



Using a Primary Source Activity: Up In a Balloon Above Music Hall

Note to teacher: This activity is based on the blog post "Up In A Balloon Above Music Hall - 1886 Bird's Eye View of Cincinnati", August 15, 2019 by Thea Tjepkema. The post can be found at <https://friendsofmusichall.org/blog/page/3/>

The following lesson and extension ideas align with the Ohio State Social Studies Standards included at the end of the lesson, and could be used as teacher-directed, individual or small group activities. The questions could be modified depending on grade level; you may want to retype the primary source chart for younger students.

Activity:

Would you like to ride up above the city in a hot air balloon? This blog post tells us about a special day in Cincinnati in the year 1886, when balloon riders enjoyed a "bird's eye view" of Cincinnati Music Hall and the streets of the city.

An amateur cameraman was one of the balloon riders. He created photographs of the scenes below. Thanks to his work, we now have several *primary sources* (*engravings* and a *chart* of important buildings in downtown Cincinnati) which provide us with information about life in the city many years ago.

Imagine the year is 1886. You and your good friend have just arrived in Cincinnati. It's your first visit, and a chance to explore this exciting city! What will you find? Use the *primary sources* to discover interesting things about the city: the *chart* (it's called the *index*) and the *engravings* (the pictures) in the blog post will help you answer these questions.

Link to the entire 1886 Bird's Eye View by engraver C.A. Fries so you can zoom in: <https://digital.cincinnati.library.org/digital/collection/p16998coll15/id/192679>

YOUR FIRST DAY IN THE CITY

You have arrived! What beautiful buildings! No wonder they call this place the "Queen City". **Look at the picture above the blog post title** and find the largest building. Today we call it Cincinnati Music Hall.

1. Write the **letter and the 1886 name for this building**. (Hint: look at the **chart**, where you'll find the building listed with a longer name)

Letter _____ Name: _____

2. What does the size of Music Hall tell you about the building?

_____ (possible answers: must be an important building, important things happen there, the people value music, used for large public events)

3. Let your eyes travel over the same picture. What type of building or building *feature* stands out the most? (possible answers: pointed towers, churches, smokestacks; vocabulary words: *steeple, spire*)

Type of building or feature: _____

How many *steeple*s or *spire*s do you count when you study the same picture?
_____ (possible answer: students will probably count 6-9 steeples or spires, including the church on Mt. Adams; note factory towers, especially to left of the picture)

4. As you and your friend walk the streets of Cincinnati you see lots of buildings that look like churches. How many places of worship can you find in the **chart**? (look for the word church or cathedral and don't forget to include the synagogue, the place of worship for followers of the Jewish faith)

Number (not names) of buildings used for worship listed in the chart_____ (19)

Note: African American churches and community buildings were downtown as well but not listed on the chart. African American churches that could have been labeled on this Bird's Eye View: Union Baptist Church-west side of Mound between Ninth and Richmond; Zion Baptist Church-north side of Ninth between John and Central Ave.; Mt. Zion Baptist Church 152 Cutter St., Union Chapel-north side Seventh between Plum and Central Ave.

5. Education is important to the people of Cincinnati in 1886. List the names of 2 buildings from the **chart** to *support* this statement. Hint: look for the words college, university, institute or library in the chart.

Names of 2 buildings: _____

(possible answers: The McMicken University, The Ohio Medical College, The Public Library, The Ohio Mechanics' Institute) Note: See the extension question below for an activity related to African American institutions in Cincinnati during this time period.

6. The air is smoky! There are many factories downtown in 1886: you'll be happy to find a nice park and a fountain. If you're standing at Music Hall you won't have to go far. Look right across the street in the top picture, then find the name for this park in the **chart**. (hint: the name starts with a "W")

W_____ Park

7. It's been a full day! Now it's time to sleep, but where will you go? Like many nineteenth century travelers, you have arranged to stay with friends. Some visitors to the city will stay in a hotel or a boarding house. Write the names of 3 hotels you can find in the **chart**.

