

Teaching with Folk Sources

Multiple Perspectives & New Voices

Authors

Shanendra Nowell (Oklahoma State University), Lisa Rathje (Local Learning), Sasha Antohin, Andy Kolovos, & Mary Wesley (Vermont Folklife), Michael Knoll, Suarmis Travieso & Vanessa Navarro Maza (HistoryMiami Museum), Sarah Milligan & Robin Fisher (Oklahoma State University), Lisa Lynn Brooks (Montclair State University), & Guha Shankar (American Folklife Center)

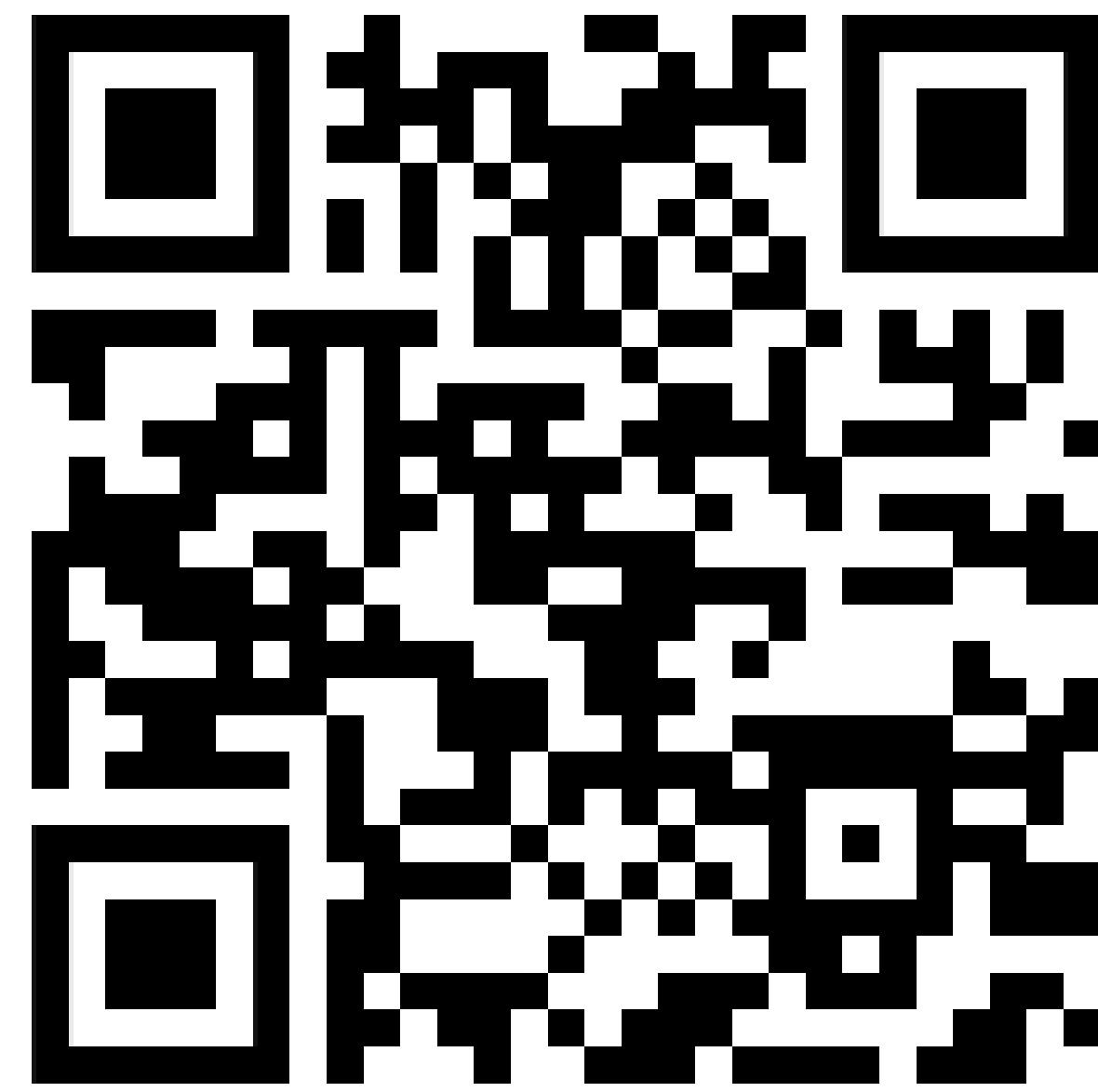
Learn more at <https://JFEpublications.org>, a publication of Local Learning.

Introduction

This curriculum, published by the [Journal of Folklore and Education](#), showcases research and researchers who seek to make direct human connections to documentation and treat cultural knowledge as a type of primary source.

