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

- Didn’t get a chance to attend our summer institute on Reconstruction? Check out our new Civil War Image Gallery to see some of the highlighted sources used in the institute. Also, be sure to check out our Civil War page for a variety of other resources to teach the Civil War and Reconstruction.

- We’re excited by the enthusiasm that our Facebook posts are generating among our Friends. (If you’re not yet a Friend, please Like us by searching for “Teaching with Primary Sources - Middle Tennessee State University.”) So far, the most shares have occurred with October 30th’s posting about 1880s baseball cards. These come from an online collection containing 2,100 baseball cards dating from 1887 to 1914. In honor of the finale of the World Series, check them out!

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Where there's smoke there's fire [1920, detail]

What do you think of this image of a flapper? Why do you think the artist chose the title he did? Why did he choose a black backdrop? Why a thin line of smoke?

THEME: THE 1920s

Flappers. Speakeasies. Jazz music. Consumerism. These things and more may come to mind when you think of the “Roaring ’20s.” But what was really going on? How do the culture, politics, and economics combine to create this iconic epoch in American history?

Sandwiched between World War I and the Great Depression, the 1920s are sometimes depicted as a rip-roaring time of excess and prosperity that eventually drove our economy to the brink. They were also a time of Jim Crow segregation, prejudice against immigrants (especially Catholics), the Scopes Trial, and the “unintended consequences” of Prohibition.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- November 2 (Clarksville) - "History Day and TPS Introductory Workshop" in partnership with Tennessee History Day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Jennifer Core.

- November 6 (Memphis) - “Trials and Triumphs” Workshop at the National Civil Rights Museum from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

- November 13 (Nashville) - “Growth of a Slave Economy” Workshop in partnership with Travellers Rest from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

- November 19 (Knoxville) - “Economics and Culture in the 1920s” Workshop at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

- December 3 (Knoxville) - “Primary Source Strategies for the Primary Grades” Workshop at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

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LESSON IDEA– ADS AND CONSUMER CULTURE

For three dollars a year, American housewives could subscribe to the magazine *Good Housekeeping* and learn about affordable appliances, healthy foods, and fashionable attire. In the pages between articles, wives and mothers could peruse the advertisements. Ask your students what they know about advertisements. What is the purpose of an ad? How does an ad accomplish its objective? Can your students provide examples? To encourage discussion, show your students several ads from the February 1926 issue of *Good Housekeeping*. You can divide the ads into categories. First, try the informative type. Take a look at these ads on home heaters and furniture. Why might these ads be successful? Second, examine the emotional approach. Show your students an ad for a Packard automobile or a brand new Cadillac. Also look at this refrigerator advertisement. How do these ads attract buyers? Why might this emotional approach be successful? Thirdly, analyze the beneficent-seller approach. Take a look at this ad for a shopping service. Why would this type of ad appeal to buyers? After the class looks at all of the ads, ask them to think about what might happen if a majority of housewives in 1920s America read *Good Housekeeping* every month. Do you think men read *Good Housekeeping*? Bring up the word consumerism with your students. Do they recognize and relate to that word? Why or why not?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet TN curriculum standards for high school U.S. History (US.33 & 34) and Economics (E4 & 29).

LESSON IDEA– THE RISE AND FALL OF WARREN HARDING

Republican Ohio Senator Warren Harding was elected to the presidency in 1920 with a campaign that pledged to move the country away from war and Progressive Era reforms with a "return to normalcy." Harding filled his cabinet with some of the best and worst that his party had to offer. The cronyism of the Harding administration including the appointment of members of Harding’s “Ohio Gang” would eventually lead to a number of scandals that would forever taint Haring’s time in office. Harding died suddenly during his second year in office in the midst of the Teapot Dome scandal. His vice-president Calvin Coolidge took office and worked quickly to distance himself and his administration from the scandals of his predecessor.

Begin by showing your students these five sources related to Harding’s inauguration. Within these sources, divide the inaugural address into different sections and have your students analyze this address in pairs. What tone does Harding set for his presidency with his remarks? What would you anticipate to be his primary goals for his time in office?

Next have your students research Harding’s time in office noting key moments (both positive and negative for the president). You may wish to have your students use this Web resource guide along with their textbooks. Finally, have your students read two sections from “Fall May Father Alaska Scandal Like Teapot Dome”: “Fall’s Friendship for Oil Man Worth 400,000,000” and “Private Investors Get Hold of Naval Reserve.” Have students note the specifics of the Teapot Dome scandal. How does this connect with Harding? How does this scandal compare with other events they have found during their research? What conclusions can be drawn about the Harding presidency based on Teapot Dome and their research as a whole?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet TN curriculum standards for high school U.S. History (US.35) and English Language Arts (Reading: Informational Text).
LESSON IDEA– LET’S GO TO THE MOVIES!

