

ENDNOTE 4

Working-Definitions Of Historical Sources Terms

Primary Sources are written accounts by **first-hand** observers, and any relevant documents from the very same era. For Maine's early past, examples would be Christopher Levett's (1624) *A Voyage Into New England*, and (if preserved) any business records from his travels and trading-post in now-Portland-Harbor ME. The relative accuracy & bias of Primary Sources have to be assessed & taken into account by the scholars who use them. (Levett's book is usually given favorable ratings.)

Secondary Sources are **second-hand** written accounts, **either** from the same time as the events described (such as Purchas' published account from Hakluyt's papers, titled *Description of the Countrey of Mawooshen*), **or** from a later time's scholarly analysis of Primary Sources (like Williamson's 1832 *History Of The State Of Maine*, which provides footnoted references to his Primary Sources of information - so that others may check-up on their accuracy, as *scientists* should do).

Tertiary Sources, although not an *official* term, nonetheless usefully designate much later, and/or less-scholarly, written summary-accounts, perhaps intended only to tell a good story, not to preserve *facts*. A relevant example of this sort for us to be wary of is *Sebago Lake Land In History, Legend & Romance* by Herbert G Jones (1946), because it is still widely used as an *information-source* today, **but** does **not** clearly distinguish what is *History* and what is *Legend & Romance*, **nor** tell where Jones got his data from, **nor** even distinguish genuine Native American legends from Euramerican romance about Indians. (Indians need no enemies with friends like this.)