

Table of Contents

Frequently Asked Questions	4
What's the best strategy for searching in HeritageHub?	4
How do I find a particular person?.....	4
How can I find more results if I received none or too few?	5
How can I narrow my results if I received too many?	5
Getting Started.....	6
The Home Page	6
Narrowing Your Results	7
Expanding Your Results	9
Working with your Search Results	9
Overview of the Search Results Page.....	9
Modifying a Search.....	10
Changing Sort Order	11
Using Limiters.....	11
Using the Date Selector	12
Viewing a Preview of an Article	12
Selecting & Working with One or More Articles.....	13
Emailing Articles.....	13
Printing Articles	14

- Downloading Articles 14
- Saving Articles to your Personal Account: My Folder 14
- Saving a Search 16
- Creating an Alert 16
- Unsubscribing from an Alert 16

Working with Articles and Image Content 17

- Working with Text Articles 17
 - Emailing an Article..... 18
 - Printing an Article..... 18
 - Downloading an Article..... 19
 - Saving an Article to your personal My Folder account..... 19
- Working with Image Content 19
 - Viewing and Working with Image Content 20
 - Searching an Image..... 21
 - Emailing Image Content 21
 - Clipping an Image for Downloading or Printing 22
 - Printing an Article..... 23
 - Downloading an Article..... 23
 - Saving an Article to your personal My Folder account..... 23

Creating and Using a Personal Account: My Folder 23

- Creating a Personal Account 23
- Signing in and out of your Personal Account 24
- Using your Personal Account 24
 - Saved Articles..... 25

Saved Searches..... 26

Saved Alerts..... 26

About HeritageHub Content27

HeritageHub Obituaries and Death Notices.....27

Social Security Death Index (SSDI).....27

Article Formats.....27

Understanding Optical Character Recognition (OCR)27

Terms of Use28

Privacy Policy.....28

Browser Requirements 28

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the best strategy for searching in HeritageHub?

Envision a funnel, wide at the top, narrow at the bottom. This is the search strategy, the funnel.

1. First, try searching just a last name.
2. Narrow search results using filters on the left. Try the graphic timeline first because you can immediately narrow the search further. Select the decade you think was appropriate for the death date. You can quickly see the number of results per year.
3. Narrow to the year of death within the timeline. Usually there are only limited number of obituaries within a year.
4. Scroll through the results list.
5. If you need to narrow your search even more, try adding a first name. When entering first names, keep in mind that variations that might be used - e.g., William, Bill, Will, etc.
6. Lastly, if you need to further limit your results, try entering personal details, such as a person's occupation, the name of a spouse or child, the town or city in which the person lived, or even the name of a school the person attended.

How do I find a particular person?

Envision a funnel, wide at the top, narrow at the bottom. This is the search strategy, the funnel.

7. First, try searching just a last name.
8. Narrow search results using filters on the left. Try the graphic timeline first because you can immediately narrow the search further. Select the decade you think was appropriate for the death date. You can quickly see the number of results per year.

9. Narrow to the year within the timeline. Usually there are only limited number of obits within a year.
10. Scroll through the results list.
11. If you need to narrow your search even more, try adding a first name. When entering first names, keep in mind that variations that might be used - e.g., William, Bill, Will, etc.
12. Lastly, if you need to further limit your results, try entering personal details, such as a person's occupation, the name of a spouse or child, the town or city in which the person lived, or even the name of a school the person attended.

How can I find more results if I received none or too few?

1. Search for variations of the name spelling. Many names have evolved to different spellings over time, especially in historical newspapers. First names may also include variants such as William, Bill or Will.
2. Use a date range, just a year, or no date at all. The publication date of an obituary is not the same as the date of death. Thus, it is best to start with just the year of death and narrow from there if needed.
3. Try entering only a last name, and using the limiters to narrow from there.

How can I narrow my results if I received too many?

1. Narrow search results using filters on the left. Try the graphic timeline first because you can immediately narrow the search further. Select the decade you think was appropriate for the death date. You can quickly see the number of results per year.
2. Narrow to the year within the timeline. Usually there are only limited number of obits within a year.
3. Scroll through the results list.

4. If you need to narrow your search even more, try adding a first name. When entering first names, keep in mind that variations that might be used - e.g., William, Bill, Will, etc.
5. Lastly, if you need to further limit your results, try entering personal details, such as a person's occupation, the name of a spouse or child, the town or city in which the person lived, or even the name of a school the person attended.

Getting Started

The Home Page

We recommend that you start by entering only the Last Name of the deceased person for whom you are looking. You will have the opportunity to refine your results on the next page. You can fill in the other fields, such as First Name and Year of Death on this page, but often, starting with a very broad search – just the last name – is best.

To begin your search:

1. Enter the last name of the deceased.
2. Enter any optional information you may know.
 - a. First name – *Hint: Remember to include name variants when searching. If the deceased's name is William, try entering: William OR Bill OR Will*
 - b. Middle name – *Hint: Try searching on a full middle name or just an initial*
 - c. Year of Death – *Hint: If you don't know the year, you can enter a range of years such as 1990 – 1992*
 - d. Keywords, such as the hometown of the person, the company for whom they worked, or the name of a spouse or relative of the person.



