

## Collecting, Creating, and Witnessing History A Library of Congress Virtual Workshop

We're excited to have you join us for a virtual student workshop! This document gives an overview of pre- and post- activities for this program, for you to review with your students.

- The **pre-program** (slides 2-7) will give students background information about the Library and define primary sources. This will prepare them for discussions during the virtual program.
- The **post-program** (slides 8-11) will encourage students to capture their pandemic experiences.

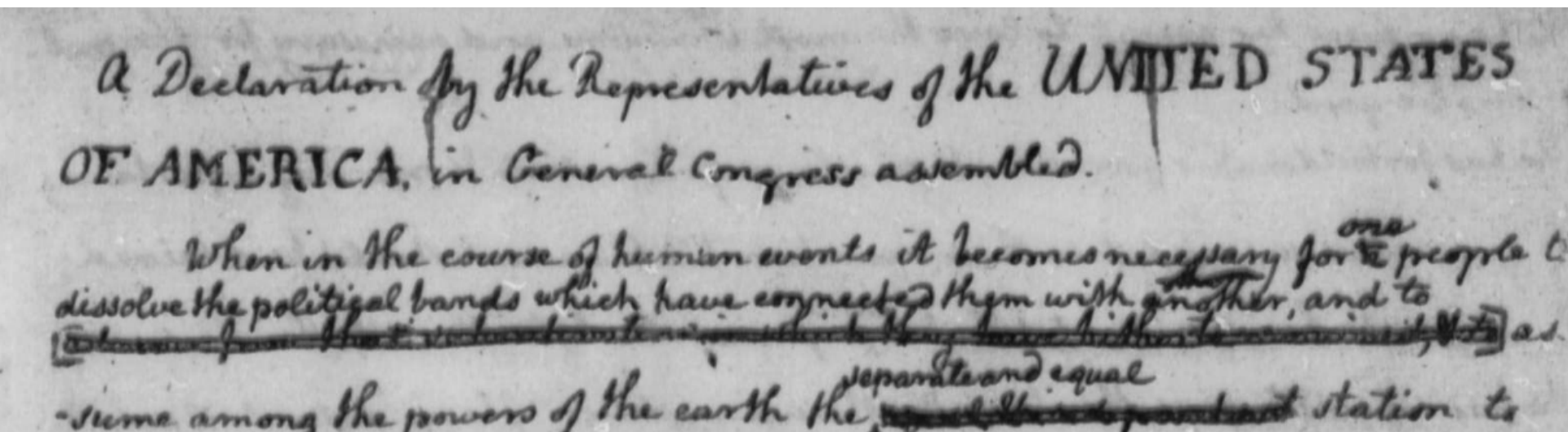


# About the Library of Congress

- General Information (available [here](#)):
  - America's national library & the largest library in the world
  - A free, non-partisan service to Congress and the public
  - Home to:
    - 170 million collection items
    - U.S. Copyright Office
    - Congressional Research Service
    - Materials in a variety of languages, origins, and formats
- Review the history of the Library [here](#)
  - Founding of the Library in 1800
  - Thomas Jefferson's role in reviving the Library after the burning of the Capitol in 1814
  - The Library's role in American democracy

