

Lesson 11.2

THE DECLARATION OF CONSCIENCE IN CARTOONS

Objective: Students will be able to explain the significance of Margaret Chase Smith's "Declaration of Conscience" by analyzing political cartoons depicting differing attitudes about the speech.

Materials:

- **Doc 11.2A:** "Something to Cheer About" cartoon
- **Doc 11.2B:** "A Noticeable Distaste for Wisconsin Cheese" cartoon
- **Doc 11.2C:** "Declaration of Conscience" cartoon

Timing: One to two class periods

Background Reading: Chapter Eleven

Procedure:

1. Review with students the section on Margaret Chase Smith. Ask questions like the following:
 - Who was Margaret Chase Smith? What made her such a significant figure in Maine politics?
 - What is communism? Why did many Americans consider it a threat in the 1950s?
 - Who was Senator Joseph McCarthy?
 - What was Smith's "Declaration of Conscience?" Why was it significant? Why was it controversial?

***Note:** This lesson will be more effective after students read the "Declaration of Conscience" as a class. See Documents 11.1A and/or 11.1B.
2. Put each political cartoon up on the overhead, or hand them out to students. Ask students to analyze the cartoons in detail. Use the following questions as a guide as you examine each cartoon:
 - What message does the cartoon send?
 - What do you think the cartoonist's point of view was? How can you tell?
 - What figures does the cartoonist use to express his or her point? Why?
 - Which newspaper did the cartoon appear in?
 - What might you conclude from the cartoon about the political point of view of the newspaper?
 - Is this cartoon kind, indifferent, nasty? How would you describe it?
 - Does it influence your opinion about Margaret Chase Smith at all? Do you think a cartoon could?
 - How can humor be used as a political tool?
3. **Portfolio option:** Have students create their own political cartoons depicting Margaret Chase Smith's "Declaration of Conscience." Their cartoons can be one to four frames

long, and should express a clear opinion about the “Declaration.” Display student cartoons in the classroom.

Evaluation: Grade student cartoons based on effectiveness, presentation, and accuracy.

Follow-up Activities:

- Have students create political cartoons for other events in Chapter Eleven, or in the present-day.
- Ongoing project: have your class collect one political cartoon a week throughout the year. Create a class scrapbook of cartoons as a record of that year in history. Use the scrapbook as an assessment tool for current events by providing the images and asking students to explain them in writing.

Alignment with the Learning Results:

Grade Level: **6th-8th**

Content Area: Social Studies: **HISTORY**

Standard: **Historical Knowledge, Concepts, Themes, and Patterns**

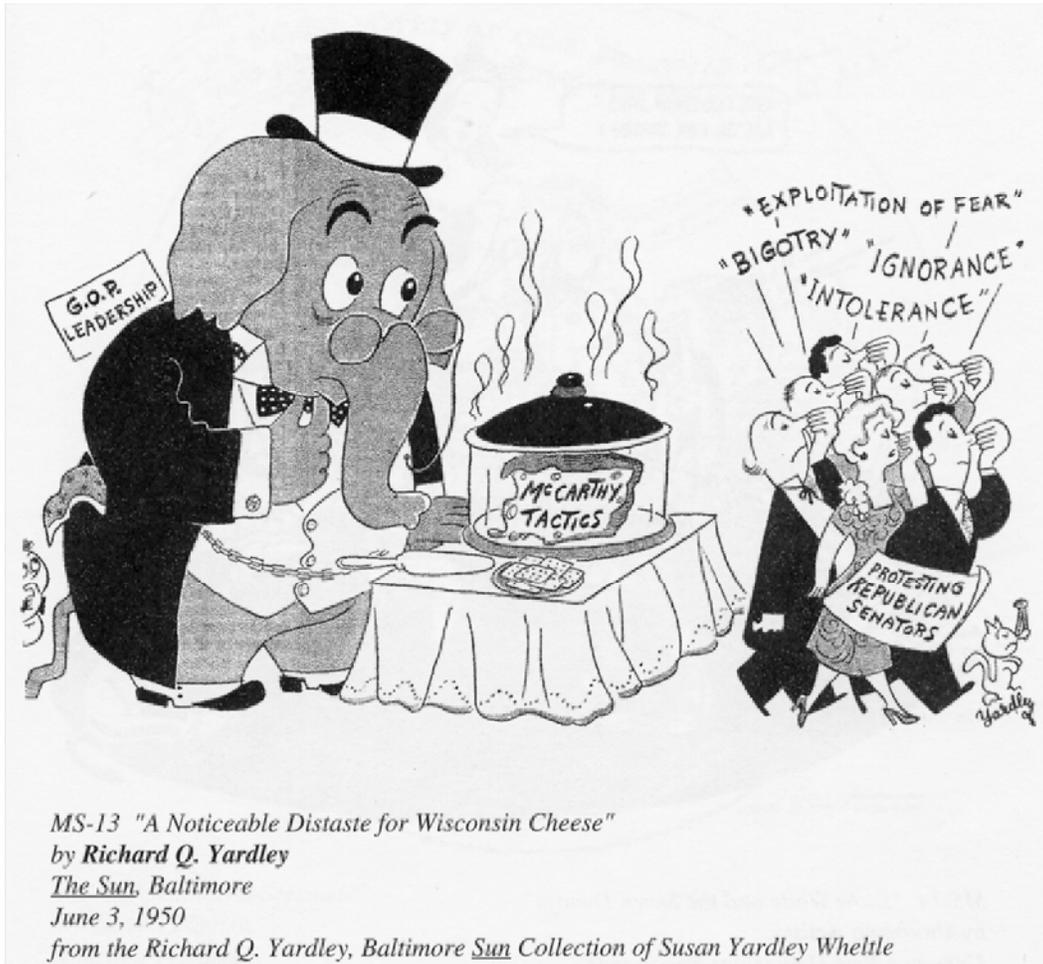
Students understand major eras, majoring enduring themes, and historic influences in the history of Maine, the United States, and various regions of the world.

Descriptor **E1d:** Analyze interpretations of historical events that are based on different perspectives and evidence.



MS-11 "Something to Cheer About"
by *William Comber*
Poughkeepsie New Yorker
June 10, 1950

"Something to Cheer About" by William Comber, 10 June 1950. Originally published by Poughkeepsie New Yorker. Used with permission of the Margaret Chase Smith Library, Skowhegan, ME.



"A Noticeable Distaste for Wisconsin Cheese" by Richard Q. Yardley, 3 June 1950. Originally published by The Baltimore Sun. [copyright] the Richard Q. Yardley collection, Susan Yardley Whelple, copyright holder. Used with permission of the Margaret Chase Smith Library, Skowhegan, ME.



"Declaration of Conscience" by Sidney L. Maxell, 4 June 1950. Originally published by Guy Gannett Publishing Company. Used with permission of the Margaret Chase Smith Library, Skowhegan, ME.