

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU

NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2019

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 12

WELCOME!

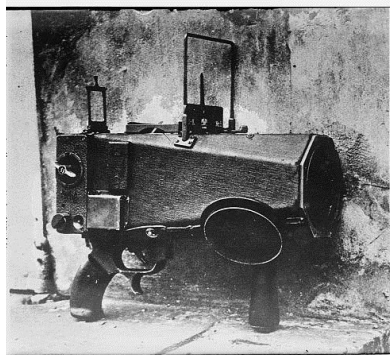
Teaching with Primary Sources—Middle Tennessee State University, administered by the Center for Historic Preservation, engages learners of all ages in using primary sources to explore major issues and questions in many different disciplines.

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NEWS

- For those of you who did not get enough Cold War material in last month's newsletter, we have [a new primary source set on the Cold War](#), which grew out of our work on the Cold War workshop last month. If you are a fan of using political cartoons with your students, this is definitely a primary source set that you will want to check out!
- Mark your calendars for March 17, 2020. TPS-MTSU will be offering a special educator workshop in conjunction with the Women's Suffrage Signature event: Road to Suffrage at MTSU, featuring scholars Laura Free and Minoa Uffelman. The educator workshop will include participation in the symposium. For more information, visit [Tennessee Woman Suffrage Centennial Collaborative webpage](#).

"AWESOME" SOURCE OF THE MONTH:



[German Camera for Aircraft](#) [between ca. 1915 and ca. 1920]

War has often led to advancements in technology that is later used in everyday life. How does this camera compare with how we capture aerial photographs today? How do we use these type of photographs?

THEME: TECHNOLOGY & ENTERTAINMENT

I just subscribed to the Disney Plus streaming service and downloaded the app to my smartphone. As I browsed through the movie offerings I recognized about a dozen that I already have on my shelf in DVD form. I could either get off the couch, walk ten feet to the shelf, take the DVD out of its case, load it into the Blu-ray player, and use the remote control to play the movie, OR I could just press my thumb to the smooth flat phone screen and accomplish the same thing. Guess what I chose?

This is all to say that one of the ways in which technology improves our lives is to provide us with new, enhanced, more convenient forms of entertainment. From watching movies to recording music to taking a road trip (pp. 2-3), how has technology changed our experiences?

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **February 17 (Franklin)** - Williamson County Social Studies PD workshop. Open to educators in Williamson County Schools. Please register through your district.
- **February 29 (Knoxville)** - "Migration" workshop at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email [Lisa Oakley](#).
- **March 13 (Cool Springs)** - Tennessee Council for Social Studies Conference
- **March 17 (Murfreesboro)** - "Road to Suffrage" at the MTSU Student Union from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To register, email [Kira Duke](#).
- **May 2 (Knoxville)** - "Industrial Revolution" workshop at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email [Lisa Oakley](#).

LESSON IDEA— EVOLUTION OF THE MOVIE THEATER



[Edison's greatest marvel--The Vitascope](#) [1896]

Since the invention of the motion picture, movies and the movie-going experience have become an important part of American culture. Changing technology from the late 19th century to the present has allowed the movie-going experience to continually improve. These changes have been coupled with an evolution of the design of the movie theater.

To begin, have students view [Edison's greatest marvel—The Vitascope](#) and analyze this image. How is the movie-going experience shown here? How does this compare with the modern movie-going experience? What are some of the technology changes that led to the changes in the movie-going experience between the 1890s and 2019?

Tell your students that they will be analyzing images of different projectors used in movie theaters from different decades. Ask students to compare [Billy Bitzer seated at movie projector](#), [Man working with a projector in a movie theater](#), and [Movie projectors in the Avalon theater](#). How has the film projector changed? What similarities do you see in the projector design? What differences? Then have students research to find images of theaters from a similar time period as their three projector images. Ask students to create a visual presentation that highlights the changing experience of movie-going. You might have students to include images from the local theater to connect to today's movie-going experience.

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.14, SSP.01-03) and science (5.ETS2).

