TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: August 2015

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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UPCOMING EVENTS:
• August 11 (Chattanooga) - “Research, Resources and Reconstruction” at Tennessee History for Kids Tent Revival. Session times 12:45 and 2:45 p.m. ET.
• September 12 (Cookeville) - TN History Day and TPS Intermediate workshop at Tennessee Tech University. Workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Jennifer Core.
• September 14 (Cleveland) - “Primary Source Strategies for the Primary Grades” workshop with Museum Center at Five Points from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET. To register, email Joy Key.
• September 15 (Knoxville) - “Citizenship in Action” workshop at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.
• September 17 (Germantown) - TN History Day and TPS Intermediate workshop at St. George’s Independent School. Workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Jennifer Core.

NEWS
• TPS-MTSU will be offering two workshops exploring the War of 1812 in September at the Morton Museum of Collierville. The first will take place on Friday (9/18) and will be open to Collierville School faculty. The second will take place the following week (9/25) and be held in partnership with the TN State Library and Archives and the War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission. Click here for more information.
• Are you in a classroom with access to I-Pads or other notebook devices? If so, check out the Library of Congress Student Discovery Sets! These primary source sets on twelve different topics allow students amazing access to the sources and come complete with supporting teacher material. They are available free on iBooks.

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Our robber barons / Gillam. [1882, detail]
In this vivid political cartoon, robber barons such as Jay Gould and William Vanderbilt are robbing an anonymous taxpayer of his income through “unjust” taxes, and conveying that income instead to “Castle Monopoly.” What do you think the public’s reaction to such a cartoon would be?

THEME: GILDED AGE

When you hear the phrase “The Gilded Age,” what images come to mind? (The term was coined by Mark Twain—see p. 4.) Political corruption and robber barons, immigration and industrialization, Andrew Carnegie and J.P. Morgan, westward migration and manifest destiny, imperialism and yellow journalism, child labor and capitalism, cowboys and Indians?
This complex time is even harder to define by dates. The Library’s America’s Story page dates the period to the years 1878-1889, though many other sites give the vaguer time span of the 1870s to roughly 1900. This sandwiches the Gilded Age between Reconstruction and the Progressive Era and makes it synonymous with the Industrial Age. In any case, this era set the stage for America’s becoming the superpower of the 20th century.

Content created and featured in partnership with the TPS program does not indicate an endorsement by the Library of Congress.
FEATURED FEATURE—GILDED AGE LESSON PLANS

Looking for more classroom ideas? The TPS-MTSU and Library of Congress Web sites offer a variety of lesson plans that deal specifically with the period of history known as the Gilded Age. TPS-MTSU lesson plans on this time period are:

- Science & Technology: Then & Now (8th);
- Manifest Destiny: War on the Plains (8th & HS);
- Myth of the Vanishing Race (8th & HS);
- Inventors & Innovations (7th);
- Industrial Revolution (HS);
- Punched Cards to IBM: Early Invention & Technology (6-8th);
- Historic Black Colleges and Universities in Tennessee (HS); and
- The Leadership & Impact of Booker T. Washington (HS).

The Library of Congress Teachers Page contains several lesson plans on what it calls “The Industrial Age.” Here are a few of the highlights:

**African American Identity in the Gilded Age**: through thematic groupings of primary source images & texts, students learn the difference between public & private identities;

**The Immigrant Experience: Down the Rabbit Hole**: students in grades 3-8 identify important themes of immigration through images and oral histories;

**American Indian Reservation Controversies**: students role-play as Indian reservation agents, based on their readings of oral histories of dealings between Whites & Indians;

**Journeys West**: multi-day lesson plan challenges students to examine experiences of westward migration from multiple perspectives and diverse formats.

LESSON IDEA—THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT

One of today’s symbols of the United States, the Washington Monument, was dedicated on December 6, 1884. When completed, the monument reached 555 feet in height, topped with two capstones. The first, made of marble, weighs 3,300 pounds, while the smaller capstone is made of aluminum and is a nine-inch pyramid. The structure was built to commemorate George Washington, Revolutionary War hero and the first president of the United States. This monument, modeled after an Egyptian obelisk, has become one of the most significant structures of the Gilded Age, visited by countless tourists every year in our country’s capital.

Why does this building stand as one of the most important structures that represent our country? What about it is unique? Have you seen any buildings that resemble the Washington Monument? Instruct your students to come up with five words to describe the Washington Monument. Allow your students to present these to the class and see what words they have in common. Why do you think no other building can be constructed higher than the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C.?

If you were to design a building that represents our country, how would it look? Prompt your students to think about what they know about the country’s first president. In small groups, direct your students to share ideas about George Washington. Now that the groups have common themes, encourage them to come up with a Washington Monument for the city where they go to school, either with a drawing or a written description. How would their version of the Washington Monument look?

