Mary Adams Maverick:  
A Texas Pioneer  
A curriculum unit that explores the life of a woman on the Texas frontier  
as it teaches students to use primary source documents

Lesson 5  
Mary Maverick and Texas History—Part 2  
Chapter 11—Perote  
Chapter 12—Colorado Bottoms

Enduring understandings for this unit:

• People who write history use evidence from the past to describe and explain the  
events, people, and motivations that were part of a particular time period.

• Women’s contributions are often different but just as important to history as  
men’s contributions.

• Mary Adams Maverick played an important role in Texas history.

Essential questions for this unit:

• How does a historian use a primary source document to understand the past?

• Who was Mary Maverick and why is she important in Texas history?

TEKS:

Grade 4:

3(B) The student will describe the successes and problems of the Republic of  
Texas  
22 (A) differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources . . .

Grade 7:

4(A) identify individuals, events and issues during the Republic of Texas . . .  
including annexation

21(A) differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources . . .

Note to Teacher: Lessons 4 and 5 are based on excerpts from the memoirs of Mary  
Maverick. You can provide the students with copies of both the diary pages and the  
corresponding memoir pages so they can see how the memoir has much greater detail than  
the diary does.
Materials:

1. The Maverick diary pages
2. Chapter 11 and 12 excerpts from the Maverick memoir
3. Comprehension questions

Objectives:

The students will:

A. Read the Maverick memoirs to gain information about events in Texas history.

B. Create a written or visual product that demonstrates understanding of the text.

Anticipatory set (Attention getter):

The teacher will:

A. Display a copy of the Maverick diary pages and allow students to read as much of them as they can decipher.

Procedure(s):

1. The teacher will:

   A. Introduce the lesson by explaining:

   In this lesson you will be reading Mary Maverick’s first-person account about the evacuation of many of the women and children of San Antonio in 1842. Mary calls this the “Runaway of 1842.” This is a different event from what is commonly called the “Runaway Scrape of 1836.” Both of these events show the effects of the unresolved conflict between Texas and Mexico after the Texas Revolution of 1836.

   The memoir excerpts that you are reading are divided into sections. These numbers are not part of the original document but were added to help students understand the document.

   B. Guide the students through the reading of the diary excerpts, discussing the events that are happening and clarifying any vocabulary words that may be hard to understand. Discussion questions are included in each section of the memoir.

   Teacher Note: The events related in the memoir are very exciting. If your class is not composed of strong readers it would probably be more effective
for the teacher to read the memoirs orally with expression. With older or more proficient readers they can read the material individually. However, to achieve the most from this primary source account it should be read in a woman’s voice.

**Closure:** The teacher will ask students to explain in a sentence or two how Mary’s account of historic events is different than what they read in their textbook.

**Evaluation:** The students will choose one of the following activities and apply it to a section of the memoirs.

1. Write a letter to the mayor of a Texas city explaining why the city should honor Mary A. Maverick. The letter should include suggested activities that would be appropriate.

2. Choose one of the people mentioned in any of the chapters to do further research on and present their findings to the class.

3. Create a mural that illustrates Mary Maverick’s life in Texas from her arrival in 1838 to 1845 when Texas became a state in the United States.
September 11th (1842), Sunday morning, at day-break, General Adrian Woll with a large force of Mexicans consisting of cavalry and artillery to the number of thirteen hundred suddenly appeared before San Antonio, and captured the place. It was a complete surprise. The court was in session at the time, and including the members of the bar and the Judge of the district Court, fifty-three American were captured, one of whom was Mr. Maverick.

Before the little band surrendered, they showed a bold and vigorous front, even in the face of such fearful odds. They fortified themselves in the Maverick residence at the corner of Commerce and Soledad Streets—some of them mounted upon the roof, when Mr. John Twohig received a wound from which he has never entirely recovered. When the Mexican troops entered Main Plaza, the Texans fired upon them briskly, killing two and wounding twenty-six, six of whom died of the wounds.

General Woll beat a parley [held a conference between enemies under a truce], and after he had shown the Texans they could not escape him and had promised to treat them as honorable prisoners of war and used some other plausible talk with them, the Texans held a consultation among themselves, when a majority voted to surrender. After they surrendered, they were kept in the Maverick residence, where they were closely guarded until the 15th.

Mrs. Elliott was in San Antonio when my husband was captured, and she was allowed to visit the prisoners once or twice before they were taken off to Mexico. Mr. Maverick found an opportunity to hand Mrs. Elliott twenty gold doubloons [gold coin of Spanish America] for me.
No one can imagine how dreadful this news was to me, especially when I learned that our poor prisoners were marched off on foot for Mexico on 15th. At this time my poor little Lewis was dangerously ill with fever then prevalent in the neighborhood . . .

I now return to Mr. Maverick, and other prisoners captured on September 11th, in San Antonio during the Term of the Court.

On March 30th, 1843, Mr. Maverick, W. E. Jones and Judge Anderson Hutchinson were finally released in the City of Mexico by Santa Anna. Our obligations to General Waddy Thompson can never be forgotten. General Thompson was a native of South Carolina, and a connection by marriage of Mr. Maverick’s. He was the United States Minister to Mexico. After securing the release of Mr. Maverick, Jones and Hutchinson, he nobly exerted his influence to secure the release of all the other helpless and friendless prisoners, and he did not cease his efforts until he had succeeded in getting them all—all the survivors—liberated.

