

# MAKE HISTORY JUMP OFF THE PAGE

**Smithsonian Primary Sources in U.S. History:** Learn how this school is meeting curriculum standards and engaging students.

*“In the hands of students, primary sources prove to be valuable learning tools.”*



Lisa Rupp  
Librarian,  
Beaver Creek High School  
Beaver Creek, Ohio

## BACKGROUND

Located minutes away from Dayton and one of the largest military bases in the country, Beaver Creek High School is surrounded by innovators. In fact, the school is driven by the motto: Inspiring Today, Preparing for Tomorrow. Beaver Creek has not only set high standards for itself, but it is also committed to meeting them. The school's test rankings are above the state average<sup>1</sup> and the curriculum offers students current, relatable content that will help them prepare for life after high school.

To provide students with more curriculum-aligned primary sources, the school purchased *Smithsonian Primary Sources in U.S. History*. Their librarian, Lisa Rupp, a 29-year veteran in education, added this resource based on the recommendation of a friend whose opinion she could really trust—another librarian.

*Smithsonian Primary Sources in U.S. History* delivers organized, high-value content, mapped to national curricula, satisfying requirements to incorporate vetted, authentic primary sources. Shaped for the school curriculum by an advisory board of teachers, students gain insight into historical figures and key events as seen through the Smithsonian's valuable collections.

## ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

### FINDING VALUE IN PRIMARY SOURCES

Rupp said that ultimately they wanted to be able to provide primary sources in the classroom and beyond. The largest hurdle was working with a budget that had been cut by two-thirds. They also wanted to easily transition from Microsoft Office 365 to G Suite for Education. *Smithsonian Primary Sources in U.S. History* provides access to both Microsoft and Google tools.

To get the other teachers excited, Rupp scheduled a professional development session. She wanted to show the value of the product—demonstrating what could be accomplished by incorporating it into lesson plans and classroom discussions that relate back to Common Core Standards.

more 

<sup>1</sup>Source: <http://www.greatschools.org/ohio/beavercreek/2420-Beavercreek-High-School/>

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## ■ BRIDGING THE GAP

### MEETING CURRICULUM STANDARDS

According to Rupp, Common Core Standards require that you break down exactly how primary sources are being used in classroom learning. “*Smithsonian Primary Sources in U.S. History* is packaged for you versus grabbing random items out on the web,” she said. “You can embed and incorporate content, videos, and images into your daily teaching.”

Debbe Hermane, an English teacher at Beavercreek, was the first one at the school to try *Smithsonian Primary Sources in U.S. History*. As a starting point, Hermane looked at the 1929-1945 Great Depression section. “Specifically, I have used Dorothea Lange’s photos when studying *The Grapes of Wrath*,” said Hermane. “It was a great way to help the students empathize with the migrants and to understand the severity of the dust storms. There are some great pics there!”

Hermane pointed out that there are many documents on the role of religion that will be helpful for her English literature class studying the theme of crime and punishment. “What specifically strikes me are all the documents that fall under the heading of ‘the power of words’—there are so many that can be used for so many classes,” she said. “These would fulfill our Common Core Standards of using foundational documents.”

## ■ THE RESULT

### GOING BEYOND FOUR WALLS

Bringing *Smithsonian Primary Sources in U.S. History* into the fold helped Beavercreek meet curriculum goals they had been working toward for quite some time. According to Rupp, the fact that this product carries the Smithsonian name adds to its credibility.

Rupp attributed her students’ ability to be more immersed in the subject matter to features such as ReadSpeaker text-to-speech technology. She added that students are engaged when content “isn’t just flat text on a page ... which is not as meaningful. They retain information when they find interest on their own and choose to explore more. They don’t have to always be reliant on the teacher or the librarian. You can show it to them once and it sparks interest.”

Usage reports provided by her Gale sales representative also helped Rupp justify costs. “It really helped me understand how much my students and teachers were using the product,” she said. That was something she could easily share with the principal. Rupp noted that the quality of the product and top-notch customer service adds further value that will serve Beavercreek for years to come.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PRODUCT

 [gale.com/smithsonianps](https://gale.com/smithsonianps)