Guide to Using the Digital Specialist

The Digital Specialist Archive features the entire run of the Society's journal, *The United States Specialist*, from 1930 through the last full year published. While all visitors to the site can view the Digital Specialist Page, access to the browse, search and download features are available **only to members** who have logged into the site.

Members of the USSS have free and unlimited access to all issues of *The United States Specialist* via the Digital Specialist portal. The following is a step-by-step description of how to use the online Digital Specialist archives.

After logging in as a member on your computer, smartphone or tablet, there are two ways to navigate the Digital Specialist, which are shown as drop down links under the Digital Specialist category: "Browse the Digital Specialist" and "Search the Digital Specialist."

The Browse feature is initially displayed on the page with the images of the most recent complete year journal covers illustrated (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Digital Specialist Browse Page.

To **browse** the archives of *The United States Specialist* for a specific issue (volume, month and year), select a year in the "Select Year / Issue" blue dropdown box (Figure 4-a), and the related covers of each issue from the selected year will appear below. Click on a cover to view the issue in a new browser window as a PDF document, or place your cursor over a cover to view its table of contents.

Use the **search** feature if you wish to find specific articles, topics or authors, by clicking on "search page" (Figure 4-b) which is highlighted in the text, or from the dropdown from the "Digital Specialist" top menu.

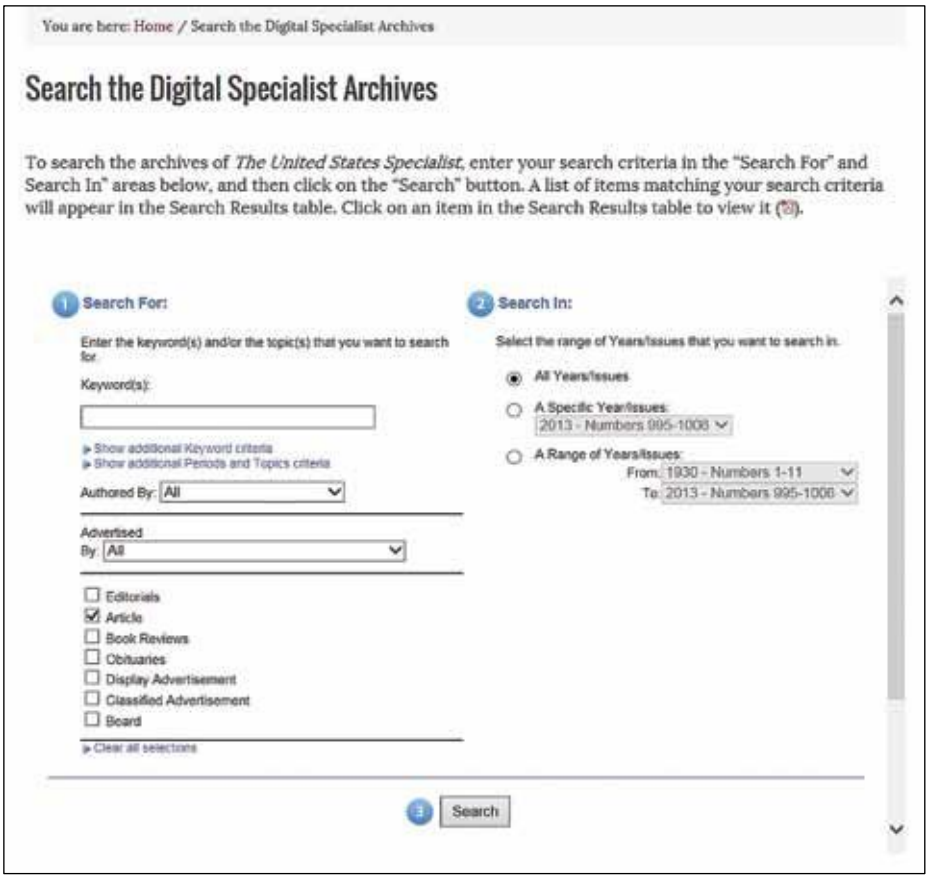

Figure 5. Search function of Digital Specialist Archives.

Enter your search criteria in the "Search For" and Search In" areas, then click on the "Search" button (Figure 5). A list of articles matching your search criteria will appear in the Search Results table. Click on an article to view it a PDF file.

