

Marie LeFevre Bailly: The Real Princess Monee

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Suggested Grade Level Range: 9-12

Connections to U.S. History Curriculum

This lesson situates local history within broader U.S. historical themes, including Indigenous dispossession and myth-making. Students will engage with the real-life story of Marie LeFevre Bailly, an Odawa woman whose land allotment in the 1832 Treaty with the Potawatomis connected her to what would become Monee, Illinois. They will explore how Marie's life illuminates the cultural and economic entanglements between Indigenous and settler communities during westward expansion, the fur trade, and treaty negotiations. By comparing the historical record with local mythologies about a so-called "Princess Monee," students will develop critical skills in historical thinking, source analysis, and civic reflection on how history is remembered and represented. This lesson complements units on early 19th-century U.S. expansion, Native American removal policies, and the role of women in frontier and Indigenous communities.

Local Context

Monee, Illinois, was named after Marie LeFevre Bailly, an Odawa woman whose daughters were granted land in the 1832 Treaty of Tippecanoe. Though Marie never lived in the village, generations of residents constructed and circulated a myth of "Princess Monee"—a romanticized Native figure thought to be buried nearby. This lesson uses local oral history, treaty documents, and artwork to explore how the mythology evolved and how it preserved and distorted Indigenous history in the region. Understanding this story helps students examine the legacy of colonialism and the power of community memory.

Student Learning Objectives

- *SWBAT Analyze how historical myths are constructed and how they differ from documented evidence.*
- *Evaluate the role of local and national narratives in shaping public memory.*
- *Interpret primary and secondary sources related to Indigenous history and settler colonialism.*
- *Construct an argument or take civic action that reckons with complicated local histories.*

Standards Addressed

- **SS.H.3.9-12:** Evaluate how historical developments were shaped by context and process.
- **SS.H.10.9-12:** Analyze the ways in which diverse groups and individuals have participated in the development of U.S. society.

Materials Used

- Video: [What is the difference between history and memory?](#)
- Strategy: [TAPE Protocol](#) (for Informed Action)
- Additional Visual Sources:

- [Photo of Marie Bailly's daughter, Agatha Biddle](#)
- [Description of the clothes Marie Bailly wore at her daughter's wedding](#)

Sources for Supporting Question 1	Sources for Supporting Question 2	Sources for Supporting Question 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SQ1 Student Worksheet: Confirm and Challenge ● Source A: Canadian Encyclopedia, Women and the Fur Trade ● Source B: Marie LeFevre Bailly Timeline ● Source C: NPS, Marie LeFevre Bailly, Indiana Dunes National Park ● Source D: NPS, Bailly Homestead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Source A: Eliot Fackler, "Marie LeFevre Bailly, Allotments, and Westward Expansion" (2024) ● Source B: Treaty with the Potawatomi, 1832 ● Source C: Monee Allotment Map, 1832 ● Source D: Illinois Central Railroad Outline Map, 1854 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Source A: Jim Crow Museum, "I is for Ignoble": Stereotyping Native Americans" ● Source B: Princess in the Post Office ● Source C: "Indians to Industry" Monee Centennial Commemorative Plate (1974) ● Source D: Patricia Morton Oral History Interview (2024)

Procedure

Anticipatory Set/ Staging the Compelling Question

- In order to get students thinking about the nature of historical study and the ways that communities form and hold on to stories about the past, ask a few questions (suggested below). You might start by sharing a story that was passed down to you or your own community.
 - Who decides what stories get told in your family, community, or town? How do those stories get passed down?
 - Why do you think some stories from the past are easier to remember or more widely told than others?
- Show this Video that features historian Emily Owens and have students think about this question while they watch: [What is the difference between history and memory?](#)
 - How can memory both preserve and distort the past? Can you find an example from the video?
- After the video is shown, talk about students' responses. Write a t-chart on the board as students brainstorm how memory can preserve (on one side) or distort (on the other). Then discuss these follow up questions to set up the lesson.
 - What happens when the way we remember history doesn't match what happened?
 - Why might some communities create myths or nostalgic memories about their past? What purpose do these myths serve?

Supporting Question/Activity 1: Who was Marie LeFevre Bailly, and what does her life reveal about Indigenous women's roles in fur trade-era borderlands?

- Introduce the role of Indigenous women in the fur trade, reading Source A: Canadian Encyclopedia, [Women and the Fur Trade](#)
 - Vocabulary to highlight: [Métis](#)

- Read and analyze sources about Marie LeFevre Bailly and relate to Source A.
 - Source B: [Marie LeFevre Bailly Timeline](#)
 - Source C: NPS, [Marie LeFevre Bailly, Indiana Dunes National Park](#)
 - Source D: NPS, [Bailly Homestead](#)
- Formative performance task: Students will complete a graphic organizer on [SQ1 Student Worksheet](#) that compares:
 - Marie LeFevre Bailly's biography and contributions
 - General roles of Indigenous women in the fur trade
How her story challenges or confirms stereotypes of Indigenous women
 - Conclude with a short written response: *How does Bailly's story complicate what we typically learn about westward expansion?*

Supporting Question/Activity 2: What were treaty allotments, and what do they suggest about Indigenous removal?

- Interpret a brief secondary source or excerpt from Eliot Fackler's conference paper explaining the broader pattern of removals and railroad expansion. (SQ2, Source A)
- Read a summarized excerpt from the 1832 Treaty with the Potawatomi, focusing on the land allotted to the daughters of Marie Bailly. (SQ2, Sources B)
- Examine a map showing the original allotment and its later sale to railroad developer William B. Ogden (SQ2, Sources C and D)
- Formative performance task: Students create a one-paragraph explanation of how land allotments offered limited opportunities and facilitated Indigenous removal, using the Bailly allotment as a case study.

Supporting Question/Activity 3: What do the myths surrounding Princess Monee reveal about the way history is remembered locally?

- Reading and analyzing sources activity (how will students make meaning from source materials?)
 - Source A: Jim Crow Museum, ["I is for Ignoble': Stereotyping Native Americans"](#)
 - Source B: [Princess in the Post Office](#)
 - Source C: ["Indians to Industry" Monee Centennial Commemorative Plate](#) (1974)
 - Source D: [Patricia Morton Oral History Interview](#) (2024)
- Formative performance task: Imagine a student 100 years from now uncovers the 1974 centennial plate. What would they believe about the relationship between Indigenous people and the town of Monee? Then, write a brief caption (1–2 sentences) for a museum display that accurately interprets the plate in historical context.

Assessment *(students have a choice to construct an argument or complete the extension activity for their summative assessment)*

- Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that evaluates the need to study, remember, and/or celebrate this expedition using specific claims and relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging competing views.

Informed Action

- UNDERSTAND the ways that the memory of Marie Lefevre Bailly has changed over time by comparing primary sources across historical eras and reading oral history interviews.
- ASSESS representations of Marie Lefevre Bailly in visual and textual sources.
- ACT to help propose a historically consistent and inclusive public monument to Monee's namesake, Marie Lefevre Bailly. Use visual cues sources to prompt AI image generation using the [TAPE Protocol](#) to create a mock-up of a monument.
 - Additional Visual Sources:
 - [Photo of Marie Bailly's daughter, Agatha Biddle](#)
 - [Description of the clothes Marie Bailly wore at her daughter's wedding](#)