This lesson idea meets TN standards for 5th grade Visual Arts (2.6) and CCSS for ELA (Writing).
LESSON IDEA— THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

The Spanish-American War (1898) is an often forgotten war between the United States and Spain that lasted four months, but it was a significant step forward for American imperialism, setting the stage for the Philippine-American War and the annexation of Hawaii. The February 15, 1898, explosion of the USS Maine in Havana, Cuba, and the ensuing investigation appeared on headlines across the country, awakening the minds of the nation to issues abroad and the eventual declaration of war against Spain. Motion pictures, capturing Americans at war for the first time, and the inflated political cartoons of the era’s yellow journalism were two ways the American public perceived what was unfolding. Embedded within these media was the rhetoric of interventionists like Alfred Thayer Mahan, President William McKinley, and Senator Albert Beveridge, and the non-interventionist critiques of individuals like Representative William Jennings Bryan and Mark Twain.

Begin by having your students skim through the front-page articles and headlines of The Salt Lake Herald and The San Francisco Call leading up to the declaration of war. Ask them to share some of the reasons why they think the United States was going to war and what types of images and language were being used to convey these ideas. Follow up with an introductory narrative they can read about the war. Next, have the students split up into two groups to watch and discuss "Raising Old Glory Over Morro Castle" and "Troops at Evacuation of Havana." Be sure to have them read the accompanying captions for each video. What role does the American flag play in each of these videos? What is the impact of motion pictures compared to printed text? Why would these videos be shown to the American public? After allowing each group to share their answers with the class, bring them back together to look at two political cartoons about American imperialism in Cuba and at home. Have the students compare the messages behind each cartoon, and encourage them to incorporate the previous sources into their responses. How are the various characters portrayed? Which characters look more powerful? Teachers may also choose to read aloud excerpts from Mark Twain’s writings pertaining to the American flag or have students create their own political cartoons about American imperialism around the time of the Spanish-American War.

This lesson idea meets state curriculum standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US. 23 & 24) and CCSS for ELA (Reading: Informational Text).

LESSON IDEA— SILVER, OR CROSS OF GOLD?

The discovery of huge reserves of silver and gold in the mountain West in the second half of the 19th century had an immediate and enormous impact on immigration patterns, territorial annexation, labor issues, and economic cycles such as inflation and recession. Due to overproduction in the agricultural sector and oversupply from the silver mines, the federal government purchased large quantities of silver so farmers could pay their debts with paper money and the mine owners could turn more of a profit (Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890). The government bought the silver, however, with notes that could be backed with either silver or gold. When most of the investors chose gold, the country’s gold reserves were so seriously depleted that President Cleveland later had to borrow gold from wealthy industrialists like J.P. Morgan. The nation was plunged into an economic depression, called the Panic of 1893, which caused a forceful political backlash against the Democratic party in the elections of 1894 and 1896.

William Jennings Bryan ran for president on the Democratic party ticket in 1896, championing the cause of free silver over the oppressive gold standard. To win the Democratic nomination, he delivered one of the most famous political speeches of American history, the “Cross of Gold” speech, in which he boil down the issue of bimetallism into a clear choice between two sides: “Upon the side of the idle holders of idle capital, or upon the side of the struggling masses?” Start off by reading and discussing the first two paragraphs as a class. Then split the students into five groups, with each group analyzing one of these excerpts. What is Bryan saying? How does he organize his argument for maximum impact? What words and phrases does he choose to rile up the crowd? How does this speech address the socio-economic issues of 1896? How can it relate to today?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet TN curriculum standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.5).
MARK TWAIN’S GILDED AGE

[Mark Twain, full-length portrait, facing left, seated on step, outdoors, holding cigar] / T.E. Morr. [1903]

The term “Gilded Age” was coined by Mark Twain. In 1873, before Huckleberry Finn or Tom Sawyer, Twain published a book called *The Gilded Age*. Co-written with Charles Dudley Warner, this novel satirized the behaviors of wealthy Americans. How does some of the economic disparity portrayed in the novel compare to socio-economic issues today?

GARFIELD ASSASSINATION

Historical photograph of the assassination of President Garfield [1881]

President James Garfield was the second president to be assassinated. Have students listen to the folk song “Mr. Garfield” about the assassination and then identify why each of the smaller images was included in the above source. Students can also compare the folk song with Johnny Cash’s “Mr. Garfield.”

EDISON’S LIGHT BULB

New Jersey—the wizard of electricity—Thomas A. Edison’s system of electric illumination [1880]

Arguably one of the most important events of the Gilded Age, the first demonstration of Thomas Edison’s light bulb occurred in 1879. The light bulb provided an alternative to gas and changed how we see the world. Can you imagine a day without light bulbs in your home, school, and public areas? How did the invention of the light bulb affect the use of natural gas in the 19th and 20th centuries?

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

233. GENERAL VIEW OF STATUE LOOKING NORTH-WEST - Statue of Liberty, Liberty Island, Manhattan, New York, New York County, NY [1984]

An icon of freedom and democracy in the United States, the Statue of Liberty was given as a gift from France on June 19, 1885. The sculptor, Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi, named his work *Liberty Enlightening the World*, although today she is mainly known as Lady Liberty or the Statue of Liberty. What does this statue mean to our country today? What is the sculpture made of and how do you think it arrived from France?