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Black Emancipators of the Nineteenth Century

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As middle school teachers, we have found our social studies books to be inadequate, void of any real African-American History. Young African-American, Anglo Saxon, Hispanic, and Chinese students are made to feel that the African-American's history began with slavery, and that slavery was not an institution that grossly affected real, thinking, and feeling human beings. Most social studies curricula do not address the historical origins of the African-American. If they are mentioned, it is often only to note how illiterate, slothful and pagan they were. Those curricula often fail to address the role of the slaves in building the thirteen colonies, while speaking at great length about how the colonists fought against Britain for Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In an effort to correct this misrepresentation of a people and to instill pride and a positive self-image in our African-American students, we will provide information about the primary role that African-Americans played in American history and in liberating themselves from one of the most oppressive conditions that any race of people ever endured, slavery.

First, we will address the issue of slavery. We will discuss the capture and selling of Africans by Africans, as well as by whites. We will briefly discuss Africa's system of slavery and compare its counterpart in Africa. We will then discuss the triangular trade, the dehumanizing saga of the middle passage, and its psychological effect upon the African captive.

Second, we will discuss the underground railroad, the method through which many slaves obtained liberation. Our focus will be on the emancipators and their role in the mind/body liberation of the slaves. We use the term mind/body liberation to describe a revelation that occurred in the minds of the slaves who became aware of the oppressive conditions of slavery and who refused to accept these conditions by verbally expressing dissatisfaction, staging rebellions and/or by escaping.

Although he know that black emancipators had the help of Quakers and northern abolitionists in their quest for liberation, the most serious workers for freedom were among the black slaves.

. . . . for who would have been the most serious workers for freedom if not the Negroes whose own salvation was at stake, and in particular, those developed and leading blacks who were fully aware of the historical importance of their nation in America? The underground railroad was the most dangerous front in the whole conflict, short of the Civil War itself. After all, the people who escaped over the Road were black. If is true, as it has been

estimated, that more than 50,000 slaves fled from the South to the free states and Canada, then it has to be true that the Negro people, in this situation alone, produced at least 50,000 individual revolutionary acts. And what other people in America up to that time, yes, including even the founding fathers, in their great struggle against Britain, exceeded or equaled such a demonstration or illegal protest?1

Our unit will use personal accounts drawn from slave narratives and anti-slavery speeches, to dispel the myths of the “ignorant and slothful” slave. Beginning with the men and women who chose to be swallowed by the waves of the sea, rather than to live as slaves. We will also discuss the motivating factors of each emancipator in choosing the road towards freedom and the avenues each pursued in freeing other slaves. Taken from the autobiographical theme of our seminar, we will follow this mind/body liberation through the lives of Nat Turner, Sojourner Truth, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and William Still.

Through the use of films, field-trips, plays, an original Black History Rap, a series of African-American History questions, coupled with lesson plans and detailed information of the subject at hand, we intend to achieve the following objectives;

1. Students will be able to discuss why Africans were used as slaves in America.
2. Students will be able to discuss the underground railroad.
3. Students will be able to identify major black emancipators.
4. Students will be able to compare and contrast work done by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Sojourner Truth, their language, audiences addressed, and degree of effectiveness as speakers.
5. Students will be able to compare and contrast Harriet Tubman and Nat Turner’s reasons for and means used to achieve liberation, as well as degree of their effectiveness.
6. Students will be able to compare and contrast Frederick Douglass and William Still’s method for speaking against slavery, preserving history, and work with anti-slavery societies and their level of involvement.
7. Students will be able to define terms such as emancipation, abolition, triangular trade, middle passage and the like.

HISTORY

During the late 17th and early 18th centuries, countries in Europe began to look to the African race as a cheap labor source in developing the new world because attempts to enslave the Indians and poor whites had failed. The Indians had been susceptible to European diseases (such as small pox), and their cultural background did not prepare them for the arduous tasks of the plantation system. They hunted big and small game instead of

raising cattle. Poor whites as laborers were equally unsatisfactory. These laborers gradually achieved good standing in the colonies since their work terms as indentured servants ended; often they ran away or threatened revolt, as in Bacon's Rebellion in 1676.

The Englishmen used Africans based on their color and their pastoral skills. African slavery soon then became a fixed institution, for it was the answer to one of America's most pressing problems: cheap labor. Profits were made, however, not only in the plantation system but in the slave trade itself.

TRIANGULAR TRADE

In the triangular trade route, sugar from the West Indies was sent to New England. The sugar was used to make rum. Rum was sent to Africa and exchanged for slaves. The slaves were then taken to the West Indies to work in the cane fields.

The voyage to the Americas was one of the most dehumanizing experiences that anyone might undergo. Slaves were crowded into the ships, sometimes 700 to a ship. To the slave traders more slaves meant more profits. The slaves were chained together by twos, hands and feet. They were packed like sardines in a can. As a result of these inhumane conditions, slaves were often struck down by disease and epidemics during the voyage to America. Still, despite these conditions some slaves managed to rebel by killing slave traders or by jumping into the waters to drown.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The underground railroad was the most organized, systematic method for taking slaves from the South to points north. Contrary to what students often imagine, there were no tunnels underground by which slaves escaped to freedom. The word "Underground" simply symbolized the clandestine nature by which slaves escaped. The depots, if you will, were often the homes of white sympathizers, abolitionists who hid escaping slaves in chimneys, basements, and barns. The slaves traveled by foot, horse-drawn carriages, trains, boats, and any other means of transportation available. To gain entry on trains and/or boats slaves often obtained false passes stating that they had permission to ride or that they were on an errand for their master. This was in fact how Frederick Douglass escaped slavery. He borrowed another seaman's papers and boarded a boat.

The underground railroad goes back as far as the early 1720's. By 1750 there had been 30 slave revolts in the United States area and the legend of these had spread among the African-Americans, giving impetus to the development of new routes to the North. By the time of Harriet Tubman's birth the underground railroad was "operating at full speed", and had spread its tracks across North America.

Blacks as well as whites assisted in the work of the underground railroad. However, black slaves tended to trust the black abolitionists more readily than they did their white supporters.

All underground railroad lines led North. Stations on the underground railroad included the region of Harriet Tubman's birth, Dorchester County, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Delaware's most important station was the home of Quaker Thomas Garrett, who worked with Harriet Tubman and was

considered the outstanding champion of the African-American in his state. Garrett aided 2,700 'fugitives' to the North. After fugitives would pass through Delaware and points north, they would reach Philadelphia. Philadelphia had an organized group called the Pennsylvania Anti-slavery Society, with a sub group called the General Vigilance Committee. At Philadelphia the slaves were examined by a committee. William Still chairman of the General Vigilance Committee recorded experiences and they were given enough funds to continue their journey. "The Road had some of its staunchest supporters in New York State, especially across the breadth of the state", according to Conrad. "The underground railroad touched at Troy, Schenectady, Fonda, Little Falls, Peterboro, Canandaiqua, Oneida, and Syracuse."² After Syracuse, slaves journeyed to Rochester, the last big stop on the underground railroad before Canada.

The underground railroad was the last major step in obtaining ultimate freedom of the body. But slaves such as Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Sojourner Truth, and William Still often risked recapture in order to plant the seed of emancipation in the minds of slaves, often-times resulting in their decision to be freed totally.

The next portion of our unit will focus on these black emancipators and the role they played in freeing slaves and abolishing slavery. We will explore the lives of these emancipators, who for a myriad of reasons dedicated their lives to this great cause. Each has personal qualities the others did not have, or at least not to the same degree. Except for the desperate need of freedom they all had in common, each figure attempted to escape slavery of the mind and body under different conditions and by different means.

