

## BIBLIOGRAPHY – WORKSHOP #2 RESEARCH

### Workshop Readings in Binder

- Goforth, Teresa. "The Truth, The Whole Truth, and Nothing But The Truth: Researching Historical Exhibits," from Cinnamon Catlin-Leguto and Stacy Klingler, eds. *Small Museum Toolkit, Book 5: Interpretation: Education, Programs, Exhibits*. Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 2012, pp. 49-70.
- Lubar, Steven and Kathleen Kendrick. "The Object of History: Behind the Scenes with the Curators of the National Museum of American History." Accessed 24 January 2017, [www.objectofhistory.org/](http://www.objectofhistory.org/)
- Rex-Atzet, Wendy. National History Day 101. Teacher Workshop Presentation (extracted) at Utah Division of State History, Salt Lake City, 2015.
- South Australian Community History. "Historical Research: an Investigative Treasure Hunt (updated 19 November 2010)."
- Utah Valley University Library. "Evaluating Sources and the CRAAP Test." Accessed 4 October 2019, <http://www.uvu.edu/library/tutorials/basic2/3-1.html>

### Additional Readings of Interest

- Cronon, William. Learning to Do Historical Research: A Primer for Environmental Historians and Others. Accessed 24 January 2017, <http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/index.htm>
- Ericksen, Hilary and Ingrid Unger (eds). *The Small Museums Cataloguing Manual: A Guide to Cataloguing Object and Image Collections* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Melbourne: Museums Australia (Victoria), 2009. <https://amagavic.org.au/resources/infosheets#article>
- Kyvig, David, Myron Marty, and Larry Cebula. *Nearby History: Exploring the Past around You*. Oxford: AltaMira Press, Fourth edition, 2019.
- "Making Sense of Evidence." *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*. American Social History Project / Center for Media and Learning (Graduate Center, CUNY) and the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (George Mason University). Accessed 4 October 2019, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/browse/makesense>
- Russell, Roslyn and Kylie Winkworth. *Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Adelaide: Collections Council of Australia, 2009. Access PDF copy here <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/museums-libraries-and-galleries/significance-20>

### Utah Humanities has copies of these resources available upon request

- Schroeder, Fred. "Designing Your Exhibits: Seven Ways to Look at an Artifact." American Association of State and Local History Technical Leaflet #91, 1976.

## Helpful Research Web Links

### **Utah University Libraries, Archives, and Special Collections**

Brigham Young University Digital Library <http://www.lib.byu.edu/digital/>  
Brigham Young University Special Collections <http://lib.byu.edu/sites/sc/>  
Dixie State University Special Collections and Archives [http://library.dixie.edu/special\\_collections/](http://library.dixie.edu/special_collections/)  
Snow College Library <https://snow.edu/library/>  
Southern Utah University Special Collections <http://www.li.suu.edu/page/special-collections-about>  
University of Utah Digital Collections <http://content.lib.utah.edu/cdm4/digitalcollections.php>  
University of Utah Special Collections <http://www.lib.utah.edu/collections/special-collections/>  
Utah State University Digital Library <http://digital.lib.usu.edu/>  
Utah Valley University Library <http://www.uvu.edu/library/>  
Utah Valley University Archives <http://www.uvu.edu/library/archives/>  
Weber State University Digital Collections <https://dc.weber.edu/collection-list>

### **Utah Government Collections**

Pioneer, Utah's online library <http://pioneer.utah.gov/>  
Salt Lake County Archives <https://slco.org/archives/> (check your own city or county archives)  
Utah Division of State Archives & Records Service <http://archives.utah.gov/>  
Utah Division of State History Library and Collections <https://history.utah.gov/library-collections/>  
Utah Government Publications Online <http://publications.utah.gov/>  
Utah State Library <https://library.utah.gov>

### **Utah and Intermountain Specialty Collections**

International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers <http://www.dupinternational.org/>  
LDS Church History Archives and Library <http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library>  
Mountain West Digital Library <http://mwdl.org>  
Utah American Indian Digital Archive <http://utahindians.org/archives/index.html>  
Utah Artists Project <http://www.lib.utah.edu/collections/utah-artists/>  
Utah Education Network eMedia Resources and Encyclopedias <https://eq.uen.org/emedial/home.do>  
Utah Digital Newspapers <http://digitalnewspapers.org/>  
Utah State History to Go <http://historytogo.utah.gov/>  
Utah State "I Love History" for Kids <http://ilovehistory.utah.gov/>

### **Research Resources National**

Digital Public Library of America <https://dp.la/>  
Ancestry.com - Federal Census, Voter Lists, Military Records, Immigration etc. <http://www.ancestry.com/>  
Family Search - LDS Church Family History Library <https://familysearch.org/>  
Google Scholar <http://scholar.google.com/schhp?hl=en&tab=ws>  
History Detectives – Detective Techniques <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/>  
National Archives Records Research <https://www.archives.gov/research>  
National Register of Historic Places <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>  
Smithsonian Institution Learning Lab <https://learninglab.si.edu/>

### **Object and Collections Research**

*Museum Sites for Identification and Comparative Research*

- Powerhouse Museum – History <https://collection.maas.museum/>
- Te Papa Museum – History, Anthropology <http://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/>
- British Museum – History, Antiquities, Everything [https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/search.aspx](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx)
- Smithsonian Institution – portal to all Smithsonian collection databases [www.si.edu/Collections](http://www.si.edu/Collections)
- American Museum of Natural History – Anthropology <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/anthropology/collections>

*Blogs*

<http://blog.britishmuseum.org/>  
<http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog>

*Collector Sites for Comparative Research*

<http://antiques.about.com/>  
<http://collectibles.about.com/>  
<http://www.collectorsweekly.com/>

<http://chicagoantiquesguide.com/>

<http://antiqueprintsblog.blogspot.com/>  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/tips/>

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH: RESEARCHING HISTORICAL EXHIBITS

*Teresa Goforth*

Museum exhibits tell stories in the most compelling and fascinating way. They pull people to them through sights and sounds and the promise of “the real thing.” They provide visual context to a multitude of rich stories that, without the work of small museums all over the country, might not otherwise be told. An exhibit may be beautiful and exciting, but without solid, diligent historical research as its foundation, it jeopardizes the trusted status of the museum within the community. Museums have a responsibility and an obligation to present only the most accurate and current information to their audiences. Visitors trust museums to provide them with “the truth,” insofar as that is possible, and all museums must honor that responsibility. To do so requires a passion to dig for clues and piece together the facts that make up the stories that combine to create the fabric of our communities. Museum exhibit research is a great adventure.

This chapter provides you with stepping-stones for successful exhibit research. You will learn some basic definitions of types of research sources and, through a series of textboxes interspersed throughout the chapter, follow the research development of a small museum exhibit as it might happen in real life. It is important to note that, as with most other aspects of museum work, there is no single right way to accomplish the end goal of a well-researched, truthful exhibit.

### **Where to Begin?**

The adventure begins with an idea, which can be inspired by many sources. Sometimes, as the director or board member of a small historical museum, you spend time wandering through the collections storage areas surveying the beauty and intrigue of it all. Perhaps you have an interesting group of objects that can tell the story of an important person in the community, or perhaps some curious items, such as interesting agricultural or household articles, can illuminate activities of times past. Those objects might be the starting point of your research

adventure. For example, a small museum in rural Michigan has a large collection of objects that either are elephants or contain images of elephants. There is an entire dinner service, figurines, costume jewelry, and much, much more. These objects belonged to the first Michigan woman to run for the U.S. Senate, Elly Peterson. A prominent member of the Republican Party, she received many of these items as gifts from friends and supporters. The staff knew these objects would be of great interest to the museum's core visitors and so, from the inspiration of this one group of artifacts, developed an exhibition exploring the political history of the county, including, but not limited to, this single person.

Inspiration might also come from the community. All of our communities have people who are passionate about their own history, and that passion often manifests itself in the collecting of objects and the pursuit of research about specific topics. Perhaps there is a commemorative event for the community, a bicentennial or celebration or memorial of an event. These are great opportunities for museums to reflect their communities, to take part in the activities that bring community members together, and even to grow their collections. That same small museum mentioned above had the opportunity to celebrate an event that embodied community spirit. The town commemorated its centennial in 1963 with a giant celebration for which much of the town dressed in faux nineteenth-century attire; commemorative wooden nickels, a full-color book, and other accoutrements were produced. Roughly thirty-five years after this event, the museum chose to do a temporary exhibition about the centennial celebration during its more modern annual festival. It was able to show objects only exhibited on rare occasions and to make a call for other objects still in private hands in the community. Many of these objects were donated to the museum once the exhibition ended, and, perhaps most exciting, a film of the original event that most members of the community had never seen came to light.

Finally, exhibit topics may be inspired by information gathered by the person in the museum who acts as curator, the content expert. This person ideally brings together collection and community to determine exhibit topics. He or she has a solid understanding of the needs and interests of the museum's visitors and develops topics that both meet those needs and support the museum's mission.

Regardless of the source of inspiration, the exhibit cannot become a reality without diligent research and development. This chapter outlines the steps and resources needed to accomplish this fundamental task.

### **Sources: What's What?**

Before moving on to talk about how to do historical research for the purpose of museum exhibition, it is critical to spend a little time providing some basic

**TEXTBOX 3.1****BY THE STEPS 1: CHOOSING A TOPIC**

Museum XYZ, a small museum in a rural county, has a paid staff of one, numerous committed volunteers, and a board of directors. It develops and presents a new exhibition to its visitors every year. The museum's director is a part of the local Rotary Club and participates in activities with the chamber of commerce, the women's club, the local library, and other community organizations. In her time in the community, she has learned of a long history of interesting women, and she knows the museum has the collections to support an exhibition about women in the community. The board of directors and volunteers include a significant number of women, all of whom are excited about the topic and agree that it would find great support in the community. It is formally proposed to the exhibitions committee and scheduled for the changing exhibit space the following year.

definitions of resource materials. It really takes all the types of sources to create an accurate, comprehensive story for your exhibition.

**Primary Sources**

Primary sources are materials written or produced during the period under study and often provide us with the most valuable information related to a subject. A primary source has not been analyzed or interpreted by a third party; rather, it is a direct reflection of the person or period being researched. Examples of primary sources include diaries and journals, newspapers, letters, business ledgers, and census documents. Starting with primary sources gives the researcher the opportunity to take a step back in time and view events from the perspectives of contemporary players. They can often be inspirational in the development of themes or a story line for an exhibition.

For the same reason that they are useful, they must be read and utilized with care. We have a great advantage as historians: We often have fifty, seventy-five, or even hundreds of years of perspective, new research, and learning to inform our knowledge of historical events and periods. This allows us to view them with a greater objectivity than if we were living at the time. The same holds true for the present. Historians eighty years from now will have a much better perspective for understanding the events of our lives than we do. That said, primary sources are invaluable tools for understanding history when used in conjunction with modern information and scholarship.

### Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are those materials written about history, using primary sources as a foundation or evidence for the research. Modern authors, not those contemporary to the period or event, generally write them, and they can be great resources for locating primary sources for a topic, as well as other secondary sources. Examples of secondary sources are textbooks, monographs, and journal or magazine articles. As with primary resources, it is very important to read them critically and to ask questions. Do not always accept an author's word at face value. Ask yourself if his or her argument has been supported with primary documentation in a way that makes sense. Historical research is about critical thinking.

### Unearthing Context

Once the inspiration is clear, the exhibit has been approved by the proper channels, and you are ready to move ahead, it is time to clarify the story, to understand the overarching themes and ideas and determine the context into which the local story will be placed. Even when you are telling a local story, be it of a community, county, or state, it is important to understand what is going on around the subject to give the story context. The first step in researching the exhibit, once you have a topic, is to take a little time to read up on the period at hand. College history textbooks are an excellent resource for understanding the broad themes of various historical periods. (Many college professors post their class syllabi online, listing the textbooks they use in their classes. A quick Internet search for "Intro to U.S. History syllabus" will provide you with numerous options. Inexpensive used editions of the books can generally be found at booksellers' websites, such as Amazon.com or Bookfinder.com.) Once you have a text, read the chapters relevant to the period you are researching and then ask at least the following questions:

- How did the larger events of this time in history affect the people of the period presented in the exhibition?
- Are there events or topics that we, the exhibit team, did not think of in relation to the exhibition content?
- Is there new material in the textbooks? Or does the secondary literature contain topics that might form useful sections in the exhibition?

Once you have spent some time learning about the historical context and answered these questions, it is time to move on to the second layer of secondary literature research. A monograph, as defined by Merriam-Webster, is "a written account of a single thing."<sup>1</sup> It is a nonfiction book about a single subject. For example, Deborah Gray White's *Aren't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Planta-*

*tion South* is a monograph. A textbook covers many topics, generally over a significant amount of time, whereas a monograph focuses on a very specific topic. The next step in your research process is to seek out useful secondary literature in monograph form, if available, so that you can delve more deeply into your subject matter. Finding monographs on a particular topic is just like searching for any other kind of material, but you might have trouble getting them at a local bookstore. You will have the most success using the online library catalogs of major universities. In most cases, anyone can access those catalogs, and you can then request the title using interlibrary loan at your local library.

