

Research Project Teacher Guide—Introduce A WASP Project

In this learning activity, students will listen to the personal narrative of an individual Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) in the [Veterans History Project](#) online collection, then explore other Library collections to find primary sources that will help them to present the significant moments of the pilot's life to the rest of the class.

Objectives:

- Help students better understand what a primary source is and why they are important to historical narratives.
- Have students create a presentation of their research findings to effectively present the life of a WASP pilot to their classmates as well as explain their research methods.
- Introduce students to oral histories, specifically the personal narratives in [the Veterans History Project \(VHP\)](#), and explain their significance as primary sources.
- Direct students through research in the Library's online collections to find primary sources in different formats.

Preparation:

Students should have been introduced to the Women Airforce Service Pilots through the learning activities present on the TPS Teachers Network:

REQUIRED:

- [Introduction: Women in the Military During World War II](#)
- [Closer Look: Who Were the Women Airforce Service Pilots?](#)

Materials:

Teachers should have:

- A computer (or appropriate electronic device) and access to Library of Congress website
 - o Video: [Finding Resources on the LOC Site](#) (to be shown during project introduction)
- [WASP VHP Collection Options](#) document (Provides options for students to choose WASP they will research)

Students should have

- ["Introduce a WASP Project" Worksheet](#)—One packet per student (9 pages total)
- Computer (or appropriate electronic device) and access to Library of Congress website (www.loc.gov)
- Any presentation program, such as PowerPoint, Google Docs, Prezi, etc.

Project Procedure:

Introduction:

In this project, students will be asked to create a presentation about the life of a WASP pilot using primary sources from the Library of Congress collections.

Review with your students:

- What is a Primary Source?
 - A primary source is a “raw material of history”, original documents and objects that were created at the time of a historical event.
 - If students need a review of how to differentiate primary and secondary sources, this activity from the Library of Congress is a great resource: [Primary and Secondary Source Sort](#)
- What is an Oral History?
 - An oral history is a way of preserving original and historically relevant information from personal recollections through recorded interviews (Paraphrased: <https://siarchives.si.edu/blog/introduction-oral-history>). There are a variety of oral history collections at the Library, including [StoryCorps](#), the [Civil Rights History Project](#), the [Voices from the Dust Bowl](#) Collection, the [Occupational Folklife Project](#), and many others.
- What is the [Veterans History Project](#)?
 - “The Veterans History Project (VHP) of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center collects, preserves and makes accessible the firsthand narratives of U.S. military veterans who served from World War I through more recent conflicts and peacekeeping missions, so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand what they saw, did and felt during their service.” (From [VHP: About this Collection](#))

In this project, students will create a presentation about the life of a WASP based on their Veterans History Project oral history and by using primary sources in different formats from the Library’s collections.

“Introduce a WASP Project” Worksheet:

Pass out the Introduce a WASP Project Worksheet— Each student should have one

- Page 1: Review—Primary Sources
 - After students have been introduced to the concept of primary sources in the introduction, they will be asked to write their own definition and circle the primary sources from a group of different historical documents.
 - Two of the options, a [History Textbook](#) and an [Article about Alexander Graham Bell from the Library of Congress](#), are not primary sources but secondary sources and **should not be circled**.
 - If students need to see the sources up close, the links to all of them are below:
 - [Photograph of cats celebrating a birthday from 1914](#)

- [Map of Seattle, Washington from 1891](#)
- [History Textbook](#)
- [Oral History Interview with Olympian and Civil Rights Leader John Carlos](#)
- [Poster for an early film projector from 1896](#)
- [Issue of the Manzanar Free Press, the newspaper at Manzanar Japanese Internment Camp from 1945](#)
- [Article about Alexander Graham Bell from the Library of Congress](#)
- **Correct answers for this question:**
 - Circled: Photograph of cats, Map of Seattle, WA, Oral History Interview, Poster for early film projector, Issue of Manzanar Free Press
 - NOT Circled: History Textbook, Article about Alexander Graham Bell

WASP Collections in the Veterans History Project:

