



## Tips for Finding Primary Sources

Always check for local resources first. Most states will have their own digitization initiatives for newspapers, archives, or other resources. The resources listed here are the most common, sometimes free, national online resources. If there is a subscription-based service that your institution does not already provide access to, try gaining access through your local library.

Additionally, there are limits to what has been digitized and made available online. There are often many records you can get images of by sending a reference request to the organization/institution that owns the document. If a local government or library/special collection has a document or folder listed in a finding aid online that you think has what you need, reach out by email or phone to ask them if they can send you an image, or allow in-person access. Always check with your local historical society as well- if they don't have the documents you need, they likely know where to find them.

Researching a significant person? Try to find out if a special collection or archive hosts their papers.

[Cyndi's List](#) is a good starting place. As a compiled list of resources by state and source type, the list is a good way to start your search and includes many of the resources mentioned below.

- **Maps** – include date and source of map; use multiple images, if needed. Include a link to an online version if possible.
  - Maps are often available through:
    - [Library of Congress Maps Division](#)
    - [Alabama Maps](#)
    - [David Rumsey Map Collection](#)
    - [Sanborn maps](#) are excellent resources for showing addresses, buildings, etc. between the late 1800s and 1950.
    - [Curiosity Collections](#) at Harvard Library
    - The [Map Collection](#) at Huntington Digital Library
- **U.S. Federal, State and local government census records** – must include copy of original document (no transcripts). Include the full page whenever possible. You must include any date or location information.

- [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)- a great source to find both state and federal censuses. You may need a subscription or institution with access.
  - [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) also has some census records and is free.
- [National Archives](https://www.archives.gov) also has most census records, and a helpful guide to searching for them.
- **Newspaper articles and advertisements**– created at the time event(s) occurred; include header with name and date of newspaper.
  - [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com) is a good resource but may require a subscription, as it is an Ancestry.com related resource.
  - [NewspaperArchive.com](https://www.newspaperarchive.com) is also subscription based, but local libraries may offer access.
  - [Chronicling America](https://www.chroniclingamerica.org) is a free resource from the Library of Congress.
- **Gazetteers, directories, and other publications** – copy of page(s) relevant to marker text, including title page, publisher and publication date of source; please note that local history publications are rarely accepted as primary sources documentation.
  - [Internet Archive](https://www.archive.org) has many of these resources digitized for free. You can “borrow” books on here that are still under copyright, like a digital library.
  - [HathiTrust](https://www.hathiitrust.org), [Google Books](https://books.google.com), and [Library of Congress](https://www.loc.gov) also digitize these resources, especially if a book is old enough to be in the Public Domain and out of copyright.
- **Government records** – copy of the original document; transcriptions not accepted.
  - State Laws and statutes are often available for free by Google searching, found through Google Books or Internet Archive. Your state also likely has its own archive site you can search on. Many local documents (especially deeds prior to the mid-1900s) are going to be in-person access only, or accessible through a reference request sent to the archive.
  - [Congressional Serial Set](https://www.congress.gov)- House and Senate documents going back to the 15<sup>th</sup> congress (1817-1819).
  - [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)- Searchable congressional records. Set the search bar to search “all congresses” and then narrow by date and type of document.
- **Military Records**- including muster rolls, pension applications, etc. Include date, location, and names whenever possible
  - [Fold3.com](https://www.fold3.com), a subsidiary of Ancestry.com. Military records will often show up in Ancestry searches, but going to Fold3 directly allows you to search more precisely by name, war era, etc. If your institution does not have Fold3, try accessing through an Ancestry subscription.

- [FamilySearch.org](https://familysearch.org)- has digitized collections for many state archives, can be a great resource for any genealogy-related records (including military records). Free to use.
- **Life dates, birth, marriage, death records, Wills, Deeds, etc.-** Include full context whenever possible.
  - [Ancestry.com](https://ancestry.com)- can be subscription based, check with your institution or local library for access.
  - [FindAGrave.com](https://findagrave.com)- an Ancestry.com related service. We accept readable photos of original gravestones as primary sources only.
  - [FamilySearch.org](https://familysearch.org)- has digitized collections for many state archives and can be a great resource for any genealogy-related records. Free to use.

