



Searching Chronicling America's Foreign Language Content Video Transcript

Researching with Foreign Language Newspapers

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 how to work with foreign language newspapers available through Chronicling America. These build on the search skills demonstrated in the Using Chronicling America Podcast Series and Chronicling America Search Strategy Videos.

Researching with Foreign Language Newspapers

Description	Watch this video to learn some tips for working with foreign language newspapers on Chronicling America. Topics covered include the importance of immigrant newspapers; titles and mottos; bias; appearance; and contents. You may also find this video helpful if you're working with other historic newspapers.
Host	Jenni Salamon
Duration	7:01
URL	http://www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/resources/search-help

0:01	Hi, my name is Jenni Salamon, and I work on the National Digital Newspaper Program in Ohio at the Ohio History Connection, formerly the Ohio Historical Society. I'm going to give you some tips on researching with foreign language newspapers published in the United States—what they are, why they are important and what you can find in them. This will help you better access information contained in the many foreign language (and even English) newspapers on the Library of Congress's Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers website.
0:28	Chronicling America is made possible through a collaboration between the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress and state partners like the Ohio History Connection. As of June 2018, the website has over 13 million pages of historic newspaper content covering 1789-1963. The digitized newspaper pages are freely available and keyword searchable, and more content is added on a regular basis.
0:51	To date, there are nearly 20 languages represented by over 100 foreign language newspapers on Chronicling America totaling more than half a million pages. Among these languages are German, Spanish, Czech, Finnish, Swedish and Slovenian, and more pages and languages will be added soon. By the end of 2018, Ohio will have 20 newspapers representing nine foreign languages on Chronicling America.



1:14	Today, most of us rely on TV and the internet for news. But not that long ago, print newspapers were the primary form of communication. Typically published at regular intervals, newspapers provide news, views, features, advertisements and other information of public interest. They are an incredibly valuable resource for historic research, giving us access to thousands of stories and offering contemporary description and analysis of and reactions to historical events, places, people and culture.
1:43	Newspapers provide important insight into people and their daily lives, businesses, politics, opinions and activities. This is particularly significant for immigrant communities whose stories were rarely covered by the mainstream press—in some cases, their newspapers are the only resource we might still have about a particular person or event within their community.
2:01	Ohio was (and still is) home to a number of immigrant communities. From the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries, many arrived from countries in central, eastern and southern Europe. They settled in Ohio’s urban centers like Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati where they established vibrant, influential and industrious communities.
2:20	They also began publishing their own newspapers, which allowed them to stay connected to their old homes and forge connections to their new ones. By digitizing these newspapers, we have access to their stories in their own words, offering a unique perspective on our national, regional and local history.
2:37	Now that you have some background, let’s talk about the characteristics of foreign language newspapers—the most successful adopted the style, pattern and commercial methods of English newspapers.
2:47	An essential part of any newspaper is its title, and, if it has one, its motto. Sometimes these titles can be fairly generic or they might clue you into their political or other viewpoint. The motto might give you further information about what to expect from the paper, whether it’s a quote from a famous politician, or a declaration of the paper’s intention.
3:07	Foreign language newspapers were no different, in choosing titles and masthead content that expressed their viewpoint. <i>Pokrok</i> is Czech for “Progress” and fittingly, this newspaper disseminated religious and politically liberal ideas. The <i>Vaterlandsfreund</i> from Canton was Jacksonian Democrat in politics, and its mottos expressed this in both English, with famous quotes, and German, with this 18 th century poem which reflected early German nationalism.
3:31	As you might have guessed from the titles and mottos you just saw, newspapers were often partisan and supported specific political agendas. Most communities had at least two papers—one Republican and one Democrat—and some had even more covering special interests such as abolition or a fraternal organization. It was not uncommon for an immigrant group to have multiple publications in the same city that represented political, religious or other divisions within their communities. In Cleveland, for example, Czechs had at least three newspapers to choose from for a time.



4:01	It is critical to identify what bias, if any, a newspaper has because it will affect what news is reported and how it is reported. Even an article that is mostly factual may be written in a manner intended to convince the contemporary reader to feel a certain way about a topic, so you will need to read critically to determine fact versus opinion, true versus false, and neutral versus inflammatory. These approaches to reporting are all informative in their own way, whether they relate events as they unfold or give insight into how a community felt (or wanted to feel) about something. If you can't determine the newspaper's bias from its title or motto, you may need to read editorials or find other print and online resources that discuss the newspaper.
4:41	Early newspapers look much different from those published today. They had small handset type, and if there were any images, they were usually small engraved drawings. Article headings were also small, although some advertisements would use different types and sizes of font and white space to catch the reader's eye. In the latter part of the 19 th century and into the 20 th and 21 st , headlines became much more prominent, and more images were incorporated.
5:05	A typical newspaper, whether in a foreign language or in English, would often include content from leading U.S. papers; legal and official notices; local, social and church news and events; serial novels and poetry; articles on various topics related to science, medicine, religion, or agriculture; political editorials; and advertisements for property, businesses, and products and supplies ranging from plows to hair tonic. Some content was original—created by the editor or newspaper staff—while other content came from external sources, some originally in English and translated. In foreign language newspapers, you'd even find ads placed by people looking for their relatives.
5:43	Smaller newspapers that were published less frequently may not have provided all of this content, and sometimes local community news can be hard to find if printed alongside advertisements or not be there at all, especially in 19 th century newspapers. News from neighboring towns and counties, or even states, was regularly included. The most successful foreign language newspapers were distributed well beyond their immediate locale, across the U.S. and even to other countries.
6:09	Foreign language newspapers were also able to source information from outside the U.S. During and between the World Wars, friends and relatives still living in their countries of birth could provide information about the conditions they were experiencing, offering a perspective beyond that of English news sources. In their own language, these publications reported on what they thought about political and economic turmoil, free from possible censure by the American government.
6:32	Foreign language newspapers were mostly printed in the first language of their readers, but occasionally articles and advertisements were in English. Those that were still being published in the mid-20 th century often incorporated English-language pages or sections, which was important as subsequent generations wanted their news in English too.



6:48

For more information about Chronicling America, and additional tutorials for using the website, please view the Ohio History Connection's Ohio Memory website and Chronicling America. Thank you for viewing my screencast!