



Elementary Classroom Primary Source Set

Billie Preston



Grade Level:

Elementary, 3rd

Essential Question:

How are facts corroborated across different sources?

Supporting Questions:

1. How could the time between an event and the creation of a source change its accuracy?
2. Are memories accurate? Does the time between a memory and its recording have potential problems?
3. How can emotions change memories?

Sources:

5

hard to put together, but when you got up there, they was awfully heavy.

Int: I don't think I could do it!

B.P.: Well, you have to build a scaffold, you know, and you lay so many blocks up there, and you take your mortar up there and your water and you lay things out. You get enough up there for one day's work. Of course, you have to come down and get more mortar, of course, but the blocks are already there. I put them up every evening and the next morning I mixed the mortar and started in.

Int: About how long did it take you?

B.P.: I don't know. I just kept goin' until I finished it.

Int: Well, I'm sure you are proud of it! And you have lived here, let's see, 31 years? You've seen a lot of changes in 31 years.

B.P.: Yeah, in Aurora, yeah.

Int: You got Patches when he was about two. What year was that?

B.P.: By golly, I forgot. It was in the forties, I think, or the fifties.

Int: Let's see, in this story, she is 26 and she died at 29. So that would have been 1971? Did she die about 6 years ago?

B.P.: 6 or 7, yeah.

Int: So 27 from 71. That would have been 1944. Did you have her when you built the house?

B.P.: No, I got her when I was building it.

Int: That was around 1946 or so?

B.P.: Uh-huh. Somewhere in there.

Int: Did you just get her as a pet or did you really get her to ride and show?

B.P.: No, you see, I didn't have a car and I would have to go to the store and get groceries. I knew how to make those bags, you know, like paper bags, only not so big and I would put these over the back of the saddle and put the groceries on each side and bring them home. And I would go down to the icehouse down on Colfax and put 50 pounds of ice on each side and bring them home.

MUST MARE MOVE?

Two Defy Aurora Over Horse 'Patches'

"They're just picking on me—there are other horses in Aurora besides Patches," she said.

That's how Mrs. Royce E. "Billy" Preston, 2311 Havana St., owner of Patches, a 10-year-old mare, stated her defiance of Aurora city officials' efforts to get the horse out of the city.

Mrs. Preston said her husband have until April 1 to remove Patches, the couple's only means of transportation. If the horse is still in town then, the city will file court action to have the mare housed from town, City Manager Earl P. Sandquist warned.

Mrs. Preston said, "Patches is entitled to stay. She was here before the city officials came," she said.

Mrs. Preston charged that the city was "picking" on her because a real estate man is trying to get his hands on her property. "I know of at least five other horses in town—four on Peoria St. and one on E. Colfax."

Patches isn't the nuisance that city officials claim, she said. She said she has never heard of anyone taking off from Staples field and Mrs. Preston said, "You can hear the airplanes all the time, but you don't even know Patches is here until you see her," she said.

Sandquist said Mrs. Preston's charges are "ridiculous." There have never been complaints of other horses in Aurora, he said.

Livestock in Aurora Gets Eviction Notice

Animals within the city limits of Aurora had better start looking for new homes.

Their days inside the city are numbered. City Manager Earl P. Sandquist warned Friday.

Sandquist's warning came after a Denver Post survey Thursday turned up at least 100 animals, two with cows, two horses, two geese and scores of chickens in Aurora.

The survey followed charges by Mrs. Royce E. "Billy" Preston, 2311 Havana St., that her property, Patches, wasn't the only animal in the city. Aurora officials have given Mrs. Preston until April 1 to remove Patches, only means of transportation for Mrs. Preston and her husband.

Mrs. Preston's charge about other animals was only a "red herring," Sandquist said. But, nevertheless, the animals are going to have to go. Outgoing regulations make no provisions for agricultural animals.

However, colder weather possibly some snow will melt by Saturday night.

Denver's big reading of 38

Warm Skies Due to Last Over Friday

Denver weather will stay bright and warmer until late Saturday, the U.S. weather bureau said Friday.

However, colder weather possibly some snow will melt by Saturday night.

Denver's big reading of 38

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Editorial

The subject of 'Patches' appeared on the agenda of the City Council Monday night when several letters (all urging that the horse be allowed to remain) were read by City Clerk Ray B. Johnston. At least one of the letters had some signatures from the city itself. There were also some people present who addressed the council in Patches' behalf.

The basis for the action against Billy Preston, owner of Patches, appears to be a petition of 15 residents which was unavailing and a noisy ordinance that was adopted in 1930 and which was quoted as containing something about public health and nuisance. A speaker at the council meeting pointed out that the Health Department recently gave the horse and its quarters a clean bill of health but the verdict remained—the horse must go.

