North Carolina – No Longer a Rip Van Winkle State when it comes to FREE Online Research

In part one of two, Diane L. Richard looks at some of the free online resources available for researching North Carolina ancestors

ONLINE RESEARCH IN NORTH CAROLINA JUST keeps getting easier and better. I first wrote about online NC research in ***North Carolina Online!*** which appeared in ***Internet Genealogy***, August/September 2009.

That article started out by saying ... "Early in its history, North Carolina was considered the "Rip Van Winkle" State, but now, with its many digital resources, it is at the forefront of Internet genealogy research!" This statement is definitely still true!

This article will talk about some of the same websites, which have just gotten better and better, and will also introduce you to some newer ones that allow you to spend even more time in your jammies as you research NC ancestors.

These are free resources. Note that there may be services offered by the providing institutions that are not free, and all the links in this article are for freely accessible material unless otherwise indicated. This is not a list of worldwide subscription (or even free) databases. The focus here is Tar Heel state created research gems, and 99% of the listed resources are NC home-grown!

Additionally, I have put NEW next to some resources that are truly new, or have really come into their own in the last few years since the original article was published, or are just new to me and overlooked last time. Even if you read and use the original article as you do your NC research, know that almost every URL has changed since that article was published, and most of the websites have been completely revamped.

And, last, but not least, this is not a comprehensive listing of online NC research resources. There are many other resources, large and small, not included here and yet just as valuable. In fact, there are enough new resources that some other ones are no longer included!

STATEWIDE

North Carolina State Archives

www.archives.ncdcr.gov

This is always my first stop. The Guide to Research Materials in the North Carolina State Archives: County Records (2002), *www.archives.ncdcr.gov/Portals/26/PDF/guides/CO_GUIDE.PDF*, gives an excellent overview of surviving records located at the state archives, organized by county. [NEW] A newer version of this resource book was published in 2009 and can be purchased, *http://nc-historical-publications.stores.yahoo.net/3420.html*.

The MARS catalog, *http://mars.archives.ncdcr.gov/basicsearch.aspx*, is the catalog for the NC archives. If you want to know what is held by the NC Archives

(from non-textual to maps to textual and more), then you need to explore here. It includes links to digital images of select early colonial documents, Edenton District Superior Court Records, wills covering 1660-1790, along with listings of Revolutionary War Army Accounts, Land Grants, Civil War Pensions, and many other records.

Types of Government Records

The site, *http://archives.ncdcr.gov/Public/Collections/GovernmentRecords.aspx*, explains the particularities of North Carolina's records. This page also discusses finding aids (both modern and legacy). The County Records tab lists Civil & Criminal Actions, Estates, Guardians, Wills and much more, relevant digital collections, etc. Collection finding aids and circulars cover topics such as Revolutionary War Pay Vouchers, African-American research (including 1866 Cohabitation Records), colonial records, Civil War research, etc.

You can find out what services are available to out-of-state researchers at *www.archives.ncdcr.gov/Public/Services/Mail.aspx*. Microfilm from certain unrestricted collections (typically documents created by state entities and newspapers) can be purchased at *www.archives.ncdcr.gov/Public/Services/DuplicationServices.aspx*.

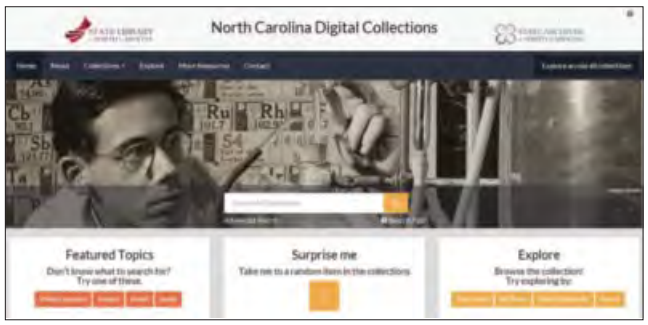
NEW North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster Cumulative Index, *http://cwroster.ncdcr.gov*, contains entries for all men who served in North Carolina Civil War units and are listed in the series "North Carolina Troops 1861-1865: A Roster" as well as entries for person, places, and military units mentioned in the histories in the same book series.