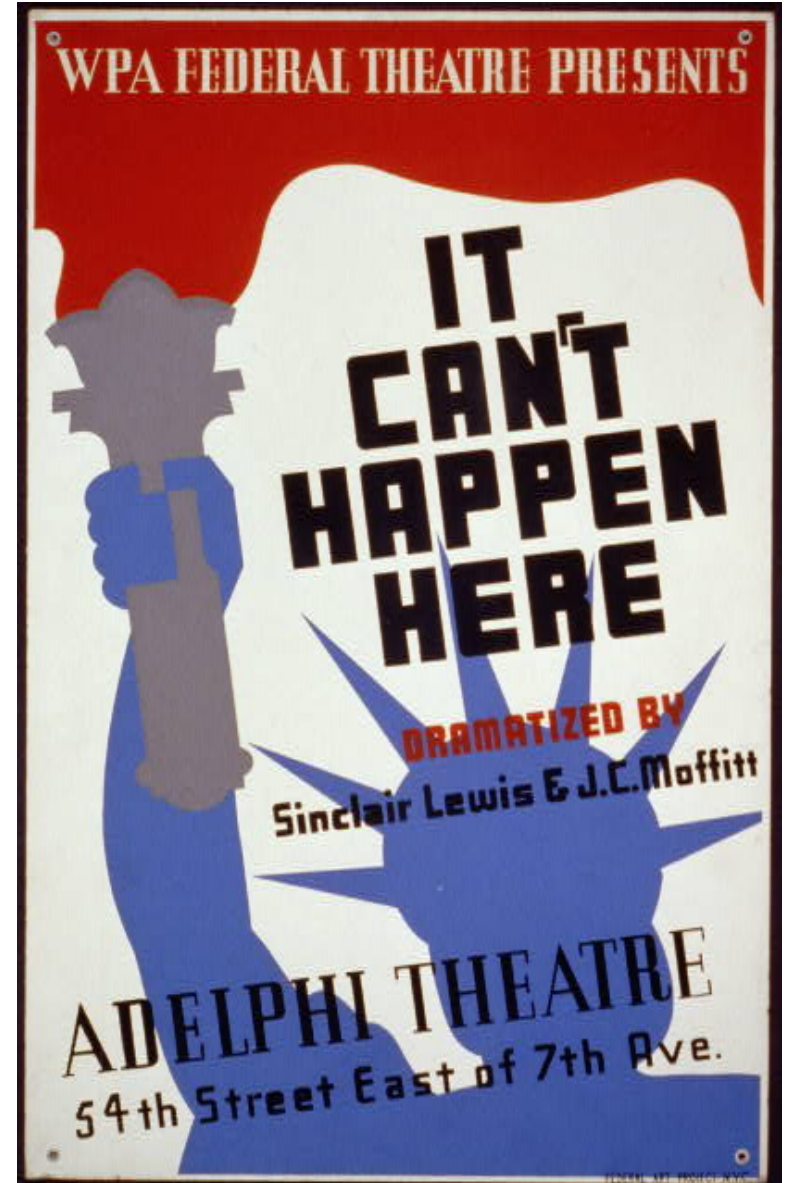
# What are primary sources? Discuss with the group:

1. What are they? Give an example.
2. How are they different from secondary sources?
3. Who can create them?
4. Give examples of primary source formats, e.g. letters, Tweets, recordings...
5. Give examples of primary sources from your life.
6. Why do primary sources matter? What do they help us do?



# What are primary sources?

- Primary sources are the **raw materials of history** — original documents and objects that were created at the time under study. Learn more about the Library's definition [here](#).
- They are different from secondary sources: accounts that retell, analyze, or interpret events, usually at a distance of time or place.
- Analysis of these unique, often profoundly personal documents and objects can give you a sense of what it was like to be alive during a different era.



Richard Halls, WPA Theater presents "It can't happen here"

# Examples of primary sources at the Library

- Thomas Jefferson's [draft of the Declaration of Independence](#)
- Clara Barton's [diary](#) (Civil War nurse who helped found the Red Cross)
- Contents of [Abraham's Lincoln pockets](#) on the day he was assassinated
- Recording of [Congressman John Lewis speaking](#) at the 2016 National Book Festival
- World's [first selfie](#) by Robert Cornelius
- Courtroom sketches from famous trials, including [this depiction of Sonia Sotomayor](#) before she was a Supreme Court Justice.



Carol M. Highsmith, *Contents of Abraham Lincoln's pockets on the night of his assassination on exhibit at the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Exhibit. Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building, Washington, D.C.*



Robert Cornelius. Self-Portrait. Daguerrotype, 1839.

