

PRE-VISIT

This packet has been designed for educators and their students planning to visit the Star Spangled Banner Flag House. In it you will find information, activities and vocabulary that is useful for students to encounter prior to their visit to enhance their experience at the Flag House. Enjoy!



THE STAR
SPANGLED
BANNER
FLAG HOUSE

FOR TEACHERS

Welcome to the Star Spangled Banner Flag House experience! Whether you are a new guest at the Flag House or you return to see us year after year, it is our job to make sure that you and your students have a fun and educational time visiting one of America's most important historical landmarks. In this packet you will find activities for your students on the Mary Pickersgill and her family, domestic life in the early eighteen hundreds, the War of 1812, flag making and the national anthem. A word search with Flag House vocabulary words and a bibliography of helpful reading material are also included. The purpose of the information on this page is to give educators background that they may want to know while preparing their class for these activities and for their visit to the Flag House.

THE WAR OF 1812: After the American Revolution ended in 1783, tensions between the new nation and Britain continued. The British had failed to withdraw from American territory and had begun to support the Indians on the frontier. They had also been unwilling to sign fair commercial agreements with the United States. Britain, who dominated the seas after years of fighting with the French, further flamed the fires of war by enacting unfair maritime policies and by the practice of *impressment* or the forced removal of British (and sometimes American) sailors from American merchant ships. After the government failed at trying to change the policies of European powers by economic means, some Americans began to argue for war to redeem national honor. A huge push for war was made by a group called the War Hawks, who were part of the Congress of 1811. On June 18, 1812, President James Madison signed a declaration of war that Congress passed at his request.

MARY PICKERSGILL AND THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER: At one time, the house that now stands at 844 E. Pratt St. was the home of Mary Pickersgill, the creator of the Star Spangled Banner. Mary Pickersgill was born Mary Young in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1776. She picked up the flag making trade from her mother, Rebecca Young, who was an established flag maker during and after the Revolutionary war. Mary's family moved to Baltimore when she was a child. She married merchant John Pickersgill in 1795 and moved back to Philadelphia until his death in 1807. In that year, Mary returned to her childhood home, Baltimore, with her widowed mother and her daughter, Caroline. She took up residence at this time in the home we call the Flag House. In the summer of 1814, Mary was commissioned by Major George Armistead, commander of the forces at Ft. McHenry, to make a flag that the British "will have no difficulty seeing it from a distance." The flag was to be an astonishing 30x42 feet with fifteen stars and fifteen stripes. With help from her mother, daughter, nieces, an African American apprentice named Grace Wisher, and an African American slave whose name is unknown, Mary hand sewed the flag in a period of 6 weeks. She was paid \$544.74 for the Star-Spangled Banner and a smaller storm flag.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM: The attack on Ft. McHenry during the Battle of Baltimore began on September 13, 1814. On the morning of the 14th, the Star Spangled Banner was hoisted over Ft. McHenry to signify American victory. An American lawyer and poet named Francis Scott Key was on a truce ship in the Patapsco River on that morning and saw the huge flag. Inspired, he began to jot down verses on the back of a letter to form a poem called "Defence of Ft. McHenry". After the popular poem was circulated in Baltimore, the words were put to an old song "To Anacreon in Heaven" and became known as "The Star Spangled Banner". Congress made the song the National Anthem in 1931.



THE STAR
SPANGLED
BANNER
FLAG HOUSE

In Class Activity

Mary's Tree, My Tree

Objective:

Students will be able to recognize members of Mary Pickersgill's family as well as make the connection to their own personal family history.

