

Primary Source Analysis: Memoir of Sr. M. Josephine Barber

- Account of the sisters' journey from Georgetown to Kaskaskia (pages 1-11)
- Sr. Josephine and her Ghosts (pages 12-14)
- Accounts of relics and conversions to Catholicism (page 14-17)
- Building on the frontier, sickness, cold, and other hardships (page 17-21)
- The move to St. Louis and account of the flood of 1844 that caused the Sisters to leave Kaskaskia (pages 24-31)
- Divine judgements and apparitions of Mary (pages 33-38)
- Account of The Civil War (pages 38-43)

Directions: Working in groups of about 3, analyze your assigned section of the primary source. Where possible, use quotes in your responses to the following questions:

Basic Information

1. Authorship:
 - a. Who created the document?
 - b. What do we know about them that might help our understanding of it? Consider their social status, occupation, gender, ethnicity, and any other relevant factors.
2. Audience:
 - a. Who was the intended audience?
 - b. What do we know about them that might help our understanding of it? Consider their social status, occupation, gender, ethnicity, and any other relevant factors.
3. Narrative:
 - a. What is the main story or message? Summarize the central theme or argument of the document.

Critical Analysis

1. Purpose:

- a. Why was the document created? What was its intended goal? Consider the author's motivation and the purpose the document was designed to serve.

- b. How could the author's purpose have affected the content and style? What does it say (and what doesn't it say)?

2. Genre:

- a. What type of document is it (letter, diary, official report, etc.)?

- b. How does the genre influence the content and style of the document?

3. Assumptions:

- a. What underlying beliefs or values are evident?

Interpretation and Contextualization

1. What does this document tell us about the obstacles women missionaries faced in the 1830s?
2. What strategies did they use to overcome these obstacles?
3. How did the Sisters' status as 1) women, 2) Catholic nuns, 3) missionaries impact their activities and decisions?
4. What can we learn about these sisters' position in society? How did they interact with others? What was the attitude of other people towards them?
5. What does this document tell us about the society that produced it? (You can zoom in on small details here and/or zoom out to connect the details of this memoir with big picture events)