Take a virtual field trip to a movie theater in the 1920s to see what your students can learn about popular culture, technology, and even a little bit of the economic standpoint of the “Roaring ’20s.” This field trip might be most fun with popcorn or snacks (if allowed). First, take a tour of a few early twentieth century theater buildings, such as The Leader Theater in Washington, DC, the Mount Vernon Theatre in Washington, DC, and the Garden Theater in Pittsburgh, PA. How would they describe the styles of buildings (decorations, ornamentation, etc.)? Discuss the decadence of 1920s culture, in which fashion and architecture were heavily ornamented, and people generally had more leisure time than in the past.

Then show students some 1920s film advertisements, such as these for Onward Flour, Flash cleaner, or an electric refrigerator show (try the downloading options under “Resources”). Ask students what struck them as strange or different about these advertisements. In what ways are they similar or different from today’s advertisements? Discuss technological advancements, as with new appliances, more money to spend on these appliances, etc.

Finally, show a silent film from 1918, The Good Sport (in 4 parts). Have students keep a list of observations about the movie. While this movie was first shown almost a century ago, it provides ample opportunity to discuss film technology and cultural aspects (what were the actors wearing, are there clear gender roles, etc.). This exercise can be used before or after discussing the impact of film on culture, as well as film as a new avenue for advertising the new technologies and appliances that were being invented during this decade.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet TN curriculum standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.47).

LESSON IDEA– THE “LOST GENERATION” IN AMERICAN LIT

While the two were hanging out in Paris in the 1920s, Gertrude Stein said to Ernest Hemingway, “You are all a lost generation.” What did she mean by that? “The Lost Generation” became the popular way to refer to the generation of Americans who came of age during the tragic years of World War I. During the ‘20s, some of these young people turned to the arts—literature, art, and music—in a new zeitgeist of cultural expression. Stein’s literary salon in Paris hosted some of the biggest names to come out of this movement, such as Hemingway, author F. Scott Fitzgerald, poet (and later Librarian of Congress) Archibald MacLeish, and photographer Carl Van Vechten.

The thoughts and feelings of the Lost Generation are well encapsulated in two seminal American novels of the 20s: Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby (1925) and Hemingway’s The Sun Also Rises (1926). Both novels deal with the themes of American expatriates, World War I veterans, excessive lifestyles of the “Roaring ’20s,” and the search for human connection in the midst of an outrageous social scene. Read Chapter 1 of The Great Gatsby and Chapter 1 of The Sun Also Rises and compare the two openings. How much do you learn about the narrators? How each author describe the male characters? The female characters? How do the attitudes of the narrators convey the sense of a Lost Generation? How do these writing styles, characters, and themes seem modern? How do they seem outdated today (if, indeed, they do)?

This lesson idea meets TN standards in High school U.S. History & Geography (US.41, Primary Documents to Read) and English Language Arts (Literature).
**Indian Citizenship Act**

[President Coolidge being made Sioux Chief by Henry Standing Bear.  [1927, detail]

Congress granted citizenship to American Indians on June 2, 1924. President Calvin Coolidge (pictured above, left) signed the legislation into law. Why do you think Coolidge is wearing a traditional Indian headdress? For more information on American Indian civil rights, see page three of this primary source set.

**Cow Shoes**

[Prohibition Unit (Cow Shoes), 6/28/24 [1924]

Why would shoes like this be useful during Prohibition? Why were they called "cow shoes"? These shoes were used so that no human tracks would be found going to or from illegal stills hidden in the woods. Show these to your students as a way to launch into a discussion about Prohibition and its effects on society and culture, including the rise of organized crime, speakeasies, bootlegging, rum-running, and moonshine.

**Former President & Chief Justice**

[Chief Justice William H. Taft administering the oath of office to Herbert Hoover on the east portico of the U.S. Capitol, March 4, 1929] [detail]

Appointed chief justice by Warren Harding, William Taft is the only former president to later be appointed to the Supreme Court. How would Taft’s role as chief justice of the Supreme Court have differed from his role as president? How did Taft’s experiences as president shape his time on the Court?

**Langston Hughes**

Langston Hughes (1902-1967) was one of the most famous American writers to emerge in the 1920s. He drew from his experiences growing up in a mostly African American neighborhood in New York to create poetry, plays, novels, and other literary works, some of which were set to music. His name is almost synonymous with the Harlem Renaissance, when jazz music and literature together captured the mood and the accomplishments of a vibrant African American culture that was experimenting with its voice. The Library has so many materials for teaching and learning about Hughes; search on his name or click [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), or [here](#), for starters!