

HHM Pre-Field Trip History Detective Activity: What Sources do Historians Use?

At the Harbor History Museum students will discover many different types of sources of historical information. We use different sources to tell the most complete and accurate story we can. Investigating different sources helps historians find lots of clues about what happened and prompts them to ask more questions and follow new lines of research. Different sources also help us find out what evidence supports what we know and what contradicts it.

Some of the sources historians use are: artifacts, drawings, paintings, photographs, ephemera, books, periodicals, interviews, diaries, letters, maps, electronic media, and official and other documents. These can be primary or secondary sources. Primary sources are original documents and objects created during the time under investigation. Secondary sources are interpretations created by someone who was not there. It's important to point out to your students that all these materials from different places and times in the past tell the stories of the lives of people – that is what historians investigate. The value of an artifact is in the story it tells about the person that used it.

Introduction

To prepare for your visit to HHM tell your students that you are going to learn about artifacts, images, ephemera, and maps.

- Artifact: A three-dimensional object made or used by humans. (It does not have to be old!)
- Images: Drawings, paintings, and photographs.
- Ephemera: Printed items, usually made of paper, which are only used for a short time. (Examples: tickets, posters, advertisements)
- Maps: There are many kinds of maps – political boundary maps, nautical charts, topographical maps, resource maps, etc.

Vocabulary

Read the following list out loud one by one and have the students say “Artifact,” “Image,” “Ephemera,” “Map,” or “Other” after each one. Discuss why they do or do not fit each category.

- A gathering basket from the Puyallup Tribe (Artifact)
- A ferry ticket from 1939 (Ephemera)
- A video of loggers working in a forest (Other)
- A photo of the fishing boat *Shenandoah* (Image)
- An overhead view diagram showing where all of the original settler homesteads in the area were (Map)

- The book *Too Many Fish!* (Other)
- A poster advertising rooster races (Ephemera)
- Your shoes (Artifact)
- A chart showing the depth of the water in the Narrows (Map)
- A letter an immigrant sent back to her family in Norway (Other)
- A painting of Mt. Rainier (Image)

Activity

Give each student the page of pictures of items and a blank piece of paper. Instruct them to cut out each item and sort them into Artifact, Ephemera, Image or Map and glue them on the blank sheet under the labels. Note: these are all primary sources. (Hint: there are three objects in each category). Have the students work in small groups as they complete their own sheet and discuss their reasoning with each other. Then go over the answers as a whole class (using the PowerPoint Pre-Visit Activity Slideshow) and discuss why an object fits a certain category. Alternatively, use the PowerPoint on these different sources as whole-class activity.

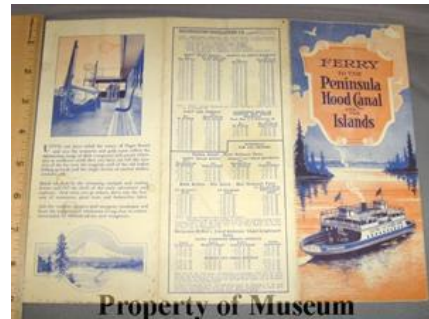
When you come to the museum look for the different types of items and note how these objects connect to people's stories in different places and times. Be sure to discuss what you saw afterward and how we can learn from all the different sources of information.