Narrowing Your Results

Sometimes, you have too many results to review. You can use different techniques to help to home in on the person(s) for whom you are searching.

Using the search form to narrow your results:

1. Optional search boxes:
 - a. First Name – remember to include variant spellings such as William OR Bill
 - b. Middle Name – search on a full middle name or just an initial
 - c. Year of Death – search a specific year or if you don't know the year, you can enter a range of years such as 1990 – 1992.
 - d. Keywords – search for keywords that are likely to be in an obituary, such as:
 - i. The deceased's spouse or relative
 - ii. The deceased's town or city
 - iii. The deceased's occupation
 - iv. The college or university the deceased attended
 - v. Organizations or Associations to which the deceased belonged
 - vi. The name of the cemetery in which the deceased is buried

Note: Be sure to put phrases in quotation marks, such as "Northwestern University"

Using the limiters to narrow your results:

1. Date Selector: The Date Selector is a limiter in bar-graph form. If you don't know the deceased's exact year or date of death, you can use the graph to limit your search to a date range.
 - a. Slide the handles on each side of the graph to pinpoint your desired date range.
 - b. Click Apply.
 - c. Hovering over a bar in the graph reveals the number of articles from that time frame.
 - d. As you apply date ranges, the Date Selector updates to offer more granular options. For example, applying a one-year date range reveals a Date Selector with bars for each of the 12 months of that year.
2. Source name: The source name is the name of the publication in which the obituary appeared. To use:
 - a. Conduct a search.
 - b. Explore the Source Names by clicking the + sign to reveal the selections within the limiter. Hide the selections by clicking the – sign.
 - c. Click a link to apply that selection to your search results.
 - d. Click More Options to see other selections and to apply more than one to your search.
3. Source Location: The source location is the geographical location of the publication in which an obituary was published.
 - a. Conduct a search
 - b. Explore the Source Names by clicking the + sign to reveal the selections within the limiter. Hide the selections by clicking the – sign.
 - c. Click a link to apply that selection to your search results.
 - d. Click More Options to see other selections and to apply more than one to your search.

Note: It can be particularly helpful to select multiple source locations if the deceased lived in a town bordering multiple states or if the deceased had made recent moves.

Expanding Your Results

Sometimes, you receive no results or too few. You can use different techniques to help to find the person(s) for whom you are searching.

1. Search for just the Last Name of the deceased, then narrow your results from there.
2. Search for variations of the name spelling. Many names have evolved to different spellings over time, especially in historical newspapers. First names may also include variants such as William, Bill or Will.
3. Search the year of death or no date at all. The publication date of an obituary is not the same as the date of death. Thus, it is best to start with just the year of death and narrow from there if needed.

Working with your Search Results

Overview of the Search Results Page

The search results page has several features that allow you to work efficiently with the content you've found. On the results page, you can:

1. Edit your search, without having to return to the home page.
2. Change the Sort Order of the results, to bring your preferred content to the top.
3. Use Limiters to refine your results by a number of factors like date, source location, and source name.
4. Review added Event and Family Relationship data to help discern whether an obituary belongs to the person or family for whom you are looking.
5. See an expanded preview of an obituary before deciding to work with it.
6. Select one or more obituaries to email, print, download, or save to your Personal Folder.
7. Save a search to your Personal Folder for future use.
8. Create an alert to receive relevant articles as they are added to the database.

The screenshot shows the HeritageHub search interface. At the top, there's a search bar with 'Jones' entered. Below it, there are filters for 'Year of Death (recommended)' and 'Keyword (optional)'. The results section shows 672,998 results. On the left, there's a sidebar with 'Sort by' options (Best Matches, Newest, Oldest), a 'Date selector' bar with a histogram, and filter options for 'Source name' and 'Source location'. Three search results are visible, each with a source, article preview, event details, and family relationships.

Modifying a Search

You can modify your search or start a new search directly from the results page, without needing to return to the main search page. Simply edit your search in the search box at the top of the page, or you can clear the search boxes by clicking the X.

This screenshot shows the top search bar of the HeritageHub interface. The search term 'Jones' has been replaced with 'Joseph'. The search bar includes a clear button (X) and a search button. Below the main search bar, there are additional filters for 'Year of Death (recommended)' and 'Keyword (optional)'.

