

A Boy Named Woodrow Wilson

Grades 3-8

Tour Objectives

Students will...

- Find out about the connection between Augusta, Georgia and President Woodrow Wilson
- Learn about the time period between 1858–1870 in Georgia
- Discuss the significance of the Civil War including Augusta's role in the war
- Discuss moral issues related to race both during the Antebellum era and the years that followed the Civil War

Vocabulary

Itinerant

Sharecropping

Agriculture

Economy

Tour Props

Ben Shahn Photo reproduction

Cotton drag sack

Branch of a cotton plant

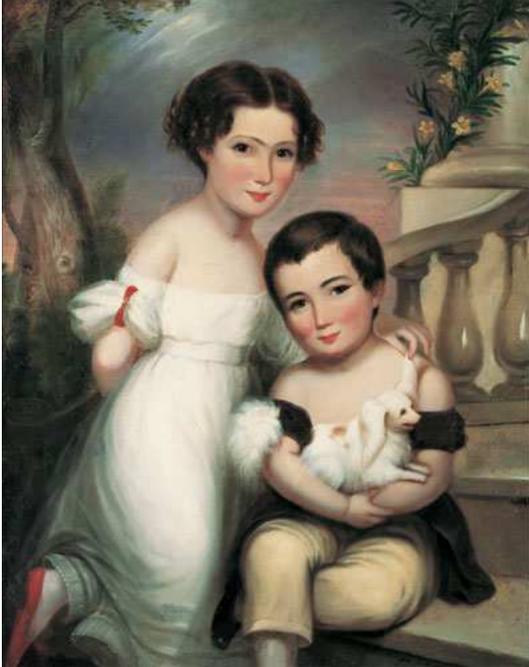
Map of Savannah River

Tour Overview

This tour is in partnership with the Boyhood home of President Woodrow Wilson; students will experience a two-part field trip that begins at the Morris Museum and ends with a house tour at the other site. The questions in this tour plan are simply suggestions to help you develop conversations with your students. You do not need to use every suggestion at every stop; assess the interests and ability of your group and choose the questions you think are appropriate.

Introduction

Welcome students to the museum. Tell them that we will be using different paintings from the museum to tell them about the history of Georgia and how it relates to our twenty-eighth President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. Explain that the tour will give them background information about what Augusta was like around the years that the president lived in Augusta. Although the president wasn't born in Georgia, he did move to Augusta at the age of two, and spent most of his time in the state between the years of 1858–1870. His family moved from the North so that his father could become the Pastor at First Presbyterian Church.



George Cooke (1793–1849)

Portrait of Western Berkeley Thomas and Emily Howard Thomas of Augusta, Georgia
1840

Oil on canvas

This portrait by George Cook depicts the niece and nephew of a prominent Augusta family. Some of Augusta’s wealthiest citizens made money exporting goods such as tobacco and cotton for resale all over the world. Having one’s portrait painted could be seen as a status symbol, or a reflection of one’s material wealth. These pictures were primarily by artists who traveled from town to town, frequently painting the sitter in their homes. This practice allowed painters to develop relationships with patrons in a variety of small and emerging towns.

1. What does this picture tell us about Augusta at the time it was painted? (Does it give us any insight into how people might have dressed? Do you think these are every day clothes? Why, or why not?) Do you think this is an accurate portrayal of life in Augusta?
2. What about this picture might suggest that these children are “well off”? Do you think all the children of Augusta had their pictures painted? Why, or why not?
3. Some itinerant portrait painters had their own distinct painting style. There is another painting by this artist in this gallery. Can you identify the other painting? In what ways are they similar? Do the children in either picture look realistic? Why or why not?
4. How is this portrait different from a portrait that might be done today? Would it be made with the same materials? Would your present-day portrait be created by

an artist? Do any of you have portraits of family members in your house? What are some of the purposes portraits serve? Are they useful? If so, how?