Worksheet, Page 2: "Listen To a Life Story: Oral History"

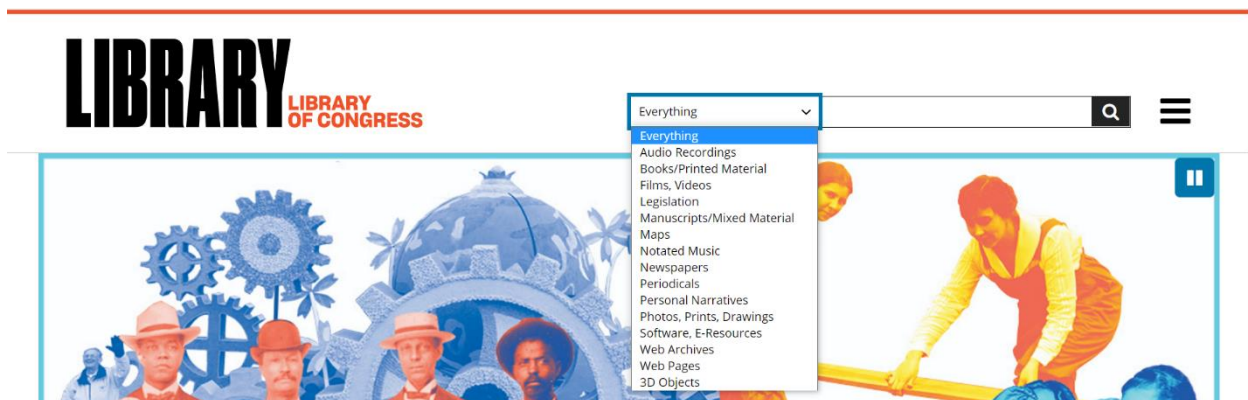
- On this page, students will be asked to choose a WASP to research from the VHP Oral History Collection.
 - As a whole class, show students the list of WASP collections to choose from.
 - In groups, students can explore the collections and choose a WASP (Be sure review each choice before students proceed with research).
- Assign Groups: Students should be broken up into **3-4 person groups** (depending on the class size).
- Direct students to the [WASP VHP Collection Options](#) document have them pick a WASP to research.
 - Start with the first 10 WASPs on the list, and if needed choose from numbers 11 through 20.
 - Students should be given the choice of which WASP to research, making sure they have a connection with the life story of their chosen pilot.
- Let students fill out the second page of the worksheet about their chosen WASPs collection
 - They will be asked which WASP they chose, why they chose this WASP, and what is included in their WASP's collection.
 - On the third page, students will be directed to listen to the pilot's oral history in full, and take notes about several details on pages three and four (option: this can be homework and then the project can be completed in the following class period).

"Time to Research"

Worksheet, page 5-7: "Time to Research"

- Students will be given directions to find **3 primary sources of different formats related to their WASP's life on the Library of Congress website.**
- **Show students this video about Finding Resources on the LOC site:**
<https://www.loc.gov/item/webcast-9205/> -- Show from 9:33-12:40
- Then, take students through a practice search for "Baseball" on the website.
 - Encourage them to limit their search using the options on the left, including "Original Format," "Date," and "Subject" (page 5 of worksheet).

- If any student finds something interesting, encourage them to share out with the rest of the class.
- Search Terms
 - In the next section, students will be asked to consider which search terms they will use while researching.
 - OPTIONAL: If this term is unfamiliar to your students, take the time to explain what a search term is and why they are important (Skip this step if your students are familiar with search terms).
 - Go back to the example search of “Baseball” and try different related search terms.
 - Try “Sports” and explain why this search term is too broad.
 - Try “Jackie Robinson” and see what you find— This should be an appropriate search term that has a good amount of resources.
 - Try “foul ball” and explain why this search term is too narrow (this term is very specific and only gives you a few sources on your actual topic).
 - Students will be asked: “What are some of the topics you want to search about your pilot’s life?”
 - Encourage students to return to their notes from the oral history to find facts or topics they want to research.
 - Students might want to organize their project by finding one source from the pilot’s early life, one from their time in the WASP’s, and one from later life.
 - Students will then be asked to write 5 search terms they might want to use in their research.
- Where to Look
 - Next, the worksheet lists some suggestions of places to start looking for different primary source formats. **If needed, model these searches for your students.**
 - For photographs, maps, digitized books, and other similar sources:
 - Go to www.loc.gov and search.



