Teaching Inquiry About Race and Democracy Through Primary Sources

Tina M. Ellsworth, PhD
NCSS Board of Directors
K12 Social Studies Coordinator
Adjunct Instructor at the University of Kansas
@DrTinaEllsworth
Welcome
Who are you and why are you here?

Native-land.ca
https://americanindian.si.edu/
Promote
• Promote inquiry using a framework for critical examination for evaluating museum collections

Find
• Find primary sources on the Library of Congress website

Learn
• Learn strategies for teaching with primary sources

Participate in
• Participate in some examples
Compelling Question:

Can we believe what we learn from museums and other historic sites?
Caption this!
Caption this!
Caption this!
Caption this!

Election Day!
Jan 21, 1909
By E.W. Gustin

Library of Congress
Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C.
20540 USA

Digital ID #ds.13248
Field Trips to Museums & Historic Sites

• They draw us in to engage with new content, deepen our historical understanding, and position us to make sense of our present-day context so we are better prepared to take informed action.
• Given geographic location and/or realities of funding and COVID-19, in person field trips are limited, therefore, virtual field trips are becoming more popular.
• For this example, I’ll provide ideas for how to attempt to recreate an exhibit for your classroom. Be thinking how this could translate into your space.
Museums, Historic Sites & the C3 Framework

- Museums provide an ideal space for students to hone their analytical skills given the myriad of primary sources they will encounter, the selection of them in a museum, and the physical placement of them within the museum space itself.

- The C3 framework provides support for how to cultivate inquiry in students in museum spaces, engage them in disciplinary thinking, position them to evaluate evidence, communicate conclusions, and most importantly take informed action.
Power of Museums & Historic Sites

- These are public histories and public history has the power to shape or reshape a public’s memory (Glassberg, 1996).
Power of Museums & Historic Sites

• These are public histories and public history has the power to shape or reshape a public’s memory (Glassberg, 1996).

• **Deepen understandings of the past** (Marcus, Levine, & Grenier, 2012)
Power of Museums & Historic Sites

• These are public histories and public history has the power to shape or reshape a public’s memory (Glassberg, 1996).

• Deepen understandings of the past (Marcus, Levine, & Grenier, 2012)

• “Learn about history not available elsewhere” (Stoddard et al., 2015, p. 124)
Power of Museums & Historic Sites

• These are public histories and public history has the power to shape or reshape a public’s memory (Glassberg, 1996).

• Deepen understandings of the past (Marcus, Levine, & Grenier, 2012)

• “Learn about history not available elsewhere” (Stoddard et al., 2015, p. 124)

• Given that museums and historic sites are in public spaces, they are often perceived as authoritative and absolute (Marcus & Kowitt, 2016; Stoddard et al., 2015).
Power of Museums & Historic Sites

- These are public histories and public history has the power to shape or reshape a public’s memory (Glassberg, 1996).
- Deepen understandings of the past (Marcus, Levine, & Grenier, 2012)
- “Learn about history not available elsewhere” (Stoddard et al., 2015, p. 124)
- Given that museums and historic sites are in public spaces, they are often perceived as authoritative and absolute (Marcus & Kowitt, 2016; Stoddard et al., 2015)
- Narratives within them often go unchallenged (Burgard, 2020).
As educators, we must be conscious of the museum curators’ decisions, which are born “out of a desire to teach, to tell, to relate something to somebody” (McWilliam and Taylor, 1996, p. vii).
Power of Museums & Historic Sites

- As educators, we must be conscious of the museum curators’ decisions, which are born “out of a desire to teach, to tell, to relate something to somebody” (McWilliam and Taylor, 1996, p. vii).

- Decisionmakers determine what stories to tell and, more importantly, what stories not to tell, a pedagogy known as “remembering and forgetting” (Segall, 2014).
Power of Museums & Historic Sites

• As educators, we must be conscious of the museum curators’ decisions, which are born “out of a desire to teach, to tell, to relate something to somebody” (McWilliam and Taylor, 1996, p. vii).

• Decisionmakers determine what stories to tell and, more importantly, what stories not to tell, a pedagogy known as “remembering and forgetting” (Segall, 2014).

• Teachers should be cognizant that stories represented at these sites are just as limited as narratives in a history textbook, and students should approach museum content “like any other source of historical knowledge” (Stoddard et al., 2015, p. 124).
FIELD TRIP!
Framework to evaluate museum curriculum: Before the visit (Burgard, 2020)

Step 1a | Provide students with the context and purpose of the museum itself (mission, purpose, origination story)

Step 1b | Provide Ss with background on the topic, as well as some alternative narratives to the story, so they can challenge or question the narratives presented at the site.
• **Step 2** | Engage in preliminary inquiry (Dimension 1) by providing students with critical questions for viewing the museum with an analytical lens. Ask students:
  - What do you expect to see when you get to the museum/historic site?
  - Whose stories do you expect to hear?
  - What types of artifacts and evidence do you expect to see?
  - What questions do you hope to have answered?
Step 3 | As students engage and analyze the artifacts, have them choose different ones to analyze, and keep notes of their thoughts (Dimension 2 and 3). Encourage students first to encounter the artifacts strictly from an observational standpoint by answering questions like:

- What is the source? (Include title)
- Who created the source and when was it created?
- Describe the source with detail. What do you see?
- Where was the source physically located in the museum? What was its size in relationship to others? Where was it placed in relationship to others?
Framework to evaluate museum curriculum: **After the visit** (Burgard, 2020)

- **Step 4a** | Ask students to individually reflect on their museum experience and draw conclusions about it (Dimensions 3 and 4).

