



THE GREATEST STORIES NEVER TOLD PROJECT GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OF BCS AND JCS

The Greatest Stories Never Told Interactive Living History Play, *On Golden Wings*, is coming to Berkeley and Jefferson County schools and The Apollo Theater on October 18 & 19, 2022. This play is a celebration of James Herman Banning: the first African American to fly across the United States.

The Martinsburg Berkeley County NAACP has been awarded a WV Arts and Humanities Grant to fund the performances and to provide resources to engage students in discovering their own Greatest Story Never Told through research. For teachers who register to participate in this grant award, this project guide will provide ideas and resources you are welcome to adapt.

What are our goals? What do we want students to know?

1. There are many great stories in our history that are not well known and that deserve to be told.
2. It's important to know how to access factual information from reliable, factual sources.
3. Sharing what we learn is an important and rewarding activity.

What does the grant project provide and ask of participating teachers?

- (1) Each teacher will be given a copy of *Sprouting Wings* to be shared with their students as an introduction to the research project.
- (2) Teachers will engage students in a research project. While this guide will provide ideas, suggestions, and resources, teachers have flexibility to guide students in selecting topics, researching, and sharing what great stories they discover.
- (3) Teachers will attend a performance of the interactive history play with their students. Transportation will be provided to a central site.

The Greatest Stories Never Told Lesson Plan By Shari Becker and Louisa Jaggar

In this activity, students will explore concepts and ideas around research, storytelling, and family history by uncovering a great, nonfiction story that needs to be told. They may choose to discover this story by interviewing family members or friends OR conducting research to discover a story that they feel deserves to be shared and celebrated.

Each teacher may adapt this lesson to meet curriculum requirements. For example, subject area teachers may want to focus on accomplishments of scientists, technologists, human rights activists, musicians, military heroes, poets, etc. who are not as well known as others in their field, but who deserve more attention.

What is a “Greatest Story?” Teachers should begin by asking students to engage in a conversation exploring what a “greatest story” means to individuals, to families, and to communities at large. Next, teachers should engage students in a conversation around the idea of “never told.”

- Why are stories important?
- What makes a story a great one?
- What does “never told” mean?
- Is “never told” a secret story?
- If the story was “told”, why is it that most people today do not know about the story?
- Why have some “told” stories not received the national media attention they deserved shortly after they happened or at a later time period?
- What are some reasons historians didn’t record some important never told stories? Who are our historians who write our history books? Why might they not know about these stories?
- Why should untold stories be told? Why should we care about them?

Teachers may show [this video](#) of Louisa Jaggard and Tanya Dallas-Lewis discussing why stories are important. And in [this video](#), they discuss how different cultures tell their stories and how we might share our greatest stories..

Teachers may begin this unit with an oral reading of [Sprouting Wings](#). They may choose to show [this video](#) of the authors sharing why they wrote the book and how Floyd Cooper did his illustrations. And this clip about [Lady Liberty](#) and why Banning wanted to make this flight.

Discussion Questions:

1. The Second Baptist Church in Columbus Ohio gave Banning five dollars for his trip. That five dollars was greater than any other donation. In 1932, five dollars equaled around 88 dollars today. His flight took place during the Great Depression. How does that influence what you think of the five dollars given?
2. Why did Banning think it was important to fly across America?
3. What did he believe his journey would prove?
4. Why did the filmmakers have Banning talk to a young African American child in this video?

Next, students will be asked to uncover their own greatest stories or a greatest story in their community. This involves students conducting research through interviews and/or research using valid, credible sources.

Ask students to list all the ways one might uncover a greatest story. Ask the students to think outside the box on this one.

Stories of historical women and minority heroes are often found in attics, minority newspapers, in old picture albums. The manuscript that Thomas Cox Allen wrote detailing the Banning and his trip was found in a museum attic in the bottom of a torn cardboard box. Where can they find little known stories? Visiting a special place in their town and asking questions about how that place came to be. Interviewing family members, friends, neighbors, community members often is a great source of little known stories. Old newspapers often hold many untold stories—particularly if these stories were written in minority newspapers.

Next, once students find resources for their story, they can make a list of interview questions or research questions. Teachers can help students formulate a research plan to collect their information. What do they need to know to ultimately tell their “greatest stories”?

Finally, each student will present their “greatest story” to the classroom. They should address whether the story was ever told before or never told and how and why they discovered the story. Greatest stories can be shared in many different ways as there are many ways to tell stories. Students may choose to narrate it in story form or create a picture book, complete a piece of artwork or comic, produce a short video, write a poem, lyrics for a song and sing it, or they may share the story aloud or a recording of it as that is how so many greatest stories are shared.

SHARING OUR GREATEST STORIES

Giving students a wider audience will give them the motivation to excel in this project. We encourage teachers to share their students’ work. We’ll provide more details to participants later, but we plan to post a padlet on the [Martinsburg Berkeley County NAACP’s website](#) created to celebrate the students’ stories with a wider audience. We may also plan a public exhibition at the Martinsburg Library. Follow your school’s guidelines in sharing student work. (For example, students may want to use only their first names when posting projects.)