On April 2nd, 1843, Mr. Maverick, once more free, left the City of Mexico, and on May 4th, he dismounted at our cabin on the Colorado having been absent from his family eight and a half months, and a prisoner seven months.

Mr. Maverick’s only sorrow was that he had left so many friends and comrades in prison, and he felt almost ashamed when he met any of their families and friends, who all, of course, came to see him—to tell them of his own good luck and of the continued ill luck of the of the other captives.

June 16th, 1843, Santa Anna, as a special favor to General Waddy Thompson, signed the release for the balance of the Perote prisoners, but the order for release was so slowly carried into execution that it was more than two months before Mr. Bradley reached his family.
Memoirs of Mary A. Maverick
Chapter 12—Colorado Bottoms

We lived on the Colorado from June 21st, 1842, until November 15th, 1844. I have mentioned our arrival, June 21st, at Colonel Dancy’s where we were to remain awhile. On August 21st, Mr. Maverick bought twenty-six acres of land, fronting on the right bank of the Colorado, and lying between two tracts belonging to Colonel Dancy. He had it surveyed by Hudson and made arrangements to build us a temporary home on it. This tract was opposite La Grange in Fayette County and opposite the ferry.

It was on August 22nd, as I have mentioned, that Mr. Maverick left us for San Antonio, where he was captured and taken to Perote. During September, poor little Lewis became ill with typhoid fever. Griffin came back about this time and returned [to San Antonio] on his fateful errand [he was killed in a battle].

September 29th, I received a letter from my dear husband, now a captive. The letter was written on the eve of their being marched off to a Mexican dungeon. It was calm cheerful and hopeful, and counseled me to be brave, to bear a stout heart, and to take care of myself and the children.

November 16th, we moved into our own house which consisted of a log cabin of one room sixteen by eighteen feet, one smaller for a kitchen, and a shed room for Jinny and the children. This house was built by Granville and Wiley with much help from Mr. Griff. Jones, who was very kind to us. Lewis was now almost strong again. The fever had been severe with him, and had so reduced him that he was unable to stand up for some time after it had left him.
1844

The Congress adjourned on February 8th, 1844, and that was the last session of the last Congress of the Republic of Texas. Mr. Maverick soon after left for San Antonio, where he attended the March term of the District Court, and returned to us in April, and then started off on a visit to South Carolina.

1845

(The Mavericks had moved to a new home at Decrow’s Point near the Matagorda Bay.)

We had a block of ground fenced in, and early in 1845 we planted a garden. It was wonderful how every thing grew, and what fine vegetables we had and what delicious watermelons! Flowers, grapevines, and orange trees flourished luxuriantly.

In March, Agatha’s clothes caught on fire, but Jack threw a bucket of water on her and put the fire out, before she was badly burned. She was quiet sore for several weeks afterwards.

June 11th, Mr. Maverick visited San Antonio, and was gone six weeks . . ;

July, 1845. Thank God, we are now annexed to the United States, and can hope for home and quiet. Mr. Smith, American Consul in Saluria, was drowned in a bayou which he was attempting to cross, and his poor wife, an amiable, nice lady, left desolate and alone. We went over to see her, and Lizzie and Cora Vandever spent some time with her.
Chapter 11

1. Who was the Mexican general who captured San Antonio?

2. What was the Texan reaction to the situation?

3. Why do you think it was possible for an army of 1,300 soldiers to surprise a whole town? Would this be possible today?

4. What effect if any do you think the memory of what had happened at the Alamo had on the Texans’ decision to surrender?

5. Why were Spanish doubloons still an acceptable form of money during this time period?

6. How long was Sam Maverick in the Mexican prison?

7. Why do you think he felt ashamed of being released?

Chapter 12

1. How is the content of this chapter different from chapter 11?

2. What advice did Sam have for Mary while he was in prison?

3. Describe the house they built to live in. Why were Jinny and the children to live in the shed? Do you think the Maverick children and Jinny’s children lived in the shed?

4. What disease made Lewis very ill? What kinds of medicines do you think they had available to treat his illness?

1844

5. Why is it significant that February 8, 1844 was the last session of the last Congress of the Republic of Texas?

1845

6. What were the primary concerns that Mary writes about during this time?
7. What significant political event happened during this time? What was Mary’s comment about it?

**Think About It**

1. How does Mary’s account of the events in her diary differ from your textbook?

2. Do you think there is value in knowing about the daily lives of people who lived during a particular period of history? Why or why not?

3. How were Mary’s and Sam’s daily lives different from each other? Do you think one had an easier life than the other?

4. What role should women’s stories play in history books?

5. Mary Maverick spoke often in her memoirs about her servants, Jinny, and her children, Granville and Wiley. In reality these people were slaves throughout their lives. In her letters, Mary speaks of the difficulty of being responsible for slaves. Why do you think it might not be easy to have the responsibility of slaves?

6. How do you think the stories related in the excerpts would be different told from the perspective of Jinny, Granville, or Wiley?