This lesson plan is designed to help students explore SAH Archipedia Classic Buildings, a publicly accessible website that will feature more than 100 of Mississippi’s most significant buildings. Students will learn about the Greek Revival architectural style and how it relates to the civil rights movement; students will also examine the University of Mississippi’s integration crisis.

Elementary Lesson Plan

Project Objectives

Students will understand and articulate the national historic significance of the Lyceum and the Circle at the University of Mississippi related to the civil rights era.

Students will develop and practice reading and writing skills required by the Common Core State Standards.

For the Teacher

Communities across our country have many homes, public buildings, and other historic places that can help us understand the cultural, social, economic, and political history of our states, regions, and nation. In essence, places can tell us the stories of our people if we work to understand the “language” in which those lessons are conveyed.

These vital repositories of history or prehistory come in many shapes: American Indian mounds that suggest the story of indigenous North American peoples; colonial structures that relate the early struggles of European settlement and then independence; classical mansions of the antebellum period that suggest the wealth and politics of “King Cotton” as well as the tragic institution of slavery; wooden dogtrot houses or barns that convey a sense of the yeoman farmer; sharecropper cabins that help relate the continuing influence of agriculture as well as the development of unique cultural contributions like the blues; cotton gins, grain elevators, schools, railroad depots, covered bridges, factory buildings, warehouses, military facilities, and numerous other structures suggest developments in transportation, education, industry, and government that have greatly impacted Americans—the possibilities are nearly limitless.

This lesson will help students understand that our buildings and other places can help us appreciate the rich history of our nation. As students study the Lyceum and the Circle at the University of Mississippi, they will become acquainted with architecture as well as the civil rights lessons those buildings can relate. The students will ultimately be empowered to see their home communities through new eyes—eyes with a greater ability to understand the stories behind our local built environments.

Curriculum Connections

Common Core English Language Arts Standards for Grades 3–5
GRADE 3
Reading: Informational Text
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.7
Writing Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2
Speaking and Listening Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.4
Language Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.3
GRADE 4
Reading: Informational Text
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7
Writing Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2
Speaking and Listening Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.4
Language Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.3
GRADE 5
Reading: Informational Text
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7
Writing Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.2
Speaking and Listening Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.4
Language Standards
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.2
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.3
Background

In 1954 the United States Supreme Court ruled in Brown v. Board of Education that racial segregation in educational facilities violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Much earlier, in the Plessy v. Ferguson decision of 1896, the Supreme Court had determined that the equal protection clause was not violated as long as equal conditions were provided to both blacks and whites. The Brown decision overturned that “separate but equal” standard. Although it applied specifically to public schools, the Brown decision also implied that other segregated facilities were also unconstitutional and dealt a heavy blow to white supremacist policies in the segregated South.

Before 1962, African Americans had begun to be admitted in small numbers to white colleges and universities in the South without too much incident. However, several attempts to integrate the University of Mississippi (commonly known as Ole Miss) had been successfully blocked by Mississippi officials. Then, in 1961, James Meredith, who had been studying at all-black Jackson State College, filed a lawsuit against the university with the help of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) alleging racial discrimination. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually heard the case on appeal and ruled in Meredith’s favor in September 1962.

Mississippi officials, including Governor Ross Barnett, attempted to defy the Supreme Court decision. The Governor’s actions provoked a constitutional crisis between the state of Mississippi and the federal government. After multiple attempts to register Meredith were prevented by Barnett and other state officials, President Kennedy ordered U.S. Marshals to accompany Meredith to the school’s Oxford, Mississippi, campus for his enrollment. A mob of more than 2,000 students and others formed to block Meredith’s way, and on the evening of September 30, 1962, a riot exploded on the University of Mississippi campus. Two people were killed and numerous others injured in the ensuing chaos, forcing Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to send federalized National Guardsmen to Oxford to restore order and enforce the Supreme Court’s decision in the Meredith case.

Despite the fierce resistance, Meredith registered as the first African-American student at Ole Miss on October 1, 1962, and he graduated the following year.

Additional background information on the integration crisis at the University of Mississippi is available from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History’s National Landmark application for the Lyceum and Circle Historic District, online at: https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/nom/dist/200.pdf

Opening the Lesson

The label “historic” is applied to many things, from Greek temples to baseball cards. When it comes to buildings it can be safely said that most are built with a fairly specific use in mind. These buildings may be beautiful, or they may be ugly, but as long as they serve their specific function some people don’t give much thought to the building itself. However, because buildings are designed with an end use in mind, they can relate a great deal about the culture, economics, and politics of the period when the building was used. Buildings can be great teachers of history.

So what makes a building historic, and, by implication, worthy of preserving?