### TEXTBOX 3.2

#### BY THE STEPS 2: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

In thinking about their exhibit about women in the community, the members of the exhibit team determine that its topic should be a little more focused, and they decide to look at the daily lives and accomplishments of women in the community between 1840, the period of settlement, and 1920. This is the period best supported by the collection, and it will frame an exhibit small enough to not overwhelm the visitors and large enough to allow the team to provide more stories and detail. So, the research must begin, and the team takes the following steps:

- The director pulls a handful of U.S. and women's history textbooks from her shelf and shares them with members of the exhibit team.
- Team members are encouraged to read the chapters for the period from 1840 to 1920 and to make notes of important events as well as information directly related to the history of women.
- When the team reconvenes, members have noted that important themes for the period include agriculture, the Great Awakening or religious revival, ideas of social reform (e.g., schools and prisons), the growth of the antislavery movement, progressivism, and the suffrage movement.
- Choosing those themes most relevant to the subject at hand, the group seeks out a few monographs to give them more detail (e.g., *All-American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America*, *Women in the Civil War*). The titles depend on the priorities set by the exhibit team.

Perhaps one of the most useful aspects of the monograph is the opportunity to use its bibliography. In adventurous terms, it is like a treasure hunt. While the modern analysis of the subject is enlightening, the list of other resources in the bibliography of the monograph, both primary and secondary, leads you on the chase to the “truth” of your topic. Monographs provide you with more puzzle pieces to assemble to tell your story.

### **Organizing Ideas: Multicolored Index Cards Are Awesome!**

Now you have a mound of contextual material that you must somehow turn into a coherent museum exhibit, accessible to a diverse audience. In order to make that happen, and before you move on to collecting local historical resources, it is an excellent idea to organize your thoughts into the main ideas of an exhibit, if you have not already done so. Ideally, you have determined along the way what the main message of your exhibit will be. The initial research process should have given you some ideas about what the various sections of the exhibit will look like. They might simply be chronological, but they also might be thematic, covering the major events and issues you have determined relevant through your initial research.

Without getting too far into logistical details, a great way to brainstorm and physically organize your thoughts and ideas is to devote some wall space to the project if you can find it. Using multicolored index cards, assign a different color to each potential section. Put the exhibit section headings on the wall. On each subsequent index card, write a piece of information discovered during your research that supports that particular topic. Eventually, as you move through the local research to refine the topic into a local history exhibit, you will add thoughts from that research, object ideas, photos, activities, and so forth. This creates a wonderful physical manifestation of the research you do, which can be both refreshing and practical, as the research can sometimes feel intangible and overwhelming.

### **Technology: The World at Your Fingertips**

The technology of today has changed the face of all historical research, but particularly local research. Whether you live in a large city or a small, rural community, you can now access books, documents, and other resources from your living room couch or your local coffee shop by using the Internet. While it is still necessary and, yes, fun to sit in reading rooms in the basements of libraries and historical societies searching for nuggets of useful and exciting information to assemble your puzzle, much of the legwork can be done from almost any-



**TEXTBOX 3.3****BY THE STEPS 3: GREEN IS  
FOR AGRICULTURE**

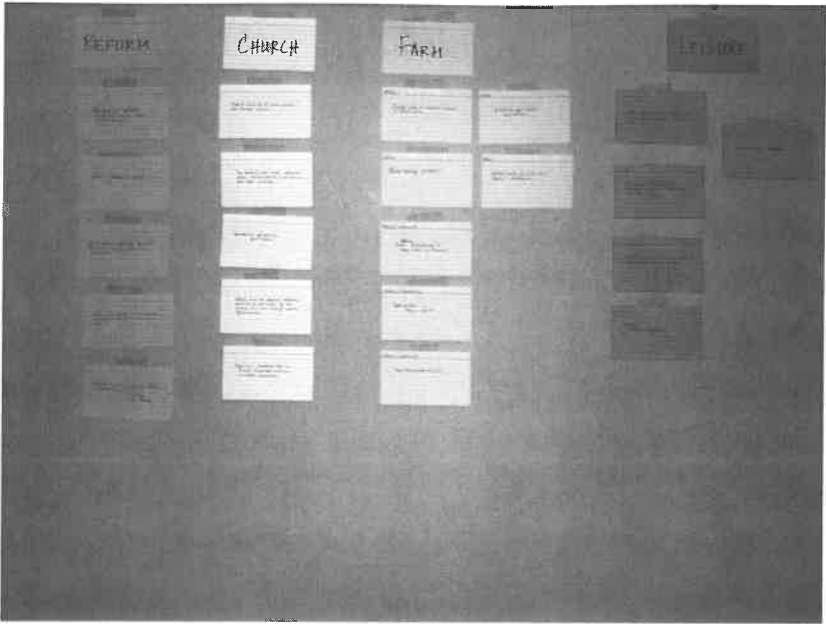
The team now knows its exhibit on women in XYZ county from 1840 to 1920 will be organized thematically. Through contextual research and conversation, it has decided to include the following themes as sections of the exhibit:

- Women on the farm
- Women and the church
- Women and reform
- Women and leisure

Now that these themes are in place, the director assigns each a color: green for the farm, yellow for the church, orange for reform, and pink for leisure. Team members put a sticky note or card as a heading on the large wall cleared for the purpose, leaving a great deal of room between the columns for other sticky notes or cards. Now the team takes all the contextual pieces of information it has, writes each idea on a card of the appropriate color, and places it on the wall under the corresponding heading. This process continues as the team gathers more detailed exhibit information and includes cards that indicate a photograph or an object for the exhibit.

where. Archives, libraries, genealogical societies, and museums have digitized their catalogs, so not only can you look to see who has what, but in some cases you can actually see the what, without ever leaving your computer, expediting the research process. This also means that you can very quickly get a more comprehensive understanding of what exists in the country to assist your research efforts. Prior to the advent of this technology, traveling to each physical location was a necessity to find what you were looking for. This was expensive both in terms of time and money.

If you are not comfortable with technology, find that volunteer in your community who lives to seek out obscure things online. Those individuals are out there, I promise. And they can help you find the many indexes for online resources now available on the Internet. Exploring these Web resources will help you narrow down your research directions and limit the number of physical visits you will make, opening up doors to resources you may not have known existed.



**Photo 3.1.** Example of an arrangement of colorful index cards used to organize thoughts and ideas that will become exhibit content. (Courtesy of Teresa Goforth)

**TEXTBOX 3.4**

**BY THE STEPS 4: TECHNOLOGY OPENS THE DOOR**

The exhibit team is in the midst of researching women's history and decides to tap technology to see what returns. This is only one example of many. Over about a two-minute period, an exhibit team member types "women's history local index" into a Google search box and returns a plethora of Internet links. The first link clicked takes the team member to the National Women's History Project. An obvious link on the home page reads, "Links." This yields a very refined list that relates specifically to women's history and research. Among the categories that come up is "Resources by State." This is a great start. While looking for the links area, the team member sees that the site also has mini-biographies and summaries of the lives of women in various historical periods and as they relate to specific events. All this happens in two minutes. Imagine the resources an hour could provide!

## Making It Local: What Are the Resources?

By completing the contextual research, an exhibit team has the framework within which to place its local story. The team can now ask the following questions:

- How do the historical stories of the people in our community fit into the context?
- How do their stories reflect this larger context?
- How are their stories different?
- Do these local stories provide a different perspective on the events and issues of the broader context?

These questions can help guide the quest to research and document these local stories. Sometimes, the local story is more difficult to research than the national context because so little has been written at the local level, and what was written forty or a hundred years ago is often based as much on hearsay and folklore as on the historical record. I talk about these sources later because, despite their shortfalls, they can still hold great value as clues to the past for the researcher.

No one knows better than the museum's staff and volunteers the research resources available in the museum or its archives or at the local library or genealogical society. The first step in making those resources speak to the content of the exhibition is to gather a comprehensive list. The resources might take many forms: photographs, letters, journals, diaries, county histories, plat maps, and publications developed and created during the time in question. It is good to know where each is housed (e.g., at the museum, the library, the genealogical society). This list might include the state archives or state museum as well. Most state archives have at least some component of their collections available on their websites. Some may only have the catalog digitized, but for many, at least some of the collection is actually viewable online. For example, the state of Michigan has its Civil War materials, including photographs, letters, and diaries, scanned and available on its website. This includes transcriptions of the letters and diaries. The Mississippi State Archives has a number of its photograph and government document collections available to online researchers as well. State archives also often maintain microfilm of local newspapers. It is important to remember that some local resources are no longer housed within the physical boundaries of the community.

### Diaries and Letters

The greatest treasures of research for nearly any historian are letters and diaries. They are the expressions of the players themselves, their personal

thoughts and ideas as they react to the world around them and interact with their communities. In some cases they are writing for others' eyes, but, as with a diary or journal, most are writing for themselves only; thus, they provide an insight for the historian that might not be found in a public correspondence. Letters and journals can provide content support for the exhibit as well as the content itself. Quotations within the texts of these documents might suffice as large graphics for the exhibit or simply form important parts of the exhibit label, allowing visitors to see or hear the local characters speak for themselves. This is very powerful when we talk about one of the museum's most important qualities: authenticity.

When using letters and diaries as historical resources, you must ask a few important questions:

- For whom is the author of the letter or diary writing? It is important to know this and to know something about that person to make sure you have the opportunity to think about motives and ways in which a relationship between the two individuals might inform what is being written in the letter. For example, if you are working on an exhibit about the Underground Railroad in a particular area, and you are reading a letter known to be written by a landowner whose property served as a stop on the railroad, knowing to whom he is writing is critical. If he is writing to someone in the community not sympathetic to the work of the Underground Railroad, the content of that letter may not reflect completely accurate feelings or information.
- If the source is a diary, do you have any sense of whether the writer intended for the words to be read by someone else, or was the diary intended to be a private affair? As with letters, if diarists know that someone will read the writing later—for instance, elected officials or famous individuals might assume that their papers will be of interest in the future—they may censor themselves for the potential audience. If written privately, a diarist's words are apt to be much more candid.
- Are there potential pitfalls in using certain private correspondence? This question must be answered on a local basis. Are descendants of the writer still alive in the community? Will release of certain pieces of information ruffle feathers among the public that the museum serves? An answer of yes does not necessarily mean that the museum should not use that resource. Rather, it means the museum should proceed carefully and be as accurate as possible.

## Photographs

Photographs are another invaluable research and exhibit tool for historians and museums. While they can be used for illustrative purposes as objects in an exhibit, they can also provide excellent information about a person, an environment, and a context. For example, a nineteenth-century photograph of someone sitting in her parlor gives great insight into the way interior spaces were furnished and decorated at that time. It helps to understand the objects important in a person's life and the value placed upon them. Photographs of a downtown building might help identify past businesses or perhaps even objects housed in the museum's collection, like a light fixture or a sign.

As with letters and diaries, it is always important to consider context and think critically about subject matter when using a photograph for an exhibit or for research. You must ask the following questions:

- Who took the photograph?
- Where was it taken?
- Is it a candid photograph, or was it staged? In other words, were the subjects unaware that they were being photographed, or was the scene set up and organized by a photographer to enhance composition or the drama of the shot? The practice of doctoring photographs to change the content or context is not new. It has been happening since the early days of photography.<sup>2</sup>
- What can I see in the photograph that is not the focal point? What is in the background? Can the photograph provide additional information that I did not expect to find?

## County Histories

A preponderance of county histories was published in the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century, perhaps as a response to the nation's centennial but more than likely as part of an effort to document the settlement and survival stories of the county's early residents as they began to pass on. These histories have titles such as *The Past and Present of Eaton County: Historically Together with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Leading and Prominent Citizens and Illustrious Dead* and *History of Hampshire County, West Virginia, from Its Earliest Settlement to the Present*. These tomes can be found in nearly every U.S. state, if not all of them, and can provide valuable basic information to assist in exhibit research.

As with all sources, some caution must be exercised with these works. Their celebratory nature sometimes means that the history they provide is somewhat superficial. They were intended to celebrate the great citizens of their respective counties, not necessarily to look critically at the history of the area. Therefore,

some of the more difficult or controversial issues are absent. This is often particularly noticeable in the accounts of settlers' interactions with the American Indians present in the area when Europeans arrived. This is not to say that these histories are not useful. On the contrary, they generally provide useful biographical information and a general overview of the founding of an area and its communities. But they should be used in conjunction with other sources.