Folk Sources are sourced from materials created by the methods of ethnography and oral history. They often represent an act of co-production and shared authorship between the researcher and the individuals and communities whose expertise and experiences inform a study.

Access Resources



Teaching with Folk Sources

We have created teaching units that can be engaged sequentially for a scaffolded learning experience that moves students from **Process** (interviews, documentation, and art) to **Product** (learning through listening, observing, reading primary sources) to **Analysis** (challenging history and primary sources). However, each class may also develop their own pathways through these assignments, using the essential questions and topics to inform their lessons.

Examples of assignments and activities that feature **Process** are those that center research methodologies from ethnography and oral history, including documentation and interviews (see especially lessons in Units 1 and 2).

We define **Products** to include the many kinds of items that can be found in an archive, as well as the secondary sources that are created for users and audiences of many types, including students, museum goers, and community participants.

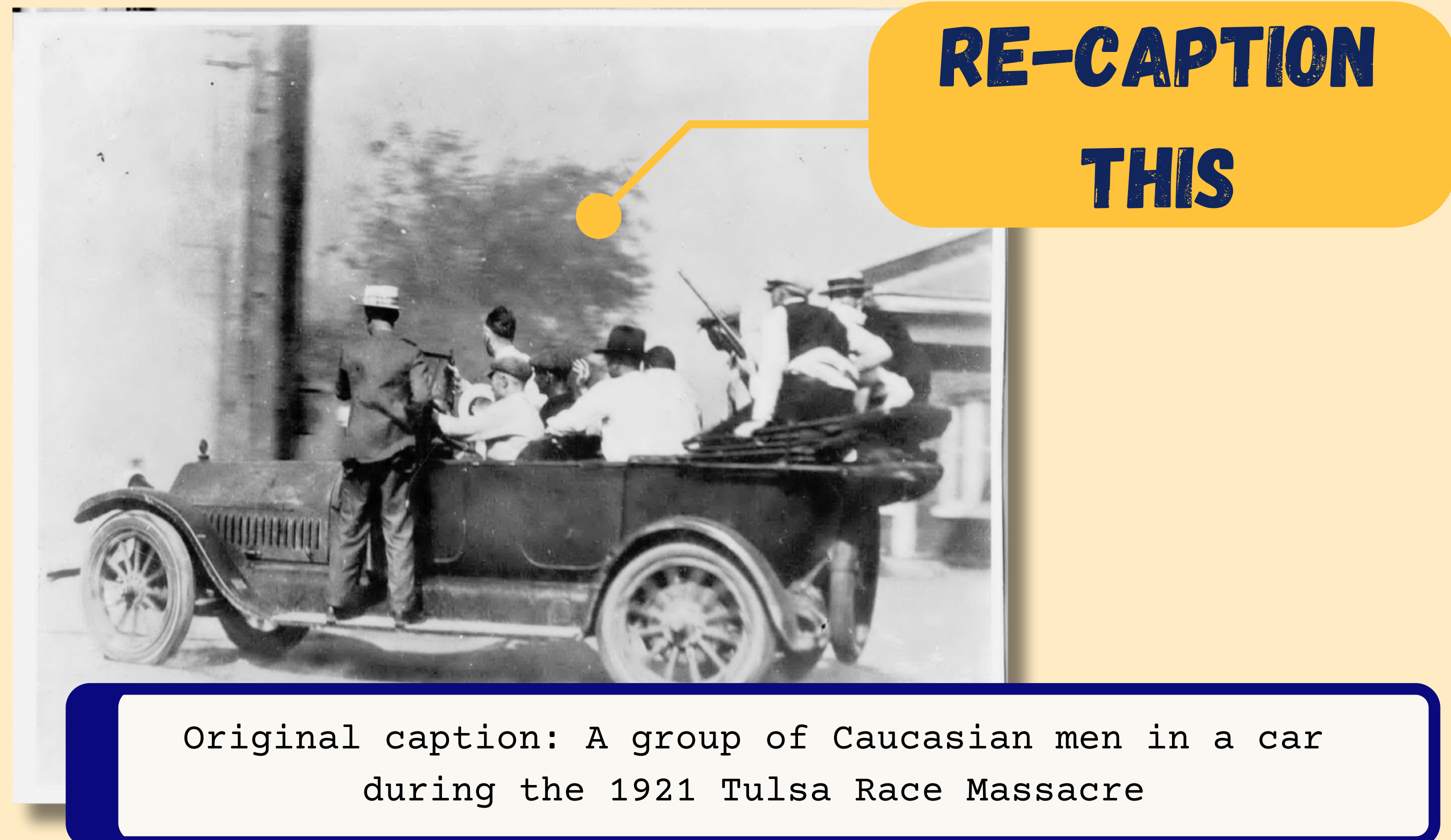
Lessons that center **Analysis** hone students' tools for interpretation, critical thinking, and considering essential questions that connect to education standards for many subjects (see especially lessons in Unit 5—Challenging History).



