

# FIND RECORD TRANSCRIPTIONS AND BUILD CONTEXT WITH PERSI

## The PERiodical Source Index

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### Abbreviations

PERSI = PERiodical Source Index

ACPL = Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana

## WHAT IS THE PERIODICAL SOURCE INDEX (PERSI)?

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- A subject index to family and local history literature published in periodicals
- Originally created in 1986 by the Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the second largest family history library in the United States, in print and fiche formats
- Now includes more than 11,000 genealogical, historical, and patriotic periodicals, including magazines, newsletters, journals created by societies from around the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and Ireland
- Articles indexed by place, subject, surname, ethnicity, and methodology
- *FindMyPast* partnered with ACPL in 2013 to publish the index on their website and include links to articles as they are digitized in an ongoing project
- 2.7 million searchable entries describing family history articles published from 1850-present and which libraries have a copy
- Not an every name or full text index, but rather an index to subjects discussed within the article

## PERSI BASICS

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1. **Search the Index.** Search by subject, locality, or surname to reveal descriptions of helpful articles. Narrow results with places and keywords.
2. **Choose an Article.** Click on the index transcription describing the article. View the details and determine if you want to order a copy of the article, if not digitized.
3. **Order a Copy.** Order the article through interlibrary loan or an order form from ACPL. You may also be able to find a library near you that has copies of the periodical or hire a researcher near ACPL in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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## HOW CAN PERSI HELP WITH YOUR RESEARCH?

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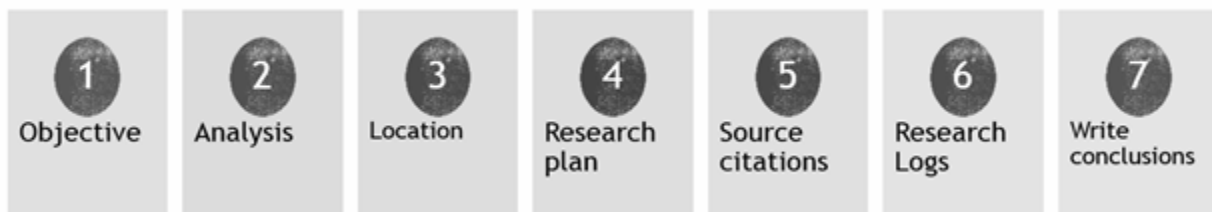
Articles located with the PERiodical Source Index may help you:

- Learn what has been discovered about ancestors by previous researchers
- Learn tips for researching in a specific locality
  - How to trace ancestors in a county or state
  - Methodology tips
- Find abstracts and transcriptions of records including tax lists, church records, voter records, land records, county court records and more
- Learn what life was like for your ancestors
  - Transcriptions of journals, diaries, letters
  - Background information for local historical events and places
- Understand the historical and geographical context of the area you are researching
  - Local history
  - Local parishes and church history
  - Places of emigration and settlement
  - Occupations and communities
  - Ethnic group history
  - Fraternal and religious groups
  - Battles and military units

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## WHEN TO USE PERSI IN YOUR RESEARCH PROCESS

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### Step 3 - Location Research

In step 3 of your research process, you learn about the locations pertinent to your research objective. Questions about documents you analyzed in step 2 can be answered as you do location research in step 3. Consulting sources that teach you about what the local history of that region can be an important part of this step. You may wish to create your own locality guide for a region, with lists of record collections and links to those collections online. You may want to add a section for periodicals that pertain to your locality. You could include journals found through searching PERSI by location.

### Step 4 - Research Planning

In step 4 of the research process, you should make a research plan. This includes listing all the potential records to search, then prioritizing your search to about 5-6 sources or less. Reviewing the published

literature for a county may include abstracted and transcribed records that can be viewed in a periodical. PERSI can help you find those articles.

### Step 7 - Write Conclusions

As you write about the sources and information you located about a research subject, you may have questions about why records were created and what they mean. Information without context cannot become meaningful evidence. To understand the history and context of the records you're using, you can turn to PERSI. Articles written about history, geography, politics, law, customs, economics, and so forth can provide contextual information to your research reports and case studies.

