TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 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.
Contact: Stacey Graham or Kira Duke at (615) 898-2947 or www.mtsu.edu/tps

NEWS
- TPS-MTSU’s 8-year-old Web site, http://library.mtsu.edu/tps, has accumulated quite a bit of material over the years. We are now happy to announce that there is an effective way to search through all of it! Our friends at MTSU Walker Library have installed a Google Custom Search box on our home page that you can use to find materials specifically on your topic of choice. As always, though, if you are having trouble finding things, give us a call or email and we’ll be happy to help you directly!
- We’re looking forward to a full and successful 2017! A quick preview of what’s ahead for the new year: Summer Institute on Jim Crow in June; two-day workshop on text-based sources in Knoxville in June; multi-day workshop on Reconstruction with Tennessee State Library and Archives in July; more History Day workshops in July!

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Martin Luther King press conference / [MST], [1964]

In honor of MLK Day 2017, engage your students in some historical thinking skills with King’s famous “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” or watch an interview of King discussing how non-violent protest meshes with his faith (far right).

THEME: HISTORICAL THINKING, VOLUME III

Fall 2016 was my fourth year teaching HIST3011: Teaching Historical Thinking in the MTSU Department of History. This course is designed to impart historical thinking skills and strategies to history majors with an intention of becoming K-12 history teachers. As with previous years’ classes, I worked with the Fall 2016 class to produce an issue of the TPS-MTSU newsletter to showcase what they’ve learned. Here it is!

Each year I use Sam Wineburg’s indispensable Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts as a course textbook, as well as activities from the Reading Like a Historian Web site. This year, I added Bruce Lesh’s “Why Won’t You Just Tell Us The Answer?”, which the students appreciated for its straightforward approach and practical strategies.

UPCOMING EVENTS:
- January 26 (Nashville) - “Primary Source Strategies for Middle and High School” at the Martin Professional Development Center from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for Metro Nashville teachers in grades 6 to 12.
- February 17 (Murfreesboro) - “Defining Citizenship: Strategies for Teaching Civics with Primary Sources” at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.
- February 23 (Nashville) - “Strategies for Finding and Using Primary Sources in Elementary Grades” at the Martin Professional Development Center from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for Metro Nashville teachers in grades 2 to 5.
- March 11 (Knoxville) - “Strategies for Using Text-Based Sources in the Elementary Classroom” at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.
Lesson Idea – Great Depression (Multiple Perspectives)

Every American experienced the Great Depression differently. Mass unemployment forced desperate people from their homes and farms as did dust storms in the Great Plains region, those who lacked the money to make payments on their home or farm were left homeless, and many lost life savings that they thought were safe in their bank accounts. In this lesson, students will be challenged to think about how multiple groups of people were affected during this time, specifically migrants, people affected by massive unemployment, and those living in Hooversvilles.

- Hooverville sources: Squatters’ shacks along the Willamette River in Portland, Oregon... [1936]; [Untitled photo, possibly related to: Circleville, Ohio’s “Hooverville” (see general caption)...] [1938]; secondary source: Hoovervilles (from University of Washington)
- Massive unemployment: [Crowd of depositors gather in the rain outside Bank of United States after its failure] / World-Telegram staff photo, [1931]; A wise economist asks a question [1931] (read Summary); secondary source: The Depths of Depression
- Migration: “Arizona” [1940] (view in PDF or TIFF); Migrant drought refugee family stalled on an Arizona highway, between Yuma and Phoenix, on their way to California to work in the harvests [1937]; secondary source: The Migrant Experience

Divide the class into three groups, with each group examining the primary and secondary sources from one of the topics above. Each group will write a journal entry from the point of view of a migrant worker, unemployed person, or person living in a Hooverville. Then each group will present their journal entries and sources to the class, followed by a class-wide discussion of the differences and similarities in people’s experiences during the Great Depression.

This lesson idea meets state standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.47) and English Language Arts (Writing).

Lesson Idea – Emancipation Proclamation (Sourcing)

Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation granted freedom to the slaves in the Confederate states. Delivered September 22, 1862, Lincoln gave the Confederate states a little over three months to comply; when they did not, Lincoln issued the final proclamation on January 1, 1863. The decree appears to be straightforward, but some of the proclamation is not so obvious. The Emancipation Proclamation only applied to the Southern states in rebellion against the Union. The Union would have to win the Civil War for the it to be valid. Furthermore, the proclamation paved the way for former slaves to be able to fight for their freedom, and soon after the United States Colored Troops were established. While reactions across the country were mixed, many believed that the proclamation was a positive step in allowing freedom for everyone. Lincoln is quoted as saying, “I never, in my life, felt more certain that I was doing right, than I do in signing this paper.”

Provide students with copies of the Emancipation Proclamation. (You may wish to divide them into pairs or small groups for discussion.) Have the groups read the document using a sourcing strategy developed by Bruce Lesh that explores the text, context, and subtext of a primary source. Sourcing is a skill that asks students to look beyond what they see in a primary source and ask where it came from, what may have been the motive behind its creation, and how it was received by its audience. Have students fill out this worksheet to guide their inquiry. After filling out the worksheet and discussing among their groups, lead a class discussion, being sure to ask: Who wrote the Emancipation Proclamation and when? Why did Lincoln create the document? What purpose(s) did Lincoln hope to accomplish? Can Lincoln’s motives be trusted? Why or why not? Who would be for the proclamation and who would be against it? (For more on audience reactions, see this lesson plan.)

