



**Learning Resource Center
Cape Fear Community College**
Wilmington, North Carolina

Selected History – Primary Source Resources

Finding Primary Sources in the Library

What are Primary Sources? For historians, primary sources are “first hand” accounts, which are generally written at the time, or shortly thereafter, of an historic event. These sources include letters, diaries, newspaper articles as well as records of governmental agencies and other organizations. They may be published or unpublished. Speeches and oral histories may be printed transcripts or audio recordings. Maps, photographs and advertisements can also be primary sources as can statistical data, video materials and artifacts.

Go to <http://cfcc.edu/lrc/> under **Research Tools** choose [Library Catalog](#).

Using the *General Keyword* search box is recommended.

Use keywords for your topic plus one of the following words or phrases:

- History Source*
- History Document*
- Personal Narrative*
- Diar* (this retrieves Diary and Diaries)
- History Archive*
- Correspondence
- Letter*
- Speech*
- Primary source*

Note: Use of the * at the end of a word will search for singular and plural forms.

If your search gets zero hits, try a broader term.

For example, if there are no books with GETTYSBURG, try searching for CIVIL WAR.

Selected Print Resources:

American Decades Primary Sources – Includes primary sources and secondary articles about Twentieth Century America.

Reference E 169.1 .A471977 2004

Ancient Near East: Historical Sources in Translation.

DS 62.2 .A63 2006

Annals of America – Primary sources of American history from the Age of Exploration to 1973.

Reference E 173 .A793

Daily Life Through World history in Primary Documents.

Reference CB 69 .D35 2009

Milestone Documents in American History: Exploring the Primary Sources that Shaped America – Includes an analysis of each primary source.

Reference E 173 .M62 2008

Finding Primary Sources Online

What are Primary Sources? For historians, primary sources are “first hand” accounts, which are generally written at the time, or shortly thereafter, of an historic event. These sources include letters, diaries, newspaper articles as well as records of governmental agencies and other organizations. They may be published or unpublished. Speeches and oral histories may be printed transcripts or audio recordings. Maps, photographs and advertisements can also be primary sources as can statistical data, video materials and artifacts.

Internet Resources:

From Revolution to Reconstruction – Selected documents important to American history from Christopher Columbus to George W. Bush.

<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/>

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) – American primary sources. Search the “Digital Copies” portion of the Archival Research Catalog (ARC) to locate full-text documents, maps, photographs, etc. Limit by Type of Archival Material.

<http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/action/AdvancedMultimediaSearchForm>

Library of Congress. **American Memory Project** – Includes written and spoken words, sound recordings, still and moving images, prints, maps, and sheet music.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

Valley of the Shadow Project – Provides Northern and Southern views, 1859 to 1870, through a variety of resources from Virginia and Pennsylvania.

<http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/valley/VoS/choosepart.html>

Pearl Harbor Working Group. **WWII Resources** – International relations leading to World War II and beyond.

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/>

Perseus Digital Library. **Perseus Collection Greek and Roman Materials** – Includes English translations for many documents.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collection.jsp?collection=Perseus:collection:GrecoRoman>

Perseus Digital Library. **Perseus Collection Renaissance Materials** – Includes English translations for many documents.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collection.jsp?collection=Perseus:collection:Renaissance>

Internet Modern History Sourcebook – Western history from the Reformation through the 20th century.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html#Introduction>

Internet African History Sourcebook – Links to primary and secondary sources on the history of Africa.

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/africa/africasbook.html#African%20History:%20General>