More modern histories are written as well, often by museum volunteers and longtime community residents. Again, as with any source, think critically when using these for research purposes, and ask the following questions of the author's work:

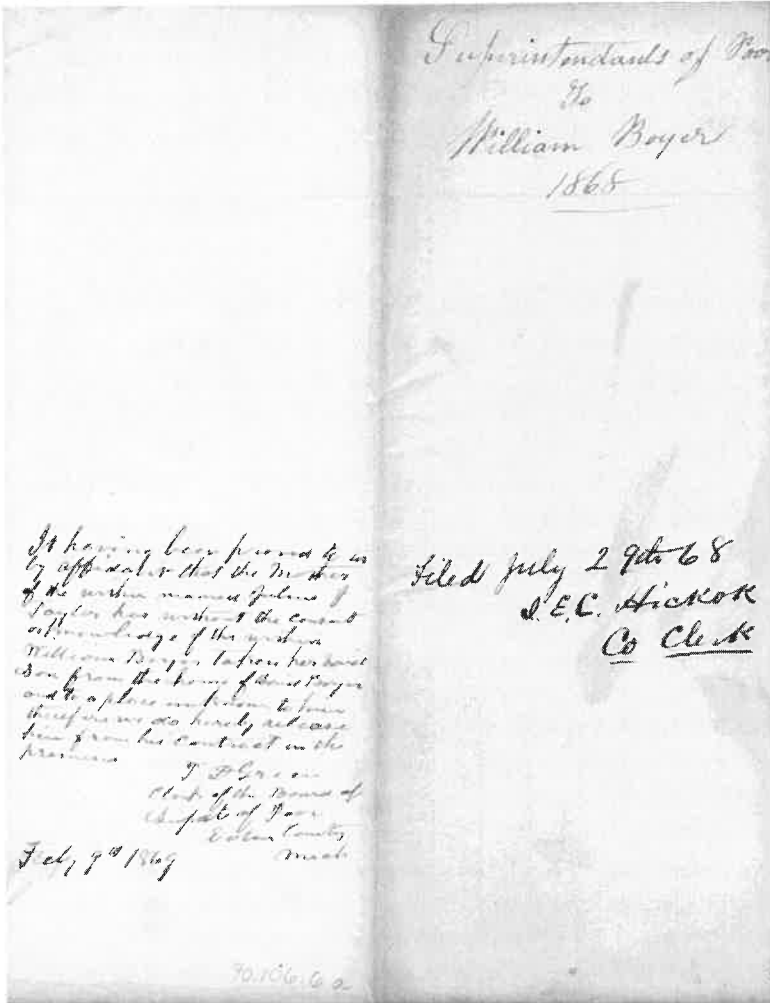
- Did the author document the primary resources on which the book is based? If so, take a little time to spot-check some of those sources; see if you would have the same interpretation. If the author did not document primary sources, then you must use the work carefully as a basis for your research because you cannot independently verify the authenticity of the information presented. This is not to say these sources are not valuable, just that we have to look at them, like all sources, with an analytical eye.
- Was the book created for a specific purpose (i.e., was it written for the chamber of commerce or other marketing organization as a souvenir or as a piece to be used to encourage people to visit the community)? Like the nineteenth-century county histories discussed earlier, these can be more celebratory and not necessarily a comprehensive history of the community.

### Public Documents

Public documents should not be ignored as important sources of information. Sometimes they are mined only for more empirical data or statistics, but they also can lead you to other useful stories. Public documents include census records, deeds, wills, court records, and other legal documents. These are usually located in county government offices, but occasionally, if the documents have been microfilmed or digitized, the original documents may be located in the state or county archives or in a local museum.

It is important, if possible, to look at the original documents. County court documents in the nineteenth century were roughly legal-sized documents that were then folded in thirds, with the pertinent information written on the outside of the document. In some cases, when looking at the original, you will find interesting bits of information written on the outside of the document, offering insight into the more personal aspects of the data contained within. For exam-

ple, while doing research for an exhibit, I ran across some documents that were letters of indenture from the court for children from the county superintendant of the poor to local farmers for service on the farm. In return, farmers were to provide clothing, shelter, and education to the children. On the outside of one of the indenture letters was a note that the child's mother had attempted to retrieve her child from one of these farms. That small note lends great insight into the emotional and human aspects of this kind of government transaction that will not come through the standardized legal documentation contained within.



Photos 3.2. Legal document from the superintendent of the poor in a mid-Michigan county. Writing on the outside tells the story of a mother taking back her indentured son. (Courtesy of Julie Kimmer, Courthouse Square, Charlotte, Michigan)

State of Michigan }  
 County of Genesee }  
 Personally appeared before me  
 the undersigned a justice of the Peace  
 for said County, Samuel S. Bliss and  
 Jackson Henney, who being duly sworn  
 deposes as follows, that Julia Jerome  
 Taylor living with William Boyer  
 of Springfield Canton County, Michigan  
 was taken away from the said Boyer  
 by his Mother Mrs Taylor without  
 any cause or provocation Samuel S. Bliss  
 subscribed <sup>and sworn</sup> to before me S. S. Bliss  
 this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of January 1849  
 S. S. Bliss Justice of  
 the Peace

**Photos 3.3.** Legal document from the superintendent of the poor in a mid-Michigan county. Part of the story is told outside the formal portion of the document. (Courtesy of Julie Kimmer, Courthouse Square, Charlotte, Michigan)

### Oral Histories

If presenting an exhibit for which the players in the historical story are still alive, you can create a new historical source by conducting oral histories with those subjects. Oral history is not an endeavor to take lightly. In and of itself, it requires research, but it also requires a great deal of thought and preparation, recording equipment, time, and planning. There are many resources to help you work through an oral history project, one of the most informative being the Oral History Association ([www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org)), but often state libraries, archives, and genealogical societies can help as well.

Undertaking an oral history project has an immediate research benefit and a long-term one as well. It provides firsthand accounts of the subject at hand, but it is also a tool for gathering information that, if done well, will leave a rich



historical legacy for the museum. The following are basic components of a successful oral history project:

- Have a plan that includes a finite research topic. Oral history is not successful if you go in without a focus for your research. If you intend simply to ask your subjects to tell you about life in your county in the 1930s, you will get hours of tape with a lot of information but little substance or focus. If, however, your plan is to gather information about attending a one-room schoolhouse in the 1920s or being a soldier in France during World War II or participating in civil rights demonstrations in the 1960s, you will mine much more substantive information for the future.
- Once you have a clear topic on which to work, develop specific questions about that topic to ask those you are going to interview. The questions should be consistent from interview to interview, but this does not preclude you from asking follow-up questions to clarify answers.
- It is extremely important that you make sure to have a consent form prepared and to train all volunteers to have the interviewee sign it. This is a critical step in the interview process. Without the consent form, you may not be able to use or reproduce the interview in the future! A sample consent form is available at the following address: [www.oregon.gov/OPRD/HCD/.../Oral\\_History\\_Interview\\_Consent\\_Form.rtf](http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/HCD/.../Oral_History_Interview_Consent_Form.rtf).
- Make sure you provide training for all staff and volunteers who will be conducting interviews. While some elements of interviewing are straightforward—ask a question, get an answer—others are not. Interviewers may need to be reminded that in some cases the information they are asking these individuals for is personal and can be emotional or sensitive. In addition, the questions may indirectly ask interviewees to reflect on someone close to them, a friend or a family member, which they may not want to do. Train interviewers to not press their subjects too hard; it will often cause them to stop talking. Respect their privacy and emotions, and be sensitive. You may have the opportunity to go back to those questions and get answers—or you may not.
- Doing oral histories requires some form of recording equipment. When choosing that equipment, you need to think about standardization and longevity. The oral history association can help you choose audio and video equipment. It has a page on its website

devoted to the different types of technology and their advantages. It is imperative to make sure staff and volunteers are trained to use the equipment and that it is checked to be in working order before each and every interview. There is nothing worse than sitting down for an interview and finding out your battery is dead or that you do not have the correct cable.

- Once the interviews are complete, it is important to have a plan in place to transcribe and index them to make them even more effective as research tools.

The Nebraska State Historical Society created an excellent online oral history primer ([www.nebraskahistory.org/lib-arch/research/audiovis/oral\\_history](http://www.nebraskahistory.org/lib-arch/research/audiovis/oral_history)) to guide those undertaking such a project through the process, the logistics, and the pitfalls.

While all these resources come in very different forms, they can each provide pieces of the puzzle you are trying to put together as the foundation of a museum exhibit. Probably most important when looking at any of these sources is to examine them with a critical mind. Do not take any source at its face value. In order for the source to really speak to the researcher, the researcher must ask difficult questions about the source. It is that questioning that truly enlightens the subject.

## **What Is the Object?**

“Objects embody unique information about the nature of man: the elucidation of approaches through which this can be unlocked is our task, the unique contribution which museum collections can make to our understanding of ourselves.”<sup>3</sup>

At the core of what history museums do, be they large or small, is the collection of objects. Our missions all involve preserving the collection and interpreting it for our visitors or using it for educational purposes. So far, we have looked at the plethora of sources available for contextual research for an exhibit. Now, we must look at the object and how to utilize it as its own historical source. It is hard to believe how many stories a single object can tell.

### **Interpreting Objects**

When you choose objects for your exhibit, you have a general idea of the part of your story they will tell, but now it is time to delve a little deeper. Look at each object, and just as you did with the documentary sources, ask and answer these questions about it:

- When was it made?
- How was it made?
- Who made it?
- Why was it made?
- How was it used?
- Who used it?
- What can we tell about the time during which it was created?
- Would it be created today?
- How would it be used in a story?
- What stories can the object tell?
- How could a person today use this object?

Answering these few questions gives us opportunities to use a single object in many different ways. As we take stock of our stories and our objects, because we have thought about them critically, it is possible to think about them in different contexts and move them around in an exhibit to where they are best able to help tell the story.

### Researching Objects

Just as we research context, we must also sometimes research objects to interpret them to their full potential. This research is a bit different from the contextual research outlined earlier. Some sources are very particular to object research. Some of the greatest resources for identifying common historical objects are historic catalogs, such as those for Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward. Reprints of various editions, mostly from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are available for between \$10 and \$15, so they are very accessible even to the smallest museum. They are particularly useful because of the breadth of objects they cover. For example, when cataloguing the textile collection in a very small museum, we were having trouble accurately identifying various women's undergarments. One look through the Sears catalog from 1895 gave us accurate terminology. From the same catalog, we were able to identify historic kitchen tools and agricultural implements. These resources should be on every small historical museum's bookshelf. Many other resource books are helpful for identification as well, some of which are listed in the resource list at the end of this chapter. There are also specific handbooks on the market for identifying American Indian artifacts, as well as collector's manuals used by antique dealers.

Sometimes you make object identifications by happenstance, just by keeping your eyes and ears open as you read state history magazines, peruse newsletters

**TEXTBOX 3.5****BY THE STEPS 5: ANALYZING AN OBJECT**

One of the objects the exhibit team chooses for its exhibit on women in the community is a quilt that has been in the collection for many years. At face value, the team knows the quilt can help illustrate the work of women and craftsmanship, but it can tell so much more. Here are the questions the team asks and the answers:

- When was it made? It was made in the 1880s.
- How was it made? It was made by hand. Pieces of fabric were sewn together in a pattern, layered with cotton batting and muslin backing, and quilted together. It is a sampler quilt; each square is different, and a different name is embroidered on each square.
- Who made it? By the names on the squares and a patch on the back, we know the quilt was made by a women's group in the community of which we have excellent records.
- Why was it made? A little research through the museum archives turns up minutes from this women's organization. The quilt was created for auction to provide support for a local charity for the poor.
- How was it used? We know from the donor that it has remained in the family that won the nineteenth-century auction; it was used on beds and eventually displayed in the home.
- Who used it? The winner of the auction was a member of the woman's organization and the wife of a prominent businessman in the community.
- What can we tell about the time during which it was created? From our research, we know that women's organizations around the country were taking notice of various reform needs in society, particularly with regard to women and children in poverty. This local group reflects that national trend.
- Would it be created today? Yes, absolutely. The museum has an associated group that makes and raffles a quilt annually to support the museum and other charitable causes.
- How could it be used in a story? It could be used to talk about quilting as a necessity and a pastime, about women's organizations and their role(s) in the community, and about the many ways women participated in progressive reform movements in the late nineteenth century.
- How could a person today use this object? It could be used for display or functionally.

Now that team members have thought about these questions, they can reevaluate where in the exhibit the quilt will work best. It could be used in the “Women on the Farm” section to talk about the ways women spent their time for work and for pleasure, or perhaps it might tell a more interesting story in the “Women and Reform” section.

from other historical organizations, and interact with members of the community. For example, when relocating a large cast iron stove in our small museum, we opened the oven to discover a number of objects stored inside, including an oddly shaped device. It had two long, narrow wood pieces, hinged at one end with a brad of sorts, which had a bent wire piece on each of the other two ends. The name of a local hardware store in the community, long closed, was imprinted on one of the narrow wood pieces. We really had no idea what this object could be, despite looking through catalogs, antique identification books, and so forth. One day, the state history magazine came in the mail, and on the front cover were photographs of a number of odd objects, including this strange object found in the stove. The magazine identified this strange little object as a “pie puller.” Women used them in their kitchens to pull pies from the oven so they did not burn their arms reaching in with potholders. The fact that the local hardware store name was printed on top suggests that this object was more than likely a premium given away with a purchase. This kind of information can come from conversations with visitors and through publications and really just requires an attentiveness to unexpected but useful information.

