

## 1. How do we learn about our city's past?

### How Historians Study the Past

History is the study of the past. It includes the study of people, places, and events. The past itself is gone. But events from the past sometimes leave evidence that lasts for a long time.

Historians are people who study the past. They want to know what happened in the past. Historians are like detectives. To draw conclusions about the past, historians investigate the evidence left behind. They ask questions about who, what, where, when and why events happened.

Historians use two types of sources to find evidence about the past. Primary sources are first-hand records that come from the time period you are studying. Photographs, newspapers, speeches, letters, diaries, and artifacts are examples of primary sources.

Secondary sources are later accounts written by historians who were not present at the events. A textbook, museum exhibit, and recent videos created about the past are examples of secondary sources.



This photograph provides evidence of kids playing marbles in the early 1900s.

## Change Over Time

Historians focus on change over time. They want to know what has stayed the same, what has changed, and why. To study change over time, it is important to understand causes and effects. A cause is a reason why an event happens. An effect is a result (consequence) of an event. There are many causes and effects of events in the past.

Historians look at multiple primary and secondary sources to draw conclusions about causes and effects.

Chronology means time order, or sequence order. Putting events in chronological order means placing them in the order in which they happened. A timeline is one way to show chronology.

Chronology is important to historians. To understand causes and effects, historians must first know the chronology of events. A cause of an event must happen before the event. An effect happens after an event.



Photographs of the 1913 Columbus flood would provide a good source for historians to study the effects of the event.

## Questions for Review

1. How do historians learn about the past?
2. What is the difference between primary and secondary sources?
3. What does cause mean? What does effect mean?
4. How do historians draw conclusions about cause and effect?
5. Why is chronology important to historians?