

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

7-1-2008

Primary sources and their effects on student interest

Kevin T. Foster
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the Secondary Education and Teaching Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you -
share your thoughts on our feedback form.

Recommended Citation

Foster, Kevin T., "Primary sources and their effects on student interest" (2008). *Theses and Dissertations*. 722.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/722>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact LibraryTheses@rowan.edu.

PRIMARY SOURCES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON STUDENT INTEREST

by
Kevin Foster

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Science in Teaching Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
June 19, 2008

Approved by, _____
Advisor

Date Approved July 1, 2008

© 2008 Kevin Foster

ABSTRACT

Kevin T. Foster
PRIMARY SOURCES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON STUDENT INTEREST
2007/2008
Dr. González Rodríguez
Master of Science in Teaching

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of primary sources on the interest levels of three Honors classes during my Student Teaching. I wanted to see if my students would enjoy the ten primary sources I introduced to them. The study was conducted over a month's time. Data was collected using hundreds of surveys, over sixty questionnaires, fifteen interviews, and anecdotal notes to determine my seventy-five students' interest in the primary sources I chose for their classes. After analyzing the written data, I concluded that my students overwhelmingly enjoyed the primary sources we read and analyzed together. I then determined the reasons why they enjoyed them. Finally, I learned that the primary sources I handed out helped to produce meaningful debates and discussions of the past, helped to improve my pedagogy, and brought my students closer to an authentic studying of history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conducting and completing this study was one of the most difficult things I've ever done and I'd like to thank all those that supported me through it. Most of all, I'd like to thank my family, especially Mom and Dad, for their tremendous help in getting me through college and giving me the chance to live my dreams. I'd also like to thank my Student Teaching Advisor, Mr. Wick, for his tremendous support and guidance, as well as my Cooperating Teacher's support and guidance. Finally, I'd like to thank Dr. González Rodríguez, my Thesis advisor, for her tremendous and vital assistance in completing this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| List of Tables | v |
| CHAPTER | PAGE |
| CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY | 1 |
| Research Background | 2 |
| Critical Questions | 9 |
| Integrated Action | 9 |
| Context for the Research | 12 |
| CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW | 17 |
| Making History Come Alive | 17 |
| Truer to its Origins | 20 |
| Using Primary Sources Responsibly | 23 |
| The Intricacies and Characteristics of Primary Sources | 25 |
| Teaching Sources | 26 |
| Conclusions | 27 |
| CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS | 28 |
| Brief Overview of the Action Research Process | 28 |
| Data Collected | 30 |
| Data Analysis | 31 |
| Validity of Research and Trustworthiness | 33 |
| Potential for Bias | 34 |
| Limitations of Study | 34 |

| | |
|--|----|
| CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS | 36 |
| Results and Analysis of the Primary Source Surveys | 36 |
| Conclusions from the Primary Sources Surveys | 44 |
| Results and Analysis of the Interviews | 50 |
| Overall Conclusions from the Interviews | 56 |
| Results and Analysis of the Summary Questionnaires | 56 |
| Conclusions from the Summary Questionnaire | 62 |
| CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND NEW QUESTIONS | 64 |
| Conclusions | 64 |
| New Questions | 65 |
| REFERENCES | 68 |
| APPENDICES | 71 |
| Appendix A: Primary Sources with Primary Source Surveys | 71 |
| Appendix B: Summary Questionnaire and Interview Question | 87 |
| Appendix C: Permission Slip | 89 |

LIST OF TABLES

| TABLE | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Table 1 Racial Breakdown of City | 12 |
| Table 2 Economic Characteristics of City | 12 |
| Table 3 Gender and Racial Makeup of All 3 Classes | 14 |
| Table 4 Students' Favorite and Least Favorite Classes | 15 |
| Table 5 How do You Like History Classes in General? | 16 |
| Table 6 Primary Source Descriptions | 36 |
| Table 7 Primary Source Survey Results | 40 |
| Table 8 Analysis of Primary Source Survey Results | 41 |
| Table 9 Interviews with Students that Didn't Like the Primary Sources | 51 |
| Table 10 Interviews with Students that Did Like the Primary Sources | 53 |
| Table 11 Interviews with Students who thought the Primary Sources were Okay | 55 |
| Table 12 How did You Like the Primary Sources? | 58 |
| Table 13 How could I have made the Primary Source Sheets Better? | 59 |
| Table 14 What is Your Favorite Way to Learn History? | 61 |
| Table 15 What is Your Least Favorite Way to Learn History? | 62 |

Chapter I

Introduction to Study

Primary sources are one of the most basic components for studying history accurately. Primary sources are “Unedited, firsthand access to words, images, or objects created by persons *directly involved* in an activity or event or *speaking directly* for a group. This is information *before* it has been analyzed, interpreted, commented upon, spun, or repackaged.” (“Primary and Secondary Sources”, 2004, para. 1). Without the actual primary sources in hand, that is the actual newspaper articles, first-hand accounts, etc., our interpretations of the past are subject to someone else’s interpretation (Robinson, 1904). Over time, as primary sources are studied extensively, historians build secondary sources - descriptions and theories on the past based from primary sources (“Primary and Secondary Sources”, 2004). Thus, if people only study secondary sources, they will be subject only to others’ interpretations of the past, and thus their biases. An example of a secondary source would be a standard history textbook, something most high school students are familiar with. The history constructed in those textbooks may technically be considered a secondary source, but in actuality may be based off others’ interpretations as well - making it three, four, five, or more times removed from the original accounts of the historical event (Robinson, 1904). But even if these textbooks’ interpretations of the past are accurate, primary sources make the content more engaging and relevant to the student (Bloom and Stout, 2005, para. 1). James Harvey Robinson, in *Readings in European*

History, states that primary sources are “more vivid and entertaining than even the most striking descriptions by the pen of gifted writers...” (1904, p. 5). According to James W. Loewen in *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1995), when history is taught primarily from textbooks, history becomes abstract and boring. Loewen goes on to say:

High school students hate history. Students consider history “the most irrelevant” of twenty-one subjects commonly taught in high school...What has gone wrong? We begin to get a handle on this question by noting that the teaching of history, more than any other discipline, is dominated by textbooks. And students are right: the books are boring. The stories that history textbooks tell are predictable; every problem has already been solved or is about to be solved. Textbooks exclude conflict or real suspense. (1995, p. 13)

Simply put, history taught through a mere textbook, without a description of the drama and conflict of a time period, breeds dullness for students. Thus, I extensively used primary sources in my classroom and studied its effects on students, to see if moving away from the textbook and towards a more genuine and conflict-ridden view of history would get students more interested in it.

Research Background

I learned several things about primary sources, during college and during Practicum, as to why they are one of the most effective tools for a Social Studies teacher.

Students need to see primary source documents for themselves or history simply becomes what someone else tells them. Secondly, primary sources give students something to debate and discuss (“History in the Raw”, 2007). Thirdly, I felt that primary sources are easy to connect to the present. And fourthly, primary sources “are real and they are personal; history is humanized through them.” (“History in the Raw”, 2007, para. 4) I knew these things were true for me and that there was some research to back it up, but I wanted to see if using primary sources would enhance my teaching and raise student interest. I wanted to see if my students, who don’t necessarily enjoy history, actually would enjoy it more if exposed to sources. And if it did work, then I would know to use them extensively in my future classrooms. Below then is a brief description of each of these assertions and my justification for it.

Much of the history we come across is simply an interpretation of the events by someone else (“History in the Raw”, 2007). Consequently, what we often learn is simply the beliefs someone else held. Unfortunately this can be dangerous because history may become inaccurate over time. From *Readings in European History* (Robinson, 1904) comes a great explanation of how this happens:

It is well known that the oftener a report passes from mouth to mouth the less trustworthy and accurate does it tend to become. Unimportant details which appeal to the imagination will be magnified, while fundamental considerations are easily forgotten, if they happen to be prosaic and commonplace. Historians, like other people, are sometimes fond of good stories and may be led astray by some false rumor which, once started into

circulation, gets farther and farther from the truth with each repetition. (p.

2)

To put it simply, the farther away we are from the past, the more likely the past is to become distorted - like a game of “Telephone”. Much of the information and facts we come across in textbooks, as mentioned previously, are third, fourth, and fifth hand knowledge. To add to that, history is a battleground, as each generation often “rewrites history” (McClellan, 2000, p. iii). Thus, the past may constantly be rewritten. But if students are exposed to primary sources more, they can make their own conclusions and think for themselves.

Many students see history as a series of abstract events, and thus very boring (Loewen, 1995). While teaching, many of my students constantly asked, “Why do we have to learn this?” For those students, the “problem” has already been fixed, and there is really no need to understand how it was fixed, or even to remember it, a view that is perpetuated with textbooks that follow this pattern (Loewen, 1995). The conflicts, problems, and moral dilemmas of every time period and the strategies employed to face those problems are not only memorable, they are fun to debate and discuss. From the Library of Congress’ website comes the assertion and reasoning behind why it’s fun:

Primary sources expose students to multiple perspectives on great issues of the past and present. History, after all, deals with matters that were furiously debated by the participants. Interpretations of the past are furiously debated as well, among historians, policy makers, politicians, and

ordinary citizens. By working with primary sources, students can become involved in these debates. (Rationale for Using Primary Sources, 2002, para. 1)

When students are exposed to many different points of view, and they can thus get into the minds of those who men that preceded them, they can pick a side on a given issue and debate on it. Finding a way to make history debatable makes history more interesting to students, partly because it gets students actively involved. The view of Gary Borich, found in *Effective Teaching Methods* (2007, p. 23) states that learning “is an active process in which learners internally construct knowledge from interpretations of their interactions with their physical and social environment.” In other words, learning is a personal process that is best done when students can relate to the knowledge being studied. When a student is able to pick a side and debate with me out loud or with a fellow classmate, he is debating that point because he can get into the mind of a person who originally argued it. Debating and argument, found through the use of primary sources, are some of the best ways to make history seem exciting and alive.

Making history seem more interesting by including argument is important, but it can very quickly become even more empowering and relevant when students find valuable insights into the issues we face today. Carol Ann Tomlinson’s belief, a belief that originated with John Dewey (1938), is that “if school isn’t for today, it will often turn out to be for nothing (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 13).” Primary sources can help be a gateway to real events of today and make Social Studies seem to be for something. Studying primary sources about factory work from 19th century America can give insight into

factory work today for Chinese citizens. Studying Andrew Jackson's image as a common man can partly make sense of the reason why President George Bush beat John Kerry in the 2004 Election: because he was seen as a common man as well (Beneditto, 2004).

Studying the words, emotions, and justifications of those from the past help us to understand people today. After all, society may have changed quite a bit since the time of Andrew Jackson, but apparently people haven't in many ways.

The other value of primary sources is that they can often spark emotional responses by the students. A guide for history teachers produced by the Federal government gives the following example of how primary sources can do just that:

A high school teacher reported that, "In sharing the Whitman hospital letters, I clearly saw a sheen of tears in students' eyes and noted an avid interest in Civil War soldiers as 'people,' not simply as pallid historical figures." (Why Use Primary Sources?, 2007, para. 6)

Imagine being able to make a student cry after hearing about the suffering of war, and making soldiers from yesterday seem real. Although emotions may seem to have little meaning in what is a social science, they are valuable because they make history real and memorable. Indeed, there is psychological evidence that memory, and thus learning, are tied to emotional experiences in the classroom:

Without a doubt, emotional memory strategies are the most powerful. Many of these strategies also activate other memory storage areas that

make them even more powerful. Both negative and positive emotions cause the brain to release certain neurotransmitters that aid in memory retention...Strong feelings about content can add to emotional memory.

(Sprenger, 1999)

Emotional details of the aftermath of a battle, or a passionate speech, can help students remember events and come to appreciate history. Emotional primary sources make students realize that a time period is not simply a chain of abstract events, but rather something real that people struggled through.

These four assertions about primary sources, assertions that I came across primarily during college and Practicum, led me to believe that primary sources are an extremely valuable tool in a Social Studies classroom. Because primary sources have so much value, I wanted to see if students, from my Student Teaching experience, would enjoy primary sources and find them interesting. Thus, the goal of this project is to gauge primary sources and their effect on student interest in three "U.S. History I" Honors classrooms in a New Jersey public school.

Challenges of Primary Sources

There are many problems that primary sources can pose for an educator. Unfortunately, history can sometimes best be taught through lecture alone. For many educators, lecture is the easiest and most convenient way to teach (McIntosh, 1996). Aside from the lecture problem, there are other major issues that may complicate the use

of primary sources in a classroom. Below is a brief look into some of the disadvantages and challenges of primary sources.

Primary Sources Require Extensive Reading. According to a recent report by the *National Endowment for the Arts (To Read or Not to Read, 2007)*, today's teenagers are reading less than they did in the past. Primary sources require reading material some students may see as too long for their tastes. Therefore, primary sources may be seen as requiring too much work to get the meaning out of and thus uninteresting.

Primary Sources are Sometimes Offensive. Primary sources can be offensive in a number of ways. They may be too violent, feature racism, and include offensive vocabulary, amongst many other offenses ("Using Primary Sources", 2008). Bringing these kinds of material into a classroom may offend some students and raise sensitive issues.

Primary Sources can be Puzzling and Time Consuming. Filled with archaic vocabulary and hidden meanings that need to be inferred, high school students may find many primary sources puzzling. (Hatch, 2003). For students to understand a given source, it may take a teacher's extensive help. It may even take the teacher some work to understand the document himself. Therefore, primary sources are often time consuming to read and understand, for both student and teacher.

The Expense of Using Primary Sources. Printing primary sources can be financially expensive. Although there are some ways to save money (Hutton, 2007), copying for every student may require hundreds of copies per week. Over the course of an entire school year, it may be unrealistic for some teachers to afford this type of instruction.

Critical Questions

The following are the questions I had in the beginning of this Action-Research project:

- How can I create a history classroom environment where students see history as interesting, meaningful, and relevant to the present day, through the use of primary sources?
- Will students enjoy history more with primary sources?
- How effective are primary sources in getting student interest, especially in comparison to other methods?
- What types of primary sources (i.e. emotional, political, social, etc.) are the most effective in gaining student interest?
- What are the basic challenges of using primary sources and how do I combat them?

These questions were the most critical questions I had for this project, and whose answers I searched for throughout the study.

Integrated Action

In Class. Bringing primary sources into the classroom was the primary strategy I used in my Action Research project. Typically, I handed copies of the primary source we were discussing that day on a sheet, two to three times a week. Going over each document took approximately fifteen to twenty minutes, and doing anymore than two or three a week would slow down the class too much. I went into my Student Teaching

assignment with a timetable that I had to keep; I had to ensure that when my Cooperating Teacher took back his classes, he'd have enough time to finish the classes' curriculum. In addition to the primary source, I also taught my classes the basic information surrounding the primary source topic, as well as any other information that was relevant to the topic(s) of the day. Thus, out of twenty days of class, I chose to survey ten primary sources that I used.

As for picking the sources themselves, I tried to pick events that were significant or debatable. The period I covered, the "Corrupt Bargain" (1824) until the beginning of the "Women's Rights Movement" (1850), was full of several important and interesting events in history. There was the Nullification Crisis, the issue of slavery, and the Missouri Compromise, to name a few. A complete list of what I covered can be found in the appendix A

To ensure that students actually understood what the source said, I would pick words that I imagined my students didn't know, and put their meanings in parentheses. I would also take out minor phrases that may have confused students even more. For example, from a source with Thomas Jefferson as the author, I translated the original text into the following:

I can say, with conscious truth, that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach [punishment], in any practicable way. The cession [release] of that kind of property...is a minor thing which would not cost me a second thought if...

a general emancipation and expatriation [loss of citizenship] could be effected; and gradually, with due sacrifices, I think it might be.

Using this simple method, I felt students would probably be able to follow along better. This strategy was one I developed during Practicum when I realized that much of the vocabulary in primary sources were difficult, and constantly stopping the class to explain a word was time-consuming and didn't give the source any continuity. Additionally, even though these were 10th grade Honors students, some said they enjoyed being read to. They complained that when they read it by themselves, they couldn't understand what the document meant. When I did read aloud, stopped, and explained every important phrase, they enjoyed it more. This is simply a form of scaffolding, and clearly something that helped students to comprehend the content better. Correctly scaffolding material and helping a student to comprehend material that is somewhat out of their reach can motivate a student to learn (Van Der Stuyf, 2002). Learning is frustrating when the content is out of a student's comprehension, and some of the students needed my help. After reading aloud, the class and I would discuss what was meant by the article further. Lastly, at the end of each of the ten primary source sessions, I asked my students to tell me if the primary source interested them or not, and why. They wrote their response on the primary source worksheet, and handed it in to me. The actual question of "Did you find this article interesting? Why or why not?" was printed on the primary source worksheet. This was to ensure I had some survey of how they felt about each particular source. Therefore, I will refer to those sheets as "Primary Source Surveys" (PSS), as they were surveys of the student interest on a particular source.