Regardless of how you identify objects, taking the time to get as much information as possible can only enhance the story you tell in your exhibit. Knowing what the object does, who made it, and who owned and used it leads to a more complete, better-illustrated story in your exhibit.

## **The Legacy of Your Research**

The hard work expended to research an exhibit is not wasted energy. It is important to organize and file the research notes and even a bibliography for the future. The museum is bound to do an exhibit in coming years with parallel stories to tell, and if you have maintained your files well, some of that hard work may already be done for the next exhibit.

**TEXTBOX 3.6****BY THE STEPS 6: IT ALL COMES TOGETHER**

The exhibit team's hard work culminates in the resources necessary to take "Foundations: The Women of XYZ County, 1840–1920" from the page to the walls and three-dimensional spaces where it will invite visitors to explore, experience, and learn. Each diligently researched section has been designed to bring out the themes, ideas, and facts that have been uncovered. The community is invited to share in the adventure by attending a grand opening, including a presentation by a woman who has made significant contributions to the community and beyond its borders. The exhibit team members, board of directors, and members of the community get to celebrate the exhibit together. In addition to viewing the exhibition, visitors have the opportunity to scan a list of the oral histories and artifacts newly acquired by the museum to find their own connections to the subject, beyond the exhibit.

In the end, the exhibit brings new visitors to the museum, is utilized by the local school district in its social studies curriculum, and inspires other members of the organization to start thinking about future exhibition ideas. All of the research materials from the exhibition are filed and made available for future research and exhibitions. The city council acknowledges the museum for its important contribution to the culture and legacy of the community.

**Conclusion**

Researching exhibits is a great adventure, but it also involves a tremendous amount of work. It requires diligence, critical thinking, creativity, and excellent organizational skills, and, perhaps most importantly, it is imperative to the overall success of any exhibit. Our great responsibility to our visitors to maintain authenticity and objectivity mandates that we be diligent in researching our exhibits. Technology and access to information have leveled the playing field between large and small history museums in their ability to be comprehensive in their research, limiting the need to travel and allowing researchers to be more creative in the search for sources. The rewards of this work are great, and the trust it develops between the museum and its visitors is a significant part of the museum's making itself an integral part of its community.

## Resources

### U.S. History Textbooks

These textbooks with varying perspectives are often used in general U.S. history courses. Hundreds more are available.

Jones, Jacqueline, Peter H. Wood, Thomas Borstelmann, and Elaine Tyler May. *Created Equal: A History of the United States*. 3rd ed. New York: Longman, 2008.

Norton, Mary Beth, David M. Katzman, David W. Blight, Howard Chudacoff, and Fredrik Logevall. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States*. 7th ed. Florence, KY: Wadsworth Publishing, 2004.

Roark, James L., Michael P. Johnson, Patricia Cline Cohen, Sarah Stage, and Susan M. Hartmann. *American Promise: A History of the United States*. 4th ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.

### References for Object Identification

Bragonier, Reginald, and David Fisher. *What's What: A Visual Glossary of the Physical World*. Maplewood, NJ: Hammond, 1990.

Corbeil, Jean-Claude, and Ariane Archambault. *Macmillan Visual Dictionary*. New York: Macmillan, 1997.

Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward catalogs, with editions from many different years, are available from many online booksellers, such as Amazon.com.

### Organizations

American Association for State and Local History ([www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org))

Oral History Association ([www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org))

### Statewide Museum Associations and Field Services Offices

Most states have a museum association that offers programs and resources to help small museums. To locate a field services office in your state, visit [www.aaslh.org/FSA/FSA.html](http://www.aaslh.org/FSA/FSA.html). These organizations can usually facilitate the answering of questions by putting you in contact with other museum professionals who are generally very happy to help.

### Libraries

Local libraries are amazing facilities—conduits to the rest of the world. As they are sometimes located in rural communities, the number of titles related to the work of museums and historical research is often limited. However, because so many libraries now participate in lending networks and can use interlibrary loan services, patrons in all parts of the country have access to just about any title they desire. Nearly all university libraries have online catalogs where you can browse titles. Request those titles from your local library's interlibrary loan program, if possible.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Websites

Online County Histories, Biographies, & Indexes—USA ([www.genealogybranches.com/countyhistories.html](http://www.genealogybranches.com/countyhistories.html)): This website is a comprehensive genealogy listing, providing many resources by state. It includes historic county histories and biographies, among other resources.

History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web ([www.historymatters.gmu.edu](http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu)): History Matters, while created for students and college history teachers, makes available a great number of primary documents and resource materials that could be adapted for use in exhibit research and even in exhibit-related educational programs.

### Notes

1. Merriam Webster online entry for “monograph” at [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/monograph](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/monograph).

2. See “Phototampering throughout History,” Dartmouth professor of computer science Hany Farid, [www.cs.dartmouth.edu/farid/research/digitaltampering](http://www.cs.dartmouth.edu/farid/research/digitaltampering) (accessed May 3, 2011).

3. Susan Pearce, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (London: Routledge Press, 1994), 125.



# NATIONAL HISTORY DAY 101

*(teacher workshop packet extracts)*

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#### Important Websites

Utah History Day: <https://heritage.utah.gov/history/utah-history-day>

National History Day: <http://www.nhd.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UtahHistoryDay>



# HISTORY DAY RESEARCH STARTER

## Sleuthing the Past

Good historians are like detectives – they investigate, search for evidence, and dig into records to find more sources. Then they piece together what happened based upon the evidence they find. For your History Day project, you'll do essentially the same thing. Start by learning all you can from experts on your topic, then search for and analyze primary sources.

### 1 Start with credible secondary sources

A credible secondary source is written by an expert on the topic (preferably a historian). Secondary sources include articles from professional journals, articles from the internet, and books from the library. Wikipedia is not a credible secondary source, but its articles can help you find better sources to use.

Tips for finding good secondary sources:

- Search for books at your local library or at Utah's Online Library (formerly PIONEER, <http://onlinelibrary.uen.org>). If your library does not have the book you want, you can usually request it from a partner library by placing a hold on the book.
- Search for articles through your local library or the Utah Online Library. Good article databases include EBSCO, JSTOR, and WorldCat.
- There are specialized historical journals on almost every topic (Western history, American history, Utah history, history of science, women's history, and so on) that contain excellent secondary source articles.
- Look at the bottom of online articles for its citations, then go find those articles or books.
- Look for secondary sources that show different sides of the story.
- Ask – Who wrote this? Are they an expert? If not, don't use it.

### 2 Read your secondary sources and take notes

These sources should give you a good understanding of the events you are covering, including important dates, names, and facts. They should also explore the background events leading up to your topic, the **historical context** (the social, cultural, and political circumstances in that time and place), and the consequences or outcomes.

Take notes using a notebook, a Google Doc, or Noodle Tools. Write down sentences you might want to quote exactly as they are written. Use quotation marks to show they are quotes.

Record the citation information for each source using a History Day Source Tracker or Noodle Tools, and keep this information attached to your notes.

### 3 Search for primary sources – voices from the past

Primary sources are materials that were **created at that time** in history. They include eyewitness accounts, newspaper and magazine articles, letters, diaries, books, government records, court cases, laws, photographs, paintings, drawings, maps, images, artifacts, clothing, tools, and objects. Interviews with people who were involved in the historical event are primary sources – these are called oral histories.

Primary sources are usually kept in archives, special collections, and libraries. If there are materials relevant to your topic at an archive near you, make an appointment to go and look at them.

Thousands of primary sources have been digitized and are available to researchers online. For links to high-quality online repositories, go to <https://heritage.utah.gov/history/uhd-research-resources>.

SLEUTHING TIP - To find out where the primary sources for *your* topic are held, look in the footnotes/endnotes or bibliography of good secondary sources.

### 4 Analyze your primary sources

Examine each source and ask questions such as...

- Who created this? When did they create it? Who was able to read or see it?
- Why was it created? What was its purpose?
- What does the image show? What does the document say?
- What is the point of view? (Example: is it proslavery or antislavery?)
- Is there something missing? What questions do you have after examining this artifact? How can you answer your questions?

Take notes and record the citation information for each source as you go.

### 5 Keep digging!

Research often builds its own momentum. When you find a lead, chase it down. Do your sources make you wonder about something? See if you can uncover an answer by doing more research.

#### Research Goals

- 10 or more secondary sources
- 15 or more primary sources, such as historical images or documents
- 15 or more quotes – select the best ones to include in your project

Every research project is different. Set your own goals for your History Day research!

# PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES

## Definitions

### Secondary Sources

- Secondary sources are typically published books or articles written by an author who interprets the past using primary sources and the work of other experts. The writer is not an eyewitness or participant in the historical event.
- Most books, scholarly articles, website, and encyclopedias are secondary sources.
- Secondary sources are useful because they can provide an overview, background, chronology, details, and historical context on a topic.
- Secondary sources can also show how different historians have drawn differing conclusions about an event.
- Credible secondary sources are written by experts on the topic.

Tip: Look at the footnotes and bibliographies of secondary sources to discover where you can locate primary sources.

### Primary Sources

- Primary sources are materials with a direct link to the actual historical event.
- Primary sources are *not* limited to direct participants or eyewitnesses to an event.
- Materials that were created, written, or published during the time period you are studying are all primary sources on that topic.
- Ask: *when* was this source created?
- Interviews with participants in or eyewitnesses to an event are primary sources, even if the interviews take place long after the fact.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

### Sets the Stage

History doesn't happen in a vacuum. Events, people, and ideas are deeply shaped by the world around them – the political, social, intellectual, scientific, cultural, and economic realities of that time and place. Students need to show in their project how their topic fits within the historical context that surrounded it.

Here are some ways to think about historical context:

**Background** – What were the events that lead up to this topic? Example: How did the conclusion of World War II set the stage for the Cold War?

**Social Context** – What was the social environment like at the time? Example: racism, segregation, and Jim Crow form the setting from which the Civil Rights Movement emerged. It's also an important context for Jazz music, for Jackie Robinson, and a host of other topics.

**Intellectual/Scientific Context** – How did experts understand this issue or question at the time? Example: what did scientists and doctors believe about disease transmission during the Flu Pandemic of 1918?

**Cultural Context** – What were the cultural norms in the community? Example: what was the prevailing view of a woman's aptitudes and role in this time and place?

**Economic Context** – How did the economy shape peoples' lives, choices, and decisions? Example: the Great Depression.

**Other Contexts** – Can you identify other contexts that are relevant to your topic?

In many cases, your topic will center on a creative response, reaction, or attempt to change the prevailing circumstances of the time. A good understanding of the historical context is also essential to allow you to see and describe change over time, and to identify short- and long-term consequences and outcomes.

# THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN

## Questions to Ask about Your Topic

### Essential Questions:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- How?
- Why?

### Cause and Effect: What were the causes of past events? What were the effects?

- Who or what made change happen?
- Who supported change?
- Who did not?
- Which effects were intended?
- Which effects were accidental?
- How did events affect people's lives, community, and the world?

### Change and Continuity: What has changed? What has remained the same?

- Who benefited from this change? Why?
- Who did not benefit from it? Why?

### Turning Points: How did past decisions or actions affect future choices?

- How did decisions or actions narrow or eliminate choices for people?
- How did decisions or actions significantly transform people's lives?

### Using the Past: How does the past help us make sense of the present?

- How is the past similar to the present?
- How is the past different from the present?
- What can we learn from the past?

### Through Their Eyes: How did people in the past view their world?

- How did their worldview affect their choices and actions?  
What values, skills, and forms of knowledge did people need to survive and succeed?

# THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN

## Primary Source Analysis

### Written Document Analysis

1. What type of document is it? Newspaper, letter, memorandum, telegram, press release, report, advertisement, congressional record, government report, other
2. What unique physical qualities are present? Letterhead, seals, notations, typed, handwritten, other
3. Is the document dated? If not, how can you tell it is a primary source?
4. Who created the document? Name, position
5. For whom was the document written/created?
6. Why was the document written/created? Cite the evidence by quoting from the document.
7. List and discuss three or four things the author said that you think are important.
8. Are there questions left unanswered by the document? What would you ask the author if you had the chance?
9. How will you use this document as part of your History Day project?

### Photograph Analysis

1. Study the photograph for an overall impression of the photography and examine individual items. Divide the photo into quadrants to see what details become visible. Discuss the people, objects, and activities in the photo.
2. Based on what you have observed, discuss three or four things you might infer from the photograph.
3. Is the photo dated? Who took the photo?
4. Are there questions left unanswered by the photography? What would you ask the photographer if you had the chance?
5. How will you use this photograph as part of your History Day project?

