

MAGOFFIN HOME

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

El Paso, Texas

Post-Visit Guide

High School

Overview: Magoffin, A Civic Leader

In this lesson, students will analyze primary sources to understand Joseph Magoffin's record of service as a civic leader.

U.S. History TEKS

(3) History. The student understands the political, economic, and social changes in the United States from 1877 to 1898. The student is expected to:

(B) analyze economic issues such as industrialization, the growth of railroads, the growth of labor unions, farm issues, the cattle industry boom, the rise of entrepreneurship, free enterprise, and the pros and cons of big business;

(C) analyze social issues affecting women, minorities, children, immigrants, urbanization, the Social Gospel, and philanthropy of industrialists.

(24) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a constitutional republic. The student is expected to:

(A) describe qualities of effective leadership.

(29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(A) use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions;

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions;

(D) use the process of historical inquiry to research, interpret, and use multiple types of sources of evidence;

(G) identify and support with historical evidence a point of view on a social studies issue or event; and

(H) use appropriate skills to analyze and interpret social studies information such as maps, graphs, presentations, speeches, lectures, and political cartoons.

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Materials

- Historical images, timelines for display/distribution
- **Magoffin Lampooned** activity resources

Vocabulary

- **capitalist:** one who invests his or her wealth in trade and industry for profit; practicing and supporting capitalism
- **entrepreneur:** a person who takes on financial risk in order to organize and operate a business

Historical Context

After the railroad boom era and the platting of the Magoffin Addition in the 1880s, Joseph and Octavia Magoffin largely lived off their income from the sale and leasing of properties in that area. In addition to their homestead, the Magoffins owned or leased numerous properties throughout El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. They also held a large number of personal mortgages for new homeowners in the community.

In the early 1880s, Joseph Magoffin began selling lots for the Magoffin Addition. The addition included more than eighty-three square blocks as well as the Texas and Pacific Railroad rail yards and warehouses located four blocks from the Magoffin Home. By late 1897, the Magoffins had decided to break up the old homestead and create the Magoffin Homestead Addition. This marked a new period of real estate sales for the Magoffins.

In the 1880s, Magoffin Addition lots had sold for a few hundred dollars. By 1897, the new Homestead Addition lots were selling for as much as \$2,000 each. The Magoffin family's real estate wealth gained the family power and influence in early El Paso society. In 1889, Magoffin described himself as a "capitalist" in the City Directory. As a successful entrepreneur, Magoffin invested early in the railroads and benefited from the subsequent booming population in El Paso by selling his landholdings as city lots.

Joseph Magoffin held public service offices for three decades. The Magoffins were not only citizens of El Paso, but more importantly, leaders in its growth. Joseph was elected mayor four times between 1880 and 1900. He dedicated over 30 years to city, county, and federal work in El Paso. His achievements included:

- swearing in the first city officials for the newly incorporated city of El Paso as a Justice of the Peace,
- re-energizing interest in city government and organizing council work into a system of committee review in his first mayoral term,
- publicly and privately promoting railroad development,
- equipping the fire department, setting up a hospital bond election, organizing drainage and street improvements, and placing priority on a strong public-school system in his second mayoral term,
- working with federal officials to straighten the Rio Grande River and construct levees to protect El Paso from dangerous flooding in the late 1890s.

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Activity: Magoffin Home State Historic Site

5 minutes

Ask students to reflect on their visit to the Magoffin Home. Have students share their experiences including any new questions raised by the visit.

Activity: Magoffin Real Estate

15 minutes

Display/distribute the *El Paso Times* January 1, 1882 article. After students have read the article, discuss these questions as a class:

- What convenience is advertised in the new Magoffin Addition community?
[street car railways to all parts of the city]
- What is necessary for the residents in this community to be able to easily visit Mexico?
[completion of a bridge across the Rio Grande River]
- Why would this community be attractive to business owners?
[Texas and Pacific Railroad Company has offices and operations located in an area of the addition]
- Why would the growing business relationship with Mexico be beneficial to residents of this community?
[goods and services will flow into El Paso]
- Why are prospective buyers encouraged to buy soon?
[prices of real estate will rise and good lots will be bought up as the city grows and business with Mexico increases]

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Activity: Magoffin Lamponed

15 minutes

Context: In the weeks leading into the 1899 mayoral election, the *El Paso Herald* newspaper ran political cartoons, the nature of which suggested that the newspaper editor had a grudge against Magoffin and favored the republican candidate, O’Keefe, for mayor. In the end, Magoffin won the 1899 election by a 72% majority. The subject of this cartoon is based on a truth: Magoffin was invested in the mule-drawn streetcar company.

