

**Martin Van
Buren
National
Historic Site
Kinderhook,
New York**



**Junior
Ranger
Day
April
2020**

National Park Service Rangers: Preservationists of 'Forever Moments.'

Welcome!

Before learning about National Park Service Rangers and why they do what they do, it is essential to understanding the importance of national parks.

- View the 27 minutes long extended preview about the Ken Burns series, 'National Parks: America Best Idea.' at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mx8WbZIWCSM>

The video preview opens with a personal story told by Yellowstone Park Ranger Shelton Johnson. He speaks poetically of an encounter he had one morning while amongst a group of bison. He referred to this single experience as a 'forever moment.'

There are 419 places under the protection of the National Park Service within the United States and its territories. The National Park system is comprised of; Historic Sites, Monuments, Battlefields, and Parks . In 2018 there were a little over 12,000 people employed to take care of them all. Together, they ensure Americans and visitors from around the world get to experience their own 'forever moment.'

Scientists, biologists, museum curators, historians, police officers and carpenters are just a few of the many occupations within the National Park Service. What would make a person want to dedicate their life to working in the heat, cold, wind, snow and rain? Spending weekends and holidays at work instead of home – and love it?

Want to get into the mind, and heart, of some park rangers at the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site? A few have offered why they love being Park Rangers in the paragraphs below.

The accompanying activity offers insight into what all park rangers, including those at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, rely upon when carrying out research before writing the tours each ranger is assigned to conduct.

Enjoy!



THIS ACTIVITY INCLUDES:

- ⇒ Intro Page;
- National Park Service Rangers; Preservationists of 'forever moments.'**
- ⇒ What is a Primary and Secondary Source'?
- ⇒ Game: 'Is It or Isn't It'
- ⇒ Game question examples
- ⇒ Key for game

Also Included:

MEET THE MARTIN VAN BUREN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE PARK RANGERS!

- Ranger Becky
- Ranger Dawn
- Ranger Maryalice



Meet Some Martin Van Buren National Historic Site Park Rangers

RANGER BECKY



"Hi, I'm Becky! I am the Chief of Interpretation at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, which means I oversee public programming, outreach, and interpretive media.

Being a park ranger allows me to delve into the complexities of the past in the very places where history was made. I am inspired daily by the ability to share meaningful stories with people from around the world and am a firm believer that the best lessons are those we learn together."

RANGER DAWN

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is fifteen miles from my hometown of Philmont, N.Y. I came to work here after spending ten years on staff at youth camps in New York, Vermont and California.

My favorite part of being a park ranger is meeting families from across the United States and from other countries! I especially like hosting fourth grade students who visit in May and June. They bring a curiosity about the community of people who lived and worked in the house and on the farm. After a house tour, I may be found outside talking with visitors near my favorite sycamore tree!

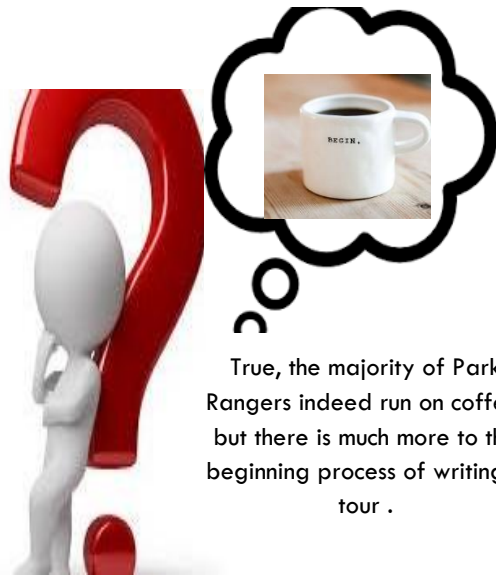


RANGER MARYALICE



I fell into history at seven years old. I read a story so extraordinary, scary, freaky and brave it persuaded me that history was far more interesting than fiction. Reading about that event drew me to other stories focusing on our country's past. I just never imagined I'd grow up talking about historic events on a daily basis, but I do!

What is the best part of my job? It's what rangers refer to as, 'the aha moment.' That quick second when I catch the look on a visitor's face and know what I said genuinely connected with them. It could be a look of shock or anger, a nod showing understanding, laughter or even tears. Those are the moments that validate my belief that history is very cool, and one of many reasons why I love being a park ranger.'



True, the majority of Park Rangers indeed run on coffee, but there is much more to the beginning process of writing a tour .

Inside a Ranger's brain when planning a tour .



Rangers begin by thinking about and deciding on an overall theme for the tour and what it is they want to include.



The process of gathering information needed to write about the various topics included in the tour is called **research**.

Primary and Secondary sources are two forms of research material Rangers rely upon when gathering information to include in their tours.

The next activity will introduce you to the meanings of each.





What is a Primary Source?

Anything from the time it was actually created or written.



