



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: Satisfaction

- 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