**Guide for Using Primary Source Sets from the Northfield History Collaborative**

*Definitions:*

- A **Primary Source** is an original record from the past created by firsthand witnesses of an event or particular time period. It can be a written record (a letter, diary, or newspaper), a visual material (painting, photograph, map), an artifact (tool, object, etc.), etc.

- A **Secondary Source** is made at a later time, often by someone who has researched the primary sources. Examples of secondary sources include textbooks, biographies, encyclopedias, etc.

- A **Primary Source Set** is a collection of primary sources that explore topics in history. The Northfield History Collaborative's Primary Source Sets focus on the local Northfield experiences of a broader historic theme, subject, or event. All of these sets include a topic overview, links to approximately 20 unique digitized items available on the Collaborative's online database, discussion questions, related resources, education standards, and a guide to interpreting and using primary sources for research.

- The **Northfield History Collaborative (NHC)** is an online collection of primary and secondary sources from 16 community partners. Our partners include museums, libraries, college archives, businesses, churches, and more. We created this online collection to share the history of Northfield with a wider online audience. Our mission for over 10 years is to preserve and make accessible digital versions of records of the history of the Northfield area. Visit our website at http://northfieldhistorycollaborative.org/.

*Resources*

- Primary vs. Secondary Sources video
- Teaching with Primary Sources Videos and Sets from the Minnesota Historical Society
- Using Primary Sources guide developed by the Library of Congress
- Document Analysis Worksheets developed by the National Archives
- Teaching Primary and Secondary Sources lesson plan from the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum

*Other Primary Source Sets*

- Digital Public Library of America
- Minnesota Digital Library

*Using NHC Primary Source Sets*

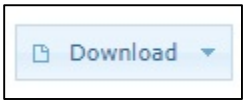
To see a list of all available Primary Source Set topics, visit the landing page at http://northfieldhistorycollaborative.org/primary-source-sets/. Click on an image to go to a set.

For each set, read the introduction text and begin to explore the sources. The image thumbnails link directly to their entry on the NHC's online database. Each database entry provides more details on the historic material, what partner it came from, its date (if known), and other descriptions.

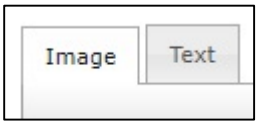
Tips for exploring individual sources on the NHC's online database:

- Use the zoom tool to scroll in for greater detail. A quick way to zoom is to use the "Fit" icon.

- You can download a JPEG copy for personal or classroom use.

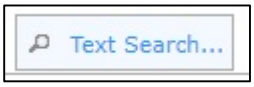



- If it is a text document, use the "TEXT" tab to toggle between the scan and a transcription (typed-out version) of the document's unique words.




- You can also view the image and typed-out text side-by-side by using this button.

- For text documents, you can also search within the source using the text search bar right above the image. Use this tool if you are looking for a particular name or topic.




- Some of these sources are only one page; others are multiple pages. Use the "Next" and "Previous" arrows to move among the pages, or scroll on the thumbnail list on the right side.

- You can browse similar items by following links in the "Locally Assigned Subject Heading" field.

(you can also search using a basic or advanced search bar on the top of every page of the database)

- You can also browse the full collection of one of the NHC's partners by following its link in the Contributing Institution field.

*Other Tips for the Primary Source Sets*

The rest of the set will provide you with discussion questions for further exploration, sometimes with links to the sources to "dig deeper" into them. Some of them also have suggestions for classroom activities. Use these as suggestions or come up with your own!

If you are short on time, the easiest option is to have students pick an item from the set and talk about its historic significance. Use the primary source analysis guidelines found at the bottom of each set to look deeply into the source, or simply have them answer questions like these:

- What is the source about? What does it show you about this particular topic?
- Who created the source? Who was the source created for?
- When was the source created? What else was going on at that time in history?
- Why was this source created?
- …and more.

Each set also includes:

- Items related to the set's topic that did not appear in the image thumbnail section, and/or
- Links to a set of search results related to the topic (like "Northfield bank raid photographs")
- Lists of lesson plans, if applicable, found online from vetted education sources.
- Bibliography of the top 10 sources used to create the set's introduction.
- Tips for analyzing primary sources

If you wish to look at any of the sources listed that are not online or you can't find them at the Northfield Public Library or your school library, contact the Northfield Historical Society museum and archives to request copies or schedule a time to visit. Some of the Northfield history books listed (especially *Our Story* and *Northfield: The History and Architecture of a Community*) are available for sale in the museum store.

Each set also includes the benchmark codes for Minnesota State Education Standards in Social Studies as well as English Language Arts that could be explored using the primary source sets. Follow the links included to identify which benchmarks they refer to. You'll see that there are a wide range of grades and complexity. The sets were developed primarily for use in middle and high schools, but we encourage all ages to consider exploring these broad history topics through the sources in these sets. Also, many English Language Arts standards relate to reading and analyzing a variety of sources, including visual items, so that is why they're included here too.

If you want to print a primary source set, I recommend converting the page to an Adobe PDF and then printing it. This helps preserve the set's layout and format - otherwise it just becomes a long list.

Finally, we welcome your input for these sets. Please use the "Contact Us" form linked to at the bottom of each page to send us your comments, questions, examples of how you used them, requests for an "answer key" for some of the discussion questions, and more. You can also email us at NHC@northfieldhistory.org.

We hope you enjoy exploring these historical subjects through the lens of local history! Hopefully more of these sets will be developed over the next few years. We have a running list and add more every day!

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