

THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM  
AUGUST DIGITAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

# Chronicling America: A Beginner's Guide



ACCESSING | SEARCHING | APPLYING

# Chronicling America

## ABOUT

Chronicling America is a free website that allows users to access historical United States newspapers printed between the years 1789 to 1924. The newspapers located within the website come from a variety of locations - in some cases, universities have digitized their collections, while in other cases, historical societies and smaller libraries have teamed together to make their local newspapers digitally accessible. The entire endeavor is made possible by by the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP), which is a joint project between the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities. While the Library of Congress maintains the webpage and digital files, the National Endowment for the Humanities makes the project financially possible.





# Chronicling America

HOW HARD IS IT TO USE?

Whereas a researcher, genealogist, or history buff may have once had to travel to the Library of Congress or to a far-away historical society to painstakingly read through line by line of a specific newspaper that might produce a find, Chronicling America makes searching through its database as easy as turning on a home or library computer.

This guide provides the steps of a simple search. To read the scholarly article that was produced by this search, visit "A Representative 'of our people': The Agency of William Slade, Leader in the African American Community and Usher to Abraham Lincoln" in the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* located at

<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.2629860.0034.204>

# Getting started

The screenshot shows the Chronicling America website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Library of Congress logo and buttons for "ASK A LIBRARIAN", "DIGITAL COLLECTIONS", and "LIBRARY CATALOGS". A search bar is located on the right with the text "Search Search Loc.gov" and a "GO" button. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: "The Library of Congress > Chronicling America".

The main content area features the National Endowment for the Humanities logo and the text "CHRONICLING AMERICA Historic American Newspapers". A search bar is present with the text "Search America's historic newspaper pages from 1789-1924 or use the U.S. Newspaper Directory to find information about American newspapers published between 1690-present. Chronicling America is sponsored jointly by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress. Learn more >".

Below the search bar are three tabs: "Search Pages", "Advanced Search", and "All Digitized Newspapers 1789-1924". A purple button labeled "US Newspaper Directory, 1690-Present" is on the right. A search bar below the tabs contains "All states" (dropdown), "+ from 1789" (dropdown), "to 1924" (dropdown), "+", and "enter one or more search words" (input field), followed by a "GO" button.

Below the search bar, it says "Pages Available: 12,086,479" and has links for "Print", "Subscribe", "Share/Save", and "Give Feedback".

The main content area shows a "100 Years Ago Today: 7/26/1917 (165 issues)" section with three newspaper thumbnails: "JACKSON COUNTY SENTINEL", "The Princeton Union", and "TURNER COUNTY HERALD".

On the left side, there is a sidebar with links: "About Chronicling America", "About the Site and API", "Recommended Topics", and "Help". Below this is a "More Resources" section with links: "National Digital Newspaper Program", "NDNP Award Recipients", "Newspaper and Current Periodicals Reading Room", and "Ask LC Newspaper & Current Periodicals Librarian".

**STEP 1:** Access Chronicling America at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

**STEP 2:** Locate the "Search Papers" bar for a fast and easy simple search.

# Running a simple search

The screenshot shows the search interface for the US Newspaper Directory. It features three tabs: "Search Pages" (selected), "Advanced Search", and "All Digitized Newspapers 1789-1924". A purple button on the right reads "US Newspaper Directory, 1690-Present". Below the tabs is a search bar with a dropdown menu set to "All states", followed by "from 1789 to 1924" and a text input field containing "enter one or more search words". A "GO" button is on the right. Below the search bar, it says "Pages Available: 12,199,743" and provides links for "Print", "Subscribe", "Share/Save", and "Give Feedback".

The screenshot shows the search interface for the US Newspaper Directory with an advanced search setup. It features three tabs: "Search Pages" (selected), "Advanced Search", and "All Digitized Newspapers 1789-1924". A purple button on the right reads "US Newspaper Directory, 1690-Present". Below the tabs is a search bar with a dropdown menu set to "District of Columbia", followed by "from 1861 to 1868" and a text input field containing "William Slade". A "GO" button is on the right. Below the search bar, it says "Pages Available: 12,199,743" and provides links for "Print", "Subscribe", "Share/Save", and "Give Feedback".

**STEP 1:** You can choose to search through information located in newspapers across all states, or you can select a particular state.

For this exercise, let's explore the life of William Slade, an usher in Lincoln's White House. We know that he lived in Washington, D.C. Let's begin by selecting "District of Columbia."

**STEP 2:** Look for information located within a particular year, or a span of years, by adjusting the dates located between "from" and "to."

We know that Slade definitely lived in Washington, D.C. between 1861 and 1868. Select "1861" and "1868" to set the parameters.

**STEP 3:** Enter your search terms. You may choose to enter a name, an event, or another noun that is tied to the subject you are searching for.

Since we have Slade's full name, let's begin there. If we need to eventually narrow our search, we may also enter in key words like "usher" or "servant."

# Tips for search terms

Search Pages    Advanced Search    All Digitized Newspapers 1789-1924    US Newspaper Directory, 1690-Present

All states    + from 1789    to 1924    + enter one or more search words    GO

Pages Available: 12,199,743

Print    Subscribe    Share/Save    Give Feedback

Search Pages    Advanced Search    All Digitized Newspapers 1789-1924    US Newspaper Directory, 1690-Present

District of Columbia    + from 1861    to 1868    + "William Slade"    GO

Pages Available: 12,199,743

Print    Subscribe    Share/Save    Give Feedback

**Tip 1:** Today's spelling is not always similar to the spelling of the past.

For help, visit the Oxford English Dictionary's notes on 19th century spelling variations at

<http://public.oed.com/aspects-of-english/english-in-time/nineteenth-century-english-an-overview/>

**Tip 2:** Remember, the present names given to past events were not always the given names in the given period. The Civil War took on a number of names, ranging from "the war" to "the rebellion."

