



# Historical Research

# The Historical Impulse

- The search for how we got here
- Curiosity about the past & our connections with it
- A contingency of understanding

# The “Sense[s]” of History

## Humans carry:

- Sense of repetition
- Sense of generalized history
- Sense of derivation
- Sense of historical placement

# Purposes of Academic History

To discipline this historical impulse

- Establish the historical record
- Reconstruct a historical culture
- Utilitarian: Useful to our public decisions

# Skills necessary to Historian

*From Barzun and Graff*

- Accuracy
- Love of order
- Logic
- Honesty
- Self-awareness
- Imagination
  
- Add Skepticism

# Digging: Historical Fascination

- The curiosity cycle
- The ideographic impulse
- Historical evolution

# Digging: Satisfactions

- Discovery
- The accurate record
- Credibility of research conclusions

# An exercise

# Activity of the Historian

- Flow is:
  - understanding of others ► “stuff” of history ► Accounts
  - Literature ► Data ► Conclusions
  - A history ► is taken to the record ► to revise
- Typically moves:
  - From Library
  - Thru records, artifacts and people
  - To the word processor

# The task of writing

- To construct the moment: creative writing
- To construct the narrative: writing connections
- While sifting the evidence: writing to convince