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## SUBJECTS IN THE PERIODICAL SOURCE INDEX

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The staff at ACPL indexes each article by assigning one of twenty-two subject areas. The *FamilySearch Wiki* describes each subject area as follows.<sup>1</sup>

1. **Biography:** more than three main people
2. **Cemeteries:** listings, history, lot owners, plot maps, photos
3. **Census Records:** federal, state, municipal
4. **Church Records:** histories, records, directories, photos
5. **Court Records:** civil, criminal, licenses
6. **Deeds:** only deeds (can include slaves)
7. **Directories:** city, county, atlas directories, business or manufacturing
8. **History:** narratives on localities, companies, houses, ethnic groups
9. **Institutions:** orphanages, hospitals, poor farms, prisons, photos
10. **Land Records:** anything pertaining to land that is not a deed
11. **Maps:** migration trails, county boundary changes, plats
12. **Military Records:** muster rolls, regimental histories, troop movements, photos
13. **Naturalization:** declarations of intent, petitions, naturalizations
14. **Obituaries:** full obituaries, death notices
15. **Other Records (Misc.):** archaeology, extracted local newspaper items, photos and other articles not belonging to another record type
16. **Passenger Lists:** ship histories, travel experiences, lists
17. **Probate Records:** administrations, guardianships, apprentice documents
18. **School Records:** attendance, student lists, histories, teams, photos
19. **Tax Records:** personal, property, income
20. **Vital Records:** births, marriages, deaths, coroner inquests, funeral homes
21. **Voter Records:** lists, elections, election procedures
22. **Wills:** indexes, abstracts, transcriptions (can include slaves)

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<sup>1</sup> "Periodical Source Index (PERSI)," *FamilySearch Wiki* ([https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Periodical\\_Source\\_Index\\_\(PERSI\)](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Periodical_Source_Index_(PERSI))) : rev. 20 June 2019, at 14:32).

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## EXAMPLE PERIODICAL TITLES

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Most of the periodicals included in PERSI are from the United States. Here is a random sampling of some journal titles:

- Arizona Historical Review
- Central Virginia Heritage
- Massachusetts Genealogical Council Newsletter
- Methodism in the Tennessee Conference
- California Mennonite Historical Society Bulletin
- La Grange County Historical Society Newsletter
- Wabash Valley Generations
- Georgia Genealogist

There are also periodicals from Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and Ireland. Some examples from these locations include:

- Alberta Family Histories Society Quarterly
- Saint Lawrence Chronicler
- Kent Family History Society Journal
- Railway Ancestors Information Journal
- Bedfordshire Family History Society Journal
- Midland Ancestor
- MacAmore Miscellany
- Glamorgan Family History Society Journal

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## EXAMPLE ARTICLES

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Betsy F. West, "Davidson County, Tennessee, Tax List - 1805," *Ansearchin' News* 26 (Spring 1979): 80-85, esp. 82 for Baldy Dyer; image online, *Tennessee Genealogical Society* (<https://www.tngs.org/Ansearchn-News> : accessed 3 June 2019).

"Letter, Abraham H. Dyer, Green Co., Tn," *Distant Crossroads* 2 (Apr 1985): 47-48.

"Some Early Families of Hawkins County," *Distant Crossroads* 2 (Jan 1985): 16.

Oscar G. Norseen, "The First Swedes to Locate in Worcester, Massachusetts," *The Swedish Pioneer* 4 (Oct 1953): 14-15.

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## HOW TO USE THE INDEX

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There are two pages for searching PERSI on *FindMyPast*. Option 1 is the preferred search page.

### *Option 1 – Similar to a Database (Preferred Search page)*

- How to get there: <https://www.findmypast.com/> > Search > Newspapers and Periodicals > PERiodical Source Index.
- Actual URL: <https://search.findmypast.com/search/periodical-source-index>
- Includes the following search fields and filters:
  - Who (surname)
  - Where (location)
  - What else (keywords)
  - Use filters to narrow search results
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Last Names</li> <li>○ Country</li> <li>○ State</li> <li>○ County</li> <li>○ Town/City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Subject</li> <li>○ Article Keyword</li> <li>○ Periodical</li> <li>○ Publisher, Publication Year</li> <li>○ How to</li> </ul>
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### *Option 2 – Similar to a Catalog*

- How to get there: <https://www.findmypast.com/persi> > “Discover the Periodical Source Index today!”
- Actual URL: <https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/periodical-source-index>
- Works well if you know the title of the periodical or article. Search by these additional categories:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Periodical Title</li> <li>○ Article Title</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Has images</li> <li>○ Optional keywords</li> </ul>
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## HOW TO OBTAIN AN ARTICLE

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### 1. FIND A DIGITIZED COPY ONLINE

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- *FindMyPast* is currently working with periodical publishers to digitize the articles in PERSI. If a camera icon is next to the entry, that means a digitized copy of the article is available at *FindMyPast*. You can view this if you have a [subscription](#) or purchase [pay as you go credits](#).
- [HathiTrust](#), [Internet Archive](#), and [Google Books](#) may have digitized copies of older periodicals
- Genealogical society websites may contain digitized copies of their periodicals

### 2. CONTACT THE PUBLISHER

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Search for the website or contact information for the journal publisher. They may publish digitized versions of the journal on their website. Alternatively, if you reach out to them by email, they might send you a PDF of the article you seek, and even give you additional help.