Context for the Research

The School. The school I Student Taught at is a rural district with urban elements, as it is located near a big city in New Jersey. To give an idea of the basic demographics of the area, I included some statistics showing the race and economic status of the area. The following table, Table 1, shows the racial breakdown of the city's 34,611 people in 1999 figures (Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights, 2000).

Table 1
Racial Breakdown of City (1999)

| Race | Population |
|--|-------------------|
| White | 22,670 (65.5%) |
| Black or African-American | 10,154 (29.3%) |
| Asian | 449 (1.3%) |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 104 (0.3%) |
| Some other race | 547 (1.6%) |
| Two or more races | 677 (2%) |
| Hispanic or Latino (of any race) | 1,492 (4.3%) |

Table 2 shows some of the economic characteristics of the district I taught in versus the United States' average (Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights, 2000).

Table 2
Economic Characteristics of City (1999)

| Category (1999) | District | Rest of U.S. |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| In labor force (over 16) | 17,665 (68.4%) | 63.9% |
| Median Household income | \$55,990 | \$41,994 |
| Median Family Income | \$62,054 | \$50,046 |
| Per capita income | \$21,254 | \$21,587 |
| Families below poverty level | 4.5% | 9.2% |
| Individuals below poverty level | 6% | 12.4% |

The economic characteristics of the city are above the average United States' city (in 1999). Information about the school, however, is a bit more telling of the environment my project took place in.

The school has a generous mix of all ethnicities, with students of many different levels. Compared to other high schools in the state, it is below average in some areas, according to the New Jersey School Report Card (2005-2006). For example, the dropout rate is higher, in every race, when compared to the state average for the 2005-2006 year. The most dramatic differences are for Hispanic students, whose dropout rate is 17% in my school, versus a state average of 3.3%. For black students, the dropout rate is 6.8%, while the state average is 2.3%. For white students, the dropout rate is 2.3%, while the state average is 1.2%. Another significant statistic is the school's graduation rate, which is 89.3% versus the state average of 93.2% for the 2005-2006 year. The total comparative cost per pupil is approximately \$1,300 less than comparable school districts for the 2005-2006 school year. Finally, the SAT scores of the school are at least forty points lower than the state average in every category, with 56% of the school taking the SATs, versus the state average of 74% for the 2005-2006 school year. In summary, the data shows that the school is spending less on students than the comparative school districts, is facing difficulties with the student drop-out rate, and the student body is underperforming on the SATs. However it is important to note that New Jersey's Education system ranks fourth in the United States, as of 2005-2006 (Results of the 2005-2006 Smartest State Award, 2006).

The Participants. I worked with 10th grade Honors students teaching U.S. History I classes. These students were able to get into Honors classes through one of two paths.

The first is that some students earned an ‘A’ average in History the year before and applied to be placed in Honors classes. The second path was if a student’s grade was a B, and a parent asked the school for their child to be placed in Honors, then they would be. Therefore, the students I worked with did well in their most recent History course.

There were seventy five students in the three classes I chose to use for this project, each with twenty-five students enrolled per class. The primary source surveys were collected from two of those three classes. I did not collect surveys from the remaining class because they were behind when this project started. However, it should be noted that this third class did see all the same primary sources, were given a questionnaire like the other two classes, and were also given interviews like the other two classes. This third class then gave input to this study, just not in the form of primary source surveys.

Further information about the students is important to understand the context of the classroom. The next piece of information presented is the classes’ racial and gender makeup, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Gender and Racial Makeup of All 3 classes

| | Male | Female |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| White | 26 | 18 |
| African-American | 8 | 12 |
| Hispanic | 1 | 4 |
| Indian | 3 | 2 |
| Asian | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 39 | 36 |

In all three classes, there were twelve females and thirteen males, numbering seventy-five students in total. The next table (Table 4) shows which class my students enjoyed the

most, for that year. The poll was part of the summary questionnaire and was given in early May 2008. Of seventy-five students, there were sixty-five respondents (some students were sick the day the questionnaire was given out). On the questionnaire, I asked them “What is your favorite class (other than gym, lunch, Driver’s Ed.)? Why?” and “What is your least favorite class (other than gym or lunch)? Why?” I verbally clarified to all three classes that I expected students to put some kind of core curriculum class (math, science, English, history) or an Elective. Although students specifically listed the Electives they enjoyed on the questionnaire, for the purposes of this project, I will group all Electives together. Finally, student respondents liked and disliked classes for a variety of reasons. For example, a student may have liked a class because their friends were in it, or disliked a class because the teacher was mean, although they typically chose a class they did well in (as determined by their answer to the question of “Why?” in the questionnaire). Regardless, the table should give some insight into my students’ favorite and least favorite classes:

Table 4
Students’ Favorite and Least Favorite Classes

| | Favorite class | Least favorite class |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Math | 13 (20%) | 23 (35%) |
| Science | 10 (15%) | 16 (25%) |
| History | 9 (14%) | 4 (6%) |
| English | 13 (20%) | 13 (20%) |
| Foreign Language | 4 (6%) | 6 (9%) |
| Elective | 16 (25%) | 3 (5%) |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

In the same questionnaire, I also asked students “How do you like History classes, in general?” Although this question was technically an open one, all students gave answers that fit into one of four categories shown below in Table 5. Noteworthy is the last section

of Table 5, “It depends...” In two cases, students put an answer that essentially said “It depends on the teacher.” Therefore, a separate category was created for them. The other sixty-three students chose the preceding three choices:

Table 5
How do You like History Classes in General?

| I like them | They're okay | I never like them | It depends... |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 29 (45%) | 21 (32%) | 13 (20%) | 2 (3%) |

Keep in mind that Table 5 is representative of student opinions as of May 2008, and may or may not have been different before my arrival. From my three classes, students generally seemed to enjoy history. Only 20% of those students surveyed said they never like history classes. This would make sense because most of the students in the Honors classes volunteer to take them, or possibly are told to take them by a parent.

Chapter II

Literature Review

For this study, I reviewed literature related to the subject of primary sources used at various levels of schooling, from elementary school to college. These sources helped me to initially imagine what kinds of sources I'd bring in the classroom, how a classroom using primary sources would operate, and to understand the advantages and pitfalls of primary sources. Furthermore, I read other literature to help give me background for this study, as well as to ensure that any assertions I had would have some grounding in other research.

Making History Come Alive

Making history come alive, shown in the following articles, is best done through the power of primary sources. An educator makes history come alive when students can empathize and understand the people of a given time period. According to the following articles, this makes history more interesting for the students.

The first piece of literature which showed the value of primary sources in teaching was *Remembrance of Things Past* (Jacobson, 2004). The article states an idea history teachers may sometimes wish to ignore: "Let's Face It: A lot of kids think history is dull...when learning history consists largely of memorizing facts and dates..." (p. 35). This study describes a project by the author, Frances Jacobson, which asked her class to

look at what farming was like in the United States during the 20th century through primary sources alone. She asked students to write about what it'd be like to be a farmer during the 20th century. The study concluded that students were well versed and interested in the lifestyle of farmers, its challenges, traditions, and day-to-day atmosphere because the sources grabbed her students' attention.

Another study that showcased the ability of primary sources to make history come alive for students was *Use Primary Sources to Develop a Soap Opera: As the Civil War Turns* (Morris, 2002). The author had his elementary school students read narratives from the Civil War to demonstrate the great divides this country had during the period. Students' interests were peaked as they analyzed these documents daily and came to understand the greater debates and dramas of the Civil War on a personal level. Morris' styles and strategies were transplanted into other classrooms where its success became obvious: "One teacher who used this project in a social studies class said, 'My students became so excited about the project they went to the library to read ahead'" (p. 53). This study demonstrates that primary sources capture the attention of history students and make history come alive.

In *The Diary of Calvin Fletcher - Using Primary Sources in the Elementary Classroom* (Morris & Morgan-Fleming & Janisch, 2001), narratives were again used extensively in an elementary classroom. In this study, a classroom analyzed Calvin Fletcher's diary, an Indianapolis businessman who wrote entries from 1817 to 1866. Fletcher wrote about a variety of subjects, from what the frontier was like to what traveling was like during the antebellum period. The students were asked to relate his experiences to their own life. In one case, students wrote about their own experiences

traveling, both the good and bad, as Fletcher in his diary describes many of the problems of traveling during that time period. Students then could close the gap between the experiences of the past to their own. The conclusions of this study were promising as the authors' concluded: "When viewed through their personal papers, prominent figures often have attributes common to all. When students learn to access and use historical sources, they can make sense of the lives of those who lived before them" (p. 153). This study shows that primary sources can make seemingly abstract history come alive as students can start to relate to people of the past.

The article, *Bringing Ordinary People into the Picture* (Shedd 2004), discusses the availability of primary sources today and the power of social history over the normal political/elite history most people are probably accustomed to. The author discusses how students become more interested when discussing every day people's lives as opposed to political history because political history is much harder to relate to than the lives of common people from the past. History, in other words, becomes more interesting when we can look deeply at common people in their own time, empathize with them, and relate to them.

In the article, *Teaching Students about Civil Rights Using Print Materials and Photographs* (2007), an eighth grade classroom used pictures from the Civil Rights movement to analyze the state of racism in the 1950s, as well as the effort to end it. The students found meaning and empathy in these primary source documents, in addition to putting together quality work: "The students demonstrated through their writing and in-class discussions that history is 'affective, personal, dynamic and transforming'" (p. 154).

The power of primary sources made history come alive and students were able to relate to historical events in this study.

The articles discussed show extensively how primary sources can make history come alive. But making history come alive isn't the only reason why primary sources should be used in a classroom. History through primary sources, as opposed to a textbook or lecture, is truer to its origins.

Truer to its Origins

History is built from primary sources. Studying those sources stays truer to history's origins. Additionally, it makes history more interesting because it brings conflict and discussion into the classroom. The following studies, books, and documents assert and describe the advantages of ensuring history stays truer to its origins through the study of primary sources.

The assertion that many students aren't prepared for the real history of college is shown in *Closing the Distance between Authentic History Pedagogy and Everyday Classroom Practice* (2007). The author, a college professor, Wilson Warren, states that most students coming into college aren't adequately prepared for college history by their secondary teachers: "In fact, my colleagues often say that undergraduates cannot really do history, at which point I often think, though seldom say, that it is because the students are not taught how to do it" (p. 250). Therefore, the author believes, secondary teachers need to do a better job of teaching history the way it should be taught: with sources and analysis.

In Peter Levy's *Teaching the 1960s with Primary Sources* (2004), Levy describes some methods to make history more meaningful. More prominently in the study though, Levy describes how his methods of using primary sources are more authentic. Levy gives two valuable methods when using primary sources. First, Levy suggests using a variety of primary sources from many different points of view of the period to recreate the conflict and drama of an event or time period. Secondly, Levy said to get students involved. Levy had students create 1960s era organizations (i.e. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee or Students for a Democratic Society), and then tried to get other students in the classroom to join. By using a variety of primary sources, Levy's students made choices that students made in the 1960s. This made history more meaningful to them. Even though it is more meaningful, it also a more correct way to teach history because it illustrates the complexity of the past:

One final advantage in using primary sources is that by exposing students to a wide variety of sources, teachers can demonstrate the complexity of the past and the richness and joy of doing historical research. It is important for students to see and feel, firsthand, documents that represent both mainstream and marginal views, and to realize that the past can be reconstructed from famous documents..." (p. 7)

When history is viewed as a complex study of the past, it becomes more interesting and stays closer to the truth of the past.

In *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (Loewen, 1995), the author describes some of the major pitfalls of textbooks, further showing that history is boring without conflict:

Textbooks exclude conflict on real suspense. They leave out anything that might reflect badly upon our national character. When they try for drama, they achieve only melodrama, because readers know that everything will turn out fine in the end. “Despite setbacks, the United States overcame these challenges,” in the words of one textbook. (p. 13)

Because textbooks leave out the drama of a given time period, there is no real room for discussion of the time period. The rest of Loewen’s book describes some of the lies that history textbooks perpetuate when they leave out the truth of a given time period in American history. The purpose of this, to Loewen, is to make American history inoffensive. Instead, it bores students because there is no conflict. Drawing from Loewen’s assertions, it is easy to see why primary sources can present a multi-faceted view of history that is full of drama and conflict.

In *The Teaching and Learning of history for 15-16 year olds: Have the Japanese anything to learn from the English experience?* (Larsson & Matthews & Booth 2004), the authors studied the Japanese methods of teaching history versus the British’s. Japanese methodology for teaching history is more classical: it is composed of rote memorization and little debate, while the British experience is more grounded in debate and primary sources. The article declares the British method more pure and truer to history’s roots, as

well as more interesting. This article show that primary sources are needed in the classroom, not only because it's more interesting, but also because ensures history stays true to its origins.

History is often a conflict and drama. Understanding these conflicts and dramas in-depth requires a historian to study primary source documents from all sides of the conflict. As these articles showed, primary sources stay true to the origins of real history.

Using Primary Sources Responsibly

Educators need to use primary sources responsibly. As will be shown below, primary sources have become the rage in many classrooms, but are sometimes presented poorly. Primary sources are not an end unto themselves and must be present correctly.

The article *Primary Sources in History: Breaking Through the Myths* (Barton, 2005) is a synthesis of information from different studies and the personal experiences of the author about primary sources. The article provides suggestions on how to find a balance between peaking student interest with imagination while using primary sources and in an appropriate classroom manner. The author argues that using primary sources has become all the rage in the classroom and thus, an end unto itself. For primary sources to be valuable, they require historical context through lectures, secondary-texts, or other media. Therefore, the conclusion is that primary sources are valuable, but need to be assessed correctly and taught properly to students that may find them puzzling and difficult to understand.

In the study, *Empathy without Illusions* (Cunningham, 2004) the author recounts several suggestions from experienced teachers on how to assess students to ensure they

are analyzing documents and getting something out of it. The most prominent suggestion of the study is to get students writing about how they would feel in a given historical situation, and then to analyze their writing, ensuring that the writing is focused, draws on historical fact, and is simply not imagined. By getting students to write about the past, an educator can be assured that their students' understanding of the past is accurate.

An article that described the challenges of primary sources is Robert Hatch's *Reading Primary Sources* (2003). Hatch says that primary sources can often be puzzling because "The reader must not only attempt to understand the text as the author intended it (if this is humanly possible) but must also make sense of the text despite lost or limited information" (para. 10). Hatch explains that many primary sources require the reader to understand contextual information that is not always given and potentially make a student's understanding of history more splintered and difficult to comprehend in the big picture. Consequently, an educator needs to ensure that students have some help in understanding these documents through lecture and secondary sources.

The difficulties of using primary sources are shown in *Using Primary Sources* (2008). The author explains that primary sources can often be offensive, using racially charged language, featuring sexist attitudes, and showing historical events featuring violence, slavery, and other kinds of offensive material. Consequently, teachers must use primary sources responsibly and use the opportunity to think about the past:

In all these examples, the most useful response will be to validate the student's outrage and then to turn his or her intellect back on the text through questions... Instead of suppressing or avoiding these offensive

passages, exploit them as uniquely powerful occasions for learning and thinking about the past. (para. 25)

It is simply not enough, in the case of offensive sources, to just let students draw their own conclusions from the sources. Students must be guided to ensure they understand the context of these sources, to ensure they understand that the people you're studying were simply brutes, and to ensure that offensive sources can be turned into powerful lessons about history.

The Intricacies and Characteristics of Primary Sources

I found several useful articles and a book that helped to further explain the intricacies and characteristics of primary sources. Unlike previous references, these weren't studies as much as they were glimpses into primary sources, showing off the basic challenges, intricacies, and characteristics of primary sources.