Use the "Browse" option to:

- Locate an article **if you know** the Date, Volume, or Issue number of *The Specialist*
- Browse through back issues from a certain year; or
- Locate an article that you recall seeing recently in the journal.

Use the "Search" option to:

- Locate articles discussing a specific topic
- Locate articles by a certain author;
- Run searches limited to certain time periods, authors, or section of *The Specialist*
- Run proximity searches where keywords appear with a set number of words of each other.

The following illustrates how to retrieve an article using the Browse option:

Let's look for Leonard Piszkiewicz's *Specialist* article about plate numbers on stamps issued pursuant to the Stamp Act of 1765. The article titled "America's Earliest Stamps With Plate Numbers (?)" was published February, 2011, in Issue No. 972, Volume 82, No. 2 on page 53.

Using the Browse Function

Knowing the article was published in February, 2011 you can navigate directly to the 2011 issues. By clicking the down arrow to the right of the "Select Year / Issue" bar, (Figure 6-a) all the years the journal has been published appear. Click on the desired year, in this case 2011, and the covers of the monthly journals for 2011 appear. By hovering over the cover of No. 2 (February) issue (b), the Table of Contents will appear. Click on the Piszkiewicz article (c), to open the article PDF. Alternatively, instead of opening the article in the Table of Contents, clicking on the cover image will open the PDF of the entire February issue.

Clicking on the **cover** image (b) opens a PDF containing the cover image, an index to the issue, and the entire contents of that issue. Clicking on the **specific article** in the Table of Contents (c) opens a PDF containing the cover image, the issue index and only the selected article.

Using the Search Function

There are several issues to consider when using the search function. Depending on how you qualify the search, the results can be rewarding or disappointing.....so let's take a look at the features of the Search page.

Keywords

Keywords (Figure 7-a) are single words or combinations of words used to search for topics or articles. If you entered too many words and hit the search button, the search output might contain hundreds of articles that had any or some of those words. Keywords, however, can be qualified using the advanced search tools. It is important therefore to be familiar with the advanced search tools to improve the outcome of the keyword search.

Search in: Range of Years

On the right side of the search function (Figure 7-b) is a "Range of Years" function that allows you to search all years, a specific year, or a range of years. This is useful to facilitate the time and outcome of the search. Searching for a common keyword (i.e., stamp, history, plate, etc.) and opening the year range to "All Years" could result in an exhaustive list or "timed-out" failed search.

Search for: Authored By

The search can be facilitated by using the "Authored By" box. If you know the author's name, you can use the dropdown arrow to locate the author's name. Searching on the author's name without a keyword will produce a list of every article by that author. For example, clicking on Piszkiewicz, Leonard and clicking the "Search" box, reveals all 53 of Leonard Piszkiewicz's articles, including the "America's Earliest Stamps With Plate Numbers (?)" article. If you had limited the search to the year 2011, only four Piszkiewicz articles would have appeared in the results.

Advanced Search Tools

Under the "Keyword" box is a dropdown menu "**Show additional Keyword criteria**" (Figure 8-a). Clicking on that link opens four search choices:

