Instructions for Using Plain Dealer Historical Index

1. Navigate to http://www.cpl.org.
2. Mouse over Research & click Research Databases in dropdown menu.
3. Scroll down page & click Plain Dealer Historical (1845-1991).
4. Enter you Library Card Number & Password/PIN & click Submit.
5. Enter a term in the Search window.
6. Click Add Search Field beneath this window to add a search term.
7. Select a Custom Date Range, following the examples.
8. When you are satisfied with your search parameters, click Search.
9. Look at your search results by examining the small page image box, which may or may not indicate an item's usefulness. Often you can tell whether an item is an article, classified ad, or commercial ad by looking at this image. Click the page image box to view the page.
10. You may need to click and drag on the resulting page image to find what you're seeking on that page. Your search term(s) will be highlighted in yellow and may appear in multiple places on a page.
11. Jot down the Date and page from the top of the page. Note that the page corresponds to the PDF scan of the date's newspaper—NOT the actual original page in the newspaper. You should make a practice of also getting the actual page number, such as 4 or 4-A, by looking in either top corner of a page.
12. If the item is useful, click the Print button in the top right corner of the page. Note that the PDF button is NOT a good idea because it will create a PDF of the entire page, not the actual content you want.
13. On the resulting page view, you'll see a red crop box, which may or may not encompass all of the material you want. You can drag the box as a whole by clicking on any side and dragging to the desired location, or you can enlarge or reduce the box by clicking and dragging any corner.
14. When you have the image you want, click the pdf> button at the top.
15. Depending on whether you are using a PC or Mac, you will save the PDF image in whatever manner you are prompted to do. I strongly recommend renaming the file in a clear way for future reference. My own method is to use the following format: pd19460428_p36(4-C) to indicate Plain Dealer, April 28, 1946, PDF page 36 or actual page 4-C.
16. To continue searching, you'll probably need to return to the initial browser window and click either Next> or Results.

Some additional thoughts:

Your search will only be as good as the search parameters allow. Be sure to be relatively specific in your terms to lessen the chances of returning thousands of results that could prove impossible to sift through.

Use quotation marks around specific multiword terms. (e.g., "garfield park")

Use the adj function to get the database to search two terms that are in proximity to one another but not necessarily adjacent. For instance, if you want to search instances of river fires on the Cuyahoga, I would suggest "cuyahoga river" adj5 fire to search instances in which the word fire appears within five words to either side of Cuyahoga River. You can change the number after adj to anything that seems appropriate.

If you know you're interested in a particular time period, be sure to indicate that in the Custom Date Range. (e.g., 1946-1952)