TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU 
NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2017

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.

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NEWS

• Are you interested in learning more about the women’s suffrage movement? Mark your calendars for March 17-18. We will be offering a workshop at the East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville on the 17th. The following day will feature symposium kicking off the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. For more information, contact Lisa Oakley.

• Did you know the Library of Congress has its own magazine? The November-December issue looks at “Veterans on the Homefront,” and also contains short articles on the Alexander Hamilton Papers collection and the song “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” interviews with veterans and librarians, and other interesting news from America’s Library.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Democracy .. a challenge [between 1936 and 1940]

How can art be used to communicate to the general public during times of war?

THEME: ART, VOL. II

This month’s issue focuses once again on art, specifically the visual arts. The following lesson ideas look closely at using photographs and print illustrations in both art classes and Social Studies classes. Art prints make fantastic primary sources because they are visually compelling and can engage students’ interest with their colors, composition, and subject matter.

The Library of Congress Web site has digitized hundreds of art sources that help depict the cultural history of the United States and other countries around the world. See here, here, and here for more ideas on art primary sources. And don’t forget to check out the Library’s newest art exhibition, highlighting American female artists from the 1800s to the 2000s, Drawn to Purpose.

Upcoming Events:

• December 1 (Knoxville) - “American Imperialism” workshop at the East Tennessee Historical Society from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

• December 8 (Columbia) - “Examining Tennessee’s Story: Resources and Strategies for Social Studies” workshop at the James K. Polk Home from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

• January 19 (Milan) - “Examining Tennessee’s Story: Resources and Strategies for Social Studies” workshop at the Polk Clark School in partnership with the East Tennessee Historical Society from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

• February 9 (Dyersburg) - “Using Text-Based Primary Sources” at Dyersburg State Community College from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

Democracy .. a challenge [between 1936 and 1940]

Neptune statue in Neptune Fountain... [2007]

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One of the worst events in United States history was the forced removal from their homes of 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry in 1942. Most were American citizens. They were sent to live in remote, desolate prison camps—all without due process of law. I know because I was one of them. And although I was a child just 9 years old, I was old enough to remember how it felt.

After retiring from the Boeing Company where I was a rocket scientist, I decided that the best new career for me was to become an educator, teaching about the history of mass imprisonment in the U.S. I started teaching five years ago as a visiting lecturer at UCLA and U.C. Berkeley on the topic of racially based mass incarceration. I also ventured out across the country teaching.

Most students who have heard my lecture say it was especially memorable because of the personal stories I share about the difficulties my family and I experienced during—and after—our three years of imprisonment. The entire family was forced to live in one small room without facilities in a desolate camp in Northern Wyoming.

About a year ago, I received a message from Todd Wigginton of the Tennessee chapter of the National Council for History Education (NCHE). Todd had heard me speak at the national conference and wanted me to come to Nashville to speak at this year’s TNCH gathering. So on September 27, 2017, for the first time as speaker, I came to Tennessee and talked about my experience. The presentation included photographs of the imprisonment process and video clips of other witnesses to the mass incarceration.

Most important was the discussion on the topic of what were the lessons learned from this ordeal and how does it apply to problems of today—especially to people of Middle Eastern origin. The connection between major events in history and issues facing our country is an important part of teaching about history. Several educators in the audience expressed thanks for their attendance and for receiving a copy of a new DVD that describes details of this chapter in our history.

I also enjoy giving presentations to large student groups, as I recently did with an assembly of the entire high school in New Mexico. I was introduced to the school by a teacher who heard me speak at a NCHE conference. The speech was made possible by a state humanities grant.

Through this newsletter, I invite all history teachers in Tennessee to let me know if you have interest in having me speak at your school. You can contact me at smihara12345@gmail.com.

There is no doubt that automobiles changed the culture and landscape of the United States. John Margolies turned his hobby of sightseeing into a forty-year career. Margolies travelled the country taking photographs of inns, restaurants, gas stations, and other vernacular architecture that developed in response to the role of the automobile in American life. His fascinating prints are highlighted in two Library of Congress blog posts: “Exclamation Points” and John Margolies Photographs of Roadside America.

Students could analyze this collection of prints to better understand the impact of the interstate system in 20th-century America. Ask them to consider who built the structures and how they have been used by their communities. Many of Margolies’ prints document unique architecture. Have students choose a photograph and create a narrative story focused on a particular building.

This lesson idea meets state standards for grades 6-12 for ELA (Writing), 5th grade Social Studies (5.61) and high school U.S. History & Geography (US.84).
LESSON IDEA— ANSEL ADAMS, PHOTOGRAPHER

American photographer Ansel Adams (1902-1984) is best known for his majestic pictures of Yosemite and other rugged natural landscapes. Less well known, but equally compelling, are his photographs from Manzanar, which was one of several internment camps set up in the western U.S. by the federal government for the express purpose of detaining Japanese Americans during WWII. (Sam Mihara’s family was detained at the Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming; see p. 2.) Adams visited Manzanar in 1943 and was deeply affected by what he saw there. The following year, he published a book with text and photographs about his experience called Born Free and Equal.

