

PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary Sources are original records or materials produced when an event occurs by people there. Memoirs and oral histories produced later are also primary sources. Other examples are letters, diaries, speeches, newspaper and journal articles, interviews, photographs, audio and video recordings, government documents, patents, data, maps, emails, listservs, works of art and literature, and artifacts like weapons, tools, clothing, furniture, buildings and fossils. Interpretations of events by other people, such as histories or encyclopedia articles, are not primary sources.

Find Primary Sources in Library Books

Do a word search in the library catalog using any of the following terms: primary documents, primary sources, autobiography, pictorial works, personal narratives, interviews, diaries, correspondence, memoir, oral history, newspapers or speeches.

Newspapers, Magazines & Microfilm

The library keeps back issues of newspapers and magazines. The Chester County Library has microfilm. To see what is available, go online to <http://catalog.ccls.org/search/t>Magazine Title>.

Chester County Library System Databases

Go to www.ccls.org>Databases and then select one of the following:

In the First Person (highly recommended) – index of letters, diaries, oral histories and personal narratives on the Web

Ancestry Library Edition (in library use only) – census records, government records, local histories, photographs, historical maps

AP Images – current and historical photographs

Biography in Context – newspapers, magazines

Consumer Health Complete – Choose from Images & Diagrams, Videos & Animations or on the results page, the News tab.

Gale Virtual Reference Library – Use photographs from Dictionary of American History, Encyclopedia of the Great Depression, Roaring Twenties Reference Library.

GreenFILE – In Advanced Search, select an appropriate source under Document Type.

HeritageQuest – census records, Freedman's Bank applications, Revolutionary War pension records

InfoTrac Newsstand 1980-Current – Search for any newspaper article.

Literature Resource Center – Select Primary Sources & Literary Works.

netLibrary – Select Keyword and then, enter diary, autobiography, etc.

New York Times, Historical 1851-2005

New York Times, 1985-Current (in library use only)

OmniFile Mega – Click Browse. Skip Browse for box. For the box marked In: choose Document Type. Click Start. Select an appropriate one, such as, Autobiography, Poem, Speech, etc.

OmniFile Select – Click Browse. Skip Browse for box. For the box marked In: choose Document Type. Click Start. Select an appropriate one, such as, Autobiography, Poem, Speech, etc.

Philadelphia Inquirer 1981-Current

Philadelphia Inquirer Historical Archive 1834-1922

Reader's Guide Select – Click Browse. Skip Browse for box. For the box marked In: choose Document Type. Click Start. Select an appropriate one, such as, Interview, Speech, Symposium, etc.

Science Full Text Select – Click Browse. Skip Browse for box. For the box marked In: choose Document Type. Click Start. Select an appropriate one, such as, Interview, Speech, Symposium, etc.

SIRS Discoverer – Search by subject and then in the results screen select the Newspaper or Magazine tabs. Find photos, interviews, etc.

Recommended Websites

National Archives www.archives.gov/

American Folk Life Center Sound Archives
www.loc.gov/folklife/index.html

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

Primary Source Sets from the Library of Congress
www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/

Call us for additional help.



Reference Department

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