

Tale 2: Primary Sources from the Inside Out:

Discovering Uncharted Territory



The Inspiration

- ◆ Growth in primary source assignments
 - History—military, medical, women, Oregon, etc.
 - Journalism—early journalism, documentaries
 - Theater—dramaturgy course
 - Honors College—thesis projects, HC421
- ◆ Intimidation factor
- ◆ Challenging to find

The Idea: Inside

Students become better researchers by studying and practicing basic archival work

- ◆ Learn what to expect to find in a collection
- ◆ Think about likely repositories for an item
- ◆ Understand structure of standard research tools
- ◆ Learn how to treat original documents by studying preservation & handling originals



The Idea: Outside



Students become better researchers by practicing research & writing

- ◆ Consider different media
- ◆ Hear practitioners' stories
- ◆ Research strategies
- ◆ Assessing sources
- ◆ Put them in their historical context



Background Research

- ◆ Looked for similar classes
- ◆ Library/archival course syllabi
- ◆ History course syllabi
- ◆ Searched for articles in databases on:
 - Education
 - Library science & archival theory
 - History



Marketing



- ◆ Identified relevant departments
- ◆ Used department & program e-mail lists
- ◆ Created & distributed fliers
- ◆ Visited classes
- ◆ Word of mouth



The Students



- ◆ 12 students
- ◆ Sophomore to Senior
- ◆ 1st time—mix of lit, history, journalism, etc.
- ◆ 2nd time—more history majors
- ◆ Reasons for taking class varied



Revised Edition



- ◆ Reduced archival work
 - Still had hands-on experience with manuscripts
 - Reduced required visits to Special Collections
- ◆ Emphasized paper & presentation
 - Greater freedom in selecting research topic
 - More time to focus on research



In Class



Theoretical topics

- Collective memory
- Access & Censorship
- Ethics of primary source research
- The future of primary sources

Select Exercises

- ◆ Evidence of your life
 - What will be preserved & how
 - Makes primary sources concrete
- ◆ Frémont expedition accounts
 - Different perspectives of writers & their authority
 - Intended audience of a primary source
- ◆ Ethical dilemmas
 - Return of stolen artwork
 - Preservation vs. ownership rights

Assignments

- ◆ Read history article & analyze use of sources
- ◆ Analyze
 - Diary
 - Photo
 - Recording
- ◆ Final project in several segments
 - Preliminary topic, final topic, intro/outline, bibliography
 - Final presentation



Student Projects



- ◆ All-American Girls Professional Baseball League
- ◆ Founding of Astoria, Oregon
- ◆ The Black Panthers in Eugene
- ◆ 1st woman sports reporter for *Daily Emerald*
- ◆ The *real* Joseph Lane
- ◆ The Rogue River War

Unexpected Issues

- ◆ Students had little writing experience
 - Added guides to historical writing
 - Handed out writing tips
- ◆ Courseware experience varied widely
 - Profs use at many different levels
 - Some students wanted more online, some less

Student Comments

- ◆ My eyes were opened to the abundance of primary document info available...I learned a ton.
- ◆ I wish I would have taken this class earlier...it would have helped me with so many projects and papers
- ◆ This class would be great for anyone preparing to take Information Gathering [journalism requirement]



What Next



- ◆ LIB399 becomes LIB323
- ◆ Field trips with lectures
- ◆ Continue to revise reading list
- ◆ Discuss disciplines outside of history
- ◆ Incorporate more teaching effectiveness tips
- ◆ Assign students to lead class discussions

Further Information

- ◆ **LIB323 Home Page & Reading List**

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/courses/lib323heather/>

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/courses/lib323heather/reading.html>

- ◆ **NARA Analysis Worksheets**

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/>

- ◆ **Research Using Primary Sources**

<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/history/primary.html>



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