TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: JUNE 2015

WELCOME!

Teaching with Primary Sources—Middle Tennessee State University, administered by the Center for Historic Preservation, engages learners of all ages in using primary sources to explore major issues and questions in many different disciplines.

Contact: Stacey Graham or Kira Duke at (615) 898-2947 or www.mtsu.edu/tps

NEWS

• We are partnering with Tennessee History Day to offer three workshops in July: July 21 & 22 at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City and July 23 at the Museum Center at 5ive Points in Cleveland. Additional workshops will be announced in the coming weeks. To register for any of these or to get more information, contact Jennifer Core.

• Have you seen our newest lesson plans? They include Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., by Lakenya Ransom, who teaches in Metro Nashville Public Schools (Kindergarten), Telling Time with Analog Clocks (2nd grade math), and African Americans in Military Service (high school English/Language Arts & African American History).

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

[Infantry sergeant, Buffalo soldier, with young girl / Pollock, Main & Gold Sts., Deadwood, Dakota, 1877, detail]

During Reconstruction, the United States Colored Troops regiments that had served during the Civil War were reorganized as “Buffalo Soldier” regiments and saw action out West.

THEME: RECONSTRUCTION

While the Civil War brought four years of destruction and intense conflict to Tennessee, the Reconstruction period undertook the long and painful task of rebuilding the society and landscape. While the textbook dates for Reconstruction are 1865 to 1877, the process can be seen as beginning during the war and lasting until the 1890s. Reconstruction was the time during which thousands of formerly enslaved black Americans had to adapt to new economic and political conditions. It was the time during which former Confederate and Union partisans had to work together (well, sort of) in order to get states readmitted to the Union. It was the time during which the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution redefined what it meant to be a citizen in America. And, it was a time during which the country had to adapt to new circumstances of labor and agricultural organization. This is quite a lot to try to explain to 5th and 8th graders, we know! Luckily, TPS-MTSU has created several materials (see “Important Links,” p. 2) to help you in this task.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

• June 4 (Lebanon) — “Resources for K-3 Social Studies” workshop for Wilson County School System.

• June 8 (Lebanon) — “Teaching the First Half of U.S. History” workshop for Wilson County School System.

• June 12 (Lebanon) — “Using Primary Sources to Teach Math” workshop for Wilson County School System.

• June 8-9 (Murfreesboro) — Rutherford County Schools Summer Technology Academy. Session time TBA.

• June 16-17 (Knoxville) — “Exploring the History of Labor in the United States” at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. Attendance required for both days. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

• June 23-25 (Greeneville) — Civil War Summer Institute: Reconstruction. For more information and a complete agenda, click here. To register, email Kira Duke.

• July 13-15 (Cookeville) — World War I Summer Institute in partnership with the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Institute is full.

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When former slaves gained the right to vote in Tennessee in 1867, Republicans in the state tried to harness the black vote for their party. The Ku Klux Klan, which had originally formed as a social club in 1866 in Pulaski, came to act as an arm of the southern Democratic party in order to intimidate black Tennesseans and prevent them from voting Republican, or from exercising their newly won rights in general. While the original KKK disbanded in 1869, groups re-emerged in the 20th century under the name of the KKK in response to various perceived threats to white supremacy.

Start off by asking students what they think of when they hear the name “Ku Klux Klan.” Show students this image. Is it similar to what they had in mind? Next, have them read this account by Richard Reese and this interview with Nathan Bedford Forrest (see the full article here, columns 3-4). What is different about their perspectives? What are the main aims of the KKK as portrayed in these two primary sources? What were the findings of a Congressional investigating committee? How is the KKK a reaction to Reconstruction in Tennessee? As an activity, show students this illustration. For each of the 7 figures (not including the toddler) in the drawing, have a group of 2-4 students come up with a version of the night’s events from their figure’s point of view.

This lesson idea meets TN standards for grades 5 & 8 Social Studies (5.23 & 8.86) and for grades 5-8 English/Language Arts (Reading: Informational Text & Literacy in History/Social Studies).

Andrew Johnson’s presidency was fraught with political conflict and power struggles, especially over differing views of how former Confederate states and their citizens should be readmitted to the Union. Johnson’s plan for Reconstruction was viewed as too lenient by the Radical Republicans, who wanted to punish the South, especially wealthy former slaveholders, and ensure that former slaves’ rights were protected. The political conflict between Johnson and the Radical Republicans reached its peak when the Radicals, led by Thaddeus Stephens, passed articles of impeachment against the President. Ultimately, the Senate failed to convict Johnson on the impeachment charges in a vote that fell one shy of the necessary two-thirds needed.

Begin by having students analyze the political cartoon “The Smelling Committee.” (Download the TIFF file to insure that your students can read all of the text.) Ask students to summarize the meaning of the cartoon and each of the individuals portrayed. You might have students conduct some brief biographical research into each person depicted in the image. Why is impeachment represented as a dying horse? What does the ram with 30,000 on it represent? (To learn more about the 30,000 ram, read this excerpt.)

