TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: JULY 2018

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

• Did you miss our 2018 Summer Institute: Beginnings of a Movement? If so, check out our newest educational resources: Road to Brown, Double V Campaign, The Media and the 20th Century Race Riots, and Beginnings of a Movement Primary Source Set.

• Before jumping into teaching FDR and the New Deal, we need to understand what led the nation into a depression. Are you interested in learning more about the multitude of causes for the Great Depression? Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU is partnering with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta—Nashville Branch to offer a special workshop exploring this topic on Friday, September 14, in Murfreesboro from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you are interested in registering, email Kira Duke.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

• July 11-12 (St. Louis, MO) - "Expanding Citizenship from Civil War to Civil Rights" workshop in partnership with Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, click here or contact Kira Duke.

• July 17 (Martin) - History Day and Teaching with Primary Sources workshop at University of Tennessee, Martin from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Jennifer Core.

• July 18 (Brownsville) - History Day and Teaching with Primary Sources workshop at Elma Ross Public Library from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Jennifer Core.

• July 25 (Jonesborough) - History Day and Teaching with Primary Sources workshop at the Washington County Board of Education from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Jennifer Core.

• July 26 (Knoxville) - History Day and Teaching with Primary Sources workshop at the East Tennessee Historical Society from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Jennifer Core.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:


Quilting creates a useful product for the household as well as a piece of art. Have students explore the history of quilting in various communities. What inspired different designs?

THEME: FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

This month in Middle Tennessee, folks are gearing up for music festivals such as Uncle Dave Macon Days, Smithville Fiddlers’ Jamboree, and Nashville Soul Festival, county fairs in DeKalb County, Bedford County, Smith County, Sumner County, and so much more. There will also be July 4th festivals across the state, including Music City July 4th in Nashville.

Summer has always been an appropriate time for fairs and festivals, for reasons that range from weather to school calendars, but which ultimately revolve around the agricultural yearly cycle. Check out our special guest column on p. 2 about county fairs for more on celebrating Tennessee’s agricultural ways of life.
Summer is here, bringing with it the bright lights, twirling rides, and competitions that make up our state’s wonderful county fairs. But Tennessee’s county fairs, now such a part of our summer entertainment, are much more than midways and deep-fried delicacies. They are deeply grounded in the state’s agricultural history and economy. County fairs in the United States developed in the early 19th century as a way to promote farming, highlight new tools and techniques, and organize competitions that celebrated the fruits of farm labors. In the 20th century, fairs began offering more of what we are familiar with today, including entertainment, rides, and opportunities like 4-H competitions for young people to showcase their accomplishments. Today, county fairs remain deeply rooted in tradition, while adapting to the needs of the 21st century.

As our state’s agricultural landscape changes and farms increasingly give way to development, county fairs provide a great venue to educate those who have a very limited knowledge of where their food actually comes from. Fairs bring the farm to the community, offering a rare chance to experience agriculture’s value to our state in a fun, hands-on way. County fairs also raise awareness of the importance of farms and green space to the state’s quality of life. They provide a place to honor Tennessee Century Farms (farms that have been owned and operated by the same family for a hundred years or more), whose rich histories and fascinating stories are often on prominent display.

It is important to remember that county fairs still have a significant economic impact on Tennessee. Last year’s fairs (in 60 of Tennessee’s 95 counties) grossed $12 million dollars while showcasing over 200,000 agricultural, craft, and livestock exhibits. County fairs continue to offer a way for both new and established residents to gather together and learn the importance of all our farms have to offer. Though fewer people actively farm today, agriculture remains a strong economic driver in rural counties, annually generating $60 million and more than 500,000 jobs for Tennesseans.

Fair season in Tennessee runs through the end of September. If you’ve never been to a county fair before, don’t miss the opportunity to honor and preserve our agricultural past, present, and future. By far, the best way to learn about county fairs and their connection to Tennessee’s farming history is to visit one. Take time to view the 4-H competitions and Century Farm displays, remembering why we still celebrate them today. In addition to showcasing the very best of Tennessee agriculture, each unique fair is a celebration of good times, farm pride, and hard work.

To learn more about Tennessee’s rich history of county fairs and festivals, start by visiting the Tennessee Association of Fairs for a schedule of this year’s venues. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is another great resource for farmers, residents, and consumers. Educators can also find great resources from the Tennessee Farm Bureau’s “Ag in the Classroom” site. See you at the fair!

**Feature – Bright Lights, Big County (Fairs, that is!)**

*By Laura Stewart Holder Federal Liaison, Center for Historic Preservation*

**Important Links:**
- Local Legacies (American Folklife Center)
- Tennessee Association of Fairs (Web site)
- National Book Festival
- Let’s Go To the Fair! (Today in History)
- Pictorial Americana: Fairs
- Booker T. Washington and the Atlanta Compromise (blog)
- May Day: A Festival of Flowers (blog)
- Chronicling America topics:
  - Philadelphia World’s Fair 1876
  - Chicago World’s Fair 1893
  - St. Louis World’s Fair 1904

---

**Century Farms display at the 2017 Smith County Fair. (CHP)**

**Tennessee Association of Fairs 2018 Map (CHP)**

**The Kelley Farm was honored at the 2016 Robertson County Fair. Courtesy of the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP).**
LESSON IDEA—THE 1982 WORLD’S FAIR AND KNOXVILLE, TN

The World’s Fair was held in Knoxville, TN, from May through October of 1982. Known formally as the Knoxville International Energy Exposition, the theme of the fair was “Energy Turns the World.” In addition to creating iconic landmarks that are still part of Knoxville’s cultural landscapes, the 1982 World’s Fair also brought millions of visitors from around the globe to visit Knoxville and its surrounding areas. Yet for an event of its significance, the 1982 World’s Fair remains largely unknown by Tennesseans. This lesson idea will have your students explore the 1982 World’s Fair, including its mission, the goals that the creators hoped the fair would accomplish, and competing versions of its legacies.

