

Read All About It: Using Primary Sources as Teaching Tools



Hayward Area Historical Society
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Museum Hours:
Tuesday – Saturday 11am-4pm
Office Hours:
Monday – Friday 9am-5pm
Library Research Hours:
Wednesday 11am-2pm, Thursday 1-4pm,
Saturday 12-4pm

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Unit Goals:

- ü Explore ways in which primary sources can be incorporated into classroom study
- ü Introduce you to the resources of the Hayward Area Historical Society
- ü Develop a lesson plan for use in your classroom

Unit Contents:

- What are Primary and Secondary Resources
- A Local Source for Primary Resources – HAHS
- Photographs – A Look Into the Past
- References Cited

What are primary and secondary sources?

According to the *Encyclopedia of Local History*:

A primary source, in handwriting, voice, or print, is one created contemporaneously with an event or later by witnesses to an event or an era. This is the material by which history is known.

A secondary source is one that is conscientiously created to record or explain the event, person, trend, or place using all available material, including primary sources.

Examples of primary sources

- ✓ *Objects/Artifacts*
Tools, clothing, household items, tombstones...
- ✓ *Images*
Photographs, film, video, e/digital, fine art
- ✓ *Audio*
Oral histories, interviews, music, audio recordings
- ✓ *Statistics*
Census data, land surveys, maps, ordinances, blueprints, architectural drawings
- ✓ *Text*
Journals, letters, diaries, documents, newspapers, cookbooks, advertisements
- ✓ *Community*
Family photographs, memorabilia, souvenirs, recipes, oral histories, local historical societies, genealogical information, sheet music
- ✓ *Physical surroundings*
Bridges, buildings, homes, parks

A Local Source for Primary Resources

Hayward Area Historical Society Library and Archives

What can be found in the HAHS Library and Archives:

- Architectural plans and Blue prints – From local buildings, including the old Hayward High School
- Business records
- Cards – Greeting and business
- Government records – City of Hayward treasury accounts, tax records, city ledgers, assessment books dating from the early 20th century, assessor rolls of Hayward City limits showing personal property tax records (1876-1908)
- History books – Relating to local, regional, and state history subjects
- Magazines – Periodicals such as *Etude* (1910-1945), *Harper's Magazine*, *Good Housekeeping* (1905-1921), and *Woman's Home Companion* (1920-1932) showing life in the past, as well as local publications from organizations such as East Bay Municipal Water District and Ora Loma
- Maps – Maps from local towns, Alameda County, and state, including street maps, flood control district maps, school district maps, insurance maps, plat maps from Eden Township communities (1892-1902) showing real estate holdings (may also show ownership)
- Newspapers – Articles and complete issues from local periodicals including Daily Review, Hayward Journal (incomplete set 1884-1950), Brightside, The Knave, Oakland Tribune, Then & Now, and on microfilm: Hayward Journal (1878-1919), San Lorenzo Journal, Alameda County Sanborn maps
- Organizational collections – From local clubs and groups
- Personal papers and correspondence
- Photographs – Approximately 28,000 images from local life dating from the 1870s, with some earlier unidentified daguerreotypes and negatives
- Posters – From such past local events as circuses, fairs, festival, etc.
- Reference books – On subjects such as antiques, dolls, etc., as well as catalogs that reflect past times
- School yearbooks – Public and private elementary, junior, and senior high school annuals dating from the 1920s to present
- Scrapbooks – From clubs, organizations, businesses, and individuals
- Sheet music
- Subject files (pamphlet files) – Arranged by topic relating to local and regional history
- Telephone books and City directories – Hayward area and county phone books, Hayward city directories (1948-1976), area directories (1925-1948)

Hayward Area Historical Society – 22701 Main Street, Hayward California 94541
Library Hours: Wednesdays 11am-2pm, Thursdays 1-4pm, Saturdays 12-4pm, and by appointment
For more information: 510.581.0223 or www.haywardareahistory.org

Suggested Class Projects Using Primary Resources

Primary resources can be used when teaching history and social studies. Here are just two approaches that contribute to student understanding of community history:

Family history

Students can learn a great deal by exploring their family heritage, and even by generating their own primary sources. For example, by keeping a journal, students begin to understand how the thoughts and memories of everyday people contribute to the record of history. Here are some other ways to use family and personal records in learning about history:

- **Photo albums and scrapbooks**

Photographs can be used in a variety of ways. In addition to helping students understand their own family history, photos can illustrate concepts of change (for example, in fashions, transportation, architecture, landscape, etc.) and continuity (for example, people have always had to work, children went to school in the past, etc.). Images can spark curiosity and imagination, and can promote cultural awareness. Photographs can be used when discussing traditions and holidays, food, occupations, technology, current and historical issues, etc.

When first looking at a photograph, always start with the basic questions of *who, when, where, why, and what*. Students can begin by guessing the answers, and then the correct information can be provided. Photographs and images are helpful when introducing new topics and when describing people, places, and events.

Family history is easily represented in photographs and scrapbooks and almost every family has some snapshots that children can bring to share with their classmates. Begin a classroom scrapbook that can be used at the end of the year to retrace your steps and reinforce the concepts of change and recorded history.