John A. Mooney (c. 1843–1918)
Surprise Attack Near Harper's Ferry
c. 1868
Oil on canvas
54 1/8 x 96¼ inches

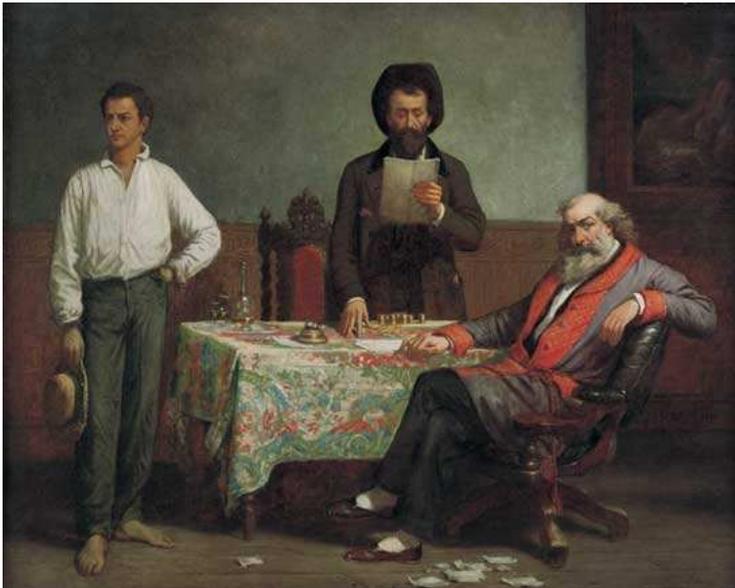
What at first glance appears to be a painting that portrays a number of men bathing in a river, is actually a painting that depicts a moment of complete fear. Unaware of the Federal troops in the distance, these Confederate soldiers, longing for a moment of solitude, decide to bathe in the Potomac River. Suddenly, a barrage of cannon fire, indicated by the smoke in the background, erupts. The men scramble out of the water to the nearest shoreline and frantically search for cover. Some stop to grab their clothing, while others are too scared.

For John Mooney, *Surprise Attack Near Harpers Ferry* was a painting created from memory with the use of models in his studio. Mooney enlisted as a private in the 10th Regiment of the Georgia infantry and saw the harsh realities of the Civil War firsthand. The artist was among these soldiers the day that the Federal army began firing toward the Potomac River. It was not until after the war ended in 1865, that Mooney decided to become a painter and show others, in the truest way possible, what he had experienced during the war.

President Woodrow Wilson was only a boy during the Civil War but he had remarked that this turbulent time in American history would have a lasting impression on him. The

President claimed that one of his first memories, at the age of four, was of overhearing a passerby announce that Mr. Lincoln had been elected, and there was going to be a war. In the years that followed, he would witness wounded soldiers being brought to his Father's Church where the confederacy had set up a make-shift hospital.

1. How would you describe what is happening in this painting?
2. Most pictures of battles are painted after the fact, by people who didn't experience the trauma first hand. How might the artist's role affect the way the battle was depicted? How might this picture be different if it was painted by a Union army soldier?
3. Often paintings of battles are made to glorify heroic acts by soldiers under difficult conditions. Do you think this picture makes any one side look heroic? Why or why not?
4. The artist shows us a variety of different reactions from the soldiers being attacked. Compare different soldiers in the painting. What are some of their strategies for survival? Are their reactions all the same?
5. Some people have assumed that one of the figures in the painting is the artist. Which figure do you think he is, and why?



Thomas Satterwhite Noble (1835–1907)
The Price of Blood
1868

Oil on canvas
39¼ x 49½ inches

This is a scene in which the family patriarch is selling his own mulatto son into slavery. The image is often cited as a critical look at slavery and an effort to confront the racial tension in the years leading up to the Civil War. The artist was raised in a slave-owning household and claims to have fought for the Confederate army on the grounds of states' rights. After the Civil War he made a number of works that dealt with the injustices of slavery. In that period, civil rights for African Americans were slowly improving, but equality would be slow coming. In the same year this painting was completed, the first African American congressmen from Georgia had been elected by the people, but they weren't permitted to serve because of their race. Explain to students what is happening in the painting, and identify each person's role.

1. How do you think the artist felt about slavery? Why makes you feel that way? Do you think that a work like this could make someone think differently about slavery? Why or why not?
2. Nowadays we can all agree that slavery is immoral and unfair. People haven't always felt this way, so what do you think has changed?
3. Even though it is difficult for us to imagine *any* justification for slavery, for what reasons do you think people supported such a horrible and unjust way of life?
4. Pretend you are each person in this picture, can you describe how you might feel?



