What are Primary Sources?

Primary sources are documents or artifacts created during a historical event or by someone who personally witnessed a historical event.

Primary sources can take many forms, including:

* First-hand accounts—oral histories, memoirs, diaries, letters, interviews, etc.
* Media accounts—newspaper or television report
* Political or legal documents—Congressional
* Records, Presidential Papers, Court rulings,
* Speeches, census or tax records
* Artistic works—Photographs, paintings, sculptures, films
* Artifacts—clothing, buildings, pottery

All primary sources, except first-hand accounts, must have been created at the time of the historical event that you are researching.

First-hand accounts must be an explanation of the historical event that you’re researching by someone who personally witnessed the event.