

## **de Tocqueville's or Jackson's America? Life in the Early 1800s**

### **The Basics**

#### **Time Required**

#### **Subject Areas**

AP US History

Expansion and Reform, 1800-1860

#### **Common Core Standards Addressed:**

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

#### **Author**

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### **The Lesson**

#### **Introduction**

Once James Monroe leaves the presidency in 1824, the Founding Fathers era is over and the United States finds itself redefining America and Americans. The election of 1824 brought a new breed of politicians and voters. The country begins to force its way to the west under Manifest Destiny as immigrants and citizens alike find themselves moving from rural to urban areas. Industry begins its takeover of the U.S. economy setting the foundations for trust building and hurling the United States into economic depression.

The song selections incorporated into this lesson illustrate many of the feelings of everyday citizens regarding issues facing Americans in this new era of U.S. History. They also serve as a new way of thinking about the events dryly explained in textbooks.

#### **Guiding Questions**

- What jobs were available in the early 1800s and what was the work like?
- What technology was available to make work easier?
- How did everyday life reflect the changes in the work place?

#### **Learning Objectives**

After completing this lesson students will:

1. Analyze several primary source songs, art, and other documents regarding life in the 1830s.
2. Evaluate the working class American society according to de Tocqueville's observations and Andrew Jackson's vision.

## Preparation Instructions

Song used in this lesson:

“Oh, Shenandoah”

## Lesson Activities

1. After students have been introduced to both de Tocqueville and Jackson’s opinions about America in prior lessons, the class will be given the lyrics to “Oh, Shenandoah.” If possible an audio recording will also be available.

Performances of this song are available on the following CDs:

Paul Clayton, “Whaling and Sailing Songs from the Days of Moby Dick”

Bob Dylan, “Down in the Groove”

Pete Seeger, “America’s Favorite Ballads”

Thomas Hampson, “Song of America”

Zesty Seaman Chorus, “Sea Heritage Favorites”

Bruce Springsteen, “We Shall Overcome, The Seeger Sessions”

2. As students listen/read the lyrics, they will write a 4-minute timed journal entry to the following prompt:

What images does this song evoke? What do you think the song is about?

Allow students to share ideas.

3. Explain what a sea chanty is and how this song was used especially on the rivers by Keel boats (flat bottom boats) and along canals. Other vocabulary might include:

*Vocabulary:*

Sea Chanty

Canals

Lock

Keel Boats

Flat Bottom Boats

Notions

4. Ask students to pick out several themes or ideas presented by the song such as river transportation, boatmen, sailors, a long journey, etc. After this guided discussion show the students the five images that fit the timbre of the song.

5. Next present the class with the National Archive Song Analysis worksheet (see below), which can be edited to fit your needs. As a class complete the worksheet.

6. Divide the class into pairs or groups, giving each group a song, a recording if possible, and the analysis worksheet. They will also have to find or create at least five images that help illustrate the song and at least some of the themes or events they defined in the worksheet. These images can be created, or collected from the internet and put into a storyboard or PowerPoint. Images copied from outside sources must be documented.

7. Songs, analysis, and illustrations are shared with the class with time for questions and discussion.

8. Finally these “Final Thought” questions must be answered by each individual student and turned in at the end of class:

What did America offer people in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century?  
What wealth did America possess?  
Who benefited from this wealth?  
What did the American Dream look like during this time period?

### **Assessment**

Assessment can be any combination of informal, checking for understanding as well as formal in the form of the group analysis, illustration, and presentation and the “Final Thoughts” questions due at the end of class.

### **Extending the Lesson**

Extension lessons will continue defining the America that de Tocqueville and Jackson envisioned and can be targeted to any number of specific content areas such as the Banking crisis, the Indian Removal Act, the advent of steam engines, expansion of US Territory, etc.

### **Resources**

#### **Lyrics**

(These lyrics may not be a perfect match for all recordings available)

“Oh Shenandoah”

Oh, Shenandoah's my native valley.  
Aa-way, you rolling river!  
Shenandoah is my native valley.  
Ah-way, we're bound to go, 'cross th' wide Missouri!

Oh, Shenandoah, it's far I wander.  
Aa-way, you rolling river!  
Shenandoah, it's far I wander.  
Ah-way, we're bound to go, 'cross th' wide Missouri!

Oh, Shenandoah has rushing waters.  
Aa-way, you rolling river!  
Shenandoah has rushing waters.  
Ah-way, we're bound to go, 'cross th' wide Missouri!

Oh, Shenandoah, I love your daughters.  
Aa-way, you rolling river!  
Shenandoah, I love your daughters.  
Ah-way, we're bound to go, 'cross th' wide Missouri!

Oh, Shenandoah, I long to see you.  
Aa-way, you rolling river!

Shenandoah, I long to see you.  
Ah-way, we're bound to go, 'cross th' wide Missouri!

Oh, Shenandoah, I'm boun' t' leave you.  
Aa-way, you rolling river!  
Shenandoah, I'm boun' t' leave you.  
Ah-way, we're bound to go, 'cross th' wide Missouri!

Oh, Shenandoah, I'll never grieve you.  
Aa-way, you rolling river!  
Shenandoah, I'll never grieve you.  
Ah-way, we're bound to go, 'cross th' wide Missouri!