Changing Sort Order

Changing the sort order of your search results can surface the best results. You can sort by the following options:

- Best Match - Ranks results with most relevant content first
- Newest - Lists results in reverse chronological order with most recent articles first
- Oldest - Lists results in chronological order with oldest articles first

Changing Sort Order:

1. Click the links at the top of the left side-rail to change the order of the results accordingly.



Using Limiters

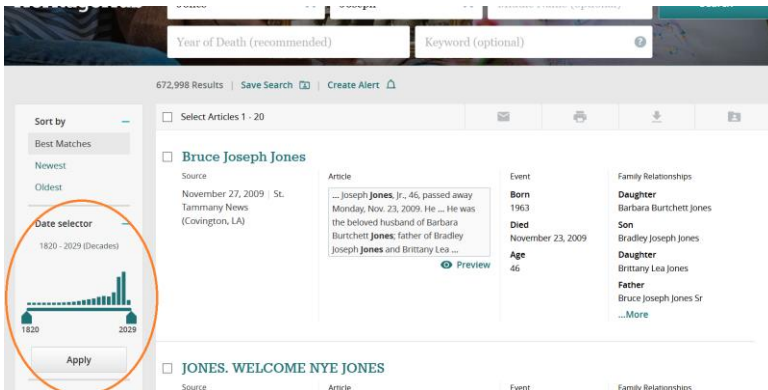
Limiters are tools that can be used to refine and narrow search results. Limiters are particularly helpful when you have received a large number of search results and want to narrow the set to articles that are most relevant to you.

Using Limiters:

1. Conduct a search.
2. Explore the limiters by clicking the + sign to reveal the selections within each limiter. Hide the selections by clicking the – sign.
3. Click a link to apply that selection to your search results.
4. Click More Options to see other selections and to apply more than one to your search.

Using the Date Selector

The Date Selector is a limiter in bar-graph form. The Date Selector can communicate interesting information about the articles in your result set, as well as give you the chance to limit your result set by date range.



To use the Date Selector:

1. Conduct a search.
2. Slide the handles on each side of the graph to pinpoint your desired date range.
3. Click Apply.
4. Hovering over a bar in the graph reveals the number of articles from that time frame.

Note: As you apply date ranges, the Date Selector updates to offer more granular options. For example, applying a one-year date range reveals a Date Selector with bars for each of the 12 months of that year.

Viewing a Preview of an Article

Viewing an expanded preview of an article provides a quick way to read a portion of an article. This can help you determine whether an article is pertinent to your research, right from the result list.

Viewing a preview:

1. Hover over or click the Preview link under the article snippet, and the expanded article preview will appear.

2. Alternatively, hover over an article title to see the preview.
3. Click the x in the preview window or anywhere outside the preview window to close it.

Selecting & Working with One or More Articles


Selecting one or more articles directly on the result list makes working with content more efficient and effective. By checking the box next to one or more articles, you can take action on those articles as a group.

The screenshot shows a search results page with 3,851 results. Two articles are selected, indicated by orange arrows and checkboxes. The top article is about Joseph Jones, a resident of St. Gabriel La. who died at 8:01 am Wednesday, May 14, 2014 at Our Lady of the Lake hospital in Baton Rouge La. of Lymphoid Leukemia. He was 65 years of age and a native of Opelousas La. The article includes details about his birth (1949), death (May 14, 2014), and family relationships (wife Roxanne M Jones, daughters Gwen Scieneaux and Amanda Jones). The bottom article is about Joseph Jones CHARLESTON, mentioning a funeral service and a date of February 16, 2012. It also includes family relationships (wife Naomi S Or Margie Jones, daughter Maureen Jones-Rivers, son-in-law Robert).

Emailing Articles

On the search results page, once you've checked the box next to one or more articles, you can email those articles to yourself or others.


Emailing articles:

1. Check the box next to each article you want to email.
2. Click the email icon  in the action bar at the top of the results list.
3. Complete the email form, including one or more email addresses in the "To" box, your own email address in the "From" box, and an optional message to be sent with the articles.
4. Click Send.

Printing Articles

On the search results page, once you've checked the box next to one or more articles, you can print those articles.


Printing articles:

1. Check the box next to each article you want to print.
2. Click the printer icon  in the action bar at the top of the results list.
3. Determine whether you want to include article information in a particular citation format on your printout.
4. Click Print.

Downloading Articles

On the search results page, once you've checked the box next to one or more articles, you can download those articles.

Downloading articles:

1. Check the box next to each article you want to download.
2. Click the download icon  in the action bar at the top of the results list.
3. Determine whether you want to include article information in a particular citation format on your download.
4. Click Download.
5. Your article will be saved as a PDF.


Note: To save an ASCII text article in a format other than PDF, such as .txt or Microsoft Word, copy the text of the article from the browser and paste it into the document of your choice.

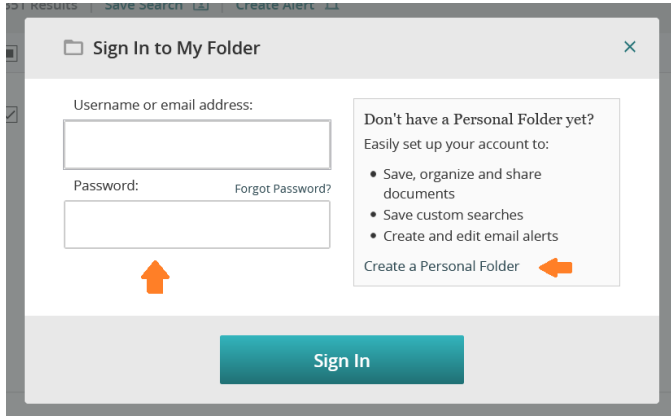
Saving Articles to your Personal Account: My Folder

On the search results page, once you've checked the box next to one or more articles, you can save those articles to your [personal "My Folder" account](#).