In this section we will deal with many themes: the motivating factors that led to individual liberation and ultimately to collective liberation, steps used to free slaves, the role of religion and God in the slave's liberation, and the different forms of emancipation. The last theme may be divided into three sub-headings, emancipation through rebellion, emancipation through oratory, and emancipation through the underground railroad. These three sub-headings collectively speak to the mind/body emancipation discussed in the introduction. The first sub-heading will focus on Nat Turner. It will be followed by a brief biography and excerpts from his "Confessions". The next section draws upon the lives of Sojourner Truth, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Frederick Douglass. Critical factors leading to their antislavery activities will be discussed. Since they chose the route of oratory, excerpts from their anti-slavery speeches will be analyzed. The last section, emancipation through the underground railroad will elaborate on the lives of Harriet Tubman and William Still. We will discuss in detail their plans for moving slaves north during a time where abolitionism was at its peak and slave laws were enacted to keep the African-American in bondage.

Nathaniel Turner (1800-1831)

Sir,—You have asked me to give a history of the motives which induced me to undertake the late insurrection, as you call it—To do so I must go back to the days of my infancy, and even before I was born. I was thirty-one years of age the 2nd of October last, and born the property of Benj. Turner, of this county. In my childhood a circumstance occurred which made an indelible impression on my mind, and laid the ground work of that enthusiasm, which has terminated so fatally to many, both white and black, and for which I am about to atone at the gallows. . . . Being at play with other children, when three or four years old, I was telling them something, which my mother overhearing, said it had happened before I was born—I stuck to my story, however and related some things which went, in her opinion, to confirm it—others being called on were greatly astonished, knowing that these things had happened, and caused them to say in my hearing, I surely would be a prophet, as the Lord had shewn me things that had happened before my birth. And my mother and father strengthened me in this my first impression, saying in my presence, I was intended for some great purpose, which they had always thought from certain

marks on my head and breast-Growing up among them, with this confidence in my superior judgment, and when this, in their opinions, was perfected by Divine inspiration, from the circumstances already alluded to in my infancy, and which belief was ever afterwards zealously inculcated by the austerity of my life and manners, which became the subject of remark by white and black. Having soon discovered to be great, I must appear so, and therefore studiously avoided mixing in society, and wrapped myself in mystery, devoting my time to fasting and prayer.³

Nat Turner was born on October 2, 1800 on the farm of Benjamin Turner in Southampton County, Virginia. Nat's rebelliousness is traced to his parents. It's been said that his African-born mother had to be restrained from killing her infant son rather than see him become a slave. Nat's father escaped slavery when he was a boy. Unlike most slave boys, Nat learned to read and write at an early age and was not motivated by the repressive conditions of slavery alone to rebel. Nat attributed his rebellious act to a vision shown to him by the Spirit of God. He had been a preacher and a leader to the slaves in his community. In May of 1828 the Spirit informed him that he was to "fight against the serpent." This was considered to be much the same calling as Jesus Christ. However, Nat was to fight against the repressive system of slavery. Nat was waiting for a sign to rebel and like Harriet Tubman, he entrusted his plan only to a few people. Nat received the sign on July 4th. (This date is significant in American History. It is known as Independence Day.) However, Nat became sick and the attack postponed. On August 13, 1831 another sign came. "The sun rose with a strange greenish tint; later, it turned blue, and in the afternoon, a dark spot was visible on its surface. As the black spot passed over the sun, as shall the blacks pass over the earth."⁴ On August 22, 1831 Nat Turner and six slaves set out on their rebellion. The slaves moved from farm to farm murdering white people. No white person was spared, with the exception of one poor white family who moved Turner to compassion. "They thought no better of themselves that they did of Negroes,"⁵ he recalled. By the end of their rebellion some 50 to 60 slaves had joined Nat's quest to destroy this vicious serpent, slavery.

Sojourner Truth(1797?-1883)

Sojourner Truth was born under the name of Isabella in Ulster County, New York. The actual date of her birth is unknown. However, she calculated it to be between 1797 and 1800. During Sojourner's childhood years her mother would speak to her about God and His powers. At the age of nine years old Sojourner was separated from her family. She was sold at an auction for one hundred dollars in a package deal with sheep to a John Nealy of Ulster County, New York. He was a hard master. Sojourner was overworked and often beaten.

Sojourner frequently talked to God. It was on one of her talks that she decided to take her freedom by escaping. On July 4, 1827 Sojourner set out for freedom with her son and the clothes she wore. Note the significance of the date and the motivating factor behind Sojourner Truth's decision to seek freedom. Like Nat Turner Sojourner chose July 4th and spoke of her inspiration by God.

Sojourner stayed with a Quaker family by the name of Van Wagener until her emancipation in 1828. (The Van Wagener's purchased Sojourner's freedom along with her son's when her old master came to claim her.) During Sojourner's stay at the Van Wagener's her religious faith increased.

My name is Isabella; but when I left the house of bondage, I left everything behind. I wasn't goin' to keep nothin of Egypt on me, an' so I went to the Lord an' asked him to give me a new name. And the Lord gave me Sojourner, cause I was to travel up an' down the land showin' the people their sins and bein' a sign unto them. Afterwards I told the Lord I wanted another name, cause everybody else had two names; an' the Lord gave me Truth, 'cause I was to declare the truth unto the people.⁶

It was often common for slaves once they decided to be free, to rid themselves of old servile habits as well as change their names given them by their masters. Changing the name was also a tactic used to keep the slave master from locating a slave once he or she escaped. Frederick Douglass, originally named Frederick Bailey, changed his name to divert any suspicion of his being an escaped slave. Harriet Tubman was also referred to as Moses. The changing of her name was done for two reasons; one, she displayed some of the same heroic and leadership characteristics as the biblical figure Moses, who delivered the Jews out of bondage. And two, to conceal her true identity from slave catchers.

(The following lines are excerpts from Sojourner's *Address To The American Equal Rights Association* , New York City May 9, 1867)

My friends, I am rejoiced that you are glad, but I don't know how you will feel when I get through. I come from another field-the country of the slave. They have got their liberty-so much good luck to have slavery partly destroyed; not entirely. I want it root and branch destroyed. Then we will all be free indeed. I feel that if I have the answer for the deeds done in my body just as much as a man. There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women theirs, you are the colored men will masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before. So I am for keeping the thing going while things are stirring; because if we wait till it is still, it will take a great while to get it going again. . . . I want women to have their rights. In the courts women have no right, no voice, nobody speaks for them. I wish woman to have her voice there among the pettifoggers. If it is not a fit place for women, it is unfit for me to be there.

I am about eighty years old; it is about time for me to be going. I have been forty years a slave and forty years free, and would be here forty years more to have equal rights for all. I suppose I am kept here because something remains for me to do! I suppose I am yet to help break the chain. I have done a great work as such as any man, but did not get so much pay. I used to work in the field and bind grain, keeping up with the cradler; but men doing no more, got twice as much pay; so with the German woman . . . We do as much, we eat as much, we want as much. I suppose I am about the only colored woman that goes about to speak for the rights of colored women. I want to keep the thing stirring, now that the ice is cracked. There ought to be equal rights now more than ever, since colored people have their freedom.⁷

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911)

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was the only child born to free African-American parents in Baltimore, Maryland in 1825. Her mother died before Frances turned three years old. She was sent to live with an aunt and attended a school operated by her uncle, Reverend William Watkins. Frances' education would have been deemed substandard in this day and age, but for the 1830's and 1840's she was a well educated woman. At age thirteen she worked in a bookstore. She seized this opportunity to satiate her love and thirst for books. Her independent study from age thirteen to twenty-six improved her overall education and better prepared her for life.

