

in the TwHP lesson proved helpful in making students aware of what they were going to encounter. In addition, I dovetailed slides that I had taken on a previous personal trip into the lessons. A combination of the TwHP lesson plans, my slides, and our visit to Andersonville made both learning and teaching more powerful than any other approach could accomplish.

I was so taken with the lesson plans and their teacher-friendly format that I decided to submit a lesson plan for publication, based on a lesser known national historic site: Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire. Here I was able to take a personal interest—specifically in the life and work of one of America’s foremost artists, sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, creator of the Adams Memorial and the Shaw Memorial—and develop a lesson plan that was rich in primary source and visual material. In this lesson, teachers and students encounter the life of this great American artist, his home, and studio workshop, as he created a number of projects during the Gilded Age. While

I conducted my own research and developed the lesson, I found a great deal of support and assistance afforded to me both by site superintendent John Dryfhout and lead park ranger Greg Schwarz. My experience proved that there is a wealth of collaborative opportunities to be made between partnerships and alliances of public history institutions and schools. I think what gave me the most pride about my lesson plan was that this particular site—one of the least known in the national park system—received well-deserved extra attention. My lesson plan on Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site was published as part of the TwHP series.

James A. Percoco teaches AP (Advanced Placement) United States and applied history at West Springfield High School in Springfield, Virginia, and is the author of A Passion for the Past, a book detailing his approach to teaching history. He was named to the first-ever USA TODAY All-USA Teacher Team (1998), and Outstanding Social Studies teacher of the Year at the Walt Disney Company American Teacher Awards (1993).

Kay Kevan Callentine

Teaching with Historic Places in the Classroom

From the Boott Mills of the Industrial Revolution in Lowell, Massachusetts, to the horrors of Andersonville during the Civil War; from the waters of the Mediterranean with Stephen Decatur to the boyhood home of William H. Taft, the Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP) lessons have provided helpful support tools for me in my classroom. The topics mentioned are but a few ready for use by the busy teacher. The lessons available on the Internet have links as well, to help teachers keep up with the growing technological side of education. These resources bring a social dimension to history that is not possible by simply reading a textbook. TwHP makes history current and active as students engage in analyzing documents, search maps and photographs to find answers to questions, and explore elements of history that

can provide explanations and examples of why things in history happened as they did.

Curriculum materials are abundant and sometimes they are worthwhile. Such is the case with TwHP lesson plans, which provide a complete lesson plan for each topic. Included are background information, discussion questions, clearly stated lesson objectives, and a variety of student learning activities. The teacher can select desired activities from a variety offered, including those which can be done in a single class lesson, or for homework, outside research, or enrichment, depending on the time available. The several TwHP lessons I have used in a variety of classroom sessions fit well into U.S. history courses, including advanced placement, or in geography classes. I have used TwHP lessons in four basic ways: as whole class readings and discussion; as cooperative learning jigsaws, in which

individual students are responsible for portions of assignments and share their results with each other to form a whole piece; as document analysis practice; and as “destinations” for historical site visitations.

I became aware of TwHP in an issue of *Social Education* while covering a geography lesson in U.S. history several years ago. Desirous of sparking up the students’ activities, I used a lesson on naval hero Stephen Decatur. This exercise had maps, photographs, and readings on information about Decatur’s life to supplement what I was teaching about the Tripoli War of the early-19th century. As the students read the articles and looked at pictures and maps, we were able to discuss why things are built where they are in cities and the relationships that jobs have to where people lived at the time. For this exercise all the students read the same materials, which enhanced the lesson.

Since that first activity I have used others. While sometimes I put questions on overhead transparencies or worksheets for whole class discussion, the activities also lend themselves well to cooperative learning group jigsaw options. Because the questions offered in the lessons have different levels of difficulty, students can each be given assignments where he or she can be successful. Then group sharing allows everyone to make a contribution in the small group discussions. For this group exercise, I used the TwHP lesson, “Andersonville: Prisoner of War Camp,” but each lesson includes a wide variety of activity options.

Most recently I have experimented with TwHP’s online resources. As with the paper lesson plans, students engage in activities according to their ability levels or to emphasize content the teacher wishes to reinforce. The web site allows the user to browse topics by location, theme, or time period. For history this is an easy tool to use, especially since this use of the Internet saves time for the teacher, as nothing has to be duplicated. Students can complete the assignments during class time or visit the web site for homework; I have used it both ways. As a home assignment it can count as enrichment or extra credit if all students do not have access to the Internet. Another way TwHP is useful is to introduce a unit by taking a virtual tour of a historic site via the Internet. Several Civil War lessons helped students make broader connections among Civil

War battles, events, and issues. The lesson “Remembering Pearl Harbor: The USS Arizona Memorial” enhances student understanding of World War II in much the same way.

The applicability of TwHP activities to a variety of ability levels also makes them appropriate for advanced placement students. These students need a great deal of practice in analytical thinking, and the historical information in TwHP lessons provides just the right amount of reading for them to work on this skill. I use study groups and I ask students in each group to divide readings among themselves, with each member responsible for one document. Students share their findings with the group at their meetings and everyone gains information and practice. I can then evaluate their success by assessing their notes. Presidential lessons I have used for this are “Woodrow Wilson: Prophet of Peace,” “Herbert Hoover: Iowa Farm Boy and World Humanitarian,” and “Growing Into Public Service: William Howard Taft’s Boyhood Home.”

A final use I have made of these resources is for virtual tours of historical sites. My U.S. history students are required to visit a historical site each quarter. I want history to be a real experience and visiting places is one way I try to accomplish this. Since our community is limited in the numbers of historical sites it has to offer I have again turned to online sources. I encourage the students to visit one or more places featured in TwHP lesson plans as an alternative to actually traveling to a historical site. With a click or two of the mouse, students can visit national parks, monuments, and battle sites to fulfill the assignment. It’s like taking a field trip via the computer.

These documents and historical places add a personal touch to history, bringing it alive for students, giving historical figures out of the history books a more human dimension, and connecting the past to students’ real life experiences. They afford students the opportunity to visit places they might never otherwise see, and at a price they can afford! Over the years, I have found that the TwHP materials pique students’ interest every time I use them. I look forward to the next additions.

Kay Kevan Callentine teaches world history and geography, U.S. history, and AP U.S. history at Golden Valley High School, Merced, California.