



**Beyond the Sources • Joseph Hancock**

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

1. Our memories of events can change over time. Hancock's journal writings are different in many ways from his writings years later as he remembered the same events. How might your memory of an event change over time? ***You might remember more details or an event or forget more details of an event. You might have more information about what really happened later than you did at the time.***

What things might influence your memory of an event? ***Your age and perspective (did you make a good choice or a bad choice during that event?), events that have happened since (called "hindsight"), and other information you may have gotten from others who witnessed or heard about the event.***

Do you think your memory of an event years later would be more or less accurate than something you wrote in a journal at the time? Why? ***It could be both more accurate (because you have had time to remember more details) and less accurate (because you might have forgotten some things or "imagined" others to fill in for what you had forgotten).***

2. Since Hancock lived in Red Wing for many years, how might his books about Red Wing be more reliable than books written by someone who had just visited the town? ***He had personal experience over the long-term with the town and was an eyewitness to many of the events that happened during his lifetime.***

What details might a long-time resident be able to provide that a visitor could not? ***A resident who knows the town and the people might be able to give a more accurate picture of the town's personality and reactions to certain events. They might also know more accurately how important an event was to the community.***

In what ways might the remembrances or descriptions of a resident be more biased than those of a visitor? ***A resident may have friends or family in the town that he or she will not want to offend and may actually want to compliment in their writing. A visitor would be more able to describe events without worrying about the feelings or attitudes of the people who live in the town.***

What kinds of information might a resident who intends to keep living in the area be likely to "leave out" of his work that a visitor or researcher might be willing to include? ***If there are controversial issues that involve the town, a local resident might be less likely to discuss them in writing, or might be more willing to take one side in favor of another. A visitor might be more likely to tell both sides of an issue because they wouldn't need to worry as much about offending people.***

3. Cemeteries can often provide very useful information to the historian or genealogist (person who is studying their family history). Often the information provided on tombstones can show us a glimpse of

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what the person was like or what their interests were. What details might we find on a tombstone that would help us direct our research? **Tombstones provide the dates of birth and death, often the locations of birth and death, and often describe family relationships (mother, son, etc...). There also may be symbols or images on the tombstone that would indicate interests of the person, their religion, or organizations of which they were a member.**

What might we learn from other tombstones near the one we are studying? **Often family members will be buried nearby and we could learn about the lives of the person's spouse and children by looking at their tombstones.**

Where could we go to find out more about the person after we have studied their tombstone? **The dates of birth and death could help us narrow a search through county records, while information about organizations, religion, or the interests of the person could direct us to the records of societies or churches the person may have been involved in.**

4. What role can diaries play in our historical research? **Diaries can tell us how someone felt about an issue or event and often can give us some details about what their daily life included.**

What might we learn from a diary that we won't learn from a textbook or letter or newspaper article? **We can learn about someone's feelings about an event and how the event might have affected them.**

How might a diary we would keep today help us in the future to remember what our lives were like? **We often record things about our daily lives in a diary that we might not remember otherwise; names of celebrities we admire, events in our community that affect us, and other issues about what our life is like may be forgotten if not recorded.**

What might be some advantages to knowing about the events in our lives and how we felt about them? **Knowing how a person reacts to an event can tell us more about their personality and what events had a large impact on their lives. For those studying family history, it is often very helpful to get a clearer picture of what a person was "like" instead of what they did.**

How might a historian of the future use our diary? **Historians of the future could use our diaries to learn about events that made an impact on our lives, what we did in our leisure time, and what our major and minor concerns happened to be when we were younger.**

How might knowing our feelings about an event make a historian's job more difficult if that was the only source the historian had about our life? **For historians, it might be more complicated to separate a person's feelings from an accurate listing of events. Understanding why a person might react a certain way to an event would take more research into the time period of the person and the social beliefs of that time.**