

Chapter Three

Finding Books and Using Catalogs

What is a Book? When is it the right choice for information?

A book is a book is a book, right? Traditionally books were printed on paper and were of finite length. Some experiments with e-fiction today, allow readers to continue to add to the story, so it never seems to end. All students, no matter how devoted, have judged, at one time or another, the use of a book by its length. However, no longer are books restricted by mere the mere physical limits of the printed page. Many are now being either replicated in electronic form or issued only in electronic form. Publishers are just now beginning to experiment with the new ways in which the electronic form can transform the traditional way in which the book is published and used. However, you as a historical researcher will still use the traditional form of the printed book for the majority of your book resources.

In this chapter we'll look at books as secondary sources, those materials which provide analysis or interpretation of primary sources and other materials. Books and journals each perform a very specific function in your secondary research. Understanding the difference will help you to know when to use which type of resource. Books thoroughly examine larger topics in-depth. They can do this in part because of their longer length. A journal article is more narrow in scope and limited in page length. The secondary sources used as documentation in books, i.e. in the bibliography, tend to be at

least several years old. Journal sources will tend to be more up to date, in part because a journal publishes articles faster and on a more regular schedule and because journal article topics tend to be more cutting edge. For this reason, scientists do not publish ground breaking cures for diseases in books. They use the journal literature because critical information is disseminated faster.

Using the building blocks of primary resources, a book will take a broad topic that spans a number of years and examine its impact in-depth. For instance, the book, **Tempered in the Revolutionary Furnace: China's Youth in the Rustication Movement** by Yihong Pan examines the experiences, from 1953 - 1980, of seventeen million urban, educated, middle school Chinese students sent to the countryside to receive Maoist, communist education in work camps. Using oral histories and other primary sources, coupled with other secondary sources, other historians' interpretations of the period, Dr. Pan provides new insights into the reasons why many of these students, as adults, would lead protests in 1978 and 1979, forcing the Chinese government to abandon this program. The topic of the book is fairly broad, covering a number of years and incidents. Yet in its 284 pages, it is able to explore the topic of the Rustication Movement in-depth, in a way a journal article could not.

How To Use a Book Artfully

While it is always best to read a book, cover-to-cover to examine the author's argument from inception to conclusion, it may be that the information and analysis you need is contained in a portion of the text. Always use

navigational tools of the book to its fullest. Look at the table of contents. Many online catalogs are beginning to link the table of contents of some of the books they provide access to right in the catalog record. That makes it easier for you to decide whether you wish to read the book, as well as identify which chapter to read. Don't forget about the index in the back of the book. If it has been done properly, a good index can pinpoint the information that you seek. It is still wise to read the introduction and conclusion of the book as well as the section in which you are interested. That helps you to understand the argument of the historian. If your book is available electronically, you may be able to navigate even easier by using hyperlinks or jumping through chapters in pdf. Let me be clear, again. It is always better to read the whole text to get the complete historians argument. But, there will be times when you need to focus on a specific portion of that argument. Use those navigational tools.

Finding Books, Using Catalogs

A catalog, in its most basic definition is a listing of contents. You can have a catalog of your CD collection, you can have an inventory or catalog of the contents of a department store. However, a catalog for a library simply provides a listing of what that library owns and has access to. Many libraries put everything they hold or have access to in their catalog, including book titles, journal titles (not their contents, i.e. individual article titles), video titles, children's books, government documents, special materials (like manuscript collections) and even cd roms, electronic books, full text journals and web sites. Restrain yourself from thinking of the library and its catalog as a

physical place. The catalog may also contain materials that are totally online and can be delivered to your desktop. Others may have special indexes linked from their web pages for videos or journal titles. If you are unsure what you are searching when you are searching your library's online catalog, ask your librarian. Beginning with help usually saves time in the long run.

Online catalogs have a number of ways to give you access to the library's collection. Understanding how the catalog operates and making this online database work for you will reduce your research time as well as help you discover some amazing information. Of course, in the online catalog, you can search for your book by author and title, if you know them. For author, you must search for the last name first, just as if you were looking for a phone number in the telephone book. This can be difficult if you have a name that begins with a prefix such as 'von' or 'ben' or for certain hyphenated names. There is no single rule that governs how you would look for these types of names, so try several combinations. For titles of books, you must search for the beginning of the title, dropping the initial article, but using all of the articles within the title. For instance, the book **The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South,** by Eugene Genovese, would be searched by entering "*political economy of slavery studies...*" in the title field.

