

Title of Session: LOC Learning Page Chat/SSForum: The Great Depression

Moderator: Leni Donlan and Michael Hutchison

Guest Speaker: Susan Mordan

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LeniD: Great, Byron. We are really pleased to be doing this chat with Michael and with our special guest, Susan Mordan.

CaroleMc: Hello, I hope I am not intruding - was interested in your topic and how this forum is moderated. Okay if I watch and learn?

MichaelH: hi, Carole, welcome... glad you could join us from down under

LeniD: Of course, Carole. Join in, as well.

CaroleMc: thanks, I will

ByronH: One of the suggested lessons that we talk about is for the teacher to pick 5 pictures that go with the weeks topic in class and assign them to students in the class. The students will research the information in the picture and write information about the picture that will be given to the rest of the class.

LeniD: Great exercise, Byron. I think what Susan and I will share tonight will give you a great deal that you can use.

BJB2: Before we begin, Leni, a couple reminders...

BJB2: go to the ACTIONS menu in the top right of this chat window and click on DETACH to make your chat window larger and easier to read

LeniD: Thanks, BJ. Michael, would you get us started, please?

MichaelH: sure will

MichaelH: Welcome all, to tonight's Learning Page Chat and Social Studies Forum

MichaelH: tonight's topic is an outstanding one

MichaelH: and we are fortunate to have several great collections to look at this evening

MichaelH: We'll be discussing resources on teaching about the Depression

MichaelH: Leni and Susan have a lot of great stuff to share, so let's get into Introductions

MichaelH is a US History teacher in southern Indiana and is host of the Social Studies Forum here in TAPPED IN

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler. I'm one of the Tapped In HelpDesk volunteers. I lead a math and technology discussion here.

LeniD: LOL! Happy New Year to all of you It's a pleasure to be at the first LOC chat of 2006. I'm Leni Donlan...I coordinate the Learning Page project at the Library of Congress.

SusanMord: I'm Susan Mordan the education specialist for the Library of Congress exhibition program

EmilyW: I am Emily and I am on Tapped In helpdesk

LeniD: Specialist extraordinaire, I might add, Susan!

MichaelH looks to BJ and Byron

LeniD: Good to see you again, Emily

CaroleMc: I am an elearning consultant from NE Victoria, Australia focussing today on web conference moderation styles, pleased to meet you all.

MichaelH . o O (and Carole)

LeniD: Wonderful, Carole. I'm so glad you joined us!

ByronH: Hello, I am Byron -- Digital Preservationist for Adventure of the American Mind project at California Univ of PA. I teach teachers about the Library of Congress and the use of Primary Sources to increase higher level thinking skills.

TerriBr joined the room.

DavidWe: Sounds cool, Byron

MichaelH waves to Terri

LeniD: Welcome back, Byron

ByronH: I am biased. I love my job.

MichaelH: Terri, we are just doing introductions...

TerriBr: hi everyone!

LeniD: Welcome, Terri.

ByronH: Thanks, Leni (I at least remembered tonight)

LeniD: Terri, would you like to tell us who you are and what you do? We'd love to know

LeniD: Susan... while Terri is preparing her introduction, warm up those typing fingers, please!

MichaelH checks to see if anyone else would like to introduce themselves

SusanMord: Ready and willing....

MichaelH: Leni, Susan, looks like we're ready to get rolling, if everyone's fingers are warmed up

LeniD: OK... we have much to share...

LeniD: so...

TerriBr: I am a Language Arts teacher and I am about to start teaching "To Kill a Mockingbird" I thought that new insight into the Great Depression would make it fresh for both my students and myself.

LeniD: take it away, Susan!

MichaelH: very cool, Terri, glad you're here

LeniD: Excellent, Terri!

CaroleMc joined the room.

SusanMord: We thought we would start by telling you about our exhibition Bound for Glory

SusanMord: It is the first major exhibition of photographs from the Farms Security Administration

SusanMord: The Library has 1,600 color images that were taken between 1939 and 1942

SusanMord: Students love these images because they are in color!

MichaelH: I mentioned to Leni the other day, Susan, they are so crisp they almost seem digital in quality

SusanMord: They are amazing.

LeniD: Agreed!

SusanMord: Kodachrome film had only been around for 3 years when they were taken

MichaelH: considering the technology of color photography in the 1930s, it's amazing

ByronH: I am amazed at the vibrancy of the colors in the photo -- especially for the time period.

SusanMord: Kodak gave the film to the photographers to promote the film since it cost \$3.50 or about 44.25 today

MaryJJ joined the room.

