

Suggested Questions for a Discussion or a Written Assignment:

Newspapers

- How do you feel about the people in the stories? Why?
- Do you agree/disagree with what the author wrote? Why?
- What are the conditions or motivations contributing to the attitudes or values being portrayed in the articles?
- Were there any words, use of language that you found surprising or interesting? Why?
- What are some of the attitudes and values presented in the article?
- What are the social issues presented? What, if any, economic interests are at stake?
- Does the author make assumptions? Does the author show a bias in the report?
- What impact do you think these articles might have had on the people in the stories?
- What impact do you think these articles had on the larger community?
- What do these articles tell you about the prevailing cultural norms of the time? Did everyone share these values? How much can we determine the answer to this question from this type of source?
- What information do you think would be important to have to develop a fuller understanding of the article's contents that is not provided in the article itself?
- Is there anything in the article that you think you should or might want to follow up with? What? Where would you go or whom would you ask to find it?
- What would you do to develop an understanding of the context for this article? [Context refers to things like the time and place the article was written and published, the source of the information – this usually refers to the author *and* publisher but there were no bylines in tabloid papers so we can only look at the publisher -- and the intended audience.]

Find some newspaper articles from the communities that your family members have historically been a part of. What information did you find in these articles that surprised you? What information didn't surprise you? What did you learn about the cultural/social/political/economic realities of that particular location and period of time? What has changed between that time period and the current day? How do you identify that change from the information gathered in the newspapers?

Oral (interviews)

- What might the bias be of the interviewer?
- What might the bias be of the person(s) being interviewed?
- What might be the motivations of the person(s) being interviewed?
- How might the motives of the interviewer and interviewee(s) influence the content of the interview?
- What questions do you think were not asked of the interviewee(s)? Why do you think these questions are missing?

What, if anything, can you tell or do you know about the circumstances of the interview(s)?

Did you believe the interviewee(s)? Why/why not?

What is the overall tone of the discussion(s)? On what basis do you make this judgment?

If you were the researcher, what might you do to authenticate the interview(s)?

Write three follow-up questions you'd like to ask of the interviewee.

Has this interviewer brought up anything that you think deserves further investigation?

How do you know what is and is not historically important in this interview?

How would you describe the interviewer's technique of interviewing? Do you think it was effective? Were there weaknesses in her or his techniques?

Conduct an interview with an older family member about an aspect of their life such as work experiences, combining work and family, family life, travel experiences, and so on. Reflect on the interview experience by evaluating the following parameters: Overall mood/tone; location of the interview; your own biases; types of questions asked; types of questions not asked; and overall discussion. Create a mind-map brainstorming how you might authenticate this interview.

Photographs

Why was this photograph created?

What do you notice about the subjects in the photo, e.g. their mood, style of dress, posture, and so on?

What do you notice about the landscape?

What do you think is missing from the frame?

What are the relations of the persons in the image? How can you tell?

What is the socio-economic situation of the people in the photos? How can you tell?

Where was this photo being taken? What is significant about this location?

Who do you think took this photo? Why do you think this?

How would you authenticate this photo? Where would you go to get more information?

What period in history does this photo coincide with? What were the major political, social, economic forces of this time period?

What were the local political, social, economic forces present in the photo (or not present in the photo)?

What are the values and morals present in this photo?

How do you think others in their community would have thought about this photo? What assumptions would have been made?

What assumptions are you making when you see this photo?

Bring a family photo to class. In partners, trade photos and analyze each others' photos. What did the other person see in your family photo? Did they see

something you missed? Did they miss anything important? What kinds of questions came out of this discussion?

What stories does your family album tell? Explore and analyze photos from your own family. What questions do the images prompt? What would you like to know more about? How can you explore them?

Archives

Did the archival documents authenticate the other sources used in this study? Why or why not?

Are archival documents more, less, or as valuable as oral histories?

Read the author's article at the end of the "Thinking Like a Historian" timeline. How did the author use archival documents to support her argument? Do you agree with how the author used the archives and archival materials? Why or why not?

Some archival documents are more interesting than others, which is a completely personal judgment. Which did you find the most interesting, and why?

What other histories might we tell from these documents?

How would you find out more about what the archival documents have to tell us about interracial relationships?

Have you ever been to an archive? What archival sources could you access in your own community or online? Mind-map the sources, including what you would need to do in order to get access to these sources of information and documents.

Marriage Certificates

What information did you find in the marriage certificates?

Was anything surprising?

What do you notice about the type/font and details in the marriage certificates?

Why do you think the government is interested in gathering this information?

Based on the information discovered in the marriage certificates, where would you go to find more information?

Books such as *Velma Demerson's Incurrigible*

Why do you think the author included Velma Demerson's *Incurrigible* in her research?

What can this piece of literature tell us about the values and morals of the time period/community?

What does this story tell you about the cultural/social/economic/political norms of this time period and community? How do the people in this study fit into these norms? Explain.

Do you think the experience of the people in the book was typical or atypical of the time/place? Why?

What did you learn from the books about the social/political/cultural/economic realities of the time/place of the study?

What could you authenticate from these texts? How would you authenticate Velma's story? How can we know if she's being truthful, for example, or if she exaggerates or leaves out information?

What research questions does this book open up? Where would you go next?

Building on the photos and interviews you've conducted on your family, write a short historical piece (1500 words) bringing to life the historical fabric of the time period and place that your family's story takes place within.

Find some historical literature that coincides with the period of history that situates your own family's history.

Overall Activities

Choose 2-3 sources in this study and authenticate them. Pin your answers! Use Padlet to build a wall that shows the relationship between/amongst the sources and any external sources that help to authenticate the sources. <http://padlet.com/>

Empathy and keeping an open mind are keen skills one must utilize in examining and exploring history. Explore and discuss how the author utilized (or didn't utilize) these skills in this study by answering the following questions:

- Why do you think the author chose to study an under-represented and typically marginalized group of people?
- How did the author try to keep an open mind in what and how she explored the information that was brought to her attention? Was she successful? Why or why not?
- In your opinion, do these stories enrich the history of Toronto during this time period? Why or why not?

Create a Pecha Kutchu slideshow presentation of your own family's history and what you learned about thinking like a historian as a result of this exploration.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PechaKucha>

Create a deep map of this project or your own personal historical project.

Some examples of deep mapping projects:

- <http://ryan.cordells.us/f13dm/assignments/deep-mapping-project/>
- <http://www.hastac.org/blogs/jrmonahan/2014/02/18/spatial-and-mapping-pedagogy>
- <http://blogs.princeton.edu/etc/2013/02/26/the-productive-scholar-ben-johnston-on-mapping-in-the-humanities/>

Create a question from your own exploration into your family's history or from one that developed as a result of this study. Create an outline of how you would go about exploring this issue. Identify and list initial primary and secondary sources of information, and be specific about how you would use these sources of information and how you might authenticate them. What would you look for? What mindset would you try to set for yourself during your exploration.