Let’s say you’re searching in American Memory and you find a primary source that you want to link to from somewhere else. Unlike in the Prints and Photographs online catalog, you cannot simply copy and paste from the URL bar in your browser. In American Memory, that link is temporary. To find the permanent URL for your selected primary source’s bibliographic page, follow these five easy steps below.

If you reach your primary source from the universal search box on the www.loc.gov home page, then the permanent URL will be in the browser bar and you don’t need to follow these steps.

**STEP 1:** Find the bibliographic page for the primary source you want to link to.
There are several different “looks” to the bibliographic pages. Here are four examples:

- **original “look” to American Memory**
- **sound recordings**
- **motion pictures**
- **more recent “look” to American Memory**

**STEP 2:** Note the URL in the browser bar.

**STEP 3:** Go to the bibliographic page for your primary source.

**STEP 4:** Click the link in the “Add to your bookmarks” field.

**STEP 5:** Copy the URL and paste it where you want to link.
Step 2: Go to “View” in your toolbar. From the menu that appears, select “Source” (PC) or “Page Source” (Mac). Recommended when using Internet Explorer or Safari.

You can also right-click anywhere on the page and select “View Page Source” (or similar phrase) from the menu that appears. Recommended when using Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome.

Step 3: A box of computer code will pop up. Do not be afraid of the computer code! Scroll down till you get to the very bottom.
STEP 4: Look for the statement, “The following URL will result in display of this document.”

This part of the code may or may not be in green.

Below that statement, between the “arrows” (<-- -->), you will find the permanent URL for this bibliographic page.

It will always begin with “http” and usually (but not always) end with double parentheses.

STEP 5: Copy and paste. You’re done!

And don’t forget the double parentheses!

Use this URL when writing a complete bibliographic entry for this primary source. For example, the bibliographic entry for this particular source above would look like this:


Q: Is there no other way?
A: Many bibliographic pages in American Memory list a “Digital ID” at the bottom. This works sometimes—not always—and it is not always present. Therefore, it is not always a reliable method. The steps listed above are a sure-fire way to return to your selected primary source time and time again.

Q: What about documents?
A: Documents are a little different. For one thing, their bibliographic pages can look different. (see ←)

For another, their URLs don’t end in double parentheses, but rather in Num=0, Num=1, Num=2, etc. (see ↓)

But you still find the URL in the same place, so refer to steps 1-3 above.

Note: The number at the end of the URL is equal to the number of the image showing on the bibliographic page, minus one. So, the first page of a document will end Num=0. (see purple squares, ← and ↓)