In 1851, Frances moved to Ohio and taught domestic science at Union Seminary in Columbus. In 1853 she left Ohio and teaching and moved to eastern Pennsylvania. Frances had her speaking debut in New Bedford, Massachusetts, like Frederick Douglass. Her topic was Christianity. In September of 1854 she also addressed an Antislavery Society in Maine. Also in 1854, she published her first book of poems. She spoke in cities like New Bedford, Boston, South Reading, Framingham Grove, Salem, Massachusetts, Wilmington, Delaware, Trenton, New Jersey, and the states of Vermont, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Evidence of her lecturing career comes mainly from the *Liberator* , (1831-1866) William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist

newspaper.

Frances Harper witnessed the kidnapping of free northern blacks, and was further inspired to join the anti-slavery ranks. Coupled with her ability to articulate the injustices of slavery and capture the attention of her audiences with her eloquent language, Frances was in great demand as a speaker after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. After the Civil War, she travelled extensively through the South as a representative of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Since the women's rights movement was quite active in the North she undoubtedly felt the need to alert black southern women of their rights.

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper continued to champion the cause of African-Americans and women to the date of her death, February 22, 1911.

(The following lines are excerpts from Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's *Address To The Fourth Anniversary Of The New York City Anti-slavery Society* Delivered May 13, 1857)

Could we trace the record of every human heart, the aspirations of every immortal soul, perhaps we would find no man so imbruted and degraded that we could not trace the word liberty either written in living characters upon the soul or hidden away in some book or corner of the heart. The law of liberty is the law of God, and is the antecedent to all human legislation. It existed in the mind of Deity when He hung the first world upon its orbit and gave it liberty to gather light from the central sun.

Some people say, set the slaves free. Did you ever think, if the slaves were free they would steal everything they could lay their hands on from now until the day of their death-that they would steal more than two thousand millions of dollars? (applause) Ask Maryland, with her tens of thousands of slaves, if she is not prepared for freedom and hear her answer: "I help supply the cofflegangs of the south . . ." Ask Virginia, with her hundreds of thousands of slaves, if she is not weary with her mechandise of blood and anxious to shake the gory traffic from her hands, and hear her reply: "Though fertility has covered my soil, though a genial sky bends over my hills and vales, though I hold in my hand a wealth of waterpower enough to turn the spindles to clothe the world, yet with these advantages, one of my chief staples has been the sons and daughters I send to the human market and human shambles." (applause) Ask the farther south, and all the cotton growing states chime in, "We have need of fresh supplies to fill the ranks of those whose lives have gone out in unrequited toll on our distant plantations."

A hundred thousand new-born babes are annually added to the victims of slavery, twenty thousand lives are annually sacrificed on the plantations of the south. Such a sight should send a thrill of horror, through the nerves of civilization and impel the heart of humanity to lofty deeds. So it might, if men had not found a fearful alchemy by which this blood can be transformed into gold. Instead of listening to the cry of agony, they listen to the ring of dollars and stoop down to pick up the coin. (applause) . . .

Slavery is mean because it tramples on the feeble and weak. A man comes with his affidavits from the south and hurries me before a commissioner; upon that evidence ex-parte and alone he hitches me to the car of slavery and trails my womanhood in the dust, I stand at the threshold of the Supreme Court and ask for justice, simple justice. Upon my tortured heart is thrown the mocking words, "You are a negro; you have no rights which white men are bound to respect!" (long and loud applause) Had it been my lot to have lived beneath the Crescent instead of the Cross, had injustice violence been heaped upon my head as a Mohammedan woman, as a member of common faith, I might have demanded justice and been listened to by the Pasha, the Bey or the Vizier; but when I come here to ask justice, men tell me, "We have no higher law than the Constitution." (applause)

But I will not dwell on the dark side of the picture. God is on the side of freedom; and any cause that has God on its

side, I care not how much it may be trailed in the dust, is sure to triumph. The message of Jesus Christ is on the side of Freedom." I come to preach deliverance of the captives, the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound." The truest and noblest hearts in the land are on the side of freedom. They may be hissed at by slavery's minions, their names cast out as evil, their characters branded with fanaticism, but O, "To aide with Truth is noble when we share her humble crust Ere the cause bring fame and profit and it's prosperous to be just."

May I not, in conclusion, ask every honest, noble heart, every seeker after truth and justice, if they will not also be on the side of freedom. Will you not resolve that you will abate neither heart nor hope till you hear the death knell of human bondage sounded, and over the black ocean of slavery shall be heard a song more requiem of Egypt's ruined hosts and the anthem of deliverance of Israel's captive people?⁸ (Great applause)

We see, by viewing the work of Sojourner Truth and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper many similarities and differences. Both should be appreciated for their efforts and work in the emancipation of women generally and African-American women specifically. Both were similar in the respect that their faith in God seemed to be the focus of their fight for equal rights as well as the ultimate source in the liberation of African Americans.

There were also differences between the two women; differences of birth, educational opportunities, and writing style of orations. Sojourner Truth was born a slave, received no formal education, and would be regarded in this day and age as a functional illiterate. However, the fact that she did not have a formal education, did not stop her from speaking against the sufferings and injustices of slaves and women. On the other hand, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was born free, received an education, and spoke with eloquence for the same cause. They were individual in their methods, but one in their aims.

Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)

Frederick Douglass was born in Talbot County, Maryland around the year 1817. He had no exact knowledge of when he was born due to the fact that records of this type were not given to slaves. Frederick's ability to note the difference between the white and black children was evident in his sadness about not knowing his birthday. He commented, "The white children could tell their ages. I could not tell why I ought to be deprived of the same privilege."⁹

As an infant, Frederick was separated from his mother. This was the usual practice in the slave system. The children were often sent to other plantations to be playmates to white children or to be house maids or servants for the mistress. By his own account, Frederick always had a rebellious spirit. He disliked both of the masters he had in slavery. Frederick was once sent to a slave breaker who succeeded only in being whipped by Frederick.

Frederick described his first master as a brutal slave holder. "I have known him to cut and slash the women's heads so horribly . . ." ¹⁰ Later, Frederick was sent to live with Captain Anthony's daughter Lucretia. It was in this home that Frederick began to learn how to read. His new master's wife was teaching him, unaware of the sentiments of the slave masters against teaching a slave to read.

I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by anyone else.¹¹

As a result of the prohibitory measures taken against Douglass' learning, he had to seek out other means of

accomplishing what was almost impossible for a slave.

From this time I was most narrowly watched. If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the inch, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the ell. The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read.¹²

Frederick, at the age of twelve understood the inequality of slavery. He spoke of his discussion with poor white boys. Here, we again see the evidence of his emancipation of the mind. "I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?"¹³

Through his readings of the *Columbian Orator* (A book of speeches) Douglass learned what effect the power of truth could have upon individuals. He stated,

The reading of these documents enabled me to utter thoughts and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery, but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful one which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and defeat my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery.¹⁴

This knowledge in and of itself was not freedom for Douglass, or, if you will, it was not "complete emancipation." It was a vehicle by which freedom was to become possible at a later time in his life.

As I read and contemplated the subject, behold that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow. My learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony I envied my fellow slaves for their stupidity . . . The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever.¹⁵

We reiterate, Douglass had just undergone the mind emancipation discussed in the introduction. However, he also spoke about his emancipation being incomplete. He felt that true emancipation would only come when he could free his body also. It is interesting to note that Douglass viewed this mind emancipation as something both good and bad.

