Reading Primary Sources: Newspaper Editorials [1]

On January 25, 1845, an editorial entitled "For What is a Mother Responsible? [2]" appeared in the Carolina Watchman, a newspaper based in Salisbury, North Carolina. On the surface, the editorial explains what a mother should do in order to successfully raise her child. But a deeper examination of the editorial reveals a great deal more about the time and place in which the piece was written, as well as the editorial's author (or authors).

As with any primary source document, the key to understanding the editorial lies in asking the right questions. This interactive guide steps through layers of questions, guiding the reader through the process of historical inquiry.

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