



## VIC327H Digital Material Culture

**Agatha Barc, HBA, MI &  
Colin Deinhardt, HBA, MA, MIST**  
Reader Services & Instruction Librarians  
E.J. Pratt Library

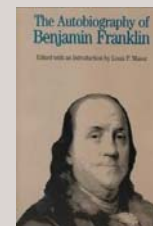
## Pop Quiz: Know Your Sources

## Pop Quiz

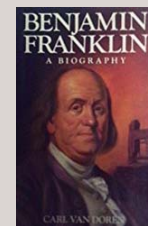
Which of the following is a secondary source?

- ☒ historical documentary
- ☒ biography
- ☐ Encyclopedia
- ☐ a soldier's diary
- ☐ newspaper article from period under study

## Primary or Secondary?

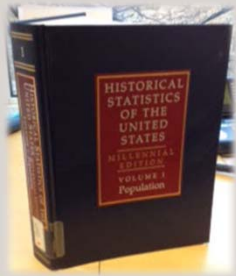


Franklin, Benjamin. 1993.  
*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press.



Van Doren, Carl. 1938.  
*Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Viking Press.

## Is this a primary source?



 A screenshot of a historical data table from the 'HISTORICAL STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES'. The table is titled 'POPULATION' and shows data for various years from 1790 to 1900. It includes columns for 'Total Population', 'White Population', 'Colored Population', and 'Foreign-Born Population'. The data is presented in a grid format with rows for each year and columns for each category.

## True or False?

Sources are either primary or secondary, never both.

☐ true

☒ false

## Primary Sources are...

- Created by someone with firsthand knowledge of the event or topic under study
- Created at or about the time an event occurred

## Primary Sources...

- can be in any medium
- can be primary in one context and secondary in another
- are defined differently in different disciplines
- come in two broad types: published and unpublished

## What's The Difference?

*Proximity* to the subject matter...

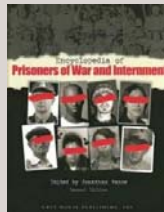
### Primary



### Secondary



### Tertiary



## Libraries



## Archives



## Libraries

- open stacks
- published sources
- library catalogue
- stacks
- context is provided
- *E.J. Pratt: Letters* (2017).

## Archives

- closed stacks
- unpublished sources
- finding aids
- secure storage
- interpretation is necessary
- E.J. Pratt fonds.

## Evaluating the Reliability of Digital Archives

There are four evaluation criteria you can use to determine the quality and reliability of online archives and their suitability for the purposes of a close bibliographic analysis:

- Authorship
- Content
- Audience
- Sources and documentation.

## Authorship

Authorship refers to the creator, editor, sponsor and/or publisher of the archive.

- Who created, edited and/or published this resource?
- What credentials or record of previous scholarship qualify him/her to compile or edit the collection?
- Is there an advisory or an editorial board?
- Is the archive affiliated with a particular library, archive, museum or other research institution?
- Who is it published or hosted by?

## Content

Currency means the archive's level of engagement in active, continuing preservation of digitized and born-digital cultural materials.

- Are there new additions to the collection?
- Does the archive consistently apply any set of digitization guidelines or policies (such as the Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiatives)
- Is there a mission or scope statement that outlines the nature and extent of the materials included in the archive (i.e. selection criteria)?
- What is the level or quality of the metadata associated with specific records?

## Audience

Audience are the individuals for whom the archive is created.

- Who is the archives geared toward?
- Is it created for experts and researchers in the field, or for members of the general public?
- Are the materials in the archive intended for an audience with a specific interest in mind?

## Sources & Documentation

Sources and documentation are the publications and documents that support the creation of the archive.

- Does the author cite primary or secondary sources?
- Do the citations include standard bibliographic information in a consistent manner?
- What style of citation is used?
- Is there a bibliography or a work cited list?
- Are supporting documents available, such as project report or timeline, grant applications, or digitization guidelines (i.e. the paratexts)?

## Research Support



- Visit our reference desk
- Book a research consultation
- Email us for research assistance
- Chat with a librarian.