ARTIFACT

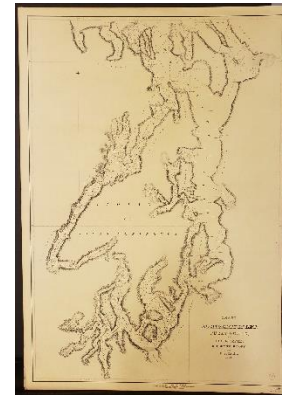
IMAGE

EPHEMERA

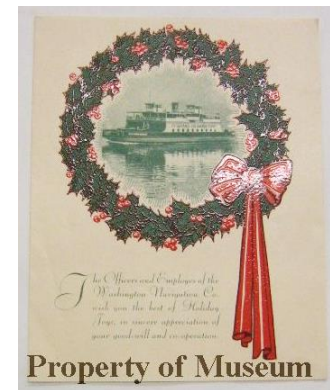
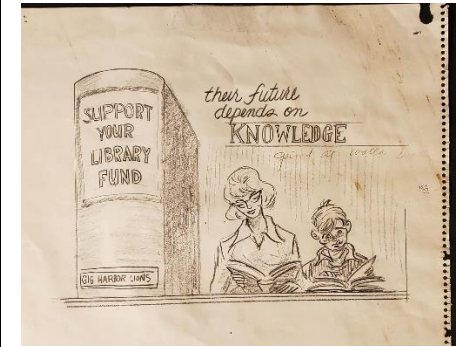
MAP



Property of Museum



Property of Museum



Property of Museum






Property of Museum






Artifacts

Teacher reference

	<p>Object Name: Basket Description: Coiled grass Native American basket. Brown and maroon design, Quinault. Natural dry grass. Dimensions: H-11.5 Dia-8 Cir-35.5 inches Collection: Native American People: Wheeler, Verna Search Terms: Native American Subjects: Native American; Baskets; Design; Islands Lexicon category: 7: Distribution & Transportation Artifact Lexicon sub-category: Container Material: Grass Catalog Number: 1977.004.002.001</p>
	<p>Object Name: Needle Description: Hand Carved Seine Needle, with twine Dimensions: W-1.25 L-9.75 inches Collection: Commercial Fishing People: Malich Search Terms: Commercial Fishing commercial fishermen Nets, Fishing Net mending Subjects: Needlework; Fishing nets; Thread Cotton Lexicon category: 4: T&E For Materials Lexicon sub-category: Leather, Horn, Shellworking T&E Catalog Number: 1985.020.002</p>
	<p>Object Name: Anchor, Net Description: Sea anchor from the purse seiner Victory, built in 1919 at Western Boat in Tacoma. Owners included Tony Gilich and Tony Novak. It sank off Grays Harbor in 2002. Dimensions: H-9 W-11.25 D-12.75 inches People: Gilich, Donald Search Terms: Fishing Subjects: fishing; tools; anchors Lexicon category: 4: T&E For Materials Lexicon sub-category: Fishing & Trapping T&E Catalog Number: 1988.009.004</p>

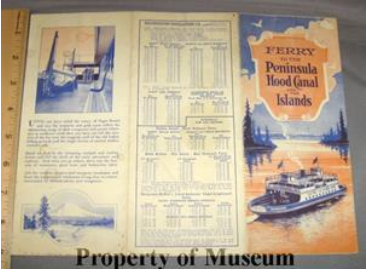


Images

Teacher reference

	<p>Object Name: Drawing Date: 1996 Description: Pencil drawing "Support Your Library Fund" – their future depends on knowledge. Sponsored by Gig Harbor Lions Club Search Terms: Library fund; Lions Club Subjects: Libraries Lexicon sub-category: Documentary Artifact Lexicon category: 8: Communication Artifact Catalog Number: 2016.001.045</p>
	<p>Object Name: Painting Artist: James Petrich Description: Oil painting of Spiro Babich's purse seiner <i>Julia B</i> and other fishing boats at the Salmon Banks. People: Spiro Babich; James Petrich Search Terms: Babich; <i>Julia B</i>; Salmon banks; Petrich Subjects: fishing boats; purse seiners, fishing Lexicon sub-category: Documentary Artifact Lexicon category: 8: Communication Artifact Catalog Number: 2006.050.005</p>
	<p>Object Name: Print, Photographic Date: 1889 - 1896 Description: View of a launch at Young's Landing People: Burnham; George McDowell Search Terms: Young's Landing Subjects: Photography; transportation Lexicon sub-category: Documentary Artifact Lexicon category: 8: Communication Artifact Written on verso: "Note on original by Biz Burnham – Indian Shanties – Start of the City of Gig Harbor in 1888 – Left of Picture – Indian Ground Potlatch House (Indian Meeting House) Now Austin's sawmill – Youngs Landing and First Post office Now Union Dock (in 2021 it is the county boat launch)- *George McDonald or McDowell in the Foreground *Nick Burnham said (1957) that the name was McDowell" Catalog Number: 1972. 006.004.002</p>

