

The research paper I am submitting for the Undergraduate Library Research Award is my senior thesis, titled “Civil War Diary Keeping: Every Man Was His Own Historian.” In it, I compare and analyze two Civil War diaries, one of which I personally transcribed for the Archives and Special Collections Department. I began working with the Richard Blackstone diary in the fall of 2009, and finished the transcription in the summer of 2010. From the very first moment I handled the diary, I became enamored with it, and knew immediately that I wanted to use it for a research project. Without the help of the library’s resources, I would not have been able to create this work.

As a history major, I am no stranger to research, but this project has opened me up to a world of information that I had no idea was available. An invaluable source, the diary of Richard Blackstone was the foundation upon which I built my thesis. While working with the diary, I began to fact-check Blackstone’s entries in *Ohio in the War: Her Statesmen, Her Generals, and Soldiers*, a primary source book I found through the library’s online catalogue. Eager to learn more about Blackstone’s infantry, I used the internet to research other soldiers, and serendipitously came across the diary of Charles E. Smith, a man who served in the same regiment and engaged in the same battles. I analyzed each diary autonomously, examining the different themes and rhetorical styles, and then compared them to highlight the differences in personalities and intent in diary keeping. I credit much of my discovery to the online library catalogue. It provided sufficient results, and when I requested materials to be delivered from the basement storage, they were promptly available. I used it to acquire secondary source books and by reading the bibliographies of those, I came across even more reputable sources. I also

supplemented my research with the HarpWeek database, Ken Burns' *The Civil War* documentary, and military programs, among many others.

I learned a great deal from this research process, and the most important lesson I will take away is to follow as many leads as possible. If one searches, one shall find. Researching requires a tremendous amount of energy and persistence. While most of my research came from the diaries themselves, I made sure to fact check possible biases, using historical society records and secondary source materials.

Evident in my colorful bibliography, I have utilized as many of the library's resources as I could, and I am ever so appreciative for the wonderful library staff that have answered my questions and helped me along the way. I could not have developed my thesis without the library, and therefore could not have grown as an academic. The library and its breadth of resources have provided me with the tools necessary to grow as a scholar. I thank you for your consideration.