Display/distribute the political cartoon. As a class, discuss the following questions:

- Who is pictured in the cartoon? [Mayor Magoffin (on the left), angry protestor riding rail car labeled “Progress”]
- What is the issue the cartoon is referring to? [Magoffin’s standing in the way of progress by investing in and running a mule cart company as opposed to electric railcars.]
- Who is the cartoon’s intended audience? [all eligible voters]
- What is the cartoonist’s opinion on this issue? Why do you think that? [Answers will vary.]
- What is the effect of this cartoon on Magoffin’s legacy of progressive civic leadership? [Answers will vary.]

Multidisciplinary Extension Activity: Hometown Philanthropy

English I and II TEKS

(8) Reading/Comprehension of Informational Text/Culture and History. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about the author's purpose in cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the controlling idea and specific purpose of a passage and the textual elements that support and elaborate it, including both the most important details and the less important details.

U.S. History TEKS

(24) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of effective leadership in a constitutional republic. The student is expected to:

- (A) describe qualities of effective leadership; and
- (B) evaluate the contributions of significant political and social leaders in the United States such as Andrew Carnegie, Thurgood Marshall, Billy Graham, Barry Goldwater, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Hillary Clinton.

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Context: The Magoffins were aware of their civic responsibilities as landowners. They donated Block 53 of the Magoffin Addition as a city park (current-day Alamo Park) and sold three lots in Block 5 of the Magoffin Homestead Addition at a discounted price to the school district, resulting in San Jacinto School.

The *El Paso Daily Times* noted, “Before the town had any organized charity associations, Mrs. Magoffin did the charity.” Octavia was a founding member of the Ladies Benevolent Society of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in 1895, and then served six consecutive terms as its president.

Upon Mrs. Magoffin’s death, the *El Paso Herald* stated that she was “a most charitable woman, quiet, capable, and self sacrificing.... [H]er work for humanity knew no barriers of race or creed.”

Activity

Andrew Carnegie and Joseph Magoffin were 19th century contemporaries, born two years apart (Carnegie in 1835 and Magoffin in 1837). Though they lived different lives, they were both wealthy men who had specific attitudes toward money and its use.

Have students read famed industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie’s *Gospel of Wealth* (available online at <https://www.carnegie.org/about/our-history/gospelofwealth/>) and create a visual representation of the similarities and differences in how Carnegie and Magoffin approached the responsibility of wealth in their respective communities.

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Resource Image: Octavia Magoffin, ca. 1870s

Courtesy Magoffin Home SHS



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Activity Image: El Paso Times, January 1, 1882

El Paso Times. (El Paso, TX), Vol. 1, No. 1, Ed. 1 Sunday, January 1, 1882 Page 4, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu, (Accessed September 30, 2017.)

ate conveyance. The Magoffin Addition lies south of the old San Antonio road, and will be immediately opposite the new El Paso in Mexico. Street railroads will soon be built running to and from this addition to all parts of the city, and to Paso del Norte, Mexico. The two city railroads now projected, the El Paso Street Railway Company and the City Railway Company, will run their street cars across the Rio Grande river as soon as the bridge is completed. The yards, out buildings, workshops and depots of the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company are located on a portion of this valuable addition, thus making this a desirable location for large business houses, while the other portions of the addition offer superior inducements as locations for private residences. The entire city of El Paso is growing rapidly. American merchants are now building and will continue to build large stores and warehouses for extensive business with the different States of Mexico; the Mexican Central railroad to the City of Mexico is being rapidly built, and is opening a wonderfully rich country, the product of which will of necessity flow into El Paso. The Texas and Pacific Railroad will open up the grand and wonderful country of our own "Lone Star State," through which it passes. All this must of necessity increase the price of real estate in El Paso, and those who wish to secure good locations should not defer too long.

