

Two Looks at the Making of America

AS GENEALOGISTS AND family historians, we are always looking for obscure resources for information about our family members, the events they were involved in and the communities where they lived. There is so much printed material and our family members are frequently the proverbial “needle in a haystack”! The unique digital collections of the Making of America (MoA) project are just the place where you might find these obscure references to ancestors, locales or organizations, without having to leave home.

Making of America is a digital library of primary sources in American social history primarily from the antebellum period through reconstruction. The collection is particularly strong in the areas of education, psychology, American history, sociology, religion, and science and technology. The original project was funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, <http://www.mellon.org>, and started in 1995. This means

Diane L. Richard examines two “must-see” websites for American genealogy.

that this digital collection was created before the recent explosion of similar initiatives and is still incredibly important today owing to its eclectic contents.

The project is housed at two universities: The University of Michigan site currently contains 10,281 books and 2,457 journal issues, while the Cornell site provides access to 267 monograph volumes and 955 journal volumes with 19th-century imprints.

Since these two pieces of the project operate distinctly, let’s examine each of them more closely.

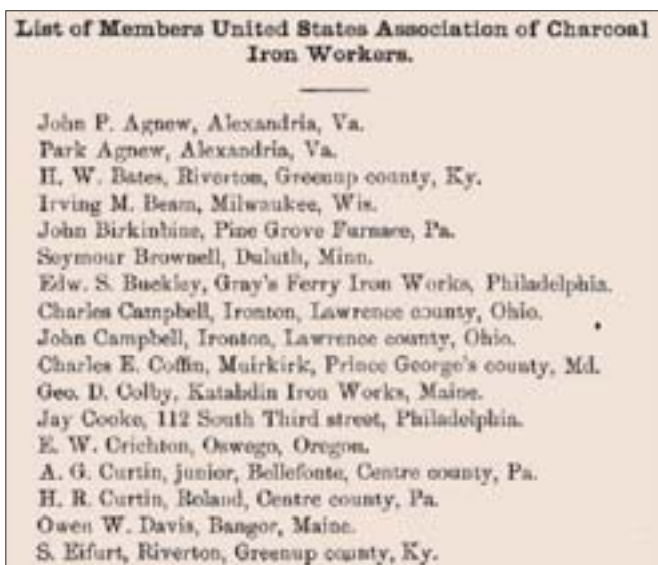
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
As far as navigating around the

website, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>, you have many types of search options available to you. At the simplest, you can enter a key word into the search box on the main page and see what you get. Or, you can click on “Other Searches in MoA” and be taken to options to do a Basic, Boolean, Proximity or Bibliographic search and have access to your search history. Additionally, you also have the ability to “browse” subject, author and title. It isn’t very often that a website has so many search options available to the user.

When you locate an entry of interest through the search function, besides viewing the associated image(s), which we will talk about, you can add the book or journal article to your “bookbag”. Here, you have options for e-mailing and downloading your bookbag’s contents. This is a way for you to keep track of any particularly relevant finds you make as you explore the website and then have the saved information avail-



Left: University of Michigan's Making of America home page. Right: List of Members United States Association of Charcoal Iron Workers [Journal of the United States association of charcoal iron workers, Volume 1, Issue: 1, April 1880, pp. 46-48].



able to you for future reference. If you choose the e-mail option, once you provide your e-mail address, you will receive a message with the saved items. If you download the contents, it will be in a .txt format and I suggest that you rename the file to something simpler and with less underscores. Also, make sure that the file format is still .txt.

When you identify a book or article you wish to explore further after clicking on it, you are taken to a digitized image of the requested page. In addition to viewing the page, you can print it, zoom in or out on the image, advance through the pages using the "previous" and "next" arrows, or use a "page number" feature to further explore the text.

Now that we know how to find and view resources on the website, let's explore some of what it contains.

For my first test, I entered in the words: **Wake County** (no quotations). Given that this is a Michigan library, I was curious to see what kind of coverage it has for non-Michigan book titles. For this first search, there were 38 hits returned. One title found was:
Title: *A statistical and descriptive account of the several counties of the state of North Carolina, United States of America.*

Author: North Carolina land company.

Publication Info: Raleigh: Nichols & Gorman, printers, 1869.

Additionally, several gazetteers, government reports, geological surveys, lists of post offices and other references were located with the words "Wake County" in them. There were also some unexpected titles, such as this:

Title: *History of the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal church, South.*

Author: Redford, A. H. (Albert Henry), 1818-1884.

Publication Info: Nashville, Tennessee, 1871.

I next searched on "Raleigh". This brought up 12,438 matches in 1,617 records. That's too many to browse through. Using one of the more sophisticated search options, I entered "Raleigh AND Carolina

NOT Sir". (I know from experience that Raleigh brings up West Virginia entries, as well as numerous references to Sir Walter Raleigh!) This produced a more manageable 49 records. Browsing through these, it's clear that in most cases, the entries are widely dispersed within the text of the book and so of little relevance to my interest in entries relevant to Raleigh (Wake County).

