TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU

NEWSLETTER: OCTOBER 2018

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

- The MTSU Center for Historic Preservation will be hosting the fifth annual Slave Dwelling Project Conference on October 24-27. Conference highlights include keynote speaker Colson Whitehead, musical performance by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, and a number of great panel presentations. For more information and to register, visit http://slavedwellingproject.org/2018-slave-dwelling-project-conference/.

- Have you seen the newest resource from our partners at the Tennessee State Library and Archives? They have recently published an online student edition of the Tennessee Blue Book. This is a great resource to supplement your textbooks. Also, remember to check out the Tennessee Encyclopedia and TN4ME for additional secondary source information on Tennessee history.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Secy. of State Cordell Hull [ca. 1940]

Born in the Upper Cumberland region of middle Tennessee, Cordell Hull is most well-known for his work as secretary of state under FDR and for his role in the creation of the United Nations.

THEME: DIPLOMACY

If you asked your students to define the word “diplomacy,” what would they say? Would they mention trying to build bridges with other countries? Would they mention advancing foreign policy? If you tell them you want them to practice diplomacy when dealing with each other in the classroom, would they understand what you mean?

According to the U.S. State Department, “Diplomacy is a complex and often challenging practice of fostering relationships around the world in order to resolve issues and advance interests.” Can your students name a good example from history of diplomacy (such as the Statue of Liberty or Ping Pong Diplomacy)? Can they name an actual diplomat (such as Cordell Hull or Henry Kissinger)? Why is it important to know how diplomats work?

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- November 2 (Clinton) - "Beginnings of a Movement" workshop in partnership with East Tennessee Historical Society at Green-McAdoo Cultural Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

- November 10 (Murfreesboro) - "World War II" workshop in partnership with Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.

- December 7 (Knoxville) - "Era of the American Revolution" workshop, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET, at East Tennessee History Center. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

For more professional development opportunities from our partners, check out Discover Tennessee History. Be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page and check out our shared calendar of upcoming workshops.

Nixon attending a ping-pong exhibition in Beijing [1972]

Content created and featured in partnership with the TPS program does not indicate an endorsement by the Library of Congress.
LESSON IDEA—ADAMS-ONIS TREATY

As the United States spread westward in the early 19th century, a portion of the land gained was due to diplomatic efforts such as the Louisiana Purchase and the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819. The Adams-Onis Treaty, noted as a major diplomatic victory at the time, settled boundary disputes between the U.S. and Spain over the New Spain territories and ceded Florida to the U.S.

Begin by analyzing A map of Mexico, Louisiana, and the Missouri Territory... What do you notice about boundaries on the map? What regions are part of the U.S. and New Spain? Divide students into nine pairs/groups and assign each group one of the first nine articles from the Adams-Onis Treaty. What can we learn about relations between Spain and the United States from the treaty? What did the United States gain as a result of this treaty? Shortly after this treaty was ratified, Mexico won its independence from Spain, taking control of New Spain. How might this have reshaped diplomatic relations related to territory in the Americas?

With Florida now a part of the United States, a new government needed to be set up in the territory. President James Monroe named Andrew Jackson governor of Florida. As a class, read the transcript of Monroe's letter. What was the process for transitioning Florida from Spanish to American control?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet Tennessee state curriculum standards for 8th grade Social Studies (8.32).

LESSON IDEA—THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES AND A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The Treaty of Versailles, signed June 28, 1919, marked the end of World War I. After four years of war, policy makers, diplomats, citizens, and heads of state had to address some tough questions. Who was responsible for the war? How should those responsible be punished? And, perhaps most importantly, what can we do to prevent this from ever happening again? It was from these questions that the Treaty of Versailles was born, and the legacy of those decisions in 1919 set into motion currents and events which not only impacted 20th-century history but continue to reverberate into the 21st century.

Begin the class with a bell-ringer asking students what they think “diplomacy” means. What are the goals of diplomacy? After they have written their answers down, have your students share what they wrote with the class.

Next, divide your students up into groups and give each group four copies of a Primary Source Analysis Sheet. First, hand out the "At last!" primary source for the students to investigate. Open up discussion using the students’ observations of the primary source as talking points. After the class discussion, lead a short lecture on the background of the Treaty of Versailles or show them a short video. Next, hand out the second source, “The League, the nation’s danger.” Once again, open up discussion and encourage them to connect this source with the previous one. Repeat these steps again for “The League of Nations and Its Importance to World Peace” and “The Lamb from the slaughter.”

