

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES— SOUTHERN REGION

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WELCOME!

The Teaching with Primary Sources Regional program promotes the widespread, sustained and effective use of primary sources from the Library of Congress in K-12 classrooms by increasing access to the TPS program.

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

NEWS

- **SAVE THE DATE!** *The Teaching with Primary Sources—Southern Region at MTSU will be hosting the first Southern Region conference on May 12-13, 2026*, at the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville. This two-day event will highlight successful regional projects, explore trends in education in the South, and serve as a networking opportunity for TPS Consortium members in our eight states.
- The [Tennessee Council for History Education](#) is now accepting session and poster proposals for the 2025 conference, scheduled for September 30-October 1 in Nashville. The conference theme for this year is “Doing History.” If you have a great lesson plan, activity, resource, or strategy that would like to share, [consider submitting a proposal!](#) The proposal deadline is August 22nd.
- The TPS-SR is partnering with Tennessee History Day to offer a series of workshops this summer. For each workshop, participants will take a director’s tour of a historic site, placing it in the context of the NHD framework. Later, participants will explore the Library of Congress’s online repository and pair resources with those at the site in student-focused activities and planning. For more information, click [here](#).

FEATURED GRANT PROJECT: HISTORY IN OUR BACKYARD

Guest article by Amber Qian, Naomi Fagan, Katherine Perrotta, and Brittney Johnson

History in Our Backyard: The Names and Places of Georgia is a student-created podcast, funded in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region grant and Mercer University’s Office of the Provost, that debuted in March of this year. Five high school student groups who are part of the extracurricular youth leadership organization Student Leadership NORTH, with the help of Dr. Perrotta and two of her Ph.D students, created the first five-episode season of the podcast after a year of research and writing. **History in Our Backyard: The Names and Places of Georgia** uncovers the histories behind the names of the world’s busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Lake Lanier, Tallulah Falls, and Chickamauga— all places that are truly in our backyard in the state of Georgia.

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **June 16-17 (Little Rock)** - Arkansas Council for Social Studies conference at Clinton Presidential Library. Session in partnership with Dr. Kristin Dutcher Mann discussing Arkansas Primary Source Sets and the TPS-SR. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **July 8 (Knoxville)** - Joint workshop with TN History Day at the Mabry-Hazen House from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **July 10-12 (Elizabethton)** - Educator Institute: 2025 Tennessee 250th Event at Sycamore Shoals State Park.
- **July 16 (Gallatin)** - Joint workshop with TN History Day at Cragfont State Historic Site from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **July 18 (Bartlett)** - Joint workshop with TN History Day at Davies Manor State Historic Site from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Click [here](#) for more information.
- **September 30 - October 1 (Nashville)** - Tennessee Council for History Education conference. Click [here](#) for more information.

HISTORY IN OUR BACKYARD, *CONTINUED*

Each of these bite-sized recordings are the outcome of a long research journey the students of Student Leadership NORTH embarked on. This journey began with a deep dive into the archives of the Library of Congress where each team sifted through recordings, manuscripts, newspaper clippings, and more—some more successfully than others—to discover as much about their respective locations as possible. Students in each group wrote show notes with cited evidence from an array of documents that they analyzed by using strategies that were provided by the Teaching



Students and staff at the podcast listening event.

with Primary Sources Network. For example, the Lake Lanier group from Northview High School unearthed treasure troves of information from Library of Congress databases that painted a picture of Lake Lanier with the good, the bad, and the ugly. Through examining documents from the Library of Congress, the students learned about the lake's namesake, poet Sydney Lanier, and the disregard for the African American community of Oscarville that existed before it was flooded by the Army Corps of Engineers to create the lake. The Library of Congress's archives helped them to learn about the lake's disconcerting history that they would probably not learn about in the classroom.

This experience of finding a lot of documents was not the case for other groups. A Chattahoochee High School group researching Mayor William Hartsfield found it more difficult to gather the whole story about why the airport is named after him from just the Library of Congress website. They found some sparse newspaper clippings mentioning Hartsfield but needed more information. From there, the team followed the newspaper clippings to other websites and recordings. One clipping covered the infamous Jewish Temple Bombings of 1958, and the group was able to follow that story to other sources that recounted how Mayor Hartsfield, who said the city was "too busy to hate," advocated for business and civil rights in Atlanta in greater detail.

Another group from Chattahoochee High School researched Mayor Maynard Jackson, finding from the Library of Congress and other digital archives that his vision for Atlanta, like Hartsfield's, focused on economic strength and equal opportunities for all citizens. Groups from Innovation Academy, who researched Chickamauga, and Northview High School whose episode was about Tallulah Falls or "the Niagara Falls of the South," used information from the National Parks Service and Georgia State Parks websites to expand on the primary sources they found from the Library of Congress about the preservation of Civil War battlefields, Native American history, and protection of natural spaces throughout Georgia.

