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 is excited to partner with Tennessee History Day again this summer to offer a series of workshops across the state during the month of July. We will be offering workshops in Manchester (18th), Cookeville (19th), Burns (24th), Union City (25th), Covington (26th), and Harrogate (30th). More information and registration will be available on the Tennessee History Day website.
• Are you looking for a new creative way to teach the Cold War? We have a new lesson plan written by Jennifer Lange, who teaches at East Hickman Intermediate School (Hickman County Schools). This lesson plan Cold War Veterans uses excerpts for the Veterans History Project to explore the experiences of the military during various points in the Cold War culminating in a found poetry activity.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

The success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Civil Rights Movement inspired movements around the world.

THEME: DAWN OF THE MODERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
This issue shares a theme with our TPS 2019 Summer Institute, held this year in Knoxville on June 12-14. This theme picks up where last year’s “Beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement” left off—around the year 1954 when Brown v. Board changed the dynamics of segregation in the South. It focuses in particular on the growth of nonviolence as a tactic of protest and the participation of students in the movement. The Montgomery Bus Boycott, which took place from December 1955 to December 1956, generated a lot of momentum for nonviolent protest of Jim Crow. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, furthermore, formed in 1957, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee formed in 1960. These groups would be instrumental in organizing the sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and marches that would grab headlines and bring the country closer to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

UPCOMING EVENTS:
• June 4 (Jackson) - "Discovery Tennessee History: Stories, Strategies, Sources" conference at Jackson State Community College. To register, visit this website.
• June 12-14 (Knoxville) - “The Dawn of the Civil Rights Movement” Institute at Beck Cultural Center and East Tennessee History Center. To register, email Kira Duke.
• June 20-21 (Knoxville) - “Strategies for Teaching the Social Studies Process Standards” workshop from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET, at East Tennessee History Center. To register, email Lisa Oakley.
• July 18 (Manchester) - "Building a National History Day Project Using the Library of Congress" workshop with Tennessee History Day at Coffee County Offices from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sign up here.

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LESSON IDEA– THE FREEDOM RIDES

After interstate bus travel was officially desegregated in the U.S., a group of activists tested the extent to which this law was upheld across the southern states. Planned by Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) leaders such as James Farmer and Diane Nash, the 1961 Freedom Rides encompassed different legs of interstate bus travel by teams of activists. The riders, who ranged from young to old, black to white, experienced a variety of treatment from local residents and law enforcement agencies in the various southern cities where the buses stopped, often violent and hostile.

Start off by asking students about nonviolent protest. What can you do to try to get people to change their minds? Next give them this excerpt from a news article written after the Freedom Rides. What was CORE’s approach? Why such a strict dress code? Do you think the riders chose jail over fines? Show students this clip (4:08) from the PBS 2011 documentary Freedom Riders. What did the riders set out to accomplish? Have them analyze this map and have them identify the cities along the riders’ routes. How many were arrested?

Imagine how the riders felt pulling up to a bus station, not knowing what reception they would experience. Listen to Percy Sutton (4:35) and then read/listen to Joan Trumpauer Mullholland’s account [PDF pp. 29-30/video 52:06-54:38]. Then have students imagine what a local resident might have felt, seeing this bus pull up. How might the Freedom Rides have changed minds and hearts? This lesson idea meets TN state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.24) and high school U.S. History & Geography (US.80).

LESSON IDEA– TENNESSEE IN THE MOVEMENT

Tennessee was a nexus for key people, events, and organizations throughout the Civil Rights Movement. In east Tennessee, Highlander Folk School trained many of the leaders of the movement and taught the music that would keep activists inspired in their darkest moments, including “We Shall Overcome.” In middle Tennessee, students in Nashville launched a sit-in movement that desegregated lunch counters downtown. They went on to co-found the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, continue the Freedom Rides, and organize Freedom Summer. In west Tennessee, African Americans in Fayette and Hardeman County, many of them sharecroppers, would wage a campaign to fight for their right to vote. In response, many of these people were forced out of their homes and into tent cities for years. Voting rights campaigns in Mississippi and Alabama would later add more visibility to the need for a Voting Rights Act.

Begin by having your students share what they know about the Civil Rights Movement such as key people, events, and themes. Next, share that you are going to look at three places/events in Tennessee and explore their significance to the larger Civil Rights Movement. Divide your students into three groups. Each group will be given three sources related to their place/event and the synthesizing sources worksheet. (Note: some sources in the PDF are multimedia and will need to be accessed via the listed URL.) Ask each group to analyze the sources to determine the overall significance of each place/event and what we can determine about Tennessee’s place in the larger Civil Rights Movement. Allow time for each group to share their findings.

