DEEP DIVE INTO DIGITAL CONTENT: MINNESOTA REFLECTIONS PRIMARY SOURCE SETS

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Greta Bahnemann,
Metadata Librarian, Minitex

Jennifer Hootman,
DASH Program Associate,
University of Minnesota Libraries
“HEY, YOU GOT YOUR CHOCOLATE IN MY PEANUT BUTTER!”
Students and researchers at all levels are in need of greater access to digitized primary sources and their context.

We manage and promote a digital collection of hundreds of thousands of primary sources and serve as a hub of the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) which has been creating their own Primary Source Sets.

Minnesota Reflections
Primary Source Sets
WHAT IS MINNESOTA REFLECTIONS?

• 180 contributing organizations from across the state of Minnesota

• Non-profit, cultural-heritage organizations

• Contents: photographs, postcards, diaries, letters, journals, course catalogs, maps, atlases, oral histories, short subject films, newsletters, and much more
WHAT ARE DPLA’S PRIMARY SOURCE SETS?

Japanese American Internment During World War II
Primary Source Set

By Jeromy Abbott, Digital Public Library of America

WHAT ARE DPLA’S PRIMARY SOURCE SETS?

WHAT ARE DPLA’S PRIMARY SOURCE SETS?
THE CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL TEAM

The Writers & Developers

Greta Bahnemann
Jennifer Hootman
Rita Baladad
Beth Staats
Lizzy Baus
Carla Urban

Administrative Sponsor

Jolie Graybill

Web Developer & IT Support

Scott Hreha
WHAT ARE MINNESOTA REFLECTIONS PRIMARY SOURCE SETS?

• Curated sets of primary sources on a Minnesota-specific topic.
• Designed to help students develop critical thinking skills.
• Encourages students to further research the topic.
• Brings together Minnesota resources in new ways for researchers.
• Provides educators with primary sources and tools for teaching them.
THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

Each Minnesota Reflections Primary Source Set begins with a brief historical overview – positioning the topic in its time, place, and significance.

Context provides an understanding of content and its meaning.

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why

Understanding context ensures accurate application and use of the source material.
ENCOURAGING FURTHER RESEARCH

Electronic Library for Minnesota Resources (for Minnesota residents)


Additional Resources for Research


Tapping Into Existing Online Resources

- ELM for Minnesota residents
- Additional resources
  - Library of Congress
  - National Archives
  - Smithsonian
  - Minnesota Historical Society
  - DPLA (Primary Source Sets, Service & Content Hubs)
  - New York Public Library
  - PBS
  - Universities
TEACHING GUIDES

• Provides teachers with a starting place for discussion questions and classroom activities.

• Each set includes at least 2 discussion questions and 1 activity – some include many more.

Teaching Guide: Morgan Park: U. S. Steel's Company Town in Duluth, Minnesota

This teaching guide helps instructors use a specific primary source set, Morgan Park: U. S. Steel’s Company Town in Duluth, Minnesota, in the classroom. It offers discussion questions, classroom activities, and primary source analysis tools. It is intended to spark pedagogical creativity by giving a sample approach to the material. Please feel free to share, reuse, and adapt the resources in this guide for your teaching purposes.

Discussion Questions
1. What do company towns tell us about the companies themselves? Their attitudes towards their workers?
2. Look at the photograph of the curling rink in the Morgan Park Clubhouse Building. Discuss how U. S. Steel adapted their company town model to Minnesota’s people, culture and interests.
3. Why did Morgan Park own its own general store? Do you think the prices at this store were more or less than what you would pay at a store in downtown Duluth?
4. What could happen to workers and their status within Morgan Park if the workers went on strike?

Classroom Activities
1. Assign the class the job of planning their own planned community. This should be a community for everyone in the class to live in. What would it include and why? What would be left out? What rules would be implemented? What happens when someone breaks the rules?
2. Set up a classroom debate. Discuss the pros and cons of living in planned community. What are the advantages of living in a company town? What are the disadvantages of living in a company town?
3. Assign students different roles associated with Morgan Park: a U. S. Steel worker, the child of a steel worker, the manager of the general store in Morgan Park, the head of Minnesota Steel Company, a minister at a Morgan Park church, a doctor or nurse at the Morgan Park Hospital. Conduct a series of mock interviews. Ask each member of the Morgan Park community about their lives. Expectations? Roles? Responsibilities?

Send us feedback about this primary source set
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LET’S DIVE IN!
GOALS OF THE PROJECT

- Influence research → Strengthen students’ research efforts (e.g., research papers, digital projects, presentations, History Day, etc.)

- Influence teaching → Strengthen educators’ efforts in using primary source sets in the classroom

- Expand access & use of existing resources → Putting already digitized content and online resources together in new and different ways for users
NEXT STEPS

• Collect feedback and usage data on current work (Phase 1)
• Continue to promote current sets (Phase 1)

• Launch Phase 2 (Fall 2016):
  1. Add more Primary Source Sets
  2. Invite guest authors to curate and write a primary source set on current collections in Minnesota Reflections
  3. Invite contributors to submit curated collections to Minnesota Reflections and write an accompanying primary source set