



## Preparation for using the "Preserving American Freedom" project

### And the first steps of usage in the classroom

“Preserving American Freedom” is a selection of fifty treasured documents and manuscripts illustrating the exercise and denial of freedom throughout our nation’s history. All of the primary sources center on the issue of freedom. Freedom as an over arching theme allows teachers, K -12, great leeway to incorporate these documents into United States History, World History, and several other academic curriculums. The concept of freedom provides instructors with an engaging topic that can be traced from our earliest landings in North America to the current day. Freedom can serve as a central theme for students in a year-long discussion on the evolving meaning and interpretation of freedom within the history of the United States. To guide instructors through this odyssey of historical inquiry the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) provides lesson plans, assignments, and other nontraditional assessments for instructors to use within the framework of their school standards / curriculum.

The use of primary sources in the classroom can be an intimidating task for both the novice and veteran teachers who are unfamiliar with their application in the classroom. HSP’s “Preserving American Freedom” can be used in a number of ways to satisfy the needs of the instructor. The primary sources are grouped by sections relating to historical time periods that can be used as a companion piece to your textbook. Each section provides a wide sampling of the American experience of freedom from William Penn to the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in 1978.

Whether an instructor is using an HSP lesson plan or developing their own based on the available primary sources, HSP reminds instructors to read the document(s) in its entirety for greater understanding. Once the lesson plan or document(s) has been selected, instructors can devise the best method to present to their students the historical context in which the document(s) was written. The number of ways an instructor can convey the historic context of the document(s) are endless based on one’s imagination, but a few traditional methods maybe a lecture, readings from either the textbook or an outside source, and relevant websites or podcasts that clearly explain the historical time in which the author(s) of the primary source was living. Instructors may also want to call attention to any words, phrases, or names that the students are unlikely to know. Eliminating unnecessary obstacles for the students may provide them with confidence needed to understand and complete the primary source reading. Overall, No one understands the dynamic and skill level of the class better than the teacher.