The text file is BIG, with over 28,000 line entries of data. Many lines point to multiple different newsletters, yielding over 50,000 total links. The index is basically in alphabetical order, and one approach is to simply scroll down. But be aware there are about 12,000 line entries for the name Coffey, plus about 3000 lines for Coffee! "Scrolling" to find things will be a challenge!

If you have a reasonably fast internet, you can call up the index file every time you need it (1.8MB). As an alternative, you could save the index to your hard drive, then keep it open while searching.

Each index entry will have various references like "93-6,11", which refers to newsletter #93, pages 6 and 11. You can go back and forth between the index and the home page, clicking on any issues you wish to explore.

You may want to view the "Foreword" (see home page link) to the index, to understand the organization, abbreviations, etc.

TIPS FOR SEARCHING THE INDEX:

Be aware you can use your computer's "FIND" function to search the text. This is "Ctrl+F" if you run Windows, or "Command+F" if you have a Mac.

Let's suppose that I'm researching a Joel Coffey. If I do "Command+F" (I have a Mac), I can type "Coffey, Joel" in the search box (include the space after the comma), and then click (hit return) down to the correct section. Unfortunately there are over 100 lines for "Coffey, Joel", but at least the search is narrowed a bit.

Searches are not case sensitive. Searching "Joel Coffey" or "JOEL COFFEY", work the same.

NOTE: Anytime you want to start a completely new search, it may work better if you start at the TOP of the index file. Do a "Command+F" or "Ctrl+F", "TTT", and it will position you at the top of the index.

Another approach: Reams has put some key descriptive info on many of the lines, and you can also search for key words the same way. Suppose I remember that the "Joel" I want was "indicted" for participation in a "riot" in North Carolina. Doing a search for the word "indicted" or "riot" might greatly narrow the search. (I tried "riot" first, and that flagged several issues, but none on a "Joel" line. But "indicted" quickly showed me that "indicted Joel" was in issues "33-2,6,7" and "111-6,7".)

Another neat searching trick: Suppose you are researching the Hugh Coffey line. Reams uses a code "H#" to flag known descendants of Hugh, where the "#" is the number of generations removed. So searching Ctrl+F "H1" will find Hugh himself, "H2" will find his children, "H3" will find his grandchildren. Looking for spouses? Searching for "H3s" will find spouses of grandchildren! This kind of search should also work for Edward (E), Peter(P), Ambrose(A), and Chesley(C). (But be careful with Chesley – because Chesley Senior probably didn't exist, and even if he did exist he was a descendant of Edward. Many articles will link his presumed descendants to Edward(E)!)

Another searching trick (that will only work sometimes): Once you have opened a newsletter, you can try "Ctrl+F" again. It MAY work WITHIN the newsletter to find an entry of interest.

(BACKGROUND ON THE "PDF" FILES: These were created by various newsletter editors, using a variety of word processors, over 35 years. The issues created prior to 2004 are all purely graphic images, and you cannot search within them. (Generally, they were made by scanning paper images.) Most of the later issues are using a "smarter" PDF that you can search.)

<mark>**COMPOUND SEARCH (MAY NOT ALWAYS WORK)!**</mark>

You can also do a compound search. Suppose I want to find a John Coffey (there are hundreds of those!), and I remember his father was Timothy:

Position your cursor at the top of the Index file, and do "Ctrl+F" (or "Command+F") and type "Coffey, John". Then click along until it finds the TOP of the John Coffey people. DO NOT move the cursor, but do a "Ctrl+F" for "Timothy". It will then continue its scroll downward to each "Timothy" within the John group. Got it! There are only 3 possibly relevant lines, and the man I want is in issues 32-11, 38-8, and/or 60-16.

(CAUTION: This works great on my Mac, but may not work on some computers or browsers. Some of them, when you do the second "Ctrl+F", start back at the top again instead of picking up where you left off!)

It might be wise to look both for "Coffey" and "Coffee". Need a James Coffee, born 1820? Do a "Ctrl+F" (or "Command+F") and type "Coffee, James" Then "Ctrl+F" again followed by "1820". Got him! Then position again at the top of the page, and do the same exercise for a James Coffey, and you'll find a different answer.

MORE ADVANCED TECHNIQUES:

When I open a newsletter online, it opens in my Internet browser. I use "Safari" on my Mac. This does give me a decent image of the newsletter, but Safari is somewhat limited in its viewing choices. Also, the opening of the internet file can be rather slow.

MEMO: I experimented opening with "Firefox" instead of "Safari". Firefox offered a big advantage, because it had the option to automatically open the PDF in Mac "Preview". Preview is a lot more powerful than Safari as a viewer. It allows me to instantly click on any specific page without scrolling. And if I do a "Command+F" search for a name or phrase, it instantly identifies which pages have that reference. Think about experimenting with different browsers!

There is nothing to prevent you from downloading ALL of these PDF files to your own computer hard drive. The overall size is about 350 MB. This may give you MUCH faster access, allow you additional viewing options, and free you from needing to find internet access.