Tale 2: Primary Sources from the Inside Out:

Discovering Uncharted Territory
The Inspiration

- Growth in primary source assignments
  - History—military, medical, women, Oregon, etc.
  - Journalism—early journalism, documentaries
  - Theater—dramaturgy course
  - Honors College—thesis projects, HC421
- Intimidation factor
- Challenging to find
The Idea: Inside

Students become better researchers by studying and practicing basic archival work

- Learn what to expect to find in a collection
- Think about likely repositories for an item
- Understand structure of standard research tools
- Learn how to treat original documents by studying preservation & handling originals
The Idea: Outside

Students become better researchers by practicing research & writing

- Consider different media
- Hear practitioners’ stories
- Research strategies
- Assessing sources
- Put them in their historical context
Background Research

- Looked for similar classes
- Library/archival course syllabi
- History course syllabi
- Searched for articles in databases on:
  - Education
  - Library science & archival theory
  - History
Marketing

- Identified relevant departments
- Used department & program e-mail lists
- Created & distributed fliers
- Visited classes
- Word of mouth
The Students

- 12 students
- Sophomore to Senior
- 1st time—mix of lit, history, journalism, etc.
- 2nd time—more history majors
- Reasons for taking class varied
Revised Edition

- Reduced archival work
  - Still had hands-on experience with manuscripts
  - Reduced required visits to Special Collections

- Emphasized paper & presentation
  - Greater freedom in selecting research topic
  - More time to focus on research
In Class

Theoretical topics

- Collective memory
- Access & Censorship
- Ethics of primary source research
- The future of primary sources
Select Exercises

- Evidence of your life
  - What will be preserved & how
  - Makes primary sources concrete
- Frémont expedition accounts
  - Different perspectives of writers & their authority
  - Intended audience of a primary source
- Ethical dilemmas
  - Return of stolen artwork
  - Preservation vs. ownership rights
Assignments

- Read history article & analyze use of sources
- Analyze
  - Diary
  - Photo
  - Recording
- Final project in several segments
  - Preliminary topic, final topic, intro/outline, bibliography
  - Final presentation
Student Projects

- All-American Girls Professional Baseball League
- Founding of Astoria, Oregon
- The Black Panthers in Eugene
- 1st woman sports reporter for *Daily Emerald*
- The *real* Joseph Lane
- The Rogue River War
Unexpected Issues

- Students had little writing experience
  - Added guides to historical writing
  - Handed out writing tips
- Courseware experience varied widely
  - Profs use at many different levels
  - Some students wanted more online, some less
My eyes were opened to the abundance of primary document info available… I learned a ton.

I wish I would have taken this class earlier… it would have helped me with so many projects and papers.

This class would be great for anyone preparing to take Information Gathering [journalism requirement]
What Next

- LIB399 becomes LIB323
- Field trips with lectures
- Continue to revise reading list
- Discuss disciplines outside of history
- Incorporate more teaching effectiveness tips
- Assign students to lead class discussions
Further Information

- **LIB323 Home Page & Reading List**
  http://libweb.uoregon.edu/courses/lib323heather/
  http://libweb.uoregon.edu/courses/lib323heather/reading.html

- **NARA Analysis Worksheets**
  http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/

- **Research Using Primary Sources**
  http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/history/primary.html
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