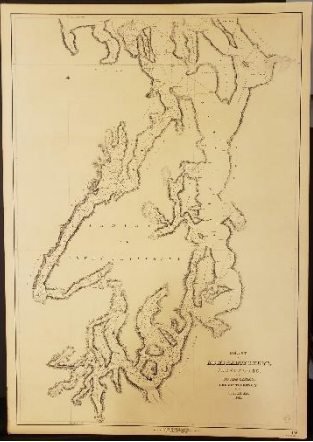
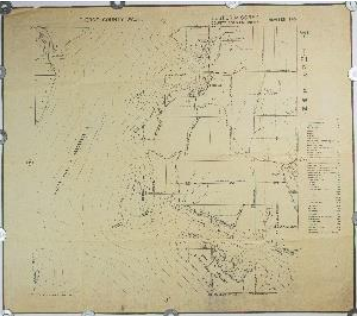

Ephemera

Teacher reference

	<p>Object Name: Promotion Date: Pre-1939 Scope & Content: Map, schedule, & brochure, Ferry to the Peninsula, Hood Canal and the Islands, WA Navigation Co. (Size: trifold open - 12" w x 9" h) Catalog type: Archive Collection: Shaw, C.E. People: Rockwell Search Terms: Ferries; Ferry Schedule Subjects: Books; Maps; Navigation Lexicon category: 8: Communication Artifact Lexicon sub-category: Advertising Medium Catalog Number: 1989.025.017</p>
	<p>Object Name: Documents Scope & Content: Poster announcing the Annual Skandia Midsommar-fest Catalog type: Archive Search Terms: Scandia Gaard Skandia Folkdance Society Subjects: Folkdance; midsommar Lexicon category: 8: Communication Artifact Catalog Number: 2004.001.176</p>
	<p>Object Name: Card Scope & Content: Holiday card from Washington Navigation Co., blank inside, cover shows drawing of ferry Skansonia, circled by wreath and ribbon Catalog type: Archive Search Terms: Washington Navigation Company Skansie, Mitchell Skansonia Subjects: Christmas cards; Ferries Lexicon category: 4: T&E For Materials Lexicon sub-category: Leather, Horn, Shellworking T&E Catalog Number: 2005.004.001</p>

Maps

Teacher reference

	<p>Object Name: Map Date: 1841 Scope & Content: Map from the U.S. Exploring Expedition under the command of Lt. Charles Wilkes. Mounted on fiberboard. Admiralty Inlet, Puget Sound, and Hoods Canal, Oregon Territory – NOAA Chart No. 146. Catalog type: Map Creator: U.S. Ex. Ex. Title: Chart of Admiralty Inlet, Puget Sound, and Hoods Canal, Oregon Territory Publisher: U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Search Terms: Wilkes Expedition; U.S. Ex. Ex.; Puget Sound Subjects: Maps Lexicon category: 8: Communication Artifact Lexicon sub-category: Documentary Artifact Catalog Number: 2014.049.003</p>
	<p>Object Name: Map Date: 1943 Scope & Content: Map of west Gig Harbor peninsula, part of Fox Island, and Glencove. Sections and roads. Catalog type: Map Creator: Lester M. Corey, County Road Engineer Title: Pierce County Map Pub Place: Pierce County, Washington Search Terms: Pierce County; roads; Gig Harbor Subjects: Maps Lexicon category: 8: Communication Artifact Lexicon sub-category: Documentary Artifact Catalog Number: 2000.051.001</p>
	<p>Object Name: Map Date: 1994 Scope & Content: Map of historical Fox Island. Includes historical photos. Catalog type: Map Creator: George Miller and George Weis Title: Fox Island Historical Map Publisher: Fox Island Historical Society Search Terms: Fox Island; Carr Inlet; Hale Passage Subjects: Maps Lexicon category: 8: Communication Artifact Lexicon sub-category: Documentary Artifact Catalog Number: 1997.010.001</p>