Extending the Narrative of Primary Source Research as a Process: Subject Specialists As Beneficial Interlopers in Special Collections Research Instruction

Adam Rosenkranz, Arts and Humanities Librarian
CHAPTER 12

Developing a Primary Source Lab Series:
A COLLABORATION BETWEEN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND SUBJECT COLLECTIONS LIBRARIANS

Adam Rosenkranz, Gale Burrow, and Lisa Crane

Introduction

In 2014, special collections and subject specialist librarians at the Claremont Colleges Library came together to pilot a lab series giving graduate students the opportunity to analyze a primary source closely as an artifact, explore related digital primary sources, identify potential research questions, and find examples of secondary scholarship that spoke to those questions. The lab series emphasized research not as a linear sequence, but a process with a holistic view of the range of available resources, paper and digital, historic and contemporary. Although the librarians who developed the lab series were excited about collaborating with graduate school faculty, they have grown to see the value of collaboration among librarians with differing expertise.
Carrie Marsh, Director of Special Collections & Libraries

Gale Burrow, Head of Outreach and Public Services & Curator of Literary Collections

Lisa Crane, Western Americana Manuscripts Librarian, Special Collections; Subject Specialist, American History
I. The Interloper
Giuseppe Arcimboldo - http://www.wga.hu/art/a/arcimbol/4composi/5librari.jpg
Welcome to Special Collections

The Claremont Colleges can boast two special collections libraries. Located in Honnold/Mudd Library, Special Collections is a place where you can connect to the past by examining rare books, reading original letters and manuscripts, and studying historical photographs and other objects. We collect, preserve, and make accessible collections that span more than 900 years of human history, with particular depth in 16th-20th centuries, the American West, science, music and theater, Asian history and culture, books and printing, and the history of The Claremont Colleges and the larger Claremont community, among other subjects, places, and eras. Explore our collections in person or by visiting our exhibitions, digital collections, and blog. In our effort to facilitate access to and use of the collections, we employ a range of digital technologies, such as online patron registration and requesting, and we offer class instruction and individual research sessions in order to support teaching, learning, and scholarship.

The Ella Strong Denison Library at Scripps College housed in the uniquely beautiful, historic Kaufmann Wing of the library building offers a wide variety of primary resources to The Claremont Colleges and wider community of scholars. Subject strengths include fine printing and artists’ books, women's history, literature, and art; Denison holds the papers for the College's founder, Ellen Browning Scripps, as well as the Scripps College archives.

Want to know more about our special collections? Ask Us!
150,000 rare books and about 10,000 linear feet of literary and manuscript collections.

Oldest item is O-Kutsu-Ma-Ra-Kyo, from 1090 (Chinese Buddhist Sutra)  
https://ccl.on.worldcat.org/oclc/981531502.

CCEPS fellowship
<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2016</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2015</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total uses of Special Collections items by patrons or for activities</td>
<td>6,886</td>
<td>7,534</td>
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<tr>
<td>College-affiliated patrons who used Special Collections</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>895</td>
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<tr>
<td>College classes that visited Special Collections</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Items viewed by classes visiting Special Collections</td>
<td>2,952</td>
<td>3,372</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total hours spent in Special Collections by college-affiliated patrons</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>987</td>
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2. The Librarians Collaborate!
Or:
The Primary Source Labs / Workshops
A Simplified Chronology
- **Fall of 2011**: Gale has Conversation with concerned Faculty Member

**Fall of 2011**: Planning in collaboration with faculty members in Arts and Humanities at Claremont Graduate University (Literature, History, Religious Studies, Philosophy, And Cultural Studies)

- **Spring 2012**: Pilot Source Lab Series with a group of several students from CGU’s School of Arts And Humanities

**2014, 2015, 2015**: Primary Source Lab Series / Primary Source Workshops for classes in Early Modern History and Literature and History 300 (Basic History Class for incoming History Grad Classes)
4. The Basic Concepts (aka Philosophy)
1. Begin with a physical source
2. Begin with physical properties of the source
3. First gather what you can from the physical properties of the source and brief gleanings of text and/or image
4. Do not worry (at first) (much) about a topic
5. Let topics radiate outwards from the source
6. Let the sources guide you
7. Proceed to the contemporaneous conversation about and around the source
8. Followed by the scholarly conversation
9. View and use resources at library and beyond the library holistically
Lab I: A visit to special collections to converse with a source or several sources, guided by worksheets (preceded by Primer on Special Collections)

Lab II: A visit to the classroom to enter conversation contemporaneous with the Source and the later scholarly conversation

(Lab III: citations, Zotero, other places to look for information)
A primary source is an original document relating to a particular subject, time period, or event. Primary sources enable the researcher to get as close as possible to what actually happened during an historical event or time period. Primary sources were either created during the time period or were created at a later date by a participant in the events (as in the case of memoirs) and reflect the individual viewpoints of a participant or observer. Primary sources are invaluable to the work of the historian in which they were written.