## Compiling Sources

Since our online application only has **two upload locations** that allow **one file upload in each**, you will need to compile all the sources you find into one or two files as you do your research. There are a number of ways to do this:

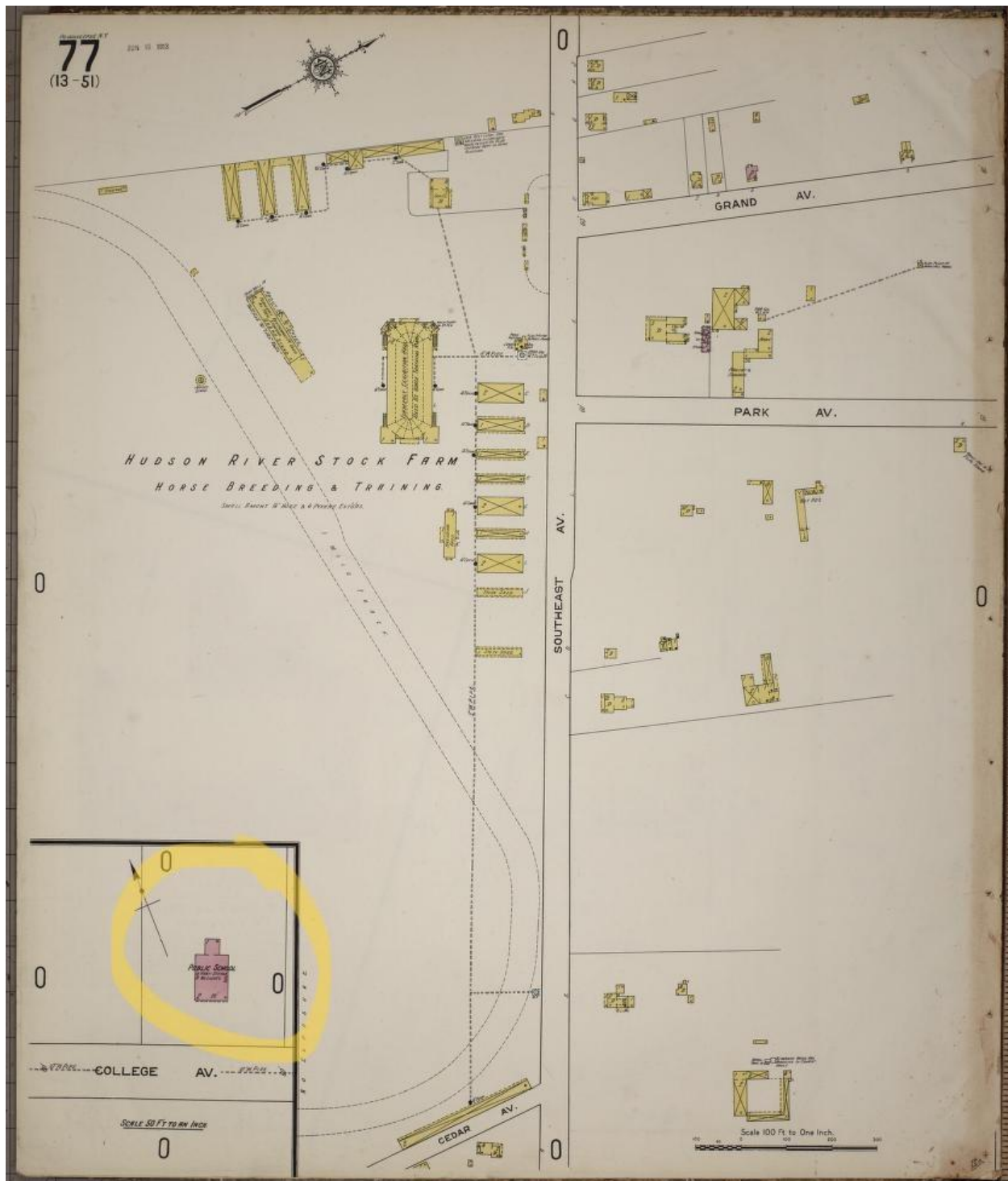
- **Word document:** As you find sources, you can insert screenshots or photos into a Word document along with a link to where you found it or a written explanation of where you got it. If you find the document in-person, take a picture or scan the document you need. Then, insert the image into your compiled Word document and write where you took it so that we have some context. When you have finished compiling all the sources in one document, you can either upload the Word document itself or export it as a PDF and then upload.
  - If you do not have access to Word, you can use Google Docs for free or visit your local library which may be able to offer access.
  - If you compile the sources in a Google Doc, you will have the option of downloading the document as a PDF, which you can then upload to the application.
- **PDF:** If you have multiple documents in PDF form and need to merge them into one file, you can use Adobe Acrobat, or Preview (Mac only).
- **ZIP file:** You can upload a ZIP file to the two locations on the application. To create a ZIP file, you select all the documents/files you want to have in the ZIP file by holding the shift key and clicking on them. Then, right click on the selected documents. On a Windows computer, you then select “Compress to” and then “ZIP file”. On a Mac, after you right click select “compress”. You can then upload the ZIP file to the application.