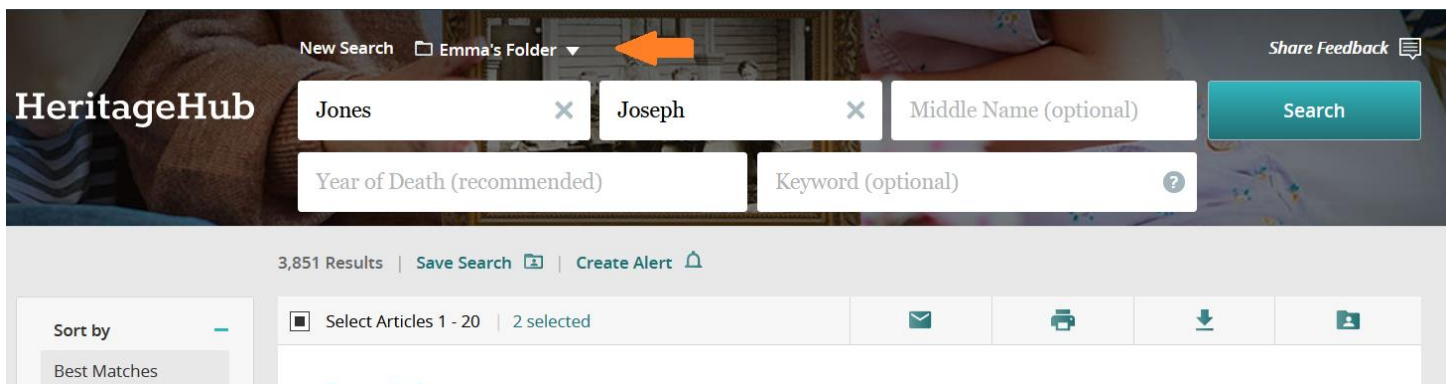
Saving articles to your Personal "My Folder" account:

1. Check the box next to each article you want to save to your personal folder.

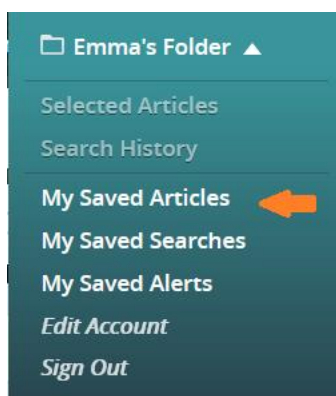
2. Click the Save to My Folder icon  in the action bar at the top of the results list.
3. If you already have a My Folder account, sign in and save the articles. If you do not have a My Folder account, click Create a Personal Folder and follow the instructions.



4. To access the articles you've saved, find your personal folder above the search bar.



5. Click My Saved Articles.



Saving a Search

You can save a search to your [personal “My Folder”](#) account to make it easy to conduct the search again in the future.


Saving a Search:

1. Conduct a search.
2. On the search results page, click the Save Search link above the list of articles.
3. If you already have a My Folder account, sign in and save the search. If you do not have a My Folder account, click Create a Personal Folder and follow the instructions.
4. To access the search you’ve saved, find your personal folder above the search bar.
5. Select My Saved Searches.

Creating an Alert

Alerts are emails that are automatically sent to your email inbox when new articles that match your search topic are added to your HeritageHub. This feature is particularly useful for keeping up with related obituaries as they are added to the database.

Creating an Alert:

1. Conduct a search.
2. On the search results page, click the [Create Alert](#)  link above the list of articles.
3. In the window, enter the email address(es) to which you want the alerts sent.
4. Select the frequency with which you would like to receive alerts.
5. Click Create Alert.
6. You can also Sign in to My Folder or create a [personal “My Folder”](#) account from the alert window. Saving an Alert to My Folder offers options for editing or deleting the alert in the future.

Unsubscribing from an Alert

Unsubscribing from an Alert:

1. At the bottom of each Alert email you receive, there is a link to Unsubscribe from the alert.
2. Click the link to unsubscribe, and you will no longer receive the emails for that alert.
3. If you have saved the alert to your [personal folder](#), you may delete the alert from there as well.

Working with Articles and Image Content

Each article page and each image page contain features and functions that allow you to read the content and to utilize it in ways that suit your needs.

Working with Text Articles

On each article page, important information about the article is shared.

The name of the source in which the article was published

The publication date of the article

Important metadata about the article, such as author

The article page has a row of action buttons. Hovering your mouse over a button reveals a text description of each button icon. Going left to right:



increases the size of the font



allows you to email the article to one or more recipients



enables printing of the article



is for downloading the article



allows you to add the article to your personal [My Folder](#) account




provides a copiable link to the article

The screenshot shows the HeritageHub interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'HeritageHub', 'New Search', 'Emma's Folder', and 'Share Feedback'. Below that, the article title 'Advocate, The (Baton Rouge, LA)' and date 'May 21, 2014' are displayed. A toolbar contains icons for font size, email, print, download, and share. The main content area features the article title 'Joseph Jones', a date and word count, and a 'Read News Document' button. The article text describes the death of Joseph Jones. On the right, a 'Family Relationships' sidebar lists details like Name (Joseph Jones), Event (Died), Born (1949), Died (May 14, 2014), and Age (65). Buttons for 'Copy Record' and 'Print Record' are also visible.


