TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU
NEWSLETTER: October 2013

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
• Join TPS-MTSU and the Tennessee State Library and Archives on Friday, November 22nd for workshop exploring the Cold War. The day will feature speaker, Dr. Amy Sayward from the MTSU Department of History and hands-on activities with primary sources from both the Library of Congress and TSLA’s collections. To register, email kira.duke@mtsu.edu.
• PLEASE NOTE—Due to government shut-down, the Library of Congress Web site will not be operational until further notice. To get around this problem, you can visit www.archive.org/web/web.php and enter www.loc.gov into “The Wayback Machine,” select the most recent date on the calendar, and then navigate from there. You cannot conduct searches this way, but you can visit static pages.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

FEATURE ARTICLE: “A BRIEF HISTORY OF DISABILITY IN THE U.S.,” BY DR. KATIE STRINGER, Executive Director, Blount Mansion
In the United States, special education has often taken a backseat in programs for educational reform, and opportunities for students with disabilities have only recently been expanded and discussed in an open forum. Scholars have recognized the patterns of exclusion for people with intellectual disabilities and other related cognitive and developmental disabilities.
During the colonial and early republic eras, families kept people with disabilities at home, or they sent them to custodial institutions. In the 1840s, reformers urged that those with mental retardation or disabilities were a social and state (Continued on p. 2)

UPCOMING EVENTS:
• October 1 — (Nashville) “Reading Multiple Perspectives in Stories of New World Encounters” and ”O Captain, My Captain: A Fishbowl Analysis” at Tennessee Council for History Education Conference. Session times at 8:15 a.m. and 9:40 a.m.
• October 9 & 10 — (Chattanooga) “Teaching Occupation and Liberation” Workshops from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST at the Chattanooga Convention Center as part of the Civil War Sesquicentennial Signature Event. To register, email kira.duke@mtsu.edu.
• October 30 —(Knoxville) “Women’s Suffrage” at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. To register, email Oakley@easttnhistory.org.
• November 13 — (Harrogate) “Resources to the Rescue!” Lincoln Memorial University from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. To register, email Oakley@easttnhistory.org.
• November 14 — (Knoxville) “Civil Rights” at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST. To register, email Oakley@easttnhistory.org.

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problem. Institutions expanded to serve as places to relieve families from the “grievous burden” of taking care of a child or adult with a disability. Prior to the establishment of such places, many “feebleminded” persons were sent to county workhouses for the poor or insane asylums.

Institutions for “idiots” or “the feeble-minded” claimed to be in place to provide education as well as care and protection for the individuals housed there. In the mid-nineteenth century, many social reformers such as Dorothea Dix and Charles Sumner wanted to create places to instruct children with intellectual disabilities and other related cognitive and developmental disabilities in general education. Reformers and public officials began to realize that workhouses, jails, and lunatic asylums were not appropriate places for children to receive proper education and treatment. (For images of asylums from this era of reform, click here, here, and here.)

By the mid-nineteenth century, most educational facilities for those with intellectual disabilities were custodial rather than educational. During this time, mental retardation became a “problem,” which insured the endurance of the institution as a necessary place for all communities. By end of the nineteenth century, most administrators only allowed the most capable of students to participate in schoolwork while the rest were provided with custodial care and instruction. The treatment of children with special needs in public classrooms became more scientific and meaningful in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1896, Providence, Rhode Island, opened the first classroom for children with intellectual disabilities and other related cognitive and developmental disabilities. By 1927, over 500 cities in the United States had 4,000 classes with more than 78,000 students with special needs.

Boston was a key trendsetter; in 1899 the city opened a class for students identified as “mentally deficient” in public schools. By the 1920s special education was a fundamental aspect of Boston’s public schools, and over five percent of the students were in a designated special setting. By this time, Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and other cities had classes devoted to students with disabilities; special classes for children with mental retardation were standard in large school systems in the 1920s.

The 1960 election of John F. Kennedy as President of the United States elevated disability rights to the forefront of the government. Kennedy’s sister Rosemary was born with an intellectual disability, and the Kennedy administration actively worked to support those with disabilities. In 1961, Kennedy created a President’s Panel on Mental Retardation to set goals, planning services, and funding for research and developmental projects.

In November of 1975, President Gerald Ford signed Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This law made it possible for all children with disabilities to integrate more effectively into public schools and society. PL 94-142 guaranteed a free, appropriate public education to each child with a disability in every state and locality across the country. Today, PL 94-142 is still in existence and is known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and it serves children from birth to age 21.

The United States continues to provide more opportunities for education and employment for disabled people every day. Technological innovations improve the quality of life and access to resources. Special education teachers, for example, can find online, at the Library of Congress Web site, a wealth of primary sources to engage their students at various developmental and sensory levels. The primary sources in this newsletter can help draw attention to the place and importance of disabled people in the history of American politics, social reform movements, military endeavors, technology, and culture.

