



# Chronicling America Search Strategy Video Transcript

## Historical Vocabulary

### Background

In collaboration with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress, the National Digital Newspaper Program in Ohio developed and produced a series of video tutorials to teach users advanced search strategies and highlight interesting topics in Chronicling America. These build on the search skills demonstrated in the Using Chronicling America Podcast Series.

### Historical Vocabulary

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| <b>Description</b> | Historical vocabulary are the words used by people living at the time to describe contemporary people, places and events. Watch this video to learn more about historical vocabulary and why it is important to use it while searching Chronicling America and other digital newspaper resources. |
| <b>Hosts</b>       | Kevin Latta   |
| <b>Duration</b>    | 5:06  |
| <b>URL</b>         | <a href="http://www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/resources/tutorials">http://www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/resources/tutorials</a>   |

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| <b>0:01</b> | Hello, my name is Kevin Latta, and I work on the National Digital Newspaper Program in Ohio at the Ohio History Connection. Today, I'm going to talk to you about what historical vocabulary means, and how it affects your search results when you're looking for information in historic newspapers.   |
| <b>0:15</b> | To demonstrate historical vocabulary terms, I will be using the Library of Congress's Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers website. This is a great free resource for historical research because newspapers covered such a wide range of topics.   |
| <b>0:30</b> | "What is historical vocabulary?" you might ask. It's the phrase we like to use when we are referring to things, places, events or other sayings that were used by the people living in those times. Vocabulary does change over time. Some words that we use today were never heard of 100 or even 50 years ago, and vice versa. Words that were used back in the 1850s are no longer currently used today.                                |
| <b>0:57</b> | Have you ever tried searching for the word <i>computer</i> in old newspapers? You would get results, but they would not be referring to our everyday machines, like the ones you might be watching this video from. Our definition of what a computer means didn't come into existence until the 1940s. If you search for the word <i>computer</i> , you would get results referring to somebody who computes things, and that's about it. |



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| 1:22 | Another example is if you've ever searched for the phrase <i>World War I</i> in newspapers prior to World War II happening. Wars are usually named after the conflict is completed, so there would be no mention of a "World War I" if the second war has not happened yet. You have to think of other words and phrases that would have been used to describe that event, like |
| 1:43 | <i>War with Germany</i> , or  |
| 1:45 | <i>Great War</i> , or   |
| 1:46 | just simply, <i>World War</i> .   |
| 1:48 | Or what you can do is limit the date range of your search and simply look for the word <i>war</i> .   |
| 1:55 | Names of geographical locations, like city or country names, are great examples of how vocabulary changes. Let's try to find information about Thailand in the newspapers.  |
| 2:05 | Using the <b>Basic Search</b> function, I'll just search for the word <i>Thailand</i> , and let's see how many results we get back. Only 291 results from the over seven million possible newspaper pages in <i>Chronicling America</i> . That doesn't seem like very much at all, just a small drop in the pond of what's available.   |
| 2:24 | Upon further inspection, though, we can actually see that we didn't even get results for what we actually searched for. These are called false hits, results that aren't really what we wanted. Instead, we get results for things like <i>thousand</i> and <i>the hand</i> and <i>that land</i> —words that the computer thought were the word <i>Thailand</i> .               |
| 2:51 | Do you know why we didn't receive any relevant results? It's because the country known today as Thailand didn't become Thailand until 1939. Prior to that date, it was known as Siam. Knowing that, let's try our search again.   |
| 3:07 | Searching for the word <i>Siam</i> gives us over 41,000 results, and it looks like we finally have relevant pages to view if we scroll down and click on a couple of these we can get some information about Siam, or Thailand.   |
| 3:37 | A more local example of a geographic name change is the city that is currently named North Canton in Stark County. Doing a search for this city actually gives you some results referring to the north of Canton but not necessarily the actual city itself.  |
| 3:52 | In 1918 and prior, it was actually known as the Village of New Berlin. The residents voted on a name change during the anti-German sentiment during World War I because they didn't want to appear to be German sympathizers.   |



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| <b>4:04</b> | If you're looking for your family in North Canton prior to 1918, say in 1901, and you can't find anything, it may be because you're searching for <i>North Canton</i> when you actually should be searching for <i>New Berlin</i> or <i>Village of New Berlin</i> . |
| <b>4:21</b> | Sometimes it helps to do some research about the particular location that you're looking for to see if there were any name changes.   |
| <b>4:29</b> | These are just a few examples of how historical vocabulary can influence your search strategies. Here are a few other quick examples of historical vocabulary differences.  |
| <b>4:41</b> | I hope this demonstration was helpful, and that now you understand the concept of historical vocabulary and that these tips can aid you in future searches.   |
| <b>4:50</b> | Chronicling America is freely available and more newspapers are added on a regular basis. Visit the Ohio Digital Newspaper Portal to view additional resources, such as Subject Guides and the Using Chronicling America Podcast Series. Thanks!                    |