

Multiple Perspectives

Accessing Point of View in Primary Sources



BUT, IS IT TRUE?

(A QUESTION WE HEAR FROM STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ALIKE!)

Oral histories and ethnographic materials help present complicated issues and topics by comparing and contrasting life experiences, voices, and vantage points. Although they do often reflect historical truth, primary sources are valued as powerful reference points for understanding individual and community perspectives on memory, meaning, and identity.

PROCESS

Our testing suggests that students learning perspective through Primary Sources need 3 modules to scaffold learning:

Context (know where oral history interviews and documentation come from, and identify prior knowledge student brings to items)

Engagement (listen, observe, read, challenge)

Interpretation (identify multiple perspectives and the relationships between diverse narratives)

LEARNING GOALS

Learning through Oral Histories offers multiple skill sets, including:

- Interpreting historical and cultural contexts
- Knowing that the interview that collects the material which becomes a primary source is not neutral
- Learning ethnographic tools to conduct student research projects.

PLACEMAKING PERSPECTIVES: DOWNTOWN OKLAHOMA CITY

ACCESS DENIED

“If you could walk with me through the streets of Oklahoma City [...] You could not try on shoes. She [grandmother] had to take some thread and tie a knot in it to determine the size shoe that she would buy for me to wear. (Marilyn Luper Hildreth)

MOBILITY BRIDGE

“And the shoes, the way Big Mama used to have to do it, but I think she left out the part about how Big Mama would-the buses would change there in front of John A. Brown’s [...] and she’d ride the bus down there and then change over to catch it. [...] And that’s early in the morning and in the evening. (Calvin Luper)

THE TEAM

Lisa Rathje (Local Learning), Autumn Brown & Sarah Milligan (Oklahoma State University), Andy Kolovos, & Mary Wesley (Vermont Folklife), Ellen McHale (New York Folklife), & Guha Shankar (American Folklife Center)

LEARN MORE AT

<https://JFEpublications.org>, a publication of Local Learning and <https://locallearningnetwork.org/TPS>

ARCHIVIST PERSPECTIVES: A STORY OF TWO CAPTIONS



CAN YOUR STUDENTS CRITICALLY DISCERN MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN PRIMARY SOURCE ELEMENTS? (SAME PHOTO WITH DIFFERENT CAPTION LABELS IN TWO ARCHIVES)

1

A group of Caucasian men in a car during the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. One man stands on the car's running board. One man at the rear carries a rifle or shotgun.

2

A group of armed white rioters in a car with one occupant holding a gun and another man standing on the running board from the Tulsa Race Massacre, 1921.

NAMING PERSPECTIVES: LOCAL TO GLOBAL

“I prefer to call it, in retrospect, the Southern Freedom Movement, because it was not only a movement for civil rights, but it was also a movement for human dignity. [...] I think that when you limit it to ‘civil rights’ you obscure, first of all, the horrors of segregation. [...] you obscure the long hard years of Black struggle and the blood and sacrifice that we have poured into that struggle. (Ruby Nell Sales)

