

**Discovering the Civil War Webcast – Q&A Section  
(Sponsored by American Public University and Best of History Web Sites)**

**Answers by:**

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***Are newspaper articles considered a proper source for research papers in APU?***

Dr. Woodworth: They are in my classes, and I would think they would be in others. Of course, you have to use them wisely.

***As Civil War primary sources can present conflicting accounts, do you attempt to cross reference and verify specific accounts of battles or events?***

Dr. Woodworth: Yes, whenever possible. You try to figure out some way for both accounts to be true. If that's not possible, you try to decide which is likely the more reliable. You would also seek corroboration if possible. Clock times are notoriously in conflict in Civil War battle accounts.

***If you were going to subscribe/pay for any of the online library services that cost money, which ones are the best?***

Dr. Woodworth: That's really a hard question. It depends on what your needs are. I've been able to get my research done without subscribing, so I'm not the best judge. I'd try to do it for free if I were you.

***I use primary source documents in my classroom when teaching Social Studies. I am trying something new this year and using Fort Sumter as a primary source in my own academic pursuits. How do you feel about using Civil War battlefield sites as primary sources?***

Dr. Woodworth: I think it's a great idea. Some are better than others, of course, in terms of preservation. Chickamauga, for example, is excellent, while Chattanooga is dismal.

***When will Woodworth's John Brown/Harpers Ferry course be offered again?***

Dr. Woodworth: It's not currently scheduled. It might be next summer. APU is currently offering another Harpers Ferry Course the Prelude to War 1859-1861. For more information, please visit our [Harpers Ferry](#) page.

***Can you list any issues or advices for moving on to a Ph.D.?***

Dr. Woodworth: Getting a Ph.D. is a lot of work, and, to be honest, there are not a lot of jobs available in the teaching profession. This is something to pursue only if you love it and can't see yourself doing anything else. Of course, if you want to get a Ph.D. just for fun, that is different.

***What are the main sites you seem to always use for your research of the Civil War?***

Dr. Woodworth: The Library of Congress and the 19th Century Newspapers database.

***Does the university offer a course in Museology?***

JB Tanner: APU offers the following courses: Museum and Exhibition Culture HIST635, Archive and Manuscript Management HIST522, and History and Digital Preservation HIST636, as well as History, Theories, and Contemporary Issues in Historic Preservation. Those courses do work around that field and are part of the Masters of Arts in History-Practicum Option.

***Have you seen any problems for your M.A. students to move on to a Ph.D. program?***

JB Tanner: There are no issues for students moving from Masters to Ph.D., but they will want to select the thesis option to help them get admitted to a Ph.D. program. A Ph.D. program will have separate admission requirements so it is always difficult to say what other requirements they may require beyond a graduate degree.

***Is there a free site that provides access U.S. Census records?***

APU Webcast Team: Please visit the [U.S. Census Bureau Site](#) for more information.

***Is it true that the American Civil War was the first time that intelligence and military intelligence were used by the U.S.? This was taught in a Mil Intel GOV 483 class I attended at a different university.***

Dr. Woodworth: I would say that this is not true. Consider the famous Nathan Hale, hanged by the British for espionage in 1776. He was one of several spies whom General Washington utilized during the New York Campaign of 1776. So I would say that the U.S. was certainly using military intelligence then. You might say that military intelligence was used in a more sophisticated way in the Civil War. General McClellan utilized the Pinkerton private detective service to gather military intelligence for him, though the results were spectacularly bad. This was not, I think, the fault of the Pinkertons so much as it was McClellan's fault in incorrectly analyzing the raw intelligence data he received. In effect, every Civil War general was his own chief of intelligence and did all of his own analysis. Thus, in the end, I would say that military intelligence in the Civil War had more in common with the Revolutionary War than it did with the wars of the twentieth century.

***Are you aware of online resources for the "supplements" to the O.R.?***

Dr. Woodworth: I'm not. I believe you can get them along with the ORs themselves on a CD produced by Guild Press of Indiana—at least that's how I got them a number of years ago. You might try eHistory.com. I haven't looked for them there.

***With primary sources, as our speakers have said, there are often axes to grind. How do you ensure your sources are accurate?***

Dr. Woodworth: Well, I'm not sure it's possible to ensure that, but you can try to be as careful as possible. Consider the source itself. Was the writer in a good position to see the facts he reported? Are you aware of any motives he might have had for fudging his record? (e.g., a colonel might be expected to report that it was not his regiment that broke for the rear first—it was the other regiment next in line). Had much time elapsed since the events, possibly clouding the witness's memory? Was the document intended for publication (e.g., letter to a newspaper, memoir, official report), for family reading (letter home), or purely for the writer himself (diary). However, be aware that many diaries were meant to be shared with family. Above all try to compare sources, so that, as the Bible says, everything can be substantiated by two or three witnesses.

***Can you update us on APU plans for a doctoral program?***

JB Tanner: APU is always evaluating additional programs and degree levels, including doctoral programs.

View the entire webcast online at: <http://www.studyatapu.com/web-cast/history/civil-war/index.htm>.