TEACHING with PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU

NEWSLETTER: JULY 2019

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 presenting at district in-services in Wilson, Robertson, and Dickson counties this month. If you are teaching in these districts, please be sure to check with your district PD calendar for more information. For those of you in other districts, keep in mind that we do not charge a fee and can customize sessions to your teachers’ needs. For more information, email Kira.

- The story of agriculture in Tennessee is an interesting lens to explore the state’s history. Out of his dissertation research, TPS-MTSU GRA Ethan Holden has developed a new lesson plan that explores agriculture in Tennessee at crucial junctures in the state history—post-Reconstruction, Depression/WWII, and modern America—to understand how agriculture has shaped our state.

THEME: OUT OF THE CLASSROOM LEARNING

As you might imagine, as public historians and staff members of the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, our TPS-MTSU staff feels strongly that out of the classroom learning is a valuable component to every student’s education experience. Each of our staff has experience working and volunteering at various historic sites and museums across the state. Also, we have all had the experience of either participating in and/or facilitating and organizing study abroad classes. In this issue, we want to dig into some of the benefits of this type of learning experience as well as lessons learned from our own experiences leading and participating in out of the classroom learning. We would love to hear from you all about your own experiences with out of the classroom learning!

AWESOME SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Edinburgh Castle, from Grassmarket [ca. 1890-1906]

Stacey, along with TPS-MTSU GRAs Ethan and Layla, will be spending three weeks in Edinburgh this summer, learning all sorts of things out of the classroom. For instance, why is Edinburgh called the “Athens of the North”?

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- July 18 (Manchester) - "Building a History Day Project Using the Library of Congress" workshop at Coffee County Offices from 9 to 3. Sign up here.

- July 19 (Cookeville) - "Building a History Day Project Using the Library of Congress" workshop at Putnam County Library from 9:30 to 3. Sign up here.

- July 24 (Burns) - "Building a History Day Project Using the Library of Congress" workshop at Montgomery Bell State Park from 9 to 3. Sign up here.

- July 25 (Union City) - "Building a History Day Project Using the Library of Congress" workshop at Discovery Park of America from 9 to 3. Sign up here.

- July 26 (Covington) - "Building a History Day Project Using the Library of Congress" workshop at Dyersburg State Community College from 9 to 3. Sign up here.

- July 30 (Harrogate) - "Building a History Day Project Using the Library of Congress" workshop at Lincoln Memorial University from 9 to 3 ET. Sign up here.

*All workshops with Tennessee History Day.

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FEATURE ARTICLE—OUT OF THE CLASSROOM LEARNING

**Designing Field Trips—Thoughts from a Former Museum Educator by Kira Duke**

Field trips can be a wonderful learning experience for students that stays with them for years to come, or they can be a day out of school. So what can educators do to increase the chances that all the stress of planning a class field trip will lead to quality learning, and an experience that will have impact on a student’s education? Based on my experiences working as a museum educator, here are a few things I would encourage you to consider.

**Time**—How much time will your group have at the site? Securing buses, factoring in travel time, waiting in line at the site, lunch, and getting students on and off the bus take up a portion of your field trip time. The larger your group is the more time you need to factor in for the basic logistics.

As you think about the site you want to visit, be sure to research how much time is needed to have a meaningful experience. Talk to the site staff to find out how much time they recommend for a quality visit.

**Communication**—Get in touch with museum education staff. Talk with them about the amount of time that you have and what you want your students to learn during the visit. Sharing information with site staff in advance allows them to better prepare for your students and to share resources with you. Don’t assume that guest services communicates with education staff. It is always best to ask for a contact and reach out yourself.

**Pre/Post Field Trip Learning**—The learning must extend beyond just the day of the field trip. Often museums will have educational resources that they can share with you to prepare your students for their visit. Students who have context for what they will be seeing will be more engaged and ask better questions while they are on-site. Follow up the field trip with a post-visit activity or reflection that will allow you to bring the experience full circle connecting the overall experience to your curriculum and the work that students have been engaged with throughout your class.

**Study Abroad … In Your Own Town by Stacey Graham**

This summer I will be leading a group of MTSU undergraduates and graduate students on a study abroad trip to Edinburgh, UK, “the Athens of the North.” This will be the third study abroad program I have led, and nothing is more exciting than being able to introduce students to new places and sharing in their experiences. You may not be able to take your students to a foreign country, but that doesn’t mean they can’t try to approach their own towns as if they were seeing them for the first time.

Divide your students into two groups: one group is the home group, the other is the visiting group. The job of the visiting group is to look up the local sites of interest that they as tourists would want to see. Looking through brochures provided by a CVB might help here, or the website of your county or municipal government. The job of the home group is to think of what they would want to show a visitor that might be off the beaten track, or not as obvious from a tourist brochure. What are the best places to eat? Where have interesting events taken place? Where is the best public art?

The visiting group should try to act like they don’t know the history or geography of the place, and think of questions to ask the home group as if they were actually new to all these sites. Whose name is on that memorial and why is he/she famous? How do people of different socio-economic classes co-exist here? What styles of buildings do they see in neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial zones? What types of ethnic cuisines can you eat for lunch (and how does that illustrate a history of immigration)?

This can simply be a classroom experience, though it would be best to get out on foot for a few hours and visit some student-chosen sites. Afterwards, have a class discussion about which sites they liked best, what new things they learned about their hometowns, and what new ways of thinking about their surroundings they gained.

Depending on your town’s history, this could touch on a variety of curriculum standards. Students will also exercise historical thinking skills by examining multiple perspectives and practicing historical empathy. They may also become more active in local organizations or events with a newfound appreciation of the history and culture around them.