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe waves to Mary

SusanMord: The photographs were taken as propaganda photos to promote government programs like the WPA

LeniD: Welcome, Mary.

MaryJJ: Hi, Leni. It's been awhile since I've visited Tapped In, so I'll be a bit slow.

LeniD: No problem, Mary. Susan is sharing information about the Bound for Glory exhibition.

SusanMord: The Library has 160,000 B&W images from this project, but only 1,600 in color

MichaelH: Susan, was there any other relationship between Kodak and FSA with this... as far as the subject matter, did FSA just decide to use the film in this manner?

MichaelH: I guess I'm asking if Kodak had any input into the subject matter of the photos?

SusanMord: Kodak did not have a say on the subject matter.

SusanMord: The FSA assigned the photographers to take "everyday photographs"

DavidWe is very fond of Dorothea Lange

LeniD: Coming, David

SusanMord: We have some great photos by Dorothea Lange

DavidWe smiles

SusanMord: She was one of the photographers that did not use color film because she felt it wasn't for documentary photography

ByronH: I used some of Dorothea Lange's picture for our bulletin board this month.

LeniD: They are compelling, aren't they?

DavidWe grew up looking at a LOC reprint of "Migrant Mother"

SusanMord: Leni why don't you go ahead and share our first treasure.

LeniD: Are you sure, Susan?

LeniD: Susan will share more in just a bit... but we would like to try something with you...

MichaelH listens up

LeniD: Let's try looking at an image, together.

LeniD: We're going take a look at a very famous image. But I want you to look with fresh eyes.

MichaelH: Leni, before you start...

LeniD: Yes, Michael?

MichaelH: maybe we should remind everyone about the photo opening in a new window

MichaelH: and it may cover the chat window.

MichaelH: and also about pop-up blockers...

MichaelH: they may want to disable

MichaelH: or hold the CTRL key down when they click on a link

LeniD: Thanks, Michael

LeniD: REALLY look at this image - forget what you know, or think you know, about it and just look at it.

LeniD: You may want to jot down notes about what you see. Don't stay away to long, though.

LeniD: You may want to jot down notes about what you see. Don't stay away to long, though.

LeniD: Yes, David... that one

DavidWe smiles

LeniD: When we come back, I'm going to ask you to share what you SEE. Are you ready?

CaroleMc -)

MichaelH is

LeniD: OK... here we go:

TerriBr: I am still trying to figure out where the picture will show up...

LeniD: <http://memory.loc.gov/pnp/fsa/8b29000/8b29500/8b29516v.jpg>

TerriBr: thanks!

MichaelH: Terri, Leni will show you the "Link". You click on the blue, and it should open in a new browser window

MichaelH: Leni, believe it or not, there's one thing in this picture that hit me tonight that I never noticed before...

DavidWe listens

CaroleMc: I see despair, desperation and intense sadness in the face of this mother...

MaryJJ: I noticed the ragged sleeve on the woman for the first time.

MichaelH: we focus so much on the face of the mother... I never really paid attention to the children in the picture

DavidWe smiles

EmilyW: I see sadness with whatever she is looking at

LeniD: Great observations. What else?

CaroleMc: I see fear and confusion because the children are hiding their faces....

ByronH: I think I know too much about this photo. I see a despair women who has had a hard life, raising her kids in a pea picking camp, including her baby.

MichaelH: a look of pensiveness... despair...

LeniD: all true, but leave what you know about the image out for now...

LeniD: really look at what you see

MaryJJ: I wonder if the children are shy in front of the camera. That's a fairly typical reaction even among children today.

LeniD: Be careful... only what you SEE, folks. This is hard!

MichaelH: Leni, with what Mary just said... I wonder if Lange posed the children that way?

LeniD: Good question, Michael.

ByronH: I see raggedy clothes. (mother's frayed at the sleeve)

CaroleMc: this is the first time I've seen this picture and I see four souls in pain, and I think the youngest child may in fact be dead or very ill.

DavidWe knows some of the stories associated with this image

LeniD: Why do you think that, Carole?

MichaelH: the related LOC page has a lot of info, David

LeniD: Yes, you do, David.

DavidWe nods

LeniD: OK...

MaryJJ: Two children with faces turned away from camera. Holes in shirt of one on the right. Woman unsmiling, staring ahead, holding hand near mouth. These are objective observations only.

LeniD: Excellent, Mary.

LeniD: That's just what you want your kids to do...

LeniD: no subjective observation, but just what you see.

LeniD: Anything else?