Frederick Douglass escaped in 1838 borrowing a "Negro" sailor's protection papers and impersonating him. Douglass then began to attend the abolitionist meetings held by the free African-Americans in New Bedford, Massachusetts. During these meetings, slaves would often describe the horrors experienced in slavery. Douglass' first public speaking message was to this body of people in describing his experiences as a slave. From that point on Frederick Douglass was considered to be a powerful speaker and an asset to the Anti-slavery Cause.

(The following lines are excerpts from Frederick Douglass' speech *If There Is No Struggle There Is No Progress* Delivered in 1857)

. . . The general sentiment of mankind is that a man who will not fight for himself, when he has the means of doing so, is not worth being fought for by others, and this sentiment is just. For a man who does not value freedom for himself will never value it for others, or put himself to any inconvenience to gain it for others. Such a man, the world says, may lie down until he has sense enough to stand up. It is useless and cruel to put a man on his legs if the next moment his head is to be brought against a curbstone. . . . Christianity itself teaches that a man shall provide for his own house. This covers the whole ground of nations as well as individuals. Nations no more than individuals can innocently be improvident. They should provide for all wants-mental, moral and religious-and against all evils to which they are liable as nations. In the great struggle now progressing for the freedom and elevation of our people, we should be found at work with all our might, resolved that no man or set of men shall be more abundant in labors, according to the measure of our ability, than ourselves.

I know, my friends, that in some quarters the efforts of colored people meet with very little encouragement. We may fight, but we must fight like the Sepoys of India under white officers. This class of abolitionists don't like colored-celebrations, they don't like colored conventions, they don't like colored anti-slavery fairs for the support of colored newspapers. They don't like any demonstrations whatever in which colored men take a leading part. They talk of proud Anglo-Saxon blood as flippantly as those who profess to believe in the natural inferiority of races. Your humble speaker has been branded as an ingrate, because he has ventured to stand up on his own right and to plead our common cause as a colored man, rather than a Garrisonian. I hold it to be no part of gratitude to allow our white friends to do all the work, while we merely hold their coats. Opposition of the sort now referred to is partisan opposition, and we need not mind it. They will see and appreciate all honest efforts on our part to improve our condition as a people . . . 16

Harriet Tubman (1820?-1913)

The exact date of Harriet's birth is unknown. It is estimated to be in the year 1820 in Bucktown Village in Dorchester County, Maryland. Harriet's African ancestry was of the Ashanti and was considered to be a factor in her early sense of rebelliousness. The Ashanti leaders of the West Coast of Africa defeated the British in their four century old attempt to enslave them. It wasn't until 1896 that the Ashanti leaders came under the colonial rule of England. It is, however, more plausible to attribute Harriet's bravery to the oppressive conditions of her time.

Harriet Tubman had no formal education. However, she would listen to quotes from the Bible by her mother and father. At the age of five she was required to keep house, take care of a baby, work day and night and feel the wrath of her white enslavers.

Harriet was not, if you will , "the model slave." She restated her masters and mistresses openly and made it known that she did not want to be a slave. At a young age Harriet realized the hardships endured by the slaves and understood the dynamics of slavery. Her sense of objectivity moved her to see that the blame of the conditions of her and the other slaves laid upon the system. She remarked, "They don't know any better, its the way they were brought up. Make the little slaves mind you, or flog them was what they said to their children and they were brought up with the whip in their hands. Now that wasn't the way on all plantations; There were good masters and mistresses, as I've heard tell, but I didn't happen to come across any of them."17

Harriet Tubman's first act of liberating slaves came in her early teens. A slave left his work without permission. He was followed by the slave master and Harriet. The master wanted Harriet to tie up the slave so he could be whipped. Harriet refused. The slave ran away, Harriet put herself in the way to block the master

from chasing the slave. The overseer threw a two pound weight at the runaway slave. It missed the slave and hit Harriet in the head. It was a while before she recovered.

The reasons for Harriet choosing to take her freedom and the freedom of other slaves are varied. Harriet was influenced by what she had learned of the Bible, by the oppressive conditions of slavery, and by the rebellions staged by Nat Turner, Gabriel Prosser, and Denmark Vessey. However, Harriet's only concern was not the emancipation of slaves. She wanted to weaken the economy of the South and organize and educate an underground army of abolitionists to fight the South.

There's two things I've got a right and these are Death and Liberty. One or the other I mean to have. No one will take me back alive; I shall fight for my liberty, and when the time has come for me to go, the Lord will let them kill me.¹⁸

Harriet escaped from slavery in 1849 through the underground railroad.

When I found I had crossed the line, I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over everything; the sun came like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in heaven.¹⁹

Happy that she was free, but not content with the situation that her people were still bound, Harriet made up her mind to dedicate her life to the liberation of her people. "So it was with me. I had crossed the line. I was free; but here was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom. I was a stranger in a strange land; and at home, after all was down in Maryland; because my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and friends were there. But I was free and they should be free! I would make a home in the North and bring them there!"²⁰

Harriet's work with the underground railroad began in 1850 and continued through the Civil War. The underground railroad was one of the greatest forces that brought about the Fugitive Slave Law and the Civil War, and thus destroyed slavery. It must be understood that Harriet worked to free slaves at a time when the fugitive Slave Act was being enacted. Thus, Harriet risked being sent back to slavery or death if caught.

When discussing with students Harriet Tubman as a liberator, many questions come into mind as to how she freed slaves. How did Harriet plan her trips? What were her methods? Did she take just any slave? How did she keep them from turning back and surrendering? What about her strategy of movement, and how did she defend herself as well as her "passengers"? Harriet had the essentials; a gun, money and knowledge of routes to the North. Harriet always traveled at night and followed the North Star. Harriet would have in her possession passes written out by other people. Men would escape in female clothing and females would escape in men's clothing. All of Harriet's trips were planned and executed to promote success. Prior to making trips South, Harriet would obtain money. She would then go on to the South. Parties awaiting her would meet at a designated place known only to the slaves Harriet could trust. Harriet would not tell everyone in the group her plan, for fear of informers. The group would set out to leave on a Saturday night. This was a tactic used to prohibit the masters from advertising their escape the following day. Most businesses were closed on Sundays. Slave masters had to wait until Monday to advertise the escape of their slaves. This would give the slaves one day start, north. Harriet always paid some "colored man" to follow after the person who put up the posters advertising the runaways. The man would pull them down as fast as they were posted.

Although Harriet was an illiterate person, not able to read or write, she demonstrated remarkable intelligence and displayed military genius. When confronted with a slave who became fearful and wanted to turn back she would put a pistol to his/her head and say, "Move or die." Other tactics that were used to escape, were, on the

first part of the journey to escape by horse and carriage. This tactic was based on the theory that a slave would not be as bold as to pull off a trick of this sort. When one usually saw a slave driving a horse and buggy it meant the slave was going on an errand for the master.

Harriet's passengers also included babies. She would carry paregoric with her to stop their crying. Harriet considered babies to be the best material for flights. She knew the parents wanted the best for their children and would not weaken.

William Still (1821-1902)

William Still was born in New Jersey, in the year 1821. Still's mother had escaped slavery and his father purchased his freedom. Still worked on his parents' farm until he was seventeen. At that time he moved to Philadelphia. In three years time he taught himself to read and write. Now equipped with educational tools, Still joined the Pennsylvania Anti-slavery Society, an organization that helped to usher slaves to points further north as well as to offer financial assistance. The joining of this Society marked a second turning point in Still's life. (The first being his acquisition of reading and writing.)

William Still, like Harriet Tubman, may be considered one of the most important workers in the fight for freedom and equality. He was also the most important link to the black community. It was through his work as the chairman of the General Vigilance Committee that William Still helped to free slaves. The committee was responsible for "underground" operations, raising funds to facilitate the operation of the underground railroad, and keeping a record of all the committee's functions.