In *History in the Raw* (2007) the author describes how primary sources can create debate and discussion and is further shown in *Rational for Using Primary Sources* (2002). In *Why Use Primary Sources* (2007), the author describes some of the positive effects that primary sources can have on students. For example: "Primary sources help students relate in a personal way to events of the past coming away with a deeper understanding of history as a series of human events." The article goes on to give examples of these effects from real classrooms. In the book *Changing Interpretations of the American Past* (McClellan, 2000), the author describes how interpretations of the past often change and thus history becomes a battleground over those interpretations;

therefore, the past can often be debated. This book is also noteworthy because many of the primary sources I used for this project were found in it. Finally, in *Primary and Secondary Sources* (2004), the article details the differences between primary and secondary sources.

Teaching Sources

I used several references that gave me background information in various areas of study that weren't directly related to primary sources but nonetheless, were useful in this study. *Scaffolding as a Teacher Strategy* (Van Der Stuyf, 2002) describes what scaffolding is: "In scaffolding instruction, a more knowledgeable other provides scaffolds or supports to facilitate the learner's development. The scaffolds facilitate a student's ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new information" (p. 4). In *Why Do we Lecture* (McIntosh, 1996), the author shows that lecture is one of the more often used types of instruction and is also one of the easiest, despite not always being the best. In *Learning and Memory: The Brain In Action* (Sprenger, 1999), many of the intricacies of the brain, especially related to memory, are described and shown. In *Anecdotal Records* (1992), the definition of what anecdotal records is given as "Significant incidents or specific, observable behaviors can be recorded by teachers in anecdotal records" (para. 1), as well as some of their specifics and intricacies. These sources, although not related to primary sources, helped to inform this study.

Conclusions

The literature I've reviewed for this study has helped me to transition from what I felt I knew to more substantiated knowledge about primary sources. A large amount of literature showed me the power of primary sources and helped me to appreciate the various styles that different educators use. Some of the literature simply helped me reference some assertions and give me basic knowledge on a particular topic somewhat related to primary sources. But regardless, a substantial amount of literature out there shows the power of primary sources, and what I have reviewed is a small sample.

Chapter III

Research Methods

Brief Overview of the Action Research Process

To understand how to perform Action Research, one must fully understand what Action Research is. Using Donna Phillip's and Kevin Carr's definitions as found in *Becoming a Teacher Through Action Research* (2006), Action Research is "most simply defined as a form of research that is practitioner based. In other words, it is done by teachers in their own classrooms with the goal of improving simultaneously pedagogy and student learning" (Phillip & Carr, 2006, p. 7). From their definition of Action Research, it is understood that this process is done by teachers, with the hope of improving their own skills in the classroom, while improving student learning in the process. In my study, I hoped to show that primary sources could be interesting, informative, and a good strategy to use with future students in my instructional practice.

Action Research is typically qualitative research. Qualitative research uses "methods generally [that] assume the nature of knowledge as fluid and subjective" (Phillips & Carr, 2006, p. 26). Action Research experiments are not the kind of experiments that are proven through mathematical equations and are totally indisputable. To help ensure greater objectivity, Action Researchers do their best to create conditions where multiple sources of information and evidence are used. This ensures that no single source of information, which may have very many biases, is used to draw conclusions

from. This process is called “triangulation” (Phillips and Carr, 2006, p. 26). It is called so because, like a triangle has multiple points that form a clear shape when they come together, an Action Researcher must use multiple forms of data to come to a clear conclusion when all data comes together and is analyzed. After collecting a variety of data, an Action Researcher studies it as objectively as possible, always keeping in mind for potential biases, making analyses, and finally providing conclusions and new understandings.

The field portion of my Action Research study began on April 14, 2008, and concluded on May 11th, 2008. For twenty school days, the class and I read and discussed ten primary sources for the purposes of this project; the purpose being to determine primary sources and its effect on my students’ interest. To read and discuss each primary source together took approximately fifteen to twenty minutes, sometimes more, in addition to giving background information on the topic(s) of the day, normally related to the source itself, and taking fifteen to twenty minutes as well. In other words, giving relevant information to understand the source, read it, and discuss it often took up to forty minutes, the length of each period. After this, I asked students to write their response to the question “Did you find this primary source interesting? Why or why not?” I collected two classes’ responses, averaging forty-one responses per session. I also took anecdotal notes on how I felt the primary source lesson went that day as well, in addition to any significant behavior in the classroom. Towards the end of the project, I gave all my students, from all three classes, a written questionnaire (appendix B), asking what they thought of the sources as an instructional practice, and what they thought of my teaching in general. Lastly, I interviewed fifteen students on their thoughts about the

primary sources. In summary, I tried to improve my pedagogy and increase student learning (by increasing their interest) in the classroom setting. To determine the effectiveness of my efforts and its validity, I collected various types of data throughout the process. This, in summation, was my Action Research project.

Data Collected

Data collected about the effectiveness of primary sources in my classrooms were based from four kinds of data: primary source surveys, summary questionnaires, interviews, and anecdotal notes. Below is an in-depth description of each.

The primary source surveys were administered at the end of each lesson featuring primary sources. I simply asked students “Did you like this primary source? Why or why not?” and this question and their answer was written on the actual primary source page. The students were instructed to answer as truthfully as possible. This was done two to three times a week over a four week period. On average, I collected forty-one primary source sheets per primary source session from two classes.

At the end of my action research study, students were given a summary questionnaire that asked if they enjoyed the project overall, the way I taught, and what they would change if they could. I collected summary questionnaires from all three classes, and received sixty-five copies in return (some students were absent that day). A copy of the summary questionnaire can be found in appendix B.

Interviewing students helped to contribute a portion of student feedback on this project and their interest in primary sources. I interviewed fifteen of my students on May 7, 2008. Some students volunteered and some were selected as students of interest. Five

students were interviewed from each class of twenty-five. Therefore, 20% of each class was interviewed.

My final piece of evidence for the project was anecdotal notes. Anecdotal notes are notes about “significant incidents” in a classroom (“Anecdotal Records”, 1992, para. 1). In the case of this project, I took notes down on significant class reactions to particular sources, as well as notes on how I felt the primary source went that day. These anecdotal notes were taken to help understand why some sources worked and others didn’t on a given day. These notes comprised the final portion of my evidence in determining the effectiveness of primary sources in my classes.

Data Analysis

This project’s evidence, as discussed before, is based from four kinds of data. The primary source surveys, the first piece of data I analyzed, numbered 410 surveys for ten primary sources altogether. The answer to the question “Did you find this article interesting? Why or why not?” was answered in numerous ways by my students. Their answers fell into one of six categories. I then categorized their answers into a table. On average, each source has forty-one responses, and from these responses, I determined the interest my students found in each source. After determining the number of students that were interested through the primary sources surveys, I then used my anecdotal notes to analyze the results. That is, I used my anecdotal notes to determine perhaps why some students found some articles more interesting than others. Finally, I drew conclusions from these two sets of data.

The next pieces of data I analyzed were the student interviews. As discussed previously, I interviewed fifteen students from three classes, five students per class. I asked for volunteers, but five “students of interest” were selected. These students of interest were students that were very vocal about their like or dislike of the primary sources, and I wanted to hear their opinions on the project and the use of primary sources in the classroom. A copy of the interview questions can be found in appendix B. Based off their initial response to the question “Did you like the primary sources?”, I grouped the responses into three groups: students that didn’t like the primary sources (four students), those that did like the primary sources (seven students), and those that thought the primary sources were okay (four students). The next question I asked all students was “What primary sources did you like (if any)?” I then asked “Why did (or didn’t) you like the primary sources?” In the case of the interviewees that thought the primary sources were just “okay”, this question was changed to “How could I have made the primary sources better?” Finally, I asked all students their favorite form of instruction. I analyzed these answers by frequency and put them in three separate tables. The goal of interviewing these students was to ensure that I had some oral communication with some students so they could explain themselves in detail, something they might not do on paper.

The final pieces of data I analyzed were the summary questionnaires. The summary questionnaires were given out on May 8, 2008. The questionnaires had eight questions, some of which directly asked about the primary sources and others that simply asked about background information on the student. Questions one through three of the questionnaire were inquiries into the students. I used this information to further my

understanding of the students for this study, and included the information in the section “Context for the Research.” Question four of the questionnaire asked students what they thought of me as a teacher. The answers to that question were not used in this study and were for my own personal growth and development. However, questions five through eight were related to the students’ interests and opinions on the primary sources. Like the primary source surveys, the answers were categorized by frequency and put into several tables. The analysis of the results from primary source surveys and questionnaire are found in the “Results and Analysis” section.

Validity of Research and Trustworthiness

The methodology of this study tried to ensure validity and trustworthiness. I used several kinds of data over a month’s period of time. I made sure that one piece of data asked the same questions as the other, to show that my students’ opinions and beliefs were consistent. For example, the summary questionnaire, the primary source surveys, and the interviews all asked the question “Did you like the primary sources?” I analyzed students’ participation, behavior, and responses over a month’s time and at different points to look for consistency. I also investigated other research to help inform myself, support my claims, and ground my findings and conclusions in research. Although I tried to eliminate bias and ensure objectivity in this study, there are some potential ways this study may have been biased. What follows then is a look into the potentials for bias and the limitations of the study.

Potential for Bias

Confirmation Bias. My liking of primary sources in the classroom started before this study. Consequently, my belief in primary sources' power and interest may have affected my objectivity in this study.

Shaping Students. Although I have never purposefully led my students to believe that primary sources are the best way to teach, it is reasonable to assume that I led them to believe so subconsciously. Additionally, some students may have said they liked the primary sources to appease me. Although I do not see these scenarios being likely, as I constantly instructed students to be honest and "insult me if necessary," it is something worth mentioning.

Limitations of Study

Because this study was performed by an inexperienced Student Teacher, there are some limitations to it. The following are the main limitations of this study.

I'm an Inexperienced Researcher. I have had little experience with research, especially this kind of research. Consequently, my methodology for the study may not have been the most appropriate or efficient. There may also be other avenues for improvement of this study's evidence that I did not consider.

I was a New Teacher. When I first started this project, I had approximately two months of experience teaching, and only as a Student Teacher. Despite my best efforts, I did not have the ability to control a classroom or organize a curriculum as well as a seasoned teacher. Additionally, I became teacher of the Honors classes in late January, long after they had adjusted to my Cooperating Teacher. My classroom presence then

may not have been as effective, or respected, because I was new and inexperienced. This may have influenced students' responses positively and/or negatively during this study.

Time. Even though my experiment was organized in a way that acknowledged a lack of time, I could have used more of it. Being that I was teaching every day for the first time, taking college classes, designing lesson plans from scratch every night, grading papers every night, and designing this project, I feel the project suffered by not being able to dedicate more time to selecting the best primary sources and reviewing more literature about primary sources.

The second time-related issue is simply that the project's subject was not able to be studied over a long term. The project's experiments took approximately a month to complete. To answer my thesis' questions beyond a doubt would be very difficult in only a month's time.

Honors Students. My project suffers partly from the fact that it was conducted in a very homogenous environment. Most of the students I taught volunteered to be in an Honors history classroom and wanted to do well. This study's findings may or may not apply in another, less cooperative, classroom.

Chapter IV

Findings and Analysis

Results and Analysis of the Primary Source Surveys

Of the fifteen primary sources I provided my classes, I selected ten sources from which to collect student response data. All of these sources can be found in appendix A. As mentioned previously, their written responses were to the question “Do you find this article interesting? Why or why not?” Before moving onto the data showing whether they enjoyed a given primary source, I will describe what each source is about in Table 6. On the left side (Name and Date) is the name for the source, as well as the date it was written and the date I used it in class; on the right side (Description) is a brief description of the historical context of the source and any significant details of it.

Table 6
Primary Source Descriptions

| Name and Date | Description |
|---|--|
| Jefferson on the Missouri Compromise (1820)- April 1, 2008 | The Missouri Compromise was a compromise struck between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces in Congress. When Missouri applied for statehood in 1821, the question of whether to add Missouri as a slave state arose. Many Americans living there had brought slaves with them from their former homes in the South, but slavery was actually restricted in this new area, as well as other Western lands. Missouri would enter as a slave state in this compromise, but a line would be drawn at the 36°30' north parallel (which is at the bottom of Missouri), in addition to admitting Maine as a free state. Under that line, slavery could exist. Above it, free states reigned. Thomas Jefferson felt this compromise would further separate the North and South and eventually tear apart the Union. He went on to |

| | |
|---|--|
| | say that he'd give up everything to resolve the conflict over slavery, and ended the document by exclaiming that the sacrifices of the Revolutionary generation were to be in vain, and that his only consolation was "that I live not to weep over it". |
| Senator Robert Hayne on the good of slavery (1830)- April 2, 2008 | In this document, Robert Hayne argues that slavery is a good institution for slaves and the beliefs of the newly emerging abolitionists were hypocritical. He based this belief on accounts of poor blacks in Northern cities that were destitute and without jobs, most likely because they faced such harsh racism in the North. On the other hand, in Hayne's view, slaves were treated kindly and with respect, as well as being given the basic necessities for life. Hayne ends his argument by discussing an account of a free black family being forced to live in a cave because of their destitution, after moving to a "refined" city of the North. |
| Frederick Douglass' account of a slave beating (1855)- April 3, 2008 | In this heated article, Frederick Douglass, one of the greatest writers of his time and a former slave, shows what slavery was like as he recalls a physical fight between an overseer and a female slave, ending with the female slave being severely beaten. |
| James Monroe's speech to Congress on the Monroe Doctrine; (1823)- April 7, 2008 | James Monroe (fifth president of the United States) gives a brief account of European history in recent years, and thus his justification for the Monroe Doctrine. This doctrine asserted that European powers could no longer colonize or interfere with the Americas. Although this Doctrine couldn't realistically be enforced, it did show the growing power of the nascent American government. |
| Several Account on the "Corrupt Bargain" and John Quincy Adams (1824)- April 9, 2008 | In the close and widely contested election of 1824, the winner was decided in the House of Representatives because none of the candidates won a majority of the electoral votes. The likely winner, Andrew Jackson, won the most popular votes and the most electoral votes, but was still ousted by John Quincy Adams when the House elected him. Henry Clay, another candidate for the election, supposedly made a deal with Adams, to exchange his support in the House for the position of Secretary of State (a springboard for the presidency back then). This became known as the Corrupt Bargain, because it usurped the power of the people, as Jackson clearly had the most public support. Truly though, whether a deal was struck or whether Adams simply chose Henry Clay as his Secretary of State, because he thought he was the best man for the job, has never been resolved. Nonetheless, the reaction to this bargain was volatile by Jackson and other politicians of the time. Thus, this document featured those reactions, as well as a brief description of John Quincy Adams by another |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>politician, describing Adams essentially as not being able to “make a single influential friend” in office because he was apparently pompous.</p> |
| <p>Description of Jackson’s Inauguration and the “Whitehouse Rabble” (1829)- April 14, 2008</p> | <p>Andrew Jackson was seen as the common man’s president. Consequently, his inauguration speech was practically a mob scene. In the reception in the Whitehouse following his speech, Jackson was nearly suffocated by people wanting to shake his hand. This document was a description of that scene and it showed how politics was becoming more of a widespread phenomenon to the common man in American life.</p> |
| <p>Daniel Webster on the Nullification Crisis (1830)- April 16, 2008</p> | <p>Nullification, the theory that the states can nullify Federal laws that are unconstitutional, is a dangerous theory proposed several times in American history (although under different titles). In the case of this period, the rehash of Nullification came in 1828. The danger of Nullification is that it could split the Union apart very quickly, as Nullification would lead to states doing whatever they please. A proponent of Nullification, Senator Robert Hayne (SC), brought up Nullification in the Senate when discussing minor issues related to tariffs and land. Senator Daniel Webster (MA) responded with a moving reply where he urged for national unity, recalling how the sacrifices of the Revolutionary generation and the bones of those great soldiers who died for a Republic would all be for naught. This document is an excerpt from Webster’s speech.</p> |
| <p>Alexis de Tocqueville: Northern and Southern society compared (1832)- April 22, 2008</p> | <p>The famous French political thinker Alexis de Tocqueville, in this document, describes the differences between Northern and Southern American society. Tocqueville believed the North’s growing prosperity and the South’s economic stagnation were directly related to slavery and its ill effects on Southerners.</p> |
| <p>Reaction to Nat Turner’s Rebellion (Various dates: 1831, 1846, 1948, 1874)- April 24, 2008</p> | <p>Nat Turner’s revolt ended with the killing of a little over fifty whites (many women and children) by the slave and his fellow insurrectionists. But the reverberations it had through Southern society were extreme and Turner’s revolt is considered one of the most important events leading up the Civil War. This document gives a brief description of the aftermath of the gruesome murders, as well as various analyses (from different time periods) of the attack on Southern society, mostly describing how it led the South to become more restrictive of its slave class.</p> |
| <p>A newspaper, <i>The Spectator</i>, describes the advantages of slavery for slaves (1859)- April 30, 2008</p> | <p>In this document, a writer from <i>The Spectator</i> describes how Southern slaves are treated better than Northern freemen, as racism was rampant during this time period. The document also gives a philosophical argument against slavery, going on to describe how we are all slaves to God and fate.</p> |

As discussed previously, each primary source's historical context was prepped, and archaic words had a modern translation next to it in parenthesis. I tried to reasonably ensure that all students could follow along. In the case of my classes, the work paid off, as the results from the sample surveys of the ten out of fifteen primary sources show good results.