Emailing an Article

Sending an email:

1. Click . A window of email options will open.
2. In the To box, enter the email address(es) of the recipients. Use commas to separate email addresses.
3. In the From box, enter your email address.
4. Include an optional message.
5. Click Send.
6. To close the email window, click the x in the upper right corner.

Printing an Article


Printing an Article:

1. Click . A window with options will open.
2. To print the article without including a particular citation format, simply click Print.
3. Then, click Print.

- To close the email window, click the x in the upper right corner.


Downloading an Article

Downloading an Article:

- Click . A window of download options will open.
- Select whether to download as PDF or to Google Drive.
- A progress bar will show, until your document is fully downloaded.
- To close the download window, click the x in the upper right corner.

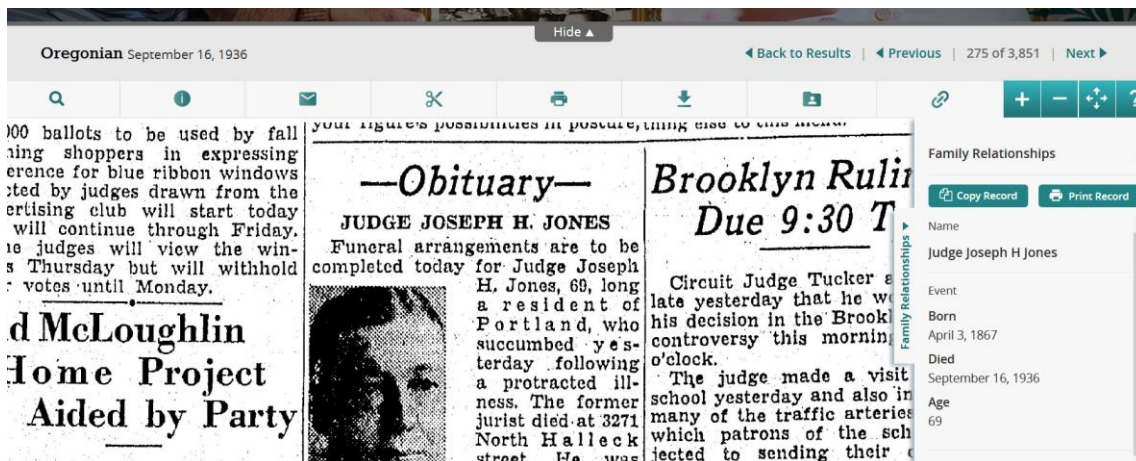
Saving an Article to your personal My Folder account

Saving an article to your personal My Folder account:

- Click . A window will open allowing you to

Working with Image Content

HeritageHub provides access to some content that is in image format. Working with this content has some additional functionality that is unique to working with images.



On each image page, important information about the article is shared.

The name of the source in which the article was published

The publication date of the article

The page has a row of action buttons. Hovering your mouse over a button reveals a text description of each button icon. Going left to right:



allows you to search for text on the page



provides additional metadata about the content



reveals options for automatically citing the content



allows you to email the content to one or more recipients



provides the ability to clip a piece of content to be printed or downloaded



enables printing of the content



is for downloading the content



allows you to add the content to your personal [My Folder](#) account



provides a copiable link to the content



allows you to zoom in and out of the image


Viewing and Working with Image Content

There are several tools that allow you to view and work with image content.

To Move the Image around the Screen:


1. Use your mouse wheel, touch pad or touch screen to move the image around the page.

OR

2. Hover your cursor over the image.
3. Your cursor will turn into a grab hand. 
4. Click and hold the left button on your mouse or touchpad, then move your mouse or use your touchpad to move the image around the screen.


