HIS 1165
Environmental History in the Early Modern European World
Dr. Caroline Murphy

Primary Sources Workshop: Part 1

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Objectives

Students will:

- define “primary sources”.
- demonstrate ability to evaluate and interrogate primary sources.
- understand the scholarly importance of citations in original research.
- discern the relationship between primary and secondary sources.
What are primary sources?

- Make a list of examples from readings, previous assignments, or “real life” experiences.
What are primary sources?

1. What kinds of records do you create, collect, and share as student and as citizen?
2. What are they evidence of?
3. What do they tell us about you?
4. What do they not tell us?
What are primary sources?

• “Primary sources are materials in a variety of formats, created at the time under study, that serve as original evidence documenting a time period, event, people, idea, or work.”

What are primary sources?

• “Primary sources can be printed materials (such as books and ephemera), manuscript/archival materials (such as diaries or ledgers), audio/visual materials (such as recordings or films), artifacts (such as clothes or personal belongings), or born-digital materials (such as emails or digital photographs). Primary sources can be found in analog, digitized, and born-digital forms.”

SAA, ACRL, RBMS (2018).
How can you tell if a source is primary or secondary?

• When was the document created? (at the time of event?)

• To what time period does the document refer?
What are secondary sources?

- “A work synthesizing and/or commenting on primary and/or other secondary sources. Secondary sources, which are often works of scholarship, are differentiated from primary sources by the element of critical synthesis, analysis, or commentary.”
  
  Newman, 2014
What are secondary sources?

• “In general, secondary sources tend to be works that use primary sources to analyze or evaluate topics or phenomena. They tell the story one or more steps removed from the person, time, or place.”

  Newman, 2014
What are secondary sources?

- “Books or journal articles written by historians and textbooks are examples of secondary sources.”
- “Some scholars go one step further and identify tertiary sources, citing the encyclopedia as examples.”

Newman, 2014
Where is one of the best places to find primary sources?

Now it's closed and everything's safe inside it. So you're sure I won't know any of the text?
What do “archives” mean?

How do researchers find archival sources?
How do researchers find archival sources?

VU Find

WorldCat/FirstSearch

You can guess where a collection might be based on subject matter, biographical information, etc.

You can ask a librarian or an archivist for help.

You can use citations, acknowledgments, endnotes/footnotes, etc. from secondary sources.
Take and Read your Handout
5 discussion groups
2 different cases
Notetakers
Speakers
IDENTIFY

• What is the title?
• Who created the source?
• When was it created or published?
• Where was it created?
• How was it created?
1. Use who, what, where, when, and how queries to describe source’s content?
2. What is the message of the source?
1. What was the original purpose or purposes? Why was it created?

2. Who was the original audience or audiences?

3. Where does it fit in the historical period (people, place, time)?

4. How does it relate to the topic being studied?
SIGNIFICANCE

1. What was the impact of the source on the people at the time?
2. What has been its impact on later generations, including now?
3. What other value does it have?
Assignment

1. Students will select one primary source and secondary source that may answer questions from the primary sources to provide additional context.

2. Visit Falvey Library and Course Guides

3. Create a citation of your primary source following the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition.

See you soon at the Library!
References