The next table, Table 7, shows the results of each of the ten primary source surveys for two classes, periods four and six. In the first column from the left of Table 7, is the name of the document. In the next six columns are a variety of responses that students typically wrote. Although they wrote seemingly different responses, on closer inspection, all of their responses fell into one of these six categories. For example, a student may have written "I liked this primary source because it was exciting" or "I liked this primary source because I liked reading about the people of the time period." In essence, they are the same response because both students found it interesting and would accordingly be put in the "It was interesting" category. The second category, "I liked it because it was easy" requires a little background. In many cases, students responded that they liked the primary sources because they provided information in an easy way, or a way that was much easier to comprehend than their textbook's and better than lecture. Therefore, similar responses were grouped there. The final of the six categories, "It just wasn't my preference," requires some background information as well. In many cases, students may have put: "I'm not feeling well today" or "This primary source was too violent for me." In some cases, responses were a bit unconventional, so I chose to put it in this category. Regardless, the results from this stage of the research seem promising. Please note that the figures were rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

Table 7
Primary Source Survey Results

| Name of Document | It was interesting | I liked it because it was easy | It was okay | It was boring; It was too long to read | I didn't understand it | It just wasn't my preference | Total |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--|------------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| Jefferson on the Missouri Compromise | 30 (73%) | 2 (5%) | 3 (7%) | 2 (5%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (10%) | 41 |
| Senator Robert Hayne on the good of slavery | 43 (93%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (7%) | 46 |
| Frederick Douglass' account of a slave beating | 28 (80%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (9%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (11%) | 35 |
| James Monroe's speech to Congress on the Monroe Doctrine | 30 (68%) | 2 (5%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (7%) | 6 (14%) | 3 (7%) | 44 |
| Several Accounts on the "Corrupt Bargain" and John Quincy Adams | 25 (55%) | 3 (7%) | 10 (22%) | 5 (11%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (4%) | 45 |
| Description of Jackson's Inauguration and the "Whitehouse Rabble" | 18 (42%) | 8 (19%) | 0 (0%) | 5 (12%) | 5 (12%) | 7 (16%) | 43 |
| Daniel Webster on the Nullification Crisis | 32 (84%) | 2 (5%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (5%) | 2 (5%) | 0 (0%) | 38 |
| Alexis de Tocqueville: Northern and Southern society compared | 26 (59%) | 4 (9%) | 5 (11%) | 6 (14%) | 2 (5%) | 1 (2%) | 44 |
| Reaction to Nat Turner's Rebellion | 26 (63%) | 4 (10%) | 1 (2%) | 2 (5%) | 2 (5%) | 6 (15%) | 41 |
| A newspaper, <i>The Spectator</i> , describes the advantages of slavery | 22 (63%) | 3 (9%) | 1 (3%) | 4 (11%) | 0 (0%) | 5 (14%) | 35 |

The Primary Source Surveys show good results numerically. What follows then is a table showing the analysis of the numbers. In other words, this table will describe my beliefs

on why some sources showed overwhelming success, while others did not show as much. This analysis comes from my anecdotal notes that I took during the school year as well as student responses on the Primary Source Surveys.

Table 8
Analysis of Primary Source Survey Results

| Name of Document | Analysis |
|--|---|
| Jefferson on the Missouri Compromise | Receiving a 73% in the category of “Interesting” was a surprise to me. I didn’t think this document would gain such wide approval because I felt it was a bit difficult to understand. It is important to note that this was the first document the students saw, at least for the project. Although students were previously exposed to primary sources, this was the first time they knew I was recording their responses. Consequently, it may be that they weren’t comfortable giving their opinion. However, I do believe that Jefferson did command a lot of respect in the classes, and may be part of its success. Or it just may have been that the document was good, as its final sentences seemingly had Jefferson in tears and was one of the most emotional documents of all. In any case, the students reported an overwhelming acceptance and liking of this primary source. |
| Senator Robert Hayne on the good of slavery | This document sparked a lot of debate and was one of my best days of teaching. Students wildly debated its arguments and it is thus unsurprising that it received a 93% in the “Interest” category. It was so popular, in my opinion, because it introduced a very novel concept to them: slavery actually was better than freedom for some slaves. Students are well-acquainted with the evils of slavery, but to see an argument against freedom and for it to actually make sense was probably new to some. Finally, the fact that no one said “I didn’t understand it” shows that the article was a good choice for their skill level, and was broken down well. It shows that my students liked to reflect on and discuss new ideas. Furthermore, the students had to think in the past, trying to understand the culture and morals of the time. They were doing history. This was very satisfying for me as their teacher. |
| Frederick Douglass’ account of a slave beating | Douglass’ account was, in my opinion, the most well-written and descriptive of all the documents. Although it received a rating of 80%, it still was not as high as I thought it would be. This was, however, the longest document I gave out, being a little bit over 1300 words. Consequently, 9% categorized it as too long or boring. In reality, no one actually said it was boring though. Rather, all three students said it was too long. Interestingly enough, the four students that were categorized as “It just wasn’t my preference” all said it was too violent. Indeed, the article is violent, and several of the students didn’t seem to like it because |

| | |
|---|---|
| | of it. This article demonstrates that some primary sources need to be used with caution. Some sources are violent, racist, or have some other issue that may turn off some students. |
| James Monroe's speech to Congress on the Monroe Doctrine | This article had a number of references to past events that needed to be explained to the students. For example, it talked heavily about the French Revolution and what it did to Europe. Therefore, I didn't think this article had a chance because it'd be too hard to understand; 6 of 44 did say they didn't understand the document. This document received the highest "didn't understand" responses of any of the sources used in this study. But nonetheless, 68% thought it was interesting. I feel this is partly because Monroe's speech is actually written like a story. It is written in a way where the president carefully connects every event to the next, until it ends with Monroe's assertion of the Monroe Doctrine (although he never referred to it as such). Additionally, students often said they hated going over stuff they "knew already," in the words of one response. They enjoyed hearing about events and processes that they knew practically nothing about, something this document featured in abundance. Finally, I let students work in groups for this one, because I felt it would be too difficult alone for them. This may also have had an effect, and may have led to fewer students saying they didn't understand it. I feel then that it is very important to gauge what your students do know and what they don't, and to ensure you have enough time to cover all bases. It also shows me that my strategies will sometimes have to change when a document is too difficult. |
| Several Account on the "Corrupt Bargain" and John Quincy Adams | I did not expect the "Corrupt Bargain" to gain a lot of support, and it didn't comparatively speaking. Fifty-five percent of students labeled this document as interesting - while 22% said it was "Okay". The reason for this was probably because it was about an issue that the students had little interest in. From my view, an article like this will gain less support than an emotional speech or an account of slavery because it's about an event that may be hard for students to really relate to. Nonetheless, 77% of my students, at least, thought this article was okay. Although this primary source may not have had as much popularity as other sources, it would be interesting to see if students would prefer the book or lecture over this primary source. |
| Description of Jackson's Inauguration and the "Whitehouse Rabble" | The description of Jackson's inauguration, albeit a very wild one where people essentially trampled the Whitehouse and nearly killed their newly elected president, didn't seem to get as much positive rating as I expected. Getting a meager 42% in the "Interest" category isn't satisfactory. It did get a rating of 19% in the "I liked it because it was easy" though. So it seems that a majority of students liked the source, but just didn't find it as interesting as others. At this point in my Student Teaching, many students were growing weary of the sources. Consequently, a greater number of students, 16%, said "It just wasn't my preference" for various reasons. In this case though, five of seven students said that they "just didn't like primary sources," or something along those lines. Although this |

| | |
|---|---|
| | percentage does drop in subsequent Primary Source Surveys, it is perhaps at this point that some of the charm of doing a new thing wore off for some of my students. This is partly the reason why it is important not to bombard students with any single type of instruction, as surely their interest level will drop accordingly. |
| Daniel Webster on the Nullification Crisis | This document gained 84% interest from students. The reason is fairly simple: It was an emotional speech and I tried to show it. One class even clapped at the end of my reading it. Webster was known for his emotional speeches, and this one is no different. Documents ripe with emotion gained the most support overall. This emotion filled primary source seemed to rekindle the students' interest in reading primary sources. They also seemed to enjoy my dramatic reading. The more authentic and real a primary source becomes, I would imagine the more following it'll have in the classroom. |
| Alexis de Tocqueville: Northern and Southern society compared | This article had some very mixed results. Although 26 of 44 students enjoyed it, it received significant numbers in all categories. For example, 14% of students saw it as too long or boring. In this case, most student responses said it was boring. I blame this on myself. The presentation I had for the class was very poorly unorganized, and my reading of the document was somewhat choppy. I feel that the five students that said it was "Okay" might have liked the document better if I presented it better. What this shows, in other words, is that primary sources can't just stand alone, and require a teacher's scaffolding and an organized presentation. It also shows that students respond to teacher's organization and presentation of a lesson, as well as a teacher's enthusiasm. |
| Reaction to Nat Turner's Rebellion | Nat Turner's Rebellion, for many students, was the most memorable of all classes, as was shown when I interviewed students. Turner's slaughtering of innocent whites is a controversial issue: Does someone look at him as a slave hero or a villain? Therefore, the documents covering the event showed a 63% "Interest" response. Interestingly enough, 15% of students said "It just wasn't my preference." Three students said this because they felt the article was too "violent." Again, some sources need to be used and presented with care. But even with the numbers not being as high as some others, I do feel the primary source surrounding Nat Turner's revolt held the student's interest. This was shown not only by their good behavior, but also because they asked questions and did debate the issue of the event's justification. When I asked one class to write their opinion on whether Turner's revolt was justified or not, many students wrote very long and detailed responses, showing that the event clearly was of interest to them. Why the primary source received only a 63% "Interest" rating is thus partly a mystery to me. Perhaps it shows that teachers can only rely on direct student responses as one variable in determining their teaching decisions. Student participation, student questions, and student engagement, as well as teacher observations and note taking, must be factored into teacher decision making about future lessons and instruction. |
| A newspaper, <i>The</i> | The final document Primary Source Survey received 63% interest. This |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Spectator</i>, describes the advantages of slavery</p> | <p>was a similar document to “Senator Robert Hayne on the good of slavery”. Perhaps Hayne’s argument received an overwhelming “Interest” rating, while this one received significantly lesser because they’d seen it already and it wasn’t new to them. For this document, five students were categorized as “It just wasn’t my preference.” Three of those students were African-American and all said that they felt this document belittled African-Americans too much. For example, one said that it made slaves seem like “dogs...unable to take care of themselves.” This particular response struck a chord because I wondered if I was being reckless in exclusively choosing arguments for slavery. Although many other African-American students didn’t seem to have a problem with it, it is still noteworthy and something I will remember in future classes. But overall, the document’s philosophical argument for slavery seemed to gain student’s attention spans as each class debated the true meaning of freedom with vigorous participation. The fact that students may object to one or two arguments or ideas in a primary source does not mean they didn’t engage in the learning process but rather, they may not have related to the historical culture or morals. Learning may have still been enhanced. It does alert me to be more sensitive to how and when I might use this source in the future.</p> |
|--|---|

Conclusions from the Primary Source Surveys

The results from the Primary Source Surveys are excellent, based on positive responses. Only one primary source did not gain a majority of the “Interest” rating. All others were rated as being liked by a majority of the classroom, with a significant portion of the students finding the sources as okay. Truly, I am a bit surprised by the results. Although students did seem genuinely interested in the primary sources according to the number of positive responses, while teaching it felt otherwise at times. Sometimes it was difficult to read through an entire source without feeling like I was boring the class, but this is not the case according to the evidence. From this evidence, I’ve drawn several conclusions about primary sources. The following are those conclusions from my primary source surveys:

A Majority of my Students Enjoyed Primary Sources. On average, 68% of my students enjoyed a given primary source and found it “interesting”. This is, in addition, to 4.5% of students reporting the primary sources as “okay” and another 6.9% saying they liked the source because it was “easy” on average. Thus at any given one of my classes featuring primary sources, nearly 80% (79.4% to be exact) of my class was engaged by the source. It is thus very advisable to use primary sources twice a week in my future classrooms. It is important to note that not all sources are created equal, and surely some are more interesting than others to some students. The point is to find those that appeal to the widest audience and use them.

My students liked “Emotional Documents.” Emotional documents are the types of documents that are more than just a description of an event, but give some kind of picture of how someone (or people) felt about a particular issue or event. It is part of the reason why Jefferson’s response to the Missouri Compromise and Daniel Webster’s response to the theory of Nullification received such high “Interest” ratings. Conversely, the documents with some of the lowest ratings overall, “Jackson’s Inauguration” and “Tocqueville’s Northern and Southern society compared” were the most objective and featured the least emotion of all documents. The descriptions and theories these objective documents present can be found in a textbook and related to the students effectively by simply telling them what happened. On the other hand, actually reading Jefferson’s personal account on how he felt about the Missouri Compromise, and seeing that he’s consoled by the fact that he’ll die before he sees the ill effects this agreement would cause, is interesting:

I regret that I am now to die in the belief, that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of 1776, to acquire self-government and happiness to their country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be, that I live not weep over it.

The emotion that Jefferson releases in the document is hard to capture by a third person account; it is difficult to describe such things in a textbook without showing it first hand. One response by a student to this article demonstrates this: “I think this article was interesting because of Jefferson’s choice of words and the sentence structure. He spoke so passionately about something bigger than himself and it was interesting.”

My Students Enjoyed (and Needed) a “Superficial Interpretation” of the Documents. When I say “superficial interpretation”, I mean breaking the basic argument of the document down for them, but letting them draw their own conclusions. Sometimes, a document would have such a complex argument that my students needed it to be broken down for them. On average, approximately four students per primary source did not understand what it was about. After averaging the total number of students present per class (41 students), it seems (on average) that 4.1% of students didn’t understand part of a given primary source. Although this may seem like a small number, is it unacceptable to me, especially considering that these students were Honors students and these figures may only get worse at lower levels of student readiness. In half the documents, no student said “I didn’t understand it”. Only 5% of students said “I didn’t understand it” in three of the remaining five documents. The remaining two documents,

the “Monroe Doctrine” and “Jackson’s Inauguration”, were not understood by 14% and 12% of the class respectively. This is partly because I did a poor job of interpreting words for some students in both documents, and also because I rushed through both documents’ readings. In other words, continuity is important, but understanding the document is more important for the students. These results lead me to reinforce the importance of teacher lesson preparation, enthusiasm, and involvement, for positively influencing student engagement and learning.

My Students Liked Reading Controversial Arguments. The document that students most enjoyed was one that argued for slavery. Aside from providing a new perspective, the document was controversial, and the students liked it. For example, one student wrote: “I found this article interesting because it was an incredible argument for the good of slavery. It makes it easier to see why most southerners didn’t have a problem with it, but still doesn’t justify it in my eyes.” This response shows that he liked the article because he could get into someone else’s shoes, but he still asserts his opinion in the end, showing perhaps that he took the day’s debate that followed the source seriously. Another student wrote “Yes, it’s interesting because you don’t usually see articles for slavery.” Ninety-three percent of students went on to say they liked the first article defending slavery. The next article that argued for slavery, received only 63%. Perhaps this is because the second article lost the “shock value” of the first one, but it’s obvious from student responses that they enjoyed this first article because it was controversial. Consequently, when my students heard an argument for slavery a second time, albeit in a somewhat different form, their interest dropped. However, it may also be because this article was so dehumanizing of African-Americans. If a number of students did rate this

article poorly because they saw it as dehumanizing, then it does not mean that these students weren't engaged or actually interested, but rather, their responses on the primary sources surveys were inaccurate. They thought it was interesting, but couldn't bear to say "I liked it."

