



Beyond the Sources • Hydropower

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

1. Historians sometimes use catalogs as sources for their research. The Victor Turbine in this section was taken from a catalog of milling machinery from the time period when the equipment was sold. If you wanted to write a play or report about a certain time period, how might a catalog help you?

A catalog could show you what kinds of clothing, technology, household appliances were in use at the time. This could help you create costumes or a set that would accurately depict the time of your play or accurate descriptions of the time period for a report.

What details might a catalog provide that you may not be able to get from other sources?

Costs of products, details about the construction of a product, or information about how popular a product was (how many different versions of the product were listed can give you an indication of this) are all details that it would be difficult to obtain from many other sources.

Why do you think a catalog might or might not be a reliable source?

Catalogs are created to sell a product, so they don't give you any indication of how effective a product actually was or how well it was made. They can be reliable in that they show us items people were interested in at the time and often provide pictures or drawings of the items sold.

2. This unit uses diagrams and a map to show how hydropower was used for industry in St. Anthony. What other sources might we look for if we wanted to know how hydropower affected the environment or the surrounding communities?

Information about the waterpower used farther up or down the river, statistics about the production created by the use of waterpower, and information about animal life or water quality at the time would all be helpful.

Would those same sources be able to give us a more complete picture of the importance of hydropower in St. Anthony during this time?

By looking at a wider variety of sources, we could obtain a more complete picture of the importance of hydropower in St. Anthony.

What other documents might speak to the importance of hydropower?

Newspaper articles about the use of hydropower, statistics about mill production in both high-and low-water years, and mill records showing the use of hydropower could all help us determine waterpower's importance to the area.

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3. Studying a diagram or a map requires some skill in looking for important details. Even if you weren't studying hydropower, what could you find in these sources that might tell you other information about St. Anthony?

Information about the construction of mills and the milling process, machinery used in the mills, and information about the growth and development of this area could all be found in these sources.

How might these sources give you hints about where to look for more information?

You could locate the catalogs, maps or diagrams used and study the books or sources from which they were taken for more information.

What hints in these sources might lead you to other sources?

You may wish to study milling in more detail and these sources provide you with the names of some of the larger mills in the area. You could also find information about the author or creator of these sources.

What other sources might you study?

Photographs, letters from mill workers or owners, other milling records, newspapers, and other maps from the area are all sources you could locate to expand your research.

4. Technology changes quickly in industry, and St. Anthony is no exception. The waterwheels and turbines you see here were eventually replaced by electricity. How can these sources show you changes in the technology that St. Anthony used during this time?

By comparing the kinds of machinery used at different times in St. Anthony, we can determine what technological changes the industry experienced during a given time period.

Why might it be useful to know how technology changed?

If we are studying the life of a person during a certain time period, it would be helpful to know what technology they were using at their home and work. We can also use this information to evaluate how production and working conditions changed over time at the mills.

What can you learn from other sources when you know how technology was changing at that time?

You can learn about new advances in technology, you can study the dangers involved for workers in using the technology, the growth of a business with the technology and possibly the failure of a business without it, and whether or not a certain technology had a large local impact on an industry.

How can knowing about the technology of a time help you identify photographs or other sources from that same time?

If you find photographs without dates or locations listed, it can be helpful to know when certain forms of technology were first used (electricity, bags for packing flour instead of barrels, etc...) as that can give you a starting date for identifying the photograph.