### Poster Analysis

1. Discuss the subject of the poster and the situation it concerns.
2. What colors are used in the poster? What symbols, if any, are used? Are they clear? Memorable? Dramatic?
3. Are the messages in the poster primarily visual, written, or both? Explain.
4. Who do you think is the intended audience for the poster? What is the poster's purpose?
5. Is this poster effective? Why or why not?
6. How will you use this poster as part of your History Day project?

### **Cartoon Analysis**

1. Describe the action taking place in the cartoon. Name the objects or people seen.
2. Is there a caption or title? Are there any important dates in the cartoon?
3. Is the cartoon signed? Who is the cartoonist? Do you know anything about the cartoonist?
4. What type of symbolism is used in the cartoon? Is the symbolism significant?
5. Are there words or phrases in the cartoon that are significant?
6. What is the message of the cartoon? What special interest groups would agree or disagree with the cartoon's message?
7. Is the cartoon effective? Why or why not?
8. How will you use this cartoon as part of your History Day project?

### **Map Analysis**

1. What type of map is it? Political, topographic, weather, military, satellite photo, natural resource, other
2. What qualities are present in the map? Date, scale, title, legend, notations, mapmaker's name, etc.
3. What is the date of the map? Why is it a primary source?
4. Where was the map produced?
5. What information does the map convey? Why is that information important?
6. Why do you think the map was drawn? What evidence do you have?
7. How does the information in this map support or contradict the information that you have already read about the event? Explain.
8. What information is left unanswered by the map? What would you ask the mapmaker if you had the chance?
9. How will you use this map as part of your History Day project?

### **Sound Recording Analysis**

1. What type of sound recording is this? Policy speech, congressional testimony, news report, interview, entertainment broadcast, press conference, campaign speech, court argument, other
2. What are the unique physical qualities of the recording?
3. What is the date of the recording? What is your evidence?
4. What is the mood or tone?
5. What are the important points that are made during the recording?
6. Why do you think the original broadcast was made and for what audience? What is your evidence?
7. What information do you gain about the event that would not be available by a written transcript? Explain.
8. What information is left unanswered by the recording? What would you ask if you had the chance?
9. How will you use this recording as part of your History Day project?



# THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN

## Secondary Source Analysis

### Written document sources

1. What type of source is it? Book, article, website, interview, current newspaper article, other
2. What is the overall thesis or point of view of the author / creator?
3. When was the document created?
4. Who created the document? Name, position
5. For whom was the document written/created?
6. Why was the document written/created? Cite the evidence by quoting from the document.
7. List and discuss three or four points the author said that you think are important.
8. Are there questions left unanswered by the document? What would you ask the author if you had the chance?
9. How will you use this document as part of your History Day project?

### Documentary / Multimedia Sources

1. What type of source is it? Documentary, streaming video, other
2. What is the overall thesis or point of view of the author / creator?
3. When was the source created?
4. Who created the source? Name, position
5. How do you know that the source is authentic and accurate?
6. Why was the source created?
7. List three or four points the creator said that you think are important.
8. Are there questions left unanswered by the source? What would you ask the creator if you had the chance?
9. How will you use this document as part of your History Day project?

Primary and Secondary Source Analysis from “NHD Teacher Resources, Middle School Level”  
(<http://www.nhd.org/classroom-connection/nhd-in-the-classroom/>)

## **ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION**

**Read ~ Think ~ Compile ~ Compare ~ Think**

### **Balanced research**

- Variety of sources
- Differing points of view
- Substantial

### **Think about relation to your theme and sub-themes**

### **Make a historical argument**

- Thesis = Argument
- Sources = Evidence
- What do the sources show?
- Is there evidence that counters your argument? Discuss!
- Is there controversy or debate? Explore!
- Wait to write the thesis statement

### **Show significance in history**

- So what? Why does this matter? Why is it important?
- What changed? What were the short-term impacts? What were the long-term outcomes?

## QUALITIES OF A GOOD NHD PROJECT

Here are the qualities a judge will use to evaluate your National History Day project. After you create your project, go through this list and ask yourself if you've met the criteria or incorporated the information into your project.

### Historical Quality: 60%

- My project is historically accurate:** All information in my project is true to the best of my knowledge.
- I show analysis and interpretation:** My project doesn't just recount facts or tell a story. I interpret and analyze my topic. My project has a strong central thesis or argument that I prove. I can point to where I state my thesis in my project.
- I place my topic in its historical context:** My topic didn't take place in isolation. I make sure to place my topic into historical context—the intellectual, physical, social, and cultural setting for my topic.
- My project shows wide, balanced research. I use available primary sources:** These ideas all relate to the research behind your NHD project. Judges will look carefully at your bibliography to learn more about your research process. They want to see that you investigated multiple perspectives about your topic and that you looked at all sides of an issue. They are looking for research using both primary and secondary sources and want to see that you used a variety of source types.

### Relation to Theme: 20%

- I clearly relate my topic to the theme:** My theme connection is clear in my project itself.
- I demonstrate the significance of my topic in history and draw conclusions:** My project does more than just describe my topic. I explain why my topic is important in history or demonstrate its significance.

### Clarity of Presentation: 20%

- My project and written materials are original, clear, appropriate, and organized:** I have an organized and well-written project. I was careful to avoid plagiarism and I have double-checked spelling and grammar in my project process paper, and bibliography.
- My project has visual impact, uses multimedia effectively, and actively involves the viewer:** I thought about the overall design and organization of my project. I chose multimedia and interactive elements to help viewers understand my topic and prove my argument, if appropriate for my category.

From National History Day Handbook, "How to Create a Website" pg. 61

# RESEARCH RESOURCES IN UTAH

Link to all of these resources at  
<https://heritage.utah.gov/history/uhd-research-resources>

## US History – Primary Sources

### Library of Congress (LOC)

- American Folklife Center
- American Memory
- Chronicling America – Historic American Newspapers from 1836-1922
- Veterans History Project

### Mountain West Digital Library

- With some 800,000 primary sources about the Mountain West available online, the MWDL is one of the largest digital repositories in the country.

### National Archives & Records Administration (NARA)

- Our Documents - 100 milestone documents in American History
- DocsTeach - Get Ready for National History Day
- Research Tools for National History Day
- Digital Vaults

## Utah Division of State History – Primary Sources

- State History Research Center – Utah State Historical Society & State Archives
- ILoveHistory.utah.gov - Utah history for young people
- historytogo.utah.gov - Online encyclopedia of people, places, and events in Utah History
- Library Catalog Online - Use this to search State History's holdings
- Publications Online - Academic journal articles are excellent secondary sources
- Digital Photos Online
- Utah Historical Quarterly

## Good Places to Find Secondary Sources

- Utah's Online Library (formerly PIONEER) – Access EBSCO and Noodle Tools here
- Digital Public Library of America (DPLA)
- America: History & Life
- JSTOR
- Journal of American History
- Journal of Mormon History
- Western Historical Quarterly
- Your City or County Library
- Salt Lake City Library - If you are able to visit the Salt Lake City Library, special collections and regular collections are available in large volumes, especially at the Downtown Salt Lake City location.

- Salt Lake County Library System
- State Library

### **University Research Libraries in Utah – Secondary and Primary Sources**

Utah State University: Merrill-Cazier Library, and Merrill-Cazier Special Collections and Archives

- Weber State University: Stewart Library, and Stewart Library Special Collections
- University of Utah: Marriott Library, and Marriott Library Special Collections
- Utah Valley University: Library and George Sutherland Archives
- Brigham Young University: Harold B. Lee Library, and L. Tom Perry Special Collections
- Southern Utah University Library: Gerald R. Sherratt Library, Special Collections and Digital Archives
- Dixie State University: Library and Special Collections

### **More Primary Source Repositories**

- Ancestry.com - Genealogical information, photos, documents, and census records. (Coupons available at <http://www.therawfeed.com/stores/ancestry-com>.)
- Archives of the Catholic Church in Utah
- California Digital Newspaper Collection
- Discovering American Women's History Online
- Farmworker Movement Documentation Project
- Google News Archive
- The Internet Archive
- LDS Church History Library
- Logan Library Archives
- Newspapers.com - Although this is a subscription web site, you can make use of the free trial. Includes newspapers outside of Utah.
- Salt Lake Family History Library
- Utah State Archives - Government documents and other legal records, including birth and death certificates
- Utah American Indian Digital Archives
- Utah Digital Newspapers - This free web site provides access to digitally search newspapers from all over Utah.
- Utah Ski Archives
- Your City or County Archives and Government Offices

# GUIDE TO ARCHIVES IN UTAH

## A Utah History Day Resource

### LOGAN

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#### Utah State University

**Location:** 3000 Old Main Hill  
Merrill-Cazier Library  
Logan, Utah 84322

**Web:** <https://archives.usu.edu/>

**Phone:** (435) 797-2663

**Hours:** 8:00-5:00, M – F  
Additional evening and Saturday hours  
when school is in session (call for details)

**Contact:** Clint Pumphrey, [clint.pumphrey@usu.edu](mailto:clint.pumphrey@usu.edu)

#### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Topaz Internment Camp
- ✓ Intermountain Indian School
- ✓ Utah Folklore
- ✓ Tourism in Utah
- ✓ Environmental Activism in Utah

### OGDEN

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#### Weber State University Archives

**Location:** 3921 Central Campus Drive Dept. 2901  
Ogden, Utah 84408-2901

**Web:** <http://library.weber.edu/asc/archivesdept/>

**Phone:** (801) 626-6486

**Hours:** 9:00-4:30, M - F

**Contact:** Jamie J Weeks, [jweeks@weber.edu](mailto:jweeks@weber.edu)

#### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ History of Theater 1918 - 2013.
- ✓ History of John G Lind 1819 - 1944  
(Famous Geologist)
- ✓ History of Northern Utah Satellite  
Program (NUSAT) 1980s.
- ✓ Early Weber State History 1889 - 1970.
- ✓ History of Debate (Leland H. Monson)  
1921 - 1980.

#### Weber State University Special Collections

**Location:** 3921 Central Campus Drive, Dept. 2901  
Ogden, UT 84408-2901

**Web:** <http://library.weber.edu/asc/speccoll/default.cfm>

**Phone:** (801) 626-6540

**Hours:** 9:00-5:30, M-F  
10:00-2:00 Sat

**Contact:** Sarah Singh, [ssingh@weber.edu](mailto:ssingh@weber.edu)

#### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Italian and German Prisoners of  
War at Camp Ogden
- ✓ Defense Depot Ogden
- ✓ Nursing Education in Northern  
Utah
- ✓ Immigrant populations in Ogden
- ✓ Utah Construction Company:  
Builders of the American West

## SALT LAKE

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### **J. Willard Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah**

**Location:** 295 South 1500 East  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112  
**Web:** <http://www.lib.utah.edu/>  
**Phone:** (801) 585-3076  
**Hours:** 8:00-6:00, M-F  
9:30-6:00, Sat  
**Contact:** Liz Rogers, [Liz.Rogers@utah.edu](mailto:Liz.Rogers@utah.edu)

#### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Science
- ✓ Oral Histories
- ✓ Women's Studies
- ✓ Utah History
- ✓ Literature

### **Utah Division of State History**

**Location:** 300 S. Rio Grande St.  
Salt Lake City, UT 84101  
**Web:** <https://heritage.utah.gov/history/library-collections-history>  
**Phone:** (801) 245-7227  
**Hours:** 9:00-4:00, M-F  
**Contact:** Greg Walz, [gwalz@utah.gov](mailto:gwalz@utah.gov)

#### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Utah transportation history
- ✓ Utah labor history
- ✓ River exploration
- ✓ Utah women's history
- ✓ Early statehood

### **Utah State Archives**

**Location:** Research Center  
300 South Rio Grande  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101  
**Web:** <http://archives.utah.gov/>  
**Phone:** (801) 9155472  
**Hours:** 9:00-4:00, M-F  
**Contact:** Jim Kichas, [jkichas@utah.gov](mailto:jkichas@utah.gov)

#### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Joe Hill
- ✓ Military History
- ✓ Governors of Utah
- ✓ Colorado River
- ✓ Territorial Utah Government

### **Westminster College**

**Location:** 1840 S 1300 E  
Salt Lake City, UT 84105  
**Web:** <http://www.westminstercollege.edu/library/>  
**Phone:** (801) 832-2256  
**Hours:** 9:00-4:00, M-F  
**Contact:** Christopher Dasanjh,  
[cdasanjh@westminstercollege.edu](mailto:cdasanjh@westminstercollege.edu)

#### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Westminster College student newspapers, post WWII
- ✓ History of nursing education in Salt Lake City – St. Mark's Hospital and Westminster College
- ✓ Hannah Clair Haines papers – Utah's first woman CPA