- **Family trees**

Constructing a simple family tree will require that students have time at home to talk with family elders. Students can collect names; birth, marriage, and death dates; places of birth and death; and anything else they find interesting such as information about occupations, hobbies, places of residence, unusual facts, family pets, etc. If photographs are available, these can be added to the tree as well.

There are many family tree templates available online or in genealogical guides. However, given the complexity of families today, most of these templates only allow for two parents, four grandparents, etc. You may want to consider having each student make family trees from scratch. You may also want to use this time to discuss the changing dynamics of families and promote a positive attitude about all types of families.

Once completed, students can share and compare family histories: Whose ancestors came from the same country? Who came from the farthest distance? How did they get here? When did family members immigrate to the United States? In what other parts of the country

do family members live? What were some of the occupations held by ancestors in the past? What do names and surnames mean? Does the popularity of certain first names change over time?

Students can also share with the rest of the class any special stories they may have learned about their family heritage. This can be done through a short oral presentation, a written story, or through artwork.

Discuss with your class that when they conduct family research, they are mostly discovering and using primary sources. Their completed family tree becomes a secondary source and could be used by other researchers in the future.

By donating copies of your students' family trees to a local history archives (like the one at HAHS), you will be contributing to the documentation of local history. As donors of such materials, students can learn that their families are important members of the community and that their histories are needed to record history.

- **Oral histories**

When searching for information to construct a family tree, students can take the opportunity to record the conversations they have with family members. This can be an informal discussion aimed at getting specific details (those needed for the tree) or a more formal interview where they ask many questions.

When setting up an oral history project for your class, consider technology needs (tape recorders, cassettes, batteries), time restraints, and your main objectives.

At their most serious, oral histories are taken and transcribed, providing a primary source for research and a record of individual lives. For young students, the process of interviewing elders may have the simple goal of getting information, or may serve as a way to foster communication within families and across generations. Make sure you have thought through your reasons for collecting oral histories and have decided what will become of the taped interviews. Will students make copies of the tapes for the interviewed family member, for the school, for the Historical Society, for church, etc.?

Students should prepare a list of questions before interviewing their elders. These questions can include information about the interviewee's ancestry, parents, siblings, childhood, schooling, marriage, offspring, occupations, volunteerism, as well as reflections on good times, even sad memories, and other life stories.

Professional oral histories suggest that interviews begin with friendly, easy questions. This helps everyone get comfortable and allows for trust to be built. When interviewing, silence is okay. It allows for time to think and gather one's thoughts.

There are many websites that offer interview questions. A great place to start is by using the online version of the book "Climbing Your Family Tree" by Ira Wolfman. Chapter 3 has helpful links: <http://www.workman.com/familytree/links03.html>. Remember that most of these online genealogical sites are for profit.

- **Family bible or other sacred books**

People often record important dates (birthdays, baptisms, weddings, deaths, etc.) and their lineage in a bible or other sacred books. Students can use this information when constructing their family tree.

- **Heirlooms**

In addition to precious photographs, documents, and books, family heirlooms are another primary source that can reveal both family and social history. An easy way to demonstrate this is to have each student bring a special object from home. Encourage them to bring items that reflect family tradition, ancestry, or unique characteristics. Classroom discussions can include historical and cultural topics. Information about the object's origin, maker, age, purpose, and family significance can be shared.

School history

Piecing together the history of your school can provide a window into the community's past and give students the opportunity to conduct research and interpret their findings. This type of project will require time and energy, and could be done in conjunction with other teachers, school administration, historians, community members, and HAHS. The outcomes of your project could be a research paper, website, book, or display.

The local history manual *Local Schools: Exploring Their History* offers several steps in constructing a school history including how to get started:

- ü Define your topic

- What is the chronological scope? Do you want to go back to the founding of your school, or pick a certain era to explore?
- Are there certain topics that you want to research? Will this be a comprehensive overview, or will you look at the evolution of the building, focus on certain principals, teachers, grade levels, or subjects? Was there a major event at your school? Did famous or successful people attend your school? How did your school get its name?

- ü Pose research questions to guide your research process

In other words, what do you want your research to show? Keep these questions in mind while researching because it will help you eliminate information that doesn't fit within your project's scope.

- ü The research process

Searching the community for information about your school's history should take you everywhere from the school's basement, to the district archives, to HAHS, and library. Interviews with retired employees, articles in the newspapers, and old school newsletters will be helpful resources as well.

Break down the research process into distinct units and assign responsibility to each part. Some research you and other adults can do, while the students can do other parts. Also keep in mind that you have adequate resources? For example, will you need cameras, tape recorders, scanners, etc.? Can these be borrowed?

ü Pulling it all together

Once you have collected stories, clippings, interviews, photographs, memorabilia, etc. you can begin to organize and interpret this material. This should follow from your original research questions and serve to define your main topic.