Have your students analyze this postcard in groups using the primary source analysis tool. For what purposes do you think the card was created? Who do you think created it? Is there anything from the postcard that the students recognize? What do you think the theme of the fair was based on the postcard?

After your students have had a chance to analyze the postcard, have them read President Jimmy Carter’s statement on signing the bill into law which authorized the 1982 World’s Fair. This article on the Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture may also be useful for fleshing out the mission and scope of the fair for your students. How close were you to what the theme of the fair was? What was President Carter’s vision for the World’s Fair? What were some of the reasons that President Carter cited as Knoxville being the perfect place for this event?

Finally, have your students read these articles from the New York Times and Channel 10 News. What does each article have to say about the successes or failures of the 1982 World’s Fair? On what do the articles agree? On what do they disagree? Why do you think the articles differ from one another so much? Do you believe that the 1982 World’s Fair was a success?

This lesson idea meets standards for high school Tennessee History Standard (TN.60).

LESSON IDEA—LEARNING THROUGH COUNTY FAIRS

When kids think about visiting their county fair, they usually eagerly anticipate the rides they will enjoy and the junk food they will eat. That’s natural and goes back many decades. Yet, young people have also long participated in fairs through exhibiting livestock they have raised, artwork they have created, baked goods they have produced, and preserves they have canned. There has always been a strong educational element to county fairs.

During the Progressive Era at the turn of the twentieth century, reformers promoted a variety of educational improvements, especially for children living in rural areas, where access to education often lagged behind urban centers. In some southern states, departments of education provided suggestions for how schools could participate in county fairs or set up countywide school fairs of their own.

During the Progressive Era at the turn of the twentieth century, reformers promoted a variety of educational improvements, especially for children living in rural areas, where access to education often lagged behind urban centers. In some southern states, departments of education provided suggestions for how schools could participate in county fairs or set up countywide school fairs of their own.

In 1913, for example, the South Carolina State Department of Education published a booklet titled Suggestions for County Fairs and Field Days. The goal was to promote friendly competition among the schools so that children would strive for excellence and teachers and administrators could share ideas. Make copies of the “Suggestions for Fair Exhibits” (pp. 15-18) section of the booklet. Divide your students into groups of 4-5 students. Ask each group to read through the lists of suggestions and choose 3-5 exhibits that they could collectively create today, either in school or at home. Ask them to choose a similar number of exhibits that they could not produce at school or at home in 2018. Bring the groups together and discuss their choices. What has changed in schools and homes in the past 105 years? What has stayed the same? Is agriculture still an important part of the local community? If students could choose to exhibit anything at their county fair, what would it be?

This lesson idea meets state standards for 6th-8th grade English Language Arts (Reading: Informational Text and Speaking & Listening).
The 2018 National Book Festival is scheduled for Saturday, September 1st. Since 2001, the event has celebrated award-winning authors and advocated the joys of reading to the larger public. The festival also includes a Youth Writing Contest and Youth Poetry Slam. Have your students share their favorite books with the class or work with other teachers and your librarian to organize a writing contest or poetry slam at your school.

In August, the “Tipi Capital of the world” will celebrate the 100th Annual Crow Fair Celebration Powwow and Rodeo. The event pays tribute to Native American tribes of the Great Plains and includes a daily parade, contests, games, dances, horse racing, and a rodeo. Ask students to learn more about Crow Fair to see how the celebration compares to events near their hometown. Also available on the Library of Congress’ Web site are aerial photographs of the fair, as well as photographs and audio recordings of the Crow Fair Dance.

This 1864 photograph from the Metropolitan Fair in New York shows portraits of presidents along with a Frederic Church painting entitled “The Heart of the Andes.” During the Civil War, civilians organized sanitary fairs such as this one to raise money for the U.S. Sanitary Commission and other organizations that provided relief for Union soldiers and their families. In addition to fundraising, the Sanitary Commission also volunteered and collected supplies for the Union Army such as clothing, bandages, and food. Have students brainstorm ways to support our military today such as sending care packages, volunteering with the USO, fostering a pet or writing notes of encouragement.

Described as “half blues festival, half small-town fair and all about the Delta,” Clarksdale’s Juke Joint Festival has been celebrating Mississippi’s culture since 2003. Have students research blues music, listen to audio recordings, or discuss how blues songs were used as protest. Billie Holiday’s “Strange Fruit” and Buster Ezell’s “Obey the Ration Laws” are great examples.