NEW A really neat option started in 2014. If you live out-of-state, you can request a digitized copy of many records that are currently available via microfilm for the cost of $5 per roll. These encompass records created by the state or counties of North Carolina (does NOT include Federal or Church records, even if available on microfilm). If there is a microfilm which you are interested in having scanned/digitized, check in advance to make sure the records have been microfilmed and that they can be scanned.

North Carolina Digital Collections NEW

http://digital.ncdcr.gov

Elements of this collection did exist back in 2009 when the collection was in its infancy. As described, "The North Carolina Digital Collections makes materials from the State Archives of North Carolina

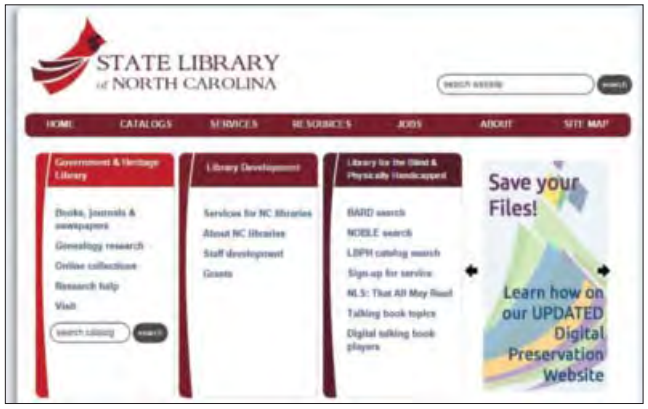


and the State Library of North Carolina available whenever and wherever you need them." Some of the collections found previously included: North Carolina Newspaper Digitization Project, *http://exhibits.archives.ncdcr.gov/newspaper/index.html*, and Family Records (has been expanded to include Marriage and Death Notices published in Raleigh Newspapers), *http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/digital/ncfamilyrecords* & WPA cemetery surveys (c. 1930s), *http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/search/collection/p15012coll1/searchterm/cemetery%20survey*.

This collection has really grown in the intervening years. Some of the newer and invaluable materials include: 1901 Confederate Pension Applications, Alien Registration and Naturalization, Historical Governors Papers, Our State Magazine, War of 1812 Pay Vouchers, and more.

The State Library of North Carolina

http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov



This library is physically located in the same building as the state archives which makes is easy for both on-the-ground researchers and for the wonderful online collaboration (mentioned above).

One of the most important stops to make on your tour of the website is the catalog of the Government and Heritage Library (GHL) (the sub-library which is of interest to family history researchers), *http://catalog.ncdcr.gov*.

Genealogy Research, *http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ghl/resources/genealogy.html*, gives a quick overview of electronic and print resources, how to guides on finding slave records, NC vital records, and tracking back to North Carolina, as well as information about their email reference service.

NEW North Carolina Newspaper Locator, *http://cinch.nclive.org/newspaper*, this database contains newspaper microfilm housed at GHL. It is not a complete list of all newspapers published in North Carolina. Though, the GHL holds one of the largest collections of NC newspapers (only University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill might rival its collection, see later entry). A neat feature is, that, if no newspaper is found for the town or county of interest, you can opt to see nearby newspapers that might be of interest. This is very helpful when you are not sure where nearby newspapers were published. I often use this in conjunction with Google Maps (or similar) to determine which of the listed newspapers it makes the most sense for me to check out.

NEW Index to the News & Observer, 1926-1992, *http://statelibrarync.org/noi*. Created by librarians from the State Library of North Carolina who indexed important topics and personal names from articles and selected obituaries that appeared in the Raleigh News & Observer from 1926 to 1992. Note that this is not a sophisticated search engine.

NC ECHO (Exploring North Carolina's Cultural Heritage Online)

www.ncecho.org

Historically, my favorite component of this website was the Cultural Institutions Search, *http://c2c.ncdcr.gov/InstitutionsSearch.aspx*, which provides excellent information on identified repositories — large and small. Almost all cultural heritage locations have unique records in their collections.

