

Notes:

Tips for Finding Life Events in Newspapers

Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library

Newspaper accounts of life events (births, marriages, deaths) are often sought by genealogical researchers.

Most, if not all, newspapers carry death notices or obituaries; marriages are also often listed. Births began to appear in newspapers in the 20th century-about mid-century.

Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library

475 Moe Rd
Clifton Park, NY 12065
(518)371-8622
www.cphlibrary.org

Library Hours:

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Monday-Thursday | 9:00am-9:00pm |
| Friday | 9:00am-6:00pm |
| Saturday | 9:00am-5:00pm |
| Sunday | Noon-5:00pm |



Your Community Center for Lifelong Learning.

Where can you look for these records?

For recent local papers use:

Newsbank database (available at the CPH Library web site) which includes:

- *Daily Gazette* (Schenectady) [8/15/1997-current]
- *Troy Record* [5/24/2005-current]
- *Saratogian* [6/20/2005-current]
- *Times Union* (Albany) [3/1986-current].

For earlier years of these newspapers:

- New York State Library which has them all on microfilm.
- The main library of each city.
- Other local (now defunct) newspapers may also be available at some of the libraries and at the NYSL.

For areas outside of the local area:

In New York State, try the New York State Library, (www.nysl.nysed.gov).

Outside New York:

Use Google to try to locate a library in that area. Look at their web site and check the catalog to see if they have a newspaper. Look for a genealogy or local history room. These often have directions for how to obtain obituaries, etc. from the library. Genealogical or historical societies in the area may also provide such a service. Reference librarians at the public libraries may be able to refer you to one or more of these societies.

Our **Interlibrary Loan Department** can request microfilm of newspapers, usually from the appropriate State library. Locate these titles by checking their catalogs. ILL cannot get individual obituaries, etc. You must request an entire roll of microfilm, identifying the newspaper name and year. Try “Googling” the city name and “newspaper” to locate the local newspaper and then check to see if it has an online archive. Many will require subscription or a fee for a printout.

Most are *not* historical and will cover only 90 days to 15 years or so.

Clifton Park-Halfmoon Public Library has several newspaper databases including New York State newspapers and the New York Times Historical newspaper. Check with the “Ask a Librarian” desk for assistance.

There are subscription obituary databases which may be accessed through a subscription to an organization that subscribes to them or you may subscribe to them yourself, if this is an option. Proquest’s databases are called *America’s Obituaries* (these are relatively current or recent) and *GenealogyBank*, which is historical www.GenealogyBank.com. *GenealogyBank* offers individual subscriptions and is a fairly reasonable cost (about \$20 for a month). *America’s Obituaries* is only available through a library.

When searching for life events, use terms such as:

“married” “weddings” “matrimonials” “nuptials” or “hymeneals

“died” “deaths” “death notices” or “obituaries”

“births”

In older newspapers these items might be inserted right in the middle of a page of unrelated items and can be very brief. Early obituaries give very little information. Except perhaps for a spouse, almost no family members are listed. Interment information is rarely listed either. Later obituaries are much more informative, although there is a period of time when they are longer than the early ones, but are generally just full of “flowery” language praising (usually) the deceased.

9/07 vb