Finding Primary Sources from the Library of Congress

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Welcome. We’re glad you’re here! Use the chat box to introduce yourselves. Let us know:

- Your first name
- Where you’re joining us from
- Why you’re here
Together, we will:

- Tour short cuts to finding primary sources on LOC.gov
- Explore techniques for constructing searches on LOC.gov
Shortcuts for finding primary sources
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Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote

Suffragists from Seneca Falls to the 19th Amendment featured in a 100th anniversary exhibit.
100 Years Ago Today: 5/19/1920 (117 issues)

**Grand Forks Herald. [volume]**
Grand Forks, N.D.

**The evening Caledonian. [volume]**
St. Johnsbury, Vt.

**Capital Journal.**
Salem, Or.
Topics in Chronicling America

Chronicling America provides free access to millions of historic American newspaper pages. Listed here are topics widely covered in the American press of the time. We will be adding more topics on a regular basis. To find out what's new, sign up for Chronicling America's weekly notification service, that highlights interesting content on the site and lets you know when new newspapers and topics are added. Users can use the icons at the lower-left side of the Chronicling America Web page to subscribe. If you would like to suggest other topics, use the Ask a Librarian contact form available on the Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room site. Dates show the approximate range of sample articles.

- Alphabetical list of Topics Pages
- by subject category
- by date range
Topics by Subject

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- **African American History:**
  - [Booker T. Washington](#) (1895-1915)
  - [Emancipation Proclamation](#) (1862-1863)
  - [Fugitive Slave Ads](#) (1792-1863)
  - [Harpers Ferry. John Brown.](#) (1859)
  - [Harriet Tubman](#) (1869-1913)
Introduction

In 1890, the Ouija board was created for supernatural communication. It was also the focus of several lawsuits. This guide provides access to materials related to the "Ouija Board" in the Chronicling America digital collection of historic newspapers.

Ouija is a talking board first manufactured in the Unites States in 1890. A talking board is a board printed with letters and numbers that uses a sliding pointer to spell out messages in a mysterious way. The board that became Ouija was born in 1886 in Chestertown, Maryland and named in 1890 in Baltimore where it was first manufactured. Since Ouija's inception newspapers reported on its use as a way to communicate with the dead, predict catastrophes, solve mysteries, even commit crimes. As Ouija's popularity grew in the wake of World World I, newspaper coverage spread about Pearl Curran, a St. Louis housewife who used Ouija to talk with the spirit of a 17th-century woman named Patience Worth. Mrs. Curran went on to publish Patience's writings, many of which were met with critical acclaim. 

Read more about it!

The information in this guide focuses on primary source materials found in the digitized historic newspapers from the digital collection Chronicling America.

The timeline below highlights important dates related to this topic and a section of this guide provides some suggested search strategies for further research in the collection.

TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Elijah Bond and Charles Kenner begin manufacturing Ouija boards in Baltimore after reportedly holding a seance with Helen Peters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>William Fuld buys the rights to the game and records a patent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Fuld's brother Isaac has his license revoked by Ouija Novelty; he tries to keep making the game but is blocked by a judge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ouija Board: Topics of Chronicling America

Search Strategies & Selected Articles

The links below provide access to a sampling of articles from historic newspapers that can be found in Chronicling America. You can further explore the topic of the "Ouija Board" using the following search strategies:

- Use the following terms in combination, proximity, or as a phrase: Ouija board, talking board, planchette, alphabet board, witch board, Patience Worth, Mrs. Curran, William Fuld, Isaac Fuld, Ouija Novelty Company
- It is important to use a specific date range if looking for articles for a particular event in order to narrow your results. To narrow your results for this topic, search between 1890 and 1922.

SELECTED ARTICLES FROM CHRONICLING AMERICA

- "The New Talking Board"  
  *The Democratic Northwest* (Napoleon, OH), April 29, 1887, Image 3, col. 2.
- "The Ouija: The Wonder of the 19th Century"  
- "Weird Writings: Planchette Craze Has Broken Out Again"  
  *The Morning Call* (San Francisco, CA), November 14, 1893, Page 8, Image 8, col. 3-4.
- "Ouija Board Again Brings Marvelous Mysterious Messages"  
  *The Ogden Standard* (Ogden, UT), December 11, 1915, Image 17, col. 1-7.
- "Patience Worth, the Newest Literary Marvel!"  
- "Enduring Mystery of the Ouija Board Reincarnation"  
- "Who Invented Ouija?"  
  *Charlevoix County Herald* (East Jordan, MI), June 25, 1920, Image 3, col. 3.
- "The Baby that is Being Raised by a Ghost"
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May 1, 2020 by Danna Bell

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Posted in: News and Events, Teaching Strategies

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April 30, 2020 by Danna Bell

This post is by Jen Reidel, the 2019-2020 Library of Congress Teacher in Residence.

In 1958, President Eisenhower designated May 1 as Law Day to recognize the influence of the rule of law within our government and society. Use primary sources to facilitate a conversation with students about legal concepts like justice and due process.

Posted in: Government and Law

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Primary Source Sets

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Alexander Hamilton
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The Dust Bowl

Teacher’s Guide

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The Dust Bowl Teacher’s Guide (PDF, 2.53 MB)

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Map of California by the Rural Rehabilitation Division

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The Chattanooga news.
[volume]. (32pp.)
Chattanooga, Tenn.

The Camden chronicle. (4pp.)
Camden, Tenn.

The Progress-itemizer. (8pp.)
Water Valley, Miss.
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