

THE PAST

IS ALWAYS PRESENT

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to <i>The Past Is Always Present Educational Theater Project</i>	2
Language Note	2
Case Study Components	2
Framework Alignment for Each Case Study.	3
Suggestions for the Primary Source Improv Activities	5
Additional Primary Source Analysis Prompts to Enhance Student Learning	5
Suggestions on How to Guide Student Research of Digital LGBTQ Primary Sources	6
Connecting Seven Generations Teaching with the Stage Production Script	7

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The Past Is Always Present Educational Theater Project

TARGETED FOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOMS & STAGE PRODUCTIONS

History UnErased and Houses on the Moon Theater Company have teamed up to bring to life powerful, untold stories that have been overlooked or erased from our U.S. history education — to *inspire, educate, and entertain!*

The musical's protagonist is a contemporary high school student in the midst of a tumultuous time, who inadvertently calls upon ancestors for inspiration and guidance. And the ancestors come through! One by one, we meet these otherwise hidden figures, learn about the impact they made in their time, and the ripple effect of their lives and legacy on today's world.

The accompanying case studies are for US History, Civics, and Social Studies educators to integrate some of the historical content featured in the script within their current curriculum.

Language Note: In our attempt to find a common language to engage in the work of teaching and learning that is conceptual and applicable across the historical narrative, History UnErased suggests aligning with the American Psychological Association's (APA) definitions of the following terms: gender, gender identity, gender expression, queer, sexual orientation, and transgender.

I. Case Study Components:

1. Video Introduction
2. Teacher's Guide
3. Student Guide
4. Printer-friendly Pullouts from the Student Guide
 - Historical Background and Context
 - Links to Digital Primary and Secondary Sources
 - Primary Source Improv Activity
 - Discussion and Analysis Questions
 - Case Study Question
 - Extension Activity
5. *UnErasing LGBTQ History and Identities Podcast* Episode with Transcript
6. Digital and Professional Print-ready 24" x 36" Classroom Poster

II. Framework Alignment

1. THOMAS(INE) HALL: Integrates with Jamestown, Colonial Virginia

Case Study Question: How do the thematic issues raised in Thomas(ine) Hall's life and court case still influence society today?

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands Alignment:

- **Theme I: Culture:** Examining how 1629 Virginia colonists understood and enforced gender categories through clothing, work roles, and social expectations
- **Theme II: Time, Continuity, and Change:** Analyzing how individual identity can change across time and social and/or economic circumstances
- **Theme III: People, Places, and Environments:** Analyzing the possible motivations for Hall's gender presentations and whether they may have reflected economic considerations, safety considerations, and/or a strategy for self-determination
- **Theme VII: Production, Distribution, and Consumption:** Analyzing the relationship between work roles and gender expectations in colonial society, as well as connections to today's world

2. BARON VON STEUBEN: Integrates with the Revolutionary War

Case Study Question: Does the memorial statue of Baron Von Steuben in Lafayette Park offer an accurate portrayal of his legacy?

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands Alignment:

- **Theme I: Culture** - Examining how Baron von Steuben's Prussian military culture influenced American military traditions
- **Theme II: Time, Continuity, and Change** - Analyzing von Steuben's impact on the transformation of the Continental Army and lasting effects on the United States military
- **Theme III: People, Places, and Environments** - Understanding how geographic factors (Valley Forge, European origins) shaped historical events
- **Theme IV: Individual Development and Identity** - Exploring the possible motivations for Baron von Steuben to transition from a Prussian military officer to his role as advisor to the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War
- **Theme V: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions** - Examining the role of military institutions and leadership in social change
- **Theme VI: Power, Authority, and Governance** - Analyzing how military organization reflects broader governmental structures
- **Theme X: Civic Ideals and Practices** - Understanding service, sacrifice, and contributions to democratic ideals

3. WILLIAM DORSEY SWANN: Integrates with the Reconstruction Era and/or the First Amendment

Case Study Question: Is William Dorsey Swann a Civil Rights Pioneer?

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands Alignment:

- **Theme I: Culture** - Examining how William Dorsey Swann's drag balls created a community and connections across racial lines
- **Theme II: Time, Continuity, and Change** - Analyzing continuity and change regarding gender expression and civil liberties from the 1880s to today
- **Theme IV: Individual Development and Identity** - Examining methods of underground systems and non-conforming social structures during the Reconstruction era and beyond
- **Theme VI: Power, Authority, and Governance** - Analyzing challenges to governmental authority over civil liberties and making connections to today's world
- **Theme X: Civic Ideals and Practices** - Evaluating collective action for justice and First Amendment rights during Reconstruction and the application and enforcement of laws and policies

4. GLADYS BENTLEY: Integrates with the Harlem Renaissance, Cold War, and/or the Lavender Scare

Case Study Question: How did Gladys Bentley use fashion and performance style to challenge social, political, and cultural norms of the 1920s-30s?

National Council for the Social Studies Framework Alignment:

- **Theme I: Culture** - Exploring how performers like Gladys Bentley created and shared the culture of the Harlem Renaissance
- **Theme II: Time, Continuity, and Change** - Considering how changing social attitudes in the 1940s-1950s forced Bentley to alter her public persona
- **Theme III: People, Places, and Environments** - Examining how specific places in 1920s-1930s America enabled or restricted Gladys Bentley's ability to express her identity
- **Theme V: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions** - Analyzing how Gladys Bentley and other individuals used performance to express their individuality
- **Theme VI: Power, Authority, and Governance** - Investigating how government power shaped Queer lives, and how individuals resisted or adapted
- **Theme X: Civic Ideals and Practices** - Demonstrating how democratic values can be expressed through art and entertainment

5. MARGARET CHUNG: Integrates with WWII

Case Study Question: How did the context of WWII provide Dr. Margaret Chung with opportunities to create social and political power despite gender- and race-based barriers?