Start the lesson by projecting this image on the board or screen. Ask students for initial observations before giving them the title and date information; then take students through the analysis process using this form. Discuss the composition of the photograph. How does the foreground (the ball and players) fit or not fit with the background (the barracks and mountains)? How does Adams visually capture the poignancy of Americans playing an American sport in America while being detained under the unwarranted suspicion that they were disloyal to the U.S.? Split students into five groups and give each group one of the following to analyze: Catherine Natsuko Yamaguchi, Warehouse, Mrs. Naguchi, Roy Takeno, and Benji Iguchi. After analyzing what they do see, ask students what they don’t see—for instance, why are there no pictures of guards? barbed wire? tense or upsetting situations? Why would Adams make things look clean and pleasant? Consider how his photographs were subjected to approval by U.S. authorities and how that might have limited the scenes that photographers (including Dorothea Lange and others) could capture.

Show students these two brief videos to contrast their initial impressions of the internment camp with the realities. Then have students read Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston for more eye-witness testimony about the harsh living conditions there. To start talking about the constitutionality of FDR’s executive order that decreed the internment, contrast the words of the order with FDR’s statement on Americanism, quoted by Harold Ickes in the Preface to Born Free and Equal. See more teaching ideas for using the Ansel Adams collection of Manzanar photographs here.

This lesson idea meets state standards for 5th grade Visual Arts (3.1.3) and Social Studies (5.54) and High School Visual Arts (3.1.3) and U.S. History & Geography (US.63).

LESSON IDEA— EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY INDUSTRY

During the mid-eighteenth century, labor and production in England underwent major changes due to the industrial revolution. This transition to mechanized work changed the landscape as well as the lives of individuals nationwide. As the industrial revolution spread to other countries during the next century, prices were reduced and standards of living improved, but at a cost; pollution, poor working conditions, and other labor issues were rampant.

The following lithographs are from the late industrial period and depict factory scenes from England and the United States: Factories on the Thames, Shell factory, no. 2, In the works, Homestead, Within the furnaces, Building engines for the allies, and Munitions river. Present the lithographs to students and ask them to think about what life may have been like for the workers in these factories. Where did they live? How did they arrive at work? What did their work day consist of? How were they treated? Ask them to also consider the owners of the factories and make predictions. How did they obtain their positions as industrial leaders? What was the purpose of the factory? What was their relationship with their employees?

Have students pay close attention to [Old and new mills, Valenciennes] and pick out the differences on either side of the lithograph. Why is the windmill juxtaposed with the factory? What significance did all these scenes have that made them worthy of being the subject of lithographs? What can you assume about society because these scenes were chosen to make art? Ask students to write a short essay on how factories changed the landscape of cities and affected the people living in the area.

This lesson idea meets state standards for High School Visual Arts (3.1.3, 4.1), Writing (W.TTP.2), and World History & Geography (W.7, W.11).
Telling Stories Through Cartoons

After the September 11th attacks, artists depicted scenes that provoked questions, preserved memory, and honored victims. The "Remembering September 11th" exhibition includes an assortment of work drawn by comic book artists in 2001, and is part of a larger collection of cartoons, caricatures, and comic strips from other time periods. Encourage students to think about why cartoons have such lasting impact and have them to create a comic that depicts a scene from your current unit.


National Gallery of Art

Monet, Claude. The Artist’s Garden in Argenteuil (A Corner of the Garden with Dahlias) [1873]

The Impressionist movement transformed art in the 19th century. The depiction of movement, short brush strokes, and everyday subjects was a noticeable change from the Realism movement that preceded it.

Students can view the National Gallery of Art’s online collection to identify other Impressionist paintings, discover common characteristics of Impressionism, or even attempt a painting of their own.

Historical Travel Pictures

In this photochrom, viewers can see a colored depiction of Cairo, Egypt circa 1890-1900. These prints, which deceivingly appear to be color photographs, were once popular among travelers and tourists. Students can browse nearly 6,000 prints from around the world in the Photochrom Prints Collection In class, students could analyze these prints to better understand a particular region, create a "postcard" version of a photochrom, or use one of the prints as the basis for a writing assignment. To learn more about the photochrom process, click here.

Resting Bedouins and the Grand Pyramid, Cairo, Egypt [between ca. 1890 and ca. 1900]

Brodie, Howard. N.Y. Panther trial/ Brodie 70. [1970]

The Library of Congress houses a collection of courtroom illustrations dating back to 1964. Artists’ renditions of legal trials have given the public a glimpse of courtroom proceedings that are now available online. In this 1970 example, members of the New York Black Panther Party were acquitted of charges of conspiracy to bomb several sites in New York City. Have students explore Drawing Justice: The Art of Courtroom Illustration. Why are these illustrations important? What is their purpose?