IDENTIFYING YOUR CATHOLIC ANCESTORS
GENEALOGY WORKSHOP SERIES
SESSION 3

NAVIGATING NEWSPAPER DATABASES
FOR OBITUARIES
SEPTEMBER 26TH 2020
It's time for the 3rd session of a 6-week Zoom collaboration between:

- The City Archives & Special Collections at New Orleans Public Library
- Office of Archives and Records of the Archdiocese of New Orleans
- New Orleans Catholic Cemeteries (NOCC)

Today we will discuss how to use your regional Public Library cards to access newspaper databases and find obituaries, often the starting point for researching Catholic ancestors.
Please make a note of any questions you have during the presentation and reserve them until we open the Chat function at the end.

- We will address the content of this presentation only. If your question pertains to a future presentation, please save it!
- We will get to as many questions as we can by 12:15.

Recordings of each session will be made available on the "Programs and Presentations" page at archives.nolalibrary.org on the Tuesday following, so don't worry if you can't write as fast as we talk! You will be able to view the presentation again any time on our YouTube channel.
SESSION MATERIALS AND RECORDINGS

archives.nolalibrary.org: Click this link to get to the program materials and video.
MEET OUR PRESENTERS

- **Kimberly Johnson** is the Senior Processing Archivist/Records Analyst for the Office of Archives and Records at the Archdiocese of New Orleans, where she helps manage conservation and preservation of historic and current records. She holds a Masters of Arts in History and is a Certified Archivist.

- **Heather Veneziano** is the Director of Public Engagement and Development for New Orleans Catholic Cemeteries, as well as an architectural historian and cultural heritage advisor with the preservation firm of Gambrel & Peak. She holds a Masters of Fine Art and a Masters of Preservation Studies.

- **Katie Vest** is the Research Archivist for the Office of Archives and Records at the Archdiocese of New Orleans; in addition, she researches and translates genealogy requests in French, Spanish, Italian, and German. She holds a Masters of Arts in History with an emphasis in Public History, and is a Certified Archivist.

- **Amanda Fallis** is a Librarian and Archivist in the New Orleans City Archives & Special Collections at NOPL, where she works with genealogical and municipal government records. She holds a Masters of Library and Information Science and is a Certified Archivist.
WHAT WILL WE COVER TODAY

1. What is an obituary?
2. Religious and burial information in obituaries
3. How to find obituary citations
4. Accessing local newspaper databases to view obituary citations
WHAT IS AN OBITUARY

- **WHAT** - A death announcement placed in a newspaper by a family member or close person for a fee
- **WHO** – Immediate family, relatives, ancestors, friends, and other persons of interest to the genealogist
- **WHERE** - For our purposes, obituaries are published by news services either online, or in **scans** of **physical** newspapers online!
- **WHY** – Today specifically so we can hopefully find out what Catholic cemetery someone may have been buried in. Generally, we hope to find details such as the cemetery, home address, birthplace, and relatives.
IMPORTANT NOTE!

Not everyone had one.

- It is *not* a Vital Record (legal government document)
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RELIGIOUS AND BURIAL INFORMATION IN OBITUARIES

- **Dates**
  - Of death, of residency, of birth, of funeral

- **Family**
  - Spouse(s), children, parents, and others

- **Locations**
  - Cemetery, home address, nation of birth, funeral location

- **Events**
  - Disease, disasters, accidents

- **Affiliations**
  - Religion, profession, charity work
We will talk about information found in obituaries in the context of what is needed to place a sacramental request with the Archdiocese.

While we are focusing on Burial and Funeral Sacraments, some information in obituaries can help with even Baptisms and Marriages.
Information REQUIRED to begin research

- If an exact date or church is not known, you MUST provide detailed information such as, but not limited to: parents' names, birth dates of first children, New Orleans address, name of the priest who performed the marriage, death date, etc. This information can be obtained by checking old city directories, census records, obituaries and state issued marriage licenses, birth certificates and death certificates. (Please visit our website for links to these resources)

- The number of Catholic churches in the city of New Orleans increased rapidly after 1840. Requests for records after 1845 must include the name of the church or the address of the participants.

- Cemetery records, in general, are not indexed. Therefore, requests must include name, date of death (within a month), and, if possible, the cemetery.