Next, divide students into groups and have them analyze the different articles about the Senate’s impeachment vote from The Union Flag, published in Jonesborough, TN. Be sure to have one group read “The Chase Conspiracy” article. How does this conspiracy article connect with the “seven” reference in the cartoon? Why might some Republicans believe that members of their party were part of a conspiracy after the vote? How does coverage of this political event compare with political journalism today?

This lesson idea meets TN standards for grades 5 & 8 Social Studies (5.22 & 8.83) and for grades 5-8 English/Language Arts (Reading: Informational Text & Literacy in History/Social Studies).
LESSON IDEA—MEMPHIS RACE RIOTS

Known as the worst race riot in the city’s history, the Memphis Race Riot took place on May 1 & 2, 1866. The riot started after African American troops at Fort Pickering were relieved of their weapons after a violent confrontation with local police, who had reportedly shot a soldier. This left local freedpeople vulnerable to mob violence. Forty-eight people were killed, “seventy-five persons injured, one hundred persons robbed, five women raped, ninety-one homes burned, four churches and eight schools burned and destroyed, and seventeen thousand dollars in federal property destroyed” (Bobby Lovett, “Memphis Race Riot of 1866”).

Print a copy of the Memphis Race Riot of 1866 entry from the Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture for each student. Read the entry as a class and discuss the riot’s significance. Then have students analyze the image below. What is being depicted here? Next, have students read portions of local newspaper coverage of the riot. (See articles “Riot in South Memphis” and “Second Day of the Fight.”) How do these articles compare with the information from the encyclopedia entry?

Divide the class into pairs and assign one partner the role of “reporter” and the other that of “witness.” Have the students conduct interviews as if they were reporters at the scene of the Memphis Race Riot. Both students should take notes. After the interview is complete, assign both partners to write a one-page article from the perspective of the reporter. (Remind the class that they are writing for an 1866 newspaper.) How is having a witness useful when writing the newspaper article? Then group students into groups of eight and have them compare their articles.

This lesson idea meets TN standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.92) and high school English/Language Arts (Informational Text).

FEATURED FEATURE—LESSON PLAN: THE HAYES-TILDEN ELECTION

The Reconstruction Era witnessed rapid changes in voting rights. While Congress passed legislation to give African American males the right to vote, Congress denied the vote to women and, temporarily, many former Confederates. Yet, members of Congress did not have the final say on voting rights. Depending on where an individual lived, the color of his skin, his party loyalties, and whether or not federal troops were stationed nearby, he could be denied the vote through intimidation and fraud. These conflicts over voting rights and voting fraud came to a head during the disputed 1876 presidential election. The compromise decision that settled the election ended political Reconstruction and shaped voting rights in America for more than eighty years.

Fights, Freedom, and Fraud: Voting Rights in the Reconstruction Era prompts students to determine what factors decided whether an individual could vote in Reconstruction America. This lesson plan, along with a detailed PowerPoint, provides a comprehensive look at voting since the Reconstruction Era.

Over the course of two days, students will complete three activities: Who Gets to Vote? (page 4), the 14th Amendment (page 6), and newspaper analysis (pages 7-10). Through these activities, students will learn how to use a timeline, interpret and examine text-based primary sources such as newspaper articles, and build critical thinking skills.

This lesson plan meets TN standards for grade 8 Social Studies and high school U.S. History & Geography (8.82, 8.88, & US.3).
The yellow fever epidemics of the late 19th century hit Tennessee extremely hard, especially in places such as Memphis. In 1873, 2000 people in the city perished from the disease, which would recur there in 1878 and 1879. What impact would such an outbreak have on the social and economic life of a city? Yellow fever still claims thousands of lives each year around the globe. How can its spread be prevented today? What about in the 19th century?

Yellow fever

The Republican chart. The nation’s choice in war and peace Ulysses S. Grant / M.T. Boyd, [1872]

Ulysses S. Grant’s presidential career (1869-1877) often gets overshadowed by his military career and defined by the scandals occurring during his years at the White House. Despite instances of corruption in his first term, he was easily elected to a second one. Download the TIFF file above and zoom in on “The Platform” (bottom right). What issues does Grant acknowledge in the 1872 platform and in his second inaugural address?

Grant As President

Lincoln’s Assassination

The assassination of President Lincoln: at Ford’s Theatre, Washington, D.C., April 14th, 1865 [1865]

President Abraham Lincoln was shot in the back of the head at Ford’s Theatre by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865. Booth assassinated Lincoln and fled the theatre but was caught and shot by a Union soldier twelve days later. What is a martyr? Would you say that President Lincoln was a martyr for the abolition of slavery? Why or why not?

Lincoln’s Assassination

Fisk University

Junior preparatory class of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee [1899]

Fisk University, first called the Fisk Free Colored School, was established on January 9, 1866. This Nashville school was one of the first in the state to educate African Americans. Why were these schools needed? See Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Tennessee to learn more about Fisk and other HBCUs in Tennessee.