Journals and Diaries

Journals and diaries are considered primary sources, because they serve as a written record of past events by those who were there.

- It is important to verify the authenticity of the information provided.

Any Law Enforcement Officer will attest, people don't always recall events accurately.

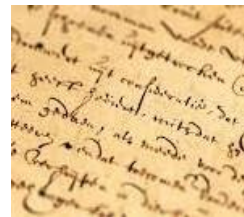


Artifacts

Anything created by the hand of a human being.

Examples:

- A Civil War Sword
- A shoe uncovered at the site of a former outhouse.
- A Scottish Kilt worn by someone who fought at Culloden
- A piece of jewellery found in a cave with ancient tools.



Documents

A written item that has some characteristic to prove it is authentic.

Examples:

- A will
- A letter
- A decree
- Birth Certificate
- Passport

Recordings

Recordings in various forms that for documentation purposes.

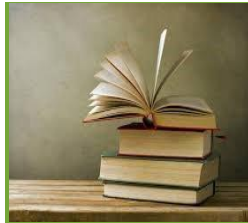
Examples:

- Records
- Wax Recording
- Photographs
- Cassette Tapes

IT WASN'T ME

What is a Secondary Source?

A Secondary Source is a document or recording about something, someone or an event by someone not present when it occurred.



Books

Books are secondary sources. The exceptions are autobiographies and memoirs. They're books written by a person about their life. They are considered primary sources, but it's best to verify any information you plan to use. People can exaggerate, forget or mix things up.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Films

Documentaries are films about people, places or events making them secondary sources.



Articles

Articles about an event that happened in the past are secondary sources. They can appear in newspapers and magazines, and sometimes quote primary sources, but they are not primary sources by themselves.



Internet

Articles about a subject found on the internet are considered Secondary Sources. Information found on the internet is helpful, but make sure you don't rely only on information found on web-sites.

A verified letter to Martin Van Buren.

Primary Source
Secondary Source
Other

1.

An article on Wikipedia about Martin Van Buren.

Primary Source
Secondary Source
Other

2.

An entry from the journal of his son John written during a trip to England.

Primary Source
Secondary Source
Other

3.

A book of stories written by an old man whom as a child lived at Lindenwald.

Primary Source
Secondary Source
Other

4.

A scribbled note that looks like Martin Van Buren's handwriting, but lacks a signature.

Primary Source
Secondary Source
Other

5.

A photograph of a page from the baptismal record of the Kinderhook Dutch Reformed Church. It's dated 15 December 1782. Martin Van Buren's name is spelled Maarten.

6. Primary Source Secondary Source
Other

A church web-site mentions in 1820 Martin Van Buren donated \$50.00 for the building of the second St. Mary's Church on Capitol Hill in Albany, New York.

Primary Source Secondary Source Other

7.

A page from the 1790 census for Kinderhook, New York.

Primary Source Secondary Source Other

8.

An article on the Irish servant girls who worked at Lindenwald for Martin Van Buren, written by Patricia West, PhD. Curator for the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site.

Primary Source Secondary Source Other

9.

A letter to Martin Van Buren about an enslaved man whom the author writes was owned by Martin Van Buren. The letter speaks of this man as if he successfully sought his freedom and was in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Primary Source Secondary Source Other

10.

1. Primary Source

In the field of history, something that was verified as being original is referred to as, 'authenticated.'

A properly authenticated letter is definitely a primary source.

2. Secondary

Wikipedia is a secondary source, even though information on the page about Martin Van Buren was written mainly by our park rangers.

3. Primary Source

Journal entries are valid documentation of events that happened by the person who experienced it.

* Events should always be verified before accepting them as accurate.

4. Secondary Source

This is a tricky one. It should be treated as a secondary source even though documentation exists of the author having lived at Lindenwald as a child.

The book was written long after the events took place, and the book lacks the documentation needed to back his claims.

5. Other

Another tricky one. It must be treated as a **possible** primary source until original documentation supporting its authenticity appears.

6. Primary Source

True, it is a photo, but it's a photo of an actual entry in the church record.

* Maarten is the old Dutch spelling of his name. Martin Van Buren grew up speaking old Dutch.

7. Secondary Source

It is not a judgement of the church's web-site, but it is merely a mention in an article.

If a photo of the check written by Martin Van Buren or a church record entry was posted, the item in the

8. Primary Source

Photography wasn't widely used until the mid -1800s, yet it's still a primary source.

It is a primary source because it is a photo of the actual record written in 1790.

9. Secondary Source

It is a secondary source because Dr. West was not alive in 1842 to interview the Irish servants for the article.

However, she would have used primary sources for information needed to write the article.

10. Primary Source

This is another tricky one that on the surface seems pretty straight forward.

It is a letter sent to MVB in 1824, but documentation proving he owned a person does not exist.

This letter certainly raises the possibility.