#### Other Sources:

\* American Studies at the University of Virginia, Everyday Life: 1830s, Inland navigation, etc.  
<http://www.hnet.uci.edu/mclark/HumCore/CoreF2005/WebCoreF05/IdlFrm.html>  
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/transport/canal.html>

\* Website – A Working Girl Source: *New York Sun*, November 17, 1863.  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6539/>

\* Digital History Website Article, “The Birth of American Culture”  
[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article\\_display.cfm?HHID=648](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=648)

\* PBS Website for Freedom a History of US, Episode 4  
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/web04/index.html>

\* American Art and Its Critics, 1826-1925, The National Academy of Design  
<http://www.thecityreview.com/raverev.html>

\* Website with a variety of information and documents regarding Alexis de Tocqueville  
<http://www.tocqueville.org/>

\* Amon Carter Museum, Encountering Texas, 1846-56, Sarah Ann Lillie Hardinge works  
<http://www.cartermuseum.org/books/encountering/art/sh1.htm>

\* Image “The Residence of David Twining” by Edward Hicks (Carnegie Museum of Art)  
<http://www.hnet.uci.edu/mclark/HumCore/CoreF2005/WebCoreF05/IdlFrm.html>

\* Canal Sites  
<http://www.eriecanal.org/> (Erie Canal)  
<http://www.canalcor.org/> (Illinois & Michigan Canal)

## Sound Recording Analysis Worksheet

<b>Step 1. Pre-listening</b>	
A.	Whose voice/what kind of voice will you hear in the recording?
B.	What is the date of this recording?
C.	What are terms that need defining?
<b>Step 2. Listening</b>	
A.	Unique physical qualities of the recording <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input type="checkbox"/> Live broadcast <input type="checkbox"/> Narrated <input type="checkbox"/> Special sound effects <input type="checkbox"/> Background sound
B.	What is the tone or mood of this recording? _____ _____
<b>Step 3. Post-listening (or repeated listening)</b>	
A.	List three things in this sound recording that you think are important: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
B.	What are three events, ideas, images, or themes this song reminds you of? 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
C.	List two things this sound recording tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written: 1. _____ 2. _____
D.	Write a question to the singer/song writer that is left unanswered by this sound recording. _____ _____
E.	What information do you gain about this event or time period that would not be conveyed by a written transcript? Be specific. _____ _____

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/sound.html> (Altered for this assignment)

Suggested Songs for Activity:

Song Title, artist or composer

Sources or recordings

1. Song of the Shirt

VAT 3.52/CD 2 Track 5

1843, A British song about sweatshops later made popular in the US by the Hutchinson family

2. The Weaver's Song (Almanac Singers)

Songs For Political Action

3. I'm Afloat on the Erie Canal 1841, A song about working on the Erie Canal	VAT 3.40/CD 2 Track 4
4. No Irish Need Apply 1862, A lament against Irish discrimination in America	VAT 5.18/CD 3 Track 1
5. Old Kentucky Home (Stephen Foster)	Any Recording
6. Angelina Baker (Stephen Foster)	Any Recording
7. It's a long John	<a href="http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5758/">http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5758/</a>
8. Pretty Polly (Bill Cornett)	Mountain Music of Kentucky
9. Barbara Allen (JD Cornett)	Smithsonian Folkways
10. Young and Tender Ladies (Martha Hall)	<a href="http://www.folkways.si.edu">http://www.folkways.si.edu</a>
11. The Absentee (Mr. & Mrs. John Sams)	“ “ “ “ “
12. Round the Corner, Sally or Round the Corn, Sally	VAT 1.24/CD 1 Track 5
13. Turkey in the Straw	<a href="http://www.contemplator.com/america/">http://www.contemplator.com/america/</a>
14. Long, Long Ago	“ “ “ “ “
15. Buffalo Gals	“ “ “ “ “

Please be aware that many of these songs have archaic vocabulary and many are slave work or minstrel tunes written in dialect. These terms and genres will need to be discussed with the class with directness, clarity, and in context. “Old Kentucky Home” is a perfect example. It is about a slave being sold away from his family in Kentucky to the Deep South but because of the term ‘darkie,’ many people disregard the song as racist rather than a poignant story inspired by Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

## Working Life Project Page

Steps	Task	Due _____
1	Pick a partner or set up table groups	
2	Get lyrics, recording, analysis worksheet, supplies, etc.	
3	Establish roles and responsibilities for the following:	

- A. Type out lyrics
- B. Create vocabulary list with definitions
- C. Identify themes, events, and ideas in song
- D. Complete NARA Song Analysis Worksheet
- E. Determine layout and production of images
- F. Create or locate images
- G. Note all sources for information, images, etc.

4 Present Working Life song project to class

5 Each student must Complete these “Final Thought” Questions on the back of this project guide

- A. What did America offer people in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century?**
- B. What wealth did America possess?**
- C. Who benefited from this wealth?**
- D. What did the American Dream look like during this time period?**

Requirement	Possible Points	My Opinion	Points Earned
Lyrics	5		
Vocabulary	5		
Themes, etc.	5		
NARA Worksheet	30		
Images	30		
Notation	15		
Presentation	10 and -		
Final grade	100		

Your observations please: