



Using the information you gather on the web site, answer the following questions about the unit.

1. Godfrey wrote letters to his family when he was building the mill in St. Anthony and on his gold-mining expeditions in the West. What details can we learn about someone from the letters they write?

Letters can tell us about a person's daily life, the weather at the time, and their family relationships. Sometimes letters can also tell us about local and national events that are of importance to the writer. It all depends upon what the writer decides to mention in their letters.

What perspective are we missing if someone has not written letters about important events in their life?

Without personal letters or a diary entry, we cannot get a clear picture of what they thought about those events or how they reacted to them or were affected by them.

What sources other than personal letters might you need if you were writing a biography of someone?
A diary would be helpful, as would newspaper articles about the person, reminiscences from family members, photographs of the person, and documents about business or property transactions the person may have made.

2. Legal documents like the agreement between Godfrey and Steele can give us much information about what life was like during a certain time period. What specific kinds of information can we learn about life and work during this time from documents like these?

This document can tell us a little about the working conditions and wages for the time period and what was expected of an employee in Godfrey's position.

What can we learn about how people worked and how they were paid?

In this case, we know how much Godfrey was paid, what he had to do for the wages, and that Steele built or bought him a house to live in while he was working at St. Anthony.

How might a document like this help us to have a better understanding of the way in which businesses were run during this time?

Documents like these can show us how formal many of these agreements were, what obligations were required by the employer and employee, and what the employer was expected to provide for the employee. We can also learn from this document that Godfrey was not supposed to work for anyone else during his employment with Steele.

3. It is quite common for people to write in their diaries or scrapbooks about their experiences when they were younger. Why do you think Godfrey's daughter made a point of writing down information like the notes shown on this site?

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She may have wanted to record these events for her own memory or for family history purposes, similar to the way in which many people today (and at that time) made scrapbooks or wrote in diaries.

How does that information help researchers today who might be studying Godfrey?

Even though it is not directly written by Ard Godfrey himself, it is still helpful to see a family member's perspective on Godfrey's life. This information in the notes written by his daughter could tell us many things that he did not mention in his own papers, and could help a researcher verify or disprove information in other sources about Godfrey.

How might this source be more or less accurate than some others we would study?

Because this source is not written by Godfrey himself, we are relying on the opinions and memories of someone else to tell his story in this source. These memories may not be completely accurate, important details may have been left out of the notes, and the fact that the author was Godfrey's daughter might mean that she would have an interest in writing notes that would emphasize her father's good points and not mention any mistakes he may have made.

4. Seeing primary sources from different periods in someone's life can give us a clearer picture of what their life was like. Why does this help us get a clearer picture of who the person was and what they did during their life?

By looking at more than one period in a person's life, we can get a stronger picture of what the person thought was important, whether or not they met their goals in life, and how they handled challenges they were faced with.

What challenges can we face if we research someone using sources from only one time period in their life?

If we only look at items from a person's youth, for example, we wouldn't know what they ended up doing for a living or if they married or had children, or how they spent the rest of their time. Large portions of their life would be left out and ignored and our perspective on that person would probably be less accurate than if we knew more about their entire life.

Why might you have to use sources from only one part of a person's life?

Sometimes materials are only found from one part of a person's life. It may be that the person was a political figure and the only records that have survived are ones relating to their political life. Other people may not have left letters, diaries or other sources from certain periods in their life. Using government documents (marriage licenses, property transactions, etc...) can sometimes help us fill in some of the blanks.