

Volume II: A Lesson Plan from the National Archives and Records Administration for Middle and High School Students

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The **National Historic Preservation Act of 1966** (NHPA) has been called the most wide-reaching piece of legislation affecting preservation in the history of the United States. October 2006 marked its 40th anniversary. This occasion provides an excellent opportunity to introduce students to issues related to historic preservation, prompt them to consider why and how history—whether in the form of historic sites, manuscripts, artifacts, stories, or other forms—is preserved, and inspire them to learn more about the history of their own communities. The passage of the NHPA brought national attention to issues of importance to archival institutions—namely, preservation and access.

CORRELATION TO NATIONAL STANDARDS

United States History Standards for Grades 5-12:

Era 3: Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)

Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Era 9 Postwar United States (1945 to early 1970s).

NCSS Curriculum Standards for the Middle Grades:

Theme II. Time, Continuity and Change

Theme III. People, Places and Environment

Theme V. Individuals, Groups and Institutions

INTRODUCTION TO THE EDUCATOR

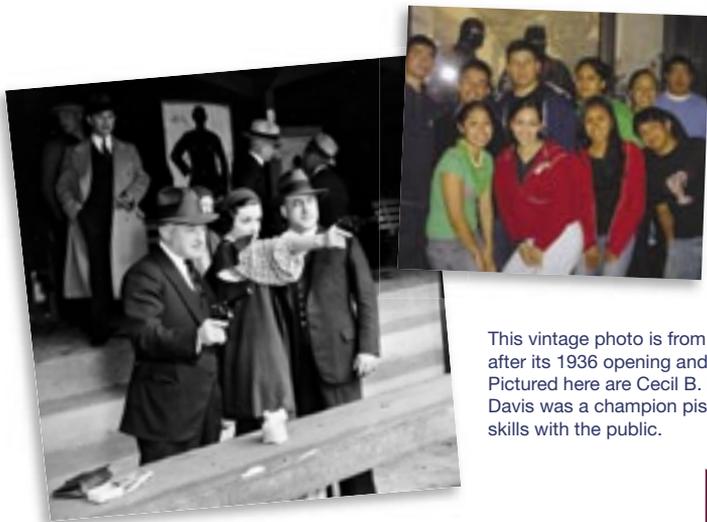
As students complete the activities below, they will build background knowledge through interactive experiences designed to help them examine their local history in thoughtful and engaging ways. Activities are appropriate for social studies, U.S., state, and local history classes and courses on government, civics, art/architecture, and English. Students will practice a range of skills by:

- Analyzing documents and conducting research;
- Working independently, with a partner, and in a small group;
- Accessing the online resources of the National Archives and Records Administration;
- Exploring documents with historical significance to the local community; and
- Communicating their ideas in writing and orally.

TIME REQUIRED

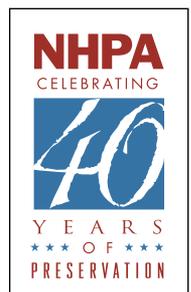
Time to complete the lesson will depend on the depth to which teachers wish to pursue each step. Steps 1, 2, and 3 can be completed in one or two class periods. The extension project will work best as an out-of-class assignment, a service-learning project, or an activity for a History Club.

The extension project can serve as the basis for entries for the Save Our History National Honors Teacher and Student of the Year Contests. Teachers and students who complete this project (or any local history preservation project) should visit www.saveourhistory.com for contest guidelines, deadlines, and entry forms.



For their *Save Our History* project, students from the police magnet program at Woodrow Wilson High School in Los Angeles, CA assisted the Los Angeles Police Historical Society Museum to organize, digitize, preserve and display their collection of historic photographs and negatives dating from the 1800's.

This vintage photo is from the pistol range at the Los Angeles Police Academy shortly after its 1936 opening and is one of the photos the students digitized and preserved. Pictured here are Cecil B. Demille, Chief James E. Davis and actress Gail Patrick. Davis was a champion pistol shot and enjoyed showing and sharing his marksmanship skills with the public.