CHURCH IN WHICH SACRAMENT WAS PERFORMED: ____________________________

CIRCLE NAME OF SACRAMENT:  BAPTISM   MARRIAGE   FUNERAL   BURIAL

NAME AT TIME OF SACRAMENT: _______________________________________

APPROXIMATEDATE OF SACRAMENT: _________________________________

DATE OF BIRTH: ___________________ DATE OF DEATH: ______________

NAME OF PARENTS (include mother’s maiden name):
______________________________________________________________

NOTES: _______________________________________________________
What you hope to find is either a church or a home address.

If you don’t get the name of a church, the home address will help you determine on a map where the nearest Catholic church was.

You could possibly get parents or children's names for Baptism and Marriage Sacraments.

You may be able to calculate a year of birth, or find a country of origin.
This obituary gives us:
- Burial location
- Area to search for a church
- Parent names for additional searches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time of Death</th>
<th>April 21, 1919 at 9:30 PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Married; Edna Ackerman (living)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Mary Curen (living) and John T. Farrell (deceased)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>None Listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>Police Benevolent Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>No. 300 South Broad (look for nearest church)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial</td>
<td>St. Patrick’s Cemetery No. 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Depending on the time period, we have 2 primary options for finding New Orleans obituaries:

- **1804-1972**: City Archives LA Biography and Obituary Index
- **1972-2011**: USGenWeb Archives Times-Picayune Obituary Index
CITY ARCHIVES LA BIOGRAPHY AND OBITUARY INDEX

- Available online at [archives.nolalibrary.org](http://archives.nolalibrary.org)
- Collaboration between NOPL and THNOC staff and volunteers
- Replicates the original WPA index cards and additions
- Over 650,000 cards in 15 cabinets, 150 drawers
CITY ARCHIVES LA BIOGRAPHY AND OBITUARY INDEX

- Covers various N.O. papers from 1804-1972
- Some newspapers are more thoroughly covered than others.
- It is substantially complete for the Daily/Times-Picayune.
- There are links to additional volunteer projects that continue through 2012
GETTING TO THE CITY ARCHIVES OBITUARY INDEX

1. Go to archives.nolalibrary.org
GETTING TO THE CITY ARCHIVES OBITUARY INDEX

2. Scroll down to the link under the Genealogy section
3. Once inside, click here
Search screen

Example search result
Enter a “surname” (last name) only

200 results! Oh dear!
Let's add a first name, too
CITY ARCHIVES OBITUARY INDEX SAMPLE SEARCH

- Surname + First Name = one result
- The most important information on this page is/are the Obituary citation(s)

**Allen, Mrs. Tina**

- Death date: 1938-10-05
- Age: 57 years
- Sex: F
- Next of kin: Thomas Allen (husband at death), Frank Bongiovanni (previous husband), Thomas Spicuzza (previous husband)

**Obituary citation(s):**
- Times-Picayune, 1938-10-06, Pg. 2 col. 7
- Times-Picayune, 1938-10-07, Pg. 2 col. 5
- Times-Picayune, 1938-10-09, Pg. 6 col. 3

**Biographical Reference(s):**
- see Bongiovanni, Mrs. Frank
- see Spicuzza, Mrs. Thomas

New search
Search Tips

- Try many different spellings
- Start with only the last name if it is a less common name
  - The more fields you enter, the fewer results you get. Too many search terms could be the difference between 1 result and 0 results! Or vice versa—if it is a very common name, you’ll want to narrow your results by adding more search terms.
To get to the USGenWeb Archives Times-Picayune Obit Index, click here...
US GEN WEB ARCHIVES TIMES-PICAYUNE OBIT INDEX

New Orleans Public Library
Louisiana Division

Free Online Projects to Index New Orleans Obituaries

*Louisiana Biography & Obituary Index*
This index, the original of which is housed in the Louisiana Division of New Orleans Public Library, indexes obituaries in New Orleans newspapers (1804-1972), as well as biographical references in a number of older publications.

*Indexing for *Times-Picayune* Obituaries*
From NOVA (the Orleans Parish volunteers of the U.S. GenWeb Project) this page indexes obituaries from various years from 1880 to the present (mainly 1972-2011)

*Obituary Index at the Jefferson Parish Public Library*
Their online index cover 1972-1978.

...and then here
Once inside...

- Choose a year
- It covers 1972-2011
Includes every day the paper ran in that year

That's a lot of names!

How will we find the one we need?
We use the FIND function on the keyboard!

Press CTRL + F at the same time

A search window will open near the top of your window
We type the name "Ourso" and press Enter

This is our citation
ACCESSING LOCAL NEWSPAPER DATABASES TO VIEW OBITUARY CITATIONS

- What we will cover in this section applies to cardholders in Orleans, Jefferson, St. Tammany, and East Baton Rouge Parish, as they have confirmed access to the historic Times-Picayune via the Newsbank database.