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### 3. VISIT ACPL

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Each article indexed in PERSI is located at the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Visiting the library yourself is one way to view the article.

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### 4. ORDER COPIES FROM ACPL

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The Allen County Public Library allows you to order copies of articles found through PERSI. Use this [PERSI Order Form](#). The charge is \$7.50 per order form (pre-paid) and allows you to request up to 6 articles at a time. You will be billed \$0.20 per page copied when you receive the copies.

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### 5. VISIT A NEARBY LIBRARY

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Use WorldCat, <https://www.worldcat.org/>, to search for libraries near you that have the periodical. Often more libraries carry the journal than are listed in the repositories field in PERSI, but these additional locations may only have some of the volumes.

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### 6. REQUEST THROUGH INTERLIBRARY LOAN

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Members of the Pima County Library can request periodicals with a free interlibrary loan service. Copies of articles may be emailed to users as a PDF, although you are asked to specify the library where you would like to pick up the journal article. To use the free Pima County Public Library Interlibrary loan service, go to the following URL:

<http://librarycatalog.pima.gov/screens/ill.html>

In my experience, it takes 2-3 weeks to receive the digital copy (PDF) of the article via email, and it's free. Simply locate an article in PERSI, then copy and paste the citation details into the interlibrary loan service.

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### 7. HIRE A RESEARCHER

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Find qualified genealogists who can look up articles for you at the library you need. The Association of Professional Genealogists is a great way to find professionals. Use the following URL at their website to search by location:

<https://www.apgen.org/directory/>

To find a researcher near the ACPL, search for professionals in Indiana. As you browse the list of researchers in Indiana, you can look in the city column for researchers in Fort Wayne.

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## HOW TO BROWSE DIGITIZED PERIODICALS AT FINDMYPAST

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The links in PERSI entries at *FindMyPast* to digitized images don't take you to the exact page the article begins within the periodical. Instead, the link directs you to the first page of the periodical. You are required to click next on the page viewer to see each page of the journal.

Download or save the image of the title page and table of contents. Then click next until you get to the first page of the article of interest. In some journals, this process may take a long time. To speed up the process, find the page ID # in the URL. Edit that number to jump forward several pages at once. You can find the page ID # in the URL by watching the URL to see which number changes when you press the next page button.

For example, I wanted to get to page 577 in the *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, Vol 1., No. 4. In the table of contents, I saw that this journal began on page 483. I didn't feel like pressing the next button over 90 times, so I edited the page ID in the URL. Here's the URL for the table of contents image. You can see that the page ID is 0002, as I have underlined:

<https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=us%2fpersi%2f105360%2f0002&parentid=persi%2fncgr%2f105360%2f1011313>

To jump forward to the page I wanted, I changed that number to 0095, as shown:

<https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=us%2fpersi%2f105360%2f0095&parentid=persi%2fncgr%2f105360%2f1011313>

After jumping forward about 93 images, I was at page 573. It was much easier, then, to click next a few times until I reached page 577.

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## RESOURCES

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"4 easy ways to track down an indexed PERSI article." *FindMyPast*, 2 February 2016.

<https://www.findmypast.com/blog/family-records/persi-by-post> : 2019.

Dyer, Nicole and Elder, Diana. "RLP 36: Church Records Part 2." *The Research Like a Pro Genealogy Podcast*, 18 March 2019. MP3 file. *Family Locket*. <https://familylocket.com/rlp-36-church-records-part-2/> : 2019.

Elder, Diana. "Genealogy Research and PERSI: A Perfect Match." *Family Locket*, 14 February 2019. <https://familylocket.com/genealogy-research-and-persi-a-perfect-match/> : 2019.

Elder, Diana. "Research Like a Pro, Part 3: Where Did They Live?" *Family Locket*, 29 June 2017. <https://familylocket.com/research-like-a-pro-part-3-where-did-they-live/> : 2019.

Elder Diana. "Create Your Own Research Guide." *Family Locket*, 16 June 2016. <https://familylocket.com/create-your-own-research-guide/> : 2019.

"Find your ancestors in Periodical Source Index," *FindMyPast* (<https://www.findmypast.com/articles/world-records/full-list-of-united-states-records/newspapers-and-periodicals/periodical-source-index> : 2019. [The section "Recently added images from PERSI-indexed articles" contains a list of digitized journals.]

Greenwood, Val D. "Reference Works." *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy, 4th edition*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 2017. Pages 128-129.

- Henningfield, Melinda Daffin. "The Role of Background Context in Document Analysis." *Onboard 23* (January 2017); 1-2. Article online. *Board For Certification of Genealogists*.  
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<https://www.findmypast.com/blog/family-records/ho> : 2019.