

History Fest Sessions 2021

Towards Truth-Telling and Reconciliation in Minnesota

George Dalbo and Joe Eggers, University of Minnesota

In the wake of the 2012 sesquicentennial of the U.S.-Dakota War, more social studies educators across Minnesota are teaching about the war and its aftermath through the lenses of genocide and settler colonialism. Such truth-telling, or (re)framing of the state's history, is an important step towards justice and reconciliation. This interactive session will introduce a newly developed middle and secondary curriculum created by the presenters and the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota encourages students and teachers to examine efforts around truth-telling and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities across Minnesota, the United States, and North America. Participants in the session will actively participate in several learning activities from the curriculum. Additionally, participants will engage in small-group and whole-group discussions to analyze the curriculum and imagine how it might be adapted and used in their context. Each participant will receive an electronic version of the curriculum, as well as additional related curricula and resources developed by the presenters and the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Understanding the Plague in History

Eric Beckman, Anoka High School

This session will provide resources for teachers to guide students to understand the Second Plague Pandemic of the Middle Ages (aka the Black Death) and to appreciate how historians construct knowledge. Scientists and historians have made discoveries over the last fifteen years that deeply affect our understandings of the Second Plague Pandemic, confirming some details of the traditional narrative while upending others. In the lessons modeled in the session students see how these changes affect our understanding of the Plague and then apply the same skills by drawing a conclusion about how medieval people experience plague, based on close reading of primary sources.

Digitized Primary Sources at the U of MN

Marguerite Ragnow, Curator, University of Minnesota

While the University of Minnesota has a wealth of freely available digitized primary source material, it is often difficult to find it. Marguerite Ragnow, curator of the James Ford Bell Library at the U of MN, will provide a guided tour of some of these digital resources, along with tips and tricks for finding them that you can use and can pass on to your students.

History Through a Poetry Lens

Nicholas Christopherson, Frassati Catholic Academy

This session will be about how to highlight and teach historical events through a poetry lens. We will look at how poets and musicians have portrayed historical events through their art. One prime example is Johnny Cash's song: The Wayfaring Traveler which depicts the mental and physical struggles soldiers experience on the battlefield.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Primary Sources

Jessica Ellison, Minnesota Historical Society

Primary sources are for everyone, including our youngest learners! Using the framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, this session will share strategies for elementary teachers to reflect upon their history instruction and incorporate various primary sources that are relevant to their students. Learn from Minnesota Historical Society teacher educators and current elementary teachers on how to find and use engaging sources in your classroom.

Using Primary Sources with ALL Students

Wendy Harris, Metro Deaf School

Have you ever wondered how you could support ALL students with primary source research? Primary sources are a great way to develop critical thinking, literacy skills, and increase students' interest in historical topics. Learn how to make primary sources accessible to all students--including those who have academic challenges or are learning English. Participants will leave with strategies to engage learners K-12 in deep dives into primary sources.

One Year of an Ethnic Studies Elective

Peter McKown and Kaitlin Hallet-Pugh, Wayzata High School

Interested in implementing an Ethnic Studies course? Wayzata High School started offering "Race and Ethnicity in America" last year. This presentation will talk through the questions we considered when creating the course, how we chose what to cover, and what were our lessons and assessments.

The History of Native American in American Colonialism Social Studies Classroom

Sara Tostenson, Mankato West

There is a plethora of scholarly work done on the indigenous confederacies of the Wampanoag and Powhatan during the time of European exploration and colonization. This research explores whether the typical secondary social studies curriculum includes these Native American groups, and if so, at what capacity? This research question is informed by my own experience as a high school educator, where I realized that I was not providing Native American agency in my American Studies class despite the fact that I believed I was including multiple perspectives. Through the comparison of the data collected from a sample teacher poll to the Becoming Visible Report on Native American Education in America, I identify major gaps in the education system on the Wampanoag and Powhatan confederacies in the history curriculum. Some of the most famous examples, such as Pocahontas and the story of Thanksgiving, lack the inclusion of scholarly research in classrooms to provide for a more accurate representation of American history. This is a small sample of a bigger problem; Native American agency in American social studies classrooms is lacking, outdated, inaccurate, and detrimental to the teaching of history at the secondary level.