

TITLE: Historical perspective: A case study.

ABSTRACT: In this lesson, students will be introduced to the purpose and scope of this unit. Specifically, students will read a short background on Chic and Virginia Sale, local historical figures (Urbana) who became national celebrities. Students will then examine documents that reflect how Chic and Virginia felt about Abraham Lincoln, and why they might have felt that way. Students will begin to think about what shapes our opinions towards historical figures.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Are our understandings of historical figures accurate?
- How do historical events shape the way we see individuals?
- What factors shape our understandings of history?

ASSESSMENT: Teacher will examine primary source documentation and information gathering worksheets to ascertain understanding, as well as gauge from class discussion whether students understood the documents and the perspectives revealed through these documents.

SETTING THE PURPOSE: The goal of this lesson is to help students see that historical perspective often comes from the beliefs of the family, their own experiences and feelings the nation has about certain historical figures- multiple sources. Students will tie these perspectives to figures from local history. The information gathered from this lesson will be used to compare to the feelings of those who actually met Lincoln, and from Lincoln himself.

DURATION: Two to Three Class Periods

PROCEDURE:

- Write the following question on the board: “What do you know about Lincoln?” Discuss answers with students. Then ask students where they have learned about Lincoln and brainstorm a list; books, films, projects in school, plays, stories from adults, etc.
- Discuss whether students feel their picture of Lincoln is correct? Was all the information that came into your life regarding Lincoln reliable? Why do people have different perspectives on Lincoln?
- Distribute Historical Perspective: A Case Study Handout and read together. Discuss any initial questions they may have.
- Put students into 6 groups. When forming groups, it would be wise to distribute the students by ability level, so all are evenly matched.
- Distribute primary sources. All photos should go to one group, internet article to another, Virginia Sale script to another, two of the shorter articles from Chic Sale’s biography to another, and one each of the other two articles to the remaining groups.

- Distribute a Document Analysis Worksheet to each group. The photo group will also receive the Photo Analysis Worksheet. Give student groups time to analyze the documents. You may also want to show a map of the circuit Lincoln traveled as a lawyer if you go to <http://www.mrlincolnandfriends.org/> and click “view interactive map” it will bring up a map of the court circuit Lincoln traveled. The one in Urbana was right across the street from the Sale family home.
- Each of the documents from Chic’s biography (listed below) describe his passion about portraying Lincoln in the way he saw him; the internet article from the Illinois Times shows Chic’s carpenter and acting connection to Lincoln; Virginia’s script is an adaptation of a children’s book about Lincoln that Chic also adapted and acted out; and the pictures each show either the importance of Chic, Virginia and their father to each other or some connection to Lincoln.
 - Chic Sale, Virginia Sale and Father Frank (Shows the relationship between the Sale children and their father, who told stories about Lincoln)
 - Chic Sale as Lincoln (Gettysburg Address) (Chic dressed as Lincoln, as in The Perfect Tribute)
 - Frank Sale family home front and back and transcription (A picture of the father’s family home where he would watch Lincoln go into the courthouse)
 - Chic and Virginia as child (Shows the close relationship between siblings, and how Virginia looked up to Chic-possibly influencing her interest in Lincoln)
 - Chic as old man character with Virginia (Chic is dressed as the old man character he used for his “He Knew Lincoln” sketch, with Virginia at his side)
 - The Perfect Tribute Picture (A short where Chic plays Lincoln-Civil War Veterans stand in front of the World Premiere advertisement)
 - Virginia Sale in character for “The Women in Lincoln’s Life” (Virginia’s one woman show, where she played many female characters that “knew Lincoln” –in this photo, her character holds a Lincoln hat with notes, representing the notes Lincoln would keep in his hat)
 - Virginia Sale article (This article discusses “the Women in Lincoln’s Life”)
- After students have analyzed their documents, students will jigsaw and share their expert findings with the group. Distribute Information Gathering Worksheet and have students take notes on each other’s presentations.

- Discuss with students the final question. How do they think all of this information fits together? Why do they think Lincoln was so important to Chic...to Virginia? Why did so many people feel this way about Lincoln-especially this “first generation” born after Lincoln’s death?
- How might Chic and Virginia feel about Lincoln if he was never elected president? Would he still have earned this much of their attention?
- Tell students that both Chic and Virginia adapted the children’s book, He Knew Lincoln and performed it as a monologue. Because of the success of his version, Chic later won the role of Lincoln in The Perfect Tribute, a film short based on another children’s book of the time. Virginia developed a monologue as well, but also developed a show based on the women in Lincoln’s life.
- Explain that for the next few days, we will hear the words of the authors of these two books to understand the authors’ perspectives regarding Lincoln.

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PRIMARY SOURCES:

Pictures

- Chic Sale, Virginia Sale and Father Frank
- Chic Sale as Lincoln (Gettysburg Address)
- Frank Sale family home front and back
- Chic and Virginia as child
- Chic as old man character with Virginia
- The Perfect Tribute Picture
- Virginia Sale in character for “The Women in Lincoln’s Life”
- Virginia Sale article

Script (retyped)

- I Remember Abraham Lincoln Virginia Sale

From Charles Sale Biography (retyped)

- Chic’s feelings on Abraham Lincoln
- Chic and The Perfect Tribute
- Lines Chic used from Tarbell Book
- The Talkies Marching On

TIES TO NATIONAL PRIMARY SOURCE OR SOURCES:

While all sources for this lesson are housed in Champaign, Il., and considered local sources, they might also be considered national sources as they were national entertainment stars.

LIST OF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:

Handouts

- Historical Perspective: A Case Study Handout
- Photo Analysis Worksheet (from the National Archives Website)
- Document Analysis Worksheet (from the National Archives Website)
- Information Gathering Worksheet
- You Never Know Where a Job Here Might Take You (from Illinois Times Website)
- Law Circuit Map that Lincoln traveled
(<http://www.mrlincolnandfriends.org/> - click on “view interactive map”)

Photos

- Chic Sale, Virginia Sale and Father Frank
- Virginia Sale article
- Chic Sale as Lincoln (Gettysburg Address)
- Frank Sale family home front and back
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ATTACHMENTS:

Handouts

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- Document Analysis Worksheet (from the National Archives Website)
- Information Gathering Worksheet
- You Never Know Where a Job Here Might Take You (from Illinois Times Website)

Photos

- Chic Sale, Virginia Sale and Father Frank
- Virginia Sale article
- Chic Sale as Lincoln (Gettysburg Address)
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- Chic as old man character with Virginia
- The Perfect Tribute Picture
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C. Adrian, June 2006

Script (retyped)

- I Remember Abraham Lincoln Virginia Sale (Script)

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