Quick Guide to Information about Primary Sources

This Quick Guide presents concise recommendations on the topic of primary sources – the authors* urge you, the reader, to read the recommendations, try them out, and offer suggestions for improvement.

* = your professors in collaboration with the library

1. Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing (c2013) CUNE library REF 907.2 B835 2013  See “Finding primary sources,” p114-116  Example quotation – underlining and color added: “...One method that was mentioned earlier – a method for finding collections of documents in book form – is to look under the various subject headings for your topic in the library catalog to see if there are any with the word ‘sources’ added. Another effective method is to look for published bibliographies on your topic, which may be in the form of essays or articles as well as in the form of books. A good example is the Harvard Guide to American History, an excellent reference source for primary and secondary sources. In searching for published collections of primary sources, consult the bibliographies and footnotes of your secondary sources, as well as doing some creative shelf browsing. In many historical monographs the bibliographies at the end of the book are divided into primary and secondary sources... Finally, if the period you are studying falls in the last century or so, you may want to research newspapers or periodicals contemporary with the events you are studying...”

To summarize the above quotation:

   a. look under the various subject headings for your topic in the library catalog to see if there are any with the word ‘sources’ added
   b. look for published bibliographies on your topic
   c. consult the bibliographies and footnotes of your secondary sources, as well as doing some creative shelf browsing
   d. research newspapers or periodicals contemporary with the events you are studying

2. The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students (c2007) CUNE library REF 907.2 P926  See Chapter 6, “The thrill of discovery: primary sources” p92-135 “What you will learn in this chapter: How to differentiate many types of primary sources; How to search for primary sources; How to locate and use archives; How to evaluate primary sources” (p92).


Selected examples of works with primary sources or bibliographies in the CUNE library or accessible electronically via open access:

- American bibliography: a chronological dictionary of all...publications...1639...to...1820 (1903-1959) open access ebook at OpenLibrary or other sites
- The Oxford Companion to Family and Local History (2012 online version)
- Notable Women in American History: a guide to recommended biographies and autobiographies (c1999) CUNE REF 016.92072 Ad19
- Bibliography of British History, 1851-1914 (c1976)
- Bibliographies in American History, 1942-1978 (c1982)
- The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation (c1996)
- The Portable Medieval Reader (c1949)
- The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages (c2010)
- Term paper resource guide to Medieval history (c2010)
- A source book for mediæval history: ...in the Middle Age (c1905) CUNE General 940.1 T329 or open access ebook at OpenLibrary or other sites
- A source book of mediæval history: ...from the German invasions to the renaissance (c1907) open access ebook at HathiTrust or other sites
- Encyclopedia of the Renaissance (c1999)
- The War To End All Wars: ... World War I (c1968) See Essay on Sources p365-396
- English Historical Documents (c195-)
- The later Middle Ages: a sourcebook (c2011)
- English historical documents, 1714-1815; being a selection (c1967)
- Augsburg during the Reformation era: an anthology of sources (c2012)
- Encyclopedia of the North American Colonies (c1993)
- The American History Highway: ...Internet Resources on U.S., Canadian, and Latin American History (c2007) CUNE REF 973.0285 T737
- Dictionary of American History 3rdEd. (c2003)
- An American Primer (c1966)
- Documents of American History (c1968)
- The colonial period of American history (1934-1938) (print) CUNE General 973.2 An26 vol.1-4 or limited open access ebook at HathiTrust
- The Encyclopedia of Colonial and Revolutionary America (c1990) CUNE REF 973.303 F221
- The spirit of ‘seventy-six: the story of the American Revolution as told by participants (c1967) CUNE General 973.38 C755 1967
4. Library of Congress (LoC) subject headings To search for Library of Congress subject headings, go to http://www.cune.edu/librarydatabases > WorldCat > Subjects > [term] or see Library of Congress subject headings or LCSH PDF files. See also Dewey decimal classification or Library of Congress classification.

Example of LoC subject headings:

History—Sources Here are entered collections of documents, records, etc. upon which narrative history is based. See Also subdivision History—Sources under names of countries, cities, etc., and individual corporate bodies, and under classes of persons, ethnic groups, and topical headings that are not inherently historical; and subdivision Sources under historical topics, e.g. Renaissance—Sources.