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**Tennessee State Parks**

**The 12 Kid-Friendly Tennessee Attractions You Should Visit**

**Tennessee Department of Tourism**

**Vanderbilt Center for Teaching: Out of Classroom Learning**

**UNESCO Learning Outside the Classroom**

**Lesson Plan: Plant Travel: Studying the World through Ecosystems**

**Lesson Plan: Rosenwald Schools**

**Library of Congress: Plan your visit**

**Tennessee State Museum: Field Trips**
Lesson Idea – Place-Based Learning

Place-based learning is an extremely effective tool in a history educator’s toolbox. However, place-based learning requires some scaffolding to achieve the desired learning goals. This lesson idea offers some tips and examples in creating a place-based learning activity for your students.

The first step is identifying the place for your place-based learning activity. Though historic sites often offer field trips and guided tours, it may be beneficial for the teacher to look beyond a historic site’s guided tour and into the local community. Visit your local archives or talk to members of the Chamber of Commerce. Consider the following questions: what kind of cultural and historical resources does your community have? What kind of stories do they tell? How do these local stories connect to broader historical narratives?

Once you have identified a place, think about what you want your students to learn. For example, do you want your students to learn about methods of agriculture during the 19th century? Or are you wanting them to focus on the role of women in the 19th century? Once you have decided on what you want your students to learn, think about how dissecting a place can help students answer those questions.

We will use the Humpback Rocks Visitor Center as an example. We want our students to learn about agriculture and early life in the 19th century. Encourage your students to first pay attention to the surrounding landscape. Ask questions that encourage them to think about the location of the building, the surrounding vegetation, the visitor center’s relationship to other structures, and what the students think these observations can mean. Next focus on the outside of the structure. What are the materials used in its construction, how is the house put together, what kind of architectural features can you see, and what do you think these observations mean? Repeat this inquiry method inside the building. Once you have visited the site and your students have recorded their observations, have them use their notes to write a paper that connects their observations with broader historical narratives.

This lesson idea meets TN state standards (Social Studies Practice) for all grade levels.

Lesson Idea – Field Trip Practices and Protocols

Introduce students to the field trip site by showing them a picture of the site and asking them to complete the primary source analysis worksheet (and prompt questions). Ask students what they know about the site and explain the basics of what they will be seeing while on the field trip. Next, ask students to participate in a questioning activity – create three questions they hope to answer while on the field trip. Ask students to turn these questions into the teacher before the field trip so the teacher can look through the questions and discuss with students what questions are and are not appropriate for field trips. In advance of the field trip, share the classes questions with education staff at your field trip location if you will be on a guided tour.

After the students understand where and why they are going on a field trip, work with students to create a class list of “Rules and Regulations” to guide student behavior while on the field trip. Having set and agreed-upon rules allows all students to feel responsible and help enforce the rules while on the field trip! While on the field trip ask students (especially in middle and high school) to document their field trip with pictures for a class collage. As the field trip comes to an end, ask students to pick out one thing they liked about the field trip and instruct students to write a quick few sentences on what they enjoyed about the field trip and why. Teachers: Take a picture of the class on site at the beginning or end of the field trip so you can enjoy the sweet (and crazy) field trip memories.

If you want to go the extra mile, use the student pictures to make a collage and class booklet of the quick writes and give a copy to students and to the field trip education staff! Most sites love knowing what students and teachers enjoyed about their field trip experience.

The waterfalls located near the Old Stone Fort State Archaeological Area, located near Manchester, Tennessee [1967]

⇒ Visit this park’s website from Tennessee State Parks.
⇒ Visit TPS-MTSU for other helpful analysis guides and strategies to organize student thinking!
**A River Runs Through It**

The ancient Tiber and its island - from the southeast - Rome, Italy [1900]

My favorite place that I have ever visited is a little unorthodox: the Tiber River in Rome. While the entire city is fantastic, seeing the Tiber River, a natural feature older than the Eternal City itself, was a treat. Furthermore, seeing how Romans today interact with this natural landscape calls to mind the changing nature, and in some cases the staying power, of tradition.—Ethan Holden

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**New World Fort**

Castillo de San Felipe del Morro, Northwest end of San Juan, San Juan, San Juan Municipio, PR [after 1933]

This UNESCO World Heritage site drives home the military prowess of European colonial powers in the Atlantic world. Built by the Spanish to guard the city of San Juan, this site overwhelmed me just in the magnitude of the fortifications and how it shows the power of the Spanish empire.—Kira Duke

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**Change Over Time**

Bird’s eye view of Sixth Street wharf, Washington, D.C. [1863]

The Washington, D.C. Wharf served as a port for Native Americans, colonists, soldiers, and fishers. For years, the Wharf was an area that was overlooked and in decline, despite its rich history. The Wharf district of D.C. has been revitalized and today, once again, the Wharf is an area booming with activity. Ask your students who they think could have come into this port? Explain how land and architecture change over time to fit and fill community wants and needs. Use this link to show the students the Wharf District of D.C. today.—Layla Smallwood

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**Sacred Spaces**

Iona Cathedral (Abbey), Iona, Scotland [between ca. 1890 and ca. 1900]

Early medieval monasteries are my favorite places because they represent centers of learning and the preservation of written knowledge. The abbey of Iona was founded in the 6th century by St. Columba, who came from Ireland and spread Christianity into Scotland and northern England from this tiny, windswept island. Tracing the spread of Christianity in early medieval Europe also helps identify the networks of administration and trade.—Stacey Graham