National Council for the Social Studies Thematic Strands Alignment:

- **Theme I: Culture** - Examining how Dr. Chung navigated Chinese American cultural identity while gaining acceptance in male- and white-dominated medicine
- **Theme II: Time, Continuity, and Change** - Analyzing the evolution of Dr. Chung's professional opportunities from her 1916 graduation from medical school through WWII and the creation of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), a branch of the Naval Reserves
- **Theme IV: Individual Development and Identity** - Investigating how Dr. Chung managed multiple intersecting identities and navigated significant gender- and race-based professional barriers in early-to-mid 20th century America
- **Theme V: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions** - Analyzing how Dr. Chung's "adoption" network of approximately 1,500 military "sons and daughters" functioned as a support system that both challenged and worked within military and political systems
- **Theme VI: Power, Authority, and Governance** - Understanding the possible reasons for Dr. Chung's exclusion from the WAVES

III. Suggestions for the Primary Source Improv Activities

- Encourage students to use the information they learned in the primary and secondary sources to inform their characters' comments and behavior.
- Provide options for students to write their characters' comments and describe their characters' thoughts and/or emotions.

IV. Additional Primary Source Analysis Prompts to Enhance Student Learning

1. **Caption This:** Write a 7-word caption for selected primary sources from the case study.
2. **Worn Story:** Determine a piece of clothing that may have been the most meaningful to a historical figure featured in the case study.
3. **Time Capsule:** Choose a historical figure featured in a case study and decide what items to put in their shared time capsule.

4. **Two Truths and a Lie:** Create two true statements about a historical figure featured in a case study and one false statement. In pairs or small groups, other students determine which statement is false.
5. **Mix Tape:** Create a 5-song playlist for a historical figure featured in the case study, with references to why the songs are relevant.

V. Suggestions on How to Guide Student Research of Digital LGBTQ Primary Sources

1. **Custom Google Search:** Create your own search engine, using only the sites you want students to explore. This is an excellent tool to help students practice searching trusted institutions and sources and discovering subject headings and keywords. <https://programmablesearchengine.google.com/>

Note: Although the term "homosexual" is understood as a pejorative reference, many primary sources will be searchable using this keyword. "Homophile" is a term that may be helpful in searching mid-20th Century primary sources. Also, although the following terms are also considered pejorative today, "cross-dressing," "transvestite, and "transsexual" are searchable keywords for topics that connect to transgender and nonbinary history. Another keyword that students may want to use is "gay rights."

2. **Library of Congress:** <https://www.loc.gov/>

Use different parts of the site to help focus student research or to locate specific primary source formats.

Examples:

- Research Guide, LGBTQ Studies: [Introduction - LGBTQIA+ Studies: A Resource Guide - Research Guides at Library of Congress](#)
- Primary Source sets curated by educators: <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/lgbtq-activism-and-contributions>
- Chronicling America, searchable digitized American newspapers published between 1777 and 1963: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/about-this-collection>
- Digital Collections organized by topic and searchable: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/>

3. **Digital Transgender Archive:** <https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/>

4. **Google Book Example:** *The Crisis*:

<https://books.google.com/books/serial/ISSN:00111422?rview=1&lr=&sa=N&start=330>

5. **Arts and Culture Examples:**

- Harlem Renaissance: https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/harlem-renaissance/m019y_2?hl=en
- Pride: <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/pride>
- Pauli Murray: [Pauli Murray — Google Arts & Culture](#)

6. **New York Public Library Digital Collections:** <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>

7. **Example from Project Gutenberg:** *Fire!!* <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/71448>

VI. Connecting Seven Generations Teaching with the Stage Production Script

Seven Generations Teaching is rooted in the philosophy of many Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island (North America), especially among the Haudenosaunee [hud-nah-show-knee] (Iroquois) and Anishinaabe [Ahn-nish-nah-bee] nations, and involve how our choices and how we interact with our environment and community influence future generations. It also means we are carrying those same choices from the generations before us.

The stage production script (working title: YOUR HANDS ARE THE ROAD) is built around the concept of AI (Ancestor Intelligence) and the power of history and historical figures to help us understand ourselves, today's world, and the possibilities for the future.

The following outline and discussion prompts are intended to enhance students' connection to history and their lives, and to help them establish a sense of belonging within the chain of the past, present, and future.

Essential Questions: How do the voices, struggles, and wisdom of our ancestors speak through us? What responsibility do we have to future generations as storytellers?

The Land (use native-land.ca/)

1. What land are you on right now?
2. Who are the original caretakers of that land?
3. What did they do?
4. How did they care for the land?
5. What about your ancestors?
6. Who were the traditional caretakers where they are from?
7. How did they care for their land and their connection to it?

Seven Generations Back

1. Who do you regard as your ancestors?
2. What choices did they make that could have influenced where you live and who you are now?
3. How does it feel to carry their choices and their history?

Seven Generations Forward

1. What impact do you hope to have on future generations?
2. What can you do to make it a lighter load for them to carry?
3. What do you need to do to help the next generation prepare?

Start Today! (Individuals): What are 3 steps you can take today to start moving towards those goals?

Start Today! (Group): What are 3 steps you can take today to start moving towards those goals collectively that will impact your community?