

Digital Local History Activity Resources Sheet

How search works:

- [How Google Search Works](#) (Video time = 3:14)
- [Lab 99, “Limitations of Search Engines”](#) (Estimated Read Time = 5 minutes)
- Dan Russell, [“What was that word again? Effective searching with old terms”](#) (Estimated Reading Time = 10 minutes)

National Repositories

- [American Memory Collection](#) (Library of Congress) With the American Memory Collection, the Library of Congress has created access to over 100 primary source collections, with more than 7 million digital items available online. These collections contain a wealth of information: from photographs and drawings, to oral histories, maps, and sound recordings. There are several ways to locate content within these collections.
- [National Archives and Records Administration](#) (NARA) houses the nation’s archival material, including immigration, military, and census records, maps, films, photographs and more. Only a small portion of these records are available online, but the website may help you to locate material to view in person at one of seventeen [Research Facilities](#).
- [Digital Public Library of America](#) (DPLA) Combining the resources of libraries, archives, museums and other cultural heritage institutions, DPLA is a great resource for digitized documents, images, maps, and other material. Unlike the Library of Congress American Memory Collection or the National Archives and Records Administration, DPLA does not house extensive primary or secondary source collections. Instead, DPLA makes it possible to search across the digitized resources of a [growing list of repositories](#) across the United States.
- [Internet Archive](#) The Internet Archive is a digital library that preserves digital copies of analog sources as well as born-digital sources like websites, software programs, audio recordings, videos, images and more. These collections include digitized archival material contributed by libraries and archives around the world.

- [Smithsonian Collections](#) and the [Smithsonian Open Access](#) collections - a search portal which you can explore the collections of every Smithsonian Museum and collection. The Open Access collections are free to download, share, and reuse.
- [Umbra Search African American History](#). This search tool brings together material related to African American history from more than 1000 US libraries, archives, and museums. It aims to make this material more accessible and to make it easier to draw connections between sources. The sources included in Umbra Search are not always readily identifiable as related to African American history in the collections from which they come. The metadata that describes them often does not identify race and lacks references to historical topics. Staff at Umbra Search have modified and enhanced metadata and added keywords so that materials are included in broad searches for common topics, including the Black Arts Movement, Civil Rights, Diaspora, Politics and Government, Music and Theater, and more.

State Collections and Additional Sources:

- [Library of Congress- Portals to State History](#)– includes links to state and regional digital archives. Created in 2013, this list does not include all the state level collections now available.
- [National History Day](#) affiliates have [compiled local/state level information](#) on historic sites, libraries and museums
- State library collections range widely in scale and scope, and are organized and described in a variety of ways, but the general approaches to search outlined for the national repositories will help you identify primary sources relevant to your local history.
- [Chronicling America](#) (Library of Congress) a searchable database of U.S. newspapers that provides access to historic newspapers and some digitized newspaper pages.
- [Sanborn Maps](#) (Library of Congress and other state level archives) designed to assist fire insurance agents, these detailed maps include information on the shape and size of cities between 1867 and the present.
- [Hathi Trust Digital Library](#) – a library of digitized texts collected from a variety of sources, including Google, Microsoft, and university libraries. Some of the material is still in copyright and only available to users from specific institutions; most is publically available, and can accessed through full-text search.
- [Regional National Archives Research Centers](#) – locate one near you

- **Archive Grid** (OCLC WorldCat) a searchable database of records describing primary source collections held in archives, libraries, museums and historical societies. The database does contain digitized material, but can be used to help you identify local institutions that hold primary source material that might be relevant to your research.
- **Teaching History – National Resources** – collects links for different national resources for history content (from US Coast Guard and National Institutes of Health, to Federal Highway Administration and the Architect of the Capitol). Each page has some framing text and points visitors to content on the site.