Primary Sources: Library Resources and Research Techniques for History 300

Learning Outcomes: By the end of your library class you will be able to locate various types of primary sources.

Notes and Bibliographies

- Researchers often utilize—and cite—original resource material when writing their secondary works. Consult the bibliographies / notes in these books and articles.

Books

- Primary resources are often collected and reprinted as entire books. For example:
  - The Journals of Patrick Gass: Member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition
  - Lakota Noon: The Indian Narrative of Custer’s Defeat
  - Forbidden Diary: A Record of Wartime Internment, 1941-1945
  - Tokens of Affection: The Letters of a Planter’s Daughter in the Old South
  - Woodrow Wilson: An Intimate Memoir

- How do you find collections of primary sources such as these? A subject heading in the Library’s online catalog with the subdivision “sources” indicates primary sources on that subject (e.g., “West (U.S.)—History—Sources.”
  - Using a keyword search, combine your topic with “sources.”
  - For first-person accounts, try “personal narratives.”
  - Another term is “interviews.”
  - With people’s names, you can use “diaries” and correspondence
    - You can also try just looking up a person’s name as a subject heading. “Lewis, Meriwether” brings up The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Newspapers

- Contemporary articles can be found in newspapers. See the UMW Libraries’ guide to finding newspaper articles (http://libguides.umw.edu/newspapers). This newspaper resource is also linked on the “Finding Articles” and “Uncovering Primary Sources” tabs of the History and American Studies subject guide (http://libguides.umw.edu/histamst). Libraries home page is http://libraries.umw.edu.

Online Resources

- See the dozens of resources listed in the “Uncovering Primary Sources” tab on the UMW Libraries History and American Studies subject guide. You can also find numerous primary sources through online searches. Try a Google Advanced Search using your topic and perhaps “primary sources” or “documents” or some of the terms mentioned above.

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