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July 22, 2009

## Search More Than 10,258,000 Old New York State Historical Newspaper Pages

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The Fulton History web site has a great collection of old newspapers and photographs. The photographs seem to mostly be reproductions of old postcards. You can obtain a rather good view of the places your New York ancestors lived as well as being able to read about the events in their lives. As the web site says, "*Finding The Angels & The Devils In The Family Tree Since 2003.*"

The web site is a searchable repository of many, but not all, of the old newspapers published in New York State. The newspapers found on this site have been scanned by production grade Wicks and Wilson Microfilm scanners. The microfilm was obtained from the State of New York Newspaper Project (conducted in the 1970s and early 1980's) and/or from libraries, historical societies, or private individuals who wanted to share what they had.

A number of microfilm companies filmed the old newspapers for the New York Newspaper Project. Some of the filming was of very poor quality newsprint (faded, torn, creased, excessive ink bleed) so that an acceptable image (for OCR) was next to impossible to obtain. As stated on the web site, the results "*are a perfect example of WYSIWYG - what you see is what you get.*" Original scanned images are archived off site at very high resolution, now over 21 terabytes of compressed data.

I looked at a number of newspapers on this site and quickly became overwhelmed. Ten million pages is a lot of information! Most of the images I saw were easily readable although a few were a bit "fuzzy" but still readable. I suspect that an examination of each of the ten million pages would find a few more fuzzy images but I didn't check them all.

The images are in PDF format, a great choice, in my opinion. I was able to zoom in and out on each image, similar to using a magnifying glass. Even the fuzzy pages became readable when I blew them up to double or triple size.

I found that I can save each image on my local hard drive or print it on my local printer. Of course, my local printer doesn't handle newspaper-sized paper. I have a choice of printing an entire page as a compressed image or of zooming in and printing just a part of a page in larger text. If you have a printer that handles larger paper, you can print as large as whatever your printer will handle.

I was unable to copy-and-paste information from the PDF images, however.

I used a Macintosh to access the site but I am sure that Windows and Linux will operate in the same manner.

If you don't know exactly what you are looking for, I would suggest that you go to the main page at <http://www.fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html> and click on "FAQ\_Help\_Indexd." That will take you to a page that has a downloadable Excel spreadsheet that contains the index to all the newspapers available on the site. Obviously, you will need to have Excel or a compatible spreadsheet program (OpenOffice, Macintosh Numbers, etc.) installed in order to use the index. If you do not have one of those installed, use [Google Docs](#) or [Zoho Docs](#) as both of those free services will read

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spreadsheets.

Once you find something of interest on the index, you should be able to find the newspapers on the web site. You don't really need to download the spreadsheet; you can find everything without it although that may take a bit longer.

You can also search the newspapers by text. The site supports "fuzzy searching." No, that's not a reference to the quality of the images, it refers to finding words even if they are misspelled. For example, a fuzzy search for apple will find "appple." Fuzzy searching can be useful when you are searching text that may contain typographical errors, or for text that has been scanned using optical character recognition (OCR). Full instructions are available in the site's FAQ (Frequently-Asked Questions) page.

I would suggest that you click on the link labeled, "FAQ\_Help\_Index" and then read the instructions for using the site. The use of this site is a bit different than others but detailed instructions can be found in the "FAQ\_Help\_Index."


All of the newspapers and images on the Fulton History web site are available free of charge although the owners do accept contributions to keep the site operating.

All in all, this is a great find for anyone with New York ancestors. You can find the Fulton History web site at <http://www.fultonhistory.com>.

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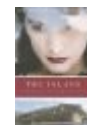
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