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


- TPS-MTSU will be hosting our annual summer institute June 12-14th in Knoxville. This year’s theme will be "The Dawn of the Modern Civil Rights Movement." The three-day institute will include a field trip to the Highlander Folk School in New Market and a guided tour of historic Knoxville College. For more information or to register, please email Kira Duke.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Capitol, Nashville, Tennessee [between 1980 and 2006]

Why would the state capitol building be a landmark? Why would it be placed on top of a hill? What about the architecture makes this building stand out? How does the modern skyline of Nashville take away from its prominence?

THEME: TENNESSEE LANDMARKS

What is a “landmark”? Technically, this is a feature in the landscape that helps you recognize where you are. The term gets more broadly defined as anything that is so memorable and/or important that everyone knows/ought to know where it is. It refers not only to landscape features (like rivers or mountains) but also buildings, structures, and historic sites.

Tennessee is chock-full of landmarks that speak to our history and culture, and give us common points of interest as well as pride in our state. Chances are, your students may be familiar with landmarks in your local communities, giving you a point of departure for a good history lesson. Check out this list of National Historic Landmarks in Tennessee and find a landmark near you!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- April 5 (Bristol) - “Tennessee History Highlights/Hands-on-History Workshop” with East Tennessee Historical Society at Birthplace of Country Music Museum from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

- April 6 (Knoxville) - "The Civil War's Impact in Tennessee" workshop, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET, at East Tennessee History Center. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

- May 3 (Gallatin) - "The Story of Tennessee" workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Volunteer State Community College with featured speaker: Dr. Carole Bucy. To register, email Stacey Graham.

- May 4 (Knoxville) - "The Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears" workshop, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET, at East Tennessee History Center. To register, email Lisa Oakley.

Content created and featured in partnership with the TPS program does not indicate an endorsement by the Library of Congress.
**Lesson Idea – The Mississippi River**

The mighty Mississippi is a major landmark not only for Tennessee but for the nation. The Mississippi River serves as Tennessee’s western border and has shaped life for much of the western portion of our state. The river connects communities and has served as a key economic and cultural influence. Its influence extends to communities along tributaries and creeks that extend throughout the river basin.

Begin by having students list important rivers around the world and how rivers impact the people who live near them. To examine the Mississippi River in more detail, assign students a segment of the Map of the Mississippi River. With each segment, have students describe key features including communities, islands, and tributaries. Based on their observations, how would they describe the river? Then have students analyze a Tennessee agriculture map. How does the river and its tributaries impact the area around them? How large of an area does the Mississippi River impact? How do the rivers impact the agricultural economy?

The Mississippi River provides a key transportation artery for moving agricultural products, especially cotton, from the area to larger markets. Memphis has served as a key port city on the river. Have students analyze this Bird’s eye view map from 1887. In a map meant to entice people to the city, how is the river depicted? You may elect to have students research the impact of the cotton economy on the city. If so, assign students each an image related to the cotton economy.

This lesson idea meets Tennessee state standards in Social Studies (3.03, 3.05, 3.11, 3.12, 3.14, 7.53, and TN.20).

**Lesson Idea – Rhea County Courthouse**

The Rhea County Courthouse was built in 1890 in the city of Dayton in east Tennessee. In 1976, the building was designated a National Historic Landmark, which is sort of a step above the National Register of Historic Places in terms of significance, as deemed by the National Park Service. The courthouse has always been significant to the residents of Rhea County, but in 1925 the building took on national significance for hosting the infamous Scopes Trial.

In response to the 1925 Butler Act, the American Civil Liberties Union sought someone who would defy the Act and therefore allow them to test its legitimacy in court. Dayton town boosters identified a local teacher who could do this in order to bring national publicity to the town. It worked. Have students examine (in five groups) how these newspaper clippings portray the courthouse and the trial. Then have students analyze the two political cartoons at the bottom of this Today in History article. What did people from other states (particularly the northeast) think of the town and the people in it?

In an effort to show that the county has a rich history apart from the Scopes Trial, the Rhea County Historical Society asked the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation to create exhibit panels to be displayed in the courthouse. Divide students into nine groups or pairs and assign a panel to each group (except for panels 7, 10, & 11); have them identify one thing in the panel that happened in Rhea County that ties into a larger, important national story (such as the Trail of Tears, the coal mining industry, etc.). Ask students why they think the Scopes Trial is remembered more than any of the other stories.