IMPORTANT LINKS:

- [Lesson Plan: Debunking Civil War Photographs: the Case of the Moved Body](#)
- [Lesson Plan: "Barbara Allen": The Evolution of Folk Songs](#)
- [Lesson Idea: Dance and Early Film](#)
- [Lesson Idea: Art & Advertising](#)
- [Lesson Plan: Inventors and Innovations](#)
- [Lesson Plan: Invention of the Telephone](#)
- [Primary Source Set: Performing Arts: Music and Dance](#)
- [Primary Source Set: Performing Arts: Stage and Screen](#)

LESSON IDEA— EARLY MUSIC RECORDING

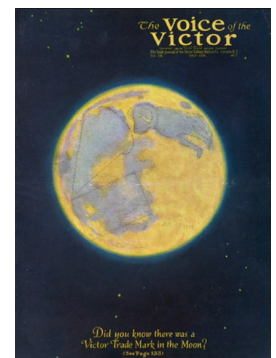
The technology of [sound recording](#) in America began in 1877 with [Thomas Edison's phonograph](#) ("sound writing"), which "wrote" sounds onto rotating cylinders. In 1877 Emile Berliner improved on this method with his [gramophone](#) ("letter sound"), which used flat discs instead of cylinders—a shape your students will much more readily recognize as a "record" (though these would not be vinyl until 1931).

The [Victor Talking Machine Company](#) dominated the commercial music recording industry in the early 20th century, using the Berliner method of disc recording. The company popularized "[The Memphis Blues](#)" by W.C. Handy with [their 1914 recording](#), bringing [blues music](#) to a wider audience. By the mid-1920s, the machines operated on electricity and used microphones while still etching the music onto discs. This is how the historic 1927 Bristol Sessions were captured, thus catapulting [country music](#) into the national spotlight and launching the careers of Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family.

By the mid-20th century, numerous recording studios around the country were trying to find the next big sound. [Sun Studio](#) in Memphis made what's considered the first "[rock and roll](#)" recording in 1951, and went on to record musicians such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, and Howlin' Wolf. The early recordings were [still made on discs](#), but soon moved to tapes that helped create the "[Sun sound](#)."

This lesson combines songs that highlight Tennessee's special musical contributions with advances in sound recording technology, so make sure you include some of the linked historical context as you play the following recordings, one by one, to the class: "[The Memphis Blues](#)" (1914); "[Bury Me Under the Weeping Willow](#)" (1927); and "[Mystery Train](#)" (1955). You may wish to have students fill out a [song analysis sheet](#) for each of them. When finished, have students compare the recordings. How does the quality change through time? How do the styles change through time? What would these sound like today? What are the strengths/weaknesses of each style of recording?

This lesson meets TN state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.05, 51) and high school Tennessee History (TN.50, 59) and U.S. History & Geography (US.05, 30, 76 and SSP.01, 03).



[The voice of the Victor](#) [1918]

LESSON IDEA— ROUTE 66 AND THE COMING OF THE INTERSTATE

Students will begin this lesson by viewing images of roadside attractions and signs from [Route 66](#) available through the [Library of Congress](#). Ask students to jot down notes about the images—what do they see, what do they already know, and what questions do they have? If using one specific image from the image selections, we encourage teachers use the [Primary Source Analysis Tool](#).

Next, show students [this clip](#) from the movie *Cars*. After viewing the clip, encourage students to discuss how they think interstates impacted communities along Route 66. Next, show students this National Park Services [map](#) of Route 66 (either display on the projector or hand out copies to students) and point out where Route 66 is on the map. Explain to students that all of the blue/red signs on the map are interstates. If you would like to discuss the need for interstates and infrastructure growth in Tennessee specifically, you can show students a [clip](#) from Al Gore, Jr.'s talk at Middle Tennessee State University in 2019. The clip starts specifically speaking to interstate and infrastructure growth starts around minute 59:00 and ends around 1:02:00.

Next, give students an [ESP](#) (Economic, Social, Political) worksheet. Ask students to use the *Cars* clip, the map of Route 66, and the clip from Al Gore, Jr.'s speech to complete the [ESP](#) handout and evaluate the economic, social, and political impact of the creation of the interstate highway system.

This lesson idea meets TN state standards for high school U.S. History & Geography (US.73).



[Historic Route 66 Motel sign, Kingman, Arizona](#)
[2006]

FEATURED FEATURE— NATIONAL FILM REGISTRY

The Library of Congress offers a collection of film essays and descriptions through the [National Film Preservation Board](#). Established by the National Film Preservation Act of 1988, the National Film Preservation Board works to ensure the survival, conservation, and increased public availability of America's film heritage. Its activities include advising the Librarian on its recommendations for annual selections to the National Film Registry, apprising the Librarian of changing trends and policies in the field of film preservation, and counseling the Librarian on ongoing implementation of the National Film Preservation Plan.

