TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: FEBRUARY 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.

Contact: Stacey Graham or Kira Duke at (615) 898-2947 or www.mtsu.edu/tps

NEWS

- 2014 Educator-in-Residence Suzanne Costner was featured as the first guest blogger for the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation’s blog Southern Rambles. You can read her blog “Exploring ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ with Fourth Graders—and Having a Teacher Evaluation at the Same Time.” If you are interested in learning more about the residency program, please contact us.

- The Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission is offering funding to cover bus cost for school groups who would like to participate in the tours and Living History programming being held on May 1st as part of the “Reconstruction Tennessee” Signature Event in Knoxville. For more information and to apply, check out this brochure.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

2009 Inaugural Parade, Michelle and Barack Obama... [2009 January 24]

In 2008, Barack Obama became the first African American elected to the U.S. presidency. What other notable accomplishments has he had during his career in public service?

THEME: AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS

In honor of African American History Month, this issue of the newsletter focuses on prominent African Americans who are highlighted (directly or indirectly) in the TN state Social Studies curriculum standards. We have expanded the page 2 Important Links box onto page 3 as well to accommodate more materials that will help teachers discuss these significant Americans with students. Many of these links are to lesson ideas from previous issues of our newsletter.

Be sure to visit the Library of Congress’s special Web page for African American History Month, which has resources and teaching materials from the Library and other institutional partners. I especially like the slideshow and the video of Stevie Wonder performing “Sketches of a Life” (start watching at the 7-minute mark).

Content created and featured in partnership with the TPS program does not indicate an endorsement by the Library of Congress.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **February 13** (Collierville) — “Primary Sources and the Common Core” Workshop for Collierville Special School District.

- **February 16** (Nashville) — “Using Primary Sources” Workshop for Metro Nashville Schools.

- **February 25 & 26** (Knoxville) — “Exploring the History of Labor in the United States” at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. Attendance required for both days. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

- **March 6** (Murfreesboro) — “Teaching Math with Primary Sources” Workshop at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

- **March 13** (Memphis) — “Trials and Triumphs: Tennesseans’ Search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity” Session at Tennessee Council for Social Studies Conference, Session at 9 a.m.

- **June 23-25** (Greeneville) — Civil War Summer Institute: Reconstruction.

- **July 13-15** (Cookeville) — World War I Summer Institute in partnership with the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Lesson Idea–Crispus Attucks (?-1770)

Crispus Attucks was celebrated as the first martyr of the Revolutionary War. He died on March 5, 1770, in what became known as the Boston Massacre. Boston in the 1770s was the seat of colonial rebellion. Many colonists were upset when the British increased taxes and duties to help pay off debts incurred during the French and Indian War. The colonists particularly despised the Stamp Act: a duty on all paper products. Several locals’ anger finally boiled over on the evening of March 5th and they began heckling British soldiers stationed outside the Boston Customs House. Attucks was among them. When the tension between the two groups peaked, the soldiers fired. Attucks was the first to fall.

An escaped slave, Attucks had made a life for himself as a whaler in the New England area. It is one of history’s many ironies that a former slave would be the first to sacrifice his life for the cause of American independence. For fourth graders, have them examine a poster commemorating Attucks’s heroism. Ask them when the poster was created and how it depicts Attucks’s role in history.

For eighth graders, take a look at a newspaper clipping from March 12, 1770, and compare the treatment of Attucks’s body to the body of the other martyrs, all of whom were white.

This lesson idea meets TN curriculum standards for grades 4 & 8 Social Studies (4.23, 4.24, 8.22) and high school African American History (AAH.6).

Lesson Idea–Marian Anderson (1897–1993)

Taken by renowned photographer Carl Van Vechten, this portrait shows the softer side of a powerful woman and singer who helped shape the musical landscape of the mid-1900s. While Marian Anderson is known today as one of the greatest singers of the 20th century, she had to break through racial barriers to become the artist who was awarded the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Anderson’s childhood revolved around music, particularly in church choirs. Despite her family’s limited finances and her father’s death when she was twelve, she applied to multiple national competitions and found a way to fund travel across the country. These competitions led to her discovery in the music business, and by the age of thirty she was an international success. Her success was not easily achieved, however, and the owners of many establishments (the D.A.R. in Washington, D.C., being the most notable) would only allow white singers to perform.

Allow your students to listen to the six songs featured in the Performing Arts Encyclopedia on the Library of Congress Web site. Encourage your students to identify what makes Anderson’s voice unique, from her range of singing to the lyrics. Why would she be singing songs such as these during the mid-1900s? Why was her success as a singer and performer so ground-breaking for the African American community?

Prompt your students to consider the historical context of the 1930s, when Marian Anderson became internationally acclaimed. What was going on in the United States during the time? How does that affect how you think of her rise to success?

This lesson idea meets TN curriculum standards for high school Music (9.1) and high school African American History (AAH.25, AAH.27).