This lesson idea meets state standards for 8th grade Social Studies (8.76; Primary Documents and Supporting Texts to Read) and English Language Arts (Reading; Informational Text).
Lesson Idea—Women’s Rights Parade, 1913 (Corroboration)

On March 3, 1913, thousands of women gathered in Washington, D.C., for a parade led by Alice Paul and the National American Woman Suffrage Association. The desire for a constitutional amendment to give women the right to vote led to a procession of over 5000 suffragettes marching in a parade the day before the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson. The suffragists were met by hostile and violent protestors during their march, leading to the hospitalization of over 100 women. These women’s actions, however, did not go unnoticed, as major news and congressional hearings were subsequently released as a result, bringing renewed attention to the movement.

Students will review four letters to the editor of The Washington Times written in response to the events. Comparing the letters will help students be able to corroborate the events which took place at the march. Corroboration is the process of questioning important details across multiple sources to determine points of agreement and disagreement.

Divide the class into three groups and present each group with a primary source letter page as well as a Venn Diagram. After groups analyze their first page, have them pass their document to the next group, corroborating their first source(s) with the new document. Continue this process until all three pages circulate the room and their points are listed on the diagram.

Reiterate to the students questions to keep in mind while filling in their diagrams, such as: What new information does the document present? Is it reliable? Does the document agree or disagree with the other documents? What do they agree or disagree upon? At the bottom of the worksheet have the students answer the question, “Based upon the four letters, what is the most probable conclusion as to what injustice, if any, occurred in the 1913 Suffrage March in Washington?”

This lesson idea meets state standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.18) and English Language Arts (Reading: Informational Text).

Lesson Idea—Revolutionary Documents (Main Idea)

The pamphlet Common Sense was originally published on January 10, 1776, by Thomas Paine as a protest to challenge the rule of the English monarchy over the American colonies. Paine sought to appeal to the common people and inspire them to action. He also appealed to the American populace in his pamphlet series, The American Crisis, the first of which came out at the end of 1776 and sought to rally support for the American cause during the Revolutionary War. Between these two works, of course, came the Declaration of Independence and the start of the Revolutionary War against Great Britain.

Students will be given excerpts from three Revolutionary-era documents to be read and analyzed for the main idea. Finding the main idea of a text (or any other kind of source) is an essential skill that helps students sort through the various details of a source and look for the big picture idea of what it’s really about. With so much text to digest, it’s important for students to be able to master finding the main idea. This lesson will allow for students to gain a more thorough exposure to Revolutionary writings and to learn how to read difficult language in complex texts, and to put them into their own words.

Using this worksheet, students will read through the three excerpts and write in what they think the main idea of each excerpt is, in their own words. Students may work in pairs or groups, and should have access to a dictionary for difficult vocabulary. Once everyone has completed the worksheet, discuss their answers as a class. Challenge them to look closely at the dates and trace how the main idea of these Revolutionary documents evolves over the course of the turning-point year of 1776.

This lesson idea meets state standards for 8th grade Social Studies (8.24) and English Language Arts (Reading: Informational Text).
The practice of sequencing historical documents allows for the understanding of the relationships between events during a time period. Print out these illustrations (without dates): Practical Illustration of the Fugitive Slave Law, The starting point of the great war between the states, Bombardment of Fort Sumter, Emancipation, Lincoln’s Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg, Assassination of President Lincoln at Ford’s Theatre. Have students work in groups to put the images in order demonstrating an understanding of events from the pre-Civil War era through the post-Civil War era. This would be a good way to introduce a unit on the Civil War and test students’ pre-existing knowledge.

Created nearly a year after the discovery of the Watergate scandal and with new details involved in the case being uncovered, Herblock’s political cartoon on the layers of deceit taking place within the Oval Office struck close to many Americans. Ask students what they think the author’s purpose in drawing this cartoon is. What attitude or opinion do they think the author was trying to reflect towards the Watergate scandal? How do you think he feels about the actions of the government in the case? How does he show this in his choice of imagery? What do you know about Herblock that helps interpret his purpose?

The devastating terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, elevated the threat of such attacks within the nation’s borders in people’s minds and brought the nation together with a renewed and heightened sense of patriotism. In this photo, why is the photographer contrasting the colors of the flag with the smoke-filled rubble of the city? How is this photo meant to influence the point of view of others?

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government

The first convention ever called to discuss the civil and political rights of women, Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19, 20, 1848. The Declaration of Sentiments was produced from the Seneca Falls Convention on women’s rights in 1848. To do a close reading, students will have to read the document first all the way through to get a grasp on the content. The second reading will bring on the major questions, such as, “Why does this sound a lot like the Declaration of Independence?” and “What specific language is different from the D.o.I. and why?”