

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES—MTSU

NEWSLETTER: MARCH 2020

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 3

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](mailto:Stacey.Graham@mtsu.edu) or [Kira Duke](mailto:Kira.Duke@mtsu.edu) at (615) 898-2947 or www.mtsu.edu/tps

NEWS

- Join us for a multi-day summer institute for Tennessee's educators focused on the story of the women's suffrage movement and the important role Tennessee plays in the ratification of the 19th Amendment. This institute is sponsored by The Official Committee of the State of Tennessee Woman Suffrage Centennial, Tennessee State Library & Archives, the Tennessee State Museum, and Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU. To learn more, visit the Educator Resources page at www.tnwoman100.com.
- Discover Tennessee History will be offering our second annual conference on June 4th at Lincoln Memorial University with keynote speaker Pam Eddy from Cumberland Gap National Park. Visit the Discover Tennessee History page at <https://tennesseehistory.org/discover-tn-history/>.

"AWESOME" SOURCE OF THE MONTH:



[Roma. Il Panteon](#) [ca. 1890-1906]

Definitely one of the most awesome buildings in the world (IMO) is the Pantheon at Rome. See how it inspired Thomas Jefferson to design the [Rotunda](#) at the University of Virginia.

THEME: HISTORY THROUGH ARCHITECTURE

Architecture — including houses, churches, schools, cemeteries, commercial businesses, government buildings, and more — is an incredibly important category of material culture. Architectural styles reflect the economic, social, and cultural trends of their times. For instance, the Neo-Classical revival of the mid-19th century was harnessed by investors in Nashville to make a statement about the capital of Tennessee as the Athens of the South. Neo-Classical architecture symbolized education, democratic traditions, and the legitimacy of antiquity in what was then a relatively new city.

Encourage students to think of their own houses, churches, schools, and favorite stores as architectural primary sources. What styles do they see? What characteristics do these buildings express about the functions they house? Why do churches usually look different from grocery stores, for instance?

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 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](mailto:Kira.Duke@mtsu.edu).
- 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](mailto:Lisa.Oakley@mtsu.edu).
- June 4 (Harrogate)** - Discover Tennessee History Conference at Lincoln Memorial University from 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. ET. Registration will open [here](#) later this month.
- June 23-25 (Nashville)** - Battle for the Ballot: A Summer Teacher Institute. Click [here](#) for more information. The application deadline is March 27th. Click [here](#) for the application.

LESSON IDEA— GILDED AGE ARCHITECTURE



[Kykuit, John D. Rockefeller, Sr. House, 200 Lake Road, Pocantico Hills, Westchester County, NY](#) [1991-1993; image 2]

Wealthy industrialists in the Gilded Age brought innovation to systems of production that contributed to the U.S. economy as well as their own personal fortunes. Many of them funneled their profits into philanthropic endeavors, but they also practiced conspicuous consumption on a scale almost unheard of before in America. This can be seen in the homes (and, in Vanderbilt's case, mausoleum) they purchased for themselves and their families – buildings that exemplify the most [luxurious](#) forms of domestic architecture in the late 19th century.

Divide students into four groups and pass out these primary (1) and secondary (2) source pairings, with each group focusing on one Gilded Age industrialist: Andrew Carnegie, [source 1](#) & [source 2](#);

J.P. Morgan, [source 1](#) & [source 2](#); John D. Rockefeller, [source 1](#) & [source 2](#); and Cornelius Vanderbilt, [source 1](#) & [source 2](#). Ask students to look at source 1 first and identify any architectural features (they can use [these guides](#) for help). How would they describe the buildings? Fancy, simple, solid, ornate, ostentatious, tasteful? Then have them read source 2 for contextual information. How do the buildings, through their size, design, and use, illustrate the characteristics of the new class of entrepreneurs? How are these buildings used today and how is that similar/different? If you have time, show [this video](#) describing a ball at the lavish house of William K. Vanderbilt (grandson of Cornelius), and discuss how houses are not just private but also for public display of wealth.

This lesson idea meets Tennessee state standards for 5th grade Social Studies (5.03) and high school U.S. History & Geography (US.05).

IMPORTANT LINKS:

- Lesson Plan: [Tennessee's Western Frontier](#)
- Lesson Plan: [Defending from Enemy Attack: Tennessee's Civil War Structures](#)
- Lesson Plan: [Education Reform During the Progressive Era and the Rosenwald Schools of the American South](#)
- Lesson Plan: [Depictions of the William Blount Mansion: Photograph vs. Drawing](#)
- [Architectural guides: Visual Survey Forms](#)
- Newsletter [August 2009: Architecture & Architectural Landscapes](#)

LESSON IDEA— LINCOLN'S LOG CABIN

The log cabin is synonymous with the American frontier in the early years of the nation's history. The first log cabins built in the American colonies are thought to have been built by Swedish colonists. The style soon spread throughout the colonies, and evolved into a symbol of the common man on the frontier. At least six U.S. presidents were born in a log cabin, and many politicians used their log cabin childhood homes as a way to prove their connection the common man and their own humble origins. One such example is Abraham Lincoln. Born in a log cabin in Kentucky, Lincoln grew up in different log cabins as his family moved to Illinois. His log cabin roots became a core part of his identity as he ran for president in 1860. The logs thought to be from his birthplace home were saved in the 1910s and set up at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Park.

Begin by having students analyze the images of [Lincoln's Birthplace](#). Ask students to discuss how cabins such as this might have been constructed. What materials would have been needed? Why would log cabins be a common type of construction on the frontier? Also ask them to share thoughts about what it would have been like to live in a log cabin.

