

PRIMARY SOURCES

Pathfinder

WHAT ARE PRIMARY SOURCES?

Primary sources are first-hand accounts; material produced at the time of the event. For example, they could be diaries, periodical and newspaper articles written at the time of the event, letters, photographs, personal papers, speeches, interviews, oral histories, historical records.

BEVERLY DOCUMENTS

Beverly Public Library has an extensive collection of primary documents pertaining to the City of Beverly. Visit the library's Beverly Room or see the links on the Beverly Room webpage at <http://www.noblenet.org/beverly/beverlyroom.shtml>

BOOKS

~Search the Library's Catalog

A keyword search using "documents," "documentary," or "sources" will bring up a list of potential sources. For example, type "women and sources" as a keyword search and you will find many books, about half of which contain primary documents including:

*American women : their lives in their words : a documentary *Representative American speeches

*The feminist papers: from Adams to de Beauvoir.

*Root of bitterness : documents of the social history of America

Not all titles obtained from your search will contain primary documents, so you must look through them.

~Browse the Shelves

Go to the call number area of the topic. Use the index and table of contents in the books to locate information on your topic. Remember you will have to look through the books for primary sources within.

~Select Reference Resources

• *The Annals of America*

Ref. E 173 .A793 1976

• *Documents of American History*
REF E 173 .C66 1973

• *Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader*

Ref. E 185.61 .E95 1991

• *The Civil War* (newspaper articles)

Ref. E 464 .C437 2002

• *Twentieth Century America*

Ref. E 740.5 .T84 1995

PERIODICALS

Periodical listings of local college libraries can be found using the catalog, or print copies of the lists may be found at Beverly Library's Reference Desk. *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* (Ref. A1 3 .R4) provides an index to some of these periodicals.

~Print

Beverly Library has back issues of many newspapers and magazines in print, on microfilm or on microfiche, some dating back to the late 1800s.

~Electronic

In the library or at home, search the library's online databases at <http://www.noblenet.org/beverly/database.shtml>. For example, in EBSCOhost you can search MasterFILE Premier using keywords related to your topic and limit the results to primary documents. See a Reference Librarian for help.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Several organizations have websites which provide full text primary documents. You can use a search engine ([Google](#), [Yahoo](#), etc.) to find sites relating to your topic. Below are some examples containing American history primary sources.

- **The American Civil War Homepage**
<http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/>
- **The American Colonist's Library**
<http://personal.pitnet.net/primarysources/>
- **American Memory Project**
<http://memory.loc.gov/>
- **The Avalon Project at Yale**
<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm>
- **Documenting the American South**
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/>
- **Johnson State College History Web Pathfinder**
<http://www.johnsonstatecollege.edu/library/156.html>
- **Literature and Culture of the American 1950s**
<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/home.html>
- **Making of America (MOA)**
<http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/moagr/index.html>
- **Project Vote Smart: Historic Documents and Resources**
http://www.vote-smart.org/resource_histdocs.php
- **World War II Resources**
<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/>
- **Words and Deeds in American History**
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mchtml/corhome.html>

OTHER LIBRARIES AND HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Local, state, or national historical societies and museums also have collections of primary documents. You can often visit or contact these societies or museums for help or to find out what they have.

Beverly Historical Society

<http://www.beverlyhistory.org/>
117 Cabot St., Beverly, MA 01915
978-922-1186
info@beverlyhistory.org

Boston Public Library

<http://www.bpl.org/>
Central Library:
700 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116
617-536-5400
info@bpl.org

Essex National Heritage Commission

<http://www.essexheritage.org/>
140 Washington St., Salem, Massachusetts 01970
Phone: 978-740-0444
Fax: 978-744-6473
Email: info@essexheritage.org

Gordon College

http://www.gordon.edu/index_flash.htm
255 Grapevine Road, Wenham, MA 01984
978-927-2300
info@gordon
~extensive primary documents collection in microfiche that is listed in the catalog.

Library of Congress American History Archives

<http://memory.loc.gov/>
American Memory - Historical Collections for the National Digital Library

Massachusetts Historical Society

<http://www.masshist.org/welcome/>
1154 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215-3695
Tel: 617.536.1608, Fax: 617.859.0074
Browse part of the collection online using the Finding Aids Search. <http://www.masshist.org/findingaids/>

Massachusetts State Archives

<http://www.state.ma.us/sec/arc/arcidx.htm>
220 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125
617-727-2816, 617-288-8429
E-mail: archives@sec.state.ma.us

Peabody Essex Museum's Phillips Library

<http://www.pem.org/museum/library.php>
East India Square, Salem, MA 01970
800-745-4054 ext. 3053

**If you need help or cannot find what you are seeking,
ask a Reference Librarian.**