Teaching with American Folk Music

The Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Program

Folk songs are primary sources that tell great stories.

Great stories engage students of all ages in learning.

The Library of Congress Web site:

www.loc.gov

• Song recordings
• Oral histories and interviews
• Photographs
• Field notes
• And more!

Teaching with Primary Sources is a tool that helps educators

• find primary sources on the Library of Congress Web site
• use these primary sources in teaching and researching
Arizona

We were out in Arizona
On the calcium desert ground
To find a place to build our new home
We surveyed for a week or so
We hired a mechanic to help us
We sent for a load of gravel

We started to California
But our money didn't last long
I went to work in Oklahoma
We lived in my dad's house
Sunny Cal

You’re all heard the story
Of old Sunny Cal
The case where it came about
They say it don’t gone now.

Your way, you ran, you shone,
You’d find you’re even gone
They’ll soon you’ll hear down.
You can shine the whole year round.

Migrant
Mother

Tools for Teachers:

• Collection Connections

Curriculum Standards

• Music (K-8)
• Language Arts, Reading (3-8)
• Social Studies (4-8)
• English (high school)
• History (high school)
(Best suited for 5th grade and high school)

Tools for Teachers:

• Lyrical Legacy
Lesson idea: “Sunny California”

- Analyze song using worksheet, “Thinking about Songs as Historical Artifacts”
- Compare & contrast to “Sunny Cal”
- Compare to contemporary songs about California

Tools for Teachers:

- Educational Resources from the American Folklife Center

Lesson Idea: Songs of Working Americans

Search by
- “Audio Subject” for work songs
- “Keyword (Full Text)” for related field notes
- “Photo Subject” for related images

Analyze content (what the songs say) and structure (how they say it)

Get to Collection Connections and Lyrical Legacy from the Teachers Page

www.loc.gov/teachers

Find

- Images and songs
- Lesson ideas
- Curriculum standards
- More helpful links

Teaching with Primary Sources across Tennessee Web site:

www.mtsu.edu/tps

Click on “Presentations”
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Teaching with Primary Sources is a program of the Library of Congress and is administered in Tennessee by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University.