Keyword Vs Subject Searching

However, your primary searching activity will probably be searching for books by keyword or subject. Understanding the definition of both will help you to understand how to enter your searches in your online catalog.

Keyword: A keyword search makes an EXACT match of the word that you type in the search box. It usually looks in some combination of the titles, notes, table of contents, and subject fields of the catalog record. For example, if you search for the keywords children and history, you results MIGHT NOT include a book entitled "A History of Childhood in the Middle Ages" because you asked the catalog to look for the word children, not childhood. You would only find that book listed in your results if somewhere in the online record the word children was listed.

Subject: A subject search performs a search through an approved, controlled list of words and phrases, in most academic libraries, the Library of Congress Subject Headings. This helps collect synonymous words and ideas under one term or phrase. For instance a keyword search under doctor would give you results with books on physicians, surgeons and professors. In a subject search, you would be more specific and use professors, etc. However, you do have to select the word or phrase that the Library of Congress Subject Headings list uses. Sometimes this is tricky.

In each instance above, you can be an information literate historian and manipulate the online catalog to your advantage. Guessing a subject heading can be difficult, so unless you are confident of a subject heading, it is best to begin with a keyword search.

In general, it's best to begin with a simple keyword search and then look at the subject headings attached to a catalog record. Usually, the subjects that have been assigned to that particular book are listed, and are often hyperlinks, at the bottom of the catalog record. The smart tactic is to look at several books in your results list and look at the subject headings that are attached to the records. Begin to manipulate these subject headings. Many times these headings will suggest concepts and terms that you had not thought of or with which were unfamiliar. Often these headings will pinpoint a smaller, highly relevant number of books and other materials. Using the subject headings will save you time in your research and will produce more efficient results.

Keyword Searching

When doing a keyword search, it's best to begin by performing a little word association. In the example above, you would need to think of both the words children and childhood. If you wished to be even more comprehensive, you might want to think of other related words such as youth or adolescent or even adolescence. You must remember that the computer, the catalog is not doing the thinking for you. Because you are looking for words you must think

of associative or synonymous words. It is possible that the first words that come to mind are not the words that best reflect your topic. Language is political and point of view is critical. For instance if you were doing a SUBJECT search for books and materials on the Vietnam War, you would find that "Vietnam War" is not a subject because, technically, the United States never declared war on Vietnam. The correct subject heading is "*Vietnamese Conflict 1961 - 1975*". If you do a KEYWORD search in the catalog, common language in book titles often refers to this "action" as the Vietnam War" and that solves, in part, your dilemma. Then, as suggested above, you could use the subject headings to find books and other materials in the catalog.

Further, to account for this problem of exact word searching in keyword searching, you can use a two techniques, truncation and Boolean searching. The use of truncation, sometimes called wild cards, allows you to search for many forms of a word at once. In our example of children and childhood above, you could enter the search with an asterisk (*) (sometimes \$ or ! are also used) after the root word, in this case: *child**. Using *child** will give you the results child, children, childhood, childlike, children's. However, it will not give you results that contain the words teenager or youth. To expand your search to include those terms, you would want to use Boolean searching and use *and* or *or* between words. For instance:

child* or youth or teenage*

Then to combine this idea with history,

(child* or youth or teenage*) and history

Chapter 4 on journals will discuss Boolean searching more in-depth as it is even more useful in periodical databases.