5. Selected example searches (CUNE library catalog; CUNE eBooks from EBSCOhost; Britannica Online; EBSCOhost four databases simultaneous search):

   **Note:** Substitute YOUR TOPIC in these examples.

   - **CUNE library catalog** subject search at [http://www.cune.edu/library](http://www.cune.edu/library) > Search CU and beyond > Advanced search > su:(united states history sources colonial period) = over 1,135 results from libraries worldwide
   - **Britannica online** > history (click to view) > [left margin] Web links > Britannica Internet guide AND Britannica Web search; click on Web search, add “sources,” then search again – for example, [history sources](http://www.cune.edu/librarydatabases)
   - **CUNE electronic books** at [http://www.cune.edu/librarydatabases](http://www.cune.edu/librarydatabases) > eBooks from EBSCOhost su (history and sources) = 87 results view, then revise as needed, [this search (click for access)](http://www.cune.edu/librarydatabases)

   **Note:** The 4 steps of online database searching are (1) identify the main concepts in your research question, (2) list synonyms for the main concepts, (3) create a preliminary search, and (4) interact with search results to refine. For tutorials about research, see the CUNE Research Toolkit. For recommended CUNE online databases, see Accessing Library Resources HISTORY.


   - [American Archives](http://www.americanarchives.org) ; [American Memory](http://www.loc.gov) ; [The Avalon Project](http://avalon.law.yale.edu) ; [California Digital Newspaper Collection](http://cdnc.ucsc.edu) ; [Connected Histories: British History Sources, 1500-1900](http://www.connectedhistories.org) ; [Cornell U Library Making of America Collection](http://lam.m.box)/Scriptorium ; [DPLA Bookshelf](http://dp.la) ; [EuroDocs European country primary documents](http://www.eurodocs.com) ; [Finding Historical Primary Sources](http://www.findinghistoricalprimarysources.com)
   - [Finding primary sources](http://www.findingprimarysources.com) ; [Founders Online](http://www.founders.edu) ; [Google Books Advanced book search](http://books.google.com) ; [The Historian’s toolbox: skills for history majors (tutorial on research / writing)](http://www.historians.com) ; [Internet History Sourcebooks Project](http://www. sourcebooks.com) > [for example] Internet Medieval Sourcebook
   - [Internet sites with primary sources for history](http://www.history.org) ; [Internet sites with primary sources for U.S. history](http://www.history.org) ; [IMLS Digital Collections and Content](http://www.imls.gov) ; [Local or state history sites/archives/historical societies/libraries such as Nebraska Memories](http://www.nebraskamemories.org) ; [Ohio Memory](http://www.ohiomemory.org) ; [Texas Heritage Online](http://www.thetexasheritage.org) ; [Nebraska State Historical Society](http://www.nebraska.gov) ; [NCpedia](http://www.ncpedia.org)
   - [Connecticut History Online](http://www.historicconnecticut.org) ; [PALMM](http://www.palmm.org) (State U Libraries of FL) ; [Mississippi Digital Library](http://www.mississippi.gov) ; [The Portal to Texas History](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu) ; [The State of Wisconsin Collection](http://www.state.library.wi.us) ; [Saskatchewan History Online](http://www.saskhistory.ca) ; [Kentucky Digital Library](http://www.library.ky.gov) ; [Digital Library of Georgia](http://www.galileogateway.org) ; [Digital Library of South Dakota](http://www.sdc.edu)
   - [Making of America](http://www.makingofamerica.org) ; [National Archives-Topics](http://www.archives.gov) ; [New Writings on the Holocaust, 2000-2011” – Choice](http://www.choice.com/new-writings-on-the-holocaust-2000-2011) ; [Sid Lapidus ’59 Collection on Liberty and the American Revolution](http://www.scrippscollege.edu) ; [United States (Bookshelf)](http://www.loc.gov) ; [Using primary sources on the web](http://www.historyweb.org) ; [Virginia Center for Digital History ; Voice of the Shuttle](http://www.virginiacentral.edu) ;

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