TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: MARCH 2016

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
• Check out our newest primary source set on the 1920s. This primary source set contains many of the sources featured in our November 2015 workshop on the culture and economics of that decade.
• Do you teach AP U.S. History? If so, we have a new lesson plan geared towards you. Written by Barbara Marks (Watertown High School) and Taylor McDaniel (formerly DeKalb County High now at Whitwell Middle), “Johnson’s Impeachment: Yae or Nay?” challenges students to evaluate the causes of the impeachment and their thoughts on the validity of the charges against him.
• Save the Date! Our 2016 Summer Institute will be June 14-16 in Murfreesboro and focus on the New South period (1870s-1890s).

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Victory! Congress passes daylight saving bill [1918]
Why was daylight saving time seen as a victory? Read more about why we move our clocks forward in the spring here.

THEME: BIOGRAPHIES
Of all the nonfiction books that Americans read for pleasure, biographies are by far the most popular. Everyone loves to read about the lives of other people who have achieved distinction, lived through trying experiences, or contributed to history in some meaningful way. Biographies are also a great way to engage students in the study of history. If students can identify with people from the past, they can relate to history on a more personal level and better analyze decisions made by people past and present.

Biographies are technically secondary sources, because they are written by people about other people, often long after the subject’s death. But biographies offer a clear way to integrate primary sources into a cohesive story. Furthermore, primary sources such as oral history interviews, diaries, memoirs, and autobiographies can be used to encourage students to write mock biographies as writing assignments.

Content created and featured in partnership with the TPS program does not indicate an endorsement by the Library of Congress.
LESSON IDEA– DIAN FOSSEY & MOUNTAIN GORILLAS

Dian Fossey was an American anthropologist who worked extensively with endangered mountain gorillas in Rwanda, and wrote about them for National Geographic magazine. She became famous after writing about her experiences in the 1983 book, *Gorillas in the Mist*, which was adapted for film in 1988.

Start off by asking your students if they know where Rwanda is. Show them this map and zoom in on the northwest part of the country. Fossey established the Karisoke Research Center on the slopes of the mountain (extinct volcano, actually) between Goma (on Lake Kivu) and Kisoro (northeast of Lake Kivu). Find this peak on the map. Measure how far it is from the nearest cities and airports. Why did Fossey select such a remote area for her research?

Next, have students read (or read to students) a biography of Fossey from the Gorilla Fund Web site. What were her most significant contributions to science? What kind of person do you think she was like? Show students this brief clip from *Gorillas in the Mist*, and, afterward, ask students to describe her techniques for studying the gorillas. Then, have students read this excerpt from an interview about a visit to Karisoke. (You may wish to divide students into groups of 4 so they can each tackle a paragraph.) Now, how would you describe Fossey? For an assignment, students can write a letter to their parents about what happened during an imaginary visit with Dian Fossey to see the mountain gorillas.

This idea can be adapted to meet TN standards for 3rd grade Social Studies (3.16) and English Language Arts (Writing & Reading: Informational Text).

LESSON IDEA– SITTING BULL

*Sitting Bull* is most often remembered for the role he played in the Battle of Little Bighorn and *Custer’s Last Stand*. Sitting Bull was a Sioux leader in the Dakota territory in the late 1860s. During this time, there were numerous conflicts between the native tribes in the area and the U.S. military. In spite of treaties meant to limit encroachment on native lands, the expansion of white settlement in the area increased after the discovery of gold in the Black Hills, which was sacred ground to the Sioux. This led to several battles including the *Battle of Little Bighorn*. Despite success in that battle, Sitting Bull and his people eventually fled to Canada to escape the army. He later returned to his native lands where he became part of the Ghost Dance movement and remained steadfast in advocating the preservation of native culture and traditions.

To begin, have your students read about the life of Sitting Bull. You might have them choose to use their textbooks, encyclopedias, or visit their school library. After a basic introduction to his life, have the students identify major events in his life. As a class, create a large timeline and place each of these events on the timeline. Be sure to leave space to add primary sources. Next, have your students examine the following primary sources and place them on the timeline: *General Custer’s Death Struggle*, *Sioux Ghost Dance*, *Ghost dance (recording)*, *buffalo at water*, *Sitting Bull’s family*, *Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill*, and *Annie Oakley*. As you introduce each source, have your students identify what type of source they are looking at (ex. photo, drawing, etc.). For grade 8, you may choose to have your students do some additional research on their own within *Chronicling America*. Once you have placed all of the sources on the timeline, ask your students to summarize the significance of Sitting Bull to our nation’s history. What other questions they have about Sitting Bull?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet curriculum standards for Social Studies grades 2 (2.32) and 8 (8.93).
Lesson Idea—Second Continental Congress Role Playing Game

The Second Continental Congress saw the appointment of George Washington as commander-in-chief, the Olive branch petition, and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, among other events. This congress provides an excellent opportunity to allow students to immerse themselves in colonial American history. Turning the second Continental Congress into a role-playing game opens up myriad possibilities regarding standards and skills that may be explored.