NEW In the sense of being greatly expanded, is the ability to search across digital collections at a variety of cultural heritage institutions around North Carolina to gain access to collections of historic photos, documents, books, family histories, maps, and much more. Also, check out the North Carolina Office of Archives and History at *www.history.ncdcr.gov*.

UNC - Chapel Hill NEW

www.digitalnc.org

The North Carolina Digital Heritage Center is a statewide digitization and digital publishing program housed in the North Carolina Collection at the UNC at Chapel Hill. The Digital Heritage Center works with cultural heritage institutions across North Carolina to digitize and publish historic materials online.

Wow, is all I can say about this project and its growth. This was a kind of sleepy project a few years ago and it has exploded. It is an excellent resource for Yearbooks, Newspapers, City Directories (my 2nd favorite place for these for NC is Internet Archive, *http://archive.org/details/ncdir*, almost 1,000 of them!), and Images and Memorabilia. You can search the entire collection, or browse by record type, and I really recommend that you start by browsing the holdings by county via the map interface, *www.digitalnc.org/counties*. This makes the collection less overwhelming and more focused as you do your research.

NCPEDIA NEW

http://ncpedia.org

NCpedia is an online encyclopedia about North Carolina, USA containing almost 7,000 entries and over 7,098 images. If you want to know about some bit of NC history, an important person or location,

or just about anything you can think of, you will probably find an answer here. Much of the website is based on these two iconic NC publications — The Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, *www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no*, and Encyclopedia of North Carolina, *www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia-*.

Recently, the NC Gazetteer, *http://ncpedia.org/gazetteer*, was added. This is an invaluable resource. All too often older records mention locales and landmarks no longer found on modern maps. I often use this publication to see if it can help me locate these historical references. It doesn't always have the answer, but it often does.

Be sure to read the second part of Diane's article in the upcoming Dec/Jan 2016 edition of ***Internet Genealogy.***

Religion in North Carolina Digital Collection NEW

library.divinity.duke.edu/ncreligion

The Religion in North Carolina Digital Collection is a grant-funded project to provide digital access to publications of and about religious bodies in North Carolina. The materials in this collection include local church histories, periodicals, clergy biographies, cookbooks, event programs, directories, and much more.

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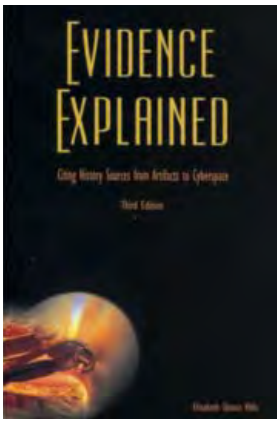
Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace. Third Edition

Eight years have passed since the first edition of ***Evidence Explained***, the definitive guide to the citation and analysis of historical sources — a guide so thorough that it leaves nothing to chance. Yet advances in genealogy and history research, changes at major repositories and online information providers, and the ever-evolving electronic world have generated new citation and analysis challenges for researchers. While countless websites now suggest ways to identify their offerings, few of those address the analytical needs of a researcher concerned with the nature and provenance of web material, whose numerous incarnations and transformations often affect the reliability of their content.



Like the previous editions of ***Evidence Explained***, the third edition explains citation principles for both traditional and non-traditional sources; includes more than 1,000 citation models for virtually every source type; and shows readers where to go to find their sources and how to describe and evaluate them. It contains many new citation models, updates to websites, and descriptions and evaluations of numerous contemporary materials not included in earlier editions.

Highlights of the third edition include

- QuickStart Guide
- Expanded "3x3" Evidence Analysis Process Model
- Expanded coverage for genetic citations
- Expanded coverage of layered citations

Plus

- Latest concepts in evidence analysis
- Coverage of latest media and delivery systems
- Expanded glossary
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- Privacy standards for genetic research
- Updates in National Archives citations after changes at NARA and TNG
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- When to cite Stable URLs vs. paths and keywords
- Your 4 Basic Rules for citing websites & many other issues raised by users of past editions

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