Another article, the one written by Frederick Douglass, demonstrates how a controversial event can spark student interest. An approval rating of 80% in the interest category alone shows that the words from this primary source had power. My students are well-acquainted with the horrors of slavery. But nonetheless, an article that simply described these horrors caught their attention and may have taught them things they didn't know. It is one thing for someone to say that slaves were whipped; it is another to actually read the account of a whipping and get a real feel for the time. This is perhaps further shown by student responses like this: "This article was good and I know now what an overseer is." This student had heard the term overseer before, but never actually thought about it or learned what it was. It was inconsequential to him. It was just a term. Now the term overseer has meaning for one of my students because they saw an overseer in action.

I Can Use too Many Sources. From my experiences in the classroom, and my reading of the students' Primary Source Surveys, it became clear that some students became used to or tired of this kind of instruction over time. In addition, some students would moan when I handed the sheets out. A majority of the students said they liked them, but I never tried to push my students beyond three sources per week in fear that the students would rebel against the extra reading, thinking, discussion and use of this teaching strategy. Thus, two sources per week became my optimal number. It broke up

the curriculum well, ensured that I wouldn't always be reading something, and made the sources rare enough to be enjoyed. With my classes, it seemed that a constant repetition of any kind of instruction would bore some, lower interest, student engagement and motivation.

Some of my Students Simply Didn't Like Sources. For some of my students, any kind of source wasn't satisfactory to them. One student that was very vocal about her dislike of the sources wrote at one point that "they were too in-depth and I would prefer to learn just facts." She reiterated this in an interview I gave her. Another student had trouble comprehending the sources and thus, consistently rated them poorly, always groaning whenever I revealed we'd have a source that day. Although it is true that you cannot please everyone, a classroom where the majority always rules would never help these students learn. It is important to reach all students, and further shows why a teacher can use too many sources.

I Must Always Remember to Keep my Audience in Mind. When I found out that several African-American students didn't like one of the primary sources because of the way blacks were portrayed in it, I felt somewhat guilty to have included the source. Part of history though is to tell the truth, and understanding why some people felt blacks to be inferior is important to understand the context of the Civil War and racism, both then and today. Throughout this project though, I included two sources that included arguments for slavery, as opposed to arguments indicting the institution. I did this because I felt my students already knew why slavery was wrong, and it would be uninteresting to cover the arguments against slavery. Since my primary purpose for this action research was to increase interest, engagement, participation, and discussion, it made sense to use sources

that were provocative and gave new perspectives to my students. However, it is important to know when to draw the line on some types of sources. This requires the teacher to know their students well before selecting the primary sources to use.

Results and Analysis of the Interviews

I interviewed fifteen students to determine, on a more personal level, how they felt about my teaching, the primary sources, and the project overall. For the most part, students volunteered (V) for the interviews, but in some cases, I asked “students of interest” (SI) for an interview. In most cases, these students were very vocal about their dislike of the primary sources and I wanted to know why. Occasionally though, some students of interest were very vocal about their like of them. I will make a note of whether it was a student of interest or a volunteer in the tables that follow. Additionally, I split up the interviews into three tables. In one table will be those students that disliked the primary sources. In another will be those students that did enjoy them. Finally will be those students that thought using primary sources was “okay”. I did this because I wanted to draw conclusions from all sides of the issue, and present it in a way that is easy to understand. Noteworthy is that some students reference sources that weren’t included in the project, such as a Trail of Tears source.

The first table that follows is those students that disliked the project. The first column (from the right) features a pseudonym (Pseud.) and whether they were a “student of interest” (SI) or a volunteer (V) for the interview. The next three columns are the questions I asked during the interview. The final column features my comments on the interview, and any pertinent information about the student, in relation to the project.

Table 9
Interviews with Students that Didn't Like the Primary Sources

| Pseud; SI or V | Why didn't you like the primary sources? | Did you like any of them? | What kind of instruction do you prefer? | My comments |
|----------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Susan; (SI) | <p>"I don't like reading."</p> <p>"I'd prefer direct instruction."</p> <p>"I like having something I can take home to study from"</p> | "No" | "I'd prefer to read a section, go over it, and do questions on it together." | <p>Susan often had trouble understanding the meaning of the primary sources. I feel I didn't do enough to accommodate her. Additionally, I didn't allow students to hold onto the PSS (because of this project), so she didn't have anything to study from at night for practice (I never tested them on the primary sources though).</p> |
| Kelly; (SI) | "In general, I didn't like them because they gave too much opinion, and not enough facts. I would prefer just to learn facts." | "Can't remember any ones I liked" | "I like just having the teacher teach, talk, and move on. You took too long going over these sources. I'd like them if you used them less." | <p>Kelly had no trouble comprehending any of the sources, but as she said, she'd rather just learn facts instead of opinions. Kelly is an intelligent student that liked moving fast; she preferred lecture, taking notes, and moving on. She was a student that consistently said she didn't like the sources on the PSS as well. It just didn't seem to be her style. Unfortunately, I didn't do a satisfactory job of stressing to the students that much of history is debatable, so that may have made her think all of the primary sources were worthless.</p> |
| Ryan; (SI) | "I don't like to read" | "Yes, the Frederick Douglass one was good, but very long." | "Just having the teacher talk while I listen" | <p>I found it surprising that Ryan enjoyed the Frederick Douglass one. On the PSS, he stated he thought it was too long and didn't like it, but apparently changed his mind. Ryan consistently said he doesn't like to read and has trouble focusing for a long time when he reads.</p> |

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|--|---|
| | | | | Ryan is a very intelligent student and truly can pass a class only through listening. |
| Billy; (V) | “They were boring to me, and hard to understand because you didn’t break them down enough.” | “The Nat Turner one.” | “I like class discussions and debating.” | I was surprised to hear Billy say that he didn’t understand some of the sources. He never came across as misunderstanding some of them. The fact that Billy liked discussion tells me that Billy would have liked the primary sources with discussions if I broke it down enough for him. |

Analysis of Students that Didn’t Like the Primary Sources. Of the students I interviewed that showed a dislike of the primary sources, two of them disliked them because they misunderstood them. Perhaps their enjoyment of these sources would have been greater if I did a better job reaching them. It is my fault that I didn’t realize this earlier, as I perhaps could have intervened before the end of the project. I also should have let all students keep the sources to be able to study anything they didn’t understand. It’s something I will keep in mind for my future classrooms.

As for the remaining two interviews, both students just didn’t seem to like the logistics of the project. Hearing that one student didn’t like to read doesn’t surprise me. As shown previously, the students of today are reading less than previous generations. Primary sources require in-depth analysis and require careful reading, even when the teacher does scaffold and explain complexities. It is interesting to note that this same student did enjoy the Frederick Douglass primary source, even though he initially said he didn’t like it. Perhaps this shows that reading a long source for him may initially bring him to dislike it, but he still may come to appreciate it in time because the source actually

did reach him to some extent - a prospect I surely hope for. Finally, it seems that some students will simply not enjoy primary sources, and thus, must be remembered when creating lesson plans. Although it'd be impossible to please all students all the time, it is important to include everyone in the learning process. This is a good reason for using multiple strategies to teach any content material.

In the next table, Table 10, I show the interviews I had with students that liked the primary source. This table has a similar format compared to the one above.

Table 10
Interviews with Students that Did Like the Sources

| Pseud; SI or V | Which primary sources did you like the most? | Why did you like primary sources? | What kind of instruction do you prefer? | My Comments |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Jackie (V) | "Nat Turner and Frederick Douglass." | "It wasn't the textbook, and it was more precise. Also, the information was in smaller chunks." | Discussion, debate, open forum | --- |
| Kasey (V) | "I enjoyed lots of them, but I can't remember any ones specifically" | "Some of them were interesting and I hate the book." | Discussion, debate, open forum | I was surprised by this student's response, as she has often said she hates history. |
| Steven (V) | "I really liked the Nat Turner one." | "A lot of them were just interesting, but I hated when there was no action in them." | Discussion, debate, open forum | --- |
| Leslie (V) | "I liked the Nat Turner primary source." | "I liked seeing how other people lived." | Discussion, debate, open forum | --- |
| Erin (SI) | "The Trail of Tears packet." | "I liked to see how people felt." | "I'd summarize the chapters more to get the basic stuff down and then use | This student was a student of interest because she enjoyed primary sources and was very vocal about it. |

| | | | | |
|------------|--|--|--------------------------------|--|
| | | | sources.” | |
| David (SI) | “I enjoyed the Trail of Tears and Nat Turner ones.” | “They were a lot better than the textbook and I’d definitely use them more if I had to teach.” | Discussion, debate, open forum | This student was a student of interest because he enjoyed primary sources and was very vocal about it. |
| Manny (V) | “I enjoyed Trail of Tears, the Monroe Doctrine one, and the mentally insane one” | “They’re not boring” | Discussion, debate, open forum | --- |

Analysis of Students that Did Like the Primary Sources. Analysis of students that did like the primary sources showed that of the seven students that I interviewed, that liked primary sources, six of them said they enjoyed discussion, debate, or an open forum. At the point of interviews, my classes had several debates and discussion surrounding primary sources, like Nat Tuner. A lot of meaningful dialogue was produced in those classes and it may have contributed to their like of a history class that focuses on discussion, debate, and open forum. It is unreasonable to have every history class center around this type of instruction, but it clearly is a powerful tool that can get students interested in history. Thus, I feel primary sources can help to spark that debate, as these sources, combined with my strategies, scaffold student thinking and promote participation. The fact that four of seven students said they liked the Nat Turner primary source most of all, a primary source that did spark a lot of controversy and discussion, further shows me that’s the case.

The final table showing interviews is Table 11. These students liked most of the primary sources, but not all of them. Their views might help to give more insight into what kinds of primary sources students like:

Table 11
Interviews with Students that Thought the Primary Sources were Okay

| Pseud; SI or V | Which primary sources did you like the most? | What was wrong with some of the sources? | What kind of instruction do you prefer? | Comments |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Sam (V) | “The Nullification source” | “Some of them were just boring, especially the ones not in first person.” | Discussion, debate, open forum | -- |
| Peter (V) | “The Nat Turner source.” | “Some of them were just too long.” | Discussion, debate, open forum | --- |
| Lee (V) | “Jefferson vs. Hamilton source.” | “Some should just be shorter.” | Teacher explanation; debate | --- |
| Andre w (V) | “I liked the Nat Turner and Corrupt Bargain ones.” | “Sometimes they were difficult to understand.” | “I enjoyed reading out of the textbook, having notes with fill-ins, and class discussion.” | Andrew was one of the few students that said he enjoyed the textbook. |

Analysis of Interviews with Students Who Thought the Primary Sources were Okay. From this set of interviews, it would seem that the main issues were that some of the sources were seen as too long, boring, or difficult to understand. For one student, Andrew, I feel I did a poor job with explaining some things to him. This may partly be the reason why he enjoyed the textbook, as it broke things down for him. Lee also said that he enjoyed a teacher’s explanation, further showing that I may not have done as good of a job as I could explaining information. Therefore, when put all together, it would

seem that the thing to remember for using primary sources in the future is to explain them well, ensure that they're of reasonable length, and hold discussion and open forum type classes more often. As students become accustomed to this strategy, the teacher can add lengthier sources and more complex sources. However, teachers must keep in mind the amount of time involved in identifying sources and in making interlinear translations for difficult words, as well as, the enhanced student involvement and work using primary sources.

Overall Conclusions from the Interviews

The interviews were a good tool in gauging the classes' feelings about the sources and what needed to be changed. Like previously shown, students sometimes just won't enjoy primary sources. It simply may not be their preferred type of instruction. But for most of my students, it seemed to be a success, at least some of the time, with areas for improvement.

Results and Analysis of the Summary Questionnaires

With the conclusion of my Student Teaching assignment, I gave out a questionnaire several days before I left the high school. The questionnaire, which can be found on appendix B, featured eight questions. Some of the answers to the questions were used in other sections (questions one through three were used in the "Context of Research" section). The ones specifically related to primary sources were questions five through eight. These questions helped me to understand how the students generally felt

about the project, what could make primary sources better, and what my students' favorite and least favorite ways to learn history were.

The following table, Table 12, shows the responses to question five from their summary questionnaire, which is: "How did you like the Primary Sources?" Students basically gave one of three answers (except for two students who inexplicably did not answer this question at all). Because this question was open-ended, sometimes a student's answer might be a bit unclear. For example, one student gave this answer: "Some were a little boring. Others I did find interesting." In my opinion, I feel this is an "okay" answer and I added it to the section "They were okay..." Another example of an answer I labeled as "okay" was this one: "They were alright. Some of them were very interesting, while others were boring." When a student put down those kinds of answers, it tells me that they thought some primary sources were okay and they are not against using primary sources in principle, but rather that some did not catch their interest as much as others. In the case of the section "I liked them...", students put down a variety of reasons as to why they liked them. For example, one student put down: "Most of them were interesting. I thought they were a good way to learn." In this case, it's very clear what section to put them in. One that was a bit grayer for me to classify was: "They're a lot better than reading the book." For the purposes of this table, I decided to classify them as "I liked them..." To me, it would seem, the student enjoyed the primary sources much more than their book, clearly didn't dislike the primary sources, and never made any statement that would make me believe they thought of them as "okay" or worse. There were seven of these kinds of responses, responses where students said the primary sources were easier than their book and never made any other significant statement to

help me categorize it. The final section, “I didn’t like them...” was very straightforward and there was no gray area in choosing which answers went into this category.

Table 12
How did You Like the Primary Sources?

| | I liked them... | They were okay... | I didn't like them... |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Numbers of responses | 31 (49%) | 25 (40%) | 7 (11%) |

From the student’s responses on the summary table, 89% of students seemed to be, at least, okay with using the primary sources I chose, with a near majority of students saying they liked them. The results show that my primary source strategies overwhelmingly worked.

If a strategy works, it does not mean it can’t be better. In question six on the summary questionnaire, I asked my students “How could I have made the primary source sheets better/more interesting?” Their suggestions are found in Table 13. I personally feel that the suggestions my students gave to this question should be taken lightly to some extent though. Some answers did show dominance, but a large portion of the suggestions are marginally supported. That is not to say that the marginally supported suggestions aren’t valid or that other students wouldn’t agree to them, but the data shows that students mostly did not see any particular issue as pressing. The list does give some insight into possible changes for the future.

Table 13
How Could I have Made the Primary Source Sheets Better?

| Answer | # | Comments |
|--|----|---|
| You couldn't have made them better [positive] | 10 | Ten students seemed to show a real liking of the sources and felt there was no reasonable way to make them better. |
| Make them easier to understand | 8 | This is probably one of the most important suggestions and is doubly important because it has a little bit of a following. Students had various suggestions on how to improve the language, one even going so far as to say that I should just completely translate the document into plain English for them (which would take away their authenticity). Nevertheless, it seems that my system for making the language easier to understand fell short for some students. A complete transition defeats the purpose of using primary sources. |
| Pick more interesting primary sources | 7 | In the case of these seven students, they felt that primary sources had potential, but some just fell short of their interest. Perhaps if I had more time to search for more interesting sources, the number would have been less, or perhaps, the effort to read and debate took more effort than some students expected to exert. |
| More details and facts about the time period and/or people | 6 | When a student suggested having more details, it meant using primary sources that show more of a social history (i.e. how did the average person dress, eat, act, etc.) This is an interesting suggestion and would be useful at certain junctions in a Social Studies class. Meanwhile, the students who said they wanted more facts wanted more background information on the source and its events - probably a reflection of my inexperience and shortness of knowledge in the field or a reflection of their curiosity. |
| Have less of them | 4 | As mentioned previously, two primary sources per week would be optimal, preferably being on opposite ends of the week. |
| You couldn't have made them better [negative] | 4 | When a student said they "couldn't be better" and it had a negative connotation, it meant that the student didn't really like the primary sources but couldn't think of any suggestions on how to improve them at the moment. |
| Let us keep them | 4 | Because of this study, I collected all source sheets for later use as evidence. Some students could have used them to study from, or analyze further on their own, but I never gave them that chance. Clearly this is a valid suggestion. |
| Act them out; let students act them out | 3 | My Cooperating Teacher sometimes would talk in a French accent when talking about anything French-related. Students would constantly ask me to do this (I never would), but it seemed to engage students when I did see it done. It would make sense that students would get more into a document if it was spoken truer to |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|---|
| | | its origin or acted out through role play. |
| Don't have them at all | 3 | These three students felt so strongly against the use of primary sources that there seems to be no middle ground for them. |
| Include more photos | 3 | Although only marginally supported, this suggestion would probably have more of a following if brought to the attention of the entire class. Preferably (but unrealistically) having color photos for primary sources would make the content seem much more alive. But really, any photo does bring the content more to life. |
| Make them shorter | 2 | Surprisingly, only two students suggested making the sources shorter in the summary questionnaire. |
| I don't know/ Marginal suggestion | 12 | Occasionally there were some suggestions that were suggested by only one student (in the case of four students overall). These four suggestions were somewhat irrelevant and one of them was a joke. As for the other eight, some students just said "I don't know" or left the question blank. |

The remaining two questions of the questionnaire helped me to understand what my students' favorite and least favorite ways to learn were. I asked these questions because it would help to further my knowledge of the students' opinions on primary sources (albeit indirectly), and further inform my pedagogy. The first question asks: "What is your favorite way to learn history? (i.e. notes, primary sources, the book etc.) Why?" This question is potentially biased because I may have inadvertently led some students to think they could only pick one of the three choices in parenthesis. In reality, there were a variety of answers given by the students, seven answers in all. Furthermore, students sometimes put two answers down. In that case, I tallied both answers. Therefore, there are eighty-nine responses in all, from sixty-five sheets. The following table, Table 14, shows the students' answers with my commentary.

