



**Beyond the Sources • Prospecting**

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

1. Booklets like the one shown in Art 1 in this unit are often produced to convince readers to agree or disagree with a belief or an action. What can a researcher learn from an booklet such as this one?

***These booklets can tell us what some people thought about an issue and what the arguments for and against the issue might have been. The simple fact that a booklet was produced to address the issue suggests to us that it was important to a number of people in the area.***

What challenges does this kind of source present for the historian?

***This kind of booklet will only emphasize one opinion about the issue involved. We can expect it to be biased and suspect that some information might be “slanted” to fit the opinion of the author.***

What can we as researchers do to evaluate how accurate a source like this happens to be?

***Using other sources that describe the same issue from another perspective can help us get a better idea about the reliability of this source’s information.***

2. In Book 2 we are given two lists of activities that were performed to prepare mine for operation. What might we assume if we were only able to see one of these sets?

***Depending upon which set we were able to use, we might assume that all pits dug on the range were done quickly and easily, or that all of them were very difficult to dig and took a long time to complete.***

What added information do we get from being able to see both sets?

***By seeing both sets of information, we can learn how things were “supposed” to happen, and what miners did to accommodate problems with the digging. This can teach us about methods that were used when difficulties were encountered during the digging process.***

Why is information like this important to a researcher and historian?

***It is important that researchers and historians be able to see a variety of sources and information about an event or activity. The more varied information we are able to receive, the more accurate our understanding of the activity or event can become.***

Where might we find other information if only one of these sets were available?

***Other logs from other prospectors might provide this information. Resources that describe the digging process might also tell us what was done in both good and bad digging experiences.***

**Beyond the Sources • Prospecting**

3. Statistics about the production and transportation of iron ore during this time can give us a clearer picture of the success of the mining industry. What other kinds of information might also tell us about how successful these mines were?

**Statistics about the mining companies themselves and whether or not they expanded could help us learn about their success. Often success in a local industry may appear in statistics such as population (people move to get good jobs), property values, or tax records.**

What information could we find to learn how successful Mesabi mines were compared to mines in other parts of the country?

**Companies would sometimes make comparisons between themselves and other companies to show how much more productive they were. These would give us more information. Also, references that discussed iron mining as an industry might list the ranges in order of production and profit. Advertising from the area might also suggest to us how successful the mines were in comparison to others.**

4. Edmund J. Longyear wrote an article about his work on the Mesabi Range. What are some advantages to using an article such as this about the work on the range?

**Because he was one of the pioneers in this area, his account of what happened is valuable to us as a primary source. Since he was there, he gives us a first-hand account of what the mining was like at the time.**

What might be some disadvantages to an article like this?

**Because it was written by him and about his work, he might have left out some of the difficulties or problems he encountered. He may have overstated some of his successes and understated some failures.**

What sources could we use to support or evaluate the information Longyear included in his article?

**Writings by other miners from the time and other accounts of the mining process during this period would help us to evaluate how accurately his account describes mining in the area. There may be people who worked with him and wrote about the experience. It is possible that they could have a different view of the same events.**