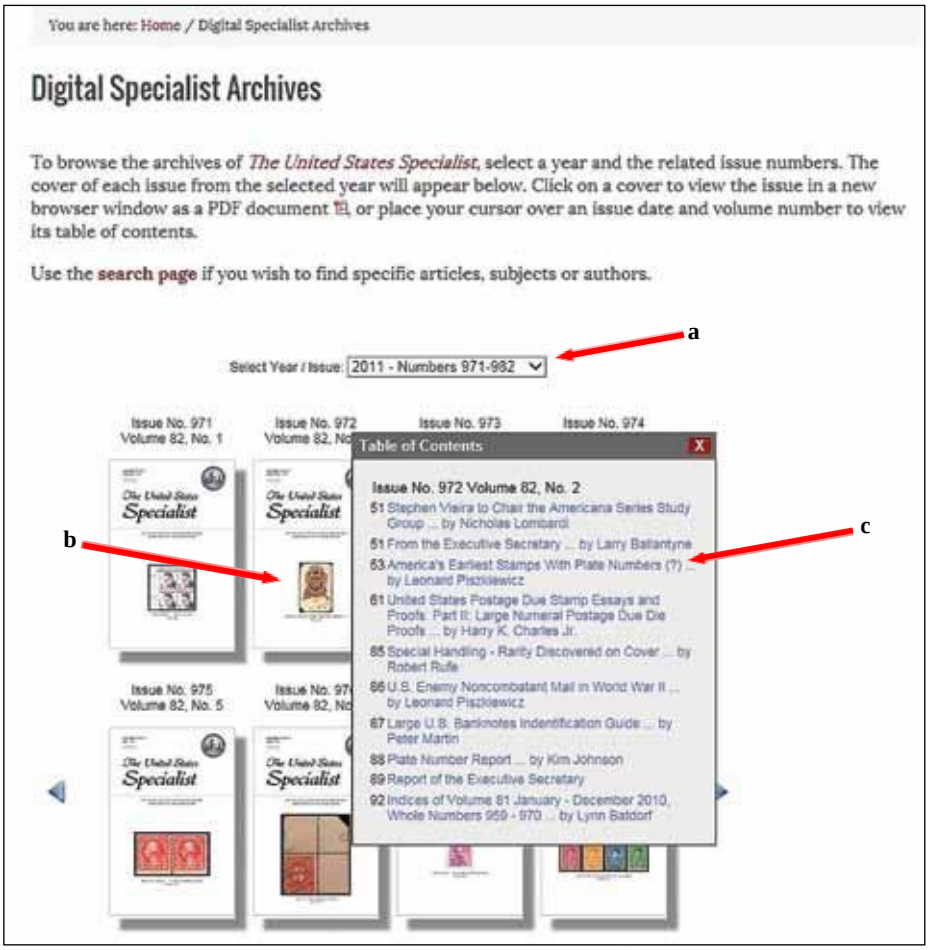

Figure 6. Browsing, Year, Volume and Contents.

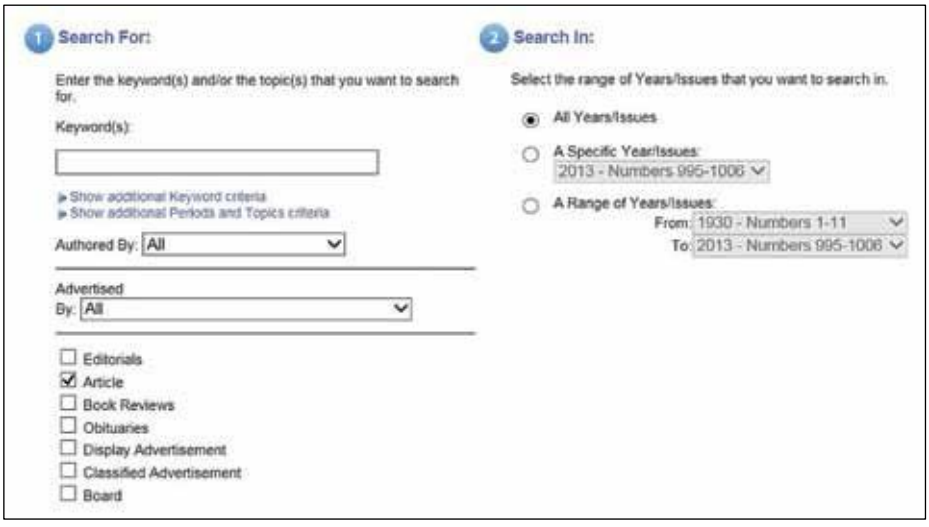

Figure 7. Search Functions.