Next regroup your students so that you have representatives from each original group. What common themes do they see in each group of sources? Ask them to compare their initial list of key people, events, and themes for the larger movement to their findings for their Tennessee sources. What can we determine about Tennessee’s importance in the larger movement?

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.50), high school Tennessee History (TN.56), and high school U.S. History & Geography (US.80).
Lesson Idea—The Montgomery Bus Boycott

Begin by asking students a question: How many have taken a ride on a school bus or a city bus? Encourage students to discuss the differences and similarities between school buses and city buses. Ask students to explain what they know about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks. Why do we celebrate their actions today? Why are they important? Then ask students what they know about the Montgomery, AL, bus boycott. Do they know it started when Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus? Do they know the role of Jo Ann Robinson in the boycott? Ask students how long they think the boycott lasted. Explain that the boycott lasted for over a year—382 days. For 382 days the African American community of Montgomery chose to walk or carpool rather than use the Montgomery busing system. Explain how the community created a successful boycott and ultimately pushed leaders like Dr. King and Mrs. Parks into the spotlight, giving the Civil Rights Movement new momentum.

Show students a quick clip (3:51) to explain the importance and impact of the bus boycott. After watching the clip, the teacher can share the following resources: Civil Rights Map of America, Rosa Parks’ instructions for Bus Boycott, various Civil Rights Photographs, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott Leaflet with students in order to complete the Primary Source Investigation—this can be done as a class, in small groups, or individually. Use the sources to answer how the Montgomery Bus Boycott is a piece of a very large puzzle—Civil Rights Movement in America...

This lesson meets TN state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.24) and U.S. History & Geography (US 80).

Lesson Idea—Strategies to Win the Movement

The Civil Rights Movement did not take place in a vacuum, nor was it a spontaneous movement. African American civil rights leaders across the nation worked together to come up with and disseminate strategies that could be used to fight Jim Crow. This lesson idea focuses on a group of Nashville civil rights activists led by Reverend James Lawson and the strategies they used during the Nashville Sit-Ins.

Begin the class by asking what they know about Civil Rights Movement. What were strategies used during the Movement? Why were those strategies chosen over other ones? Next, have your students read an excerpt from an oral history with C.T. Vivian, beginning on page 46, time stamp 1117 and ending with page 49, time stamp 1149. It may also be beneficial to provide your students with the “Questions to Ask Your Oral History” worksheet (p. 7) to complete while they read the primary source. Next have them report out on the strategies the interviewee talked about. Did the training methods enlisted by these civil rights activists surprise you? Why do you think that civil rights activists were trained the way that they were? What benefits could come from adopting these particular strategies? Finally, why do you think that these strategies were chosen over other strategies?

Next, show your students the “Sit-ins in Nashville, Tennessee” video and the “Nashville—Confrontation at City Hall” video. After your students have watched the two videos, lead a class discussions on their observations. Alternatively, you could have your students work with an elbow partner to discuss their findings. Next, ask your students what connections they saw between the videos and Vivian’s interview. Were some of the strategies he talked about present in either video? How were those strategies used? Did the civil rights activists in the video talk about their training? If so, how? Ultimately, was their training crucial to their success?

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.50), high school African American History (AAH.42), Tennessee History (TN.56 & 57), and U.S. History & Geography (U.S. 80).
Ask students to analyze this picture. Next, ask students what they know about Rosa Parks and discuss why she is important. Explain that 100 years before Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat, Elizabeth Jennings refused to get off of an all-white street car in New York. Ask students to discuss what was happening in America in the 1850 and 1860s and connect the event of Jennings’ refusal to give up her seat to the continuous fight for equal rights for African Americans.

John Lewis was one of many students involved with the Civil Rights Movement and the Nashville Sit-Ins. Lewis would later go on to become one of the “Big Six” in the movement and become a U.S. Representative for Georgia. Encourage your students to find as many connections between the Nashville Sit-Ins and the broader Civil Rights Movement. What are the legacies of the Sit-Ins on the Civil Rights Movement?

The Civil Rights Movement utilized a broad array of institutions and places as centers for the recruitment, training, and organization. One such place was Fisk University, located in Nashville. Why do you think that Fisk University played a large role in the Civil Rights Movement? How do you think this affected the Movement’s strategies? What other places and institutions do you think were centers of the Civil Rights Movement?

Jo Ann Robinson was a member of the Women’s Political Council (WPC) and one of the key organizers for the Montgomery Bus Boycott. She was a long-time, open critic of the segregated busing system in Montgomery. After the arrest of Parks, Robinson helped create and circulate fliers to the African American community with the bold statement: “Don’t ride the bus to work, to school, or any place Monday December 5.” Ask students to analyze Robinson’s flyer. How did Robinson and other civil rights activists help make the Montgomery Bus Boycott so successful?