Still worked with the underground railroad for fourteen years. In that time he interviewed hundreds of slaves seeking freedom. Due to the risk of aiding fugitives, no narratives were recorded at first. It was not until Still had interviewed his brother unknowingly that he decided to document his findings. In interviewing his brother, Still discovered in fact, that his brother Peter had been separated from their mother for 40 years. William Still was overjoyed and the revelation of possible reunions occurring caused him to take the chance of documenting the narratives of the slaves who passed through the underground railroad.

The idea forced itself upon his mind that all over this wide and extended country thousands of mothers and children separated by slavery, were in a similar way living without the slightest knowledge of each other's whereabouts, praying and weeping without ceasing, as did this mother and son. Under these reflections it seemed reasonable to hope that by carefully gathering the narratives of underground railroad passengers, in some way or other some of the bleeding and severed hearts might be united and comforted, and by the use that might be made privately, if not publicly, of just such facts as would naturally be embraced if their brief narratives, reunions might take place.²¹

Still not only documented narratives, but in his documentation included letters from, "fugitives" in Canada, slaves in the South, underground railroad conductors, and stockholders, and as Still put it "last and least from slaveholders." Like the countless slaves who risked their lives for freedom, Still risked his life in documenting the experiences of the slaves. Still originally hoped to unite other slaves by means of his slave narrative; however he decided to compile this information for posterity. Again we must stress the importance of Still violating the law. These records were evidence of willful acts to violate the Fugitive Slave Act; an act respecting fugitives from justice and persons escaping from the service of their masters. Still hid his notes in the loft of Lebanon Seminary and in a graveyard. It wasn't until 1873 that he published this great work in a book form totaling 780 pages in length. Still described his duty as being one of self-delegated responsibility for the cause of freedom and equality. (Still writes in the third person.)

Nevertheless he feels he owes it to the cause of freedom, and the Fugitives and their posterity in particular, to bring the doings of the underground railroad before the public in the most truthful manner; not for the purpose of amusing the reader, but to show what efforts were made and what success was gained for Freedom under difficulties.²²

Still continued his work in the cause for freedom and equality until his death in 1902. He supported many projects for the improvement of the African-Americans in the state of Pennsylvania. (Prior to the Civil War he spearheaded a campaign to end streetcar segregation in Philadelphia.) Still frequently organized whites as well as blacks when trying to eliminate injustice. His great organizational skills led eventually to the elimination of Jim Crow practices on the streetcars.

In conclusion it is evident that the abolition of slavery was the effort of both the slave and the free, the rich and the poor, the literate and the illiterate, the dynamic and the mild, the obnoxious, and the humble, and yes, the black and the white.

It was our purpose to write down in a few pages, and bring to the forefront what true workers for freedom and equality accomplished. While the unit is not conclusive by any stretch of the imagination, the unit is representative of a range of personalities of this time period. It is our hope that this unit will facilitate the teaching and learning of American History in its entirety and spark a yearning among teachers and—students to research the tonic further.

In order to facilitate the dissemination of this vast piece of information, we've provided a docudrama. This play focuses on the objectives aforementioned in the introduction.

EMANCIPATION

Setting: An inner-city public school. Ms. Bailey's history class

Characters: Ms. Bailey, Latricia, Bill, Rasheed, and Lisa.

ACT ONE

Ms. Bailey: Good afternoon class. Today we will begin our unit on Africa. As you know, it's February, African-American History Month, so we will devote some time to African-American History.

Latricia: (mumbles) Some time?

Ms. Bailey: Now let's get into the historical aspects of Africa. As you know, Africa is one of the seven continents. Bill can you tell me what a continent is?

Bill: One of the seven main land areas of the world.

Ms. Bailey: That is correct. Now there have been questions concerning the origin of man. It is widely believed that Africa is the mother of all nations.

Latricia: (skeptically interrupts) What do you mean by that?

Ms. Bailey: Well, Latricia, the first men did not keep records, but they did draw pictures, make tools and bury their dead. The oldest findings have been in Africa. By the way who can tell me the location of Egypt?

(Ms. Bailey looks at Rasheed. Lisa raises her hand.)

Lisa: In Iran.

Ms. Bailey: This may come as a surprise to you, but Egypt is in Africa.

(The students sigh in disbelief.)

Ms. Bailey: Africa had the first great civilization in the world. Rasheed turn to your glossary, and read the definition of civilization.

Rasheed: It says, the stage in the life of a people when they have developed arts, science, and government.

Bill: (interrupts) But I thought Europe was civilized first.

Ms. Bailey: Bill, that is common misconception. I bet you were also taught that all Africans live in the jungle, in very primitive conditions.

Bill: Yeah.

Ms. Bailey: No Bill. I'm sorry, that's not true. Some Africans live in villages, while many live and work in modern cities much like ours.

Latricia: Do they drive cars?

Ms. Bailey: They certainly do! They have department stores, tall buildings, elevators, schools, etc. Now let's get back to early Africa. Who can tell me what a dynasty is?

Latricia: Hey, that's the show where I saw Dianne Carroll and Billy Dee Williams.

Bill: (Jokingly) Back to the glossary!

Rasheed: (answers anxiously) It says a family of kings.

Ms. Bailey: That is correct.

Bill: You mean Africa had kings? I mean families of kings? (surprised)

Ms. Bailey: Yes there were many black kings and queens in Africa. A king was also called a pharaoh. Ikhnaton, a black Egyptian pharaoh, married one of his black subjects. Guess who she was? (silence) Queen Nefertiti.

Latricia: Queen Nefertiti? I saw a movie about her, she wasn't black!

Ms. Bailey: She may have been portrayed by a white woman, but she was black. Let me further shock you. Cleopatra and the Queen of Sheba were also black.

Latricia: I don't believe this! They always have Elizabeth Taylor playing those parts. (with disbelief and anger)

Ms. Bailey: Latricia, it's true and there are many more kings and queens of Africa.

(Bell Rings)

Ms. Bailey: Well, we'll continue tomorrow.

(The students get up to leave. Latricia walks over to Bill.)

Latricia: Bill I don't know what to think! No other teacher has ever told us this.

Bill: But it must be true or she would not have told us.

Latricia: Just to think, we have always been made ashamed of being black. They usually show us those stupid movies, with bare-breasted African women and half naked men running around in jungles. Everytime I'd think of Africa, I would think of Tarran and the natives with bones through their noses. I'm glad we are finally hearing something positive about Africa.

Bill: Yeah, me too. Well I have to go to class. I'll see you later.—

(They both exit.)

ACTTWO

(It's Tuesday morning. Latricia and Bill anxiously await the bell for the third period. Bell rings.)

Latricia: It seemed as if the bell would never ring.

Bill: I know.

Ms. Bailey: Good morning. Today we will continue with our discussion of Africa. (Latricia raises her hand) Yes Latricia?

Latricia: The things you told us yesterday, were they really true?

Ms. Bailey: Yes, Latricia. Today we are going to begin by discussing slavery in Africa and the United States. As many of you know, Africa had a system of slavery also.

Bill: Who were their slaves, white people?

Ms. Bailey: No they enslaved other blacks.

Latricia: What? That's disgusting!

Ms. Bailey: Although Africans had a system of slavery, it was not like slavery in the United States. Warring tribes would conquer weaker tribes and use their captives for slaves. These slaves were not sold, beaten, separated from families, or killed as slaves were in the United States.

Bill: Is it true that some Africans sold other Africans to white slave traders?

Ms. Bailey: Yes but keep in mind the African slave had one concept of slavery, while the white slave trader had another.

Latricia: Is that how our foreparents ended up in America?

Ms. Bailey: No not really. White slave traders went to Africa and kidnapped thousands of young men and women. Some captives were sold into slavery, but most were kidnapped.