## UTAH VALLEY

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### **Brigham Young University**

**Location:** 1130 HBLL  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, UT 84062

**Web:** <http://sites.lib.byu.edu/sc/>

**Phone:** (801) 422-3175

**Hours:** 8:00 am -9:00 pm, M-Th  
8:00-6:00, Fri & 10:00-6:00, Sat

**Contact:** Gordon Daines/Cindy Brightenburg,  
[ltpsc.reference@gmail.com](mailto:ltpsc.reference@gmail.com)

### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Exploration of the Western United States
- ✓ Mormon history
- ✓ Military history (WWII)
- ✓ Utah history
- ✓ Photography of the Western USA

### **Utah Valley University**

**Location:** 800 W. University Parkway, LI 302  
Orem, Utah 84058

**Web:** <http://www.uvu.edu/library/archives>

**Phone:** (801) 863-8821

**Hours:** 7:30-4:30, M-F

**Contact:** Catherine McIntyre, [mcintyca@uvu.edu](mailto:mcintyca@uvu.edu)

### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Vietnam War (oral histories)
- ✓ Peace activism in Utah
- ✓ UVU and Utah Valley area history
- ✓ Deaf Athletics and Organizations in Utah

## CEDAR CITY

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### **Southern Utah University**

**Location:** Gerald R. Sherratt Library  
351 W. University Blvd.  
Cedar City, Utah 84720

**Web:** <http://www.li.suu.edu/>

**Phone:** (435) 586-7976

**Hours:** 1:00-5:00, M-F or by appointment.

**Contact:** Paula Mitchell, [mitchellp@suu.edu](mailto:mitchellp@suu.edu)

### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ Southern Utah History/Local History
- ✓ Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah
- ✓ Historic Trails - Old Spanish Trail, Pony Express
- ✓ William Shakespeare
- ✓ Utah National Parks

## ST GEORGE

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### **Dixie State University**

**Location:** Special Collections & Library  
Holland Centennial Commons 330  
225 S. University Ave.  
Saint George, Utah 84770

**Web:** <http://library.dixie.edu/>

**Phone:** (435) 652-2087

**Hours:** 10:00-5:00, M-F or by appointment.

**Contact:** Kathleen Broeder,  
[specialcollections@dixie.edu](mailto:specialcollections@dixie.edu)

### **Major Topics in Collection:**

- ✓ St. George / Washington County  
Local History
- ✓ Polygamy / FLDS
- ✓ Oral History





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## Looking at Artifacts, Thinking about History

By Steven Lubar and Kathleen Kendrick

Artifacts—the objects we make and use—are part of American history. If we know how to look at them, they can be sources for better understanding our history.

While textbooks focus on the great documents of the American past, or the important events, artifacts can show us another kind of history, another way of approaching the past. This essay will tell you how to look closely at artifacts and how to think about the ways they shape and reflect our history.

Why bother looking at artifacts, which can be hard to understand, when there are so many documents around, and when documents seem so much more straightforward? Why do museums save artifacts at all, when it would be so much easier just to save pictures of them?

There are two ways to answer this question. Artifacts, we believe, are, and were, important. According to anthropologist Daniel Miller, objects “continually assert their presence as simultaneously material force and symbol. They frame the way we act in the world, as well as the way we think about the world.”<sup>1</sup> To understand the past, we have to understand the artifacts of the past.

But they are also important to us as a way to approach the past. Museum expert Elaine Gurian suggests that artifacts provide us a way into history. “Objects, in their tangibility,” she writes, “provide a variety of stakeholders with an opportunity to debate the meaning and control of their memories.”<sup>2</sup> Artifacts are the touchstones that bring memories and meanings to life. They make history real. Moreover, it is a reality that can and should be viewed from different perspectives. When museums choose not to enshrine and isolate an artifact but instead open it up to new interpretations and different points of view, they provide opportunities to challenge and enhance our understanding of the past. Look at the artifacts on this web site,

and around you, as reminders of the complexity of the past. To fully appreciate the complexity of artifacts—and of history—we must not only acknowledge their multiple and conflicting meanings, but embrace them.

As you look at the artifacts on this web site, think about them not as simple, unproblematic things—things with one story, one role to play in history. Rather, consider each artifact with its many stories as holding diverse meanings for different people, past and present. Think of them as bits of contested history. It is because of the contest and conflict they embody, and the way they combine use and meaning, that artifacts are such valuable tools for exploring the past.

Looking closely at artifacts, putting them into historical context, and using them to understand the past, is exactly the kind of work that goes on in a museum. Curators make it their mission to discover and tell these stories, to put objects back into history. So as you look at these artifacts, and the documents with them, imagine that you're curating your own exhibit. What stories do the objects tell? What documents, and what stories from your history books, help you to understand what the objects meant to the people of the past? What can you say about the past by using objects? How can you tell visitors to your exhibit what you've learned?

We suggest five ways to think about artifacts in history:

- Artifacts tell their own stories.
- Artifacts connect people.
- Artifacts mean many things.
- Artifacts capture moments.
- Artifacts reflect changes.

You can look at any object in any or all of these ways. Here, we suggest some questions to ask, and give some examples. As you consider the artifacts in this website—or any artifact in museums, or in your daily life—you can ask similar questions. Think like a curator: use the artifacts to understand, explain, and present history.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, pp. 105.

<sup>2</sup> Elaine Heumann Gurian, "What is the Object of this Exercise? A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums," *Daedalus* (Summer 1999), pp. 165-67.





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## Looking at Artifacts, Thinking about History

By Steven Lubar and Kathleen Kendrick

### Artifacts Tell their Own Stories

Looking at the artifact helps answer questions about its own history. What is it?

When was it made? Where is it from? What is it made of? Who made it? How was it used? These kinds of questions establish basic information about the object; they help to identify and locate it in time and place.

This way of looking at an object can be thought of as looking inward. We put an object under a microscope—literally or figuratively—and discover the object's own history. Often, these are the first questions to ask of an artifact. (On this Web site, we've provided much of this information.)

But this is only the beginning; a way to establish basic facts. (For a document, the similar questions would be: Who wrote it? When? Why?) The next step, for an artifact as for a document, is to take the object as a point of departure, opening up the world beyond the artifact. When we do that, we learn a different kind of history. Imagine the artifact not in a spotlight by itself, but rather against a variegated backdrop of people, places, and events. Now, many stories emerge. Here, we begin to ask questions about the people who used the artifact, the events that surrounded it. If we ask the right questions, and do the right research, we begin to understand the role an object played in people's lives, the meanings it held to different individuals and communities, the way it reflected the knowledge, values, and tastes of a particular era. In short, we see the object as part of American history.

When placed in context like this, museum artifacts become passageways into history. Through a single object, we can connect to a moment in time, a person's life, a set of values and beliefs.





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## Looking at Artifacts, Thinking about History

By Steven Lubar and Kathleen Kendrick

Artifacts connect people

A second way of using artifacts is to look beyond the artifact to see how it tells us about people. To look beyond the artifact is to find stories about the object's role in people's lives: not just who made it and who it belonged to, but also the meanings it held to different individuals and the relationships it was part of. If we look at an artifact as something that people owned and used, we can find out interesting things about people by looking at things as they are made, used, and passed on, artifacts create a web of relationships.

Consider the different relationships that evolved around this eighteenth-century silver teapot:

### *Tea Parties*

In eighteenth-century America, the teapot was at the center of a social ritual that brought strangers, families, and friends closer together. Imported from Britain, the ritual of taking tea—sharing food, drink, and conversation—served to strengthen social bonds among people of all classes.

### *Master and Apprentices*

This teapot was made by the silversmith Samuel Casey; his mark is stamped on the bottom. Like other artisans in pre-industrial America, Casey trained young apprentices in his shop. As they worked together to make this teapot, Casey and his apprentices formed a relationship based on the transfer of knowledge and skill from one generation to the next.

### *Craftsman and Patron*

This teapot was made by Samuel Casey for Abigail Robinson, the daughter of a wealthy Rhode Island planter. The person who commissioned the teapot—probably



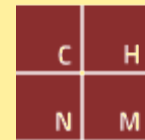
a relative of Abigail's—may have already known Casey, or perhaps they were referred to Casey by another customer who vouched for his skills. Colonial craftsmen like Casey relied on their personal relationships with patrons to gain a trusted position in the community and achieve economic success.

#### *Family Ties*

The initials and coat of arms on this teapot relate to Abigail Robinson, the young woman for whom it was made. The teapot dates from 1752, the year Abigail married John Wanton, the son of the governor of Rhode Island. As she prepared to take a new name and begin a family of her own, this teapot provided her with a connection to her roots. Abigail died only seventeen months after her wedding, at age 22. But her teapot continued to promote family ties. Her husband remarried and in 1782 he gave the teapot to his daughter as a wedding gift. The teapot was passed down in the family until 1979, when the Smithsonian acquired it.



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## Looking at Artifacts, Thinking about History

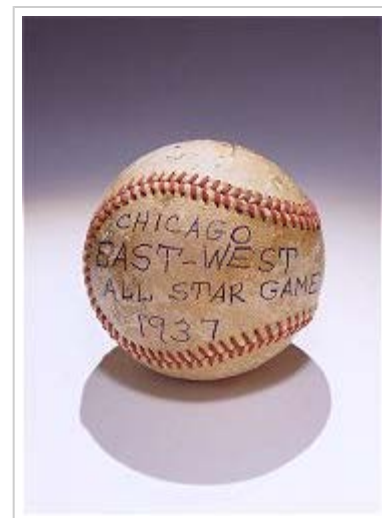
By Steven Lubar and Kathleen Kendrick

Artifacts mean many things

Artifacts are more than just material things. They communicate ideas, symbolize values, and convey emotions. When we consider meaning, value, and significance, we are in the domain of cultural history. Different artifacts mean different things to different people, and those meanings change over time.

Consider a baseball from the Negro League's 1937 East-West All-Star game. It tells a story of changing value in use, as a memento, as a collectible:

- **A Personal Triumph.** For first baseman Buck Leonard, this baseball was a souvenir of a winning game, a symbol of his skill and success, and a reminder of how far he had come. Leonard saved this ball for nearly 45 years before finally donating it to the Smithsonian in 1981.
- **An Unequal Playing Field.** Although the Negro Leagues easily matched the majors in skill and talent, racial and economic barriers kept black and white ballplayers on separate and unequal playing fields. For black teams, baseballs like this one represented the professional equipment they deserved, but did not always get. To save money during the lean Depression years, the Negro League often bought inferior Wilson 150cc balls, which cost fifty cents less per dozen than major-league balls. Only on special occasions, such as All-Star games, could players expect to use official league baseballs like this one.
- **The Fans' Favorite Game.** This baseball is from the 1937 East-West All-Star game, when the East beat the West, 7 to 2. For Negro League fans, this baseball represented the most important game of the year. The East-West All-



Star Classic, held annually from 1933 to 1950, attracted thousands to Comiskey Park in Chicago to see the best play the best. Fans especially loved the East-West games because they picked the players. By casting their votes in black newspapers, baseball fans sent their favorite stars—including Satchel Paige, Cool Papa Bell, Oscar Charleston, Josh Gibson, Willie Wells, and Buck Leonard—to Comiskey Park.

- “For the Loyalty of the Race.” For the African American community, this baseball was a weapon against the injustices of Jim Crow. At the turn of the twentieth century, the “unwritten rule” that barred black men from playing major league baseball was part of a system of racial segregation that kept white and black Americans in separate and unequal worlds. Founded in 1920 by Andrew “Rube” Foster, the Negro Leagues was one of many African American institutions built behind this color barrier. It became one of the most successful black-owned businesses of its time. Foster hoped his Negro Leagues would promote self-respect and self-help among African Americans and “do something concrete for the loyalty of the race.”
- A Collector’s Item. In 1972, this baseball became a collector’s item when its owner, Buck Leonard, was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Not until 1969 did the major-league establishment begin to recognize the achievements of Leonard, Satchel Paige, Oscar Charleston, and other Negro League stars who, in the words of white Hall of Famer Ted Williams, did not make it into the majors “only because they weren’t given the chance.” Since the 1970s, sports fans and museums have actively collected memorabilia of the Negro Leagues.



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## Looking at Artifacts, Thinking about History

By Steven Lubar and Kathleen Kendrick

Artifacts capture a moment

A fourth way of looking at an artifact is to think about its place in history. Artifacts are time capsules. They embody the tastes and values of an era. They mark a stage of technological evolution. They evoke memories of a specific time and place.

Different objects, from different times, look different, and were used differently.

Objects can tell us something of their times.

This Kodak Brownie camera was used by Bernice Palmer to photograph survivors of the Titanic disaster in 1912. Think about the ways this Kodak camera captured a moment—not just by taking a photograph, but by preserving the history of an event, an era, an invention, a cultural phenomenon, and a woman's life.