If you try to upload more than one file in one of the upload locations, it will remove the previous file and not submit it.

The following pages include some examples of the most commonly found and used sources, with tips on how to format them for submitting.

An example of a 1913 Sanborn map found on the Library of Congress site. The relevant building is circled, and a link to the online map was included because the resolution of the image is low, and the map can't be read easily if you zoom in. This shows the public school was at this location as early as 1913.

[https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3804pm.g3804pm\\_g061921913/?sp=87](https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3804pm.g3804pm_g061921913/?sp=87)



An example of a Civil War Muster Roll Abstract, found on Fold3. This includes the soldiers name, dates of service, and companies served in.

N. J. *Pay Roll 812* *Watkins, Charles F.* 1553

ENLISTED.										MUSTERED IN.				
AGE.		WHEN.			WHERE.		PERIOD YEARS.	WHEN.			GRADE.	COMPY.	REG'T.	
YEARS.	DAY.	MONTH.	YEAR.			DAY.		MONTH.	YEAR.					
23	<del>29</del> 24	May	1861	Warsaw	Hardwick City	2	24	May	1861	Camp	K/7	Inf.		
LEFT THE ORGANIZATION.														
HOW.		WHEN.			IN WHAT GRADE.		EXPLANATION.							
DAY.	MONTH.	YEAR.												
2	June	1863	Priv.	with Co.										
REMARKS: Promoted Corp, July - 1862; reduced to ranks - prior to Oct. 31, 1862. Name also borne as 'Charles F. Watkins'. Paid by the State from May 20-24/61 - 2 <sup>10</sup> . In Hosp. M.R. April 10/63.														
J.R. Born in Michigan age 23. Residence, Warsaw N.Y.														



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Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to infants. Inquiries numbered 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 are to be answered (if at all) merely by an affirmative mark, as /.

SCHEDULE 1.—Inhabitants in Winston Township, in the County of Winston, State of N. Carolina, enumerated by me on the 14 day of June, 1870.

Post Office: Winston N.C. E. J. Snider, Ass't Marshal.

1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			4	5	6		8	9		11	12								
1		John	17	11	11	Winston	V		N. Carolina										
2		Mary	15	11	11	at home													
3		Robert	13	11	11	"													
4		Daniel	10	11	11	"													
5		John	9	11	11	"													
6		John	7	11	11	"													
7		James	2	11	11	"													
8	11111	Thomas	50	11	11	Winston	V												
9		Robert	40	11	11	Winston													
10		John	10	11	11	Winston	V												
11		John	10	11	11	"	V												
12		John	11	11	11	"	V												
13		John	9	11	11	"													
14		John	7	11	11	"													
15		John	1	11	11	"													
16	11111	James	30	11	11	Winston	V												
17		James	10	11	11	Winston													
18		John	20	11	11	Winston	V												
19		John	21	11	11	"	V												
20		John	14	11	11	"	V												
21		John	14	11	11	"	V												
22		John	14	11	11	"	V												
23		John	11	11	11	"	V												
24		John	9	11	11	at home													
25		John	4	11	11	"													
26		John	1	11	11	"													
27	11111	John	21	11	11	Winston	V												
28		John	10	11	11	Winston													
29		John	11	11	11	at home													
30		John	9	11	11	at home													
31	11111	John	10	11	11	Winston	V												
32		John	10	11	11	Winston													
33		John	10	11	11	Winston	V												
34		John	10	11	11	"	V												
35		John	11	11	11	at home													
36		John	10	11	11	at home													
37		John	21	11	11	at home					</								



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