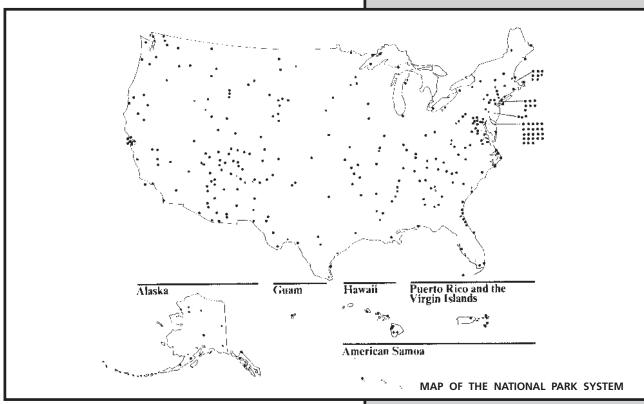
The National Park Service is "the largest university in the world, with 367 branch campuses."

Robin Winks Yale Historian, 1992

As of 2002, the number of National Park units extended to 385, all of which are here for you.







Jefferson National Expansion Memorial 11 North Fourth Street St. Louis, MO 63102 (314) 655-1600

Produced by the Division of Museum Services and Interpretation: 1995, revised 2004.

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for your valuable suggestions. You requested activities specific to each program topic that can be used before and after your museum visit. We listened and have designed this Teacher Activity Guide (TAG) especially for you. It is an investigative, hands-on approach to history.

The activities are based on curriculum guidelines for the states of Missouri and Illinois; they integrate cooperative learning, conflict resolution, and are relevant to real world experiences. In addition, suggested activities extend across the curriculum, providing an interdisciplinary approach, thereby enhancing the learning process.

We are also excited to introduce you to the National Park Service through an integrated theme concept. In addition to our basic program format, sections on career education and enrichment activities provide a multifaceted guide that can be used for a variety of student levels and subject areas.

We hope you find this guide "user-friendly" and look forward to hearing from you again. We appreciate your feedback and ask that you complete the enclosed Program Evaluation. If you have any questions or need further information, please call us at (314) 655-1700.

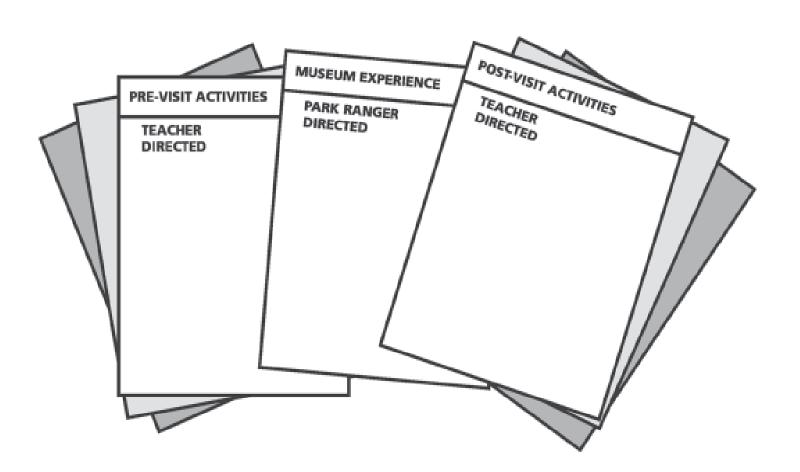
Sincerely,

Margaret G. O'Dell Superintendent

"USER FRIENDLY" FORMAT

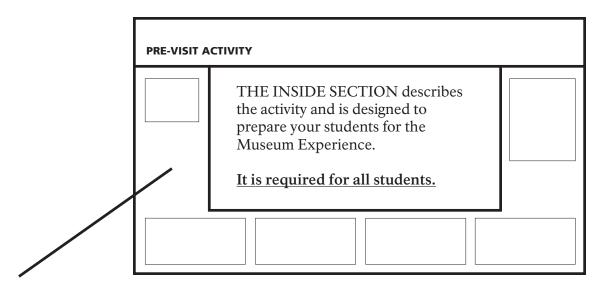
The activities in the TAG follow a simple format.

- Three PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES prepare your students before the MUSEUM EXPERIENCE. We suggest you use all three activities in sequence as access strategies. Depending on the performance level of your students, however, you may wish to move ahead to the REQUIRED activity.
- The MUSEUM EXPERIENCE briefly summarizes the program in which your students will participate at the Museum of Westward Expansion or Old Courthouse.
- Three POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES complement each of the three PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES and are designed for you to use after the MUSEUM EXPERIENCE. They are designed in sequence, yet also provide the flexibility to accommodate the specific needs of your students.