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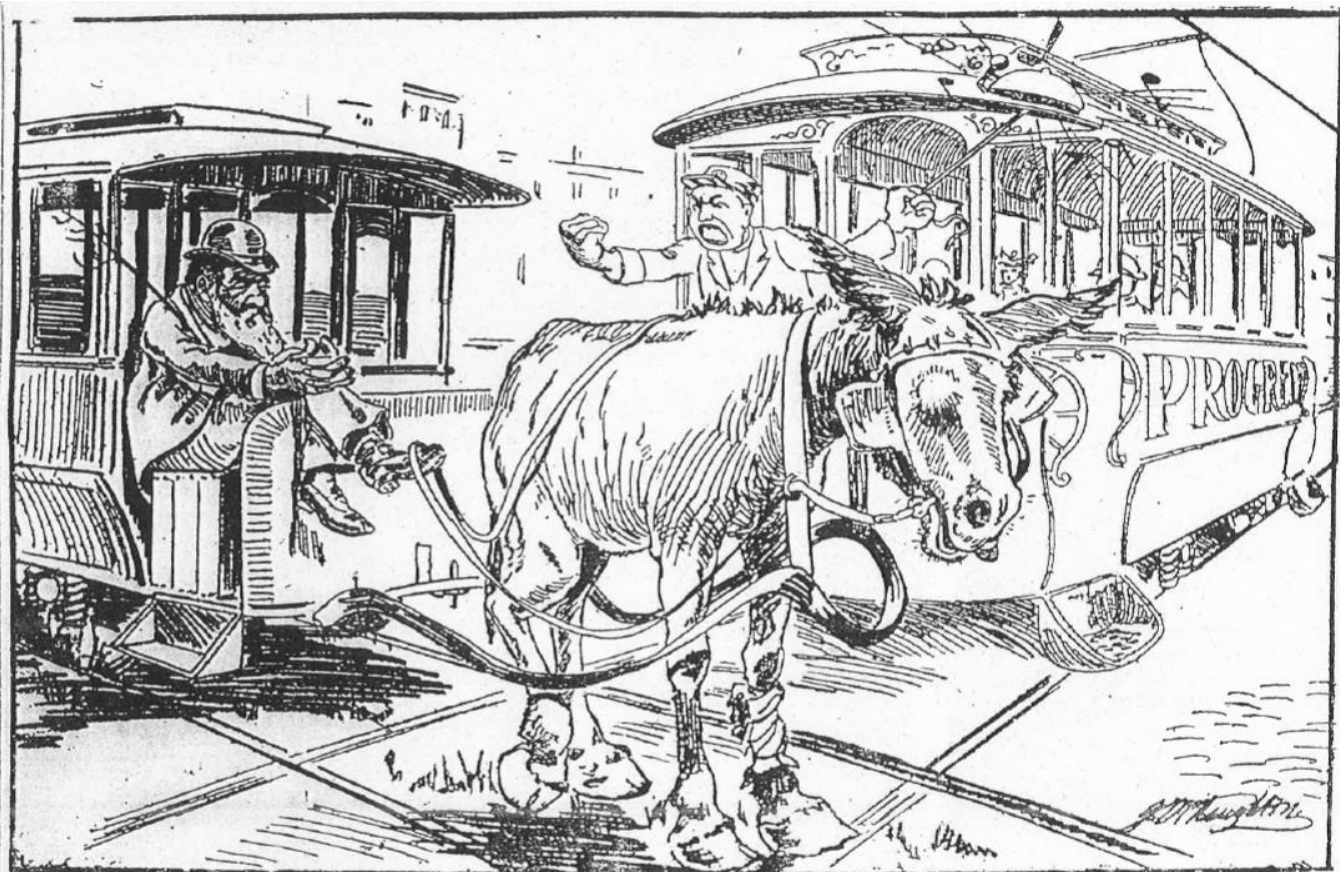
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Activity Image: *El Paso Herald* political cartoon

The caption of the cartoon reads: "Says Mayor Magoffin, heavy owner of mule car stock, to the citizens of El Paso, as he signs the five year electric light contract: 'O, don't bother me. I've got five years now to get to the end of my route. And anyhow, I don't like these new fangled improvements. What is all this noise about?'"



OUR MAYOR ALWAYS IN THE VAN OF PROGRESS.

Says Mayor Magoffin, heavy owner of mule car stock, to the citizens of El Paso, as he signs the five year electric light contract:

"O, don't bother me. I've got five years now to get to the end of my route. And anyhow, I don't like these new fangled improvements. What is all this noise about?"

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