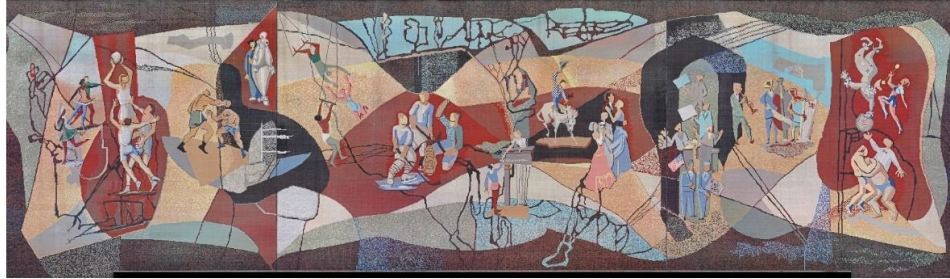


PERSHING MURAL PROJECT CURRICULUM

Learning From the Past, Understanding the Present, and Discovering the Future



THE PERSHING MURAL ~ A NEBRASKA CULTURAL LANDMARK

History Detectives

In this lesson, students will be asked to select an historic site and conduct an investigation using their interviewing, research, problem-solving and organizational skills to gather as much information as they can. They will then use their language skills to write a summary for the case file they will create for the site.

Note: The Lesson “Making the Case for Historic Preservation” is a good complement with this lesson.

Included in this Lesson:

- Lesson Plan: History Detectives
- Power Point: Training to be a History Detective
- Power Point: Conducting an Oral History Interview
- PDF: Conducting Oral History Interviews – Quick Tips
- History Harvest Sample Permission Form for Oral History Interviews

Nebraska Standards Addressed:

Present: SS 6.4.5 Apply the inquiry process to construct and answer historical questions.

Connect: SS 6.4.1.b Analyze the impact of historical events in the world using symbols, maps, documents, and artifacts.

Respond: SS 6.4.4 Interpret and evaluate sources for historical context.

Create: SS 6.4.2 Use multiple perspectives to identify the historical, social, and cultural context of past and current events.

Objectives:

- The students will be able to use a variety of resources to research an historic site and learn about its significance.
- The students will analyze artifacts and articles using the tools made available in the lesson.
- The students will be able to gather information and compile it into a comprehensive report.
- The students will interact with people associated with a specific historic site, ask questions, and gather information.
- The students will determine the “life span” of an historic site and identify local, state, national, and world-wide events that corresponded to that time frame.

Grade Level:

Written at 6th Grade Level (educators are encouraged to adjust the lesson to meet needs of Pre-K to 12th Grade)

Materials Needed:

Case folders for each student, paper, pencils, note pads, paper clips, sticky notes, markers, glue sticks

Time Requirement:

3 – 5 (50-minute) class periods

Vocabulary:

Archive: a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people

National Register of Historic Places: authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of

Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources (federal)

State Historic Preservation Officer: historians and preservationists who carry out a multitude of responsibilities in historic preservation on a state level such as surveying, evaluating, and nominating significant historic buildings, sites, structures, districts, and objects to the National Register (state)

History Nebraska: History Nebraska was founded in 1878 as the Nebraska State Historical Society with a mission to collect, preserve, and open a shared history to all Nebraskans (state)

National Park Service: authorized in 1916, the National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations (federal)

Department of Interior: The U.S. Department of Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage and provides scientific and other information about those resources (federal)

Introduction:

When mounted on the Pershing Auditorium in 1957, its Mural was the largest mosaic of its kind in the Western Hemisphere. When the auditorium was slated for demolition in 2023, a small grassroots group (the Pershing Mural Historic Preservation Committee) knew it was crucial that this iconic landmark be saved. Against all odds and resisting much pushback, the necessary funds were raised in record time to protect the Mural and arrange for its safe removal until it could be restored and established in its new home.

