


# PERSI: SPANNING THE GENERATIONS



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PERSI, the PERiodical Source Index, is an essential research tool for genealogists around the world. Imagine finding articles written about your ancestor's town, religion, occupation or military unit? That is exactly what PERSI can do for you. As a **subject based index**, it can provide crucial information on every generation of your family tree.

PERSI, created by the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center, is hosted on Findmypast. A search of the index itself is free (email registration is required), and is also available through all Family History Center's and many public libraries around North America and the UK. It is important to understand the nature of PERSI and how it was created in order to make the best use of the collection.

The publications listed in PERSI are all in some way relevant to family history. As you explore PERSI and all it has to offer, take time to read the Table of Contents, the advertisements, the "requests for articles" and the queries found in many of the publications. You will generally find that while a particular entry in the index attracted your attention, in reality the entire publication may be of use and interest.

## Strategy

To make the best use of PERSI, consider the following strategy as a starting point:

1. Create a topic-based pedigree chart (or format of your choice) for the family of interest.
2. Identify which topics – or subjects – are similar across multiple generations. Perhaps it is an occupation – four generations of lawyers, for example, or a particular location.
3. Also identify what is different, generation by generation. Perhaps a family was

swept up in the Second Great Awakening and converted to Methodism, only to see their children marry into Catholic families.

4. Create a research plan based on the identified similarities and differences.
5. Search PERSI, with the use of the filters, for articles of interest and acquire copies as appropriate. Keep a detailed research log so you can review all of the acquired content from PERSI and how it correlates to each individual in your family.

While these articles may or may not name your ancestor directly, this process will give you a library of genealogical relevant information to offer clues as to where to search next or give you important context around your ancestors' lives, traditions, migration patterns, political stance, and more.

For example, searching for "farmers" in the State of Ohio provided 274 articles. Of those, several indicate the existence of Farmers Directories, for various years and locations. The articles themselves either provide transcriptions or background information on how to access those directories. A family with two or more generations in Ohio would benefit, as the directories span at least 75 years.

### ***Keywords are essential!***

PERSI allows all of us to be creative in our research endeavors, and truly pick apart our ancestors' lives. Allowing yourself the time and flexibility in your research process to take advantage of PERSI can lead to incredible discoveries! Many of us approach this in a systematic way, but do not be afraid to utilize your more adventurous side.

The following individual profile and potential PERSI keywords are offered as an example of the variety of topics that can be investigated:

Brief Profile	PERSI Keyword Opportunity
John Horatio Lawrence (ca 1806 – 1880) was supposedly born in Birmingham, England, one of ten children. His father was a silversmith.	Birmingham, England birth – ca 1806
	Occupation: Silversmith
	Occupation: Shoemaker

John served an apprenticeship as a shoemaker, served in the British Army – including time in India – and migrated to Canada around 1830. He eventually met and got work with a Mr. Kaysor, somewhere around Livingston County, New York, where he also married Mr. Kaysor's adopted daughter, Sarah. John and Sarah had ten children and lived in Pennsylvania and Ohio throughout their lifetime. John continued to be a shoemaker. Sarah was said to be a devout Methodist, her parents' immigrants from Wales, also devout to the Methodist faith. Both lived with their adult children in their later years; as a result, John died in Nebraska and Frances died in Colorado.	Occupation: likelihood of a child taking an apprenticeship outside his father's industry
	British Army in India
	British immigration to Canada
	Livingston County, NY history
	Orphans / Adoption in NY
	Migration trails between NY, PA, and OH
	Methodist faith in NY, PA, and OH
	Immigration from Wales
	Methodist immigration from Wales
	Shoemaker's in NY, PA, and OH
	Burials in NE and CO
	Migration patterns to NE and CO

Conducting a search using some of the above keywords allows us to find an article on the history and records of St. Luke's Parish, Granville, Ohio<sup>1</sup>. While initially this article does not appear to cover the Methodist faith, three pages in, it includes the following transcription, from the church records dating February 7, 1835:

<b>MAY 2ND.</b>		
Members met at the Methodist Church agreeably to adjournment, it being the usual place of worship. Present:		
Wm. S. Richards,	Geo. W. Case,	Freeman Haskell,
Joseph Fassett,	A. Munson,	John L. Huggins,
Walter Thrall,	Simeon Reed,	Sam'l Boardman,
Alfred Avery,	Sheldon Swan,	Homer Moore,
Leonard Humphrey,	Ebenezer Parsons,	David Partridge,
Chauncy Humphrey,	P. W. Taylor,	E. F. Mower.
C. C. Rose,	Apollos Griffin,	
Having formed themselves into a religious society in Granville, Licking County, Ohio, under an act for the incorporation of Religious Societies, passed February 5th, 1819, and an amendatory act passed January 15th, 1821. More than ten days' notice of said meeting having been given by having the same proclaimed when assembled for public worship, and by a notice having been put upon the door of said meeting house.		

<sup>1</sup> Old Northwest Genealogical Quarterly. St. Luke's Parish, Granville, Ohio. Vol 8, Issue 4, October, 1905, p. 287. Accessed 10 Jan 2019; [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com).

This article demonstrates a frequent occurrence in PERSI: articles even seemingly close to the subject of interest should be pursued for any relevant data or information.

### ***PERSI Search Hints***

1. A generic search on Findmypast will bring back results from PERSI, but only those that match by name. Since PERSI is a subject based index (and not a name index) it is important that you search PERSI directly (see Accessing PERSI, below).
2. Updates on the index are completed quarterly, so check back often to find the latest materials.
3. Updates on published images are completed every two months as materials become available.
4. It is absolutely essential that you take note of and utilize the citations and references included with the articles of interest you identify. Those citations lead to additional research!
5. If your society is interested in digitizing their periodical, journal, newsletter, or other publication as part of the PERSI project, please email Jen Baldwin directly ([jbaldwin@findmypast.com](mailto:jbaldwin@findmypast.com)).
6. Read through the help content available on the Findmypast blog for even more specific PERSI tips.

### ***Accessing PERSI***

1. From the A-Z of Record Sets, search for "Periodical Search Index." (Note: do not search for "PERSI" – you must type out periodical.)
2. From the Findmypast homepage, select "Newspapers & Periodicals from the Search dropdown menu, then "PERiodical Source Index."

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