In addition to offering film information and resources, the National Film Preservation Board, through the National Film Registry, offers [film essays](#) that can be used as educational tools in the classroom. The essays range in topic offering information and critiques on classic films like *Casablanca* (1942), iconic cultural films like *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), and tougher subjects in American history and film like *Birth of a Nation* (1915).

The National Film Registry continues to update its collection and resources available in selecting 25 films each year to showcase the range and diversity of American film heritage and to increase awareness for its preservation. They also have a list of [films that have not yet been named to the registry](#). Individuals can [nominate](#) films to be considered for the registry. The deadline for nomination is in September so be on the lookout for the next films to be added to the registry!



[Original theatrical release poster for the film Casablanca](#) [1942]

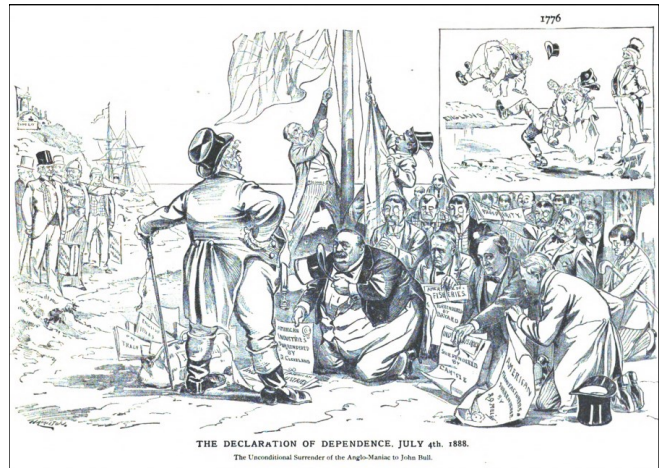
PLAY IT AGAIN



[Giovanni Zenatello \[seated at a Hardman Autotone player piano\] \[1909\]](#)

Having a player piano in the early 1900s was a sign of affluence and influence. A roll of music would be “fed” through the player piano and it would play without a person pressing the keys. Play (only the audio) for your students this [clip](#) of a player piano. Next, show them the video with the clip. Explain that nobody was actually playing the piano in the video clip. What would the pros and cons be for owning this kind of instrument?

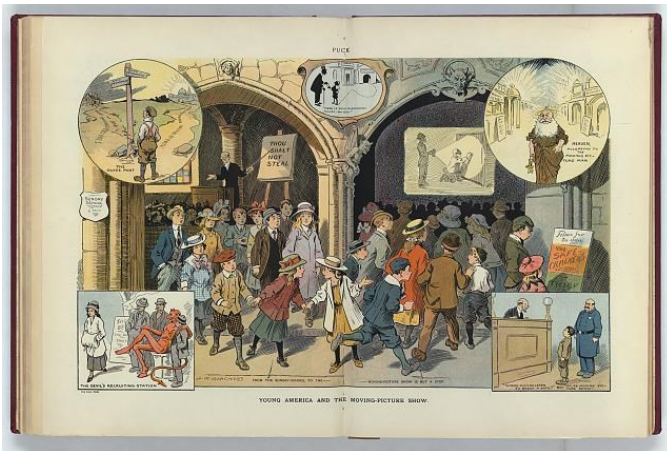
GOT JOKES?



[Protect U.S. From John Bull: Protection Pictures from Judge, 1888](#)

We have many ways of listening to jokes and comedy acts today. One of the first sound recordings that we have of a joke is from Jesse Walter Fewkes's Passamaquoddy recordings, which were done as a part of the Ancestral Voices project team. Check out [this blog](#) to learn more about the recording. Why is it beneficial to be able to listen to comedy?

BAD INFLUENCES



[Young America and the moving-picture show](#) [1910 November 9]

It is not uncommon in today's society to hear people decry the influence of entertainment on our young people. Ask your students to analyze this image. What are the concerns presented here? How is entertainment, especially new types of entertainment, being criticized here? How does this compare with critiques that we might hear today?

ANCIENT ENTERTAINMENT



[Athènes. Theatre de Bacchus](#) [ca. 1890-1910]

Before telling students what is depicted in this old “[photocrom](#)” photograph (the Theatre of Bacchus in Athens, Greece, at the turn of the 20th century), ask them if they can tell what kind of structure they see. If they recognize this as an outdoor theatre, ask them what features identify it as such. Have they been to an outdoor/indoor (amphi) theatre that has this basic shape? What about this shape makes it good for watching shows?