



The Principia School of Nations Museum

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Fall term review 2008

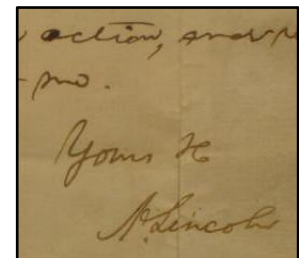
"The time demands strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and willing hands..."
-- J.G. Holland (from a poem, quoted by Mary Kimball Morgan in her 1934 commencement address.)



ELECTIONS AND LEADERS: In tune with the 2008 presidential election, we chose a "Leadership" theme for special museum exhibits this year. This fall, a gallery floor exhibit of presidential campaign memorabilia invited students to ask: **How do campaigns sell a candidate? How do we choose our leaders?** A voting booth from the 2000 Bush-Gore contested

election, along with slogans, buttons and bumper stickers from more than two dozen presidential campaigns, will remain **on display through November 21st**. Portions of the exhibit linked to study of the **Revolutionary and Civil Wars**, including late 18th century **George Washington** commemorative inauguration buttons, and an 1864 note signed by President **Abraham Lincoln**, will remain **on exhibit throughout the school year**.

The Lincoln letter, in which the President signals his intent to intervene in the court martial of a young Illinois recruit, is on loan from Margie Day Hamlin, a descendent of the Civil War officer who received it. Our permanent companion display shows the 22 U.S. presidents who served during the lifetime of **Mary Baker Eddy**, herself a world-class religious reformer and leader. In the works is a bookstore lobby display case featuring world leaders.



Lincoln letter



Fifth-grader Lily Oyer uses a magnifying glass to examine 19th century campaign buttons.

LOWER SCHOOL ELECTION CONNECTION:

As part of their social studies unit on the U.S. electoral process, **fifth grade** researched 2008 election issues, staged a rally, "registered" Lower School voters and held a simulated election on election day. According to teachers Heather Shier and Paul Fletcher-McGookin, 75 percent of Lower School's "registered" voters cast ballots, which were color coded by grade. In one grade, the major candidates tied, in two grades McCain won and in three grades Obama prevailed. As a part of their study, the fifth graders took part in **museum programs linked to presidential elections**. In the gallery, a scavenger hunt with "think" questions invited students to find connections between the issues of past and current elections.

At our Upper School lobby display case, students learned about historical artifacts on display in an exhibit titled, “**Family Heirlooms and the U.S. Presidency.**” **Ken Kooyman**, a relative of President Franklin Pierce, and great great great grandson of Revolutionary War hero Benjamin Pierce, told the fifth graders how family heirlooms inspired a love of history and respect for America’s constitutional government. Students saw pieces that once resided in the White House, campaign biographies, presidential portraits, and **an ink well used by Abraham Lincoln.** **Similar programs** can be scheduled anytime through Presidents’ Day. Contact the museum for details.



Lincoln ink well

UPPER SCHOOL GOES TO THE POLLS: At the Upper School, Student Council joined forces with our staff to stage a **simulated presidential election in the museum**, October 31st and November 3rd. Prior to the vote, student organizers arranged for government teacher Keith Preston to explain the U.S. electoral process at a Dean’s meeting. Students set up voting booths and a colorful registration table with balloons and bunting in the museum, where students could also examine historical items in the election exhibit. Two hundred three students participated in the vote, a **76 percent turnout.** Obama won 51 percent of the student vote. You can check the full results for The Principia Upper School (plus 52 other participating schools) at a website maintained by the McCormick Freedom Museum in Chicago: www.freedommuseum.us/studentvote2008



Upper School students sign registration lists before casting their ballots.

A PEAK SEASON FOR MUSEUM VISITS: Some **25 programs** used the museum galleries and meeting space in September and October, as we hosted parent receptions, faculty and development office meetings, pre-concert visitors and **14 class visits.** In addition, four teachers borrowed artifacts for classroom display or use. Curriculum topics for these special programs included:

- **Early American Life** (Preschool Juniors and Tiger Scout group)
- **Francophone Africa** (Upper School French classes)
- **Bible lands in the time of the Patriarchs** (Third grade)
- **Native American artifacts** (College School fourth grade)
- **Chinese artifacts** (College School first grade)
- **Westward Movement** (Sixth grade)
- **Ancient Middle East and Egypt, Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome** (Upper School Western Civilization course)
- **Hopi Kachina dolls** (Middle School art class)
- Our **November** schedule is quieter, but includes several meetings, gallery walks by pre-school juniors, and the loan of our **Colonial Life hands-on kit** for the Pre-School senior class, which is learning about **Pilgrim Life.**

COMING UP: December will feature our traditional **international Christmas tree** with student photos and ornaments from around the world. **The galleries will be open for visits before the upcoming Christmas concerts.** Classes may also stop in en route to rehearsals.