Subject Searching

Sometimes you will want to begin with a subject search. You may know the correct subject heading. Also, if you are looking for biographies or histories of a place, they are automatically given a subject heading of the persons name or of the place. So, to find biographies on Mahatma Gandhi, you would look under his last name, *Gandhi*. The subjects on Gandhi will then be subdivided by such subdivisions as bibliography, correspondence, philosophy, and views. Likewise, buildings, historic sites and the like will be found under their names. Cities, provinces, states, countries and other political divisions, will have a subject heading under their name. For instance the subject heading for Berlin is *Berlin (Germany)*. Usually political divisions are followed by their larger political unit (cities by province or state, for instance) and then have other subject subdivisions attached after that. However, many times the subject headings are complex and the subheadings, the parts of the subject heading after the initial listing, that follow the main heading are not always history. History is not always the first subheading in the string of subject headings. Confused? Some examples:

British -- Travel -- Germany -- History -- 20th century

Interfaith marriage -- Germany -- Berlin -- History -- 20th century

Architecture - England - London - History

Households - England - History - To 1500

So if you had entered the subject Architecture -- England -- history, you would not have had a valid subject heading. A way around this problem is to do a subject search and to limit the results by selecting words in the subject "history". This means that history can fall anywhere in the string of subject words. Limiting by other common subject subheadings is also productive. A selected list is below.

Common useful subheadings

Social life and customs	Politics and government	Antiquities
Civilization	Bibliography	Philosophy

How to Read a Catalog Record

Even though interfaces of online catalogs differ the essential information in your library's online catalog record is the same as that contained in every other online catalog record. The book has a bibliographic citation , that is the author, title, publisher, place of publication and date of publication. In addition to this, the record will indicate the number of pages as well as any illustrations (illus, or ill.) or maps. Sometimes the table of contents is included. At the end of the record are the Library of Congress Subject Headings assigned to this particular book. Also somewhere on the screen will

be an indication of the location of the book, the call number, perhaps what floor or if your campus has multiple libraries what library, and if it is available or if someone has it checked out. The call number will either begin with a letter or a number. Most academic libraries use the Library of Congress call numbering system. It is an alphanumeric system that attempts to organize materials into broad categories. History is often classed in the D's (World History), E's (United States) and F's (Latin America, and Local United States History and Canada). However because of the interdisciplinary nature of history you will find books with call numbers throughout the Library of Congress Classification System. If you would like to see the full Library of Congress Classification System see Matt Rosenberg's guide:

<http://geography.miningco.com/library/congress/blc.htm>

Finding Books and Using Catalogs Outside of Your School

While you will always want to begin at your college or university, you may find that you have selected a topic in which your library's collection is not very strong. You may need to look at other libraries' collections and request materials on interlibrary loan. Interlibrary loan is a service offered by most libraries that allows exchange of books, as well as photocopies of journal articles and some other types of materials, between each others' libraries. There are fees involved in this process that may or may not be passed on to you, so be sure to consult with your librarian.

The greatest challenge is identifying those books and sources that you need and that your library does not own. Many libraries subscribe to a database called **Worldcat** that is used by libraries world wide to share cataloging. In essence when you use this database, you are to searching thousands of libraries simultaneously. However, resist thinking of **Worldcat** as a database that contains EVERY book in EVER written, in EVERY library. It doesn't. However, it is a huge database and will help you find resources you could never find otherwise.

Because it is an online catalog, it functions similar to your library's online catalog, even if the interface looks different. It contains books, titles of journals (not their contents), motion pictures and videos, sound recordings, internet sites and manuscript sources. You can search by author, title, keyword and subject. You can limit by type of publication (serials, sound recordings, books, even Internet resources), date, language, and format (large print, microform). Some of the terminology is different (author phrase and subject genre phrase, for instance) but you are basically doing the same kind of searching as in your home library's online catalog. It is recommended that you begin with the advanced search. Of the choices, basic, advanced, and expert, advanced gives you the most guidance, so that you know exactly where you are searching and for what you are looking. In the navigation bar along the top of the screen is where you select advanced search, if that is not the search screen to which your university defaults.

In the search portion of the screen are a series of boxes in which you will enter your search words. Next to these boxes are drop down boxes from which you will select where you want **Worldcat** to look for your search terms. Because this database is also used by librarians, it will have some unusual choices under these drop down boxes. For instance under the general category of subject, you will have the choice of Subject Phrase, Named Person Phrase, and Genre/Form Phrase, to name a few. Under the general category of title, you will have the choice of Title Phrase, Series Title and Series Title Phrase. While the differences are significant to librarians, they mean nothing to you as a researcher. So, when searching for a title, author, subject, and keyword, use the general category and you will be searching all the variations underneath. Remember, though, the distinction between keyword and subject still applies in **Worldcat**, as in any database you will search. If you wish to limit your search, you can check the boxes below, and limit your search by date, by serial (journal, magazine) etc. You can choose to rank your results by relevance or by date (currency). The default is relevance. Remember for the most part, you will not find individual journal articles in **Worldcat**. References to individual articles are found through periodical indexes which are discussed in Chapter 4.

