What are Primary Sources?

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) Major organization of reference and information professionals
Using Primary Sources on the Web
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/sections/history/resources/pubs/usingprimarysources/index.cfm

“This brief guide is designed to provide students and researchers with information to help them evaluate the internet sources and the quality of primary materials that can be found online.” – from RUSA website

- What are Primary Sources?
- Finding Primary Sources on the Web (links provided)
- Evaluating Primary Source Web Sites (authenticity, it is trustworthy)
- Citing Web Sites (Help cite your source)
- Credits

University of California Berkeley Library
Finding History Primary Sources
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/primarysources.html

Similar to RUSA. In addition, provides definition of secondary sources.

“To Know Before You Search” helps you prepare for the search:
- Think of what primary source would have been produced by the subjects. (Politicians = speeches, writers and artist = interviews for promotional purposes, demographies = census records, etc.)
- Collect dates, places, name of persons and organizations that would be a part of your search. Information can be found by using subject headings and searching in encyclopedias, dictionaries, bibliographies.
- For books, search catalogs by subject and limit the date to the period it was published.
- Memoirs, letters, interviews, autobiographies, and diaries. If you have a name, search for the name. If you don’t have a name, use subject heading such as Mexican-American or Mexico AND (correspondence, diaries, interviews, personnel narratives.)
- If you find an article in a database about your subject, the citations may give you leads to correspondences, diaries, etc.
- Searching in newspaper databases can lead to relevant articles which can provide dates for specific events.
- For newspaper use search terms such as: Mexican Americans Los Angeles
- Use government agency or organization names with subject terms: Mexican Americans La Raza
- Lots more…explore and find what works for you.

Ithaca College Library
Research Guides: Primary and Secondary Sources
http://www.ithacalibrary.com/sp/subjects/primary
Gives definition of both and helps to identify them. Example: Primary source could be Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and the secondary source to it could be a book written about it. That book can be a primary source if you are writing a book review on that book. Your writing is a secondary source.

YouTube www.youtube.com
Type: “Primary Source”
What is Primary Source http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHTtpYybhm0
Primary source search in library catalog http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Njne0_X1G14
Look on right hand side to find further resources. Lots of them.