



Primary Sources

Primary sources are original records created at the time historical events occurred or well after events in the form of memoirs and oral histories. Primary sources may include letters, manuscripts, diaries, journals, newspapers, speeches, interviews, memoirs, documents produced by government agencies, photographs, audio recordings, moving pictures or video recordings, research data, and even artifacts. These sources serve as the raw material to interpret the past, and when they are used along with previous interpretations by historians, they provide the resources necessary for historical research.

The library has a variety of print and electronic resources that will aid you in your research. If you have trouble finding information, please see a staff member. We're here to help!

SUBJECTS:

(keywords to use when searching the online catalog or internet)

[correspondence](#)

[diaries](#)

[letters](#)

[oral history](#) (or [histories](#))

[primary document](#) or [primary source](#)

[speeches](#), [addresses](#)

[sources](#)

NEWSPAPERS:

For information on library locations, click [here](#).

The Carolinian

Richard B. Harrison Library – from January 1945.

Cary News

West Regional Library - available on microfilm from 1974 through 2006.

New York Times

Cameron Village Library - Available on microfilm from 1968 to present with a 6-week delay for current issues.

North Regional Library – Available on microfilm from 1980 to present.

News and Observer

Cameron Village Library – Available on microfilm from 1919 to present.

East Regional Library - Available on microfilm from 2000 to present.

Eva Perry Regional Library – Available on microfilm from 2000 to present.

North Regional Library – Available on microfilm from 1980 to present.

News and Observer (cont.)

Olivia Raney Local History Library - Available on microfilm from 1877 to present with a delay for current issues.

Southeast Regional Library – Available on microfilm from 1980-1995 and 2000 to present.

Wall Street Journal

North Regional Library – Available on microfilm from 1979 through 2006.

ONLINE DATABASES:

<http://www.wakegov.com/libraries/research/databases>

American Slavery: A Composite Autobiography

Life histories of former American slaves taken from interviews. It also includes some sound files of the actual interviews.

Greenwood Digital Collection

This collection of e-books contains the series “Literature in Context” which provides historical documents from various eras.

MasterFile Premier

Thousands of transcripts from Congressional testimony, political commentary, press conferences, transcripts, speeches, and images.

North American Women’s Letters and Diaries

Documents depicting the personal experiences of women from Colonial times to 1950.

Sanborn Maps North Carolina

Maps of N.C. towns and cities from the mid-19th to 20th century.

BOOKS:

General

The American Revolution: Writings from the War of Independence

Located: Non Fiction 973.3 AMERI

This collection of papers from the Revolutionary period starts with Paul Revere's own account of his famous ride in 1775 and ends with a description of George Washington's resignation from the Continental Army in 1783. Journal entries, letters, newspaper articles, and public documents are included, written by Revolutionary leaders, soldiers and their wives, British officers, and Colonial loyalists.

Grace Under Fire: Letters of Faith in Times of War

Located: Non Fiction 355.009 GRACE

A collection of correspondences between troops and their families, from the American Revolution through the fighting in Iraq, captures the spirit, humor, and courage of men and women in uniform and stresses the importance of faith.

[Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History](#)

Located: Non Fiction 808.85 LEND

Lend Me Your Ears contains more than two hundred outstanding moments of oratory. Covering speeches from Demosthenes to George W. Bush, this latest edition includes the words of Cromwell to the "Rump Parliament," Orson Welles eulogizing Darryl F. Zanuck, General George Patton exhorting his troops before D-Day, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg speaking on Bush v. Gore.

[The People Speak: American Voices, Some Famous, Some Little Known, From Columbus to Present](#)

Located: Non Fiction 973 ZINN

Here in their own words are Columbus on the Arawaks; Plough Jogger, a farmer and participant in Shays' Rebellion; Harriet Hanson, a Lowell mill worker; Frederick Douglass; Mark Twain; Mother Jones; Emma Goldman; Helen Keller; Eugene V. Debs; Langston Hughes; Fannie Lou Hamer, a sharecropper and member of the Freedom Democratic Party; Malcolm X; and James Lawrence Harrington, a Gulf War resister, among others.

[Ripples of Hope: Great American Civil Rights Speeches](#)

Located: Non Fiction 323.1 RIPPL

Gottheimer, a former speechwriter for Bill Clinton and senior advisor to the US Commission on Civil Rights, has collected speeches from 1787 to 1998 by activists as diverse as Abraham Lincoln, Margaret Sanger, Sarah Weddington and Sister Souljah. The anthology chronicles the civil rights movements of African Americans, Asian Americans, gays, Hispanic Americans and women.

[We Are the People: Voices From the Other Side of American History](#)

Located: Non Fiction 973 WE

We Are the People presents a revelatory mosaic of many of the voices forgotten or ignored by mainstream American history.

[War Letters: Extraordinary Correspondence From American Wars](#)

Located: Non Fiction 355 WAR

With the drama of history and the intimacy of memoir, Andrew Carroll's landmark anthology encompasses every conflict, from the Civil War to Desert Storm. Presenting 175 letters, this book captures vivid depictions of famous battles, profound reflections on the nature of warfare, gripping tales of rescues and escapes, and many more unforgettable expressions of fear, loneliness, love, and patriotism.

[Women's Letters: America from the Revolutionary War to the Present](#)

Located: Non Fiction 305.4 WOMEN

Historical events of the last three centuries come alive through these singular correspondences, over 400 letters accompanied by over 100 photographs. In 1775, Rachel Revere tries to send financial aid to her husband, Paul, in a note that is confiscated by the British; one week after JFK's assassination, Jacqueline Kennedy pens a heartfelt letter to Nikita Khrushchev; and more.

Reference (in library use only)

[American Decades: Primary Sources](#)

Located: Reference (available in library only) 973.91 AMERI

Each volume includes approximately 165 full-text or excerpted historical documents from the period representing a diversity of views that provide insight into the seminal issues, themes, movements and events from the decade. These documents include advertisements, commercials, diaries, literary works, newspaper articles, memoirs, periodical articles, speeches and other types of primary source materials.

WEBSITES:

[Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy](#)

The Avalon Project provides access to primary source materials in the fields of Law, History, Economics, Politics, Diplomacy and Government dating all the way back to the 1600's.

[Library of Congress](#)

The Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and serves as the research arm of Congress. It is also the largest library in the world, with millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts in its collections. It makes some of its collection available online.

[Making of America](#)

Making of America is a digital library of primary sources in American social history from the antebellum period through reconstruction. The collection is particularly strong in the subject areas of education, psychology, American history, sociology, religion, and science and technology. The collection currently contains approximately 10,000 books and 50,000 journal articles with 19th century imprints.

[North Carolina ECHO](#)

North Carolina Exploring Cultural Heritage Online, is a web portal to the special collections of North Carolina's libraries, archives, museums, historic sites, and other cultural institutions. It is an evolving statewide, collaborative access to special collections and digitization project.