Bill: Don't you think kidnapped is a little strong?

Ms. Bailey: No not at all. Bill suppose you were on your way to the store. While walking alone, a white stranger forces you into the trunk of his car and drives you to another state. He stops periodically to allow you to stretch. The holes that he bore in the trunk allow you just enough air to keep you alive. You've reached Texas and now you are sold to a rancher. This rancher slaps you on sight, calls you nigger, and spits in your face. Is kidnapped still too harsh?

Bill: No, I don't think so.

Latricia: But no one would be cruel enough to transport someone from Connecticut to Texas in the trunk of a car.

Ms. Bailey: Oh no? Well let's discuss the Triangular Trade. The European slave trade began around 1441. The first country in Europe to enter the slave trade was Portugal. Prince Henry sent a sea captain to Africa to bring back animal skins and palm oil. The sea captain, Antam Goncalvez, returned with twelve Africans. One of his captives claimed to have been a member of the ruling family of his tribe. He promised to send back five or six other Africans if given his freedom. Goncalvez sailed back to Africa and came back with ten more Africans. These Africans became slaves in Portugal.

Latricia: So this is how it all began. Why didn't they enslave other groups?

Ms. Bailey: The whites in America tried to enslave the Indians, but the Indians could run away and hide because this was their homeland. The labor also proved to be too harsh for the Indians. Many of them became ill, and died. Also, the color of Africans made it easier for the slave traders to distinguish the Africans from the other people.

Bill: So what was the Triangular Trade?

Ms. Bailey: The Triangular Trade, very simply, was the route in which kidnapped Africans were

taken. Slave ships left North America with rum. The slave ships sailed to Africa where the rum was traded for slaves. The slaves were taken to the West Indies and some traded for sugar and gold. The slave ship would then journey on to North America filled with slaves, sugar, and gold.
Latricia: I heard the slave ships were really bad.

Ms. Bailey: You're right, Latricia. The Africans were crowded together under the ship's deck. They were handcuffed together and their legs were chained. There was less than sixteen inches of space in which the slaves were placed.

Latricia: Well how did they sit up?

Ms. Bailey: They couldn't! Many slaves were not allowed to come to the deck for exercise. Because of disease, lack of food and water, many slaves died along the way.

Bill: Is it true that the middle passage was so bad that Africans arrived in America not remembering anything about Africa?

Ms. Bailey: Bill, that is another very common misconception. Many Africans remembered their language and passed that knowledge on to their children born slaves in America. The playing of drums, certain words, stories call and response in gospel music, and many things that are a part of the African-American culture proves that Africans arrived with strong memories of Africa.

Latricia: What is call and response?

Ms. Bailey: Many gospel songs have a lead and a background. In many cases, the background repeats or responds to the words of the leader. This is known as call and response. (Bill raises his hand.)

Bill: What did they do with the people who died on the slave ships?

Ms. Bailey: They threw them overboard.

Latricia: What about sharks?

Ms. Bailey: Latricia, many captives jumped overboard because they could not stand the thought of remaining a captive.

Bill: You mean they committed suicide?

Ms. Bailey: Remember we are speaking about people who were once free. Some of them had been from royal families. It was difficult for them to accept servitude.

Latricia: Were the first blacks in America slaves?

Ms. Bailey: I'm glad you asked that question. The first blacks did not come to the new world as slaves. They came as indentured servants, in the year 1619.

Latricia: What is an indentured servant?

Ms. Bailey: An indentured servant is a person who has signed an indenture agreeing to be someones servant for a number of years. After he had worked for a designated length of time, he/she was allowed to go free.

Bill: What was slavery really like, Ms. Bailey?

Ms. Bailey: Well Bill, the bell is about to ring. We will resume this discussion tomorrow. (Bell rings, students exit.)

ACT THREE

(It's Wednesday morning, third period. The students anxiously take their seats.)

Students: Good morning Ms. Bailey

Ms. Bailey: Good morning students. Today we are going to discuss slave emancipation. Who can define the word emancipation?

Bill: (Turns book pages) Oh here it is. Emancipation—the act of freeing from slavery, usually done by a government.

Ms. Bailey: Very good Bill. You will notice that the definition says “usually” done by a government. Emancipation of the mind was not freedom granted by government. Who can site an example of mind emancipation?

Latricia: (raises her hand) I guess when the captives on the slave ships committed suicide rather than accept bondage, that was a form of mind emancipation.

Bill: Yeah and because their minds were free, their bodies had to be freed also.

Ms. Bailey: Exactly! There were many black slaves who gained their freedom by suicide, slave revolts, orations and running away.

Latricia: Really Ms. Bailey, I don't think I could kill myself or run away. I don't think anything would make me take a chance like that.

Ms. Bailey: Well Latricia, let's discuss the horrors of slavery. Slavery became so prominent because it provided cheap labor. Black men, women, and children were bought and sold as cattle or property. Slaves could not have real families. The marriages between slaves were not legal and the master could separate the family at will. Since he was in the business of making money, he could sell a mother away from the family, the father to another plantation and the children to another. Many times family members never saw each other again.

Slaves were not allowed to learn more than was needed for the job they were designated to do. A slave who learned to read and write was considered dangerous, because he or she could write “free papers” for themselves and other slaves.

Latricia: What are free-papers?

Ms. Bailey: All blacks in America were not slaves. If a person was a free black African-American he or she had to carry papers stating that they were not property. Back to life as slaves! The slave holder or master did everything possible to make the slave feel that he was not as good as his white master. Church was also used to instill servitude into the mind of the slave. Passages of scripture like “servants obey your masters,” were often topics of sermons. There were special laws that held it illegal for a slave to raise his voice in anger or to raise his hand against a white man. A slave was also breaking the law if he pointed his finger or refused to step out of the way of a white man. The slave could not beat a drum or blow a horn. He could never own a gun, and if he met with five or more of his friends away from home, he was also breaking the law.

Bill: Oh, that's not fair!

Rasheed: I know. What about the whites?

Ms. Bailey: Slaves were often punished by whippings. Many of these whippings were given with the slave on his knees with his arms out stretched and tied to a cross. Many times. the slave hung naked by his hands, and whipped mercilessly. A white slave master could kill his slaves if he wished to, because they were his property and he had that right.

Latricia: Now I see why they killed themselves or died trying to escape. If they stayed, they endured conditions worse than death.

Ms. Bailey: There were many, many, slave revolts in which slaves tried to gain their freedom. There were early revolts in New York in April of 1712 and later in 1741. Slaves who took part in the revolts that were caught, were killed. There were men like Cato, Prosser, Bowler, Denmark Vessey, and Nat Turner who rallied the consciousness of the other slaves, and led them in revolts against their white masters.

Latricia: Did they kill whites during these revolts?

Ms. Bailey: Yes they did.

Latricia: Well I guess I'd be mad enough to kill a few people too!

Rasheed: How did those that didn't participate in slave revolts gain freedom?

Ms. Bailey: Many slaves ran away. There were groups such as the Quakers and members of the underground railroad who helped these runaway slaves make it safely to the North. Then there were the abolitionist. These people, black and white, spoke out against slavery through literature and speeches. These abolitionist were people like David Walker, William Lloyd Garrison, John Brown, Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth.

Latricia: How did slavery end for those who didn't escape or revolt?

Ms. Bailey: The Civil War, and the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation freed many slaves. The Emancipation Proclamation freed "all persons as slaves" in the rebel states. The slaves that were in the union or in areas held by his armies were not free. Lincoln was freeing the slaves in the South as a part of his aim to win the war. He did not feel that he had the power to free slaves that were outside of the rebel states.

