Working with Primary Sources

What do primary sources tell us? What questions do they raise? Learn how the object observation analysis tool can be used with primary sources and how the technique of object observation can be used within a lesson.

Audience: teachers, curriculum specialists, staff development trainers, media specialists, librarians and university instructors

Objectives:
Participants will be able to:
- Demonstrate improved observation and questioning skills with historical artifacts;
- Understand the difference between objective and subjective observation and the effect this difference has on the critical analysis and interpretation of a primary source;
- Formulate thoughtful questions based on the careful analysis of historical artifacts.

Tasks in brief:
- Practice an "object observation" exercise and understand the difference between objective and subjective observation.
- Determine the kinds of information that the object reveals.
- Search for objects contained in several American Memory collections and articulate questions about the subject, the creator, and the historical period (done in the three-hour workshop, only).
- Choose a small collection of objects to tell a story about a focused topic (done in the three-hour workshop, only).

Presentation Options:
Two-hour hands-on workshop (please allow time after signing off for participants to finish tasks demonstrated during the video conference).

Three-hour hands-on workshop (requires internet-connected computers and Web browsers configured to play LC multimedia file formats. For details, see How to View)
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/help/view.html

Resources:
- Learning Page Lessons: The Historian's Sources
  http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/psources/pshome.html
- Learning Page Lessons: Lesson Framework
  http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/fw.html
- Learning Page Lessons: Media Analysis Tools
  http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/media.html
- Learning Page: Using Primary Sources in the Classroom
  http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/primary.html

- Learning Page Handouts: [Why Use Primary Sources?](http://memory.loc.gov/learn/educators/handouts/prsrc.pdf)
  http://memory.loc.gov/learn/educators/handouts/prsrc.pdf