Likewise, the White House was often referred to as the "Executive Mansion."

**Tip 3:** To maximize the best results, use quotation marks to isolate words or phrases that might appear together.

For example, "the Republican Court" was a common phrase used for the presidential administrations of this time period. Writing these words separately can complicate the search results.

# How to explore results

Results 1 - 13 of 13    Jump to page:  [GO](#)    View: [Gallery](#) | [List](#)

13 results containing ""William Slade""

Show only front pages    Sort by: [Relevance](#)    Results per page: [20](#)



The screenshot shows a search results interface. At the top, it displays 'Results 1 - 13 of 13' and a 'Jump to page' field with a 'GO' button. On the right, there are options for 'View: Gallery' and 'List'. Below this, it states '13 results containing ""William Slade""'. There are filters for 'Show only front pages', 'Sort by: Relevance', and 'Results per page: 20'. The main content area shows four newspaper images. The first three are 'Evening star. (Washington, D.C.)' from January 06, 1865, with different image IDs. The fourth is 'The national Republican. (Washington, D.C.)' from April 01, 1862. Each image has a red highlight on a specific section of text.

[Evening star. \(Washington, D.C.\), January 06, 1865, Image 1](#)

[Evening star. \(Washington, D.C.\), January 06, 1865, Image 2](#)

[Evening star. \(Washington, D.C.\), January 20, 1865, Image 1](#)

[The national Republican. \(Washington, D.C.\), April 01, 1862, Image 2](#)

**STEP 1:** Chronicling America will provide images of newspapers that it considers to be the best matches for a given search.

Your search terms will be highlighted in red. Select the newspaper by double-clicking it to read the results.

**STEP 2:** Chronicling America allows you to adjust the image size. You can zoom in on the newspaper by clicking within the newspaper text, or by clicking on the plus sign that appears in the top left corner of the newspaper.

**STEP 3:** Click and hold your mouse to move the newspaper from left to right, or up and down. If you find that you need to zoom out of the image, click on the minus sign in the top left corner.

# Tips for digging further

Mrs. Slade stated that much had been done by the colored people of the District; that they had a relief society in successful operation, which had accomplished much good last winter and the winter before.

Rev. Mr. Kimball, of Boston, said that Washington had done very little for the freedmen, and he hoped that every door-bell would be rung and an answer required.

Other remarks were made by Rev. Mr. Fisk, Judge Day, Mrs. Coleman and others, and before the meeting adjourned the following committees were raised to call on the families in the different wards for assistance:

First Ward—Dr. Upton, Surgeon at Circle Barracks, and Mr. Newton. Second Ward—Mr. J. H. Brown, Rev. Mr. Garnet, Mrs. Garnet, and Mrs. Foot. Third Ward—Judge Geo. E. H. Day. Fourth Ward—Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Caldwell, Mrs. **William Slade**, and Miss **Slade**

The following places were also designated

**Tip 1:** You may find that you must dig through a number of newspapers before you find the desired result.

For example, there was another William Slade who commonly appeared in D.C. newspapers - he was an ambassador, not the William Slade that we are looking for.

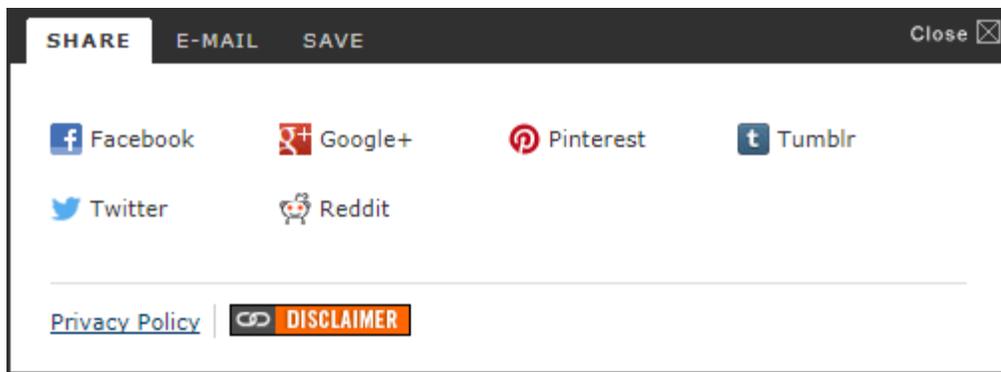
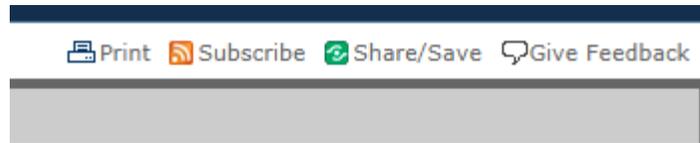
**Tip 2:** If you are looking for an individual, you may run across members of the family while running your search.

For example, wives in the 19th century were commonly referred to by their husbands' names. Above, we have found "Mrs. William Slade."

**Tip 3:** You may uncover further results if you use new keywords that you drew from the initial search.

For example, other articles that are not listed in our initial search appear if the name "Wm. Slade" is the designated search term.

# How to save & share results



**Option 1:** Send your results directly to your printer by selecting the "Print" option in the top right corner of the Chronicing America page. Depending on where you have zoomed in or out of on your chosen page, this will be the image that prints.

**Option 2:** Share an article directly to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, Tumblr, Reddit, and email. Select Share/Save in the top right corner of the Chronicing America page.

**Option 3:** Save a particular newspaper or article to your browser by selecting "Share/Save" in the top right corner of the Chronicing America page.

# Notes

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