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

- In conjunction with two of our recent workshops, TPS-MTSU has created three new resources: Cold War Links Guide, Women’s Suffrage Links Guide, and a Women’s Suffrage Across America Primary Source Set.

- The Library of Congress recently retired myLOC. The exhibits, videos, and teaching resources that were located within those pages are still available. You can now find many of them within the Exhibit page and the Teachers page.

- The Library is also phasing out THOMAS. For information on legislation, you can now visit Congress.gov. For information about this new site and available training, click here.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

48. INTERIOR, DOME ROOM - Monticello, State Route 53 vicinity, Charlottesville, Charlottesville, VA [1978]

Why was it important to Jefferson to include a grand dome on his personal residence?

THEME: THOMAS JEFFERSON

Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and third president of the United States, is one of the most well-known yet enigmatic figures in American history. He believed that “all men are created equal” and supported the gradual abolition of slavery, yet owned hundreds of slaves throughout his adult life and freed only a handful of them. Devoted to his wife Martha in life, after her death he maintained (most likely) a decades-long relationship with her enslaved half-sister Sally Hemings. As the nominal head of the Republican party, he championed smaller federal government and stronger states’ rights, yet greatly expanded the executive powers during his two terms in office. Students will grapple with these contradictions as they evaluate Jefferson’s enduring significance and legacy to this country.

This issue of the newsletter was created as a class project for Dr. Graham’s “Teaching Historical Thinking” course at MTSU. The twelve students in this class, all aspiring K-12 history teachers, contributed the lesson ideas, links, and primary sources featured on pages 2-4. This project helped them learn to combine sources, context, strategies, and standards into a concise format designed to be user-friendly and helpful to practicing and aspiring teachers alike.

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Lesson Idea—Thomas Jefferson As Slaveholder

Thomas Jefferson’s stance on slavery was complex. As a young lawyer in 1770, he wrote that “under the law of nature all men are born free,” a phrase that evolved into the foundational statement, “all men are created equal,” that he penned in the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Yet he himself, like most other Virginians of his status, was a slaveholder until his death. We can get a glimpse into what kind of slaveholder Jefferson was from a runaway slave ad he wrote in 1769.

Divide the class into groups and give each group a copy of the ad, plus one Primary Source Analysis Tool for each student. Prompt them through the analysis with the Teachers Guide. (You may need to explain that, in the late 18th century, s’s often looked like f’s.) In groups, students should discuss how Jefferson describes this slave. What skills did Sandy have? Why would Jefferson point out these particular characteristics? After groups have had a chance to form conclusions, ask them what they think happened to Sandy. (You can tell them by reading the blurb beside this image on this exhibit page.) Have students form conclusions about what kind of slaveholder Jefferson was. You can add to their interpretations by having them read the article “Thomas Jefferson and Slavery” at the Monticello Web site.

This lesson can be adapted to meet curriculum standards for grade 8 Social Studies (Slavery in America), as well as English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational Text and Literacy in History/Social Studies).

Lesson Idea—The Louisiana Purchase

The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States’ territory, encompassing all land from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. Jefferson hoped the new land would be embraced by farmers to further his ideal of an agrarian society. But his purchase was opposed by some, namely Federalists in the House of Representatives who deemed it unconstitutional. Jefferson sent his personal secretary, Meriwether Lewis, and army lieutenant William Clark on an expedition to explore the new territory and report their findings.

Have students read Thomas Jefferson’s instructions to Meriwether Lewis before class. (If it’s too long, they can read this excerpt at the beginning of class.) What was the purpose of the expedition, according to Jefferson? How were Lewis and Clark supposed to treat the Native Americans? Split the class into groups of 2 or 3 and assign excerpts from the journal Lewis kept during the expedition. All groups should read the introductory paragraph on page B. Then assign 2-3 days’ worth of journal entries to individual groups. (Or, all students can simply read these excerpts from May 22 and July 22.) From what Lewis wrote, to what extent would you say that he is following Jefferson’s instructions? What does these sources reveal about how Jefferson, Lewis, and Clark viewed Native Americans? What were their intentions in creating relationships with them? In what ways did they respect their culture?

As an extension, ask students to examine the map created of the Louisiana Territory in 1803 with annotations by Lewis. Students can trace the dates on which Lewis and Clark reached each location using information from Lewis’s journal.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for grade 8 Social Studies and English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational Text and Literacy in History/Social Studies).
**Lesson Idea—Jefferson’s Macaroni Machine**

Many people do not realize that Thomas Jefferson had a great passion for invention. He developed designs for such things as a plow, a revolving chair, and a macaroni machine. He even patented many of his inventions. During his time as the American minister to France, Jefferson developed a love for European foods and returned with a new cook and many recipes for his own kitchen. He also developed the necessary machines to produce some of his favorite new foods such as macaroni. Jefferson shared this dish with many of his guests and helped to popularize macaroni on American dinner tables.