**FEATURED ARTICLE, CONTINUED**

**Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind (1840)**

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**IMPORTANT LINKS:**
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
- National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS)
- Louis Braille: His Legacy and Influence (exhibition)
- Interview with Christopher Reeve (webcast)
- History of the Guide Dog Movement (webcast)
LESSON IDEA—INNOVATION & TRAINING FOR WWI VETERANS

During and after World War I, service men and women needed “reconstruction work” for the injuries sustained while serving their country. While preparing for the entry into WWI, the U.S. government considered how wounded veterans would be acclimated back into civilian life. This reconstruction work, later called physiotherapy and, finally, physical therapy, became a large component of these goals.

Quentin D. Corley, a disabled civilian, judge, and inventor, partnered with the Red Cross to show that amputees could be productive citizens if they received occupational therapy and prosthetics. One Red Cross poster outlined what a disabled service member had a access to. Using his life story, Corley spoke to patients at Walter Reed Hospital, as well as other military hospitals, to encourage wounded veterans and rehabilitation efforts.

In class, have students study pictures, posters, and newspaper articles available through the Library. Have them consider how this rehabilitation work relates to the Progressive Era, the increasingly industrialized economy, and technological and engineering innovations of the time. You may also want to consider the government’s efforts lower the cost of veteran’s pensions, especially after the government’s experience with expensive Civil War pensions.

At home, have students conduct further research. A good place to find additional primary sources is on Google Books. Students can write a report about the early history of reconstruction work. If you prefer, have them focus their research on a specific topic of interest to them. They might also compare WWI veterans’ experiences to those of veterans of other wars.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for High School U.S. History Era 7: Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930) (Standard 5: History and Standard 6: Individuals, Groups, and Interactions).

LESSON IDEA—HELEN KELLER AND THE MANUAL ALPHABET

The deaf can communicate through sign language, written language, and reading lips, and many learn to speak aloud. The blind can use Braille to read and write and can listen to audio recordings. But how do you communicate with someone who can neither see nor hear?

The most famous deafblind American is Helen Keller. Born in 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama, Helen lost her sight and hearing to an illness when she was 19 months old. In 1887, the Kellers hired Anne Sullivan from the Perkins School for the Blind in Boston to come to teach Helen.

At Perkins, Anne had learned to use the manual alphabet. When Anne arrived at Ivy Green, she immediately began to speak to Helen using this method. By forming the letters against Helen’s hand as Helen felt the position of Anne’s fingers, Anne was able to teach Helen these signs. Soon Helen came to understand the relationship between the signs and the world around her. She understood language. Eventually Helen Keller went to college, wrote 12 books, and became an active supporter of a number of Progressive causes.

The back of this broadside from the South Carolina Institution for the Education of the Deaf and the Blind uses illustrations to demonstrate the letters of the manual alphabet. Ask your students to imagine what it would be like to learn to communicate this way. When Helen went to college, only some of her books were available in Braille, and Anne had to read and spell them into Helen’s hand for her to study. As a class, practice using the signs. Then have students practice spelling simple words to a partner. Can they understand one another? Use the manual alphabet to practice class vocabulary words or simple sentences.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for Grades 3-5 English/Language Arts (Standard 1.0: Language and Standard 2.0: Communication), English/Language Arts Common Core Standards (Reading: Informational Texts and Speaking & Listening) and Grade 5 Social Studies (Industrial America and Western Expansion).
Landes-Kriegsfürsorge-Ausstellung [1917]

Wars often leave many soldiers to face life-changing disabilities. This poster advertised the National War Relief Exhibition in Pozsony, Austria. What can we learn about the challenges facing disabled veterans in Austria at the end of WWI? How does this compare with efforts to assist other veterans facing the same challenges in other countries? How does this compare with efforts made today?

Casablanca conference at Casablanca, Morocco, President Roosevelt... affixing the Congressional Medal of Honor upon Brig. General William H. Wilbur... [Jan. 1943]

There are very few images of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had polio, in motion; instead, a vast majority show him seated or standing while discreetly steadying himself on a podium or an assistant’s arm. Why do you think reporters refrained from taking photographs that would have revealed the president’s handicap? How did this handicap alter FDR’s presidency and public interactions?

NEW AIDS FOR DEAF-MUTES

Brochures, from October 1, 1872 to 0, 1876

Alexander Graham Bell’s invention of the telephone evolved out of his life-long interest in creating new technologies to aid deaf and mute people in new forms of communication. He helped families with deaf children (click here for example) and also assisted with Helen Keller. In the brochure above, what kinds of disabilities does Bell seek to assist through the classes he offers? How does he plan to help people?

HELEN KELLER AS ACTIVIST


Though Helen Keller was famous for learning to communicate despite her deafblindness, often the same people who praised Helen for her accomplishments diminished her based on her disabilities when she supported a cause they opposed. They claimed she could not understand the issues because of her need for an interpreter. Why would this be a popular way to attack Helen’s causes? Do you think it would have been effective? Is this method still attempted today?