Searching an Image

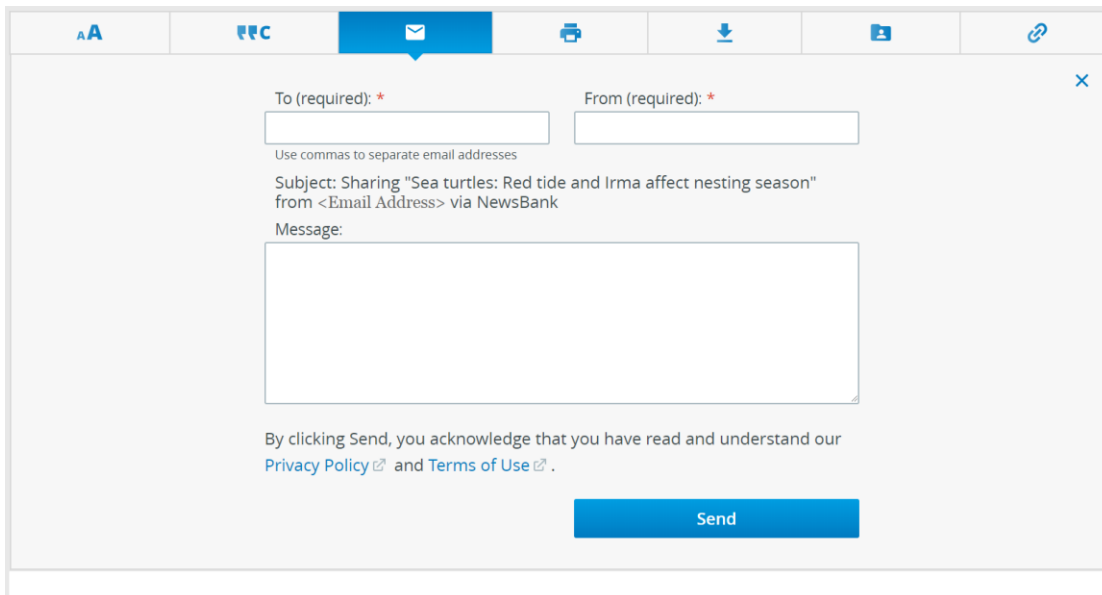
Searching an image:

1. Click . A window will open.
2. Enter search word(s) in the search box and click Highlight.
3. If your search words are found, the number of matches will be reported on the right, with arrows allowing you to jump from search match to search match within the image.
4. Your search words will be highlighted in the image.
5. To close the search window, click the x in the upper right corner.
6. Clicking the x in the highlight box removes the highlighting.

Emailing Image Content

Sending an email:

1. Click . A window of email options will open.



To (required): * From (required): *

Use commas to separate email addresses

Subject: Sharing "Sea turtles: Red tide and Irma affect nesting season" from <Email Address> via NewsBank

Message:

By clicking Send, you acknowledge that you have read and understand our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Use](#).

Send


2. In the To box, enter the email address(es) of the recipients. Use commas to separate email addresses.
3. In the From box, enter your email address.
4. Include an optional message.

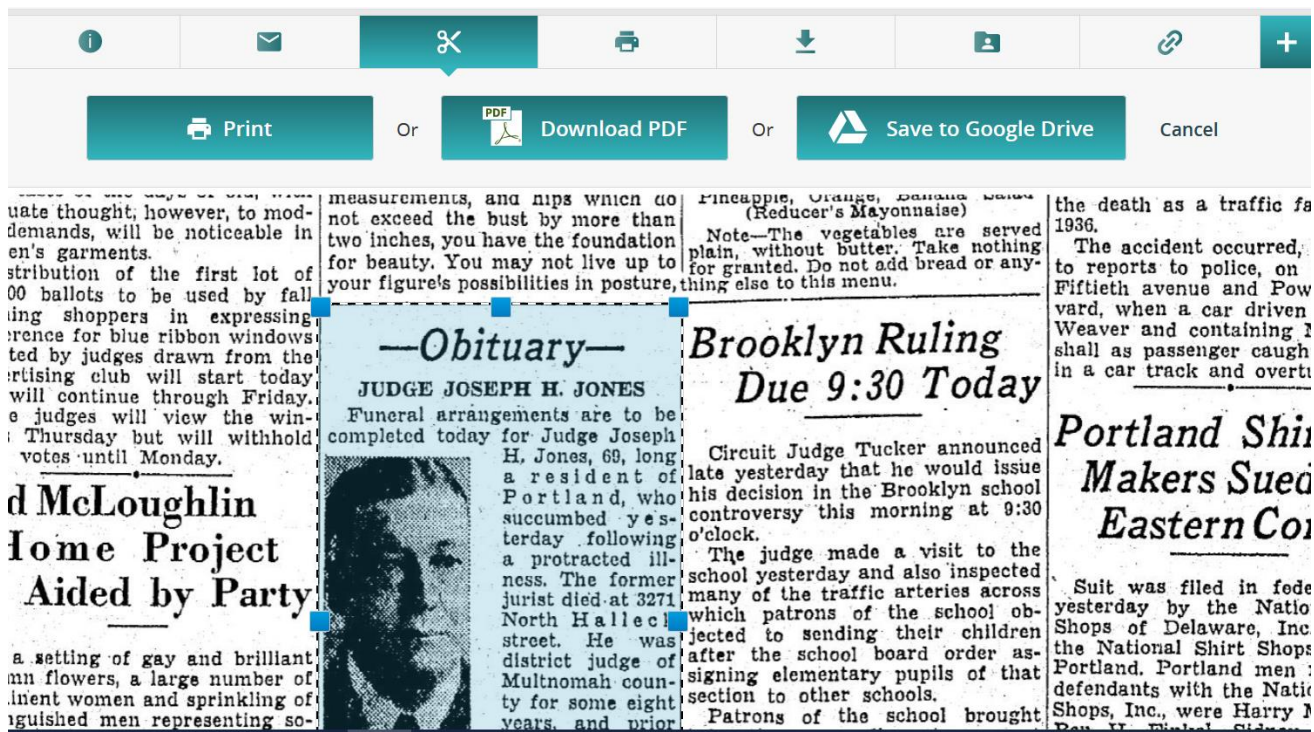
5. Click Send.
6. To close the email window, click the x in the upper right corner.