CaroleMc: the face of the infant is odd - eyelid closed but puffy - skin mottled and head angled

EmilyW: I didn't even see the children, I thought the one on the left's head was really a hand

LeniD: Good... anything else?

CaroleMc: seems like the group is huddled in a tent?

ByronH: The children's hair is cut verily short.

MaryJJ: It appears that the figures are in front of a cloth or canvas background.

LeniD: Excellent. Anything else?

LeniD: Now....

LeniD: let's draw on your prior knowledge. What do you THINK you know about this image?

LeniD: Not what do you know, historically...

LeniD: not JUST what you know historically... sorry about that.

MariaPit joined the room.

DavidWe waves to Maria

CaroleMc: I think I know that this is a poor family in despair

LeniD: Good, Carole.

LeniD: Hello Maria. We are examining this image:

LeniD: <http://memory.loc.gov/pnp/fsa/8b29000/8b29500/8b29516v.jpg>

MaryJJ: I know that this photograph is one of the most commonly used photos of the Great Depression, i.e., it says much visually about a major historical period.

LeniD: What does it say, Mary?

DavidWe: For many people it is THE icon of the Depression in the United States

CaroleMc: I think I could create a story that would fit the circumstances, even though I do not know details of the Great Depression

LeniD: True, David... by association.

ByronH: The mother was the mother of 7 children. Her car had broken down and was waiting for her boyfriend to return. It was a cold time and many of the farms had closed. They were surviving off of frozen vegetables from the field and birds that they could catch. Dorothea Lange was on her way home when she came across the sign for the pea picking farm and came back. She came across the "Migrant Mother" and started taking the pictures.

LeniD: Remember, photographers have a point of view, too.

LeniD: Very good, Byron

LeniD: And what questions do you have about this image? What would you still like to find out?

MaryJJ: It represents despair and responsibility, the impact on families, the role of women, the gritty reality.

SusanMord: How old the mother is and how she got to this point.

DavidWe knew someone who was a student at Berkeley (an assistant to Lange's husband, sociologist Paul Taylor) at the time

CaroleMc: my questions would be "where is her man?" and "did they survive?"

LeniD: Good questions....

ByronH: They do not look dressed for cold weather. How were the children doing under these conditions? How did the mother feel, having to raise her children in these conditions?

LeniD: yes, I wonder that too, Byron.

LeniD: Now let's take a look at this;....

LeniD: http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/128_migm.html

DavidWe smiles

MichaelH: I was surprised to find out she was native American

DavidWe smiles

ByronH: I placed Dorothea Lange's quote on our bulletin board. It adds so much to the pictures.

DavidWe . o O (welcome back, Leni)

MichaelH: she later also became a union organizer

CaroleMc: interesting comment from photographer "...my pictures might help her, and so she helped me"

LeniD: Susan, do you want to talk with our guests about what more we can learn from these photos?

SusanMord: Sure.

CaroleMc: I am so impressed by this process - a picture like this is a story of many dimensions to different people

LeniD: So true, Carole!

SusanMord: These pictures not only change our perceptions today, but told a larger story even in 1939

SusanMord: They were used by the FSA to get more government funds for their programs

SusanMord: and eventually used by the Office of War information to assure Americans that the U.S. could keep Hitler off our doorstep

SusanMord: Do you think using the color images will change some of your student's perceptions of this era

MaryJJ: What color images?

DavidWe: I've always felt that black and white somehow sharpens one's focus

SusanMord: Interesting point.

CaroleMc: I agree David, the B&W removes other emotions (stimulated by colour) and focuses in on the 'meaning' of a photo

SusanMord: Mary at the beginning of the chat I shared some information about an exhibition the Library has done on color images from this period

MichaelH: I do, Susan... kids are so visual as far as learning goes... color enhances that

SusanMord: The school groups I have taken through this exhibition have been amazed by the color

MaryJJ: Sorry about that. I'll go back to read the part I missed.

SusanMord: They actually say that "these are

SusanMord: sorry

SusanMord: boring Black and White

MichaelH: I agree about the B&W with focus... but I don't know how that would hold kids' attention....

LeniD: Does seeing the additional photos change your understanding of the famous Migrant Mother image?

CaroleMc: I would immediately want to use the B&W photo and add movement to capture attention and focus

DavidWe: It has to, Leni, in my humble opinion

DavidWe smiles

LeniD: It sure did for me, David!

MichaelH: I would agree with David, Leni...

CaroleMc: Yes Leni, the additional information was crucial for my learning - not being familiar with the picture at all.

LeniD: I never realized there were more children than two...confess I never even noticed the baby, earlier.