- A Tragic Event. The "Unsinkable" Titanic, a British steamship—the largest and most luxurious passenger liner ever built—sank on April 15, 1912, during its maiden voyage from Southampton, England, to New York City. Over 1,500 lives were lost after the ship struck an iceberg in the north Atlantic Ocean, about 400 miles south of Newfoundland. The Carpathia, a passenger liner bound for the Mediterranean, received the Titanic's distress call and arrived within hours to rescue the 705 survivors. Using this camera, Carpathia passenger Bernice Palmer took photographs of the Titanic survivors and the iceberg that sank the great ship. After the Carpathia returned to New York, a reporter paid \$10 to publish Palmer's pictures.

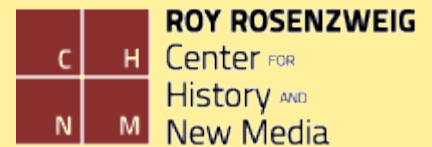




- A Visual Age. The beginning of the twentieth century marked a new era in American history: the age of images. A 1911 editorial in *Harpers Weekly* proclaimed, "We can't see the ideas for the illustrations. Our world is simply flooded with them." Henry R. Luce, founder of *Time* and *Life* magazines, wrote in 1937 that "The photograph is... the most important instrument of journalism which has been developed since the printing press." This Kodak camera was just one of many instruments that helped people visualize moments like the Titanic disaster. Newspapers, magazines, newsreels, stereographs, and other media transformed current events into a series of images. Many of these images have become part of our nation's collective memory.
- A Technological Moment. How was it that eighteen-year-old Bernice Palmer had a camera with her aboard a passenger ship in 1912? The Kodak Brownie camera, introduced in 1900, represented a series of technological innovations that made it possible for millions of people to own cameras by the early twentieth century. With its simple features and affordable price tag, this Kodak Brownie camera captured a moment when, for the first time, almost anybody could be a photographer.
- A Moment in a Life. In April of 1912, Bernice Palmer, an eighteen-year-old from Ontario, Canada, had just graduated from finishing school. To celebrate, she and her mother boarded the *Carpathia* for a cruise to the sunny Mediterranean. Four days out from New York, their ship suddenly changed course to rescue survivors from the Titanic. This Kodak Brownie camera, which Palmer expected would capture memories of her Mediterranean adventure, became instead a poignant souvenir of her close encounter with tragedy. In 1986, Palmer donated her camera and photographs to the Smithsonian.



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## Looking at Artifacts, Thinking about History

By Steven Lubar and Kathleen Kendrick

Artifacts reflect changes

Times change; history is the story of those changes. An artifact, or a collection of artifacts, can reflect change over time. Artifacts change as our society and culture change; artifacts nudge these changes along; and artifacts themselves change over time. Artifacts reflect changes, and sometimes cause change. They allow us opportunities to consider how and why society and culture change over time.

Think about some of the changes reflected by this typewriter, manufactured by E. Remington & Sons around 1875. It tells a story of innovations in technology and manufacturing. The adoption of the typewriter, at just the same time that women began to work in offices, reflected changes in women's roles, new ideas about the organization of work, and the rapidly growing corporations of the day. In turn, the typewriter brought about and helped to accelerate social change, opening up new jobs for women in the office.



- Changes in Business and the Workplace. The typewriter, by reducing the time and expense involved in creating documents, encouraged the spread of systematic management. It allowed a system of communications that shaped the business world. While the typewriter wasn't responsible for opening the office world to women—the shortage of men during the Civil War and the increasing division of labor and specialization of office work played a bigger role—it did encourage the feminization of office work. In 1870, there were

very few women office workers. In 1890, there were nearly 45,000, and 64 percent of stenographers and typists were women.

- **Social Changes.** In the 1880s, when the typewriter was first adopted in many offices, America was a country in the throes of rapid change. The way in which the typewriter was adopted reflected changes in women's roles, new ideas about the organization of work, and the rapidly growing corporations of the day. In turn, the typewriter opened up many new jobs for women in the office.
- **Changes in People's Lives.** Though it took a while for the typewriter to catch on, it quickly changed the lives of those who used it. Many working-class women saw office jobs as an escape from the drudgery of factory jobs. Office work was a step up in the class structure, a cleaner, higher-paying job. One novel described the changes in the life of a young woman when she got her first job as a typist.
- **Invention, Innovation and Obsolescence.** Dozens of inventors had tried to invent a workable writing machine, but it wasn't until 1872 that the right combination of a clever mechanism, manufacturing expertise, and a growing market allowed the typewriter to become a commercial success. Christopher Latham Sholes, a Milwaukee printer, editor, and government bureaucrat, received his first typewriter patent in 1868, and two more in the next few years. Many inventors devised improvements for the typewriter, from the shift key in 1878 to the electric typewriter in 1920. In all, several thousand typewriter patents were granted. But by the 1980s, the typewriter had begun to disappear, overcome at first by the word processor and then by the personal computer, which could do everything the typewriter could do and much more.
- **Changes in Manufacturing.** Christopher Sholes was unable to raise the money, successfully organize a factory, or find the skilled labor to produce his typewriter invention cheaply and in volume. In 1873 he sold his patent rights to E. Remington and Sons, manufacturers of guns and sewing machines, who had the technological skills to develop and manufacture the machines. The typewriter has numerous small precision parts. To make the machine cheaply enough to reach a large market, it had to be mass-produced. Remington and others soon developed ways to apply existing technology and techniques, including the "interchangeable parts" system, to the manufacture of the typewriter.





Behind the Scenes with the  
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# Guide to Doing History with Objects

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## Looking at Artifacts, Thinking about History

By Steven Lubar and Kathleen Kendrick

### Telling Many Stories

These ways of looking at artifacts can tell you not just about the artifact, but also about history. They put the artifacts back into history. To do this, we have to find the story of the artifact, the people who used it, and the society and culture it was part of. We need to understand its story. In this essay, we do that by providing documents that relate to the artifact. In fact, you can think of the artifact as another kind of document—one that is sometimes hard to read, but which can tell you a new, deeper, more interesting kind of story. Read the artifacts and the other documents together, and you'll come closer to understanding how people of the past lived and thought and felt about things.

Artifacts are more complex than we sometimes give them credit for. In *Telling the Truth about History*, authors Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob argue that "Any history is always someone's history, told by that someone from a partial point of view. Yet," they continue, "external reality has the power to impose itself on the mind; past realities remain in records of various sorts that historians are trained to interpret."<sup>3</sup> Like documents, artifacts can suggest new stories, stories that the collectors might never have imagined. By imposing themselves on the mind, they demand explanation. "Objects," write Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, "arouse curiosity, resist implausible manipulation, and collect layers of information about them."<sup>4</sup>

Artifacts, because of their complexity and layers of information, can lead to many stories. Curators may have collected tools and machines to tell a story of technological progress, but those same artifacts can also tell stories of work, skill, and industrial organization. A First Lady's gown might have been collected to tell a story of fashion and upper-class sensibility, but it also can tell a story of the

dressmaker who made the gown. Collections brought to the museum for one reason can be reinterpreted; they can tell new stories. Our perceptions of objects, and the meanings we derive from them, are shaped by the context in which they are shown.

This last point—the flexible, contextual nature of the artifact—might seem to be a weakness. In fact, though, it is a strength. Meanings in artifacts are made not just in their own history, but beyond them, in the thoughts and conversations that flow around the objects. The flexible nature of artifacts, which can be interpreted and reinterpreted, viewed and reviewed, and used to tell many different stories, enables everyone to participate in that search.

So as you consider the artifacts on this Web site, use them not only to understand the past, but also as a way to discuss the present. Discuss what they meant to the people who made and used them, but also what they mean to you. Your understanding of the artifacts, like the museum exhibit a curator designs around them, is only the beginning, for artifacts tell many stories.

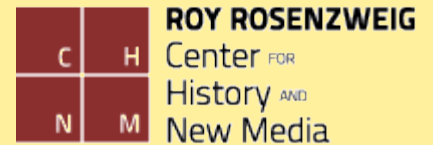
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<sup>3</sup> Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, pp. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 260.



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# Guide to Doing History with Objects

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## *Making Sense of Documentary Photography*

*(History Matters, CHNM and  
ASHP)*

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but you need to know how to analyze the picture to gain any understanding of it at all. Making Sense of Documentary Photography provides a place for students and teachers to grapple with the documentary images that often illustrate textbooks but are almost never considered as historical evidence in their own right. Written by James Curtis, this guide offers a brief history of documentary photography, examples of what questions to ask when examining a documentary photograph, and an annotated bibliography and list of online resources for documentary photography.

## *Making Sense of Advertisements*

*(History Matters, CHNM and  
ASHP)*

Advertisements are all around us today and have been for a long time; advertising-free "good old days" just don't exist. This guide offers an overview of advertisements as historical sources and how historians use them, a brief history of advertising, questions to ask when interpreting ads as historical evidence, an annotated bibliography, and a guide to finding advertisements online. Author Daniel Pope has taught at the University of Oregon since 1975 and is currently Associate Professor.

## *Unpacking Material Culture, Images*

*(World History Sources,  
CHNM)*

Images are depictions. What is not so simple is perceiving an image. We learn to perceive images, that is, to recognize them with understanding, through the filter of cultural experience. Image Our cultural values give meaning to both the content of images and their physical form. These values change over time and place and they vary according to the position of the viewer within a society. As a result, the same image can be perceived in alternate ways by people at the same time and can also be valued differently over time.

## *Unpacking Material Culture, Objects*

*(World History Sources, CHNM)*

This essay explores ways to use material objects in the study of history. "Material objects" include items with physical substance. They are primarily shaped or produced by human action, though objects created by nature can also play an important role in the history of human societies.

## Historical research: an investigative treasure hunt

This Help Sheet relates to standard B2.2

Whether you are gathering background information about objects in your collection or working towards a display, guided tour or educational program, sound research is essential. Developing good research skills and practices will ensure you find the most accurate and most interesting information, and take advantage of the widest possible range of sources. It will make research more enjoyable and rewarding and will result in a better end product.

### Where to start?

Begin by defining your focus. In other words, if you think about what you want to know you will be able to work out the kinds of sources you might want to look at. Sometimes you will start with a broad theme and narrow down to a particular focus. At other times you might begin with a particular museum object or a specific idea and work your way outwards in different directions. You might be investigating change over time or focusing on a particular era such as the Depression, the Second World War or the swinging sixties. Research into a particular time period is often necessary when you are seeking information to place an object in its historical context.

### A matter of perspective

What you are looking for will influence the way you conduct your research. You will often have a strong understanding of the local impact of some events and issues. Try also to look at local stories from broader national and international perspectives. For example if you are conducting research for a display about children and growing up in your area there is a range of possible angles you could consider:

- **Look locally:** you will already know about some of the schools, kindergartens, playgroups, playgrounds in your area. You might have photographs or know about some paper records such as school registers, school magazines. These would make a local good starting point.
- **Listen:** you have probably heard stories about children's pastimes told by older members of your community. Think about doing some oral history interviews to preserve and share those stories.
- **Look nationally and internationally:** to place your community in context, read some general books about childhood or education in Australia or other countries. In this way you see a larger picture of societal change within which the developments in your community took place.

- Hop in a time machine: are you focusing on childhood in a particular era such as the Second World War? Look at general social histories about the Home Front to get insights into the kinds of issues that might have affected children.
- Learn your local history: local newspapers from any era will reveal events and issues in your town or district that impacted upon children.
- Consider local concerns: council records or archives of community groups might tell other stories.
- Seek complexity and diversity: remember to look for documents that might give you different perspectives on the same subject, such as the point of view of a child from an Italian background whose family might have been interned during the Second World War, as compared with the perspective of children from long established local Australian families.
- What's missing: look for evidence which will allow you to tell stories that have not yet been heard, the different kinds of lives led by children that have not been acknowledged . Aboriginal children, children with disabilities, children in care in institutions and foster homes.
- Make connections: enlarge your research into objects. You might have some war era toys or other related objects like ration cards or signage displaying school evacuation or air raid procedures. You might be able to put such things on display and link them with other records such as photographs or stories from oral history.

Each research path you take will lead you to other possible records you can investigate.

## Types and locations of sources

Historians distinguish between *primary* and *secondary* sources.

**Secondary sources** such as published books and periodicals held in **libraries** are often the starting point for research. They can provide you with both broad background and specific detailed information. While you can borrow books from local libraries, in reference libraries such as the State Library of South Australia, or the History Trust's own research library you need to look at the books on site. References such as footnotes and bibliographies in good history books can point you in the direction of other useful sources.

**Primary sources** are unpublished documents and all kinds of archival records including maps and photographs. **Archival records** are documents such as letters, diaries and minute books which have been written or gathered together by people during the course of their personal, family, business and working lives. They are preserved in archives for the benefit of future generations because they are regarded as having continuing historical value.