Obviously, you can do similar searches for surnames, historic sites, geographic features and so

- *Princeton Review* (1831-82)
- *Southern Literary Messenger* 1835-64 + 1936 contributor index)
- *Southern Quarterly Review* (1842-57)
- *Vanity Fair* (1860-62)

Beyond giving a sociological and historical perspective on a time period, industry or organization, remember that journal articles can also be a great source for learning more about an ancestry, since often membership lists are included. For example, the 1880 edition of the *Journal of the United*



The Cornell Making of America home page.

much more. A search on Dawson revealed a wonderful book published by Charles C. Dawson that includes family records and more!

Don't forget the companion journal collection. It has the same search options as for the books (both collections can be searched jointly or individually). Given its smaller size, the journal collection is less diverse than the book collection and contains articles from these journals:

- *American Jewess* (1895-99)
- *Appleton's* (1869-81)
- *Catholic World* (1865-1901)
- *DeBow's* (1846-69 + 1952 index)
- *Garden and Forest* (1888-97)
- *Journal of the United States Association of Charcoal Iron Workers* (1880-91)
- *Ladies Repository* (1841-76)
- *The Old Guard* (1864)
- *Overland Monthly* (1868-1900)

States Association of Charcoal Iron Workers has a "List of Members United States Association of Charcoal Iron Workers".

I did quite a bit of aimless browsing through the early editions of these journals, and just from the article titles you learn a lot about the topics of the day! Some articles inform and some discourses aimed to inflame!

CORNELL

The partner website at Cornell, <http://moa.cit.cornell.edu/moa/>, has more of a focus on journals than books and it has its own search and browse capabilities. You can do a simple search or an advanced search of one of these types: Boolean, Proximity, Frequency (find works where a term appears a specified number of times), Bibliographic or Index (look

through alphabetical linked lists of authors' names, titles or subject headings). A browse option is also available with the book titles arranged alphabetically.

The journal collection includes these titles:

- *The American Missionary* (1878-1901)
- *The American Whig Review* (1845-52)
- *The Atlantic Monthly* (1857-1901)
- *The Bay State Monthly* (1884-86)
- *The Century* (1881-99)
- *The Continental Monthly* (1862-64)
- *The Galaxy* (1866-78)
- *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1850-99)
- *The International Monthly Magazine* (1850-52)
- *The Living Age* (1844-1900)
- *Manufacturer and Builder* (1869-94)
- *The New England Magazine* (1831-35, 1886-1900)
- *New Englander* (1843-92)
- *The North American Review* (1815-1900)
- *The Old Guard* (1863-67)
- *Punchinello* (1870)
- *Putnam's Monthly* (1853-70)
- *Scientific American* (1846-69)
- *Scribner's Magazine* (1887-96)
- *Scribner's Monthly* (1870-81)
- *The United States Democratic Review* (1837-59)

From these, for example, the missionaries lists included in *The American Missionary* are a great resource for genealogists and family historians.

The breadth of this collection seems a bit more regional, as a search on Wake County yielded zero results, although one on Raleigh AND Carolina NOT Sir yielded 74 matching books and



From Cornell's Making of America website: Left: Harper's new monthly magazine. Volume 14, Issue 84 — North Carolina Illustrated, Piny Woods Of North Carolina: pp. 741-755. Right: List of Missionaries and Teachers: pp. 41-47 in The American Missionary. Volume 37, Issue 2, Feb 1883.

336 matching journal articles. Most of the matching book entries found were from the series "United States. War Dept. et al. The war of the rebellion: a compilation of the official records of the Union and Confederate armies".

Search results are presented a little differently compared to the University of Michigan's MoA website. At this site, they are more of a list in which the article title is highlighted as a link for you to click on.

1. *Newbern as It Was and Is*
2. *Nichol's Story of the Great March*
3. Nicolay, J.J. et al. *Abraham Lincoln: A History. The Secession Movement*
4. *The North American Review*, published quarterly in Boston
5. *North Carolina Conference*
6. *North Carolina Illustrated*
7. *North Carolina, Wilmington*
8. O'Brien, J. Emmet *Telegraphing in Battle*
9. Oakey, Daniel, *Captain Marching Through Georgia and the Carolinas*

When looking at an article, you have the same viewing and navigational controls as with the companion site, though they are presented a little differently. To print an image, use the right click feature of your mouse.

CONCLUSION
One of the greatest challenges for genealogists and family historians is finding information in more esoteric resources — the types of information and resources that traditionally could only be found by traveling to a distant library and walking the stacks or through interlibrary loan.

This digital collection represents yet another way that we can easily access eclectic collections of books and journals and maybe find that needle in a haystack ancestor!

DFH

Diane L. Richard has been doing genealogy research for over 20 years. Though she still loves the smell of a musty old book, she greatly appreciates the ability to search on and download digital text. She currently does professional research in North Carolina and can be found online at www.mosaicrpm.com/Genealogy