

## **Why Certain Ancestors Cannot be Found**

Tips by Jeannette Holland Austin

A review of newspapers should answer this question. The front page of old newspapers begin with foreign disasters, followed by fatal accidents, murders, drownings and other tragedies. When there was a ship wreck, since when did the names of its passengers get listed? Although ship masters kept a record of cargoes and passengers, that manifest did not always make it to its destination (the port of arrival). There was usually a suspect or a trial when a person was found murdered. Irrespective of the situation, newspapers do provide hope for the genealogist. But every page must be read because the news was spread throughout. Tragic deaths were near the front, but obituaries and memoriums were scattered throughout.

And, an important element of the newspaper was local news. This was usually a small column detailing events, such as visitors from other areas, parties, weddings, etc. We may not locate everyone, but one narrows the scope of the research when newspapers are included.