Lamar Dodd (1909–1996)
From This Earth
1945

Oil on canvas
24 x 39½ inches

Props
Photocopy of a Ben Shahn print
Cotton drag sack

Harvesting cotton in the years after the Civil War was a challenge for the people of the South. Because landowners could no longer depend on slave labor to work their fields, new ways of establishing a workforce had to be developed. Many landowners, leased their land to worker-tenants, who would then repay them with a portion of the proceeds that came from the cotton harvest. Known as sharecropping, this arrangement had benefits for both the landowner and worker, but in many cases the workers were left with difficult labor, large amounts of debt, and an ever-decreasing return on their cotton. Just as in the days of slavery, fieldworkers (former slaves, struggling white yeomen, and Hispanics) would plant, tend, and harvest the raw materials that would later become industrial cotton products. This work of picking the cotton was difficult and time-consuming. Each cotton flower needed to be pulled from a dry thorny boll and put in a long drag sack pulled behind the picker. When filled, the bags could be quite heavy. Sometimes there were different size bags for men, women, and children. Some accounts claim that children's bags could be as long as four feet.

Opening interpretive questions:

1. What is this a picture of?
2. How has the artist painted the picture? How does the field look? Does the picture look real? Why or why not? Are there any specific feelings you get from looking at the picture? Can you describe them?
3. How might the title *From this Earth* relate to the picture? How would you describe the posture of the pickers? Many museum visitors have expressed their appreciation for this picture. What do you think they are drawn to in this picture? Can you relate to the subject matter?
4. Let's assume the pickers in this painting are sharecroppers. Why do you think people continued to pick cotton after the Civil War was over?



Thomas Addison Richards (1820–1900)

River Plantation

1855–60

Oil on canvas

20¼ x 30 inches

Props

Map of the Savannah River

This picture resulted from the time Richards spent in the South. An enthusiastic traveler, Richards spent many years exploring and documenting his travels. He illustrated magazine articles, penned essays, published books, and produced prints that documented his interest in the unique characteristics of the places he visited. Richards eventually became the editor of the first guidebook devoted to the United States and Canada. This scene on the Savannah River shows what the river may have looked like before the Civil War. An important part of the development in this area, the Savannah River provided a route for boat transporting goods from town to town, encouraging trade and travel. Some of the earliest boats used by Americans on the Savannah River, Petersburg boats, got their name from a nearby town no longer in existence, important for distributing tobacco, the most important crop in the South before cotton became extremely profitable. In those days, men, frequently slaves, would have the dangerous task of navigating the river in shallow flat bottom boats loaded with goods for various markets. They were also responsible for making the difficult trip upriver against the currents. This was achieved one of two ways: either through the use of long poles to slowly push their way upstream, or with the help of draft animals pulling the load from shore.

1. Rivers have often been crucial to development of communities like ours. Can you list some of the reasons why?

2. Hold up the map of the Savannah River and ask if one student can locate Augusta on the map. Point out the distance to other relevant landmarks including Savannah, the Atlantic Ocean, and England.
3. Along the Augusta Canal, the Confederate Powderworks, the only permanent structure built by the Confederate army made gunpowder for use during the war. How might this location have been beneficial to the Confederate Army?
3. This picture shows us a small part of the Savannah River in a time before the Civil War, how might that same place look now? What might you see?
4. Do you know some of the contemporary uses for our river system? (In addition to shipping goods, we now use the river for hydroelectric power, drinking water and recreation.)
5. This picture is called *River Plantation*; do you know what a plantation is? Can you find where the plantation might be in this picture? Plantation is a term frequently used to describe certain types of houses in the South. Why do you think the term is less popular in other parts of the United States?

Definitions

for the purpose of this tour

Itinerant

A person who travels from place to place with no fixed home.

Sharecropping

An agriculture practice in which landowners allow tenants to work on and harvest from their land in return for a share of the crop.

Agriculture

The type of work associated with growing and harvesting crops or raising livestock for sale.

Economy

A system that involves work, goods, and resources.

