

# Be a Historian

A historian studies things that happened in the past. They are like detectives. They look for clues to figure out what happened and why it happened.

They use both primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources are records made by people who saw an event when it happened. Photographs, diaries, newspaper articles, and letters are primary sources.

Secondary sources are records written by someone who was not there at the time. Town and county histories and textbooks are secondary sources.

Now it's your turn to be a historian. Look at each of these and think like a historian.

## Example #1

Sometimes historians find objects and they try to find out who, what, when, where, why, and how they were used.

Who would have used this?

What is this?

When would it have been used?

Where would it have used it?

Why was it used?

How was it used?

What were the clues that helped you?



## Example #2

### Helen M. Parr Memories of Maple Rapids Area

It was pretty near wilderness when my folks first settled on their place... We lived in what was called a double log house with a shake roof with a porch across the whole length of the house. Two front doors with wooden latches and hinges. There was a big fireplace in the south end of the kitchen.

We youst to have the Fourth of July celebrations there because it was the biggest house there was anywhere around. The neighbors went in together and cooked for the dinner. I remember one Fourth of July they brought milk to our house about four weeks before the Fourth for my mother to make cheese for dinner. I tell you they got some lovely dinners in them days. I tell you I liked them old pioneer days.

We didn't have much fruit them days except wild fruit, which was plenty. Strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, huckleberries, gooseberries, wild plums, and cranberries. You could go and get berries anytime in the season and preserve and dry them for winter. They didn't know anything about canning them days, but I think I lived just as well as I do now.

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What kind of source is this?

What is Helen Parr describing?

When were these events?

Where were these events?

What would a historian learn from reading this?

Example #3



What kind of source is this?

What is happening in this photo?

When and where do you think this photo was taken?

What are the clues?



What is different?

What is at the end of the street?

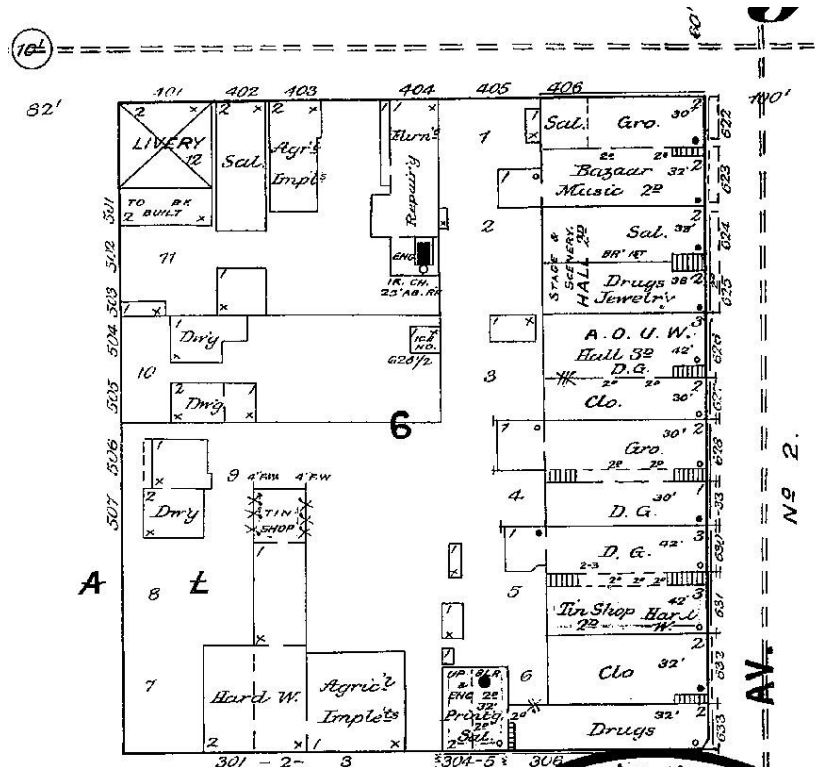
How did historians know this was the same street?

Here is a map of the same location.

Did you see a music store on the first photograph?

Can you find the same store on this map?

Historians would use other sources to make sure they were right.



## Example #4



Here's a photo of the kids at a one-room school.

What would a historian look at to decide the year it was taken?

How is this school different from yours?

What can you tell about the kids who went to school here?

## Example #5

Here are photographs of the same location taken at different times.



What happened/changed?

Why do you think it happened?

How could you find out why these changes took place?