STUDENT WORKERS:

Blanda Matzenbacher, a senior from Germany, and Ashley Alarcon, a junior from Mexico, worked fall term as museum student assistants. These creative girls prepare special exhibits for the school libraries, and assist with other projects. They bring a much-appreciated international perspective to their work.



Blanda writes exhibit labels.



Ashley arranges an exhibit on Thai classical dancing for the Lower School library.

Student workers are introduced to the museum collection, proper care and handling of artifacts, methods used to track the location of objects, and are taught how to access digital records to learn more about exhibit objects. In turn, they bring their digital graphic design and internet research skills to the work.

WELCOMING NEIGHBORS: On occasion, we open our exhibit galleries to a wider audience. With the help of volunteer attendants, we've been able to open the museum before several of the **Town and Country Symphony** concerts held in Ridgway Auditorium. Several concert goers new to Principia express delight in seeing exhibits honoring their home cultures.

STUDENT TEACHERS SHARE: Two **Principia College education majors** created engaging ways to share our museum collection this term with **elementary classes from College School**, where they were student teachers. In late September, senior **KC Gahlon** brought the school's fourth grade to enjoy a gallery walk and to sketch and study **Native American artifacts**. Senior **Brittany Pratt** planned varied, museum-based, activities for the school's first grade class, which is studying **China**. During their mid-October field trip, the first graders listened to *The Story of Ping*,



KC Gahlon explains how to complete an exercise using Native American artifacts.

learned about silk, completed an artifact "scavenger hunt" and made bookmarks with Chinese characters. The mentor teachers report that Prin education majors are exceptionally well prepared.



Brittany reads *The Story of Ping* to First Graders during a museum field trip .

AT THE COLLEGE: Our College gallery in the School of Nations has a new **meeting space** to accommodate class visits. Fall term, the museum supported these courses: "**What is art?**" (Topics

in art history course on 20th century art), “**Environmental Imagination**” (First Year Experience course) and “**Native American Cultures**” (a Sociology course.) Two courses held class sessions in the museum, and another made use of cultural objects as part of a student project. College assistant Jayne Bennett created **seven special exhibits** around the campus, and loaned objects for special programs. **Principia memorabilia; paintings** by former Principia faculty; and displays of **Mexican, African and Native American art** were among exhibits linked to special programming on the College campus. Coming up, our staff is working with art history professors to identify objects in the collection that may be used in Spring term courses on Asian and non-western art history.

CONTACT US: We welcome your requests and ideas. Nancy Boyer-Rechlin, director, 314-514-3073, nancy.boyer-rechlin@principia.edu; Sharon Cheatham, assistant, x3298, sharon.cheatham@principia.edu.

Off Campus Opportunities for the holidays:

Missouri History Museum:

- Model Train buffs take note: beginning November 16, **model steam-driven trains** will run daily from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm throughout the holiday season and beyond. This display is FREE.
- A new exhibition about **Katherine Dunham**, a human rights activist and dance pioneer who “introduced African and Caribbean influences to the European-dominated dance world,” opened November 2nd. A free, related dance concert will be held at 2 p.m., Sunday, **November 23rd**.
- A touring exhibition on the life and contributions of **George Washington Carver** opens November 28th. Performances of “Listening to the Still Small Voice: The Story of George Washington Carver” are scheduled **November 28-29**. See www.mohistory.org for numerous other programs. Or visit the website www.historyhappenedhere.org to explore historic buildings in two of St. Louis’ older communities.

St. Louis Art Museum:

- Action/Abstraction: Pollock, de Kooning, and American Art, 1940-1976”, an exhibition that examines the work of these artists and of the critics who championed and influenced them. It runs through January 11th. Visit www.slam.org for more art programming. Check out the Art of Africa section under collections, for a child friendly web page. Our school museum has an object similar to the Kuba knife from Democratic Republic of Congo, which is featured on that webpage.

Granite City High School:

- The Duquesne University Tamburitians perform choreographed traditional dances from Eastern Europe, Saturday, **November 22**, 7 p.m. (\$12).