We have **three new lesson plans** available this month!  "Jim Crow Laws and African American Discrimination," written by Matt Collier from R.T. Fisher Alternative in Sumner County, examines the origin of the term Jim Crow and how segregation laws affected African Americans (grades 6-12).  "Happy Birthday, Mr. Lincoln!," written by Vicki Hines from Coles Ferry Elementary in Wilson County, introduces students to Abraham Lincoln and uses a variety of primary sources to explore why we celebrate his birthday (grade 1).  "Wright Brothers' Flying Evolution," written by Perry Louden from Rockvale Middle in Rutherford County, examines the process the Wright brothers used to develop their aircraft (grade 6).

**“Awesome” Source of the Month:**

[Monte Ward, New York Giants, baseball card portrait] [1888-1889; detail]

Why does sliding into a base make for such a heroic pose?  Do you think this photograph was staged?  What do you have to do to slide into a base?

**Theme: Baseball**

Baseball is America’s game.  The Library of Congress, as America’s library, embraces baseball’s cultural importance through a wealth of primary sources, **teacher materials**, and other resources.  The Library even created a specific Web page, **Historic Baseball Resources**, to serve as a portal to the materials available online.

Baseball is actually a great way to engage student interest on topics as wide-ranging as math, science, engineering, English/language arts, history, and geography.  Have your students calculate batting averages, learn the physics of pitching, explore the rich poetry and literature written about the sport, or find out how other countries have embraced and adapted baseball into their own cultures.  It is also a good topic for approaching history; you can use baseball to teach immigration, urbanization, segregation and civil rights, popular culture, and more.  Needless to say, studying baseball also most likely overlaps with physical education and sports teams at your school.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **June 3 & 4**—(Knoxville)  “Using Primary Sources to Address Common Core” at the Sarah Simpson Professional Development Center from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. EST.  Open to Knox County Teachers.
- **June 5**—(Cleveland)  “Bringing the Nation’s Library to Your Classroom” P16 Conference at Cleveland State Community College.  Session Time TBD.
**Lesson Idea—Casey at the Bat**

Written by Ernest Thayer in 1888, “Casey at the Bat” has become the most famous poem about baseball in American history. Casey, the confident home-town hero, keeps the residents of Mudville in deep suspense as his team’s hopes for a win come down to him. The poem has resonated in American popular culture and has generated cartoons, sequels, parodies, and more.

Access the text of the poem [here](#) and print out copies for your students. Give them a while to read the poem and identify any words or phrases they may not understand. Discuss their questions out loud; some of your more baseball-savvy students may be able to answer their classmates’ questions. Have students explain what’s going on in the poem. Why didn’t Casey swing the first two times? In what ways does Thayer increase the suspense?

Ask a volunteer to read the poem out loud to the class, or break it up by stanza for 13 students to read out loud in turn. How does a dramatic reading change the way students understand the actions in the poem? (Optional: play [this recording](#) from 1909 for your students. How is this rendition different from the students’ readings? Look through [this sheet music](#) from 1920, and, if possible, play the tune on a keyboard. How does the composer interpret the action through music?) As a writing assignment, have students compose poems or prose items such as newspaper articles or blog entries. They should try to capture the suspense of watching a sports game, using some of the same literary devices as Thayer did.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for grades 6–8 English/Language Arts (Standard 3: Writing and Standard 8: Literature) and Common Core State Standards for grades 6–8 ELA-Literacy (Reading: Literature and Writing).

**Lesson Idea—Women in Baseball**

The movie *A League of Their Own* popularized the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) of the 1940s, but before the AAGPBL there were the “Bloomer Girls,” women’s baseball teams who “barnstormed” across the country playing games against men. Students can read about these teams and the AAGPBL at the Exploratorium’s “The Girls of Summer” exhibit.

Have students read three or four articles from those listed in [Topics in Chronicing America - Bloomer Girls: All-girls novelty act sweeps country playing baseball](#), as well the AAGPBL’s “League Rules of Conduct” and excerpts from the “Charm School” guide. Lead a discussion asking students to compare how journalists wrote about the female players on Bloomer Girls teams with the attitudes towards women’s roles expressed in the AAGPBL documents.

Assign an essay in which students should answer the following questions: How were these women players expected to behave? How were they viewed by the public? Were the views and expectations of the Bloomer Girls and the AAGPBL players the same? How did this differ from attitudes towards male players? Why do you think women are still banned from Major League baseball? Should this ban be lifted?