POSSIBLE RESEARCH TOPICS

1. Research a scientist, mathematician, writer, artist, or leader not covered in your textbook to reveal that person’s story and important accomplishments.
2. Interview a family member or friend about a specific experience connected to a topic you will study in school this year and share their story. For example, someone who served in the military, immigrated to our country, lived during segregation and Jim Crow laws, fought for Civil Rights, experienced a particular hardship or overcame obstacles to achieve success.
3. Use historical newspapers to read about the news published at the time of a major event (The Civil War, Bombing of Pearl Harbor, West Virginia succeeding from Virginia, The Depression) and write a story sharing what you have learned.
4. Examine closely advertisements that appear in historical newspapers during a specific time period. What stories do they tell?

5. Compare a major event coverage in an African American newspaper to one in a major daily newspaper? Is there a story to tell about this comparison?
6. Learn about a History Maker selecting that person by their field (music, art, military, government, etc.) using [The History Makers](#) and share that person's great story. . Some like West Virginians Henry Louis Gates and Katherine Johnson are well known, but what about the others whose stories deserve to be shared also?
7. In addition to reading *Sprouting Wings*, what else can you learn about James Banning by reading articles in historical newspapers? What do his own words tell us about his character, life and experiences?
8. Research minority group contributions to any field. For example, Black Pioneers of Aviation.
9. Research a part of our history that we may not be proud of (for example, lynchings, slavery) and discover the heroes who tried to prevent or change the direction of our history. Harriet Tubman is famous, but what about the lesser known heroes whose stories deserve to be told?
10. The [Sumner-Ramer African American Museum](#) has many [great local stories](#) that need to be discovered. Do you know anyone who was a student there? Perhaps a field trip where students could browse through the artifacts there would arouse curiosity to inspire oral interviews and research that result in a project that could be added to the museum's holdings.
11. Our area is rich in history. What places might reveal a great story? The Belle Boyd House, The Apollo Theater, Zion Episcopal Church Cemetery and others in Berkeley and Jefferson County, B & O Railroad Roundhouse, and so many more one might choose to discover.
12. A picture may spark curiosity leading to research about a great story that deserves to be told. Browse through a historic newspaper and look for such a picture.

RESEARCH RESOURCES

We have received an in kind donation of access from ProQuest for six weeks, ending on October 31. To access these resources, visit [this link](#).

[Proquest Historical Newspapers](#) empowers researchers to travel back through centuries and become eyewitnesses to history. Every issue of each title includes full-page images in easily downloadable PDFs. Researchers can study the progression of views, events, people, and places over time through these historical newspaper pages, including articles, photos, advertisements, classified ads, obituaries, editorial cartoons and more. Coverage: 1893 - 2010.

[Proquest US Major Daily Newspapers](#) U.S. Major Dailies provides access to the five most respected U.S. national and regional newspapers: *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Coverage: 1849 - 2018.

[eLibrary \(Homework Central\)](#) A massive collection of multidisciplinary periodical and digital media content, designed for beginning and intermediate researchers. Editorially created pages provide valuable context for both common and unusual research topics.

Other resources which ProQuest has also shared with us:

1. Library Guide: <https://proquest.libguides.com/hnp>
2. Webinar:
<https://proquestmeetings.webex.com/recording/service/sites/proquestmeetings/recording/787c31eb8f0a45f2a0d9c6425a22a963/playback>
3. Resource for topic suggestions:
[Black Freedom Struggle in the United States: Challenges and Triumphs in the Pursuit of Equality | ProQuest](#)

[The History Makers](#)

The HistoryMakers is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit research and educational institution committed to preserving and making widely accessible the untold personal stories of both well-known and unsung African Americans. Our grant provides a one year subscription. Students can search for history makers by their field (music, military, sports, etc.) They can search using “West Virginia” to discover our state’s History Makers including their biographies and interviews.

To access our subscription including the archives:

Click on this link: URL: da.thehistorymakers.org

Choose the “Digital Makers and Passcodes” option and enter the **Passcode: MBCPL**.

The above resources and more are accessible on this website that Emily Jones, Children’s and Youth Services Librarian, created just for us. Be sure to share it with your students.

[Martinsburg Berkeley County Public Libraries Website Guide for this Project](#)

SUPPLEMENTARY MEDIA LITERACY LESSONS

- 1) [What’s the difference between a fictional and a nonfiction story?](#)
- 2) [What is the difference between Primary Sources and Secondary Sources?](#)
- 3) An important part of any research is examining whether a source is credible. Depending on the age of the students, teachers may want to conduct media literacy lessons using age appropriate resources. Some suggestions include:
[Evaluating Primary Sources](#)
[Evaluating Resources](#)
[Evaluating What You Find: The CRAAP Test](#)

Thank you to our sponsors and partners!



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