Secondary sources interpret and analyze primary sources.

I. Describe your item:

- **Title:**
- **Basic bibliographic information:**
  - **Author/Creator:**
  - **Position of author/creator:** (if ascertainable)
  - **Publisher:**
  - **Date:**
- **Other information that will be helpful to note, especially if you are not describing a book:**
  - **Archival Institution Name:**
  - **Collection Name:**
  - **Number (Collection Box/Folder):**
  - **Document Type:**
- **Physical description:**
  - **Type of item you have:** (What is the format? Provide a full physical description of your item.)
  - **Are the bibliographic or physical characteristics of your item raise any questions? Is any information missing or complete?**
- **Why did you choose this item for today’s work?**

II. Questioning the primary source:

- **Author/Creator:**
  - If you are able to identify the author/creator, are you familiar with her/him? What do you already know about her/him?
  - What is the relationship of the author/creator to the events and issues described? Does the author/creator have a stake in how the events/issues are remembered? What judgments or assumptions are embedded in his/her choice of words/images/etc.?
  - Does your knowledge of the author/creator create expectations or assumptions you may have about your item?

- **Purpose and argument of the item:**
  - What is the item trying to do? What is the argument? How does it make its case? What is its strategy for accomplishing its goal?
  - Who is the intended audience of the document? How might this influence the author/creator’s rhetoric/strategy?
  - Is there a clear thesis? What is it?
  - In what ways might you read this that wasn’t intended by the author/creator? How would you read this “against the grain”?
III. The Historical Perspective

⇒ Cultural milieu
What do you already know about the cultural milieu surrounding this item? How does this item fit into that environment?

⇒ Audience reaction
Based on your current knowledge of the time, what would audience reactions have been? Have audience reactions been preserved?

⇒ Relationship to other sources
How does this source relate to other materials you are familiar with in your area of research?

IV. The Ultimate Questions

⇒ What have you learned from this source? How have you learned these things?

⇒ What problems does this source present?

⇒ What did you find about this source that surprised you?

⇒ What questions does this item raise? How are these questions related to your research interests?

⇒ What question(s) are, for you, left unanswered?
II. Finding Additional Primary Sources in the Library’s Collections and Beyond

Request Materials from Special Collections
- Create your Reader account in Aera.
- Find an item that interests you in Special Collections. Record the search strategy you used.
- Request that item

Use Library Search to Identity Primary Sources
- Use one or more of the methods demonstrated to find additional sources related to the one you requested in Special Collections.

Use Digital Primary Source Databases to Expand Your Search
These databases, as well as library search, will be useful in finding both items related to your main primary source(s) and contemporary responses to those sources.
- Which digital primary source databases seem likely to produce the best results for your area(s) of interest?

III. Modern Scholarship and the Scholarly Conversation

Use Databases as a Beginning Point
There are many different databases that will allow you to explore modern scholarship on the topic(s) you are researching.

Manage Your Research

IV. Areas for Further Research
Sometimes your research will lead you away from your original intent into new or different directions. As you progress through any research project, here are some questions to keep in mind throughout the process.
- What research questions would you articulate?
- What disciplines would be relevant for researching those questions in your area(s) of interest?
- Based on the disciplines and questions you've identified, what resources might be useful in pursuing research in your areas of interest?
- What research strategies make the most sense at this point?
- As your research progresses, how does your understanding of your research question/direction evolve?

V. Publishing in the Digital Age: Copyright & Open Access
**Research Tools - History 301, Lab 2 / Fall 2014**

**Search tools for primary sources (books, documents, archives, etc.). For a more complete list and more detailed guidance, please see the History Portal:**

- [LibGuides: Libraries, Claremont.edu/HistoryPortal]

**Selected library catalogs and web sites:**

- **Biblio Library Catalog (Includes Special Collections):**
  claremont.edu

- **WorldCat:**
  libraries.claremont.edu/resources/databases/lib.asp?id=0

- **Online Archive of California:**
  www.oarc.org
  www.oarc.org/members/claremont/college

- **BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine):**
  www.base-search.art/abstracts/

- **Gale - Historical American Newspapers**

- **British Library:**
  www.bl.uk

- **Wikipedia Commons:**
  commons.wikimedia.org

- **Internet Archive:**
  archive.org

- **Google Scholar:**
  scholar.google.com

- **Google Books:**
  books.google.com

- **Hemis/Modi Popular Magazine Browsing Collection (Mudc 3 north):**

**Selected databases from the Library’s database list**

- **Early American Imprints**
- **American Periodical Series**
- **Reader’s Guide Retrospective (Index Only):**
- **Frequent Congressional**
- **Making of the Modern World (documents from 1300 – mid-19th century)**

