

Save Our History®:

FBI Stings:

Recovering Stolen History

classroom: **March 31**
May 26
August 11



Most people learn about the cultural artifacts of the past through the glass of a museum case. When museums display these remnants of bygone eras and events, they are available for the public to discover. But there are those who make a business of trading and smuggling antiques and artifacts. These international thieves and smugglers conduct a clandestine business that involves crossing borders, secret meetings and enormous sums of money.

This episode of *Save Our History* presents three successful FBI stings that thwarted the efforts of thieves to trade in stolen artifacts.

curriculum links

FBI Stings: Recovering Stolen History would be useful for classes on World History, American History, Archaeology and Science and Technology. It is appropriate for middle school and high school. This documentary fulfills several National Standards as outlined by the National Council for History Education including: (1) Interrogating historical data, (2) Analyzing the importance of ideas, (3) Appreciating historical perspectives, (4) Identifying issues and problems in the past, and (5) Evaluating alternative courses of action.



vocabulary

Students should identify the following terms. Visit www.merriamwebster.com for definitions.

accoutrements
antiquities
apparition

artifact
authenticate
consulate

curator
garish
lynchpin

discussion questions

- Who are the tomb raiders described in this program?
- What is the Peruvian Backflap? Why is it historically significant?
- Discuss the ways in which globalization has contributed to looting and international smuggling.
- What is a sting? Why does the FBI use this method to catch smugglers?
- How did the Peruvian Backflap end up in the United States?
- Discuss the role of diplomatic immunity in this case.



Photo: Getty



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discussion questions (cont.)

- In 1999 the FBI arrested a man trying to sell a rare Civil War relic, the regiment flag of the 12th Corp de Afrique. Who were the members of the Corp de Afrique? Why would it have been important if this flag were lost?
- Regiment flags played an important part during battles. How did regiment flags aid soldiers during the heat of battle?
- Discuss the historical significance of the Louisiana Guards.
- The flag was missing for some time before it was discovered. Why didn't the government know about the theft immediately?
- In 1997 the Historical Society of Pennsylvania began to computerize and catalog its collection. What did it discover?
- How do you think computerization affects the work of museums and historical societies?
- Why do you think people steal historical artifacts?

extended activities

- Follow the link www.fbi.gov/kids/6th12th/adventure/peru/peru.htm to the FBI for Kids website to trace the adventure of recovering the Peruvian Backflap. Have students create a report from the perspective of an FBI agent participating in its recovery.
- Ask students to research the legacy and culture of the Moche. After they have completed their research, have students create PowerPoint presentations about the Moche and their significance in world history.
- Regiment flags incorporated the characteristics of the regiments they represented. Have students imagine that your class is a regiment. Break students up into groups of four or five. Ask students to design a flag or banner that represents your class.

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websites & books

websites

Recovery - Peruvian Backflap: www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/arttheft/southamerica/peru/peruvian.htm

The Return of a Stolen Cultural Treasure to Peru: www.museum.upenn.edu/Moche/mocheintro.htm

Art Theft Program: www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/arttheft/aboutus.htm

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania: www.hsp.org

African American Troops in the Civil War: www.itd.nps.gov/icwss/history/aa_history.htm


books

Black, Wallace B. *Slaves to Soldiers: African-American Fighting Men in the Civil War* (Scholastic Library Publishing, 1998).

Brooks, Victor D. *African-Americans in the Civil War* (Chelsea House Publishers, 2000).

De Capua, Sarah. *The FBI* (Scholastic Library Publishing Barnes & Noble, 2001).

Landau, Elaine. *Peru* (Scholastic Library Publishing, 2000).

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