Conducting Research with Primary Sources (or Just) Conducting Research

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Why Libraries?

- "Everything is online, right?" ... Wrong
- "I know how to search for information. I'm a doctoral student."
- "I can use the library catalog & write papers better than most people."

HistoricalThinkingMatters.org

History is not about memorizing facts and dates!
Historians Analyze – Doctoral Students Analyze, too!

- Http://historicalthinkingmatters.org

"They [Historians] see themselves as detectives, often unsure about what happened, what it means, and rarely able to agree amongst themselves."

Not going to agree and thus discourse is born.
Research & the Scientific Method

- Define a topic (State the Problem)
- Develop Keywords for searching (people, places, events)
  - consider different angles and Access Points from a range of different sources
  - people, places, organizations and events that relate to your topic
- Browse/search library website, catalogs using keywords
- Develop a question about that topic (Hypothesis)
- Read secondary sources first (Books and Journal Articles)
- Critical thinking/Evaluation of Resources (Experiment)
  - http://www.uky.edu/~dolph/HIS316/handouts/sources.html
  - http://www.pulaskitech.edu/library/content/source_evaluation_checklis t.html
  - Outline & Write paper (Conclusion)

Research – Tools

- Get Organized w/Mindmap and Outlining Tools
  - https://www.mindmup.com/#m:new
  - http://mindnode.com/ (MAC OS Compatible)
- Outlines
  - https://www.theoutlinerofgiants.com/outliners
- Citation Managers
  - RefWorks (free through BU), Zotero, and EndNote (online or software)

Research – Where Do I Begin?

- Be sure the question fits the library or archives
  - One of the best ways to determine this would be by contacting/visiting the archives
  - What collections speak to this question or topic area?
Secondary Sources
Secondary sources interpret or analyze an event or subject. Examples of secondary sources are biographies and journal articles written well after the event or time period under investigation.

These include:
- dictionaries
- encyclopedias
- textbooks
- books and articles that interpret or review research works.

Primary Sources
Archives hold mostly primary sources
Primary sources are materials that provide direct evidence or firsthand testimony concerning the period or subject under investigation.

Examples of Primary Sources
- Diaries
- Journals
- Speeches
- Interviews
- Letters
- Memos
- Manuscripts
- Memoirs
- Autobiographies
- Minutes
- Reports
- Licenses
- Photographs
- Sound recordings
- Drawings
- Scrapbooks
- Artifacts
Research – Where do I begin?

- One resource leads to another
  - Footnotes and “Footnote chaining”
  - Great for secondary and primary source research
  - Within the archives Record to Record
    - Stumble upon something in one record that will trigger you to look for something else you hadn’t thought of

Writers and Historians Ask Questions!
...And you should too!

- Question your secondary and Primary Resources
  - Where does it come from? Who wrote it?
  - What is their perspective on the topic? Bias?
  - Context - time, date and current events of the time
  - Compare primary sources
  - Is the record (or information) complete, date, signature, authentic aging
  - Why is this important to my research? Why was the book written and for whom?
- Kara’s Take...
  - Think like a journalist!
  - Begin to pull together an argument or thesis

What about Analysis of Digital Objects and Texts?

- Process of evaluation is much the same as for archival resources
- Additional Questions for digital objects
  - Reputable institution?
  - Quality of the metadata? (ideally, developed by creator and matched with the archivist’s standard elements, plus details about the digitization process by the digital archivist.
  - Question what makes it authentic? Markings? Handwriting? Date?
Stuck?

- When in doubt...ask?
- Studies and surveys show that a conversation with a librarian (or archivist...that's me) will help.

Archives?

The word archives refers to...
- the repository, building or place dedicated to the storage, preservation and use of records of enduring value
- Non-current records of enduring, historical value

SAA Glossary of Archival Terminology

Why Are Archival Materials Relevant?

- Past behavior predicts future, and sometimes, current behavior
- Past Informs the present – Why do systems operate the way they do?
- History is the story of the journey of your organization
- Dig into data sets, ask questions of them, and learn what to avoid based on statistics of past performance
Why Is Archival/Historical Information Important to Me?

Problem: No one is coming to church.

Ex. *motive* magazine – catalyst for change just after 1939 merger (MEC, MEC South, and United Brethren) for university students to mold the church

- This is relevant now because churches need to engage youth, young families, in order to keep doors open.
- What could be today’s catalyst for change? Could it be found in the arts, music, etc. as it was in the pages of *motive*?

Problem: data set

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How is archival material organized?

- Archives are organized differently than libraries
- Primarily use inventories, databases and finding aids
- Finding aids are used to describe collections
  - Container list is most important part, describing what is in each box

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How do I find archival materials?

- Library websites or catalogues
  - [http://www.bu.edu/sthlibrary/archives/](http://www.bu.edu/sthlibrary/archives/)
  - [http://library.bu.edu](http://library.bu.edu)
  - [http://www.worldcat.org/](http://www.worldcat.org/)
- National Union Catalog of Manuscripts Collections
  - [http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucme/](http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucme/)
- Digital Collections-Museums, Associations and Collaborative Websites
  - [http://www.atla.com/digitalresources/](http://www.atla.com/digitalresources/)
  - [http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moagrp/)
What happens when I visit the archives?

- Prior to visit contact the archivist or archives to set up an appointment
  - Look up information on the Archives website or browse NUCMC
  - Contact via email or phone kjackman@bu.edu or (617) 353-1323
- Your first visit...
  - Registration form
  - Guidelines and policies concerning the use of the archival material
  - Permission to publish
  - Reference interview

How do I cite Archival Documents in my paper?

  - Manuscript Collections (17.222-223, p.730-733)
  - Informally Published Electronic Material (17.234-17.237, p.744-745)

Citation Creation Websites

- http://www.bu.worldcat.org
- http://www.citationmachine.net/chicago/cite-a-book

Copyright for Unpublished Works

- Unpublished works are covered under U.S. Copyright.
  - https://copyright.cornell.edu/resources/docs/Copyright_Decision_Tre.pdf
- Copyright term and Public Domain in U.S.
  - https://copyright.cornell.edu/resources/publicdomain.cfm
Fair Use

- Code of Best Practices in Fair Use

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