ACTIVITY #1

Step 1

1. Lead a class discussion about what the phrase “save history” means by asking students to consider what is tangible about the past.
2. Assign pairs of students to create two lists. The first should include their reasons **why** they think people “save history.” The second should be **how** people save history—in other words, the actions that people take in order to save history.
3. Ask student volunteers to share their responses with the class and create two lists on the board based on their suggestions.

Step 2

4. Next, divide the students into four groups and provide each group with one of the following documents from the holdings of the National Archives.
 - a. Letter from Thomas Jefferson, December 29, 1801 (See page 5, or locate online at <http://www.archives.gov/about/history/building-an-archives/images/jefferson-letter.gif>)
 - b. Petition from John Muir and other founders of Sierra Club, January 2, 1893 (Go to <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/>, then click on the yellow search button, and input the ARC identifier number 306674. Click “all images” below the first page to see the complete document.)
 - c. Address of the President at the Dedication of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, June 30, 1941 (Go to <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/>, then click on the yellow search button, and input the ARC identifier number 197980. Click “all images” below the first page to see the complete document.)
 - d. Letter from Archibald MacLeish, December 30, 1941 (See page 6, or locate online at <http://www.archives.gov/education/exhibit/images/macleish-letter-print.pdf>)
5. Ask students to read their assigned document and collectively complete a written document analysis worksheet (Locate online from the National Archives at http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf.)
6. Invite one student from each group to describe the group’s document to the class. After each document has been presented, lead a class discussion based on the following questions:
 - a. What type of history was the author interested in saving (i.e. documentary, environmental, etc.)

- b. What reasons did the author give for wanting to save history? How do these actions compare with the student generated list (in #3)?
- c. What actions did the author take in order to save history? How do these actions compare with the student generated list (in #3)?

Step 3

7. Provide students with the text of Section I and II of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (available online from the National Park Service at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/nhpa1966.htm>). Ask students to:
 - a. Read the introduction to the legislation.
 - b. Highlight the section in the law that explains the reasons for it and compare these reasons to their list (from #3) and the reasons given by the authors of the featured documents (from #6).
 - c. Write a short summary paragraph explaining what the law did.



Students from Ligon Magnet School in Raleigh, NC unveil the interactive map that they created, tracing the history of the theft and recovery of the North Carolina Bill of Rights, stolen from the state Capitol building in the last days of the Civil War.



Police officers guard the original North Carolina Bill of Rights, which was returned to the state Capitol in 2004. Ligon Magnet School students, in association with the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, worked with this historic document as a part of their 2005/2006 *Save Our History* project.



Extension Project

Submitted by Save Our History National Honoree, Paul LaRue, High School History Teacher, Washington Senior High School, Washington Court House, Ohio.

The National Archives and Records Administration is a wonderful repository for historic documents related to the United States government. Many of these documents can be used in and out of the classroom to enhance units on American History. They can also serve as the basis for a unique, rewarding preservation project.

To complement units on the Civil War, Paul's U.S. History high school students used the resources of the National Archives to research and document the Civil War Veterans buried in their local cemetery. Many of the soldiers' graves were unmarked. Using the resources of the National Archives and the Department of Veteran Affairs, Paul's students ordered and installed headstones for over 60 Civil War Veterans laid to rest in Washington Court House and Bloomingburg (a large number of whom were African-American).

This community preservation project cost Paul and his students almost nothing to perform. Since the 1870's, the Federal Government has provided headstones for honorably discharged veterans at no cost. The process for researching and ordering headstones is relatively easy and can be accomplished by high school students of varying abilities.

To get a government headstone from the Department of Veteran's Affairs, you need to prove two things:

- 1) Location of veteran's grave in the cemetery. This info comes from the individual cemetery records.
- 2) Proof of military service. If you are looking at the Civil War era the records are accessible from NARA (military or pension files). Military service records for Civil War Veterans can be ordered from NARA at a cost of \$17 per record requested. But, keep in mind that NARA receives more than 4,000 similar requests each week through their "Order Online" service.