As the matter stands now, Billy Preston will receive, or has already received, a letter from the City Manager advising her that she must get rid of Patches by April 1. This letter was sent on the advice of the City Attorney. If the directive is not complied with, the city administration will bring suit against the owner of the animal in an attempt to force its removal. Billy Preston, through her attorney, can then present her case in the Police Magistrate's Court for a ruling in the matter.

So much for the legal aspects of the case of the city administration vs. Aurora's only horse. Now let's take a look at public opinion. To begin with this horse is a public pet and landmark of the days when horses were not only tolerated but desired. Horses are still desired to move, if not all, of the surrounding communities.

Everyone knows that Lathrop citizens love horses and there are several riding clubs within the city limits. There are many horses in exclusive Cherry Hills. There are horses by the dozens in Littleton, exclusive of the race track, and there are horses right in Denver. Less than five years ago a society center road Street entrance to do her shopping and no traffic on such a ticket on the whistle-trace.

Why one lonely old horse that minds its own business at the edge of town (if it were a few hundred feet further west) it would be on an airline take-off area) should cause the city fathers so much concern in their determination to get rid of it is difficult to understand. For one thing the horse's life expectancy is probably short because it is 14 years old and not very frisky. The fact that a previous city administrator ruled that Billy could keep Patches as long as it lives apparently has no bearing in the case.

It is our guess that when the ordinance was drawn up in 1930 the city councilmen who were a party to it were not thinking of a pet saddle horse on the edge of the city. If the present city council is willing to stretch a long pole to include Patches as undesirable according to the terms of this old ordinance, it seems to us they could stretch a pole in the opposite direction and consider that Patches is not a public nuisance.



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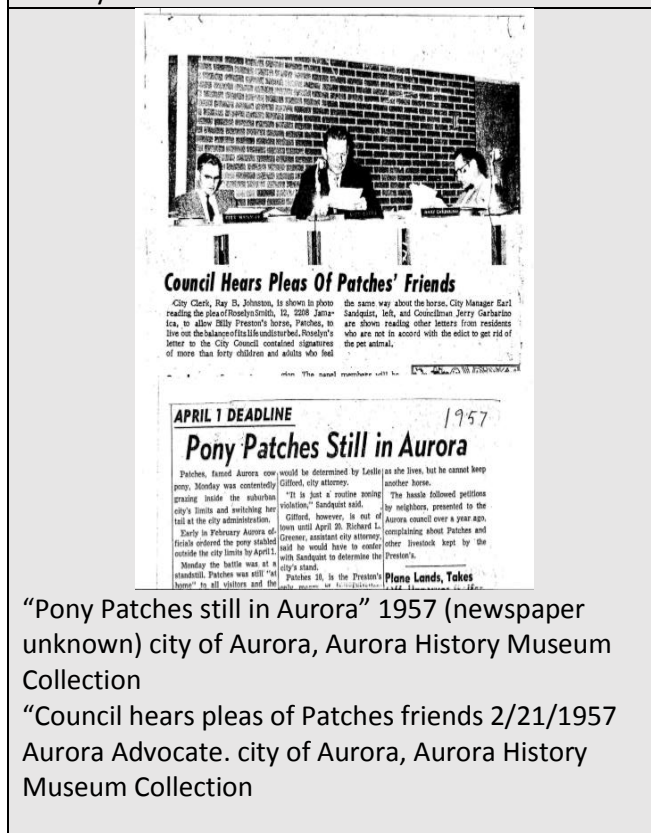
Billie Preston



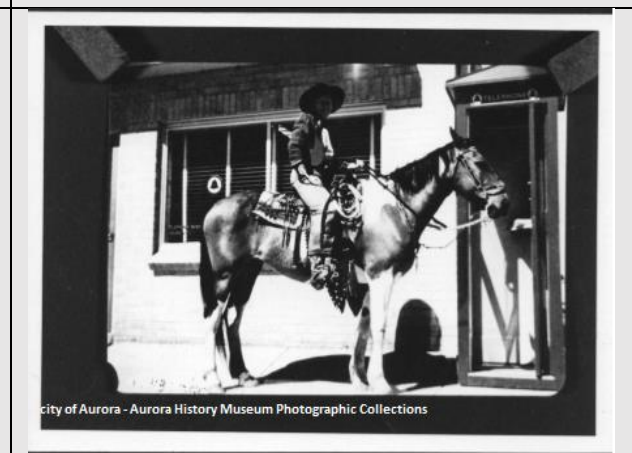
"Neighbors frown on horse woman rides to town"
1/17/1957 (newspaper unknown) city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection
"Mrs. Preston to fight order for Patches' Patches"
3/14/1957 Aurora Advocate. city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection



"Aurora's celebrated Mare, 26, living quietly"
2/7/1960 Denver Post. city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection



"Pony Patches still in Aurora" 1957 (newspaper unknown) city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection
"Council hears pleas of Patches friends" 2/21/1957 Aurora Advocate. city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection



Billie Preston on Patches, 1940-1950
city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum photography collection P1990.5466



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Billie Preston



*Bonnie Tracy & David Anderson
on Billie Preston's horse "Patches"
at 1905 Geneva St. in Aurora.*

Children on Patches, July 1962

city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum photography
collection P1990.15009

Background Knowledge/Contextual Information for Teachers:

A Brief History of Aurora

The city of Aurora began as a small suburb of Denver called Fletcher. Fletcher stretched from 6th Avenue to 26th Avenue and from Yosemite Street to Peoria Street. Fletcher was developed by Donald Fletcher who moved to Denver from Chicago in 1869. He helped develop the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Denver and was the president of the Denver Chamber of Commerce in 1888. He purchased the land that would become Aurora and set out to build his own suburb on the outskirts of the quickly growing city.

In 1957, the city of Aurora expanded to include the land that Billie Preston and her horse, Patches, lived on. Under the laws of Aurora, people were not allowed to keep large animals like horses, and so Patches would have to leave. Billie Preston fought the law, saying that Patches was there before it was Aurora, and she was Billie's only way to get around because she did not have a car. Patches was well known around town and Billie Preston was often seen riding her to run errands and giving children rides. In the end, the city allowed Patches to stay, and she was allowed to live out the rest of her life in Aurora, officially making the city a "One Horse Town".

Building Background Knowledge for the student:

Video about Billie Preston and Patches: [here](#)



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Billie Preston



Strategy Instruction:

Sourcing asks students to consider who wrote/produced a document as well as the circumstances of its creation. When sourcing a document students should ask:

- Who wrote this?
- What is the Author's perspective?
- Why was it written?
- When was it written?
- Where was it written?
- Is this source reliable? Why? Why not?

Contextualization asks students to locate a document in time and place and to understand how those factors shape its content. When contextualizing a document, students should ask:

- When and where was this document created?
- What was different then?
- What was the same?
- How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?

Corroboration asks students to consider details from across multiple sources to determine points of agreement and disagreement.

- What do other sources say?
- Do the Sources agree? If not, why?
- What are other possible sources?
- What sources are most reliable? Why?

Strategy Instruction Differentiation:

Students can work in small groups to complete this project, and the sources can be divided in a way to give some groups less of the textual sources if reading ability is a concern.

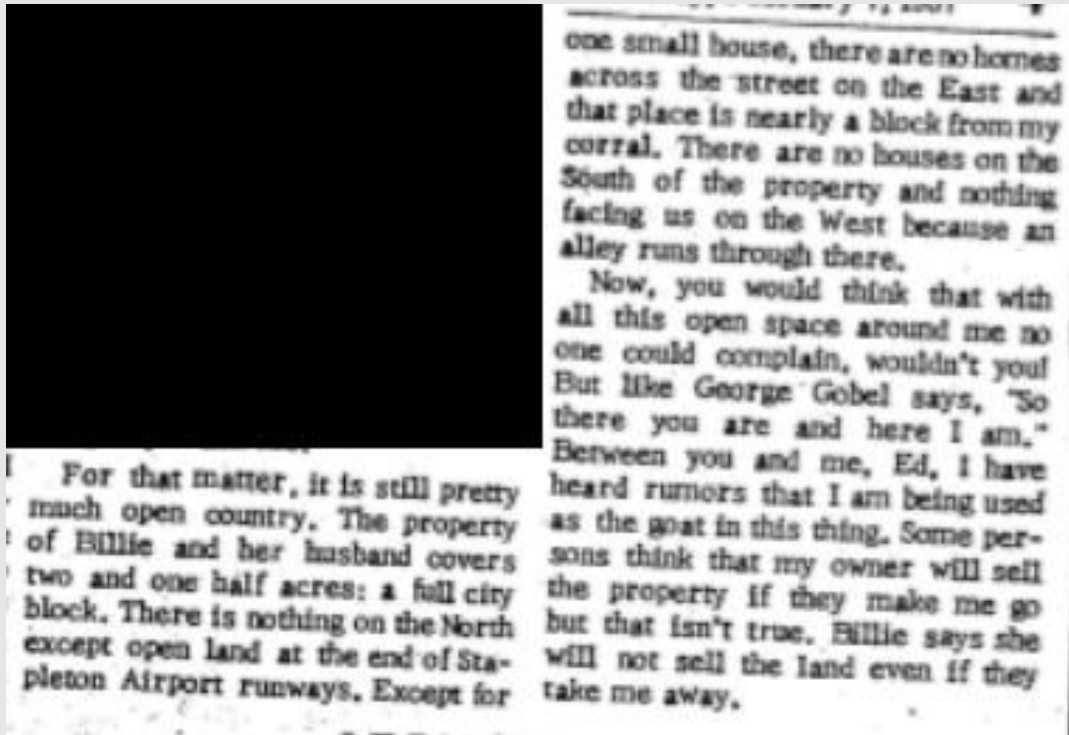
Discussion:

See "sample activities" for discussion questions

Assessment: (see next page)

Billie Preston and Patches: Assessment

The following is an excerpt from an "interview" with Patches



Patches tells her story 2/7/1957 Aurora Advocate. City of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection

For that matter, it is still pretty much open country. The property of Billie and her husband covers two and one half acres: a full city block. There is nothing on the North except open land at the end of Stapleton Airport runways. Except for one small house, there are no homes across the street on the East and that place is nearly a block from my corral. There are no houses on the South of the property and nothing facing us on the West because an alley runs through there.

Now you would think that with all this open space around me no one could complain, wouldn't you! But like George Gobel says "So there you are and here I am." Between you and me, Ed, I have heard rumors that I am being used as the goat in this thing. Some persons think that my owner will sell the property if they make me go, but that isn't true. Billie says she will not sell the land even if they take me away.



Billie Preston and Patches: Assessment Questions

Question 1: In “Patches” view, why does she think she should be able to stay in Aurora? Use any facts you remember to support your answer.

Question 2: Read the last 2 sentences. What does “Patches” think is the real reason she is being forced to leave Aurora? Do you think she could be right?

Reason she has to leave:

Is Patches right about it?



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Level	Description
Proficient	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The student identifies information from the passage that shows there are no neighbors near Patches, so she isn't bothering anyone. The student also uses 1-2 pieces of information from the activity to support their argument.2) The student identifies that "Patches" suspects the city wants her to leave to force Billie Preston to leave and sell her land. The student also forms an opinion about whether this is true and sees that it would benefit the city to force the sale of that much land. The student may have an emotional response to this (eg. It isn't fair! She is a nice horse who gives rides to kids!) showing that they understand the situation.
Emergent	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The student either identifies information from the passage that shows there are no neighbors nearby or correctly uses information from the activity, but does not do both.2) The student identifies the city's possible motives in forcing patches to leave but does not express an opinion about whether it could be true and does not show understanding of Patches' role in the dispute.
Basic	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The student does not identify any information from the passage that relates to Patches and the land surrounding her and does not bring any outside information from the activity into their answer.2) The student does not show understanding of the city of Aurora's possible motivation and how that may impact Patches.

Curriculum Standards:

- CO Standard 1- History
 - 3rd Grade- 3.1.1.b- Use a variety of primary sources with works of fiction about the same topic
 - 3rd Grade- 3.1.1.c- Compare information from multiple sources recounting the same event



Elementary Classroom Primary Source Set

Billie Preston



- 3rd Grade- 3.1.2.b- Give examples of people, events, and developments that brought important changes to a community or region.

Reading and Writing Standards:

- CO Standard 1-Oral Expression and Listening
 - 3rd Grade 3.1.1.b- Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- CO Standard 4-Research Inquiry and Design
 - 3rd Grade 3.4.1.a- Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic

Sample Activities:

Have groups of students look at different sources and make a list of what they think are the facts from those sources. They can use the provided note catcher as a framework for their investigation. Each group should look at 3-4 sources and then as a class do a scattergories style sharing to find out if other groups came up with the same fact.

For example: One group shares something they found, like Patches gave rides to children. That can be written on the board and then any other group that found the same fact can raise their hand to be tallied. If another group came up with the same thing, that corroborates the fact. If more than one source has the same information, it makes the corroboration even stronger. After gathering all the facts, talk to students about reliability and corroboration for the different things they found.

Some of the sources come from different times (1957 vs 1977).

Which facts are more reliable?

Does corroboration across time make something more or less a fact?



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Note Catcher:

What is the name of the source?

What kind of source is it? (Circle One) Interview/Newspaper/Photo

Try to answer these questions using the source? (If not, leave blank)

Who owns Patches?

Why does Patches have to leave Aurora?

Why is Patches famous in Aurora?

What other facts do you think are important?

What is the name of the source?

What kind of source is it? (Circle One) Interview/Newspaper/Photo

Try to answer these questions using the source? (If not, leave blank)

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What other facts do you think are important?