The Committee and those who contributed to save the Mural are passionate about its value to Nebraska and understand why saving historic sites and structures like the Mural is so important. From a cultural standpoint, the Mural connects us to the past and promotes the telling of human stories. It provides a link that strengthens our culture and humanity as it preserves our history. The Mural is an educational tool that serves as

a record of our society; it helps us make a strong connection with our history and culture. Physically visiting, touching and experiencing the Mural sparks imaginations and instills pride. Tragically, once our historic sites are erased and demolished, there is no getting them back so all should be diligent to recognize and protect the important places from our past. The more we learn about our history and the important places that have played a part in our heritage, the richer we are for understanding the community in which we live and who we are.

Direct Instruction:

There are many “tools” that are available in investigating and researching the historic sites in our State. Below is a listing of some of the agencies, organizations, and sources (along with their websites and links) that are available to assist students in exploring historic sites.

“The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation’s historic sites deemed worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (during the presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson), the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archeological resources.” – from the National Park Service website

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/what-is-the-national-register.htm>

The Register is a treasure trove for historians, scholars, travelers, and anyone who wishes to delve into American history. As of the end of 2023, more than 98,000 properties were listed on the National Register. Almost every county in the United States has at least one place listed in the National Register.

On a State level, State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) also play a critical role in historic preservation. Some of the duties include surveying, evaluating, and nominating significant historic buildings, sites, structures, districts, and objects to the National Register. To learn more about Nebraska’s SHPO, visit <https://history.nebraska.gov/historic-preservation/> .

Nebraska currently has over 1,000 properties throughout the State listed on the Register—everything from private residences to county courthouses to

archeological sites. To check out the map of historic sites provided by History Nebraska, log onto <https://gis.ne.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d6647460f336442e8eae88ef2a85523a> .

For a detailed, interactive listing of historic sites in Nebraska, log onto: Wikipedia National Register of Historic Places listings in Nebraska https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Nebraska

History Nebraska's website <https://history.nebraska.gov/historic-preservation/national-register-historic-places/> lists frequently asked questions about historic places on the National Register. History Nebraska is available to help prepare nominations by providing professional guidance on the historical and architectural aspects of properties, verifying that nominations are properly documented to demonstrate significance and ensuring that nominations are prepared to meet the National Park Service requirements. To learn more about the nomination process, visit: <https://history.nebraska.gov/historic-preservation/> .

There is a plethora of resources available to research historic places in Nebraska. You can find more information on the historic preservation programs listed on the Department of the Interior websites:

- Preservation: <https://www.doi.gov/library/internet/historic>
- Interior Museum Program: <https://www.doi.gov/museum/>
- Natural and Cultural Resources Recovery Support Function: <https://www.doi.gov/recovery/about-recovery/ncr-rsf-overview>
- The National Park Service and Historic Preservation: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservation/index.htm>
- NPS Archeology Program: <https://www.nps.gov/archeology/>
- NPS Technical Preservation Services: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>
- Bureau of Land Management Cultural Heritage: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/cultural-resources>
- Fish and Wildlife Services Historic and Cultural Treasures: <https://www.fws.gov/program/historic-preservation>
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management National Historic Preservation Act: <https://www.boem.gov/NHPA/>

- Bureau of Reclamation: Cultural and Paleontological Resources: <https://www.usbr.gov/cultural/>
- Bureau of Indian Affairs Environmental and Cultural Resources Management: <https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/division-environmental-and-cultural-resources-management-decrm>
- Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement: Archaeological/Cultural Resource: <https://www.bsee.gov/what-we-do/environmental-focuses/archaeological-cultural-resources-program>
- Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards: <https://www.doi.gov/pam/asset-management/historic-preservation/pqs>
- Secretary of the Interior's Historic Preservation Awards: <https://www.doi.gov/pam/asset-management/historic-preservation/historic-preservation-awards>
- Tribal Historic Preservation Program (THPO): [Tribal Historic Preservation Program \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/tps/learn/programs/tribal-historic-preservation-program)

Penny Post Cards from Nebraska <http://www.usgwarchives.net/ne/ppcs-ne.html> is another site to find historic images of postcards from 1917 to 1928.