Table 14
What is Your Favorite Way to Learn History?

| Favorite way to learn | Votes | Comments |
|------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Notes | 26 | Students liked notes a lot because it ensured they had something to study from for the test. The students I taught were very concerned about their grades. Primary source sheets, because they were collected, did not give my students the opportunity to study. |
| Primary Source | 24 | Primary sources grabbed the interest of this population so much that it became their favorite way to learn. |
| Textbook | 17 | My classes often complained about the textbook. Although I thought the textbook was decent, a lot of students didn't like their edition. Regardless, many students did like using their textbook, partly because it explained the details well, and partly because they could always study from it. |
| Lecture; discussion | 13 | When students put lecture or discussion down, it often was because they thought it was the most entertaining form of class, especially when compared to reading or taking notes. |
| Field Trips | 3 | A few students thought field trips would be a good idea, and surely they would be. I imagine more students would have put this if they thought of it. |
| Projects | 2 | Projects, in my opinion, should be part of a Social Studies classroom, but I didn't have time during my Student Teaching to implement any. |
| Skit | 1 | As I mentioned before, some students liked the idea of making the primary sources seem more alive. |
| Unspecified | 3 | Some students put answers like: "It doesn't matter as long as it's fun." That can't really be categorized. |

It should be noted that what students put down is simply what was on the top of their head. In no way are these seven choices for instruction the only way to teach history, but are glimpses into my students' favorite way to learn. It is also important to mention that these aren't necessarily the most effective or realistic ways to teach history, but rather the students' favorite. The goal of this project was really to gauge student interest, not necessarily find the most academically effective way, although I feel the two are often connected. Conversely, the following table shows students least favorite way to learn history.

Table 15
What is Your Least Favorite Way to Learn History?

| Least favorite way to learn history | Number | Comments |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--|
| Textbook | 39 | Unsurprisingly at this point, my students said textbooks were their least favorite way to learn history. It would be interesting to see if the numbers changed if they had another textbook. |
| Primary Source sheets | 7 | As shown in Table 12, seven students didn't like primary source sheets. Those seven students disliked them the most of all ways to learn history. |
| Notes | 6 | --- |
| Lecture | 5 | --- |
| I don't know | 3 | --- |
| Through only one source | 1 | One student essentially said they liked learning history through a variety of techniques. I imagine that more students would probably agree if they thought of this answer. |
| No answer | 4 | --- |

Conclusions from the Summary Questionnaire

The summary questionnaire confirmed the previous evidence that said my students generally enjoyed the primary sources. With 89% of students reporting that they, at least, thought the primary sources could be interesting sometimes, primary sources in my future classroom have a promising future. There are ways to improve the sources, most obviously being to make the language easier to understand. From the results of question seven on the summary questionnaire, notes and primary sources together would seem to be one of the more effective duos for my future classroom, at least based off the responses of my students. Finally, the textbook is one of the more ineffective ways to hold student interest. Taken altogether, the primary sources were an effective way to hold my students' interest. This prospect is not only very rewarding because it confirmed

my previous beliefs, but also because it shows that the most effective way to get my students interested in history is to have them study it in the most authentic way.

Chapter V

Conclusions and New Questions

Conclusions

This study's original intent was to determine if my students enjoyed primary sources. After sifting through the evidence, it seems that is the case for the majority of my students.

To make the primary sources interesting and relevant to my students required a variety of strategies. I had to ensure archaic language was more easily understood. I had to help students understand the meaning of a given primary source by reading it with them and explaining some of the arguments. I found out that students enjoy sources when they understand them. Unsurprisingly, one important suggestion by my students, for making primary sources better, was to make them more readable and more easily understood. Therefore, some students didn't enjoy the sources because they didn't understand them (on average, about 4.1% of the class per source). Accordingly, one of the biggest challenges for my future pedagogy is to find ways to make primary sources better tailored to my students' abilities. And of course, I have to continue to find engaging and interesting primary sources.

Even though the main purpose of this project was to gauge student interest in primary sources, surely there were some unexpected benefits. Perhaps the most important benefit is that I brought real authentic history into the classroom. By having

students read and analyze documents of all types, my students came a little closer to being real historians. As a result, various debates and discussions were produced that seemed to really challenge the minds and conventions of my students. This was in addition to other benefits, such as getting my students to read more. Despite the various obstacles that using primary sources in my classroom presented, the benefits outweighed the sacrifices. The implication is that I will use the strategies outlined in this paper in the future. I will use primary sources, two times per week, along with other forms of instruction to ensure that primary sources are rare enough to be interesting and to be fair to those students that don't like them.

New Questions

After completing this study, I have many new questions to address in the future. The most pressing is whether students that aren't Honors students will find primary sources as interesting and engaging. One of the major variables of this study was that I dealt with students that wanted to do well, as all three classes were Honors classes. Would it be different in another classroom atmosphere, such as in a regular history class or with students with learning difficulties?

I'd also like to know how effective primary sources are in the long run. Being that I taught for only one semester, I want to know if students would enjoy primary sources throughout an entire school year. I'd also like to know what would happen if I tested students on primary source. Would they remember the sources? Would they remember the analysis? Furthermore, do primary sources really make students

understand history better? Finding a way to simply test all these questions is difficult, let alone being able to answer them.

A major complication of primary sources is the time, cost, and effort by the teacher (and students) that go into them. Giving every student his own copy of a primary source required seventy-five copies per primary source session in this study. Keep in mind this study was conducted in only three classes. In five classes, the number of needed copies would probably be higher. This can only come at tremendous cost to the school or the teacher. Unfortunately, students are unlikely to hold onto these sheets for very long, so giving a test on them would probably require even more copies. There is the option of lamenting the sources, or even binding them into books, but this is also cost prohibitive and the students may lose these too. This is in addition to having the teacher constantly look for better sources, read them, and making the language more accessible for students. Although there are many advantages to using primary sources in the classroom, it may not be worth the trouble for some teachers. Thus, another important question is: What does a teacher do to lessen the time, cost, and effort of using primary sources in the classroom? Of course I dealt with these problems, but did so for less than two months. Would I be able to deal with them over the course of a school year?

Finally, I'd simply like to know what teaching with primary sources is like in a different classroom. Regardless of whether it is an Honors classroom or not, I'd simply like to see the questions and strategies I presented in this study applied to a different set of people. Would the results be any different, and why? And if turned out just as well in a future classroom, how could I make the results even better? How could I find and create the perfect set of primary sources for each class I teach, and what would be the

best ways to present them? All these questions boil down to an even simpler, but more difficult, question to answer: How do I create the perfect history classroom?

REFERENCES

- Anecdotal Records* (1992) Retrieved June 13, 2008 from <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/1-4/1/Anecdotal.html>.
- Barton, Keith C. (2005). Primary Sources in History: Breaking Through the Myths. *Teaching History*, June 2005, 245-753.
- Benedetto, Richard (2004, September 17). Who's more likeable, Bush or Kerry?. *USATODAY*. Retrieved June 4, 2008, from http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/columnist/benedetto/2004-09-17-benedetto_x.htm.
- Bloom, Nena E. and Stout, Cynthia (2005). Using Digitized Primary Source Materials in the Classroom: A Colorado Case Study [Electronic Version]. *First Monday*. Retrieved June 11, 2008, from http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue10_6/bloom/index.html.
- Borich, Gary D. (2007). *Effective Teaching Methods*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education Inc.
- Cunningham, Deborah (2004). Empathy without Illusions *Teaching History*, (114), 24-29.
- Dallmer, Denise (2007). Teaching Students about Civil Rights Using Print Materials and Photographs. *The Social Studies*, July/August 2007, 153-158.
- Documents: Monroe on the Adams-Clay Bargain* (1937) *The American Historical Review*, 42(2), 273-276.
- Douglass, Frederick (1987). *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press (1987).
- Freedom and Slavery (1859, December 6). *The Spectator*. Retrieved April 13, 2008, from <http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/teaching/vclassroom/proslavewsht2.html>.
- Hatch, Robert A. (2003). *Reading Primary Sources*. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from University of Florida Website: <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/rhatch/pages/02-TeachingResources/readingwriting/05prim-read.htm>.
- History in the Raw*. (2007) Retrieved June 5, 2008, from <http://www.archives.gov/education/history-in-the-raw.html>.
- How to Read Primary Sources*. (n.d.) Retrieved June 5, 2008, from University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Historical Society Website: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/primarysources.asp>

- Hutton, Tracy. (2008). The Power of Primary Sources: How Teaching American History Grants Changed My Classroom [Kansas]. *National History Education Clearinghouse*. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://teachinghistory.org/tah-grants/lessons-learned/14951>.
- Jacobson, Frances F. (2004). Remembrance of Things Past. *School Library Journal*, 46, 35.
- Larsson, Yvonne & Matthews, Richard & Booth, Martin (2004). The Teaching and Learning of history for 15-16 year olds: Have the Japanese anything to learn from the English experience? *Teaching History*, March 2004, 37-43.
- Levy, Peter B. (2004). Teaching the 1960s with Primary Sources. *The History Teacher*, 38(1) 9-20.
- Loewen, James W. (1995). *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. New York: Touchstone.
- McClellan, Jim R. (2000). *Changing Interpretations of America's Past*
- McIntosh, Noel (1996). *Why Do We Lecture?* U.S. Agency for International Development. Retrieved June 9, 2008, from <http://www.reproline.jhu.edu/English/6read/6training/lecture/lecture.htm>.
- Morgan Quinto Press (2007) *2006-2007 Smartest State Award*. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from <http://www.morganquitno.com/index.htm>.
- Morris, Ronald V. (2002). Use Primary Sources to Develop a Soap Opera: As the Civil War Turns. *The Social Studies*, March/April 2004, 53-56.
- Morris, Ronald V. & Morgan-Fleming, Barbara, Janisch, Carole (2001). The Diary of Calvin Fletcher - Using Primary Sources in the Elementary Classroom. *The History Teacher*, July/August 2001, 151-153.
- National Endowment for the Arts (2007). *To Read or Not to Read* (Report #47) Washington, D.C.: The Office of Research & Analysis.
- Phillips, Donna and Carr, Kevin (2007). *Becoming A Teacher Through Action Research*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Primary and Secondary Sources*. (2004) Retrieved June 5, 2008, from <http://www.lib.washington.edu/uwill/research101/basic03.htm>.
- Rationale for Using Primary Sources*. (2002) Retrieved June 4, 2008, from <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/fw.html>.

- Robinson, James Harvey (1904). *Readings in European History*. Boston: Ginn & Company.
- Second Reply to Hayne* (n.d.). Retrieved April 12, 2008, from <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~dwebster/speeches/hayne-speech.html>.
- Shedd, John A. (2004). Bringing Ordinary People into the Picture. *The History Teacher*, 23(1), 25-37.
- Sprenger, Marilee B. (1999). *Learning and Memory: The Brain in Action*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development. Dushkin McGraw-Hill.
- State of New Jersey Department of Education (n.d.) [*School name withheld*] *High School Report Card*. Retrieved June 12, 2008 from <http://education.state.nj.us/rc/index.html>.
- The Election in the House: Was there a Corrupt Bargain?* (n.d.) Retrieved April 12, 2008 from http://edsitement.neh.gov/printable_lesson_plan.asp?id=552
- Tocqueville, Alexis De. (2003). *Democracy in America*. Penguin Classics
- Tomlinson, Carol Ann (2005). *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classroom*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education Inc.
- Van Der Stuyf, Rachel R. (2002). *Scaffolding as a Teaching Strategy*. New York: Author.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). [*Town name withheld*]. Retrieved June, 14, 2008 from <http://www.census.gov/>.
- Warren, Wilson J. (2007). Closing the Distance between Authentic History Pedagogy and Everyday Classroom Practice. *The History Teacher*, 40(2), 249-255.
- Why Use Primary Sources?* (2007) Retrieved June 11, 2008, from frontiers.loc.gov/learn/educators/handouts/prsrc.pdf

APPENDIX A
Primary Sources with Primary Source Surveys

Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Representative John Holmes of Massachusetts
concerning the Missouri Compromise - April 22, 1820

I thank you, dear Sir, for the copy you have been so kind to send me of the letter to your constituents on the Missouri question. It is a perfect justification to them. I had for a long time ceased to read newspapers, or pay any attention to public affairs, confident they were in good hands, and content to be a passenger... But this momentous question, like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell [**a bell signaling the end**] of the union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve [**delay of punishment**] only, not a final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper. I can say, with conscious truth, that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach [**punishment**], in any practicable way. The cession [**release**] of that kind of property... is a minor thing which would not cost me a second thought if... a general emancipation and expatriation [loss of citizenship] could be effected; and gradually, with due sacrifices, I think it might be.¹ But as it is, we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is on one scale, and self-preservation is on the other.

I regret that I am now to die in the belief, that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of 1776, to acquire self-government and happiness to their country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be, that I live not weep over it.

1. What political event sparked this sad letter by Jefferson about the state of the Union?
2. What were Jefferson's plans for slaves?
3. What does Jefferson mean when he says "...we have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is on one scale, and self-preservation is on the other."
4. Did you think this article was interesting? Why or why not?

¹ What Jefferson means in this sentence is fairly simple, although he stated in a complicated way: If Jefferson could pay for all the slaves to be released and sent back to Africa - Jefferson didn't feel it'd be realistic for whites and blacks to live in harmony - he would do it because he knew it'd save the Union.

Robert Young Hayne of South Carolina - Speech to the United States Senate, January 21, 1830

...We [the South] found that we had to deal with a people [blacks] whose physical, moral, and intellectual habits and character totally disqualified them from the enjoyment of the blessings of freedom. We could not send them back to the shores from whence their fathers had been taken [Africa]; their numbers forbade the thought...and it was wholly irreconcilable with our notions of humanity to tear asunder [apart] the tender ties which they had formed among us to gratify the feelings of a false philanthropy [charity].²

What a commentary on the wisdom, justice, and humanity of the Southern slave-owner is presented by the example of certain benevolent association and charitable individuals elsewhere! [He's saying that slave holders have been wrongly called bad people, and this is further proven by abolitionist actions] Shedding weak tears over sufferings which had existence only in their own sickly imaginations, these "friends of humanity" set themselves systematically to work to seduce the slaves of the South from their masters. By means of missionaries and political tracts the scheme was in great measure successful. Thousands of these deluded victims of fanaticism [think of someone that is a fanatic - someone who is crazy about something] were seduced into the enjoyment of freedom in our northern cities.³

And what have been the consequences? Go to these cities now and ask the question. Visit the dark and narrow lanes and obscure corners which have been assigned by common consent as the abodes [homes] of those outcasts of the world - the free people of color. Sir, there does not exist on the face of the whole earth a population so poor, so wretched, so vile, so loathsome, so utterly destitute of all the comforts, conveniences, and decencies of life as the unfortunate blacks of Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Liberty has been the greatest of calamities, the greatest of curses.