Teacher note: although Cincinnati was a diverse city, many institutions and businesses would have enforced societal restrictions and limitations based on race at this time. In addition, a woman traveling alone without a chaperone or escort would be rare; a discussion about these issues in age appropriate ways could follow this question.

DAY 2 IN THE CITY

8. Find the "**The Illustrated News**" cover picture and study how people are moving up and down the street in front of Music Hall. Based on what you see, list 2 methods of transportation you and your friend could use in 1886.

2 ways to travel around the city: _____
(possible answers: walking, horse and buggy, horse-drawn(pulled) omnibus)

9. The people of Cincinnati enjoy the arts! Find 2 buildings on the **chart** where you could go to watch a performance or see beautiful paintings. (Vocabulary word: *opera*. Possible answers: 2 opera houses, Art Museum, and Music Hall – note different name)

10. Find evidence in the **chart** that the people of Cincinnati make the effort to help each other. List 2 buildings providing help for those who need care or healing in 1886: (possible answers: Home for Aged People, Cincinnati Hospital, The Children's Home, Ohio Medical College, YMCA)

Name 2 buildings _____

Bonus question: Do you like to dance? Standing at Music Hall with your friend, you can see a big building on the hill. Locate the names of two buildings on the **chart** (hint: find numbers 11 and 12) which provided meals and music for dancing in 1886. You and your friend decide that the people of Cincinnati, just like everywhere, love to meet their friends and have fun.

2 popular buildings on the hilltops for eating and dancing:

(Bellevue House and Lookout House; #7 Highland House was also popular)

You decide you'd like to come back to Cincinnati for another visit someday. You imagine what the city will look like in 135 years – maybe the hills will be filled with lots of buildings. You and your friend hope that people will take care of the special places in their city, and will still be enjoying the wonderful Music Hall many years in the future.

Challenge Questions:

1. What evidence do you see in the chart that a canal is located in this downtown area?
2. A statue in honor of a man named Garfield stood at 6th and Race streets. Why was this man famous? Find a clue in the chart.

4th grade Extension - primary source narrative

- Imagine you are one of the lucky ones in 1886 who gets to ride in the balloon! Write a narrative about your balloon ride: include what you can see, what you hear, and how it feels to be up in the air. Be sure to include some of the interesting details you see on the top of Music Hall. (vocabulary words: finials, spikes, cresting, lyres). Read the primary source account in the blog post to get ideas. Your narrative could be a letter to a friend, a poem, a news article, or if you're a time-traveler, your own blog entry.

- Here's another FOMH blog post entry that would be a fun place to start for a narrative based on a primary source: "An "Infernal" Creature Hiding in Music Hall" <https://friendsofmusicHall.org/blog/page/3/>

Extension: critical thinking questions for younger students:

- Do you see a lot of buildings on the hills? Why do you think the hills were mostly empty at this time? Discuss changes in transportation, and how everything was packed in the downtown area in just a few square miles.
- Which hotel building in Cincinnati today is the oldest, the Cincinnati or the Symphony Hotel? (you'll need your computer to answer this question)
- Pretend someone was able to travel into the future - from 1886 to 2021 - and walk around these same streets. List 3 things that might surprise the time traveler. (Skill: compare and contrast how city life has changed over time. Possible answers: big sports stadiums, fewer churches, buildings on the hills, streets filled with cars, buses – different forms of transportation)
- List 3 ways downtown Cincinnati might look the same to this time traveler. (Possible answers: we still have parks (Washington Park is in same location), Court House, Fountain Square, crowded buildings, some churches are still standing. Music Hall is still one of the most important buildings in the city!)
- Have you visited Washington Park today? How has it changed? (There is no longer a large fountain in the center of the park today and buildings on the north and south ends are gone. Today there is a bandstand, playground, and large open grass field)

Extension: critical thinking questions for older students:

- What does the number of churches (or the ratio of churches to other buildings) tell you about the people of Cincinnati? Interpret the information from the primary sources by making a *generalization* about role of churches in the 1800s.
- How often do you see the word "German" next to the name of a church in the chart? What does this information tell you about the people in this neighborhood? (possible answers: the neighborhood was popular with German immigrants - many arrived in 1848 and were still speaking their first language in 1886; people would need to learn to respect each other in a crowded city where people live close together and might not share the same religion, language or customs)
- Older students can also note the variety of religious expression/ different types of religions found in the chart (i.e. Catholic, Baptist, Jewish places of worship)
- Which hotel building in Cincinnati is the oldest – the Cincinnati or the Symphony Hotel? The Symphony hotel was once a _____. (You'll need your computer for this question)

- What African American institutions were downtown in 1886? Look in the 1886 Williams' City Directory and search the word "colored", which was the name used for African American citizens at this time.