Ask your students at the end of this analysis what their thoughts are on the League of Nations. Did they agree or disagree with the diplomatic reasoning behind the alliance? What are some potential strengths and weaknesses of such an organization? What would they have changed or done differently? Why did the United States not enter the League of Nations but did become part of the United Nations nearly 26 years later?

This lesson idea meets state standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (U.S. 27 and U.S. 58).
FEATURED FEATURE—BRING YOUR CLASSROOM TO LIFE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC ORAL HISTORIES

by Maureen McNicholl, Program Director of Education Outreach, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST)

“I was asleep in room 433, the duty officer’s quarters, when the building was shaken by a loud explosion just before 3 a.m. I rolled out of bed and reached for the telephone. Automatic-weapons fire broke out. I called Mr. Calhoun at his home and told him the embassy was under attack. As I was speaking, another explosion tore into the building. Recalling the need for shelter from falling debris in the event of a bomb explosion, I crawled under the bed while talking to Mr. Calhoun.”

- E. Allen Wendt, a Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon under siege by the Vietnamese on January 30, 1968, describing his harrowing night inside the Embassy during the Tet Offensive.

When we think of using primary source oral histories in our classrooms, there is one resource that is often overlooked but ideally suited to the world history, civics, or global studies curriculum -- the oral histories of our diplomats. The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) houses the largest, free collection of diplomatic primary source oral histories in the world, exceeding 2,000 interviews and podcasts, gathered from diplomats who have represented the United States since World War II. (Note that the ADST oral histories are available from the Library of Congress in the Frontline Diplomacy collection. The collection on the ADST site contains some helpful contextual introductions and excerpts that make it more user-friendly.)

Why study the work of diplomats in your classroom?

First, diplomats (also known in the U.S. as Foreign Service officers) are front-seat witnesses to world history events, serving our nation 24/7 around the globe in often dangerous or unhealthy situations. Diplomats’ work is largely unsung, often occurring behind closed doors or in far-flung locations inaccessible to the general public. Reading their oral histories illuminates the world of American diplomacy and brings it closer to home, engaging students through storytelling. For example, did you know that ADST has 41 oral histories of Tennessee-born diplomats in our collection – that Chattanoogan James Bullington disguised himself as a French priest to cross enemy lines to safety (and his fiancé) during the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War or that Lebanese-American Kingsport native Selwa “Lucky” Roosevelt was Reagan’s Chief of Protocol?

Resources for Diplomatic Oral Histories

Included in ADST’s collection are two series ideal for teachers to use in the classroom that focus on specific events in diplomatic history: Moments in Diplomatic History and Fascinating Figures. Moments in Diplomatic History highlights international events over the past seven decades such as the Korean and Vietnam Wars and the Iran Hostage Crisis, while Fascinating Figures focuses on high points the careers of individuals influential in diplomatic history, including Betty Allan, a female code-breaker during World War II; and "the Velvet Hammer," Secretary of State James Baker III. The Students and Teachers page also has lesson plans, worksheets, and student project ideas.

In sum, primary source diplomatic oral histories provide your students with a rare, front-seat glimpse into our nation's role in many of the most significant international events. They provide a unique social and cultural context to enrich your curriculum in a way that textbooks never can.
The United States has a long diplomatic history with American Indians. Many of the treaties and promises made by the U.S. government were broken or reneged on as the country continued to push westward across the continent. Read Sitting Bull’s speech about diplomatic relations with the U.S.

How does Sitting Bull feel about the treaties made with the U.S.? What are some reasons that he should be skeptical about diplomatic relations with the U.S.? For more information on diplomatic relations and treaties between American Indians and the U.S., see our lesson plans, Manifest Destiny: War on the Plains and The Trail of Tears.

The Treaty of Alliance with France was signed during the American War for Independence. The treaty promised mutual military support for an indefinite amount of time between the U.S. and France should war break out between France and Britain. However, this was annulled in 1793 when George Washington declared that he would remain neutral in the French Revolution. Why do you think that Washington remained neutral? Does this make diplomatic sense? What do you think happened as a result of this annulment?