- For newspaper articles:
 - Use **Chronicling America**, the Library's database of newspapers going back to 1777. (see screenshot on next page)
 - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
 - Model limiting the search by date with the drop-down menus to the left of the search bar.

Search America's historic newspaper pages from 1777-1963 or use the U.S. Newspaper Directory to find information about American newspapers published between 1690-present. Chronicling America is sponsored jointly by the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) and the Library of Congress. [Learn more](#)

Search Pages Advanced Search All Digitized Newspapers 1777-1963 US Newspaper Directory, 1690-Present

All states + from 1777 to 1963 + enter one or more search words GO

Pages Available: 20,166,086 [Print](#) [Subscribe](#) [Share/Save](#) [Give Feedback](#)

100 Years Ago Today: 1/20/1923 (49 issues)

The Meeker herald. [volume] (8pp.)

The broad ax. [volume] (4pp.)
Salt Lake City, Utah

The Washington times. [volume] (22pp.)

- For other sources from Veterans History Project:
 - The quickest way to get there is to search "Veterans History Project" from loc.gov.
 - www.loc.gov/collections/veterans-history-project-collection/

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Library of Congress » Digital Collections » Veterans History Project Collection

COLLECTION
Veterans History Project Collection

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Advanced Search

Results: 1-25 of 115,769 | Refined by: [Part of: Veterans History Project Collection](#)

Refine your results

Original Format	Count
Available Online	88,245
All Items	115,769
Manuscript/Mixed Material	115,672
Personal Narrative	115,672
Film, Video	61,649
Photo, Print, Drawing	34,873
Audio Recording	32,146
Software, E-Resource	8,498
3D Object	999
Web Data	165

Collection Items

View: [List](#) [Go](#) Sort By: [Shelf Order](#) [Go](#)

PERSONAL NARRATIVE
Donald Frederick Aagenes Collection

Master Sergeant, Army, World War, 1939-1945 - Cuba; Panama Canal; Fiji Islands; Australia; Hollandia (New Guinea); Pacific Theater.

Contributor: American Legion Auxiliary Unit, Fertile, Minnesota - Aagenes, Donald Frederick - Larson, Carole

Date: 1942

Resource: Interview / Recording - Video - 01:01:49.0

- **Encourage your students to record all the primary sources they find in a notebook or a Word document to ensure they are able to find them again.**

“Present”

Worksheet, page 8: “Present”

Now students will be directed to make a presentation with the three primary sources they found. The presentation should have a minimum of 5 slides and take about 10 minutes each.

- Take students through the directions on page 8 of the worksheet.
 - If students get stuck, suggest themes for each slide: One for the pilot’s early life, one for her time in the WASP Program, and one for her later life.
- One class period should be set aside for presentations.
 - If deemed appropriate by the teacher, students can do peer evaluations of other groups (Possibly, “write one thing you liked about the presentation” and “write one suggestion for improvement” or something similar).

“Review and Reflection”

Worksheet, page 9: “Review and Reflection”

- After presentations end, give students the opportunity to fill out the last page of the worksheet.
- Students will be asked to review of what a primary source is, then given some questions to reflect on why primary sources are useful, how their understanding of primary sources changed, what new things they learned about the WASPs, and how they solved research problems.

Assessment

Students successfully completed this activity if:

- All elements of the “Introduce a WASP Project” Worksheet and each group’s “Introduce a WASP” Presentation are completed.
- Students demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of what a primary source is and how to find relevant primary sources through the Library of Congress.
 - Comparison of responses to questions on the first and final pages of the worksheet should help teachers assess any change in understanding of primary sources and the research process during this project.
- Students demonstrate a better understanding of the Women Airforce Service Pilots and their contribution to World War II.