Important Links:
- African American History Month
- African-American History and Culture Items List (Links to letters by Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others)
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom
- Women in the Civil Rights Movement
- C. T. Vivian oral history interview. (civil rights leader)
- Jamila Jones oral history interview. (civil rights activist)
- Continued on p. 3...
LESSON IDEA—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. IN ART

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., served as an important leader of the civil rights movement. He advocated for a nonviolent approach to protest the inequalities of segregation and racial oppression in our country. Dr. King began his role in the movement during the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. He led countless marches during his thirteen years working in the movement, including marches in Birmingham, Selma, and Memphis. In honor of his contributions to the nation, King’s birthday was made a federal holiday, effective in 1986.

Begin by asking your students what they know about Dr. King. Then read to your students the America’s Library passages about Dr. King. What surprises your students? Why do they think he was an important leader of the movement? To give your students a deeper understanding of Dr. King, have them find additional books in their school library.

Next, have your students analyze this image using guiding questions from this worksheet. Have them compare this to the image of the King Memorial (seen above) in Washington, D.C. Then have them compare those to this image. Be sure to have students identify the type of artwork in each image and the location of the artwork. Why might Dr. King be featured in art in these three locations? What does the artwork tell us about how people in those communities feel about him? Ask students which piece of artwork they prefer and why. You might also have students create their own artwork featuring this important American.

LESSON IDEA—SOJOURNER TRUTH & HARRIET TUBMAN

The abolitionist movement of the 19th century produced female leaders that made powerful contributions to the cause of ending slavery in America. The most prominent of these, Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, were also African Americans and former slaves. Both escaped the harsh life of slavery, and both could speak from personal experience of the evils of a system that would separate a child from its parents. Both also saw the connection between the abolitionist movement and the movement for voting rights for women, and were heavily influenced by the evangelical religious revivals of the time. They also both contributed to the Union war effort during the Civil War. The two women had different approaches to their work, however. Generally, Sojourner Truth had the most impact as a speaker, while Tubman is best known for freeing slaves and guiding them along the Underground Railroad.

Students can analyze the words of Truth and the actions of Tubman and draw conclusions about the successes and drawbacks of each kind of activism. Fifth and eighth graders can read about Truth here. Eighth graders can then read the “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech (as transcribed by Francis Gage) starting here; fifth graders may wish to read this version instead. Fifth graders can read about Tubman—and teachers can read aloud to second graders here; eighth graders can be directed here instead. Then, have students analyze primary sources about the Underground Railroad and discuss Tubman’s role in it. How did each woman use her strengths to make a difference?

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for grades 2, 5, & 8 Social Studies (2.32, 5.3, 8.49 & 8.66) and English/Language Arts (Reading: Literature & Informational Text).
2. MAIN FACADE - Carter G. Woodson House, 1538 Ninth Street Northwest, Washington, District of Columbia, DC

In 1926, Carter G. Woodson created “Negro History Week,” which has since become “Black History Month.” To honor his contributions to African American scholarship, should Carter’s house be protected? Why was it in such a state of disrepair (by the time this photo was taken in 1979)? Why, after his death in 1950, did it take fifty-three years for the government to designate it a national historic site?

Col. Benjamin O. Davis, air base at Rametti, Italy [1945]

Best remembered as the first African American general officer in the United States Air Force, Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., served as commander of the World War II Tuskegee Airmen. Davis led the way for other African Americans to advance in the military, and was promoted to four-star general in 1998 by President Bill Clinton. Why was it necessary for Davis to break down racial barriers in the military? How do his efforts affect the United States military today?

J O S E P H I N E  B A K E R

Josephine Baker led a difficult childhood, leaving home at the age of eight to work in service, but was strong enough to leave after being abused by supervisors. Homeless, she worked on the streets of St. Louis as a dancer and was recruited as a chorus girl, performing on Broadway at the age of fifteen. By the mid-1920s, Baker was the highest-paid vaudeville dancer. She moved to Europe for a performing opportunity but strongly supported the United States during World War II, serving as a spy in France. She led and attended Civil Rights protests and marches in the U.S., and died as one of the most well-known female activists of the era. Why do you think she spent the time to travel from France to the United States for protests?

"Cover, Benjamin Banneker’s Almanac for 1795." Courtesy of the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.

Benjamin Banneker

Benjamin Banneker was born a free black in Maryland in 1731, and taught himself mathematics and astronomy, among other things. He successfully predicted a solar eclipse, built an entirely wooden clock, surveyed Washington, D.C., and wrote an almanac. He was therefore living proof that blacks were capable of great intellectual accomplishments, a belief that was rare in the 18th century. He even wrote Thomas Jefferson a letter, enclosed with a copy of his almanac, urging him to support equality. See Jefferson’s response to Banneker here (scroll up a tad) and read a transcription here. What kind of support does Jefferson offer to Banneker?