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 1: Culture and Standard 6: Individuals Groups and Interactions) and Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945) (Standard 1: Culture, Standard 5: History, and Standard 6: Individuals Groups and Interactions), and Common Core State Standards for grades 9-10 & 11-12 ELA-Literacy (Reading: Informational Text and Writing).
Lesson Idea– Jackie Robinson in Popular Culture

Jackie Robinson (1919-1972) broke the color line in major league baseball in 1947 and had an illustrious career with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Robinson received many honors for his achievements on and off the field and was widely respected for the dignity he displayed while integrating baseball. In 1956, he received the Springarn Medal from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and in 1962, he was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Popular culture has celebrated Robinson in many ways; long before the movie 42 (2013) came out, he played himself on the big screen in The Jackie Robinson Story in 1950. Many songs have also been written about Robinson, and one of the most popular remains “Did You See Jackie Robinson Hit That Ball?”, written in 1949 by Woodrow Buddy Johnson.

Play “Did You See Jackie Robinson Hit That Ball?” for your students. Ask the students for their reactions to the song. Divide students into small groups and give each group copies of page two and page three of the sheet music for the song (page one is a cover page). Play the song again and let students follow along with the lyrics. Then, ask each group to write down the following: 1) their favorite verse of the song; 2) what they learned about Jackie Robinson from the song, and 3) who else is mentioned in the song (Satchel Paige, Roy Campanella, Don Newcombe, and Larry Doby). If time permits, assign each group one of these other African American players to research.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for grades 3-5 Social Studies (Standard 5: History) and Music (Standard 5: Reading and Notating and Standard 6: Listening and Analyzing) and Common Core State Standards for grades 3-5 ELA-Literacy (Reading: Informational Text).

Featured Feature– Historic Baseball Resources

The Library of Congress has an extensive collections of primary sources related to baseball. To highlight some of these wonderful materials, the Library has created a special section, Historic Baseball Resources, where you can find links to collections, videos, timelines, teacher resources, and much more. The Baseball Americana slideshow features twenty-three images from the Prints and Photographs Online Catalog. These images are arranged in an easy-to-use slideshow that you can utilize in the classroom and include images of famous players, parks, and children enjoying the game. You can also find a short biography of Jackie Robinson to help students build context for understanding Robinson’s role in the history of the sport. Perhaps you want to highlight the influence of baseball on music. In that case, assign students the short article on the history of the song “Take Me Out to the Ball Game.” Today in History has several entries related to baseball. You will find these highlighted on the Historic Baseball Resources page in a time line with each date linked to the article about that day’s event.

Keep in mind that the materials in this section do not include all the baseball-related materials available from the Library of Congress. It is a great place to see some of the best of the collection and to start your exploration.
**Baseball on Film**

*The ball game / Thomas A. Edison, Inc.* [1898]

This is a very short, silent film clip from a baseball game played 115 years ago. Can you tell what is happening? What base do you think is in the forefront? What are all the different people doing? Does the field look the same or different from baseball diamonds today? What about the players’ uniforms? Lastly, why would Thomas Edison create such a brief movie of a baseball game?

**Origins of Baseball**

*A Pretty Little Pocket-Book, intended for the Amusement of Little Master Tommy, and Pretty Miss Polly...* [1760]

Baseball is the all-American sport. Do your students know where it began? Have students analyze this page from a British children’s magazine. What conclusions can be drawn about the presence of baseball in England in 1760?

**Throwing Out the First Pitch**

*[Danny Kaye Throws Out the First Pitch With A Group of Children at the 50th All Star Game, July, 17, 1979]* [actually the 46th All-Star Game]

Danny Kaye (1913-1987) was one of the twentieth century’s most popular entertainers. Why is it an honor to throw out the first pitch on opening day or at an all-star game? What are the children doing? Is pitching easy or difficult?

**Baseball, April 1912**

*Chorus girl raising money at TITANIC game* [1912 April 21] (date created or published later by Bain)

The RMS Titanic sank on the 15 April 1912. In the photograph, women ask the spectators at a baseball game to donate money to help Titanic survivors. What do you notice first about the people in the bleachers? How do they differ from the people you might see at a game today? Is a baseball game still a place to raise money for disaster victims?