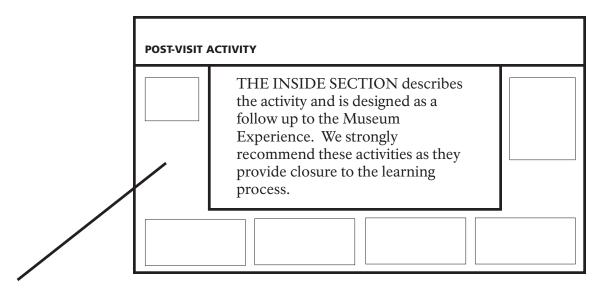
Each activity is designed in a wrap-around format to provide flexibility in your lessons and provide enrichment for a variety of student abilities.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY



THE WRAP-AROUND MARGIN conveys a relevant real world connection to the activity. Exploring a National Park Service career and related site provides an enrichment opportunity that models career choices and encourages productive citizenship. This section is optional; however, it can serve as a significant reinforcer of generalization skills.

POST-VISIT ACTIVITY



THE WRAP-AROUND MARGIN enhances the carry-over of real world connections by extending the lesson across the curriculum into Language Arts, Math, Science, Art and Music. This section is suggested and can be used at your discretion.

INTRODUCTION

"No person shall keep or teach any school for the instruction of negroes or mulattoes, in reading or writing, in this State."
Missouri Law, 1847

Apprehensive of being caught, you secretly approach the basement door of the First African Baptist Church and knock lightly.

"Who is that?" asks a voice from inside.

You give the password, "Excelsior.*"

The door opens and a stern man with a scar on his forehead motions for you to enter. You take your place on a bench among the other students, many of them younger than you. By the dim light of a tallow candle, you open your book to follow while another student reads aloud. As you struggle to understand the words in the tiny book before you, a thought nags at the back of your mind.

This afternoon, your boss handed you a handful of change for some work you agreed to do for \$2.50. Staring at the coins in your palm, you wondered uneasily if, indeed, they added up to \$2.50.

Before the Civil War, many people in Missouri feared that free African Americans would try to help end slavery. The state passed a law restricting the freedom of African Americans and making it illegal for anyone to teach them how to read or write. Violation of this law was punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment.

Despite its being illegal, many people, both black and white, undertook educating African American students in secret. These secret schools, known as "Freedom Schools," were held in church basements and private homes. Because they were secret, little is known about them or the people who attended them. From brief references and stories, we may gather that Freedom School classes were similar in many ways to other classes of the 1800s. Students of all ages, including adults, probably attended the same class. Students may have read from the Bible or a grammar series, such as the *McGuffey's Reader*. They may have written their lessons with chalk on slate boards.

But the clandestine nature of Freedom Schools led to significant differences. Conducted at night, they were sometimes called "tallow-candle schools" because students read by the light of one or two candles. Classroom conditions were probably poor, with scant books and supplies. Students may have used secret passwords to enter a classroom; and there was always the fear of getting caught.

The importance of education was self-evident. Unable to read, write, or figure numbers, free African Americans could not conduct the business of daily living. They could not read newspapers, write letters, understand contracts, or determine if their salaries were correct. Many fell prey to unscrupulous landlords and business operators. Beyond the scope of daily living, free African Americans were limited in their social, civic, and economic opportunities.

Determined to improve opportunities for African Americans, Freedom School teachers quietly conducted acts of civil disobedience in makeshift classes throughout Missouri. Like Martin Luther King, Jr. decades later, they broke the law in the hopes of creating a more just society. And like King, their willingness to follow their conscience and face the consequences points to a faith that individuals can change the world for the better. Their actions led America closer to its guiding principle, "all Men are created equal."

Their silence, however, leaves us with little to document their experiences. In place of historical evidence, a body of legends and stories has grown. The Reverend John Berry Meachum's holding class aboard a steamboat docked in the middle of the Mississippi River, beyond the reach of Missouri law; an angry mob burning down the convent of a community of catholic nuns who taught reading and writing; and Elizabeth Keckley, Mary Todd Lincoln's seamstress, teaching reading under the guise of sewing lessons. Though they bear the mark of folktales, these stories speak to us today about the connection between education, freedom, and the lengths to which people were willing to go in pursuit of both.

Some well-known African Americans, like George Washington Carver, Booker T. Washington, and Frederick Douglass, recognized the connection between education and freedom early in life. Each bent his will toward obtaining an education for himself and others. Their stories are well-documented and served to inspire later civil rights activists when the fight for equality stretched into the twentieth century.

America's government, built on principles of individual freedom and equality, depends upon educated and informed citizens. The Freedom School program at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial commemorates the efforts of Freedom School teachers who sought to improve their community one student at a time. Their stories guide us today as we continue working together toward a more perfect Union.

^{*} Latin in origin, "excelsior" was used during the 1800s to signify an elevated purpose. According to Webster's Dictionary, "More lofty; still higher; ever upward."