Grade level: 1st– 5th

Materials:

- Mary's Family Tree handout (Handout #1)
- My Family Tree handout (Handout #2)

Optional:

Crayons or Markers

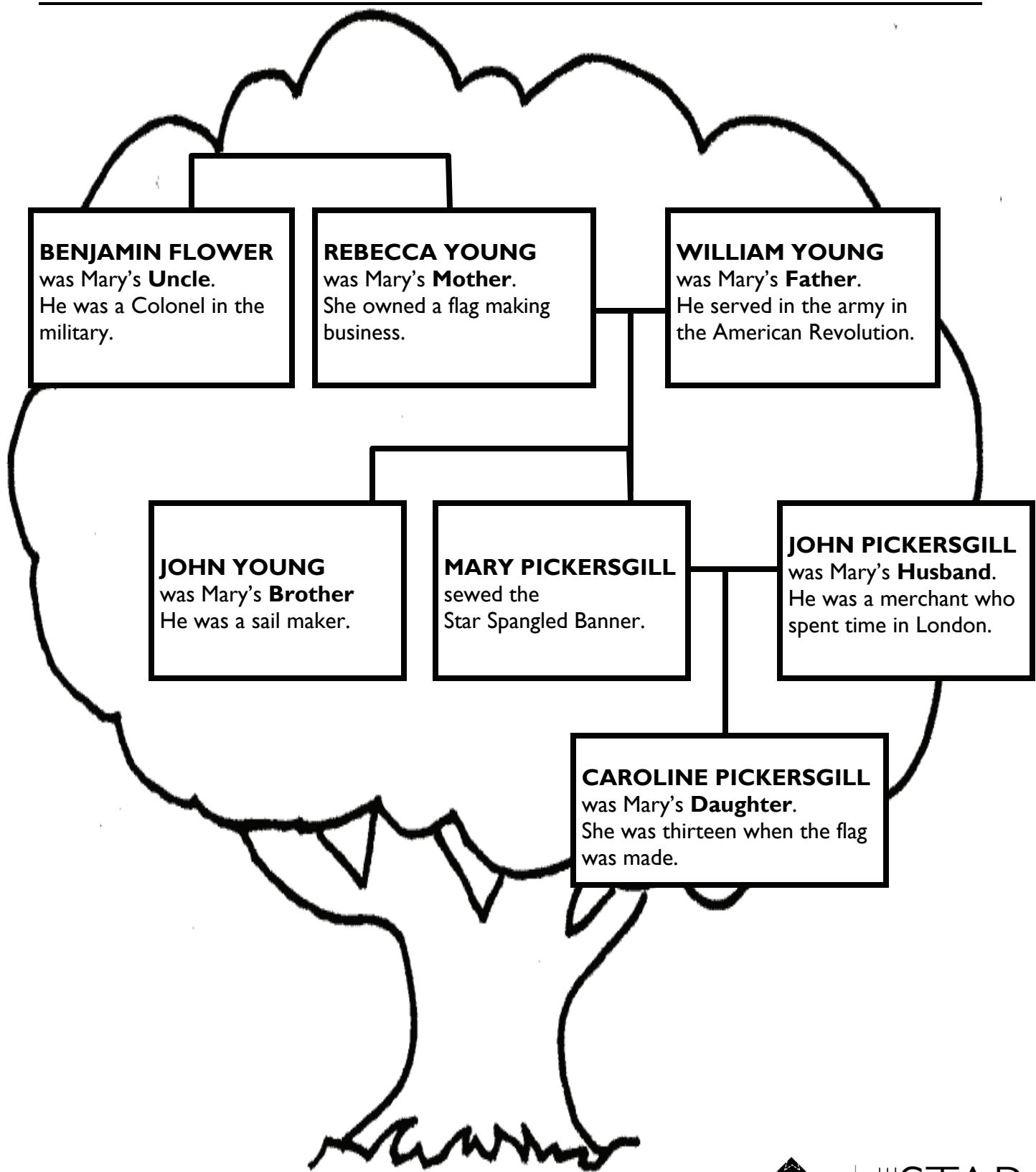
Procedure:

1. Teacher will begin activity by discussing the concept of a *family tree* as a tool that historians can use to understand family relationships. Teacher may also want to discuss a little bit of Mary's Pickersgill's history, who she was and what she did (refer to page 1 of this packet for information.)
2. Teacher will pass out Handout #1 and read it as a class. Stress that this is only part of Mary's family— family trees can get very large and historians often look at little parts at a time.
3. Teacher will pass out Handout #2 and instruct the students to take it home and fill in the information by talking to their parents or other family members.
4. Class will share the information they gathered at home the next day. Teacher will lead a discussion about the difference in the kinds of activities described on the two trees—what modern day families do vs. what Mary's family did.
5. *Optional: Students may wish to color in their trees.*