Clipping an Image for Downloading or Printing

Certain images allow for clipping a portion of the page for printing, downloading or saving to Google Drive.


Clipping / Cropping an Image:

1. Click  and click the button to select a clip to download or print.
2. Using your mouse or scroll pad, hold the left button down. Grab the blue clipping box and drag it to the area of the image you want to clip.
3. Grab the smaller blue squares to shrink or enlarge the area.
4. Once you've positioned the blue clipping box over the area you want to clip, click Print, Download PDF or Save to Google Drive.




Printing an Article

Printing an Article:

1. Click . A window with options will open. Select an option and proceed.
2. To close the email window, click the x in the upper right corner.

Downloading an Article

Downloading an Article:

1. Click . A window of download options will open.
2. Select whether to download the entire newspaper page or a [clipping](#).
3. Select whether to download as a PDF or to Save to Google Drive.
4. A progress bar will show, until your document is fully downloaded.
5. To close the download window, click the x in the upper right corner.

Saving an Article to your personal My Folder account

Saving an article to your personal My Folder account:

1. Click . A window will open allowing you to

Creating and Using a Personal Account: My Folder

A personal My Folder account allows you to save and easily re-access your activity, including articles, searches and email alerts.

Creating a Personal Account

 Video: [How to Create a Personal Account](#)

To create a personal My Folder account:

1. Hover over Session Folder at the top of any screen.
2. Select the Create a Personal Folder option.

3. Fill out the form including your email address, first name, last and create a password for your new account. Click Create Account to complete.
4. You will notice that the Folder name has been changed to reflect your name.

Signing in and out of your Personal Account

Once you've already created a personal account, you sign in each time you use HeritageHub.

To sign in to your Personal Account:

1. Hover over the Session Folder.
2. Select Sign in to My Folder.
3. Complete the form with your email address and password. If you have forgotten your password, click the link, and an email will be sent to help you reset your password.
4. Alternatively, when saving articles to your folder, you are presented with the opportunity to sign into your personal account at that time.

Using your Personal Account


▶ Video: [How to Use Your Personal Folder](#)

A personal account helps you get the most use from HeritageHub. In your personal folder, you can [save articles](#) and [searches](#) and edit or delete your [Alerts](#).

The screenshot shows the HeritageHub interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the HeritageHub logo, a 'New Search' button, and a dropdown menu for 'Emma's Folder'. A 'Share Feedback' button is also visible. Below the navigation bar, there is a sidebar on the left with a list of options: 'Emma's Folder' (highlighted with an orange arrow), 'My Saved Articles (2)', 'My Saved Searches', 'My Saved Alerts', 'Edit Account', and 'Sign Out'. The main content area displays a table of saved articles under the heading 'My Saved Articles (2)'. The table has columns for 'Headline', 'Source', 'Date Published', and 'Date'. Two articles are listed:

Headline	Source	Date Published	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Joseph Jones	Post and Courier, The (Charleston, SC)	Feb 16th, 2012	Mar 23rd
<input type="checkbox"/> Joseph Jones	Advocate, The (Baton Rouge, LA)	May 21st, 2014	Mar 23rd

Saved Articles

Once you've saved articles from the search results list or from the article page using the  icon, you can access, work with, and organize them within your personal folder.


To access your saved articles:

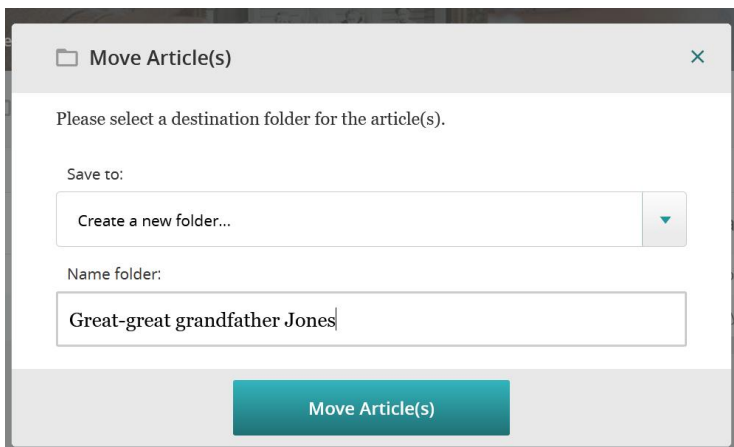
1. Hover over your personal folder and select My Saved Articles.
2. On the Saved Articles page, you can work with one or more articles at a time.

Functionality includes:

- a. The ability to sort saved articles by headline, source, date published or date saved.
- b. The abilities to email, print, download or delete one or more articles at a time.
- c. The ability to create custom folders and move one or more articles into those folders.

To create and use custom folders:

1. Select one or more saved articles to move into a custom folder.
2. Click the Move to Folder icon .
3. Use the drop down to select Create a New Folder.
4. Name your new folder and click Move Article(s).



