Becoming Kansas: The People and the Struggles that Built the State

Watkins Museum of History
Maggie’s Journal: Opening a Window to the Past
Primary Lesson Plan (K-3)

History, Government, and Social Studies Standard(s)

Standard #1: Choices have consequences
Benchmarks:

1.1 The student will recognize and evaluate significant choices and consequences that have impacted our lives and futures.

1.2 The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about choices and consequences.

1.3 The student will investigate and connect examples of choices and consequences with contemporary issues.

Standard #2: Individuals have rights and responsibilities
Benchmarks:

2.1 The student will recognize and evaluate the rights and responsibilities of people living in societies.

This Becoming Kansas lesson plan has been made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy demands wisdom.
The classroom teacher should review the information in the Overview prior to arriving at the museum. Ensure that students understand the terms choices, consequences, rights and responsibilities as well as how they are connected.

Key vocabulary to front load for primary students:

Artifact: objects that are made, used, or modified by humans and give us information about life in the past

Invention: new thing made or created that is often the reason an artifact is no longer used or needed

Journal: an account of day-to-day events

Tardy: late, especially to school or class

Dialogue: a memorized verse delivered by a single person

Maggie Herrington, an early Lawrence resident, kept a journal of her experiences during the year 1867. Keeping the journal was a school assignment made by Maggie’s teacher, Miss Brown. Maggie’s entries follow the day-to-day life of a girl living in a mid-19th century frontier town. In her journal, 13-year-old Maggie writes about her friends, the challenges of muddy streets, visiting family on their farms outside of town, and fears of being tardy to school and issues of the times such as women’s suffrage.

The following are aspects of choices, consequences, rights and responsibilities:

- Every choice comes with a cost.
- Human choice is affected by culture, geography, politics, economics, social emotional attachments, and other people.
- Rights are something that societies often guarantee and come with responsibilities.
- A responsibility is a duty or obligation to perform or complete.

By reading Maggie’s journal students can experience the real-life record of a young girl’s thoughts, feelings, and experiences over a particular time in her school career. Her journal contains details that may seem unimportant at first, but which add to the reader’s appreciation and understanding of Maggie as a writer, student, and family member.

HANDLING MATERIALS

Watch for this icon for opportunities to use hands-on artifacts or materials to make each stop more interactive.
The Journal of Maggie Herrington

DISCUSSION/TOUR

Read the information below the cover picture to the students and note these items:
  o Maggie’s picture was taken in 1871.
  o Maggie was 17 when she got married.

As students view the cover photos ask the leading questions below.

LEADING QUESTIONS

Ask students how long ago 1871 was.
(Answers may include things like “a long time, lots of years, or a specific number.)

Have students look at the cover photo of Maggie. Ask them if they think she looks 17 in that picture. Why or why not?

Maggie was married at 17. Do you think that is a good age to get married?

Looking at Maggie’s picture what do you notice about her?
(Younger students may need prompting such as, “Does she look happy to you?”.)

How is this photo different from your school photos?

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Divide students into groups of 2 or 3
Provide each group with a copy of Maggie’s journal.

LEADING QUESTIONS

Look at the picture on the inside of the cover of the Methodist Church group. Help the students located Maggie and her sister Mollie. Ask how much older they think Maggie was than Mollie. What makes them think that?
Have students look through the journal in their groups. Each group selects one entry they would like to read aloud or have read to them – depending upon the age of the student. Younger students could call out a page number or season of the year and let the docent select the entry.

HANDLING MATERIALS

Copies of Maggie’s journal for each group of students
DISCUSSION/TOUR

Show students photos of downtown Lawrence - Massachusetts Street in the 1800s and see if anyone can identify it. Follow that by displaying a current view of Mass Street and ask the leading questions below.

Tell student in advance that students will be called on to answer questions.

LEADING QUESTIONS

What is one difference you notice between the 1800s photo and the current view of Mass Street?

What similarities do you see? (This may be harder for them so you may have to prompt with things like “How are people getting up and down the street?” Although the cars have replaced the horses and wagons there are still people walking)

Do you think it was easier to get around Lawrence in Maggie’s time or is it easier today?

HANDLING MATERIALS

Provide each group with a copy of Maggie’s Downtown map and crayons or colored pencils.
Share with the students that they are going to view a number of items that would have been used during the 1800s and perhaps by Maggie herself. Show them the spinning wheel first and ask if any of them know what it might have been used for. Explain that it was used to spin cotton from the fields into thread that then was woven into material or use to sew with. Next show the dress and handkerchief as example of items of necessity that would have been made from the cotton material made from the thread spun on the spinning wheel. Show the type of dishes that Maggie may have used in her home. Follow that by showing the dress that Maggie may have worn to school at one time. Explain that dresses were worn multiple days since students did not have numerous outfits.

Do you know anyone who carries a handkerchief?
Why do you think a handkerchief was an item of necessity?

Can you see any connection between the cotton, handkerchief, and embroidery hoop?
Here’s the tricky one…can anyone suggest a connection between the slate and the handkerchief? (If the younger ones need prompting ask them what they need to use a marker board or hand-held white board…the board, marker, and something to wipe the marker off the board when finished.)

Raw cotton; dress; school slate; handkerchief; embroidery hoop
Wrap Up Activity

Remind the students of 4 items about her school day that Maggie shared in her journal. (recess time, how she got to school, how concerned she was about following the rules; preparing for her dialogue)

Have students hold up 1, 2, 3, or 4 fingers to indicate what their favorite item was.

Leading Questions

Think about how your school day today compared to Maggie’s school days.

What is something that you and Maggie have in common?

What is something that is very different about your school day from Maggie’s?

What example can you give of how Maggie’s choice to follow school rules resulted in a good consequence?

If you are quiet does your teacher let you go home early?

Why do you think that Maggie’s teacher could do that?
Follow Up Activity

Journal writing can provide a method of reflection and allow students to express feelings regarding their educational experiences. The format of this writing can vary depending on the students’ needs and the instructor’s goals.

- Have each student create a journal entry for each day of a single school week.
- Have all students write about the same week so that they can compare their observations of the same classroom/school events.

Addressing Social, Emotional Learning (SEL) skills:

- Include SEL skills by asking students to include words in their entries that show how they felt about the events and/or how their behavior influenced their reaction to the events.
  - Discuss whether or not changing their feelings or behavior would have changed the event for themselves or others.
- Read Maggie’s entries from Friday April 19 and Thursday November 14.
  - Have a volunteer explain how Maggie and her friends spent their recess time on those two days.
  - Ask students to identify how those two day show how Maggie’s created healthy relationships with her classmates as well as to making positive or negative choices.

Providing Scaffolding:

- Younger students or those who are challenged by the writing can create these entries by drawing one event for each day that illustrates something important that made the day memorable, wonderful, or emotional.
- Allow the student to share their day with a scribe who writes it down for them.

Providing Enrichment:

Advanced students can create journal entries for a week in different seasons of the school year. They can also include events from each class each day rather than creating just a summary of each day.

To challenge the more advanced students have them illustrate their journal entries or specify a requirement such as each entry must be at least three sentences in length.

Make entries more complex by having advanced students include one success and one challenge for each day.