- **Step 4b** | Engage students in whole class debriefing where they collectively critique the museum/historic site. Ask them to engage in open-ended inquiry where they ask new questions about what was missing in the museum and find answers to their own questions. Then take informed action (Dimensions 3 and 4).
Creating a museum in your classroom
Inquiry and Teaching with Primary Sources

EXPLORE THE EXHIBIT

Explore | Exhibition Items | Multimedia | Events & Resources | Credits
New Exhibition 'Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote' to Feature Original Manuscripts, Images of Suffrage Movement

Collections of Leading Suffragists from Seneca Falls to 19th Amendment to be Featured in Centennial Exhibition

MAY 2, 2019

Handwritten letters, speeches, photographs and scrapbooks, created by American suffragists who persisted for more than 70 years to win voting rights for women, will be featured in a new exhibition at the Library of Congress, "Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote," opening June 4, will tell the story of the largest reform movement in American history with documents and artifacts from the women who changed political history 100 years ago.

Drawing from the personal collections of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Mary Church Terrell, Carrie Chapman Catt, Harriett Stanton Blatch and others, along with the records of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and National
Highlights of the exhibition include marquee records, images, music, merchandise, cartoons and ephemera of the movement. Key items include:

- Abigail Adams’s letter from 1799 refusing to consign women to an inferior status;
- A rare printed version of the “Declaration of Sentiments,” a listing of demands Elizabeth Cady Stanton read to more than 300 at Seneca Falls, and the proceedings of a larger national women’s rights meeting two years later in Worcester, Massachusetts, that drew more than 1,000 suffrage supporters;
- A sculpture of Susan B. Anthony (portrait bust) that she hoped would one day be displayed in the Library of Congress, now on loan for the first time from the Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument;
- An original broadside of the Declaration of Rights for Women that suffragists distributed in Philadelphia in 1876, disrupting the nation’s centennial celebration when Anthony presented the declaration on stage to acting Vice President Thomas Ferry;
- A draft manuscript of Stanton’s controversial and best-selling “The Woman’s Bible” that paired Biblical text with feminist commentary;
- Suffrage sheet music and merchandise used to “sell” the idea of suffrage;
- Images and film footage of political activity on the streets, including the first national parade for suffrage in 1913 in Washington, D.C., which exposed racial divides in the movement and was disrupted by an unruly mob;
- Banners, pins and a cap and cape worn by suffragists during parades and demonstrations;
- Photographs of early picketing at the White House and documentation of suffragists’ subsequent arrests, imprisonment and force feeding;
- Carrie Chapman Catt’s Ratification Notebook with notes on her strategy to win ratification of the 19th Amendment in each state; and
- An interactive display on suffragists who helped win the vote state by state.

“Shall Not Be Denied” is part of the national commemoration of the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage, marking major milestones in 2019 and 2020. The exhibition opens on the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Senate’s passage of the suffrage amendment that would become the 19th Amendment once it was ratified by three-quarters of the states on Aug. 26, 1920. The exhibition is on view through September 2020.

An online crowdsourcing campaign to transcribe documents within the Library’s unique suffrage-related collections to make them
Abigail Adams's letter (1799) refusing to consign women to an inferior status

Suffrage sheet music

The first picket line (1917).

Kaiser Wilson (1917).

Suffragettes go to prison (1917).

Anthony bust

Inez Milholland (1913) suffrage parade
Applying the Framework

• **Step 1** | Provide background on the historic site (Library of Congress), the exhibit, and on woman’s suffrage in the United States.

• **Step 2** | Engage students in preliminary inquiry (Dimension 1) to activate their ideas about what they expect to see by asking questions such as:
  - What do you expect to see when you get to the museum/historic site?
  - Whose stories do you expect to hear?
  - What types of artifacts do you expect to see?
  - What questions do you hope to have answered?
### Step 3: Museum Source Analysis Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the source? (Title?)</th>
<th>Who created it? When? Why?</th>
<th>Describe the artifact with detail. What do you see?</th>
<th>What is the creator’s position or perspective? (Evidence?)</th>
<th>What is the purpose/message of the source? (Evidence?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis
Strategy:
Zoom out
Cite Evidence when answering

- What is the source? Title?
- Who created it? When? Why might the creator have created the artifact?
- Describe the artifact with detail. What do you see?
- What is the creator’s position or perspective?
- What is the purpose/message of the source?
Cite Evidence when answering