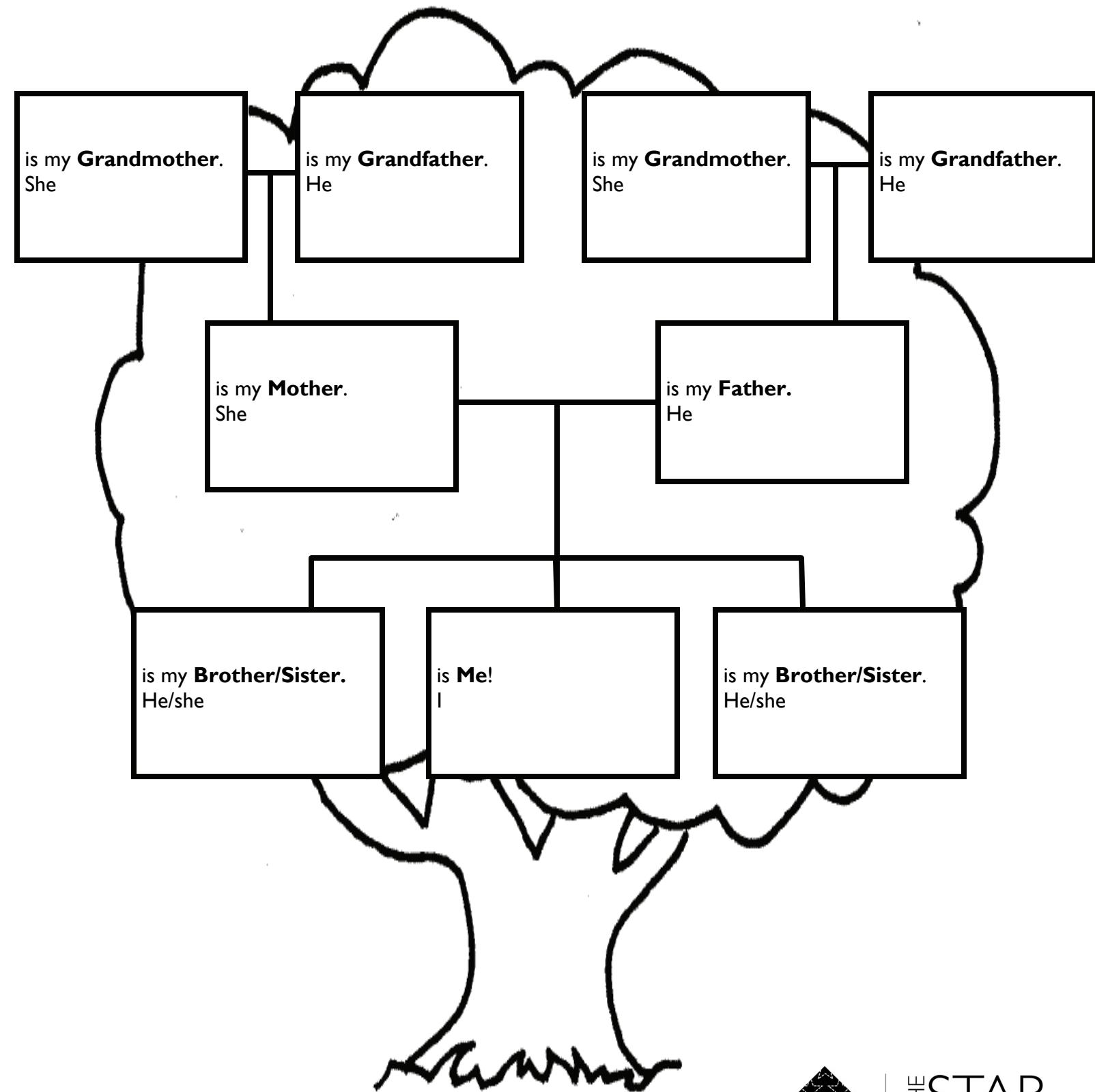
THE STAR
SPANGLED
BANNER
FLAG HOUSE

MARY PICKERSGILL'S FAMILY TREE



THE STAR
SPANGLED
BANNER
FLAG HOUSE

MY FAMILY TREE



THE STAR
SPANGLED
BANNER
FLAG HOUSE

In Class Activity

Shopping with Mary

Objective:

Students will learn how much household items cost in the 1800s and what a person like Mary Pickersgill earned on a weekly basis.

