspaper Archives
Michigan	Muskegon	Muskegon Chronicle	08/30/1894 - 08/30/1894	1	Newspaper Archives
Michigan	Saginaw	Saginaw News	12/31/1921 - 12/31/1921	1	Newspaper Archives
Michigan	Coldwater	Coldwater Republican <b>NEW!</b>	08/23/1866 - 08/25/1876	461	Newspaper Archives
Michigan	Detroit	Detroit evening times <b>NEW!</b>	12/22/1940 - 01/29/1944	742	Newspaper Archives
Minnesota	Mankato	Land <b>NEW!</b>	09/25/2009 - 06/20/2014	-	Obituaries
Mississippi	Vicksburg	Vicksburg Herald <b>NEW!</b>	06/01/1864 - 02/08/1866	58	Newspaper Archives

- current

- 1 day

- Civil war era

2. Searches can be performed from the main page or 'Advanced Search'

Advanced search screen includes several options for search criteria

Don't have to fill in all the boxes! Sometimes 'less is more'

- Name fields
- Date range
- Keywords
- Location
- Specific titles

Advanced  
Search example:  
Keyword: 'Quiack'  
(Indian name,  
brother of 2GG)

Several search results:

Article published all  
across the country i.e.  
Utah, Kansas,

Event occurred in  
Washington state

Can filter by state

- D. *ObitsArchive* <http://www.obitsarchive.com/> annual subscription <\$50, articles back to abt 1990  
 Search screen includes field for keyword  
 - such as child's name, birth place, maiden name and/or in combination  
 - experiment with different variables

- E. *Newspapers.com*, <https://www.newspapers.com/> subscription or part of *Ancestry* 'All Access'  
 'Publishers Extra' also available (additional service per agreement with certain newspapers)  
 1. 'Getting Started' video (5 min) <https://www.newspapers.com/basics/>  
 2. May need to experiment with substituting search criteria  
 3. Search example: keywords "mary johnson" (in quotes), medford, 1977 (year), Washington (place)

Search by:  
 - name or  
 keyword  
 - time  
 period  
 - locations

##### 5. Search Results:

- Article published in Longview, Washington (circulation throughout a wide area)
  - o not the location of death or funeral, as expected
- Clip article and it will be saved in your 'Clippings' folder
- Can opt to make clipping not 'public' (uncheck box)
  - other researchers will not see what you have clipped



1. Searches at *Ancestry.com* will often include *Findagrave* results
  - 'Y' is shown if there is text (often obituaries) in the memorial, then view at *Findagrave*
2. Over 190 million memorials created since 1995, some obituaries entered (random dates)
  - Anyone can volunteer to add memorials, information, photos, etc

1. Search by:
  - name or keyword
  - time period
  - locations (select county or city)
  - 'all' or specific titles
  - also filter by word position

## Searching NYS Historic Newspapers

Search

Filter  ▼

From Month  ▼ Day  ▼ Year

To Month  ▼ Day  ▼ Year

Narrow by

Newspaper	County	City
All newspapers	None	None
5th freedom. (Buffalo, N.Y.)	All counties	All Cities
The A.T. Eye. (Canton, N.Y.)	Albany	Albany
The A.T. See. (Canton, N.Y.)	Allegany	Albion
Adirondack daily enterprise. (Saranac Lake, N.Y.)	Bronx	Altamont
The Adirondack mountain sun. (Lowville, N.Y.)	Broome	Amherst
The Adirondack news. (St. Regis Falls, N.Y.)	Cattaraugus	Arcade
The Adirondack record-Elizabethtown post. (Au Sable Falls, N.Y.)	Cayuga	Au Sable Falls

**Tip and Tricks**

- When narrowing your search you may only select Newspaper or County or City.

2. Search example: John Varick, 1 Jan 1910 – 31 Dec 1910, words within 5 (default)  
Search result: keywords are highlighted, can download as pdf or png and clip

The screenshot displays a digital archive interface for the New York State Library. At the top, navigation links include Home, About, Titles, Search, Contribute, Help, and Pages Available: 10,672,097. The main title of the document is 'The Pokeepsie evening enterprise., March 24, 1910, Page 4, Image 4'. Below this, a description reads 'About The Pokeepsie evening enterprise. (Pokeepsie [i.e. Poughkeepsie], N.Y.) 1892-1918'. The image provided is from the New York State Library. The newspaper page shown is 'THE POKEEPSIE EVENING ENTERPRISE, DUCHESS COUNTY, N. Y., THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1910. PAGE FOUR'. The main headline is 'CONDITIONS BAD IN HOME'. Other headlines include 'News and Comment', 'FUNERAL HELD OF MR. VARICK', and 'Dainty Styles in Low Shoes'. A red box highlights a small inset image in the top right corner of the newspaper page.

## H. Local libraries and volunteer organizations

1. Chemung Library District, 'Obituary & Birth Index' <https://cclld.lib.ny.us/obituary-birth-index/>
  - a. Search index, then request by mail, available for a fee
2. *Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness*, <https://raogk.org/lookups/region/united-states/>
  - a. Free, some will mail hard copy for a fee
  - b. Familiar with local repositories and records; some international locations
  - c. May be limited to # of searches; turnaround may be slow

## I. Funeral Homes

1. *Legacy.com*, <https://www.legacy.com/search> includes funeral homes and newspapers
  - a. Filter by date range or location
2. Google 'funeral homes' plus a location such as a city
  - a. Recent obituaries 'born digital' and searchable, some have archives
  - b. Example: Las Vegas, Nevada funeral home <https://www.davismemorialpark.com/listings>
    - can search by name or word (keyword)

J. Other countries, *FindmyPast*, <https://www.findmypast.com/>

OCR search; if not found, need to vary search criteria

1. 'U.S. and Canadian Newspapers' - Canada includes western provinces & Newfoundland

## Video:

'Finding your Ancestors in Newspapers'

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=INUS2KGGT18](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INUS2KGGT18)