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.14) and high school U.S. History & Geography (US.36) and Tennessee History (TN.49).
LESSON IDEA— TENNESSEE’S MUSICAL LANDMARKS

The Ryman Auditorium, Stax Records, and Sun Studio are all important music landmarks on Tennessee’s physical and cultural landscapes. These musical landmarks also have shaped Tennessee’s history and American culture. Begin the class by showing your students this short video. Ask your students if they recognized any of the buildings or any of the people featured in the video. Have they visited any of those buildings? Why do they think Tennessee is important for its music?

Next, divide your students into groups. For this part of the lesson idea, you and your students will need access to sound and video. Begin by playing Otis Redding’s “(Sittin’ On) The Dock of the Bay” and Sam & Dave’s “Soul Man”. Have your students write down the style of the music they are listening to, what instruments are being used, what the subject of the song is, and who the singers are. Next play Johnny Cash’s “I Walk the Line” and Elvis Presley’s “That’s All Right,” having your students once again record their observations. Finally, have your students listen to Louis Armstrong’s “St. James Infirmary” and Patsy Cline’s “Crazy.” Next have your students report out on their observations. Reveal to your students that the first two songs were recorded at Stax Records, the next two at Sun Studio, and the last two were performed at the Ryman Auditorium. How do these songs reinforce what they know about Tennessee’s musical history? How does it change the way they think about our musical history? What impact do you think these recordings and musical landmarks had on a national level?

Next, assign each group images of Stax Records, the Ryman Auditorium, and Sun Studio. Have your students compare and contrast the architecture of each building. Based on what you learned from the previous music activity, why do you think these buildings were designed the way they are? Are they reflective of the music played and recorded in them? What are their similarities? What are their differences? You can also have your students visit their websites here, here, and here.

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.51) and high school Tennessee History (TN.50).

LESSON IDEA— WYNEWOOD STATE HISTORIC SITE

To begin the lesson, ask students to remember when they have stayed in hotels, motels, inns, and/or lodges. Ask student to explain their stays and compare and contrast their experiences. What type of transportation did students use to get to there? Did they have phones in their hotel rooms? Next introduce Wynnewood State Historic Site. Explain to the students that people would travel from all over the frontier to visit Wynnewood and stay the night in the inn. This is a good time for the teacher to explain that people would travel on foot, by horse, or maybe even in carriages pulled by horses. The teacher can find information about Wynnewood State Historic Site here, here, and here; show students this video, plus the photographs, and further explain the history of the local Tennessee site. When was it built? Why was it built in this location? How big is it?

After discussing the site and comparing how people lived in the past to our lives today, the teacher should pick one to three images and ask students to complete the Primary Source Analysis Tool in small groups for the images. After completing this analysis activity, the students will participate in class discussion. Questions to consider: how are our lives today different those who were visiting Wynnewood in the past? How are they similar? This lesson activity would be a fun introduction for students to participate in before visiting Wynnewood State Historic Site for a tour. The site is open for tours April-October.

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for 1st grade Social Studies (1.25, SSP.01, SSP.02).
Natural Landmarks

[Image: National Park Services recreational map of Tennessee [195-]]

As the weather gets warmer and people flock outdoors, keep in mind how many beautiful natural landmarks the great state of Tennessee has to offer! In fact, only California has more state parks than Tennessee. As a class, visit the Tennessee State Park website and discuss the number and distribution of sites across the state. Ask students to browse the website and find their favorite park.

Local Landmarks

[Image: Union Station, Nashville, Tenn. [ca. 1900]]

Though state and nationally recognized landmarks are great for understanding and connecting with our past, local landmarks also provide a great opportunity for your students to engage with sources familiar and close to home. A good database to find these local landmarks is the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places website. Have your students look through the database for their county and city and read the national register nomination. How do these chosen landmarks connect with broader themes of state and national history? How does it change the way you view these landmarks?

Modern Landmarks

[Image: Roof of the Ryman Auditorium and the new AT&T Building, Nashville, Tennessee [2008]]

Landmarks do not always have to be historic. For example, the AT&T Building, referred to locally as the “Batman” building, is arguably one of the most distinctive and recognizable buildings in Nashville. Have your students discuss why they think the building was designed this way. Do you think it was designed to be a landmark? Or only became one once the public gave it its nickname?

Military Landmarks

[Image: The Battle of Franklin, November 1864 [n.d.]]

Tennessee proved to be a hotspot for Civil War battles. Many grade levels learn about the Civil War and exploring the battlefields is a great way to get students interested! Visit The Soundtrack of America: Made in Tennessee’s website and read 8 Experiential Civil War Destination in Tennessee. This article shares the rich history and abundance of battlefield locations in Tennessee for historians and tourists alike to visit. When discussing Tennessee battlefields with students, ask them to follow along with a map to plot the locations of each historic battle.