5. Your new folder now appears in the left-hand side bar, with the moved article(s) within it.

Saved Searches

Once you've saved searches from the search results list, you can access and re-run these searches from your personal folder.

To access your saved searches:

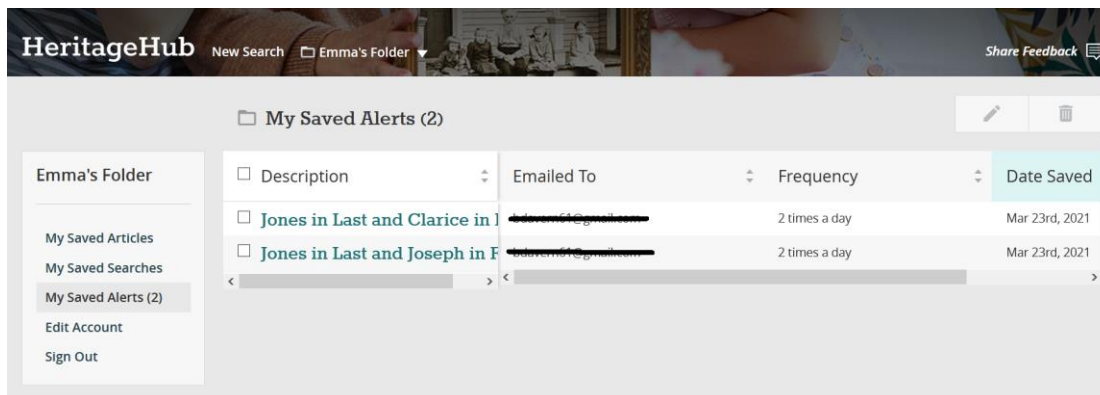
1. Hover over your personal folder and select My Saved Searches.
2. On the Saved Searches page, you can click a search link to re-run it.
3. You can also use the check boxes to select and delete searches.

Saved Alerts

When you are signed into your personal folder, you can [create alert\(s\)](#) and access additional functionality to edit them.

To edit your saved alerts:

1. Hover over your personal folder and select My Saved Alerts.
2. On the Saved Alerts page, you can see the list of your saved alerts, including the email address(es) associated with the alert, the frequency of the alert and the date on which it was saved.
3. To edit an alert, check the box next to the alert, then click on the pencil, on the upper right. From the pop-up window, you can edit the email address(es) and frequency.
4. To delete one or more alerts, check the box next to the alert(s), then click the trash can, on the upper right.



About HeritageHub Content

HeritageHub Obituaries and Death Notices

HeritageHub provides access to hundreds of years of obituaries and death notices from thousands of newspapers across the United States.

- Provides comprehensive coverage of obituaries and death notices from 1704 through today
- Manually indexed obituaries enhance search accuracy for deeper family connections
- Coverage from all 50 U.S. states and territories

Social Security Death Index (SSDI)

The Social Security Death Index (SSDI) is a database of death records created from the United States Social Security Administration's Death Master File Extract. This is an index of deceased individuals whose deaths were reported to the Social Security Administration.

*Note: Not everyone who had a Social Security card will appear in the Social Security Death Index (SSDI). Some deaths may not have been reported to the Social Security Administration.

Article Formats

HeritageHub contains sources presented in various formats.

Some articles are presented as ASCII text, while others may be presented as images.

In some cases, a source may be presented in both its ASCII text and image formats.

Understanding Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

Some pages in the database may have been digitized from microfilm. Each page is produced in a manner that provides the highest quality possible image from the microfilm. This includes de-skewing and cropping every page image.

After digitization, newspaper pages are passed through OCR (Optical Character Recognition) to make each page searchable. Newspapers are among the most difficult type of content to

digitize because of the wide variety of constantly changing type faces, font sizes, ink quality, article format and more. The older the newspaper, the more challenging this process becomes.

OCR works by recognizing shapes on a white background and by matching those shapes with known letter shapes that are stored in the computer's memory. In some cases, especially in the case of old newspapers, the letters "bleed" into each other, making the shapes unrecognizable or mistakenly interpreted as other letters by the OCR software. Any problems on the page, such as inkblots, speckles, poor type quality, fading, folds, wrinkles, tears or discoloration of the original paper page, can interfere with the OCR process. When the software cannot recognize or misinterprets some of the letter shapes on the page, this can result in false hits for the researcher and mistakes in keyword highlighting in the results sets.

A few of the most commonly misinterpreted characters are a, o, e, r, i, and n. Researchers can often minimize the problems caused by these misinterpreted characters in OCR databases by using wildcard searches. Wildcard searches enable users to allow for unlikely variations in spelling that might be caused by the OCR process. A single-character wildcard is a question mark (?) and a multi-character (allow for up to 5 characters) wildcard is an asterisk (*).

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Privacy Policy

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Browser Requirements

NewsBank databases are compatible with most popular browsers, including:

Firefox (latest version)

Google Chrome (latest version)

Internet Explorer (11+)

Safari (latest version)

MS Edge (latest version)

Mobile iOS

Safari (latest two versions)

Mobile Android

Chrome (latest two versions)