Grade level: 1st– 5th

Cross Curricular with: Math, Economics

Materials:

- The Market handout (Handout #3)
- Pencil, pens or crayons

Procedure:

1. Teacher will begin activity by telling students that a person like Mary Pickersgill, a crafts-woman living in Baltimore in the 1800s might have made about 10.00 a week in 1812.
2. Teacher will pass out Handout #3 and ask students to choose the things they would buy at the market at 1800s prices. Teacher will remind students about why certain things might be important (i.e.– you would need flour and butter to make bread, soap to both wash yourself and your clothes, muslin to make a dress or a pair of pants)
3. Students will be called on to read their lists out loud and discuss why they made their choices.
4. Students will discuss what a sum of money like Mary received for sewing the Star-Spangled Banner, about five hundred dollars, would have meant to her family in the early 1800s.



THE STAR
SPANGLED
BANNER
FLAG HOUSE

The Market of 1812

What would you buy? Remember, you only have \$10.00!



SOAP
\$1.00



4 CHICKENS:
\$2.00



BAG OF FLOUR:
\$2.00



**5 YARDS OF
MUSLIN**
\$2.00



2 BUSHELS APPLES
\$1.00



PAIR OF SHOES
\$2.00



BAG OF POTATOES
\$1.00



SHAWL
\$2.00



BAG OF SUGAR
\$1.00



**THE STAR
SPANGLED
BANNER
FLAG HOUSE**

In Class Activity

Maps Then and Now

Objective:

Students will be able to recognize the differences between the geographical layout of the United States in 1812 and the geographical layout of the United States today.

Grade level: 2nd– 5th

Cross Circular with: Geography

Materials:

- The United States in 1812 (Handout #4)
- A current map of the United States
- Blue, red and yellow crayons

Procedure:

1. Teacher will begin activity by showing the class the current map of the USA and explaining that the United States has not always looked like it does now. In 1812, when the War of 1812 started, it looked very different.
2. Teacher will pass out Handout #4 and ask the students to look at it very carefully. What is missing on the map? What seems different? Are all the state lines there or not?
3. Teacher will ask the class to identify where Mexico is on the current map of the USA. Ask them which section, 1, 2, or 3 on the 1812 map they think belonged to Spanish Mexico. Students color that portion in with red crayon and label “Spanish Mexico”.
4. Teacher will ask the class to identify where Maryland, Delaware and Virginia are on the current map. Ask them which section, 1, 2 or 3 they think most of the early States were during the war of 1812. Students color that portion with blue crayon and label “States”.
5. Teacher will ask the class to identify where Louisiana is on the current map. Ask them which section they think was the Louisiana Territory, purchased from the French in 1803. Students color that portion with yellow and label “Louisiana Territory”.



THE STAR
SPANGLED
BANNER
FLAG HOUSE

The United States in 1812



Stitch up a Needle Book

Objective:

Students will be able to master the overstitch, a type of stitch used in flag making. Students will be able to identify the needle book, a common sewing tool used in the 1800s.

Grade level: 4th– 5th

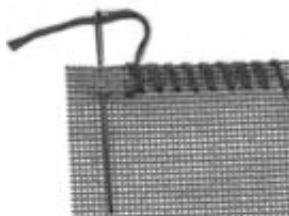
Materials (for each needle book):

- Two felt pieces 4" X 2 1/2"
- Contrasting thread
- Needle
- Pins
- Piece of ribbon (about 7 inches)
- Fabric marker

Procedure:

1. Teacher will begin activity by discussing the needle book, a common tool to keep needles clean and safe in the 18th-19th century. Teacher may also want to mention that, during this time period, it was much, much more common for children to sew and participate in group sewing activities, like making the Star-Spangled Banner.
2. Each student receives two felt pieces and some contrasting thread (contrasting thread will make the stitches easier for them to see) and a needle. Teacher may want to thread the needles for the students.
3. Students should lay one piece of felt horizontally on the table. The piece of ribbon is laid over the felt so that ribbon extends out on either side of the rectangle. Students should pin the second piece of felt to the first piece, so that the ribbon is sandwiched in the middle of the two pieces of felt.
4. Teacher explains the “overstitch”, a common stitch in flag making to reduce fraying at the edges of fabric. The stitch is diagonal over the edges of the fabric, spaced evenly. It looks like this:

OVERSTITCH



5. Students overstitch the two pieces of felt together on all four sides. After stitching, they should have a “book” when they fold the rectangle in half horizontally and tie the ends of the ribbon. They may place their needles and pins inside of the needle book.
6. Students may wish to write their name on the outside of the needle book

In Class Activity

My National Anthem

Objective:

Students will be able to draw connections between Key's Star-Spangled Banner and their own patriotic creative writing.

Grade level: 3rd– 5th

Cross Curricular with: Creative Writing, Art

Materials:

- Recording of The Star-Spangled Banner
- Lined paper
- Pencils or pens
- Tea bags
- Shallow trays (disposable roasting pans work well)
- Water
- Typing paper
- Felt tipped pens or markers

Procedure:

1. Teacher will begin activity by playing the recording of the Star-Spangled banner and asking the students what they felt when they heard it. Teacher will tell the students the story of Francis Scott Key writing the national anthem because he was moved by feelings of patriotism after the Battle of Baltimore in 1814.
2. Students will brainstorm as a class words that they might like to use in a patriotic poem or story of their own. Teacher will write these words up on the blackboard.
3. Students will compose poems or short stories, either individually or in small groups, about their nation.
4. Teacher will explain that the paper that Key wrote on was a little different from paper we use today. It was called “rag paper” because instead of being made from pressed wood, it was made from pressed rags. Because of this, the paper was not completely white like our paper today.
5. Students will place typing paper into shallow trays filled with water (1 cup for every tea-bag) and leave them there for at least a half an hour. When paper is stained with tea, Teacher will remove and hang them up to dry.
6. After paper is completely dry, students will copy their poems or stories onto their reproduction “rag paper” with felt tipped pens or markers.

Flag House Vocabulary

Impressment- The policy of British ships to force any sailor into service for the Royal Navy, including American sailors.

Privateer – A marine merchant hired by the government to attack enemy ships

Madison – James Madison, the 4th President of the United States.

War hawks – The group of Congressmen that pushed for military action against the British.

Baltimore – The port city in Maryland that successfully defended itself against a British attack during the War of 1812.

Pickersgill – The Baltimore flag making family that made the Star Spangled Banner in 1814.

Armistead – George Armistead the commander of Fort McHenry who placed the order for the flag.

Nation - A large body of people in a particular area that unite to seek or to possess their own government.



Suggested Reading List

Star Spangled Books

Filby, W.P & Howard, Edward

Maryland Historical Society

Press of Schneidereith and Sons: Baltimore 1972

Books, newspapers, manuscripts, persons and sheet music associated with "The Star Spangled Banner."

Ft. McHenry

Sheads, Scott

Baltimore Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America: Baltimore 1952

A history of Ft. McHenry.

At Home: The American Family 1750-1870

Garret, Elizabeth

Harry N. Abrams Publishers, Inc: New York

A resource discussing life at home.

The Rockets' Red Glare

Sheads, Scott

Tidewater Publishers: Centerville 1986

Maritime defense analysis of Baltimore in 1814

Francis Scott Key: Patriot and Poet

Patterson, Lillie

Chelsea House Publishers: New York 1991

Children's book on the life of Francis Scott Key.

The Star Spangled Banner

Key, Francis Scott

Franklin Watts, Inc: New York 1961

The entire Star Spangled Banner poem. Includes illustrations.

A Flag for the Fort

Carmer, Carl

Julian Messner, Inc: New York 1952

A narrative about the flag and the Battle of Baltimore.

