Primary and Secondary Sources

**PRIMARY SOURCE** - A first-hand or eye witness account of an event; newspaper stories, reports of experiments, government documents, autobiographies, statistics, field research reports, and letters. A primary source enables a researcher to get a clear picture of what actually happened during an historical event or a particular time period.

**SECONDARY SOURCE** - A source that analyzes, relates, evaluates, or criticizes based on information gathered from primary sources. Textbooks, encyclopedias, or recently published articles on historical topics are examples of secondary sources.

Web Links to primary sources:
National Archives: [http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/teaching.html](http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/teaching.html)
American Memory: [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/amhome.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/amhome.html)

To find primary sources in Holy Spirit Library use CAVALOG ([http://cavalog.cabrini.edu](http://cavalog.cabrini.edu))

Search under the **people, groups, organizations, or agencies**.

Example: a **subject** search on Richard Milhous Nixon retrieves:

- *KF27 .J8 1974h*
  *Impeachment inquiry : hearings before the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Ninety-third Congress, second session, pursuant to H. Res. 803*

Example: an **author** search on the National Conference of Catholic Bishops retrieves:

- *BX1795.E27 C37 1986*

For assistance in finding primary sources or identifying subject headings or corporate authors: Ask a Librarian