Begin by asking students how they think macaroni is cut. What are the ingredients needed to make macaroni? You might want to bring in uncooked macaroni for your students to use as a visual source throughout the discussion. Introduce Thomas Jefferson’s love for macaroni by reading this related article on America’s Story from America’s Library. Next show them Jefferson’s sketch of the macaroni machine. Ask them how they think this machine cut the dough? Next read them the transcript of his notes and his recipe for macaroni. What are the key details of the text? How does this change their responses to the earlier questions? What surprises them about either the ingredients or the mechanics of cutting macaroni?

Using the recipe provided, have students make their own macaroni using a modern pasta maker. How does the modern device compare to Jefferson’s sketch? How does the class-made macaroni compare to the store-bought? How might the recipe have been changed?

This lesson plan can be adapted to meet curriculum standards for grade 3 Science (Embedded Technology and Engineering) and English/Language Arts Common Core (Reading: Informational Text).

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**Lesson Idea—The Man Behind the Curtain**

Thomas Jefferson is most known for his writing of the Declaration of Independence, but he also played a role in the drafting of The Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Even while serving as Minister to France, Jefferson was in constant contact with members of the Constitutional Convention as they drafted the United States Constitution. Jefferson’s notes and recommendations can be found on the Library of Congress Web site and offer a unique opportunity to examine his role in another landmark event for this nation.

Students should read and examine the Seventeen Proposed Amendments to the Constitution, certain excerpts from Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, March 15, 1789 (transcription), as well as exploring key pieces from the “Creating the United States” exhibit, specifically “Creating the Bill of Rights." Students will also need to access a ratified copy of The Bill of Rights.

Divide students into small groups with selections from the above sources and provide these prompts to the groups: Compare and contrast the proposed seventeen amendments to the final Bill of Rights. How do you think the amendments are listed in that particular order? Do the proposed amendments that did not make it into the Bill of Rights get incorporated into the Constitution in any other way? If not, why do you think they haven’t been included? Encourage your students to cite the primary sources you have provided.

Once discussed in the groups, lead a class discussion asking students to share the findings of their groups. To further the discussion, ask students to compare and contrast what was ratified into the Bill of Rights with the recommendations of Thomas Jefferson. At the end of class, assign a short written assignment for the following: Consider the Bill of Rights as it relates to you. How would your life be different if amendments had not been made to the Constitution? Choose a specific amendment from the Bill of Rights and argue its importance to America and to you.

This lesson can be adapted to meet high school Government and Civics Curriculum Standards, as well as English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational Text and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Writing, and Speaking and Listening).

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**Congress of the United States. In the House of representatives. Monday, 24th August, 1789...**

**Article the Third.**

Congress shall make no law establishing religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, nor shall the rights of Concord be infringed.

**Article the Fourth.**

The Freedom of Speech, and of the Press, and the right of the People peaceably to assemble, and consult for their common good, and to apply to the Government for a redress of grievances, shall not be infringed.
**Improving the Plow**

Thomas Jefferson’s design for a plow, ca. 1794. [detail]

Have students read the brief context provided on the bibliographic page. How would this invention have been useful? How might this invention have made life easier for farmers? Who managed farming and agriculture on Jefferson’s lands? How might this person’s experience have informed Jefferson’s invention? How did Jefferson use mathematics to develop this design?

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**The Rights of Man**

Lafayette’s copy of the Declaration of the Rights of Man [July 1789, detail]

Compare and contrast the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the U.S. Bill of Rights. What can you infer from the two documents about the state of western government in the 18th century? Describe Jefferson’s influence in creating each document.

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**Howell v. Netherland**


During Jefferson’s early career as a lawyer, he represented Samuel Howell, a mulatto man suing for his freedom. Jefferson penned in his defense that “under the law of nature all men are born free.” How does this case show Jefferson’s ideas of who should be enslaved and who should be free?

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**The Prairie Dog**

The prairie dog sickened at the sting of the hornet or a diplomatic puppet exhibiting his deceptions [1804]

Not everyone in Congress approved of Jefferson’s decision to purchase the Louisiana territory from the French. Who is portrayed in this cartoon and how are they portrayed? Why would the cartoonist choose a prairie dog as an analogy? Is he a supporter of Jefferson? You can read a brief explanatory paragraph on the bibliographic page about the cartoon.