Latricia: Why was this called the Civil War?

Ms. Bailey: Because it was a war between states that belonged to the same country.

Latricia: When did slavery end?

Ms. Bailey: The Civil War lasted for four years. The war began in 1861 and ended in 1865. The South lost the war and the union had been saved. The Union Soldiers in the South freed the slaves as they went through the southern states. By 1865, the Union had freed most of its slaves. Though this was the end of physical slavery, African-Americans still had, and still have to fight for full emancipation. People can do very little when there is freedom without equality. The quest for equality has begun and must continue throughout our lives.

Latricia: I guess we as young people must emancipate our minds. African-Americans have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go.

(Bell rings. Students walk over and hug Ms. Bailey. She smiles and students exit.)

Lesson Plan 1

Objective *Students will be able to participate in guided silent and oral reading. Students will be able to define and discuss the terms historical, continent, civilization, misconception, primitive, dynasty and pharaoh.*

Materials *Play- Emancipation Act 1*

dictionary or unit glossary

Procedures

1. Students will define, through the use of a dictionary or glossary, the aforementioned terms.
2. Students will read Act 1 silently.
3. Students will be assigned various parts in the play.
4. Students will read *Emancipation* orally.

Results *Students will learn that Egypt is in Africa, and that the Queen of Sheba, Queen Nefertiti, and Cleopatra were black women. Students will be able to view Africa outside of the realm of the stereotypes portrayed in films and books.*

Lesson Plan 2

Objective *Students will be able to participate in guided silent and oral reading. Students will be able to discuss the system of slavery in Africa and compare it to the system of slavery in America. Students will also be able to discuss the content of Act 2.*

Materials

Play-Emancipation Act 2

Procedures

1. Students will read Act 2 silently.
2. Parts will be assigned to various students.

3. Students will read Act 2 orally.
4. Students will discuss the content of Act 2.

Results *Students will learn that Africans sold other Africans into slavery. Students will learn that the system of slavery in the United States differed greatly from the system of slavery in Africa. Students will learn that the cruelties suffered by African-American slave was unknown to the slave in Africa.*

Students will be able to verbalize the harshness of the middle passage. Students will be able to discuss the despair and anguish suffered by the kidnapped Africans on this voyage.

Lesson Plan 3

Objective *Students will be able to participate in guided silent and oral reading. Students will be able to define and discuss emancipation, revolt, oration, free papers, black Codes, Emancipation Proclamation, and the Civil War.*

Materials

1. Play-Emancipation Act 3
2. dictionary or unit glossary

Procedures

1. Students will define, through the use of a dictionary or the unit glossary, aforementioned terms.
2. Students will read Act 3 silently.
3. Students will be assigned various parts of the play.
4. Students will read the play orally.

Results *Students will be able to explore the notion of send emancipation and body emancipation. Students will learn that some black emancipators fought for freedom by revolt, by escaping to*

freedom, while others used orations as a tool.

Students will discuss the dynamics of why a white slave master did not want a slave to learn how to read or write. Students will be able to discuss the reasons why slavery was abolished.

Lesson Plan 4

Objective Students will be able to compare and contrast the language of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Sojourner Truth.

Procedures

1. Students will read excerpts of orations by both women.
2. Students will discuss the audiences each of them addressed, and decide if their speech was appropriate for that particular audience.
3. Students will address the issue of educational background in reference to these women, and discuss the consistency of language with their education, or lack of it.

Materials Excerpts from unit.

Results Students will be able to verbally compare and contrast the lives of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Sojourner Truth.

Lesson Plan 5

Objective Students will be able to compare and contrast the lives of Harriet Tubman and Nat Turner.

Materials Excerpts from unit.

Procedures

1. Students will read excerpts from the unit.
2. Students will compare Harriet's mode of emancipation with Nat's.
3. Students will discover how slavery was different for each of these slaves.

Results Students will write a one page essay discussing the similarities and differences of Harriet Tubman and Nat Turner.

Lesson Plan 6

Objective Students will be able to debate the effectiveness of the mode of emancipation of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Sojourner Truth, and William Still.

Materials Excerpts from the unit.

Procedures

1. Students will divide into small groups.
2. Students will read excerpts from the unit.
3. Students will discuss who they feel was better able to effect a change for the greatest number of slaves and why.
4. Students will discuss the practicality of the various means of gaining emancipation.

Results As this is not a convergent exercise, the results are not definite. Students will, however, see that each of these emancipators utilized the tactic that best suited his/her needs and abilities.

Lesson Plan 7

Objective Students will be able to compare and contrast Frederick Douglass and William Still.

Materials Excerpts from the unit.

Procedures

1. Students will divide into small groups.
2. Students will read a selected reading.
3. Students will compare the writings of these two men.
4. Students will discuss Frederick Douglass' and William Still's work with Anti-slavery Societies.

Results Students will learn that both William Still and Frederick Douglass worked closely with Anti-slavery Societies. Students will find that both men were literate and very outspoken. Students will note that Douglass was an orator, while Still was devoted to emancipation via his writings in *The Under ground Railroad* .

Lesson Plan 8

Objective Students will be able to spell correctly the following terms: emancipation, historical, continent, civilization, misconception, primitive, dynasty, stereotype, anguish, and pharaoh.

Materials Word scramble

Procedures

1. Review the correct spelling of each word.
2. Write the word scramble on the board.
3. Have students unscramble the letters and give the correct spelling of each words.

Word Scramble

1. tishroilac
2. mniaineacpto
3. oncitnnet
4. iiiaincvlzto
5. rmtvpiie
6. troypseet
7. hrapaoh
8. ngihaus
9. icnetomsocpin
10. yatdnsy

Results Students will attend to the letters given, and will refer to the correct spellings issued. Students will give the correct spelling for each word.

Lesson Plan 9

Objective *Students will be able, through the use of creative writing, to journey to Africa and experience the horrors of being subjected to the middle passage.*

Materials *Pen/pencil and paper*

Procedures

1. The class will review material pertaining to slave capture and the middle passage.
2. Students will write in the first person singular.
3. Students will express how they are feeling in the midst of these traumatic experiences.

Results *While writing, students will make the kidnapping and the transporting personal. Students will write how they would feel and react in that particular situation.*

Lesson Plan 10

Objective *Students will learn about the works of African-Americans through singing a black History Rap.*

Materials *Lyrics of the Black History Rap*

Procedures

1. Teacher will sing Rap for students.
2. Students will study the words to the Rap.

Results *Students will sing Black History Rap from memory.*

UNIT GLOSSARY

1. *Civil War*— A war fought by countrymen against fellow countrymen.
2. *civilization*— The stage in the life of a people when they have developed arts, science, and government.
3. *continent*— One of the seven main land areas in the world.
4. *dynasty* —A family of kings.
5. *emancipation*— The act of freeing from slavery.
6. *equality*— To be equal.
7. *Free Papers*— Papers carried by free blacks stating that they were free.
8. *historical*— Pertaining to history.
9. *indentured servant*— A person who has signed an indenture agreeing to be someone's servant for a certain number of years.
10. *misconception*— To have the wrong idea or understanding.
11. *pharaoh*— The name given to an ancient Egyptian King.
12. *Primitive*— uncivilized
13. *revolt* —uprising
14. *Slave Codes*— Special laws that applied only to black slaves.
15. *Triangular Trade*— The route taken by slave traders to bring Africans to America.

BLACK HISTORY RAP

Refrain: To the B, B, black , black, to the B, Black History.

Verse 1: Said Harriet Tubman, the number one woman, the one who set us free, first in the South, then to the North, and then to victory.

Refrain:

Verse 2: Said Nat, Gabriel, and Denmark those men who once were slaves, they got together and had revolts against America's so called braves.

