

# A Digital Treasure: *PERSI* and Your Family History

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## What is PERSI?

"PERSI" is an acronym, used to describe the PERiodical Source Index. This index, created by the Allen County Public Library has been an ongoing project for over twenty years. This subject index lists genealogy, family history and history related articles available in small publications, typically produced by genealogy and family history societies around the world. PERSI provides a searchable index so that researchers can identify relevant material that is published on a smaller scale.

The Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library holds the largest English-language genealogy and local history periodical collection in the world with more than 6,200 current subscriptions and more than 10,000 titles. PERSI has been compiled from this growing collection and is updated on a frequent basis.

## How can PERSI help me in my research?

PERSI is an outstanding genealogy resource. The publications included in the index are generally produced by local societies and organizations. Within the scope of the Findmypast partnership, PERSI is transitioning into a 21<sup>st</sup> century genealogy resource. The reach of these publications is limited in scope, and the material was only seen before by current members that received the material in the mail or online.

The collection consists of periodicals that are produced by genealogy societies, historical societies, family or surname societies, and other publishers. These publications often include family histories, cemetery transcriptions, historical profiles of a specific community, record abstracts, queries, descriptions of local records collections, and much, much more. Taking advantage of this resource may provide numerous clues to your ancestors!

Suggested filler: Researching the historical context of your ancestor's can lead to a variety of new clues and resources that you may not have otherwise identified. The content included in PERSI could be anything from vital records to oral history. Carefully researching through this collection may provide substitute records for lost documents, citations to previously unknown materials, and other indications of how you can continue your family history journey. The articles are generally written by local authors, giving an "insider's look" to the community and the availability of genealogically valuable sources.

## **What is new about PERSI?**

As the new home of the PERiodical Source Index (PERSI), Findmypast is linking thousands of individual genealogical periodicals and resources. This will allow the original content to be accessed and connected digitally for the first time in the history of PERSI. Findmypast continues to digitize publications to include PERSI, building a central access point for periodicals to reach a global family history community.

## **Locating PERSI**

PERSI is one of the many datasets available from Findmypast.com. From the Findmypast homepage, hover your mouse over the "Search" tab in the blue menu bar. Follow the link to the Newspapers & Periodicals collection in the drop down menu. This will take you to a search page, which includes four buttons in the left hand column; click on PERiodical Source Index to limit your search to only PERSI records.

## **Accessing the index and images**

The index can be searched online for free by anyone. Images of some articles are held behind the subscription wall on Findmypast. At the present time, Findmypast adds new images to the collection every month. To view the full details for an index entry or any associated images, you will need a subscription to Findmypast. Once you access the index and find the image you are looking for, you can download the image for your personal use.

## **Searching the index and images**

Findmypast has designed the search functionality and features within the index to be user friendly. You can now search by keyword, location, publication, name and much more within PERSI. Key ways to search include:

### **Last Names**

Because PERSI is a subject-level index, searching or browsing by last names helps you to locate articles that might relate to a specific family or extracts for a certain surname within a region.

### **Country**

Limits entries by a specific country mentioned within an article.

### **State**

Limits entries to specific states mentioned within an article.

### **Town/City**

Limits entries to specific town or city mentioned within an article.

### **Article Keyword**

Limits by a specific keyword included in the title of an article.

**Periodical**

Limits by the specific name of the periodical.

**Publisher**

Limits by the stated publisher of a periodical.

**Publication Year**

Limit the year of publication (excellent for searching new entries added to the database)

**How To**

Toggles between including "how to" articles or not within your search results.

**Subject**

Limits entries to a specific subject or related subjects including:

- Biography
- Cemeteries
- Census records
- Church records
- Deeds
- Directories
- Histories
- Institutions,
- Land records
- Maps
- Military records
- Naturalization records
- Obituaries
- Other records
- Passenger lists
- Probate records
- School records
- Surname
- Tax records
- Vital records
- Wills

**Articles not yet online**

If the articles you would like to study are not yet available as linked issues to PERSI, there are many other avenues you can try. Contacting the publisher of the periodical containing the article you're interested in can be a quick and inexpensive means of accessing photocopies, digital copies, and complete issues. You might even find that the publisher covers other materials that relate to your ancestral research, and discover more useful information.

Each entry in PERSI includes a list of the various repositories that hold the publication. You can utilize this list to contact these repositories to identify their copy process. PERSI entries also include a link to the Allen County Public Genealogy Center Catalog. The link is identified as the actual call number to this resource within their collections. Once you have followed this link, you can place an order with the Allen County Public Library to request a copy of the article from their "Our Services" page on [www.genealogycenter.org](http://www.genealogycenter.org). This equates to easy

access and identification of the item, should you have the need to order a copy from the library before it can be digitized.

Alternatively, you might find the periodical in a library or other research repository in your area. Try searching your local library's online catalog. If the title does not appear there, search OCLC's WorldCat.org. WorldCat is the largest bibliographic database in the world, and can generate a list of libraries local to you that own a particular item.

You can also contact Findmypast at [persi@findmypast.com](mailto:persi@findmypast.com) to request that the publication be added to the "Suggested Publications" list, and communicate that you would like to see Findmypast pursue digitization of this periodical. Although this option may take some time, Findmypast is actively seeking your participation in this process, to prioritize the publications they digitize.

## **The future of PERSI...**

Findmypast posts periodic updates through their blog [<http://blog.findmypast.com>](http://blog.findmypast.com) including the latest titles added to PERSI. You can also view a complete list of digital images online in PERSI at [<http://www.findmypast.com/articles/world-records/full-list-of-united-states-records/newspapers-and-periodicals/periodical-source-index>](http://www.findmypast.com/articles/world-records/full-list-of-united-states-records/newspapers-and-periodicals/periodical-source-index).

Findmypast is currently engaged in the process of working one-on-one with societies around the United States and Canada to gain permission to use their material. The majority of these publications are still protected by copyright, and Findmypast takes that protection very seriously. Each organization deserves attention and recognition throughout this project, and Findmypast will continue to hold onto that commitment as they move through this process.

This process will take some time, and although many are anxious to see the collection of digital images grow, Findmypast is taking steps to be careful and methodical in the process. This continues to ensure a high quality product being provided to Findmypast customers around the world.