Sir, I have had some opportunities to make comparison between the condition of the free negroes of the north and the slaves of the south, and the comparison has left not only an indelible [deep] impression of the superior advantages of slavery, but has gone far to reconcile [reunite] me to slavery itself.

...Sir, I have seen, in the neighborhood of one of the most moral, religious, and refined cities of the north where a family of free blacks was driven to the caves of the rocks, and there obtaining a precarious [insecure, unstable] subsistence from charity and plunder.

1. What is the argument for slavery in this document?
2. Is it a convincing argument? Why or why not?
3. Did you find this article interesting? Why or why not?

² In other words, it would be impossible and unfair to send slaves back to Africa because they already had ties in America - to their families, friends, and even whites.

³ According to the author, abolitionists had wrongly convinced slaves and freemen alike that the abolition of slaves was better for the slaves, and they'd done so with extreme fanaticism. They had done so through missionaries and political propaganda.

Nat Turner's description of slavery

Up to the time of the brutal flogging of my Aunt Esther--for she was my own aunt--and the horrid plight in which I had seen my cousin from Tuckahoe, who had been so badly beaten by the cruel Mr. Plummer, my attention had not been called, especially, to the gross features of slavery. I had, of course, heard of whippings and of savage encounters between overseers and slaves, but I had always been out of the way at the times and places of their occurrence. My plays and sports, most of the time, took me from the corn and tobacco fields, where the great body of the hands were at work, and where scenes of cruelty were enacted and witnessed. But, after the whipping of Aunt Esther, I saw many cases of the same shocking nature, not only in my master's house, but on Col. Lloyd's plantation. One of the first which I saw, and which greatly agitated me, was the whipping of a woman belonging to Col. Lloyd, named Nelly. The offense alleged against Nelly, was one of the commonest and most indefinite in the whole catalogue of offenses usually laid to the charge of slaves: "impudence." [Disrespect] This may mean almost anything or nothing at all, just according to the caprice [whim] of the master or overseer, at the moment. But, whatever it is, or is not, if it gets the name of "impudence," the party charged with it is sure of a flogging [whipping]. This offense may be committed in various ways; in the tone of an answer; in answering at all; in not answering; in the expression of countenance; in the motion of the head; in...the manner and bearing of the slave.

In the case under consideration, I can easily believe that, according to all slaveholding standards, here was a genuine instance of impudence. In Nelly there were all the necessary conditions for committing the offense. She was a bright mulatto, the recognized wife of a favorite "hand" on board Col. Lloyd's sloop, and the mother of five sprightly children. She was a vigorous and spirited woman, and one of the most likely, on the plantation, to be guilty of impudence. My attention was called to the scene, by the noise, curses and screams that proceeded from it; and, ongoing a little in that direction, I came upon the parties engaged in the skirmish. Mr. Sevier, the overseer, had hold of Nelly, when I caught sight of them; he was endeavoring to drag her toward a tree, which...Nelly was sternly resisting; but to no purpose, except to retard the progress of the overseer's plans. Nelly--as I have said--was the mother of five children; three of them were present, and though quite small (from seven to ten years old, I should think) they...came to their mother's defense, and gave the overseer an excellent pelting with stones. One of the little fellows ran up, seized the overseer by the leg and bit him; but the monster was too busily engaged with Nelly, to pay any attention to the assaults of the children. There were numerous bloody marks on Mr. Sevier's face, when I first saw him, and they increased as the struggle went on. The imprints of Nelly's fingers were visible, and I was glad to see them. Amidst the wild screams of the children--"Let my mammy go"--"let my mammy go"--there escaped, from between the teeth of the bullet-headed overseer, a few bitter curses, mingled with threats, that "he would teach the d--d b--h how to give a white man impudence." There is no doubt that Nelly felt herself superior, in some respects, to the slaves around her. She was a wife and a mother; her husband was a valued and favorite slave. Besides, he was one of the first hands on board of the sloop, and the sloop hands--since they had to represent the plantation abroad--were generally treated tenderly. The overseer never was allowed to whip Harry; why then should he be allowed to whip Harry's wife? Thoughts of this kind, no doubt, influenced her; but, for whatever reason, she nobly resisted, and, unlike most of the slaves, seemed determined to make her whipping cost Mr. Sevier as much as possible. The blood on his (and her) face, attested her skill, as well as her courage and dexterity in using her nails. Maddened by her resistance, I expected to see Mr. Sevier level her to the ground by a stunning blow; but no; like a savage bulldog--which he resembled both in temper and appearance--he maintained his grip, and steadily dragged his victim toward the tree, disregarding alike her blows, and the cries of the children for their mother's release. He would, doubtless, have knocked her down with his hickory stick, but that such act might have cost him his place. It is often deemed advisable to knock a man slave

down, in order to tie him, but it is considered cowardly and inexcusable, in an overseer, thus to deal with a woman. He is expected to tie her up, and to give her what is called, in southern parlance, a "genteel flogging," without any very great outlay of strength or skill. I watched, with...interest, the course of the preliminary struggle, and was saddened by every new advantage gained over her by the ruffian [**thug**]. There were times when she seemed likely to get the better of the brute, but he finally overpowered her, and succeeded in getting his rope around her arms, and in firmly tying her to the tree, at which he had been aiming. This done, and Nelly was at the mercy of his merciless lash; and now, what followed, I have no heart to describe. The cowardly creature made good his every threat; and wielded the lash with all the hottest of furious revenge. The cries of the woman, while undergoing the terrible infliction, were mingled with those of the children, sounds which I hope the reader may never be called upon to hear. When Nelly was untied, her back was covered with blood. The red stripes were all over her shoulders. She was whipped--severely whipped; but she was not subdued, for she continued to denounce the overseer, and to call him every vile name. He had bruised her flesh, but had left her invincible spirit undaunted. Such floggings are seldom repeated by the same overseer. They prefer to whip those who are most easily whipped. The old doctrine that submission is the very best cure for outrage and wrong, does not hold good on the slave plantation. He is whipped oftenest, who is whipped easiest; and that slave who has the courage to stand up for himself against the overseer, although he may have many hard stripes at the first, becomes, in the end, a freeman, even though he sustain the formal relation of a slave...I do not know that Mr. Sevier ever undertook to whip Nelly again. He probably never did, for it was not long after his attempt to subdue her, that he was taken sick, and died...One thing is certain, that when he was in health, it was enough to chill the blood, and to stiffen the hair of an ordinary man, to hear Mr. Sevier talk. Nature, or his cruel habits, had given to his face an expression of unusual savageness, even for a slave-driver. Tobacco and rage had worn his teeth short, and nearly every sentence that escaped their compressed grating, was commenced or concluded with some outburst of profanity. His presence made the field alike the field of blood, and of blasphemy. Hated for his cruelty, despised for his cowardice, his death was deplored by no one outside his own house--if indeed it was deplored there; it was regarded by the slaves as a merciful interposition of Providence [**intervention by God**]. Never went there a man to the grave loaded with heavier curses. Mr. Sevier's place was promptly taken by a Mr. Hopkins, and the change was quite a relief, he being a very different man.

Questions:

1. Briefly describe what happens in this passage by Frederick Douglass.
2. Why was Nelly whipped? What was her crime, according to the overseer?
3. Why do you think an overseer's job was so difficult morally?
4. Did you find this article interesting? Why or why not?

The Monroe Doctrine

Monroe to Congress - December 2, 1823

The French Revolution sparked revolutions across Europe and beyond. The foundations of monarchial society were set ablaze, and kings were toppled from their thrones. The fires of rebellion spread to colonies beyond Europe, and revolution threatened to leave the older everywhere in ashes. But with great effort the powers of Europe succeeded in bringing the flames under control. Following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, there set in a period of conservative backlash. Kings were restored to the throne of European states, and they moved quickly to suppress the republican movements. They formed a Holy Alliance to extinguish the embers of democratic zeal wherever their glow could be detected. A Quadruple Alliance of the kings of Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Britain within the Holy Alliance constituted a powerful bloc of reactionary force. This coalition, called the Quintuple Alliance after 1818 when joined by France following restoration of its monarchy, attempted to direct the affairs of Europe in the post-Napoleonic period. When new revolutions broke out across southern Europe in 1820 and 1821, the Alliance moved against them swiftly. Austrian troops smothered revolts in Italy and French forces did the same in Spain.

The resurgence of monarchy worried the United States. As a nation whose own revolution had led to a republican form of government, America was uneasy about the ultimate reach of the Alliance. Would the French, America wondered, turn their might toward restoration of Spanish rule over the rebel governments of Latin America? Did the Russian czar have ambitions over larger areas of the Pacific Northwest? American concerns about becoming entangled in European politics had first been raised a generation earlier. President Washington, in his farewell message of 1796, offered that "it is our policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." And President James Madison, in 1810, ordered the "temporary occupation" of west Florida, a Spanish possession. Madison feared that Spain was too weak to protect its colonies and might transfer ownership to another European power.

The British began to have second thoughts about involvement with the Alliance. They were concerned that their allies were becoming too powerful and therefore a threat to British independence. The British also worried that a possible restoration of Spanish control over Latin America might block the increasingly lucrative trade that British merchants were developing there. On August 16, 1823, the British foreign secretary, George Canning, approached the American minister in London, Richard Rush, with an unexpected proposition [deal]. Canning suggested that the United States and Great Britain issue a joint statement in opposition to any attempt by the French to reassert European control over the former Spanish colonies of Latin America. Minister Rush transmitted details of this proposal to President James Monroe. After consulting with former presidents Jefferson and Madison, Monroe was inclined to accept the British offer. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, however, dissuaded him. Adams argued that it "would be more candid, as well as more dignified, to avow our principles explicitly to Russia and France, than to come in as a cockboat in the wake of the British man-of-war."

How did the European powers react?

A Russian Minister - In America (1823)

The document in question enunciates [**announces**] views and pretensions so exaggerated, it establishes principles so contrary to the rights of European powers that it merits only the most profound contempt [**hatred**].

Chancellor of Austria (1824)

The United States of America...have cast blame and scorn on the institutions of Europe...In permitting themselves these unprovoked attacks, in fostering revolutions wherever they show themselves, in regretting those that have failed, in extending a helping hand to those which seem to prosper, they lend a new strength to the apostles [**friends**] of sedition and reanimated the courage of every conspirator.

A Newspaper in France (1824)

Today for the first time the new continent says to the old, "I am no longer land for occupation; here men are masters of the soil which they occupy, and the equals of the people from whom they came, and resolved not to treat with them except on the basis of the most exact justice." The new continent is right.

Another Newspaper in France (1824)

Mr. Monroe, who is not a sovereign, has assumed in his message the tone of a powerful monarch, whose armies and fleets are ready to march at the first signal...Mr. Monroe is the temporary President of a Republic situated on the east coast of North America. This Republic is bounded on the south by possessions of the King of Spain, and on the north by those of the King of England. Its independence was recognized only forty years ago, by what right then would the two Americas today be under its immediate sway from Hudson's Bay to Cape Horn?

Questions to consider...

1. What is the Monroe Doctrine?
2. How did the European powers typically feel about the Monroe doctrine?
3. What is "conservative backlash"?
4. **Connection to today:** When a few Latin American countries were turning Communist during the Cold War, why was the Monroe Doctrine used to justify undermining these Communist governments?
5. What does the Monroe doctrine show about American strength in this time period?
6. Do you find this article interesting or not? Why or why not?
7. Which would you have preferred...reading about this in the book (with the author telling you about the Monroe doctrine), having me tell you what the Monroe doctrine is, or to have read these documents and see the words of the people living in this period? Tell why you chose the one you did.

The Corrupt Bargain

Source 1 - James Monroe Diary

Having reflected much, in the course of the night, on the communication made me by Mr. Adams respecting his administration and particularly the appointment of Mr. Clay to the department of State, I felt very much disturbed by it, from a belief that it would produce, a very unfavorable effect, on Mr. Adams, and the public, as well as Mr. Clay. It was known that the people of Kentucky preferred General Jackson to Mr. Adams, and that like a preference a given to him, by the people of some of the other western States, whose members had voted for Mr. Adams...I requested an interview at a very early hour, this morning with [blank] (**it was not put down in the primary source**) who was, I knew, of the same opinion with me, as to the impropriety of such an appointment, and requested him on an intimation of its danger, to see Mr. Adams, if he thought proper, and to make known to him, the public sentiments respecting it. He did so, and found, as he afterwards informed me, that the offer had already been made to Mr. Clay. ...In the evening Mr. Adams called, and adverting to what had passed in the former interview, stated that he had received an answer to the proposition which he had then informed me, he had made to Mr. Clay, which that he would accept the department.

James Monroe - 1825

What did Monroe think of Adams' appointment of Clay?

Source 2 - John C. Calhoun in letter

My dear sir,

...The mass of political and moral power, which carried the late administration through in triumph, has been wholly neglected in the new organization; and in the final stages of the election, the voices and the power of the people has been set at naught; and the result has been a President elected not by them, but by a few ambitious men with a view of their own interest, I fear. This result has caused the deepest discontent, and in my opinion deservedly. There is a solemn feeling of duty, that it must be corrected at another election, or the liberty of the country will be in danger. It is my opinion, that the country will never be quiet till the example is corrected, and the Constitution so amended as to prevent the recurrence of the danger. The country will appear to subside, but the appearance will be deceitful. Principles cannot be violated in this country with impunity [**without punishment**]. In four years all that has happened will be reversed, and the country will settle down on sound principles, and wise policy.

...I see in the fact that Mr. Clay has made the President against the voice of his constituents, and that he has been rewarded by the man elevated by him by the first office in his gift, the most dangerous stab, which the liberty of this country has ever received. I will not be on that side. I am with the people. And shall remain so...

Calhoun says he's "with the people." Why is Jackson supposedly more with the people than Adams?

Source 3 - Andrew Jackson on the “Corrupt Bargain”

The people [have] been cheated. Corruptions and intrigues at Washington...defeated the will of the people.

-Andrew Jackson's reaction to the announcement of Clay's appointment

So you see, the Judas of the West [Clay] has closed the contract and will receive the thirty pieces of silver. His end will be the same. Was there ever witnessed such a bare faced corruption in any country before?

—Andrew Jackson to William B. Lewis, February 14, 1825

This, to my mind, is the most open, daring corruption that has ever shown itself under our government, and if not checked by the people, will lead to open direct bribery... Mr. Clay is prostrate here in the minds of all honest and honorable men.

—Andrew Jackson to George Wilson, February 20, 1825

Jackson makes a big fuss about this “corrupt bargain”. Aside from the fact that he lost the election, what’s the big deal? What kind of precedent might this set for the future?

Source 4 - About Mr. Adams as a person

Mr. Adams during his administration failed to cherish, strengthen, or even recognize the party to which he owed his election; nor, so far as I am informed, with the great powers he possessed did he make a single influential friend.

John Q. Adams is supposedly not a “people-person”. What is the big deal?

Questions to answer (and remember to be as honest as possible)...

1. Did you think any of these sources were interesting? If so, which one, and why? If not, why not?
2. Write one - I would have preferred:
 - A. The book
 - B. Taking notes
 - C. Looking at the primary sources
3. True or False: I thought these articles were too hard, even with help
4. What was the big deal about the “Corrupt Bargain”?
5. What kind of person was John Quincy Adams?