Next, ask students to discuss how the log cabin fits into historical memory of Abraham Lincoln. You may wish to have students complete some additional [biographical research on Lincoln](#). Then have students analyze the [Ode to Lincoln's Cabin](#). You may choose to have your students [analyze this poem using this analysis guide](#). After analyzing the poem, discuss why Lincoln's birthplace was made a national park site. You may choose to have students compare the Lincoln birthplace with another president's birthplace or home that is also a current historic site.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet Tennessee state standards in 4th grade Social Studies (4.38) and English Language Arts (Reading Informational Text).



[\[Postcard Lincoln cabin, birth place of Abraham Lincoln. In this log cabin in Hardin County Kentucky, on Feb. 12, 1809, this great man was born.\]](#) [n.d.]

LESSON IDEA— THE THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

In this lesson students will analyze the purposes of the three branches of American government and the buildings that house the three branches.

Explain to students that they will be examining the three branches of government in America. Begin by showing students this [picture](#) of a mural with the American flag and the Statue of Liberty. Encourage students to talk with a partner or a group to discuss the image using the [25 Questions to Ask Your Primary Source](#) handout. As a class, complete a [primary source analysis](#) for the image and discuss student observations and questions.

For this activity, students will be looking at three images in small groups. Assign student groups and give each student group one image: the [U.S. Capitol Building](#), the [U.S. Supreme Court Building](#), or the [White House](#). Students will look at their assigned image and complete the primary source analysis. After students have discussed in small groups or with partners, the class will come back together and share their findings and ask questions.

After the class discussion, the teacher can share brief descriptions and information about each of the assigned buildings and the three associated branches of government with students. What architectural features do these buildings have in common? How are the functions that take place inside the buildings reflected in the architecture? You may choose to use [Google Earth](#) to enhance your exploration of these three buildings and allow your students to take a virtual tour around the buildings.

After discussing the three images as a class, ask students to write a brief reflection considering the significance of the discussed landmarks to American history.

This lesson idea meets Tennessee state standards in 2nd grade Social Studies (2.23).



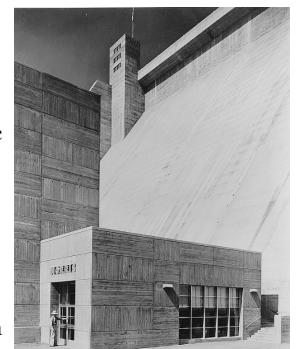
[Supreme Court Building, Washington, D.C.](#) [c.1980-2006]

FEATURED FEATURE— NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The [National Register of Historic Places](#) is a list of properties (buildings, structures, sites, districts) that have been deemed of historical significance to American history. The NR, as it is called, was established with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, and is administered by the National Park Service. To nominate a site to the NR, a specific application form must be completed and submitted to the state historic preservation office (SHPO, often pronounced “shippo”), which for our state is the [Tennessee Historical Commission](#).

Because the application is complex and, in some places, technical, professional firms, governmental agencies, and academic departments often assist people and communities (or are hired by them) to complete them. (The Center for Historic Preservation, where we work, is one of the academic departments that do this.) The resulting applications, if accepted to the NR, become important documents for the history, description, and significance of each site. They can be great sources for students at the middle and high school levels, especially for doing projects on local history. You can search for sites using [this online search form](#), after which you can download the PDF pages of the original nomination form and photographs. Here are some [examples from Tennessee](#):

- [Pikeville Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church](#) (Bledsoe County) – built in 1870 and [possibly the oldest](#) African American church building left in Tennessee
- [Norris District](#) (Anderson County) – New Deal planned community built by TVA along with the Norris Hydroelectric Project (a.k.a., [Norris Dam](#))
- [Chucalissa Indian Village](#) (Shelby County) – museum and archaeological site (dating to ca. 900) with partially reconstructed village
- [Pearl High School](#) (Davidson County) – today known as Martin Luther King Magnet at Pearl High School, an important institution for early public education for African American students in Nashville



[Norris Dam and powerhouse...](#) [between 1933 and 1945]

FRENCH QUARTER



[Details in the French Quarter, New Orleans, Louisiana](#)
[2011 March 7]

The architecture of the French Quarter in New Orleans blends together the French and Spanish roots of the city. How does the look of the quarter compare with other French and Spanish cities? How does it compare with other former French and Spanish colonial areas?

EMPIRE STATE BUILDING



[Empire State Building](#) [1931 Apr. 22]

Built in 1931, this 102-story Art Deco building was the tallest building in the world for forty years. The Empire State Building is an American cultural icon and cemented America's place as one of the most advanced nations in the world. How does this building fit as a bookend to the 1920s in America?

THE GREAT SPHINX OF GIZA



[The Sphinx](#) [1894]

The Great Sphinx of Giza was constructed between the year 2558 and 2532 BCE in Egypt. Ask your students to look at this image while using the [25 Questions to Ask Your Primary Source](#) handout to dig deeper into the mystery and cultural significance of the Great Sphinx.

THE ROMAN COLOSSEUM



[Colosseum, Rome, Italy](#) [c.1860-1890]

The Roman Colosseum could hold around 50,000 to 80,000 people. Ask your students to think about places in America today that can hold large numbers of people like the Colosseum. The Colosseum was used for public events like gladiator battles. Encourage your students to think about places in society today that are used for public events. How are they similar to or different than the Roman Colosseum?