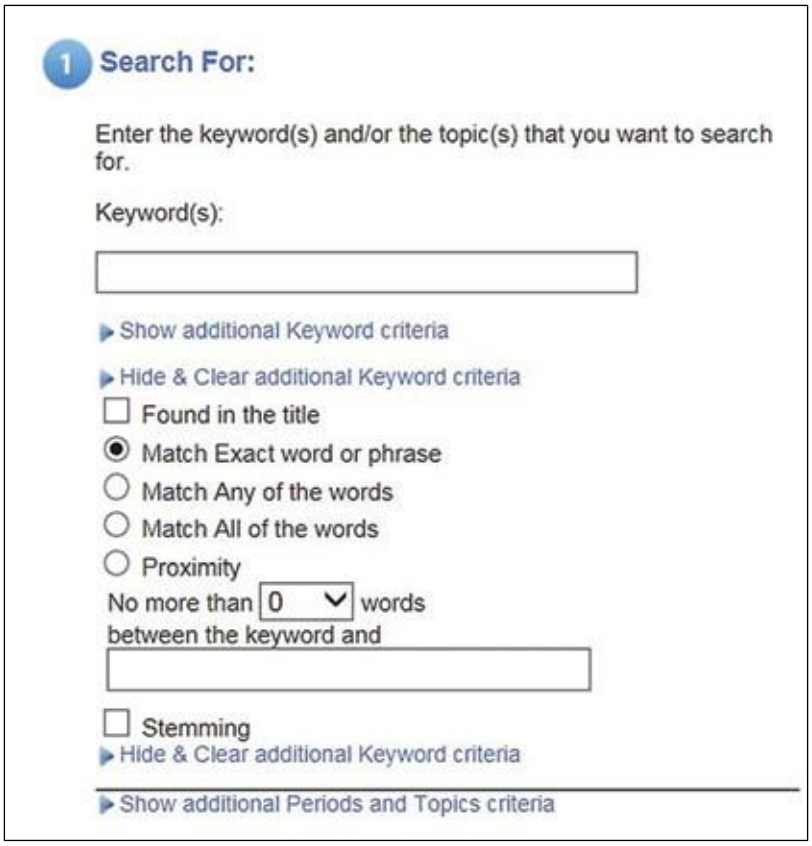

Figure 8. Show additional Keyword criteria.

- Match Exact word or phrase
- Match Any of the words
- Match All of the words
- Proximity

and two additional qualifiers:

- Found in the title
- Stemming

To illustrate, let's say you are looking for an article published since the year 2000, about a cover mailed from Fort Worth, Texas. If you make the Keyword(s) **Fort Worth**, set the year range to 2000 to 2013, and select "**Match Any of the words**" function, the result would be 119 articles with either "fort" or "worth" somewhere in the text. Some search results might have picked up portions of words like "effort" or "worthwhile."

You can refine the search, still within the 2000 to 2013 period, by changing the advanced search function to "**Match Exact word or phrase**" and the result would be only six articles, all with Fort Worth in the text (Figure 9). Since the two words were only found together naming the Texas city, the same six articles would have been found if the search had been on "**Match All of the words**."

Search results...

Back to top

All Article containing exactly "Fort Worth" in the issues 2000 (Numbers 839-850) to 2013 (Numbers 1000-999)

Year	Issue	Page	Section	Title	Author(s)
2000	847	411	Article	Presidential Issue Usages - 12c	Shapiro, Jeffrey
2000	850	557	Article	Presidential Issue Usages - 15c	Schlesinger, Robert
2001	862	534	Article	Effects of the Internet on Philately	Bourke, Paul Cleland, Wallace Fox, Philip Meek, John Wawrukiewicz, Anthony
2006	917	301	Article	USSS General Meeting Minutes - May 29, 2006, Washington, DC	Lenz, Joann
2008	937	125	Article	Penalty Fees for Underpayment - The 5c Penalty Period of July, 1958	Lenz, Joann
2012	994	574	Article	Report of the Executive Secretary	

Figure 9. Results searching Match Exact words or phrase.

Just as in the Browse function, when you click on any of the articles, the issue PDF with the cover, index, and selected article will open.

The **Proximity** function searches for the keyword and another selected word that rest within up to 100 words of each other.

A second dropdown menu, "**Show additional Periods and Topics criteria**" appears under the Keyword box. This feature, currently is under development and when available, will further enhance searching articles by specialized committee or topic.

The remaining search function is "**Stemming**." This helps expand possible matches to the keyword. For example, i f the search is for "perforation," stemming will suggest additional choices to search (i.e., perforated, perforations, perforating, perforator, perforate, etc.)

Keyword searches can also be expanded beyond journal articles to include editorials, book reviews, classified and display advertisements. It is also possible to search the Advertisements directly by identifying individual advertisers.

The Board of Governors is pleased to introduce this internet feature and hopes it will add a valuable dimension to your membership.