DavidWe smiles

DavidWe: I've been looking at that photograph for close to 40 years

MichaelH: neither did I, Leni

MaryJJ: I think seeing the additional photos gives me an appreciation for the skill of the photographer. It also shows me that only the greatest photographs survive in the public conscience.

LeniD: And that famous one may have been a bit more contrived than we know, Mary. Susan?

DavidWe: There's a fair amount of serendipity associated with this photograph(s), too

MichaelH: It still completely baffles me how people could be forced to live like that in a nation as rich in resources as the US

ByronH: The first time, I missed the baby -- until I saw the other photos.

LeniD: Yes, true, David.

SusanMord: I think it is interesting that Dorthea Lange never even learned her name!

LeniD: Good point Michael.

MichaelH: I had read that the woman wasn't pleased with the photo because she felt she looked too distraught and hopeless

DavidWe: She was on a long drive back to Berkeley, California

MichaelH: she must have been pretty self-reliant

DavidWe: . o O (Lange)

LeniD: Now that you are accustomed to analyzing photographs you can now have students try it on their own or in small groups.

LeniD: This resource page gives you a select group of images in three main categories: rural life, industry, and family/recreational activities.

MaryJJ: But what happens after the analysis? Ideas?

MichaelH: Mary, maybe students could report in class discussion; or possibly by writing?

LeniD: <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/educators/workshop/greatdepression>

CaroleMc: If this is a history lesson, perhaps write a story from the point of view of the mother or the child to explore the depths of their despair

MichaelH: the use of photos definitely highlight and enhance the study

LeniD: This activity we just did makes an excellent intro to research...

LeniD: or to learning to look and think like a historian.

LeniD: Carole and Michael, those are great suggestions as well.

MichaelH: Leni, I think what we've been discussing is a great testimonial for the power of primary sources

MaryJJ: Hear, hear, Michael!

LeniD: Use the link to "resources used" for more sets.

LeniD: Agreed, Michael

MichaelH: it's so cool that we can directly bring the past to our students through collections like this

CaroleMc: I believe that I will use this 'style of resource research' to enhance future web conferencing activities - a useful addition to teaching digital storytelling online.

LeniD: Great

LeniD: Let me share one more collection of resources with you...

MichaelH listens up

LeniD: this is a primary source set that you can download and use with students "as is"...

DavidWe: I just wonder whether students can appreciate what desperate times there were 70 years ago

LeniD: http://memory.loc.gov/learn/community/cc_greatdepression_kit.php

LeniD: Perhaps not, but these images help them to see and think about what it may have been like, David...they open the door to understanding.

DavidWe nods

ByronH: We actually talked about this set in my staff meeting this morning.

CaroleMc: Thank you all for a stimulating session and for my additional learning today about the Library of Congress.

LeniD:

DavidWe claps

MichaelH: of course, none of US know what it was like 70 years ago, either, but we can gain a great appreciation!

DavidWe: Thanks, Susan, thanks, Leni

MichaelH applauds loudly

LeniD: Two more things...

MichaelH listens

LeniD: We do hope you will join us next month for the Library of Congress Chat. We will be sharing resources about Civil Rights, including a new Primary Source Set on Jim Crow in America.

DavidWe holds up finger #1

LeniD: Thursday, February 16 at 8:00 P.M. ET.

MichaelH will be there

CaroleMc: Well done Leni and Susan - I very much liked your easy, friendly style today. Bye from Australia.

DavidWe will be where Michael will be

MaryJJ: Thanks again, Leni!

DavidWe: G'day, Carole!

TerriBr: Thank you!

SusanMord: Thank you!

MichaelH: Thanks for a great session Leni... I have some power point slides to revise

LeniD: Thanks, Susan...that was terrific!

DavidWe agrees with Leni's appraisal

LeniD: Thanks for joining us, everyone

MichaelH: thanks for joining us, Susan... it was great

SusanMord: Thanks Leni! You are amazing!

ByronH: Thanks Leni!!!

DavidWe . o O (alright, enough mutual admiration...)

DavidWe grins

LeniD: And now... before we say goodnight... shared for the first time... a new activity on the Learning Page!

LeniD: Songs for Our Times

DavidWe holds up finger #2

LeniD: http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/songs_times/flash.html

LeniD: LOL, David

DavidWe: Always happy to lend a hand...or a finger...

MichaelH reminds David that we are a family chat room around here

LeniD: Going to leave you now... thanks, for joining us... good night!

DavidWe: Indeed!

DavidWe: G'night Leni