**Historical Newspapers:**

- **Early American Newspapers**
- **Historical New York Times**
- **Historical Los Angeles Times**
- **Times Digital Archive 1785-1985 (Times of London)**
- **Historical Los Angeles Sentinel**
- **Historical San Francisco Chronicle**
- **Historical Chicago Defender**
- **Ethnic NewsWatch**
- **ARTIL – French texts from 12th to 19th centuries**

**Selected databases for modern scholarship**

**Library catalogs**

- **Biblio Library Catalog:**
  libraries.claremont.edu

- **WorldCat:**
  libraries.claremont.edu/resources/databases/lib.asp?id=0

**Main History Databases**

- **America: History & Life (for US and Canadian history)**
- **Historical Abstracts (for the rest of the world)**

**Other Disciplines**

- **Business Databases**
- **Ebsco Academic Search Premier**
- **JSTOR**
- **Project MUSE**

**For science, agriculture, and ecology**

- **Web of Science**
- **Agricola**

**Green File**

- **BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine):**
  www.base-search.art/abstracts/
**Glossary**

**Archive**: a collection of primary source documents that have accumulated over the course of an individual or organization's lifetime materials are generally not organized by standard library classification systems.

**Bookplate**: also known as ex-libris, is usually a small print or decorative label pasted into a book, often on the inside front cover, to indicate its owner.

**Catchword**: a partial or complete word located at the lower outer corner of a page corresponding to the first word of the first line of the following page.

**Chainlines**: the lines left on a sheet of lead paper caused by the pattern of wires in the paper mold.

**Colophon**: a brief statement containing information about the publication of a book such as the place of publication, the publisher, and the date of publication.

**Duodecimo**: a format in which each sheet is typically folded and cut to produce one twelve leaf or one four leaf and one eight leaf gathering.

**Edition**: a version of a book, manuscript, map, art print, or other item of historical value that is as close to the original source as possible.

**Finding Aid**: a document containing detailed information about a specific collection of papers or records within an archive.

**Folio**: a format in which each sheet is folded to produce a two leaf gathering.

**Gutter**: the space between columns of printed text, including the gap at the inner edge of a book where leaves come together and where typically the book is sewn.

**Incunabula (incunabulum; incunable, incunables)**: a book, pamphlet, or broadside that was printed—not handwritten—before the year 1501 in Europe, from the Latin for “swaddling clothes” or “cradle”.

**Justify**: to adjust the spacing of a line of type so that the left, right, or both margins align.

**Leaf**: one piece of paper in a book containing a recto and verso page.

**Ligature**: two or more characters combined into a single type, for example, æ or æ.
5. The Researcher
The Center for Process Studies (CPS) is a research center of Claremont School of Theology, in affiliation with Claremont Graduate University. CPS seeks to promote the common good by means of the relational approach found in process thought. Process thought is based on the work of philosophers Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne, two contemporary examples of a longstanding philosophical tradition that emphasizes becoming and change over static being. Process thought helps to harmonize moral, aesthetic, and religious intuitions with scientific insights. It also grounds discussion between Eastern and Western religious and cultural traditions. Process thought offers an approach to the social, political, and economic order that brings issues of human justice together with a concern for ecology. Our wide range of interests includes multicultural, feminist, ecological, inter-religious, political, and economic concerns.
Process Research
Appendix 12F: The Lab Series & the Framework for Information Literacy

Examples of the Frames seen in the lab series include:

- "Authority is Constructed and Contextual": Students explore the cultural construction of authority through both primary and scholarly sources.
- "Information Creation as a Process": Students consider the creation of information in the primary and secondary sources they work with and begin to develop an awareness of their own creation process.
- Students also engage in deep exploration of the frame "Research as Inquiry" (http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/framework#inquiry), which emphasizes, "experts use inquiry as a process that focuses on problems or questions in a discipline or between disciplines that are open or unresolved."
- Above all students in the labs focus on the frame "Scholarship as Conversation," recognizing that scholarly conversations may extend from the distant past into the present, and will include their own contributions to those conversations.
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“A Story should have
A beginning, a middle and
an end, but not necessarily
in that order”
“Stories are finding the thread of meaning through a collection of memories” –Micaela Blei
Many, Many, Many thanks to:

Carrie Marsh
Gale Burrow
Lisa Crane
Ayat Agah

Any errors in sequence or fact are my own

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