

# Discover!

**GRADES 4–6**

National Museum of American History

## Why Does the Museum Collect?

Different objects tell us different things about the past.



### **John Bull Locomotive** ▶ 1 East

In 1833, it took a rider on horseback two days to travel from New York to Philadelphia. That same year, the John Bull began transporting people the same distance in just five hours. The speed, 25 to 30 miles per hour, was faster than most Americans had ever moved! ▶ **How were fire, wood, and water used together to power the locomotive? Would the John Bull have been a source of air pollution?**

### **Ipswich House** ▶ 2 West, *Within These Walls...*

You be the historian and find out what made this house so special to five families. Select one of the families and compare their lives with yours. ▶ **How are your lives alike? How are they different?**



### **Kermit the Frog** ▶ 3 West, *Thanks for the Memories*

Objects like Kermit the Frog help us remember exciting experiences from our past that are part of the popular culture we all share. ▶ **What object do you think should be added to the Museum's popular culture collection?**

Send your group's suggestions to [nmahtours@si.edu](mailto:nmahtours@si.edu).

### **Franklin D. Roosevelt's Microphone**

▶ 3 Center, *The American Presidency, Roles of the Presidents*

Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first American president to use the radio effectively to communicate with the public. The relaxed nature of these "fireside chats" made people feel that he was talking directly to them.

▶ **What is today's equivalent of the fireside chat?**





### **Cher Ami** ▶ 3 East, *The Price of Freedom*, World War I

This carrier pigeon, Cher Ami (Dear Friend), was a hero of World War I. He “single-footedly” saved 194 men of the “Lost Battalion” who were cut off and missing behind enemy lines.

▶ **How do you think Cher Ami helped rescue the soldiers?**

**Hint: The object directly to its right is a clue. Though modern technology was being used on the battlefield, there were times when armies had to rely on ancient methods of communication.**



### **Edison's Light Bulb, 1879** ▶ 2 Center, Technology

Thomas Edison tried making the light bulb's filament (the part that glows) out of hundreds of different materials before finally finding one that worked well. ▶ **List three ways that the invention of the light bulb and the electrification of homes, schools, and businesses changed people's lives.**



### **Environmental Buttons** ▶ 1 Center, Land and Natural Resources

People have worn buttons like these to support or protest issues for over 100 years. ▶ **How many issues are represented in this case? If you designed a button about an environmental issue, what would it say?**

### **The Star-Spangled Banner** ▶ 2 Center

Can you sing the National Anthem? This is the actual flag that inspired Francis Scott Key to write about those “broad stripes and bright stars.” This flag originally had fifteen stars. ▶ **What happened to the other star?**



Learn more about these and other objects! Visit the Museum's Web site: [americanhistory.si.edu](http://americanhistory.si.edu)

**Real Stories. Real Stuff.**

Bring the museum to you with free online K-12 resources from Smithsonian's History Explorer [www.historyexplorer.si.edu](http://www.historyexplorer.si.edu)



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