

Discovering your Family in Digital Libraries

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Photographs, manuscripts, newspapers, oral histories, and other items relating to our ancestors are stored within many different libraries, archives, and museums around the world. During this session, tips and tricks for finding these resources will be shared to help discover more information about your family's past. While some of these collections may be difficult to view without visiting the library in person, there are many options for gaining access to this type of information through digital libraries and other online methods so you don't have to always travel to remote locations. This session will discuss some of the options for discovering this information about our ancestors through portals such as the Digital Public Library of America, Chronicling America, Mountain West Digital Library, and other free online resources. We will also look at different options for discovering and getting access to archival content about our ancestors that is not currently available online.

Brief outline of this class:

- Introduction to digital libraries
- Types of content in digital libraries
- Institutional digital libraries
- Statewide or regional digital libraries
- National/International digital libraries
- Digital newspaper repositories
- Finding aid repositories
- How to access items that aren't digital yet
- Search tips for digital libraries

Resources

Note: This list of resources is not exhaustive and only represents a small sampling of the digital libraries that exist around the world. More information and resources will be made available during the session at RootsTech.

Institutional digital libraries

Most libraries at colleges and universities have online digital collections. Oftentimes, larger libraries will also partner with smaller institutions in their areas (e.g., public libraries, archives, and museums) to make portions of their content available.

- University of Utah (<https://collections.lib.utah.edu/>)
- Brigham Young University (<https://lib.byu.edu/collections/?q=tag:digital>)
- The Ohio State University (<https://library.osu.edu/dc>)
- University of California, Los Angeles (<http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/>)
- Historical Society of Pennsylvania (<https://digitallibrary.hsp.org/>)

Statewide or regional digital libraries

There are many statewide or regional digital libraries that harvest or host collections from many institutional digital libraries within their scope. An advantage to using an aggregated digital library like this is that you are able to search the records from many institutions within a geographic region rather than needing to search each digital repository separately.

- Mountain West Digital Library (<https://mwdl.org/>)
- Portal to Texas History (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/>)
- California Digital Library (<https://www.cdlib.org/>)
- Digital Library of Georgia (<https://dlg.usg.edu/>)
- Empire State Digital Network (<https://empirestate.digital/>)

National/International Digital Libraries

National or international digital libraries bring together resources from many state or region level digital libraries into one search, making it possible to access the resources from hundreds of institutions in one place.

- Digital Public Library of America (<https://dp.la/>)
- Europeana Collections (<https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en>)

Digital newspaper repositories

There are many digital newspaper repositories that are free to access without needing a subscription. The Library of Congress supports the Chronicling America project and nearly all states have their own statewide newspaper repository.

- Chronicling America (<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>)
- Utah Digital Newspapers (<https://digitalnewspapers.org/>)
- California Digital Newspaper Collection (<https://cdnc.ucr.edu/>)
- Virginia Newspapers
(http://www.viriniamemory.com/collections/virginia_newspapers)

Finding aid repositories

A finding aid is a record that helps users find information located in archival collections. There are several finding aid repositories that can be used to help identify potential collections to use for research, even if the collection hasn't been digitized.

- ArchivesWest (<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/>)
- OhioLINK Finding Aid Repository (<http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xf-ead/>)
- PACSCL (<http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/pacscl/index.html>)
- Virginia Heritage (<http://vaheritage.org/>)
- Social Networks and Archival Context (<http://snaccooperative.org/>)