“Architects and Prominent People: Historic Nebraska - People, Places and Landscapes” has information on a variety of topics throughout the State including information about Nebraska architects and historic markers: http://www.e-nebraskahistory.org/index.php?title=Main_Page

Another website that can provide historic images is the Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/search/?q=Nebraska&sp=1> .

To learn more about how to analyze historic materials, visit National Archives <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets>. All materials created by the National Archives and Records Administration are in the public domain. PDF's available from the National Archives are an excellent resource that will help students analyze items (photographs, written documents, artifacts, posters, maps, cartoons, videos, sound recordings, and artwork) that they uncover during their investigations.

Guided and Independent Practice:

There are thousands of books, movies, and TV shows that feature detectives who uncover information or solve crimes. To be good at their jobs, detectives must analyze and process information, connect clues, and reach conclusions based on the information they put together. They must have good “people skills” to use in conducting interviews to gather information, follow trails, and find and use resources. A good detective pays attention to even the smallest detail and is curious, persistent, and determined.

With this lesson, students are going to become detectives to investigate historic places in Nebraska. They can research online using the sites listed above; however, they can also physically dig into archives, county records, old newspapers, etc. to learn about their specific historic site. If possible, they will conduct interviews, make on-site visits, and piece together as much information as possible to make a full report of the site they have chosen. The PDF “Conducting Oral History Interview – Quick Tips” will be helpful for the students to plan and conduct interviews related to their sites.

On a local level, students can identify and explore local (county and city) historical and genealogical societies, historic cemeteries, museums, and libraries to gather information for their investigation. And always remember that History Nebraska in Lincoln (Nebraska’s Historical Society) is a rich source of information and resources.

A detective’s final case file will include all the documents that have been gathered and a final written report summarizing and tying all the information together and drawing conclusions.

Process:

- 1) Using the National Historic Register (or https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Nebraska) each student will select an historic site in Nebraska they are going to investigate. The site may be in their city, community, or county or it can be any site in Nebraska. Selecting a site “close to home” has the benefit of making it easier for the student to visit the location and conduct interviews in person.

- 2) Each student will use at least four sources (online or in person) in investigating their site (e.g. archives, History Nebraska, personal interviews, personal visits, etc.),
- 3) Each student will be a detective and explore their site, gathering at least four items they will then analyze, using the format from the National Archives PDF's:
 - Photos
 - Documents
 - Maps
 - Posters
 - Newspaper articles
 - Historic accounts
 - Diaries
 - Construction dates and information
 - Architectural styles and features
 - Real-life stories of those who lived or used the site
 - An historical record of the site, how it evolved, and people associated with it
- 4) Each student should consider visiting their site, if possible, to:
 - Take photos
 - Interview owners of the property, tour guides, and/or local preservationists, taking notes or recording the interview
 - Solicit stories (factual or hearsay) about the property and its history
 - Walk through the neighborhood of the site and gather information about the community's history
- 5) Students will make a chronological timeline of the site's "lifespan" to visualize its history. The timeline will list events affecting the site and/or its owners (births, deaths, additions, fires, storms, etc.) as well as major events (local, state, national and international) which occurred during the existence of the site. This timeline will help students understand how the history of the site fits into larger patterns of history. To make the timeline, students should:
 - Determine the origination date of the site
 - Determine the time that elapsed from the origination date to the present date

- Determine the important events that transpired during this stretch of time and place them in chronological order
 - Make a scale of the timeline, lay it out in segments (5-year, 10-year, 20-year, etc.), and insert the events that transpired in the appropriate sections
- 6) After concluding their investigation, the “detectives” will write a final report (at least three to four paragraphs long using correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation) which:
- Identifies the site they investigated, including any pertinent information from the National Registry: official name on the Registry, date listed on the Registry, location, city/town, and description
 - Explains the process and resources they used in conducting their investigations
 - Lists all the articles/artifacts they have gathered during the investigation, including where they were found, how they were found, how they were authenticated, and what their analyses disclosed
 - Makes notations about their observations, anecdotes, or intriguing aspects of the case (how they gathered information, background material about those they interviewed, etc.)
 - Gives a summary of their findings about their sites, its history and relevance, and why the sites should continue to be preserved
- 7) The last step for the students is to gather all their findings and put them together in an orderly fashion in their case folders. These labeled case folders should include:
- An inventory of everything that is included in the file
 - Every item, artifact, photo, article, etc. they have discovered, carefully labeled with notations
 - A chronological timeline
 - A final report

