South Dakota Artists
Curriculum Unit

Charles Greener
“Origins of South Dakota Governors”

Provided by the South Dakota Art Museum
Brookings, South Dakota
Unit of Study: Charles Greener, painter

Title of Lesson Plan: Origins of South Dakota Governors

Grade Level: 3 – 5
South Dakota Content Standards

U.S. History:

3.US.2.2 Students are able to identify a community’s culture and history.

4.US.2.1 Students are able to describe the impact of significant turning points on the development of the culture of South Dakota.

4.US.2.3 Students are able to describe the influence of notable South Dakotans on the development of our state.
South Dakota Content Standards

Geography:

3.G.1.1 Students are able to identify and use map components.

4.G.1.2 Students are able to locate major South Dakota geographical and political features.
Assessment Strategies

- Class discussion
- Observation of student time management skills
- Create a map showing all the hometowns of South Dakota Governors
- Create a map illustrating key political and geographical features of South Dakota
Learning Objectives

- Students will learn about South Dakota artist Charles Greener.
- Students will explain the significance of gubernatorial portraits.
- Students will research the hometowns of South Dakota’s 31 Governors.
- Students will create a map marking the hometowns where all 31 SD Governors were elected.
- Students will identify on their maps: the Missouri River, Black Hills, Badlands, states bordering SD.
- Students will create a key for their maps.
Time Required

- Two – three classes of 45 – 60 minutes each
Materials/Technology Required

- Image of the Charles Greener portrait of former SD Governor Frank M. Byrne (see link below)
- Access to the Internet and library resources for research on SD Governors
  - For younger students you could print a list of the past governors to help simplify research
- Printouts of a plain outline of South Dakota (possibly more detail for younger students)
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.
- Pens/pencils
- Writing paper
Background Information

- South Dakota artist Charles Greener is known for his portraits, landscapes, and still life paintings. Charles Greener painted the official portrait of Governor Frank M. Byrne (1913-1917). One thing that students will notice as they research the governors is that plotting birthplaces will take them to many states (i.e. Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, etc.). For this lesson the intent is to get students familiar with SD geography and map skills.
Lesson Description

- Begin with a discussion about why people make portraits. You could differentiate between portraits of today with those of the past (photos vs. paintings). Lead students into a discussion of portraits of our political leaders - presidents, governors, members of Congress, etc. (You could start by showing portraits of former presidents.)

- Then explain that South Dakota is no different in that they commissioned portraits to be done of every governor at the end of their term (except for Bill Janklow who declined to have a portrait done).

- Have students access the Internet to view some of South Dakota’s Governor portraits. Next, have them research (either on the Internet or other library resources) where each of South Dakota’s Governors listed as their hometown when they were elected (explain to students that this does not necessarily mean birthplace). Have students make a list of the governors, their term in office, and their hometown.
From this information, students will be creating a map of South Dakota marking where each of the Governors' hometowns are located. Students can find many ways to do this, they can use straight pins to identify birthplaces (if map is pasted on cardboard), they could write the Governor’s name and term on the map next to their hometown, etc.

To make this more about the geography of South Dakota, require things like: the Missouri River, Black Hills, Badlands, Reservations, states bordering South Dakota, etc.

Students should also create a key for their map - which could be as simple as marking direction, etc.

These maps would then be displayed in the classroom or in the school library, etc.
Enrichment

- Students could be challenged to be more specific on their maps, like making a relief map, adding more detail, etc.

- Another activity would be for students to look at some of the portraits of early Governors of South Dakota and compare and contrast the look of those portraits with more recent governor portraits.

- Or, they could look at the portrait of some of the past governors and try to figure out what each man’s profession was before being elected using VTS to justify their opinions. Then researching each of the governors that they selected.
Bibliography/Resources

- South Dakota Art Museum Collection
  - Charles Greener

Charles Greener Presentation to Students
Charles Greener

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Charles Greener

- 1870 – 1935

- Painted landscapes and portraits

- Painted portrait of Governor Frank M. Byrne and Senator James A. Pickler

- One of South Dakota’s most outstanding early artists

- “Honkers at Sunrise” – considered Greener’s masterpiece, painted in 1910, an oil on canvas
Bibliography

- South Dakota Art Museum Collection
  - Charles Greener

*For more information on Charles Greener, contact the South Dakota Art Museum*
Former SD Governor Frank M. Byrne

http://www.state.sd.us/STATE/CAPITOL/capitol/tour/govpics2.htm
Other Examples of Charles Greener’s Artwork
Homestead

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Honkers at Sunrise

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
Thunderhead

Image Courtesy of the South Dakota Art Museum
unknown (hunting dog)