Selected Primary Sources at Rutgers: A Searcher’s Guide

The IRIS Online Catalog: Finding Books, Videos, and Government Documents

Sample searches: Women and diaries (Words anywhere)

Women and personal narratives (Words anywhere)

Sample IRIS record:
Note the subject headings include both "Diaries" and "Personal Narratives". You could have searched SUBJECT KEYWORD as well as WORDS ANYWHERE.

Sample search: immigrant$ and autobiograph$ (Words anywhere)

Sample IRIS record:

Note that the official subject heading would be BIOGRAPHY, so in this case you are better off using AUTOBIOGRAPHYS as a keyword (WORDS ANYWHERE) search to find the primary
sources. In IRIS the $ is a "wild card" character and means "whatever comes next". The wild card enables you to cover both singular and plural forms of a search word in a single search term.

Video Documentaries in IRIS: Use ADVANCED SEARCH and choose VISUAL MATERIALS under FORMAT.

Sample record: (Advanced Search was African Americans and Format: Visual Materials)

Title: Race and politics in America’s cities / a production of Public Affairs Television, Inc.; a presentation of Thirteen/WNET New York; producers, Gall Aelow ... [et. al.]; director, Wayne Palmer.


Physical desc: 1 videodisc (50 min.): sd., col. with b&w sequences ; 4 3/4 in.

Series: Bill Moyers Journal

Credits: Editors, Kathi Black ... [et. al.]; Music, Michael Bacon; photography, Robin Seidman.

Performer: Bill Moyers, Interviews; Cory Booker, Fred Harris.

Summary: On the 40th anniversary of the landmark Kerher Commission Report on civil unrest, this edition of the Journal spotlights former Oklahoma Senator Fred Harris, one of the last living members of the original Commission, who discusses the root causes of the 1960s riots that rocked Newark, Detroit, and other U.S. cities. Harris reflects on his ongoing commitment to the cause of reducing racism and deep poverty in inner cities. Bill Moyers then interviews Newark, New Jersey, Mayor Cory Booker, a dynamic voice for urban reform who shares the lessons he has learned and his vision for a brighter future for his city.

Subject: Documentary television programs.

Subject: Urban violence--United States--History--20th century.

Subject: Urban warfare--United States--History--20th century.

Subject: Riots--United States--History--20th century.

Subject: African Americans--Politics and government.

Subject: Municipal government--United States--History--20th century.

Subject: United States--Race relations--Case studies.

Added author: Aelow, Gall, 1962-

Added author: Palmer, Wayne.

Added author: Moyers, Bill D.

Added author: Booker, Cory.

Rutgers Indexes and Databases
Literary Sources

While setting up a search in Academic Search Premier, you can specify document types such as: Interview, Letter, Poem, or Short Story.

Black Drama: 1850 to the Present "contains the full text of 1,200 plays written from the mid-1800s to the present by 201 playwrights from North America, English-speaking Africa, the Caribbean, and other African diaspora countries."--from the Rutgers database description

Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, 1639-1800 has the full text of 37,000 books, pamphlets, and broadsides from colonial America.

EEBO - Early English Books Online and EEBO-TCP contain the full image and/or full text of 125,000 works printed in English between 1473 and 1700.

Literature Resource Center has a check box called “Primary Sources & Literary Works” on the search page, but this is unreliable. Better to look through all results for a search to find interviews, for example.

Literature Online (LION) has “searchable full-text of more than 350,000 literary works in the English language” (from the Rutgers database description). Limit your search to TEXTS.

Middle English Compendium (1100-1500) includes full text of 146 works as well as other index and dictionary components.

News and Periodical Sources--Often include interviews and contemporary reports
Access World News--most titles 1990s-current

African American Newspapers--Mostly early 19th century

American Periodical Series--1740-1900

Ethnic NewsWatch--1960-present

Factiva--current

New York Times (ProQuest Historical Newspapers)--1851-two years ago

Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers--Mostly 1800-1900

TV-NewsSearch: The Database of the Vanderbilt Television News Archive

Be sure to use ADVANCED SEARCH mode for more precision. Although this one is not full text (or full video), the index has info about authentic news videos.

Historical Government Documents in Full Text. For quick access to current federal, state, and local government documents on the Web, try Google Uncle Sam (www.google.com/unclesam):

American State Papers, 1789-1838

US Congressional Hearings, 1824-1979

US Congressional Serial Set, 1817-1980

Other Historical Sources

Everyday Life of Women in America, c.1800-1920 contains primary source writings by women, including books, pamphlets, broadsides, and other formats.

North American Women's Letters and Diaries: Colonial Times to 1950 contains over 150,000 pages of letters and diaries.
Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000 includes primary documents in addition to commentaries, scholarly essays, and the like.