

ASSIGNMENT #3

Perhaps nothing reveals as much about life in bygone decades as do the letters and diaries written by those who is those eras. These personal, eye-witness accounts record the thoughts, feelings, and reactions of the writer and his/her contemporaries; collectively, they aid modern historians understand the “common person” and the nation’s social fabric.

The Kentucky Library’s Manuscripts Division contains a fine collection of 19th century letters and diaries written by Kentuckians. The library’s collection of 20th century materials is not as extensive, but it, too, is valuable for understanding the past.

Using one of the collections available in the Library, read 2-3 dozen letters or several years of diaries and then look at some contemporary newspapers from the same period as the letters. After reading and taking notes on this material, write a 5-6 page review about what you learned of the individual and his/her activities or lifestyle. Include at least ten (10) quotes from the diary or letters. If at all possible, include a photocopy of a picture of the individual and three examples of ephemera which might have been used by your subject.

Possible choices include:

Letters of Elizabeth Cox Underwood
Letters of Samuel Starling
Letters of Mary Starling Payne
Letters of John Bibb
Letters of Lunsford Yandell
Letter of Eliza Calvert Ovenchain
Letters of Perl Carter Pace
Letters of Max Nahm
Letters of Clarence McLeroy
Letters of Frances Richards
Diary of Josephine Calvert
Diary of Camilla Herdman
Shaker Diaries that have not been printed
Journals of Martha Potter
Journals of Henry Clay Northcutt
Letters of Kate Northcutt Thomas
Diaries of Lattice Robertson
Letters of Belie Cain
Letters of Paul Acton
Letters of Victor Strahm
Diary of Thomas Goodnight
Journals of Gordon Wilson

Ask librarian for additional suggestions. You may NOT use the Josie Nazro Diary. You may not use any collection that has an article or book based upon it.