Your results in **Worldcat** will be grouped by type of resource, with books, serials, archival materials, maps, etc all collected separately toward the top of the screen in tabs. An individual record also has the same functionality

as your local online catalog. The subject headings are hyperlinked. You may also want to look at what libraries own your item.

If you know that a particular library is strong in the subject area, you may want to search its online catalog directly. For instance, if you live in Ohio, but are doing a project on the history of the pacific northwest, that is probably not an area of interest to many libraries in Ohio. You may want to use the University of Washington's (Seattle) catalog to locate materials because they would have an interest in being very comprehensive in their collection of local history. Most universities allow other users to search their catalogs. You would have to use Interlibrary Loan if you wished to actually see materials that your library doesn't have. Use one of the indexes below to link to other libraries' catalogs.

Search Tips	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Begin with a keyword search.2. Find a title of a good source which reflects your topic.3. Look at the subject headings linked to the record.4. Use those subject headings to jump around in the catalog.5. Check Worldcat or another library's catalog.
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Sources for Catalogs

- **Your Library Catalog**
- **Worldcat.** First Search.
Large online catalog of libraries, primarily in the United States, but also in other countries around the world. Fee based, so it may not be available at your library.

- **Libdex: The Library Index.** <http://www.libdex.com/>. Listing by country to over 18,000 online library catalogs. Harder to navigate than the site below.
- **Libweb.** <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Libweb/>. Online listing of over 6600 pages from libraries in over 115 countries. Easier to navigate with indexes by type of library (public, academic, national libraries) as well as by country.

Where Else Can I find Books: Good and Marginal Sources

These online catalogs above are your best source for finding books.

They are fast and easy and the way informed, information literate historians do quality research. There are a few other ways to find books.

If you are unsure of your topic or are having problems narrowing your topic, it may be useful to look for a bibliography, handbook, or encyclopedia article with a bibliography. Use the online catalog, chose a broad subject limit your results with words in the subject bibliography. Browsing a bibliography may provide better focus for your topic. Bibliographies at the end of encyclopedia articles are often highly selective and suggest good sources to begin your research. Finally looking through the sources listing in the **American Historical Association's Guide to Historical Literature** or one of the handbooks or histories listed in the reference chapter is also a good tact.

Students, always ready in the past to turn to the Internet for fast solutions, have gone to the major booksellers online, expecting them to behave like a catalog. While I am a big fan of Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com they are not catalogs. Their subject control is spotty. Their keyword searching is not fine-tuned, leaving you to get a plethora of results you didn't want and without results you did. The results ranking is based on an odd algorithm that

has more to do with sales than with your search criteria. After all, their purpose is commercial. Also, you have no idea what is in the database, what is missing from the database, and why. They have an interest in telling you what is in print and out-of-print, but they cannot match the collection of a library that has been collecting for many, sometimes hundreds of years. Finally, the companies all have excellent customer service representatives, but they don't have trained librarians who are connected with your professors and your courses and know what you need. They are not connected to the learning process.

Putting It All Together

Your topic is the idea of womanhood in Nazi Germany.

1. Begin by dividing your topic into concepts

Concept I	Concept II
Womanhood	Nazi germany

2. List associative or synonymous words

Concept I	Concept II
Womanhood Women Mothers Motherhood family	Nazi germany germany

3. Decide which words will best reflect your topic and do a keyword search.

Use truncation (*).

(woman* or mother*) and nazi*

4. Locate a good source in your results list:

Mothers in the fatherland : women, family life, and **Nazi** ideology, 1919-1945 / by Claudia **Koonz**

5. Look at the subject headings assigned to the book and use some of these subject headings to search for more books and materials on your subject.

Women - Germany - History - 20th Century

Family - Germany -- History - 20th Century

Germany - Social Conditions -1918-1933

Germany - Social Conditions -193-1945

National Socialism

6. If you need more information, do the same, or similar searches in **Worldcat** or in another library's catalog.