In South Australia there are numerous archives of different sizes and types which are open to the public including:



- State Records of South Australia for state government records ([www.archives.sa.gov.au](http://www.archives.sa.gov.au))
- The Archival collection at the State Library of South Australia, often referred to as the Mortlock Library, for public and private records ([www.slsa.sa.gov.au](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au))
- National Archives of Australia for Commonwealth records ([www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au))
- Church archives, such as the Lutheran Archives, Anglican Archives, Adelaide Catholic Archdiocesan Archives
- Council Archives for local government records
- Historical collections in local and regional libraries
- Collections held and managed by historical societies and museums
- Community, family and private collections.

You cannot browse the stacks in an archive and sometimes finding aids such as lists of documents are absent or incomplete, so you might need a lot of search time. You cannot borrow material from archival collections and there are rules to be followed when reading documents to guarantee their preservation. Take the time to delve into archives as it is often the actual documents of the time you are researching which provide the gems in the treasure hunt.

**Newspapers** and **periodicals** are valuable contemporary records. Many newspapers are available at the State Library of South Australia on microfilm. Newspapers - international, national and local - provide details of major events as well as social commentary and are a good place to find information about individuals and community concerns. There is an index to *The Advertiser* and its precursors, *The Register* and *The Observer*, called the Manning Index which covers the years 1837 to 1937. ([www.slsa.sa.gov.au/manning](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/manning)) Some examples of valuable local papers are

- *Transcontinental* (NW of SA)
- *The Islander* (Kangaroo Island)
- *The Border Watch* (Mt Gambier)
- *Bunyip* (Gawler)
- *Murray Pioneer* (Renmark)
- *Pinnaroo & Border Times* (Pinnaroo)

**Photographs** and other illustrative materials such as drawings, maps and plans are available in many archives. The State Library of South Australia, like other major repositories, has digitised many photographs allowing images to be viewed on-line. Remember the History Trust has its own Glass Negative Collection comprising South Australian photographs dating from 1890 to 1960.

**Oral History** can add human depth to any story. South Australia is lucky to have the JD Somerville Oral History Collection, established in 1987, as the central repository for oral history recordings. The collection houses a wealth of great stories and voices. It is valuable to record interviews yourself to preserve local stories and the memories of elderly residents. Contact the SA branch of the Oral History Association of Australia to find out about their next Oral History Workshop. In this day session, you will learn how to do oral history and train on high quality recording equipment which you can borrow, at no cost, from the Library for your project. ([www.ohaa-sa.com.au](http://www.ohaa-sa.com.au))

## Thorough research: selection and reliability of sources

Whatever subject you are researching you will not be able to use every source you find. You might not have the time to look at every single document. Some records that you think should exist, you will never find. One of the most valuable skills that researchers, such as historians, need to learn is how to **be selective**.

- Accuracy is essential. It is therefore important to use and refer to the most reliable sources. A good rule of thumb is that the closer the source is to the event or issue you are investigating, the more reliable it is going to be. For example, the stories of an eyewitness, someone who was actually there, are more likely to be accurate than hearsay.
- Locate and use a primary source document or record a first hand oral history account. Avoid relying on articles in tabloid newspaper and comments in unreferenced memoirs. If you are trying to find out whether something you have heard about really happened, or you want to establish a date for an object or event, primary sources are more likely to give you an accurate answer.
- Acknowledge doubt. If you can't find a definite answer or the information you find seems questionable, acknowledge that this is the case and that further research might be necessary.
- Different opinions: If there is an area of doubt or an issue upon which there are different opinions or perspectives, or some controversy, it is important to investigate each point of view, rather than just trust widely held beliefs, common stories or myths. It is valuable to examine varied sources to gather different sides of the story and find potential answers to your historical questions. Always try to find intriguing stories to illustrate your points rather than just listing bland facts.
- Surfing the web: Web resources should be subject to the same critical eye as other sources. A lot of information on the web can be inaccurate, subjective and incomplete. Check for footnotes and other references in the information provided. Check the credentials of the writers. Don't believe everything you read.

## Acknowledging sources: References and quotes

When you make notes, copy or quote from a document or other source, you must accurately reference the source, in other words, record where the information you are using came from. For a book, write down the author, the name of the book, the publisher, place and year of publication, and the page number. For archival sources, there are specific protocols for correct referencing and acknowledgement. They might include the name of the archives, accession numbers, file details and dates. For example see information on [Citing archival records on the State Records website](#).<sup>1</sup> For electronic resources such as websites and documents found on websites you also need to follow an author-name/address-date style. The author is the organisation or person responsible for the website, the address is the details of the [www.site](#), while the date is

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2008, State Records of South Australia, Adelaide, viewed 5 March 2009 < <http://www.archives.sa.gov.au/readingroom/advice/citing.html>>. This is an example of a footnote reference for information from a website.

both the date of the site's creation or last update, and the date you viewed the site. This viewing date is important because websites, unlike printed books, are constantly being changed and updated.

Accurate references provide a trail for yourself and future researchers who might want to return to the original source for more information. While you will use shortened references on display panels or object labels, make sure to keep full references in your research files and collection catalogues. Photographs also have accession numbers and dates and where possible you should include these references in any captions in your displays. If you are going to be publishing photographs or using them in a public display, you will need to apply for copyright and in many cases you will have to seek permission to publish.

If you are quoting directly – in other words using words from a book or a document exactly as they appear – it is even more important to acknowledge this through correct referencing. The Australian *Style Manual* is a valuable guide to correct referencing.<sup>2</sup>

### **Keeping good research files**

Just as you might create files to store information about objects in your collection, you can easily develop well-organised research files. These are valuable for collecting information about subjects and themes related to objects, collections and your region and its history. They might contain hand-written notes, photocopies (labelled with where they came from), print outs from websites (again make sure web address, and date of viewing are listed), lists of further possible references, related correspondence, newspaper clippings (labelled with name of paper and date). If the files begin to grow, it might be good to include an index at the front. Usually files are read from back to the front, with the oldest folios filed first and later ones added on top. You should write a clear name or subject area on the file to identify what kind of information is held within it. If you also keep documents electronically or make notes in Word documents, giving your computer file the same name as your paper file can be useful for identifying all the information you have about a particular subject when you need to refer to it.

### **Analysing the past**

As you do your research you will begin to see connections between things you have read and learned. It is like finding and interlocking the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. However it is a puzzle that can be put together in many different ways. Think about all the sides to an issue, look for other ways of viewing what you have learned and see what you have gathered as a reflection not only of the past but of the present. Try not to generalise about the *golden days* or the *good old days*; avoid tedious lists of names and dates. Discover the stories, ask the questions, seek new, untrodden paths to follow on your treasure hunt.

Refer to the Help Sheets: *Display Design and Development*, and *Display interpretation and writing* for further advice

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Finance and Administration, *Style manual for authors, editors and printers*, Sixth edition, John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd, 2002. This is an example of a footnote reference for a book.

With thanks to the Librarians at Utah Valley University <http://www.uvu.edu/library/tutorials/4-1.html>

## EVALUATING SOURCES

As you search, you should be evaluating the information you find. Books, articles, and web sites are all created by people with a wide range of education and opinions. The information you come across may be biased, inaccurate, or outdated.

The CRAAP Test contains guidelines that you can use to judge whether the information you find is reliable. CRAAP stands for currency, relevance, accuracy, authority, and purpose\*. This part of the tutorial will:

- Show you how to evaluate information
- Explain the CRAAP Test
- Discuss some exceptions to the CRAAP Test guidelines

\* The CRAAP Test was created by Kristin Johnson at California State University—Chico.

## CURRENCY

New information and discoveries make books and articles outdated all the time. For articles, books, or web sites about medicine or science, sources go out of date very quickly. As you look for information, you may want to limit your search to the last few years or even the last few months.

Both of the scholarly articles listed below are both about the possible causes of childhood obesity.

### Which article do you trust?

▶▶ [Nature and nurture in childhood obesity](#). (6/28/1975). *British Medical Journal*, 2(5973): 706.

▶▶ Pearce, A., et al. (June 2009). [Gaining children's perspectives](#): a multiple method approach to explore environmental influences on healthy eating and physical activity. *Health & Place*, 15(2): 614-621.

In the humanities (literature, music, and history, etc.), it takes longer for information to go out of date. While the article below was published in 1945, it is about two authors who were no longer active and had already been discussed for decades.

Davidson, Frank. "A Note on Emily Dickinson's Use of Shakespeare." *New England Quarterly: A Historical Review of New England Life and Letters* 18.3 (September 1945): 407-408.

## RELEVANCE

Examining the relevance of an article will help you determine if the article is on your topic and if it's written for the right audience (that is, not too simple and not too complex).

The following articles are about the causes of childhood obesity, but depending on your topic some (or all) of them may not add anything to what you know about the topic:

### Which article do you trust?

▶▶Dennison, B.A., & Edmunds, L.S. (September 2008). [The role of television in childhood obesity](#). *Progress in Pediatric Cardiology*, 25(2): 191-197.

▶▶Reilly, John J. (September 2007). [Childhood obesity: an overview](#). *Children & Society*, 21(5): 390-396.

▶▶Warren, R., et al. (June 2008). [Food and beverage advertising on U.S. television](#): a comparison of child-targeted versus general audience commercials. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 52(2): 231-246.

To find out whether or not the articles you found are relevant, take a minute or two to read the article abstracts. The abstract, or summary, will give you a clear idea of what the article is about.

### ACCURACY

One of the most important things to watch out for is bias. Some sources make a serious effort to minimize bias in their articles. Other sources, like opinion pieces, are always biased. Bias occurs when a writer's opinions lead them to use the facts (or spin the facts) to support their point of view and persuade their readers. As you read through a web site, book, or article, question what you read. Is the writer or researcher presenting all points of view? Are they manipulating the information?

One of the potential causes of childhood obesity is the availability of snack food, or junk food, in school vending machines. However, some argue that the mere presence of junk food isn't a cause of obesity. Here are two articles from both sides of the debate:

### Which article do you trust?

▶▶Geller, R., & Ebenkamp, B. (2/2/2004). [Bursting obesity myths](#). *Brandweek*, 45(5): 20-21.

▶▶[Let 'em eat carrots](#). (December 2006). *American School Board Journal*, 193(12): 61.

Always compare the information you find with other sources. If other sources agree on the facts, you have found accurate information.

### AUTHORITY

Authority is determined by an author's credentials. When you look at the authority of an article, ask yourself who wrote the book or article? What are their qualifications? Is the author a subject expert? Here are two articles that discuss television as a cause of obesity among children:

### Which article do you trust?

▶▶Ludwig, D. S., & Gortmaker, S. L. (7/17/2004). [Programming obesity in childhood](#). *Lancet*, 364(9430): 226-227.

▶▶Paskowski, M. (2/5/2007). [TV watch](#). *Television Week*, 26(6): 8.

Always look at the source—the name of the journal that published the article. Are they a reputable source?

Check for information about the authors in the article, and see if you can determine their level of expertise. Many articles do contain short author biographies that will let you know where the author works and what their level of education is.

## PURPOSE

Writers write for many different reasons. They may write to inform. They may write to argue their views. They may write to entertain. They may write to sell you something. The purpose of an article, web site, or book can affect the quality of the information.

- **Informative sources** have little bias, if any, and will cite other informative articles. They are written to present the facts, and many of them have been peer-reviewed.

Malecka-Tendera, E., & Mazur, A. (June 2006). Childhood obesity: a pandemic of the twenty-first century. *International Journal of Obesity*, 30(Supplement 2): S1-S3.

- **Argumentative sources** are written to sway you. These articles are naturally biased, and you should be careful when you use information from them.

["Obesity: Fighting the Epidemic," Huffington Post](#)

- **Entertaining sources** are written amuse or interest you. They may have some bias or be sensationalized.

Williams, E. (6/15/2005). Teenage waistland: a former fat kid weighs in on living large, losing weight, and how parents can (and can't) help. *Library Journal*, 130(11): 90.

- **Advertising sources** are written to try and persuade you to buy something and are biased in favor of whatever they're selling.

Erney, D. (Feb/Mar 2009). Pollution makes kids fat. *Organic Gardening*, 56(2): 47.

## EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULES

These criteria are guidelines—not hard and fast rules. Depending on your topic or your assignment, you may need to interpret the criteria a little bit differently.

### Currency

With some subjects, currency does not matter as much as the other criteria. Scientific and medical information rapidly go out of date. It's probably not a good idea to use an article on skin cancer treatments that is more than five years old. Humanities do not out of date as quickly. A thirty year old article on the American Civil War is probably still good.

### Accuracy

If you're writing about a controversial topic, you may want to seek out both sides of an argument to make sure that your own coverage is balanced or to illustrate the different arguments that people are making.

If you do use a biased or inaccurate source, make sure that you make that clear in your paper or project, and be sure to present both sides fairly.

### Purpose

As with accuracy, if your topic requires you to look for biased sources, purpose may not be as important.