Find Primary Sources

For information about primary sources, go to: Research by Subject → Primary Sources

Primary source material will vary from topic to topic. It may be a diary, correspondence, newspaper accounts, a law, a debate in Parliament, editorials, a photo, etc. from the period of study, as well as electronic, microfilm, and printed collections of these documents published at a later date.

1. Use QCAT

Search QCAT to find books, government documents, and magazine/newspaper titles from the time period about which you are writing as well as published documents and collections.

A. Search by Subject or Keyword

You may locate items in the library by searching QCAT using a keyword Boolean search and then adding one of the special subject terms to your search: correspondence, diaries, interviews, pamphlets, personal narratives, sources, etc. Also browse subject headings and look for these special subject terms.

(kingston or ontario) and women and history and sources

B. Look up Historical Figures, Organizations, and Agencies...

If you know of a person, etc. involved in the event or from the time period, try looking under that person’s name, etc. as an author (or subject) for memoirs, diaries, and correspondence.

C. Limit by Date

Using Advanced Search, search QCAT by topic and limit your results to find materials published during the time period about which you are writing. Beside Date enter the desired date range. You can also sort results by publication date (earliest to most recent).

2. Use Journal and Newspaper Indexes Covering the Time Period

Newspapers are a good source of primary information. Stauffer Library has a good collection of Canadian newspapers from the 19th and early 20th centuries on microfilm (located on the lower level).

To find out what newspapers the Library has, search QCAT by newspaper title or by subject heading:

Search: british whig within: Journal Title
Search: kingston ont newspapers within: Subject Heading

Since the majority of newspapers do not have an index, consider using one of the full text electronic indexes listed below to pinpoint dates. Access these resources via the tab, Databases.

The Globe and Mail 1844 - excluding latest 3-4 years
Toronto Star 1894 - excluding latest 3-4 years
Journals published at the time are another type of primary source. To locate 19th and early 20th century Canadian journal literature, consult the following indexes/databases:

- Libris Canadiana
- Early Canadiana Online (includes CIHM (Cdn Institute for Historical Microreproductions))

Some Canadian magazine titles from the time period:

- Canadian Magazine of Politics, Science, Art, and Literature, 1893-1939
  (online 1893-1900, title: Canadian Magazine)
- Maclean's, 1921- in print and on microfilm from 1905-
- Saturday Night, 1887- on microfilm

City directories of Kingston can also be found by searching QCAT by subject:

- kingston ont directories

One title that is of interest is the Kingston and District City Directory, found in Special Collections (Genealogy corner).

3. Use Special Collections

Visit the W. D. Jordan Special Collections Library located on the second floor of Douglas Library. The collection is especially strong in Canadian historical and literary studies pre- and post-Confederation. Contact Lucinda Walls for assistance: lucinda.walls@queensu.ca.

Find Secondary Sources

Secondary sources, scholarly journal articles and books, are a great source for identifying potential primary sources. Find relevant articles and books and then look at the footnotes and bibliography. Then search the library catalogue to determine if we have the primary source.

To find books on your topic in QCAT, use either a keyword or subject search. If you know the correct subject heading, you can do a subject search. Sometimes you can guess the correct subject heading but in other cases, you will have to do a keyword search. Think of the words that best describe your topic and then connect with Boolean operators: AND, OR NOT.

Search by Subject

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital punishment Ontario History</th>
<th>Law Canada History</th>
<th>Ontario Social conditions 19th century</th>
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<td>Courts Canada</td>
<td>Kingston Ont History</td>
<td>Police Canada</td>
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You might want to check the annual publication of the Kingston Historical Society, Historic Kingston. Indexes to this journal are shelved at F5499.K5H3 in SCLP. A partial list of the table of contents can be found at www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca/historic_kingston.html.

As well check this bibliography at kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca/bibliography.html.

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Learning and Research Services
Stauffer Library
Winter 2013