

## Finding Primary Sources

**Primary sources** are original accounts or records of historical events. These sources are from the time period involved, and they have not been filtered through interpretation. Primary sources include:

- **Diaries, journals, speeches, interviews, letters**
- **Memoirs and autobiographies**
- **Government records**, such as birth, death and marriage certificates, census records, licenses, patents, trial transcripts, etc.
- **Records of organizations**, i.e., minutes, reports or correspondence
- **Original Documents** (e.g. family Bible records)
- **Photographs, documentaries, sound recordings** of actual events
- **Survey Research** such as market surveys and public opinion polls

Note: **Newspaper, magazine and journal articles and books** written at the time about a particular event are often considered primary sources. These accounts were usually written by journalists or other observers at the time of the event. Materials that are written later and/or provide historical analysis are considered secondary sources.

### Finding Articles

To find articles on a specific topic, author or book, use the **DATABASES**. You can access the LNDL databases from anywhere through the LNDL homepage at <http://www.loyola.edu>. You must have a current library barcode to access databases from off campus. Your barcode is on your ID. (It's the number that begins with 22425. . . .)

### Newspaper Accounts/Periodicals

***American Periodical Series*** (1740-1900)  
***New York Times Historic*** (1851-1998)  
***The Civil War: A Newspaper Perspective*** (1860-1865)  
***The Pennsylvania Gazette*** (1728-1800)  
***Times (London)*** (1785 - 1985)

### Books Available at the Library

Use the library catalog (SHARC) on the library's web site at <http://www.loyola.edu/library>. **Terms to try** in looking for primary sources (use a **subject** and/or **keyword** search):

#### Personal narratives

**Diaries**  
**Journal**  
**Memoirs**

#### Autobiography

**Sources**  
**History sources**  
**History documents.**

Some sources that

include United States Documents are:

***Annals of America*** E173 .A793 v. 1-21  
***Public Papers of the Presidents*** J80 .A283  
***Historic Documents of ...*** Reference E839.5H57 1972-73;1975-2002

Maryland:

***Archives of Maryland*** F176.A67 v. 1-70

## Other Useful Databases

**Early English Books Online (1475-1700)** Digital library of books printed in English from 1475-1700.

**Eighteenth Century Collections Online** Works published in Great Britain and its dependencies from 1701-1800.

**Digital National Security Archive (DSNA)** Declassified government documents from the National Security Archive on U.S. foreign and military policy since 1945

**In the First Person** In-depth index of more than 3,350 collections of personal narratives in English from around the world

**Reader's Guide Retrospective** Citations to popular American journal and magazine articles from 1890-1982.

## Web Sites

The Internet has become a great source of primary materials. Select a search engine or directory such as Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) or Yahoo ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)) and type in your topic and **primary sources** or one of the other terms listed above.

Another great search directory is: **Librarian's Index to the Internet** ([www.lii.org](http://www.lii.org)).

## Selected Web Sites for Primary Materials/Digital Collections

- **American Memory:** Historical Collections for the National Digital Library (<http://memory.loc.gov>)
- **The Making of America:** Primary sources in American social history from the antebellum period through reconstruction. *Separate collections at Cornell* (<http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/>) and *the University of Michigan* (<http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>).
- **Documenting the American South** (<http://docsouth.unc.edu>)
- **Civil War Women** (<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/women/cwdocs.html>)
- **World War II Primary Source Document Collection** (<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha>)
- **Repositories of Primary Sources:** A listing of over 5000 websites with manuscripts, archives, photographs and other primary source materials. (<http://www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Other.Repositories.html>)

Note: You do need to be careful to check the reliability of Internet sources. For more information, refer to the library's guide at <http://www.loyola.edu/library/ref/evalwebs.html>.

## References

"Library Research Using Primary Sources." University of California, Berkeley: Copyright 1998-2002. Accessed October 1, 2003. <<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/PrimarySources.html>>

"Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources." University Libraries, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland. Updated October 1, 2003. Accessed October 1, 2003. <<http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/primary-sources.html>>

**For help on a specific topic or research question, please call the Reference Desk (410-617-6802)**