On the board, or via projection, write the question: “What makes a building or a place historic?” Ask students working individually or in small groups to seriously reflect on this question and list as many answers as they can. Have students share their ideas with the rest of the class and generate a class list answering the question.

Once a class list is available, compare the student list to the criteria used by the National Register of Historic Places below. The National Register of Historic Places is the United States’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archaeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.
Criteria (adapted from the National Park Service criteria for the National Register of Historic Places):

1. Age—To qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, properties must be at least 50 years old, although a few special exceptions can be made. (Teachers can discuss with students—or allow students to respond in writing—“How old is old?”)

2. Association with historic events or people—Properties listed as National Historic Landmarks are considered to have national significance, while those listed on the National Register of Historic Places are considered to have state and local significance. Generally, this means the property reflects significant patterns in national, state, or local history and is possibly associated with the life of a significant person in national or state history. Teachers can discuss—or allow students to respond in writing—“What makes an event or person ‘historic?’”

3. Historic integrity—To qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, properties must be relatively unchanged from when they were constructed or when the historic events or people were associated with the buildings. Properties may also be listed as exceptionally valuable architectural examples for the study of a period, style, or method of construction.

While National Register properties are considered to be of particular importance to state or local history and culture, National Historic Landmarks are buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects that have been determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be nationally significant to American history and culture. To date only about 2,500 structures have been given this designation. Many of the most renowned properties in the United States are national landmarks. For example, Mount Vernon, Pearl Harbor, the Apollo Mission Control Center, Alcatraz, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthplace in Atlanta, Georgia, are some National Historic Landmarks that illustrate important contributions to the nation’s development.

Explain to students that they are beginning a study of sites in Mississippi that have been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places or designated National Historic Landmarks.
Developing the Lesson

A. Critical Thinking and Interpreting Information

Without identifying the building for students, project an image (or several images) of the Lyceum at the University of Mississippi taken for the Historic American Building Survey (or share with each student in a digital classroom).

The front facade of the Lyceum at the University of Mississippi. Photographed by Jack E. Boucher; courtesy of the Library of Congress. This image is also available online at: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hhh.ms0255.photos.093398p/

The Lyceum at the University of Mississippi taken from the northeast. Photographed by Jack E. Boucher, courtesy of the Library of Congress. This image is also available online at: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hhh.ms0255.photos.093399p/

The Lyceum’s front facade viewed from the southeast. Photographed by Jack E. Boucher; courtesy the Library of Congress. This image is also available online at: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hhh.ms0255.photos.093400p/

A closer view of the Lyceum’s columns. Photographed by Jack E. Boucher; courtesy of the Library of Congress. This image is also available online at: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/hhh.ms0255.photos.093401p/
Tell students this building is a National Historic Landmark, then ask students to speculate which criteria this building might have met for being designated a National Historic Landmark.

Once some student speculation has taken place, project an image of James Meredith accompanied by U.S. Department of Justice officials in front of the Lyceum. Ask students to identify some of the details they see in this photograph, then ask students to continue speculating which criteria this building might have met for being designated a National Historic Landmark.

Student speculation is likely to change from “the building is old” to “something historically significant happened there,” and it is possible that some students will recognize the specific event. This transition in students’ critical thinking offers a great opportunity to emphasize the different criteria for National Register or National Landmark status.

After students have shared their ideas, explain that the images are of the Lyceum at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi. The Lyceum is the oldest building on the campus of the University of Mississippi, which is the first state university in Mississippi. As the oldest building and the headquarters of the University of Mississippi, the Lyceum represented exclusively white access to higher education in the state. In the civil rights era it became the focal point of anti-integration riots during September 1962, as James Meredith integrated the University of Mississippi. The Lyceum and the Circle that surrounds it were designated National Historic Landmarks in part because of their direct association with the civil rights era.

The Lyceum is a fine example of the Greek Revival style in architecture. Greek Revival buildings took the classical Greek temple as inspiration and employed multiple architectural details readapted from ancient Greece.

For white Southerners during the pre-Civil War period, Greek Revival architecture symbolized that society could combine the ideals of liberty with slavery, since ancient Greece was a slaveholding democracy.

After the Civil War, Greek Revival architecture continued as a symbol of white Southern conservatism and the desire to maintain rigid class and racial divisions.
Developing the Lesson

B. Listening, Speaking, and Writing Activities

Show students the Mississippi Public Broadcasting documentary Integrating Ole Miss: James Meredith and Beyond. Available online at 26:47: http://mpbonline.org/integratingolemiss/documentary/

- As they view or after viewing, have students complete the Integrating Ole Miss worksheet. Discuss student answers.
- Assess student worksheets for completion and quality.
- Option 1: Have students write a paragraph on a topic related to issues of the integration crisis at the University of Mississippi and assess student work. Suggested writing prompts: “How would you feel if you were James Meredith looking at the Lyceum in 1962?”; “What would you do if you were president of the United States and James Meredith asked for your help at the Lyceum in 1962?”; “How might America’s views about buildings like the Lyceum have changed because of James Meredith?”; or a similar topic.
- Option 2: Have students draw a picture of the front facade of the Lyceum (review the Library of Congress photos) and have them draw a matching picture of the front facade of their own school. Have students write a paragraph comparing the two images of school buildings and assess student work.

