

## **Amazing What You Find When Indexing a Newspaper: Case Study of the Palestine Post Website**

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The digitization of historic newspapers has created resources of genealogical value, which opens up the wealth of information contained in the newspaper or newsletters. Though this may be the way of archives with comprehensive collections of newspapers, it might not be the solution for the archives of newsletters of community groups and synagogues. This is also true for papers printed in usual fonts which OCR (optical character recognition) software has problems deciphering. Sometimes it is the quality of the paper and its poor preservation that makes this hard to do. For the information in these resources we may have to rely on indexing done by members of a genealogical society.

The Palestine Post was a Jewish newspaper that was published in Palestine/Israel during the years 1932-1950 in English. After the founding of the State of Israel in 1950, its name was changed to the Jerusalem Post, and continues to be published under that name today. The range of years in which the Palestine Post was published offers a glimpse of some of the defining events of the twentieth century not only of the Jewish people, but of the world. The period of 1932-1950 includes: the British Mandate, World War II, the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the Jewish-Palestinian Conflict.

### **Methodology & Tips**

The methodology for indexing a newspaper or newsletter is the same, just the amount of information in a newspaper is much greater and more varied. The amount of information available influences the scope of the project and means the extent of the project will be of a much longer period. The aim, both of this lecture and such an undertaking, is twofold: creating a resource for fellow genealogists and to ensure excellent results which will enable the availability of the complete information to people who cannot see the original document for finding those "significant" details that might not have been included.

### **Before You Start - Check**

- ☞ Has this newspaper/newsletter been indexed?
- ☞ If on-line, does it have a search engine?
- ☞ Is the source available on-line, will this index be just a "tool"?
- ☞ If the source is not available on-line, then this index becomes a tertiary resource.
- ☞ Though this is something that has been published – do you need permission?  
A tricky question.

### **Palestine Post Website**

- ☞ It is digitalized
- ☞ Has a search engine
- ☞ And ... can be searched through [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)
- ☞ So I didn't build an index

**But I still have a lot to share**

- 🌀 What do you include for the index to become a resource?
- 🌀 What different types of searches help discover information

**What types of searches?**

- 🌀 Personal announcement column

**Keywords!**

- 🌀 Personal events – birth, brit milah, bar mitzvah, confirmation, engagement, wedding, death, funeral, appointments

Historical events – war, army, accident, immigration

**Examples of Other Possible Keywords:** murder, killing, accident, injured, divorce, thanks, suicide, swearing in, donation, immigrant, abandonment, abducting, epidemic, earthquake, anniversary, condolences.

**Setting up the excel page for building the index**

- 🌀 Try doing 5 examples of people found from each keyword search
- 🌀 Find the “common” fields
- 🌀 Decide on what “special” fields you want
- 🌀 Remember to mark the date/volume for reference
- 🌀 If the original (or scanned) document is not on-line, you will want to include more information
- 🌀 Will all the fields be searchable?
- 🌀 Use 3 letters for the month – this is important because of the differences in writing dates between Europe and the US

**Fields for Births & Brit Milah****Fields for Bar Mitzvah****Fields for Engagement & Marriage****Fields for Obituaries****Fields for Other Events**

**Minimum Common Fields** – if the original document is available for finding out additional information.

- 🌀 line #
- 🌀 Date of Publication
- 🌀 Last Name (CAPS)
- 🌀 First & Middle Name
- 🌀 Spouse's Last Name (CAPS) (if engagement, marriage, birth or brit milah)
- 🌀 First & Middle Name (if engagement, marriage, birth or brit milah)
- 🌀 Kind of Announcement
- 🌀 Date of the event

**Fields I Might Want to Include** – if the original document is not available to the researcher.

- 🌀 Mother's Name
- 🌀 Mother's Maiden Name (nee CAPS)
- 🌀 Father's Name
- 🌀 Father's Title
- 🌀 What to do when parents are divorced, remarried, deceased?
- 🌀 Bride's Mother's Name
- 🌀 Bride's Mother's Maiden Name (nee CAPS)
- 🌀 Bride's Father's Name
- 🌀 Bride's Father's Title
- 🌀 Groom's Mother's Name

- ☞ Groom's Mother's Maiden Name (nee CAPS)
- ☞ Groom's Father's Name
- ☞ Groom's Father's Title
- ☞ Date of burial
- ☞ Place of burial
- ☞ Survived by

**What is more important? It is Your Choice**

**Compact Index** - Easier to put online

**More Information** - Harder to build one comprehensive index

**URL for the Palestine Post** <http://jic.tau.ac.il/en.asp>

**What's Special about the Palestine Post Site?**

- ☞ At that time there were few phones in Palestine and the newspapers were used for announcing family events
- ☞ Private transportation was rare, expensive and public transportation was very time consuming.
- ☞ Geared for those who didn't read the newspapers in Hebrew (also immigrants)
- ☞ Information on British Officers serving in the area or who had served here, including Eretz Israel residents serving in the police force and the British armed forces and the Jewish Brigade.

Genealogical research is changing in accordance with the development of the internet, computer (and digital) software and equipment. The energy invested by us in such projects as indexing newsletters makes resources available that we never dreamt of ten years ago and also ensures the continuity of this information in that responsible computer services have back-ups of all their files. Such projects can often be done at your leisure in your own home. The undertaking of such projects for the benefit of the whole genealogical community is a way of repaying those who helped us find our roots by building the indexes that we used.