## To get ready for the workshop, think about:

- A primary source that resonates with you emotionally. What makes this item so compelling to you? Think about the variety of possible formats, such as music, photography, or film.
- Experiences you have had (or seen others have) during the pandemic and how you felt about them.



Gordon Parks. *Muhammad Ali's fists after match with Henry Cooper in London, 1966.*

*Be ready to share your ideas when we meet. We will discuss the emotional resonance of primary sources and your role in creating history.*

We look forward to talking  
with you at the virtual  
workshop!

*Note: Students are welcome—but not required—to take notes during the session! We ask that they prepare any notetaking materials they may need, in advance!*

## *Post-Program Activity: **Teacher Note***

Please use these resources to encourage students to contribute to American memory of the pandemic.

Reinforce the idea that their voices and their perspectives matter, and if they don't record what they witness, nobody else can record their lives the way they saw them.

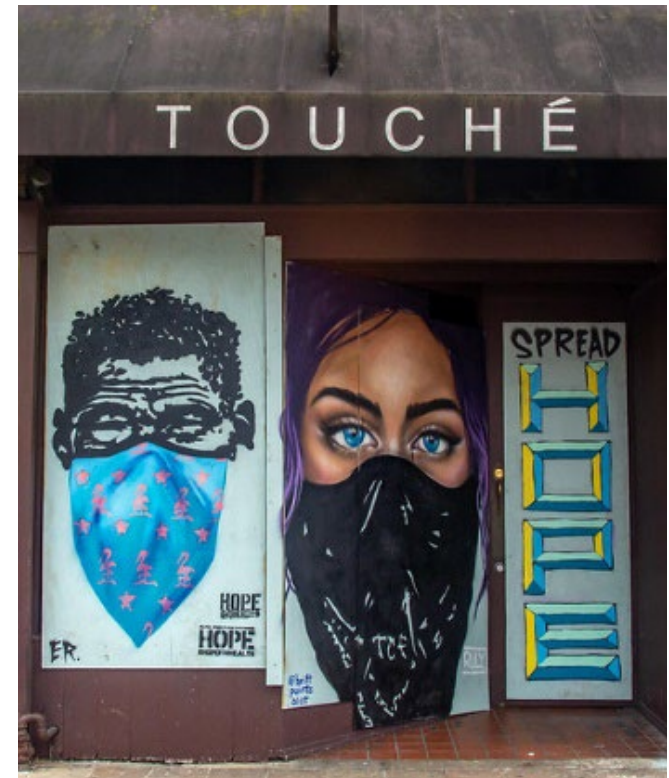
- Encourage students to embrace their unique perspective and style of documentation.
- Artistic and representational documentary style are both valid.

# Contribute to the Library of Congress Flickr Group

We invite you to contribute up to 5 of your original photographs or graphic artworks to LOC's Flickr group [COVID-19: American Experiences](#). The images should represent how the pandemic has impacted your life, your community, or life in the United States at large.



Elvert Barnes, *Downtown Silver Spring FRESHFARM MARKET at Veterans Plaza at One Veterans Place in Silver Spring, Maryland on Saturday afternoon, 31 October 2020*



Mike Rastiello, *Spread Hope (COVID-19)*

Library staff will review submissions and may acquire images added to this group to preserve in its permanent collection.

# Record a conversation with your loved ones

Developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, [StoryCorps Connect](#) is a first-of-its kind platform that enables you to record a StoryCorps interview with a loved one remotely using video conference technology.

The audio and a still photo from each interview goes into our archive at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.



"I JUST LOOK FORWARD TO  
LEARNING HOW TO BE A SISTER."

# Explore the Library's rapid response collections to COVID-19



[Camilo Vergara](#)

[Toni Lane](#)

[Amplifier](#)

Jena Floyd, *Keep Going*  
from Amplifier collection, Library of  
Congress Prints and Photographs.