Find Every Clue

Analyzing primary sources is kind of like solving a mystery. It requires you to hunt through details, find the clues, and put them together to find your answers.

Use the map on the next page as an example to see what you can find out from each and every primary source! Look for details in the illustrations and text and do your best to answer the questions below.

- What type of map is this (climate, economic or resource, military, physical, political, topographic, transportation, etc.)?

- What place or places does the map show?

- What do you notice first? Describe what else you see?

- What details do you see that look unfamiliar, strange, or out of place?

- What, if any, words do you see?

- Does the map have any special features (e.g., legend, scale, description, notations, compass, etc.)? What information do these features provide?

- Are there details that suggest the time period this map relates to? Is the creation date listed in the bibliographic record? If the creation date is listed, was this map created at or around the same time period the map relates to?

- Why do you think this map was made? What might have been the creator’s purpose? What evidence supports your theory?

- Who do you think was the audience for this map?

- What do you think the creator might have wanted the audience to see or think? Does the arrangement or presentation of the details affect how the audience might think? How?

- What was happening during the time period this map represents? If someone made this map today, what would be different/the same?