- What is the source? Title?
- Who created it? When? Why might the creator have created the artifact?
- Describe the artifact with detail. What do you see?
- What is the creator’s position or perspective?
- What is the purpose/message of the source?
Inquiry and Teaching with Primary Sources

Cite Evidence when answering

- What is the source? Title?
- Who created it? When? Why might the creator have created the artifact?
- Describe the artifact with detail. What do you see?
- What is the creator’s position or perspective?
- What is the purpose/message of the source?
Inquiry and Teaching with Primary Sources

Cite Evidence when answering

• What is the source? Title?
• Who created it? When? Why might the creator have created the artifact?
• Describe the artifact with detail. What do you see?
• What is the creator’s position or perspective?
• What is the purpose/message of the source?
Applying the Framework

• **Step 4 | Debrief and reflect.** Have students share their findings from the sources they examined. Lead students through a discussion and ask them to engage in open-ended inquiry where they ask new questions about what was missing in the museum and find answers to their own questions (Dimensions 3 and 4).
Applying the Framework

**Step 4 | Debrief and reflect.** Guiding questions:

- Whose stories and voices did you hear? What did they say?
- Whose stories/perspectives are missing/silenced? Why might they be missing?
- What is the message of the history presented?
- How does this museum shape the public memory?
- What did you see-think-wonder about the museum?
- How reliable was the museum as a historical source?
- How thorough was the narrative put forth by the museum?
- What questions did you have that were answered? Were you satisfied with the answers? Why or why not?
- What questions do you still have that were not answered that you would like to have answered?
I thought this session was about race?
What is missing?
Note: We are trying to replicate an exhibit as is.
Expose students to additional narratives
Feature
How Black Suffragists Fought for the Right to Vote and a Modicum of Respect

Halle Quinn Brown and Other “Homespun Heroines”

Martha S. Jones
HUMANITIES, Summer 2019, Volume 40, Number 3

Five You Should Know: African American Suffragists

The women's suffrage movement had many heroines who bravely fought for the rights of women in the United States. Here are the stories of five African American suffragists who helped women in America secure the right to vote.

Opinion
How the Suffrage Movement Betrayed Black Women

This series was written by Dr. Megan Bailey, intern with the Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation and Education.
Revisit questions: Why should museums be critically examined just like any other historical source?
Compelling Question:

Can we believe what we learn from museums and other historic sites?
How do we fill in gaps in the stories of BIPOC in the Suffrage Exhibit? (Dimension 4)
Sojourner Truth
Charlotte Vandine Forten
Harriet Forten Purvis
Margaretta Forten
Harriet (Hattie) Purvis
Angelina Weld Grimke
Charlotte Forten Grimke
Mary Church Terrell
Ida B. Wells-Barnett
Mrs. I.L. Moorman
Mary E. Jackson
Adella Hunt Logan
Coralie Franklin Cook
Sarah Remond
Charlotta (Lottie) Rollin
Mary Ann Shadd Cary
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper
Gertrude Bustill Mossell
Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin
Carrie Langston
Mary Talbert
Mrs. R. Jerome Jeffery
Mary McCurdy
Fannie (Frances) Barrier Williams
Verina Morton Jones
Josephine Bruce
Janie Porter Barrett
Naomi Talbert [Anderson]
Nannie Helen Burroughs
Anna J. Cooper
Margaret Murray Washington
Josephine Bruce
Lucenia Burns Hope
Lucy Laney
Mamie Dillard
Victoria Earle Matthews
Lucenia Burns Hope
Lucy Laney
Inquiry and Teaching with Primary Sources

National Portrait Gallery
Ida B. Wells-Barnett

National Museum of American History
Zitkala Sa, Sioux Indian and activist

Smithsonian
Votes for Women
Mary Church Terrell: Advocate for African Americans and Women

Mary Church Terrell was born into a prosperous Memphis family and graduated from Oberlin College in 1895. She became the first black woman appointed to the District of Columbia Board of Education. She was a founding president of the National Association of Colored Women and, in 1909, a founder of the NAACP. Terrell spent her life fighting for the causes of universal suffrage, and the freedom and equality of men and women of all colors in the eyes of the law. She celebrated the achievements of African Americans and women in her many public speeches, and was a much sought-after speaker, famed for her eloquence. Her early life and work helped sustain the civil rights and women's suffrage movements of the twentieth century.

Volunteer transcriptions now enable search and access for this collection at loc.gov.
Suffrage: Women Fight for the Vote
Create a virtual tour
Tour Creator makes it easy to build immersive, 360° tours right from your computer
GET STARTED
Inquiry about race and democracy

- Mine for what is missing in the museum/historic site.
- Democratic citizenship:
  - Ask questions and seek answers,
  - Analyze source of information,
  - Learn how to make a claim but be open to changing your ideas as you gain more information, and
- Act on your new knowledge.
I just learned something new.
Inquiry and Teaching with Primary Sources

Tina M. Ellsworth, PhD
-----------------------------
@DrTinaEllsworth
EllsworthT78@gmail.com