The results of such a project can be shared with your school, neighborhood, and the community. You could arrange a reception where your book or display is presented. Notify the newspaper about your class's accomplishment. Donate copies of your project to HAHS for inclusion in the local history archives. Whatever your results, you will have contributed to the preservation of local history and given your students a special learning experience.

Photographs – A Look into the Past

Goal of Activity

To introduce students to photographs as a way to understand the past

Objectives

- ü Students use their powers of observation to describe what they see
- ü Students make comparisons of the past to the way things are today
- ü Students create a story about what they see in the photograph

Materials

Old photographs

Instructions

You can begin by talking about family photo albums and snapshots, school pictures, photographs in newspapers, etc. – all ways to capture events and remember the past. Pose questions such as: Who takes photographs? Why do we take photographs?

This activity can be done in small groups or as a class.

1. Give each group or student a photograph. And begin with something like this:

First, just take some time to look at this photograph.

Study what you see. Are there people in the picture? What are they wearing? Do they look happy or sad? What do you think they see, hear, and smell? What are they doing? Was the photo taken inside or outside? Do you see any animals? Etc.

Now, think about the kind of photograph. Is it in color or black and white? Does it seem old or new? Do you think it was taken by a professional photographer? Who might want a photograph like this? Where do think this photograph was found?

2. Next, discuss how things in the photograph are different than they are today. Have them look at:

- Clothing, fashions, hairstyles
- Modes of transportation, machines, and other technology
- Buildings, architecture, landscape
- Types of activity occurring

Compare these things to present-day fashions, vehicles, buildings, and activities. Have them talk about their own clothing or family car. Discuss how technological advances, new inventions, and discoveries cause change. Personal preferences cause change.

3. Finally, have the students create a story to go along with the photograph. This can be presented orally or written. Encourage them to go into detail (what are people's names, where do they live, what are they doing/thinking/feeling). Encourage humor!

Resources Cited

Books

Local History

The Early Years: 1843-1890, The Rancho of Guillermo Castro, A History of Hayward, Castro Valley and San Lorenzo by John S. Sandoval from Mt. Eden Historical Publishers, 1991

Hayward: Heart of the Bay by Banning Fenton from Heritage Media and the Hayward Area Historical Society, 2002

Mt. Eden: Cradle of the Salt Industry in California by John S. Sandoval from Mt. Eden Historical Publishers, 1988

Other sources cited

Climbing Your Family Tree by Ira Wolfman. Workman Publishing Co, New York: 2002.

Discovering Architecture with Activities and Games: I Know That Building by Jane D'Alelio from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1989.

Local Schools: Exploring Their History by Ronald E. Butchart from The Nearby History Series, The American Association for State and Local History, 1986.
Also in the series: *Houses & Homes, Public Places, Places of Worship, Local Businesses*

My Backyard History Book by David Weitzman from Little Brown & Company, 1975

Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You by David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty from The American Association for State and Local History, 1982.

Websites addressing Primary Resources and History Education

www.myhistory.org

This project of the National Endowment for the Humanities "is a place where every American can be an historian -- a place to remember, to record, and to see things in the "big picture." It is a gathering place for sharing family stories; for meeting folks in the community who are prepared to share or help with your voyage of historical discovery; and for getting the scoop on websites, books, films, and places to visit where our nation's past is seen through the triumphs and trials of ordinary families." There is also a timeline stretching back to 1000 CE through to the present, and another section where you can access information on specific topics in history. The Guidebook is full of activities that can be done as a family or in class.

www.oac.cdlib.org/

The Online Archive of California is a database of finding aids to assist in tracking down primary resources from the state's history.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/>

From the Library of Congress, "American Memory is a gateway to rich primary source materials relating to the history and culture of the United States. The site offers more than 7 million digital items from more than 100 historical collections." There is also a link to the Learning Page which offers lesson plans, resources, and activities for teachers and students.

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/>

The National Register of Historic Places offers some good classroom resources, including *Teaching with Historic Places* that guides you through the process of teaching outside your classroom at historic sites in the community.

<http://nieonline.com>

Newspapers in Education offers teachers resources to guide them in using local newspapers as a teaching tool. They offer a range of activities across all disciplines. Daily features include "This week in history" and "Inkspots" which are short suggested activities to use the newspaper. The site also provides links to other useful web resources.

Also check out www.LearnCalifornia.org

Miscellaneous Sites:

www.esselennation.com – This is the website of the Ohlone Esselen Nation in the Monterey Bay Area. At this site you will find information on Ohlone homelands, history, and contemporary culture, including the Annual Gathering.

www.springer.losaltos.k12.ca.us./1999/19/ohlone – This website contains an online Information Book for 3rd Grade about the Ohlone. Although text-heavy, this is a good source for student Internet research projects.

<http://www.sims.berkeley.edu/courses/is290-2/f98/oaklandkids/>

"Oakland on the Move" information can be accessed by topic or by playing a game and provides information on east bay history topics such as the Ohlone Indians.

www.over-land.com – Provides information about westward movement/pioneer era and links to other sites.

www.emigrantroad.com – An illustrated guide to things to do along the Oregon Trail today and provides streaming video of a recreation of a 49ers diary.