

“25 Texans in the Land of Lincoln”

Discussion Guide:

Our discussion guide includes questions and readings on a variety of topics allowing you to choose those that best fits your class' focus and context. Topics include: History, American Studies, Museum Studies, Geography, Border Studies, Sociology, and Educational Pedagogy. We hope you find these prompts fruitful for sparking classroom conversation and reflection.

How both countries remember the US-Mexican War

- **The film's narrator refers to the US/Mexican war as “the war Americans never remember and Mexicans never forget.”** Does this match your understanding? Why might Americans not remember this history? Why might Mexicans never forget it? What might be some consequences of Americans' “amnesia” or Mexicans' “obsession?”

Additional reading:

Wagenen, Michael Van. *Remembering the Forgotten War: The Enduring Legacies of the U.S.-Mexican War*. University of Massachusetts Press, 2012.

<https://www.umass.edu/umpress/title/remembering-forgotten-war>

Manifest Destiny

- **The film uses cut-out images from the famous painting, American Progress (1872), by John Gast to illustrate American immigrants going to Mexico.** How did 19C Americans define “Manifest Destiny?” How was the concept of Manifest Destiny used to legitimate the US-Mexican War? Are the ideas that supported Manifest Destiny in the 19th century still around? How do modern

issues of immigration, territory, and borders relate to Manifest Destiny?

Additional reading:

OSullivan's article about Manifest Destiny July 1845

<https://pdcrodas.webs.ull.es/anglo/OSullivanAnnexation.pdf>

Hudson, Linda. *Mistress of Manifest Destiny, A Biography of Jane McManus Storm Cazneau, 1807-1878*. Texas State Historical Association, 2001.

Heroes and Villians

- **The students challenge the use of “heroes” and “villains” when understanding history. Specifically we hear about Davy Crockett as a universal “hero” and Santa Anna as “villain.”** Who were some heroes or villains you learned about in your past history education? Why were they branded as either a hero or a villain? What purpose is served by having national/regional heroes and villains? Can you think about these figures in other ways? Which primary sources might be useful to reveal the complexities of historical figures?

Additional reading:

- Perspective Drives Our Interpretation of Heroes and Villains in History: <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/anthropology-in-practice/perspective-drives-our-interpretation-of-heroes-and-villains-in-history/>
- James Miles Grade 10 Lesson Plan: Heroes and Villains <https://historicalthinking.ca/blog/598>

- The Other Baggage of Confederate Symbols

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/commentary/article/The-other-baggage-of-Confederate-symbols-6444433.php>

Museum Ethics regarding artifacts

- **In the film, the students propose that Santa Anna’s leg be sent to Mexico. Museum Staff reject such an idea countering that museums are under increased pressure as people challenge their holdings, and are in danger of being “emptied out.”** How did you feel watching the interaction between the students and the museum staff? How are museums affected by repatriation requests? Discuss the motivation and methods of those leading and supporting repatriation efforts. What are your thoughts about where the leg should be? How do you understand the mission of museums in relation to artifacts? What ethical, legal, or educational guidelines advise museums about their collections?

Additional Readings:

- Obelisk returned to Ethiopia after 68 years:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/apr/20/italy.ethiopia>
- U.S. Returns Balangiga Church Bells to the Philippines After More than a Century
<https://www.npr.org/2018/12/11/675505073/after-117-years-balangiga-bells-will-be-returned-to-the-philippines>
- *Culture War: The Case Against Repatriating Museum Artifacts*, James Cuno: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24483927>
- Development of NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0wZIEggi-l>

Borders

- **Much has been written about the creation and maintenance of**

the US/Mexican border. The film's animation shows the creation of the border as a ripping of Mexico's map. What other ways can you imagine showing a new border being created using other art materials and animation techniques? How do you understand the history of the US/Mexican border? How does historical knowledge about the US/Mexican border influence your views about the modern border? How do we understand the relationship between indigenous people and land, when maps define only nation states?

Additional Film and Readings:

Experimental Film: <http://www.fiammamontezemolo.com/traces>

Documentary <https://www.throughtherepellentfence.com/>

Valerio-Jiménez, Omar, *River of Hope, Forging Identity and Nation in the Rio Grande Borderlands*, Duke University Press, 2013.

<https://www.dukeupress.edu/river-of-hope>

St. John, Rachel, *Lines in the Sand, A History of the Western U.S.- Mexico Border*, Princeton University Press, 2012.

<https://press.princeton.edu/titles/9454.html>

Questions of Identity

Eric remarks how funny it is that he felt most Mexican when going to a predominantly white area. Jose, when dressed as a charro, experienced people locking doors, which never happened when he handed out flyers at home. What do you make of these two experiences? What might Eric mean when he said he felt "more Mexican?" Have you ever experienced anything similar to Eric or Jose? How does your identity affect your experience in classrooms, museums, and other settings? How does your identity inform your understanding of history?

Readings:

- *Don't be intimidated by museums. They belong to everyone,*
Darby English

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/31/museums-not-white-spaces-belong-everyone>

- NYTimes Student Opinion: *Why is Race So Hard to Talk About?* <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/learning/why-is-it-so-hard-to-talk-about-race.html?module=inline>

Classroom Techniques in High School and Higher Ed

- **In the film, we see Professor Van Hoy engage her students through experiential learning. For example, the students put General Santa Anna on trial and do research not just for class, but for the “Remembering Lincoln” project at Ford’s Theatre.**
What is experiential learning? What can it contribute to a curriculum? What are some of the limitations and complexities of experiential learning? To what extent can teaching extend outside of the classroom? How might you design a curriculum for the material used by Professor Van Hoy and her students?
 - David A. Kolb on Experiential Learning: <http://infed.org/mobi/david-a-kolb-on-experiential-learning/>
 - *Experiential Learning: Conceptualization and Definition*, J. Duane Hoover (1974): <https://absel-ojs-ttu.tdl.org/absel/index.php/absel/article/view/2850/2798>

<https://rememberinglincoln.fords.org/>