Infusing Technology in the Lesson

- The teacher might utilize a class blog or use free online software such as TodaysMeet.com to solicit student responses for the Opening the Lesson section. (For http://TodaysMeet.com/: (1) create a “room” at the site and have students join it; (2) post the question, “What makes a building or a place historic?”; and (3) allow students time to respond to your query in the program—responses are shared instantly with all members of your “room” and can be projected or shared in front of the class in real time.)
- The teacher might have students utilize the National Park Service National Register of Historic Places website to research and summarize: (1) the history of the National Register and/or (2) the criteria for placement on the National Register. The website is available at: http://www.nps.gov/nr/
- The teacher might utilize the Historic Preservation Curriculum of the Mississippi Heritage Trust lesson “What Makes This Building Historic?” as an introduction to this lesson. The curriculum is available online at: http://www.mississippiheritage.com/curriculum.html
- The teacher might utilize Google Docs as a digital means for students to complete worksheets by: (1) saving the Integrating Ole Miss worksheet as a Google Doc, allowing students to complete and edit it in pairs or small groups as they view the film or following viewing; or (2) saving the Integrating Ole Miss worksheet as a Google Form, then asking students to complete the form individually as they view the film or following viewing. (For more information on using Google Apps in the classroom, see: http://www.google.com/drive/apps.html)
- Technology-based presentation possibilities might include student-created or edited video presentations, PowerPoint presentations, online Prezi presentations (more information available at: www.prezi.com), or digital poster projects such as Glogster presentations (more information available at: http://edu.glogster.com/).

Extending the Lesson

The possible extensions are limited only by the desire, time, creativity, and imagination of students and teachers. Some possibilities include:

- Students could take a field trip to local historic sites related to the civil rights era and compare events in the area to those at the University of Mississippi in 1962.
- Students could take a field trip to a museum featuring exhibits related to the civil rights era and explore how the integration of the University of Mississippi fit into the larger historic context of the 1960s.
- Students could research and create photographic collages of events related to the civil rights era in the United States.
• Students could research and collect oral histories from area participants in civil rights activities, people who experienced desegregation in their community, or relatives of these people.

• Students could prepare a program for other students relaying historical events from the civil rights era.

• Teachers and students could invite members of the community who experienced the desegregation of schools in the community to speak with the class. If technology is available, teachers and students could video record interviews for future use.

• Students could research desegregation in their community.

• Students could research Greek Revival architecture in their local area or in their state to explore the significance of the style, and identify buildings that reflect Greek Revival stylistic details.

• Teachers and students could invite a local architect or architectural historian to speak with the class about significant architectural styles found in their community and what symbolism might be attached to those buildings.

• Students might develop a tour of local “historic” buildings based upon “historic” criteria the students research and develop.

Internet Resources


Integration of the University of Mississippi digital collection, University of Mississippi Libraries Digital Collections, Archives and Special Collections, accessed September 12, 2013, http://clio.lib.olemiss.edu/cdm/search/collection/integration/page/1

“James Meredith.” The Mississippi Writers Page, University of Mississippi English Department, last modified October 19, 2007, http://www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/meredith_james/index.html


Mississippi History NOW: An Online Publication of the Mississippi Historical Society, Mississippi Department of Archives and History 2000, http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/


All rights reserved © 2013 Society of Architectural Historians http://sah-archipedia.org
Integrating Ole Miss Worksheet

Complete the following matching exercise to identify terms and people from the documentary.

1. Segregation  A. The rights of a country’s citizens
2. Civil rights  B. Mississippi governor opposed to integration
3. James Meredith  C. U.S. President supportive of integration
4. Ross Barnett  D. Legally separating people of different races
5. United States Supreme Court  E. First African American to attend Ole Miss
6. John F. Kennedy  F. The highest judicial body in the United States

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. Explain why James Meredith wanted to attend the University of Mississippi.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. The Lyceum at the University of Mississippi is Greek Revival style architecture. Describe the details of the building that make it Greek Revival.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Explain what you think the architectural style of the Lyceum symbolized to James Meredith and others who wanted to integrate Ole Miss.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Explain how the integration described in the film changed the University of Mississippi, and how it affected the rest of the country.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

All rights reserved © 2013 Society of Architectural Historians  http://sah-archipedia.org