Whether students were able to find the full story from the Library of Congress archives or had to visit other digital archives, they ventured down many internet rabbit holes to find what they were looking for. This process ensured that students who researched their topics that are featured in the first season of **History in Our Backyard** had access to real historical documents that gave a firsthand view into the histories behind the names of these significant places. Not only has this research experience made the stories behind each location more personal, but it has formed a more holistic account of the history than reading from a textbook. You can listen to Season 1 wherever you get your podcasts and [on Podbean](#)!

Learn more about the podcasts and our research process at the [Student Leadership NORTH website](#). Questions about this project can be sent to [Irene Sanders](#), the Executive Director of Student Leadership NORTH.

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FAQS

WHAT? TPS Southern Region at MTSU

WHO? We welcome our newest TPS staff member on May 1 — Dr. Layla Smallwood-Gabrielle! Some of you may remember Dr. Smallwood from when she was a graduate student assistant with the TPS-MTSU program a few years ago.

TIMELINE: We are accepting [Notices of Intent](#) until Aug. 22 and proposals until Sep. 22. Please allow six weeks for the processing of proposals. All projects must be completed by May 2, 2026.



Students recording their podcast.

LESSON IDEA— FOUR LITTLE GIRLS

In September 1963, members of the Ku Klux Klan planted a bomb beneath the steps of 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL. At approximately 11 a.m., the bomb ignited, killing four and injuring twenty more. The four fatalities were 14-year-olds Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, and Carole Robertson, and 11-year-old Cynthia Wesley.

The 16th Street Baptist Church bombing and the events which followed changed the course of the Civil Rights Movement. The Library of Congress houses an online exhibit, [The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom](#), featuring primary sources related to the Civil Rights Movement, as well as secondary source blurbs that put the movement into the context of American history starting with the year 1619. Several of the sources detail the events occurring in Birmingham throughout 1963. For example, [Birmingham, Alabama, Protests](#) provides televised accounts of anti-demonstration violence; in [Television and Birmingham](#), a newspaper editor discusses the importance of media coverage just days before the bombing; this [news image](#) depicts one of the funerals in the days after the bombing; and this [newsreel](#) talking about the impact of the bombing on the bill that later became the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (watch the first 55 seconds).

In this lesson idea, students will watch excerpts from the Spike Lee documentary, [4 Little Girls](#), which intersperses primary source images and footage from Birmingham in 1963 with interviews conducted with the families of the girls and community leaders thirty years later. (The whole thing is worth a watch if you have time.) First, watch from minutes 35 to 41. What was the role of the 16th Street Baptist Church in the Birmingham protests of 1963? What was the role of young people in the movement? Then, watch from 1h 2m 49s to 1h 5m 30s. What impact did the bombing have on the leaders of the movement? Lastly, watch from 1h 16m 20s to 1h 19m. What impact did the bombing have on public opinion in the United States?

This lesson idea meets Alabama state standards for elementary school Alabama studies (4.14), middle school U.S. History (6.9), and high school U.S. History (11.14).



[Congress of Racial Equality conducts march in memory of Negro youngsters killed in Birmingham bombings, All Souls Church, 16th Street, Washington, D.C. \[1963\]](#)

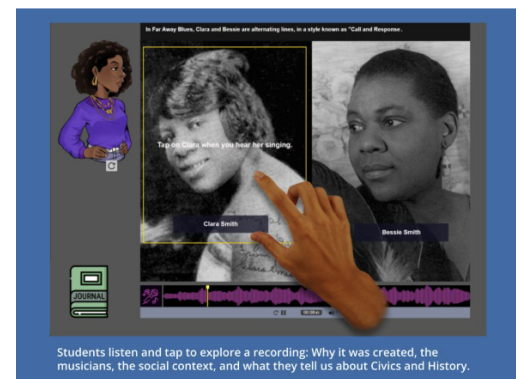
HELP PILOT A PROJECT! — MUSIC OF US

Last month we mentioned a project, [Music of US](#), which is one of the first recipients of the Lewis-Houghton Civics & Democracy Initiative award from the Library of Congress. The Music of US combines historic recordings and primary source images and texts with interactive episodes that can be used directly in the classroom to tell U.S. history through music. Check out the [Music of US teacher guide](#) for standards alignment.

[The project leaders need your help!](#) They seek teacher and student feedback on their primary source-filled interactive episodes. If you are in a classroom setting, you can choose to watch one episode with students during class, have students individually watch an episode during class, or assign students to watch an episode for homework. Then, you submit feedback to the project team during May-June 2025.

Are you interested in telling the history of the Great Migrations through music? What about the role of early women singers in the development of blues music? Then try the episode [“Far Away Blues.”](#) There’s a [teacher guide](#) for this episode as well.

Interested in how one musician broke barriers of segregation and helped develop the genre of swing? Coming in May, try [“Fletcher Henderson: Architect of Swing.”](#) And, coming soon is an [episode](#) on the development of jazz!



Help pilot this project in two easy steps:

First, take five minutes to fill out [this form](#).

Second, share one episode with your students in class or as homework.