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:

Excerpt from Billie Preston Interview (more pages in resource packet) 9/1977, city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection

"Two defy Aurora over horse Patches"
3/11/1957, (newspaper unknown) city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection

“Livestock in Aurora gets eviction notice”
3/15/1957 (newspaper unknown) city of Aurora, Aurora History Museum Collection
“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
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](#)
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)
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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| Proficient | 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   | 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      | 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?
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?

______________________________

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