- For non-residents, these can be accessed through paid non-resident cards, or paid subscription services such as Newspapers.com and Genealogybank.com.

- Please visit Nolalibrary.org and choose Services > Library Card Information & Application for instructions on obtaining a non-resident card.
ACCESSING LOCAL NEWSPAPER DATABASES TO VIEW OBITUARY CITATIONS

- We have a citation – now what?
- We should use the free library databases!
- **Newsbank (JPL) / New Orleans Newspapers (NOPL)**
  - Both - *Times-Picayune* between 1838-1988
  - Jefferson Parish - *Times / Weekly Times* 1863-1881
  - Orleans Parish - *States, Item*, and *States-Item* from 1877-1979
ACCESSING LOCAL NEWSPAPER DATABASES TO VIEW OBITUARY CITATIONS

- Other papers
  - May be on Newspapers.com, offered for free through NOPL & JPL
  - If not, it is on microfilm. Please e-mail your citation to archivist@nolalibrary.org and we will send you a digital copy from the paper (limits and fees may apply)
  - Jefferson Parish Library offers portions of the The Bee (L’Abeille) from 1827-1923 on their website
  - If it ran from 1988-2017, you will likely need to e-mail us as well
First, access your library's Louisiana Library Connection database portal.

I will show you how to do it through our site—this will work as long as your parish library has a subscription to Newsbank and Newspapers.com.

You can also just go directly to the Louisiana Library Connection site: lalibcon.state.lib.la.us
ACCESSING LOCAL NEWSPAPER DATABASES TO VIEW OBITUARY CITATIONS

- You will need a library card from a subscribing parish:

www.nolalibrary.org
Once you have logged in to the Databases, scroll down and look on the left for **New Orleans Newspapers / Newsbank** and **Newspapers.com**.
Pick the collection of papers (Historic, Current, etc.) you want to look at

This will vary from parish to parish, but you should eventually get to at least the *Times-Picayune*
On this screen, pick the specific paper you want to look at.

You can also search, but we have a citation.

We're picking the *Times-Picayune*.
Once you have chosen a paper, choose a year from the drop-down menu.
After choosing the year, click on the day and month day to open up the issue.
After choosing the day, choose your page and find the column.

Mrs. Allen had her service at St. Peter & Paul church, and was interred in St. Roch cemetery.
"Browse" is the quickest way to locate your citation.

Papers tend to have coverage between the early 1800s-1930s.
### Browse Newspapers

**Search within: Louisiana » New Orleans » The Daily Delta » 1850 » February » 01 Feb 1850, Fri**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>The Daily Delta</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>01 Feb 1850, Fri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- The database layout is similar to Newsbank
- Let's look at two obituaries from this regional paper
USING NEWSPAPERS.COM

- Red Church, St. Charles Parish
- Felicity Street between Chippewa and Fulton
- Parents' names
- **GenealogyBank.com** is the paid version of **Newsbank** databases.
- A subscription allows you access to papers from across the country, but is charged monthly.
OTHER SOURCES FOR LOCATIONS AND NAMES YOU MAY NEED

- A list of cemetery records available in the Louisiana Division can be found on our website, but there are some access restriction due to COVID.

- There is **NO** comprehensive index to all of the cemeteries in New Orleans.

- Best websites for finding graves:
  - Find A Grave – Louisiana [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)
  - [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
  - > "BillionGraves" (nospace)
  - [www.la-cemeteries.com](http://www.la-cemeteries.com)
QUESTIONS?

- **Question / Chat guidelines:**
  - Only submit **questions** via chat—please keep it clear of conversations or crosstalk
  - Submit only **one** question per participant
  - Make sure your question pertains to the information presented **today**
  - We will get to as many questions as possible by **12:15**
  - Please feel free to **contact** any of us if we don’t get to your question today!
Archdiocesan Indexes and Digital Resources
October 3rd, 11-12

Contact Us:
City Archives and Special Collections
New Orleans Public Library
(504) 596-2610
archivist@nolalibrary.org
archives.nolalibrary.org

Archdiocese of New Orleans
Office of Archives and Records
(504) 861-6241
archives@arch-no.org
nolacatholic.org/archives-and-records

New Orleans Catholic Cemeteries
(504) 596-3050
nolacatholicccem@arch-no.org
Nolacatholiccemeteries.org