Within the archives of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress linguistic and cultural knowledge that is not found in other texts can offer students new perspectives, and potentially help them see themselves in history in new ways, particularly when intentionally brought into conversation with regional and local collections through our learning materials.

Challenging History

Through the lens "Challenging History" we engage history that may be hard to teach because of racist and unjust content, as well as "challenge" standard narratives about history to expand, through oral histories and primary sources, the multiple stories and perspectives that can be brought to the teaching and learning.



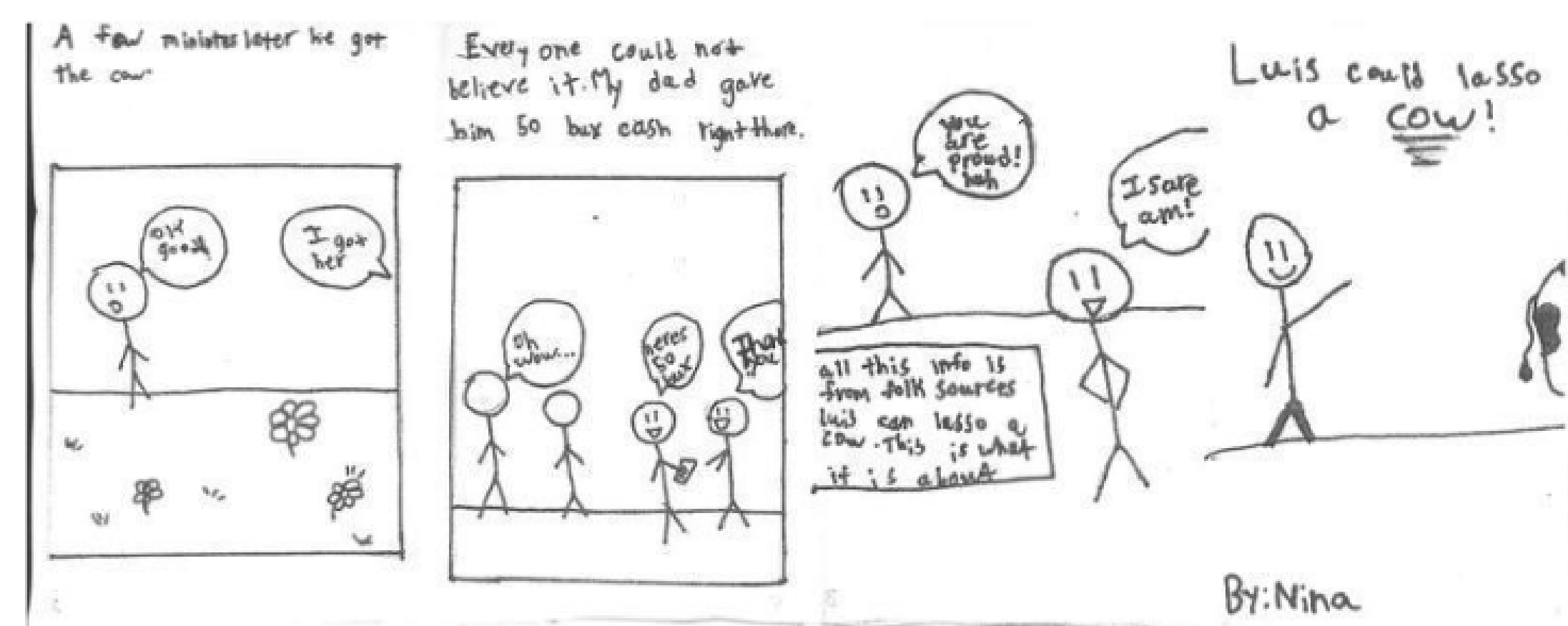
Original caption: A group of Caucasian men in a car during the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre

Learning through Listening

Discover how listening engages multiple skill sets, including understanding multiple perspectives, interpreting historical and cultural contexts, and knowing that the interview that collects the material which becomes a primary source is not neutral. Learn ethnographic tools to conduct student research projects.



CAN YOU DRAW WHAT YOU HEAR?



Learning through Observation

Students learn from objects that are primary sources, learning how to interpret the meaningful contexts of an artifact and to "read" objects like a text. Learn how museums interpret teaching with primary sources.



WHAT DO YOU SEE? THINK? WONDER?