Students can play out the whole of the Second Continental Congress, or simply focus on a major event, like the drafting and signing of the Declaration of Independence. Assign students characters within the congress as well as without. Students could make speeches as characters in the congress, write letters to members of congress (i.e., Abigail Adams’ letters to her husband John), or create newspapers announcing the events of the congress. Stage a vote on Richard Henry Lee’s Independence resolution. If the vote passes, have students elect members to draft the Declaration of Independence based on what they have learned about each character’s experiences and skills, or assign the characters playing Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Sherman, and Livingston to the committee. Students may either do their own at-home research on their character, character packets can be made ahead of time so students can study their character, or a computer day can be scheduled (if possible) to show students how to properly research online, how to recognize a trustworthy source, and how to distinguish between a primary and secondary source.

The politics of the Revolution, competing views within the colonies, women’s involvement in the revolution, and the process of independence can all be explored through this topic.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet TN standards for fourth grade Social Studies (4.26, 4.28, 4.29, 4.30, 4.33, 4.35) and Language Arts (Reading: Informational Text, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9).

Featured Feature—Meet Amazing Americans

The Library of Congress offers a great site, America’s Story from America’s Library, that is specifically designed for elementary and middle school students. We featured this section in our December 2012 newsletter. The site has several different sections including Meet Amazing Americans, which features biographies and short stories about a range of important individuals in our nation’s history.

Students can learn about inventors like Thomas Edison, explorers such as Lewis and Clark, and activists like Harriet Tubman. Students can read interesting stories about key events in each person’s life. For example, they could learn what life was like for Pocahontas as a prisoner of the colonists. Each individual’s story is paired with a feature primary source on each page. These are ideal sources for introducing younger students to the featured person and having them discuss why they are significant. Each section also contains a couple of featured questions that pull out interesting facts from the biographies and be used to gauge students’ comprehension.

Your students can even play fun games like Dynamite Presidents, which focuses on the presidents featured on Mount Rushmore.
**Child Labor Photographs**

Little Fannie, 7 years old, 48 inches high, helps sister in Elk Mills. Her sister (in photo) said, ‘Yes, she he’ps me right smart. Not all day but all she can. Yes, she started with me at six this mornin’. ’’ These two belong to a family of 19 children. Location: Fayetteville, Tennessee. [1910]

*The National Child Labor Committee Collection* provides photographs of child laborers, many of them have very descriptive titles that can also serve as mini biographies, such as the above caption. What kind of conditions may Fannie and her sister have experienced while working at the mill? Why were girls as young as Fannie working? How was this issue addressed by the government and activist groups?

**Marian Anderson**

On April 9, 1939, Marian Anderson performed on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to a national radio audience and an integrated audience of 75,000. Several months earlier, she was denied a chance to perform in the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall. Anderson wanted to perform in front of an integrated audience, even though there was a strict “whites only” policy at the concert hall. Play this song for your students. Why was it important for Anderson to perform in front of an integrated audience? Why was Anderson denied the chance to perform in the concert hall?

**Cordell Hull and The U.N.**

Cordell Hull, born and raised in Tennessee, was our longest serving Secretary of State, holding the position from 1933-1944 under Franklin Delano Roosevelt. As Secretary of State, he served during most of World War II and worked with other nations to establish the United Nations. Hull would go on to win the 1945 Nobel Peace Prize, and be named the “Father of the United Nations.” What were some of the achievements of Hull during his career? What does the United Nations do?

**Civil Rights Interviews**

Gwendolyn M. Patton oral history interview conducted by Joseph Mosnier in Montgomery, Alabama, 2011-06-01

The Civil Rights History Project houses oral history interviews of individuals involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Among the interviews, Gwendolyn M. Patton’s interview provides a compelling way for students to think about the differences between groups and individuals in the movement, as well as a nuanced view of the class politics and struggle that were also prevalent in the Civil Rights Movement. How did Dr. Patton handle racism directed at her throughout her life? How did her reactions change through the years?