Here's how you can bring this project to life with your class:

Step 1

Research your local cemetery for veterans' graves. Walk through the cemetery with students looking for existing graves. Look for:

- Government headstones (round topped are Union, and pointed are confederate)
- Flag or flag holder with GAR insignia located beside a private headstone.
- Open areas (potential unmarked graves)

Research local cemetery records:

- Your local cemetery's own records
- Records of local genealogy groups (usually compiled from headstones)
- County Veteran's Service Office records of cemetery (veteran's burials)

Direct students to create a spreadsheet with: name, war, regiment, cemetery, source, etc. Also include any additional information: location of grave, condition of headstone, etc.

Invite students to explore the Civil War soldiers and Sailors System at <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/> to find additional information on local Civil War veterans.

Encourage students to compare data from various local sources with NARA data. Review and analyze any discrepancies.

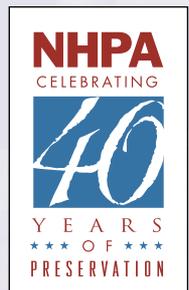
Instruct students to locate unmarked veteran's graves, and order headstones from the National Cemetery Administration, VA. For data on ordering headstones and learning about their history go to <http://www.cem.va.gov>.

Work with the cemetery to complete the installation of these headstones for the unmarked graves.



Above: Students not only helped to research and document the unmarked graves of the Civil War Veterans in their town, but also were instrumental in the installation of the headstones themselves.

Left: Veterans headstones were ordered by Paul LaRue and his students, marking the previously unmarked graves of the Civil War Veterans laid to rest in Washington Court House and Bloomingburg, Ohio.



Helpful resources for the Veterans' Headstone Extension Project

Data on ordering headstones:

National Cemetery Administration – <http://www.cem.va.gov>

Department of Veteran Affairs— Form VA40-1330—
<http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330.pdf>

National Archives and Records Administration--
<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records.html>

Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System –
<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss>

Readings on the history of veteran's headstones:

From NPS Teaching With Historic Places

Union — <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/115dayton/115dayton.htm>

Confederate — http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/123camp_chase/index.htm

View Paul LaRue's Students in action (approximately a seven minute clip), American Veteran: August 2005, Edition #7, Segment 1 The American Veteran - Public and Intergovernmental Affairs – <http://www1.va.gov/OPA/feature/amervet/amervet5-8.asp>.

Additional Information and Classroom Resources from NARA

The documents featured in this lesson come from the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration. They are among more than 124,000 documents that have been digitized by the agency and made available online. For access to the others, conduct a key word search in the Archival Research Catalog at <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/>.

For more document based lessons, visit the Educators and Students section of the National Archives web site at <http://www.archives.gov/education/>.

A "Teaching With Documents" article featuring the MacLeish letter is available online from the National Council for the Social Studies at <http://downloads.ncss.org/publications/TWDSep03.pdf>.

The October 2006 issue of *Social Education*, the journal of the National Council for the Social Studies, featured a "Teaching With Documents" article about the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.



Left: Teacher Paul LaRue (left) supervises students' work as they prepare a Veteran's grave for the installation of a headstone.



Above right: Students in Ohio dig in and help to install the headstones.



Letter from Thomas Jefferson, December 29, 1801

Sir ✓

Washington Dec. 29. 1801.

Having no confidence that the office of the private secretary of the President of the U.S. will ever be a regular & safe deposit for public papers or that due attention will ever be paid on their transmission from one Secretary or President to another, I have, since I have been in office, sent every paper, which I deem merely public, & coming to my hands, to be deposited in one of the offices of the heads of departments; so that I shall never add a single paper to those now constituting the records of the President's office; nor, should any accident happen to me, will there be any paper in my possession which ought to go into any public office. I make the selection regularly as I go along, retaining in my own possession only my private papers, or such as, relating to public subjects, were meant still to be personally confidential for myself. Mr. Meredith the late treasurer, in obedience to the law which directs the Treasurer's accounts to be transmitted to & remain with the President, having transmitted his accounts, I send them to you to be deposited for safe keeping in the Domestic branch of the office of Secretary of State, which I suppose to be the proper one. Accept assurances of my affectionate esteem & high respect.

Th. Jefferson

The Secretary of State.

Letter from Archibald MacLeish, December 30, 1941