Link to the 1886 Williams' Cincinnati Directory to look up addresses for the buildings:
<https://digital.cincinnati.org/digital/collection/p16998coll5/id/53649/rec/36>

Extension ideas related to social studies standards for diversity/inclusion:

As you could see from your balloon ride, Music Hall is an amazing structure - from the foundations all the way to the rooftop, it's a great building. Music Hall is recognized as a very important building in the United States, and that's why it's listed as a National Historic Landmark. Who designs buildings? This is the job of someone we call an architect.

- Discuss architecture as a profession.
- Discuss diversity in the field of architecture, and how difficult it was for women and minorities to become architects in the past. Why do you think opportunities were very limited in earlier time periods for women and minorities?
- Explore the wonderful buildings created by Paul Williams (first black member of the American Institute of Architects, 1923). Introduce the word "trailblazer"– someone who opens the way for talented people in later generations. <https://savingplaces.org/stories/nine-places-that-illustrate-the-life-of-trailblazing-black-architect-paul-r-williams>
- Show photos of Cincinnati buildings designed by women architects – Terrace Plaza Hotel (Natalie De Blois, lead architect), Contemporary Arts Center (Zaha Hadid)
- Society continues to look for ways to support minorities and women who want to become architects, and to challenge barriers that stand in the way.
- Research and create posters to show the work of pioneering women architects: Louise Bethune, (considered the first woman professional architect in the U.S.A.), Julia Morgan, Marion Griffin, Fay Kellogg
- Discuss the concept of "style"; Cincinnati Music Hall's style is called *High Victorian Gothic*. Take a tour of Music Hall to find out more about the architect of Music Hall, Samuel Hannaford – and more about this wonderful building style!
- Just for fun: research Cincinnati's Mushroom House

About the FRIENDS OF MUSIC HALL

Friends of Music Hall is a volunteer-driven organization. Our mission is to preserve, improve, promote and provide education about Cincinnati Music Hall. Our vision is to perpetuate Music Hall as the premier cultural center of the region and as a National Historic Landmark of international significance. Visit our website to learn more: FriendsofMusicHall.org or call 513.744.3293.

Ohio State Learning Standards: Social Standards

GRADE 3

History strand: Historical thinking and skills

- Primary and secondary sources can be used to show change over time.

Heritage

- Local communities change over time

Geography strand: Human Systems

- Systems of transportation and communication move people, products and ideas from place to place
- Communities may include diverse cultural groups

GRADE 4

History Strand: Historical thinking and skills

- Primary and secondary sources can be used to create narratives.

History Strand: Heritage

- Various groups of people have lived in Ohio over time including American Indians, migrating settlers and immigrants. Interactions among these groups have resulted in cooperation, conflict and compromise.

Geography Strand: Places and Regions

- The regions of the United States known as the North, South and West developed in the early 1800s largely based on physical environments and economies.

Geography Strand: Human Systems

- People have modified the environment throughout history resulting in both positive and negative consequences in Ohio and the United States.
- The population of the United States has changed over time, becoming more diverse (e.g., racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious). Ohio's population has become increasingly reflective of the multicultural diversity of the United States.

Economics Strand: Economic Decision Making and Skills

- Tables and charts organize data in a variety of formats to help individuals understand information and issues.

GRADE 5

Geography Strand: Places and Regions

- Political, environmental, social and economic factors cause people, products and ideas to move from place to place in the Western Hemisphere and results in diversity.
- The Western Hemisphere is culturally diverse (e.g. language, food, religion, art, music) due to the influences and interactions of a variety of world cultures.