Note to Teachers:

- 1) Visit the website <https://timeline.knightlab.com> to download a free digital timeline tool that may be helpful for the students in creating their timelines. Knight Lab also makes a digital “Story Maps” tool that is also free and very useful; visit <https://storymap.knightlab.com>. Finally, Knight Lab has an app called Juxtapose that allows people to put a historical photo side-by-side with a contemporary image of the same site; visit <https://juxtapose.knightlab.com>.*
- 2) For students interested in learning more about how to conduct interviews and record oral histories, a good resource can be found at HistoryLink.org: <https://www.historylink.org/Content/education/downloads/Oral%20History%20Curriculum.pdf> provides curriculum and a project guide for second school students conducting oral history interviews.*
- 3) When conducting oral history interviews, it may be advisable for students to secure an interview permission form. A sample form used by the History Harvest Program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln which is part of this lesson packet can serve as a guide and be adapted for use by students for this lesson.*

Revealing and Discussing the Results:

At the conclusion of the case, students can share their findings with the class through small group discussions, displays, or presentations to the entire class. Once each student has had a chance to talk about their site and what their investigation uncovered—an open class discussion is helpful.

Discussion Questions:

- Were you surprised with the number of resources available for you to use? Which resources were most helpful?
- Was there anything you uncovered that was unexpected?
- What did you learn about the history and culture of the site you would not have known without your investigation?
- Were any of the artifacts you found especially helpful in understanding more about the site you investigated?

- When you conducted your interviews, what did you do in advance to prepare?
- What was the most unusual fact about your site that you uncovered?
- Which did you find most helpful, investigating online or investigating in person?

Evaluation:

The students will be evaluated on:

- 1) Use of research time
- 2) Number of resources they used in their investigation (at least four)
- 3) The number of articles/artifacts they were able to uncover for their file (at least four with proper notations)
- 4) A completed historic timeline based on the lifespan of the site
- 5) A final report that properly identified the property investigated, a summary of the procedure and sources used for the investigation, special notes about findings, and final impressions of the site and its relevance

Closure:

The month of May is “Historic Preservation Month” and is a perfect time to promote the preservation and appreciation of historic places. It is a time to take special pride in the rich history and culture that are promoted by preserving and learning from historic places in our communities. It is a great opportunity to celebrate the diverse and unique heritage of our country’s cities and states. This lesson serves as a starting point to get students excited about preservation and the history in their State. It is an encouragement to us all to explore, embrace, and appreciate our past as we look to the future.

Resources:

National Park Service, “What is the National Register of Historic Places?”
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/what-is-the-national-register.htm> *Public Domain*

History Nebraska <https://history.nebraska.gov/historic-preservation/> *Public Domain*

Wikipedia National Register of Historic Places listings in Nebraska
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Nebraska *Public Domain*

US Dept of Interior <https://www.doi.gov/pam/asset-management/historic-preservation> *Public Domain*

National Park Services <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/consider-a-place-a-curiosity-kick-start.htm> PDF on “Consider a Place: How Does This Place Connect to the Bigger Picture”. *Public Domain*

Library of Congress—Images from Nebraska:
<https://www.loc.gov/search/?q=Nebraska&sp=1> *Public Domain*

Nebraska State Historical Society, E Nebraska, Architects and Prominent People: Historic Nebraska http://www.e-nebraskahistory.org/index.php?title=Main_Page *Public Domain*

National Archives <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets> *Public Domain*

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