Jackson's Inauguration Scene

The following is a description of the scene when Andrew Jackson was giving his inaugural address and how the people reacted to seeing him:

At the moment the General entered the Portico and advanced to the table, the shout that rent the air, still resounds in my ears. When the speech was over, and the President made his parting bow, the barrier that had separated the people from him was broken down and they rushed up the steps all eager to shake hands with him. It was with difficulty he made his way through the Capitol and down the hill to the gateway that opens on the avenue. Here for a moment he was stopped. The living mass was impenetrable. After a while a passage was opened, and he mounted his horse which had been provided for his return (for he had walked to the Capitol) then such a cortege as followed him! Country men, farmers, gentlemen, mounted and dismounted, boys, women and children, black and white. Carriages, wagons and carts all pursuing him to the President's house

[w]e set off to the President's House, but on a nearer approach found an entrance impossible, the yard and avenue was compact with living matter [people]. The day was delightful, the scene animating, so we walked backward and forward at every turn meeting some new acquaintance and stopping to talk and shake hands. . . . We continued promenading here, until near three, returned home unable to stand and threw ourselves on the sofa. Some one came and informed us the crowd before the President's house, was so far lessened, that they thought we might enter. This time we affected our purpose. But what a scene did we witness! The *Majesty of the People* had disappeared, and a rabble, a mob, of boys, Negroes, women, children, scrambling fighting, romping. What a pity what a pity! No arrangements had been made no police officers placed on duty and the whole house had been inundated by the rabble mob. We came too late. The President, after having been *literally* nearly pressed to death and almost suffocated and torn to pieces by the people in their eagerness to shake hands with Old Hickory, had retreated through the back way or south front and had escaped to his lodgings at Gadsby's. Cut glass and china to the amount of several thousand dollars had been broken in the struggle to get the refreshments, punch and other articles had been carried out in tubs and buckets, but had it been in hogsheads it would have been insufficient, ice-creams, and cake and lemonade, for 20,000 people, for it is said that number were there, tho' I think the estimate exaggerated. Ladies fainted, men were seen with bloody noses and such a scene of confusion took place as is impossible to describe,--those who got in could not get out by the door again, but had to scramble out of windows. At one time, the President who had retreated and retreated until he was pressed against the wall, could only be secured by a number of gentlemen forming round him and making a kind of barrier of their own bodies, and the pressure was so great that Col Bomford who was one said that at one time he was afraid they should have been pushed down, or on the President. It was then the windows were thrown open, and the torrent found an outlet, which otherwise might have proved fatal.

This concourse had not been anticipated and therefore not provided against. Ladies and gentlemen, only had been expected at this Levee, not the people en masse. But it was the People's day, and the People's President and the People would rule. God grant that one

day or other, the People, do not put down all rule and rulers. I fear, enlightened Freemen as they are, they will be found, as they have been found in all ages and countries where they get the Power in their hands, that of all tyrants, they are the most ferocious, cruel and despotic. The noisy and disorderly rabble in the President's House brought to my mind descriptions I had read, of the mobs in the Tuileries and at Versailles, I expect to hear the carpets and furniture are ruined, the streets were muddy, and these guests all went thither on foot.

[Source: Margaret Bayard Smith. *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906]

Questions to consider...

1. What did this description of Jackson's inaugural address show you about how the people felt about their President?
2. What did the author mean when she said it was the "People's day"?
3. After reading this description, why might some people feel like it was preferable to have an elite class of people running the country, as opposed to the people?
4. Did you think this article was interesting? Why or why not?

The Nullification Crisis

Excerpts from Webster's Second Reply to Hayne

Sir, let me recur [**recall**] to pleasing recollections; let me indulge in refreshing remembrance of the past; let me remind you that, in early times, no States cherished greater harmony, both of principle and feeling, than Massachusetts and South Carolina. Would to God that harmony might again return! Shoulder to shoulder they went through the Revolution, hand in hand they stood round the administration of Washington, and felt his own great arm lean on them for support...

Mr. President, I shall enter no [**praise**] upon Massachusetts; she needs none. There she is. Behold her, and judge for yourselves. There is her history; the world knows it by heart. **The past, at least, is secure.** There is Boston, and Concord, and Lexington, and Bunker Hill; and there they will remain for ever. The bones of her sons, falling in the great struggle for Independence, now lie mingled with the soil of every State from New England to Georgia; and there they will lie for ever. And Sir, where American Liberty raised its first voice, and where its youth was nurtured and sustained, there it still lives, in the strength of its manhood, and full of its original spirit.

This leads us to inquire into the origin of this government and the source of its power. Whose agent is it? Is it the creature of the State legislatures, or the creature of the people? ... This absurdity [**nullification**] arises from a misconception as to the origin of this government and its true character. It is, Sir, the people's Constitution, the people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people...

I have not allowed myself, Sir, to look beyond the Union, to see what might lie hidden in the dark recess behind... While the Union lasts, we have high, exciting, gratifying prospects spread out before us and our children. Beyond that I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant that in my day, at least, that curtain may not rise! God grant that on my vision never may be opened what lies behind! When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous... republic, now known and honored throughout the earth... its arms and trophies streaming in their original luster, not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured...

Liberty *and* Union, now and for ever, one and inseparable!

Did you find this article interesting? Why or why not?

Alexis de Tocqueville - Northern and Southern society compared (1832)

Scarcely a hundred years after the settlements of the colonies, the planters were struck by the extraordinary fact that the states that had few slaves increased in population, in wealth, and in prosperity more rapidly than those states that had many slaves. This result seemed difficult to explain, especially since all the settlers, who were Europeans, had the same habits, the same civilization, and the same laws.

The difference was vividly shown when settlements reached the banks of the Ohio River. Rolling lands with rich soil extend along both shores of the Ohio. On either bank of the river the air is equally wholesome and the climate equally mild. Each bank forms the frontier of a large state. The state upon the left bank is called Kentucky. The one upon the right bank is called Ohio. These two states differ in only one way. Kentucky has admitted slavery, while Ohio has prohibited it. Thus the traveler who floats down the Ohio River may be said to sail between liberty and servitude. A brief inspection will convince anyone which of the two states is more favorable to humanity.

Upon the left bank (Kentucky) the population is small. From time to time one sees a group of slaves in the poorly formed fields. Forest lands are everywhere. Society seems to be asleep; the people seem to be idle. Nature alone offers a scene of activity and life.

From the right bank (Ohio) on the contrary, a busy hum is heard, proclaiming the presence of activity. The fields are full of abundant harvests. The elegance of the houses indicates the taste and activity of the workers. People seem to be enjoying that wealth and satisfaction which is the reward of work.

The influence of slavery extends still further. It affects the people's character. Upon both banks of the Ohio the character of the people is enterprising and energetic. But this vigor is used very differently in the two states. The white inhabitants of the Ohio, forced to live by their own efforts, regard prosperity as the chief aim of their existence. Since the land they occupy presents inexhaustible resources for their activity, their greed is extraordinary. They desire wealth, and boldly seize every opportunity that fortune opens to them.

The Kentuckians scorn not only labor but all the undertakings that labor promotes. As they live in idleness, their tastes are those of idle people. Money has lost some of its value in their eyes. They want wealth much less than their pleasure and excitement. The energy which their neighbors devote to becoming wealthy is used by them for field sports and military exercises. Thus slavery prevents the whites not only from becoming wealthy, but even from desiring to become so.

In Europe it is generally believed that slavery has made the interests of one part of the Union the opposite to those of the other. I have not found this to be the case. Slavery has not created interests in the South opposite to those of the North. But it has changed the character and the habits of the people of the South.

The citizens of the southern states become domestic dictators from infancy. The first habit they acquire in life is that they are born to command. The first habit they learn is that of ruling. Their education tends, then, to give them the character of a proud and hasty people - angry, violent, impatient toward obstacles but easily discouraged if they cannot succeed at the first attempt.

Americans of the North see no slaves around them in their childhood. They are not even taken care of by free servants, for they are usually obliged to provide for their own wants. As soon as they enter the world, they see the need to do things for themselves. They soon learn to know exactly the limits of their power. They never expect to use force against those who oppose them. They know that the surest means of obtaining the support of other people is to win their favor...

It is difficult to imagine a strong union between a nation that is rich and strong and one that is poor and weak. Union is even more difficult to maintain when one side is losing strength and the other is gaining it. The rapid increase in population and wealth in certain northern states threatens the independence of the southern states. The weak generally mistrust the justice and the reason of the strong. The states that increase less rapidly than the others look upon those with envy and suspicion. This is the cause of the deep-seated uneasiness and unrest on seas in the southern states. These states are a striking contrast to the confidence and prosperity common to other parts of the Union.

If the changes I have described were gradual ones, the danger would be less. But the progress of American society is rapid. Thus the prosperity of the United States is the source of its most serious dangers. It tends to create in some of the states that overpowering excitement which accompanies a rapid increase of fortune.

Questions to consider:

1. Did you find this article interesting? Why or why not?
2. Does this article help you to understand the differences between the North and South? What are they?

Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion

Richmond Whig, 1831

Here for the first time we learnt the extent of the insurrection the mischief perpetrated. Rumors had infinitely exaggerated the first, swelling the numbers of negroes to a thousand or 1200 men and representing its ramifications as embracing several counties...; but it was hardly in the power of rumor itself, to exaggerate the atrocities which have been perpetrated by the insurgents. Whole families, father, mother, daughters, sons, sucking babes, and school children, butchered, thrown into heaps, and left to be devoured by hogs and dogs or to putrefy on the spot. At Mr. Levi Waller's, his wife and ten children were murdered and piled in one bleeding heap on his floor. Waller himself was absent at the moment, but approaching while the dreadful scene was acting, was pursued, and escaped into a swamp with much difficulty. One small child in the house at the time escaped by concealing herself in the fire place, witnessing from the place of her concealment, the slaughter of the family and her elder sisters among them. Another child was cruelly wounded and left for dead, and probably will not survive. All these children were not Mr. Waller's. A school was kept near his house, at which, and between which and his house the ruthless villains murdered several of the helpless children. Many other horrors have been perpetrated. The killing as far as ascertained amount to sixty-two. A large proportion of these were women and children...

Virginia historian Robert R. Howison, 1846

...They were weak and cowardly, killing only the unarmed and feeble, and flying any determined opposition. Yet the revolt had inflicted painful wounds; many of the young and innocent had fallen, and many had been butchered who had gained a good name for benevolence to their species. The cruelty of the slaves was the more unpardonable, because it was unprovoked. They had never been treated harshly; Nat Turner himself declared that his master was invariably kind to him. Their outrages were prompted by nothing save an inhuman fanaticism. **How far they may have been stimulated by the prevalence of the abolitionist doctrines, introduced among them by secret agents, has never been determined.**

Historian Russel B. Nye, 1948

...the Turner revolt of 1831 made the South conscious of the possible effects on slaves of antislavery propaganda. Although it is certain that neither revolt was inspired by antislavery literature, popular opinion tended to connect them. Georgia, for example, shortly after the Turner insurrection, offered a \$5000 reward for the trial and conviction "under the laws of this state, [of] the editor or publisher of a certain paper called the Liberator."

Educator and Historian, John Hope Franklin, 1974

The South was completely dazed by the Southampton uprising. The situation was grossly exaggerated in many communities. Some reports were that whites had been murdered by the hundreds in Virginia. Small wonder that several states felt it necessary to call special sessions of the legislature to consider the emergency. Most states strengthened their

Slave Codes, and citizens literally remained awake nights waiting for the Negroes to make another break.

Time to think...

1. Briefly summarize what happened in Nat Turner's rebellion.
2. Describe the effects Turner's rebellion had on the South.
3. Were these primary source documents interesting to you? Why or why not?

The Good of Slavery from *The Spectator*

The Spectator, December 5, 1859, p. 2, c. 1

We have never entertained a doubt that the condition of the Southern slaves is the best and most desirable for the negroes, as a class, that they have ever been found in or are capable of. There is abundant evidence to prove that the black man's lot as a slave, is vastly preferable to that of his free brethren at the North. A Boston paper of recent date tells of a likely negro man, twenty-eight years old, who purchased his freedom in Virginia and removed to Boston.--He is sober, industrious and willing to work, but instead of meeting with sympathy from the Abolitionists, he had been deceived, cheated and driven from their presence. The writer describes him as bemoaning his hard lot, weeping like a child, lamenting that he had ever left his former master, and declaring that if he had the means he would gladly return to the old Virginia plantation. And this, we have reason to believe, is not an isolated case, but the experience of a large majority of emancipated slaves and run-away negroes in the Northern States...

The intelligent, christian slave-holder at the South is the best friend of the negro. He does not regard his bonds-men as mere chattel property, but as human beings to whom he owes duties. While the Northern Pharisee [**self-righteous person**] will not permit a negro to ride on the city railroads, Southern gentlemen and ladies are seen every day, side by side, in cars and coaches, with their faithful servants. Here the honest black man is not only protected by the laws and public sentiment, but he is respected by the community as truly as if his skin were white. Here there are ties of genuine friendship and affection between whites and blacks, leading to an interchange of all the comities of life. The slave nurses his master in sickness, and sheds tears of genuine sorrow at his grave. When sick himself, or overtaken by the infirmity of age, he is kindly cared for, and when he dies the whites grieve, not for the loss of so much property, but for the death of a member of the family.--This is the relation which slaves generally, and domestic servants universally, sustain to their white masters.

There is a vast deal of foolish talk about the delights of freedom and the hardships of slavery. In one sense no one, white or black, is free in this world. The master orders his slave to work in a certain field, when he perhaps would prefer to go elsewhere--this is slavery. But is the master free to do as he pleases! Not so.--He is driven by as stern a necessity to labor with his hands or confine himself to business, as the slave ever feels. We are all therefore slaves.--But when the man, whatever his complexion, recognizes the fact that his lot is ordained of God, and cheerfully acquiesces [**agrees**], he becomes a free man in the only true sense. He then chooses to do and to bear what otherwise might be irksome and intolerable. [NOTE: In the final sentence, the author is saying that once any man realizes he is a slave and that this is simply part of God's world - because all of us are obligated to do things we don't want to do in life- only then can a man be happy.]

1. What happened to the industrious black man who went up North after buying his freedom?
2. Why is Southern slavery apparently better than Northern abolitionism?
3. According to the author, freedom doesn't exist in this world. Why not?
4. Is this a good argument? Why or why not?
5. Did you find it interesting this article interesting? Why or why not?

APPENDIX B
Summary Questionnaire and Interview Questions

Summary Questionnaire

Questionnaire

1. What is your favorite class (other than gym, lunch, Driver's Ed.)? Why?

2. What is your least favorite class (other than gym or lunch)? Why?

3. How do you like History classes, in general?

4. How do you like History class with me? (Be honest... I won't be offended and it won't affect your grade!)

5. How did you like the **primary source sheets** I often handed out? What did you think of them?

6. How could I have made the **primary source sheets** better/more interesting?

7. What is your favorite way to learn history? (i.e. notes, primary sources, the book etc.) Why?

8. What is your least favorite way to learn history?

Interview Questions

For those that did like the primary sources:

1. What was your favorite primary source?
2. Why did you like the primary sources?
3. What is your favorite kind of instruction?

For those that didn't like the primary sources:

1. Did you like any primary sources?
2. Why didn't you like the primary sources?
3. What is your favorite kind of instruction?

For those that thought the primary sources were okay:

1. What primary sources did you like?
2. What could have made some sources better?
3. What is your favorite kind of instruction?

APPENDIX C
Permission Slip

To the Parent or Guardian of _____,

My name is Kevin Foster, and for approximately three and a half months, I was your child's teacher in their *U.S. History I* classroom at [deleted] High School. I was a Student-Teacher from Rowan University (Glassboro, NJ) and was fulfilling part of the requirement to graduate for a Master's Degree in Secondary Education and for teacher certification. Of course, I was under the supervision of your child's official teacher, Mr. Stevenson [pseudonym].

Part of the requirement to receive my Master's Degree is to write a thesis. This thesis is nothing more than a long research paper. I chose to write my thesis on primary sources and to determine whether students enjoyed them or not. Primary sources are the writings and picture of the people we are studying - literally from that time period. Primary sources are already required by the curriculum, but I chose to use them as much as possible.

I have collected various pieces of class work during my Student-Teaching for this research paper: samples of student work, a questionnaire, and a few interviews. These pieces of data contain no sensitive information and are only related to primary sources. Nonetheless, the standards of Rowan University require me to ask permission of the student's parents to use this information in the paper. This project has already been approved by the school board and Mr. Stevenson. **I would like to note, that under no circumstance, actual student names will never be used and will be replaced by pseudonyms. Your child's privacy is extremely important to me and is a requirement of this report.**

What follows is a consent form to allow various pieces of work, which your child has already turned in, to potentially be used in the paper. Once again, I'd like to stress that this data contains no sensitive information at all. It only asks questions like: "Did you like this primary source? Why or why not?" Your child is already well-acquainted with the information that was asked of them in class. And further, I'd like to note that a copy of this report, in its entirety, can be obtained once it is finished by contacting me. If you have any questions, or concerns, please contact me at [deleted]. I will be happy to hear from you.

I give permission for various pieces of my child's class work to potentially be used in Kevin Foster's thesis on primary sources.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian; Date

Thank you for your cooperation in this project and I assure you that it will help me become a better teacher, and will help the field of Education.