Refrain:

Verse 3: We are the people from Africa, brought here to America. We are the people from the richest land, brought here against our plan.

Refrain:

Verse 4: We say to yall not in the fields, the ones of you who like to yield, stop those blacks from pickin' those crops, stop those oppressors from runnin' our shops.

Refrain:

Verse 5: In 18-63 Lincoln said that were free, but we, knew that, Harriet Tubman proved that fact.

Refrain:

Verse 6: There was no time in this ol' land till Banneker came along. Then a tick tock a tickety tock came Benjamin's ol'clock.

Refrain:

Verse 7: Now what you hear is not a lie. It's nothing but the truth. 'cause we of (school's name) have studied our history through.

Refrain:

Verse 8: Have you ever been to a public school and could not learn a thing. I mean you learn George Washington, but not Martin King. So your mind starts steamin' and your eyes start streamin' the moment it's time to read. And you say to your teacher, I don't want to read this. I want to learn my history.

Verse 9: There is a special edition to this song and we'd like you all to sing along. These teachers think their slick, try to bribe us with their tricks with a hip hop and it just won't stop we'd rather hear more about the four black tops. Now there's Martin King, the dreaming man. Malcolm X the man with the plan. Jesse Owens the running brave and Harriet Tubman freed the slave. Now these four tops they got down, teaching blacks to get around, with a hip hop and it just won't stop, until we have reached the top.

Refrain:

Verse 10: Somebody scream (Black History-sing 4 times)

Refrain:

Verse 11: Malcolm X the man with the plan was born on May 19th. He fought hard. He fought long. Until they killed him viciously.

Refrain:

Verse 12: Now that's the end of Black History Rhyme. The rhyme that will always sharp your mind. READ, READ, READ, READ, . . . BLACK HISTORY

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY CONTEST

1. Who were the first people to create the sciences, medicine, dentistry, mathematics, shoes, cloth, the alphabet, and the first library?

Answer: Africans.

2. African women were the first creators of what?

Answer: Architecture.

3. Who did the Africans teach math to? Answer: The Greeks.

4. Africans educated people from all over the world. Where did they educate them?

Answer: At the University of Sankore.

5. In what city was the University of Sankore located?

Answer: Timbuktu.

6. Who was Esop?

Answer: Esop was an African philosopher who lectured to the Greeks, influenced the thinking of Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, and many others.

7. Before the discovery of America, where did much of the world's gold come from?

Answer: Ghana.

8. Gao is the capital of Songhay, true or false?

Answer: true

9. Who was the African who led a rebellion on the slave ship Amistad?

Answer: Joseph Cinque.

10. Africa was always considered to be underdeveloped and uncivilized. Compare Europe and Mali, an African State, in the 14th Century.

Answer: In the middle of the 14th Century Europe was just beginning to feel the effects of her commercial revolution. Her states had not achieved anything resembling national unity; but Mali, under King Mansa-Musa and his successor enjoyed a flourishing economy with good international trade relations. King Mansa Musa could point with pride to a stable government extending several hundred miles from the Atlantic to Lake Chad.

11. During the 14th Century were Africans uncivilized?

Answer: No. The people adhered to a state religion that had international connections and learning flourished in the many schools that had been established.

12. What King ruled Songhay from 1493-1529?

Answer: Askia Mohammed, Songhay's most brilliant ruler.

13. Describe the empire of Songhay.

Answer: It was the largest and most powerful state in the history of West Africa.

14. Describe King Askia.

Answer: King Askia was the equal of the average European monarchs of the time and superior to many of them. King Askia sought to improve every area of his empire.

15. What area did King Askia give the most attention?

Answer: The area of education. Schools were established everywhere. Gao, Walata, Timbuktu, and Jenne became intellectual centers where the most learned scholars of West Africa were concentrated. Scholars from Asia and Europe came for consultation and study.

16. What were some of the courses taught at the University of Sankore in the town of timbuktu?

Answer: black and white youth studied grammar, geography, law, literature, and surgery.

17. Who discovered the use of iron?

Answer: The Africans are said to have discovered the use of iron. Africans were using iron when Europeans were still in the Stone Age. Africa exported iron for many years and blacksmiths and other workers in iron were found in many parts of Africa.

18. Where in Africa were freed slaves from England and America settled?

Answer: Descendants of African slaves in Britain were liberated after the Somerset case in 1772 and others settled in Sierra Leone, West Africa, in 1787. This settlement pioneered the way for the founding of Liberia, to ex-slaves of the United States who were sent.

19. What was the underground railroad?

Answer: The underground railroad was the most systematic method for taking slaves from the South to points north.

20. When was the underground railroad organized?

Answer: 1720

21. What was the triangular trade route?

Answer: Sugar from the West Indies was sent to New England. The sugar was used to make rum. Rum was sent to Africa and exchanged for slaves. The slaves were then taken to the West Indies.

22. Name the slave who staged a rebellion on August 22, 1831.

Answer: Nat Turner

23. On what date did Sojourner Truth escape slavery?

Answer: July 4, 1827.

24. What were Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's feelings about slavery?

Answer: "Slavery is mean because it tramples on the feeble and weak."

25. Quote Frederick Douglass regarding his feelings on his learning to read.

Answer: As I read and contemplated the subject, behold that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow. My learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony I envied my fellow slaves for their stupidity . . . The silver trumpet of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness.

26. Quote Harriet Tubman on the subject of freedom.

Answer: There is two things I've got a right and these are Death and Liberty. One or the other I mean to have. No one will take me back alive; I shall fight for my liberty.

27. How did William Still hope to unite slaves that had been separated from their families?

Answer: By documenting the narratives of the slaves who passed through the underground railroad in Philadelphia.

Notes

1. Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman* , (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, Inc, 1943) pp, 60-61.
2. *Ibid.*, p.59.
3. Eric Foner, ed. *Nat Turner* , (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1971)pp.41-43.
4. *Ibid.*, p,3.
5. *Ibid.*, p.4.
6. Janey, Weingold Montgomery, *A Comparative Analysis of the Rhetoric of Two Negro Women Orators Sojourner Truth and Frances E. Watkins Harper* , (Hays, Kansas. For Hayes, 1968) p.33.
7. *Ibid.*, pp 98-100.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-106.
9. Frederick Douglass, *Frederick Douglass' Narrative* , (New York: Signet Classic, 1968).
10. *Ibid.*, p.28.
11. *Ibid.*, p 63.
12. *Ibid.*, p.65.
13. *Ibid.*, p.65.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 68.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 68.
16. Phillip S. Foner, ed. *The Voice of Black America* , (New York: Capricorn Books. 1975), pp 219-225.
17. Conrad, p 10.
18. *Ibid.*, p.36.
19. *Ibid.*, p 38.
20. *Ibid.*, p.39.
21. William Still, *The Underground Railroad*, (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times),1968 p.4.
22. *Ibid.*, p.6.

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encountered while escaping.

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MATERIALS

1. " *Emancipation* " (A play included in the unit.)
2. Black History Rap (included in the unit)
3. African-American History Contest (included in the unit)

FILMS

4. *The Life of Frederick Douglass* (available at A.V. Dept. Wexler Elementary School)
5. *The Two Worlds of Musembe* (available at A.V. Dept. Wexler Elementary School)
6. *The Underground Railroad* (available at A.V. Dept. Wexler Elementary School)
7. *Roots* (available at A.V. Dept. Wexler Elementary School)

FIELDTRIPS

8. Connecticut Afro-American Historical Society New Haven, Ct.
9. Peabody Museum (Egyptian Exhibit) New Haven, Ct.

BOOKS

(See teacher's and student's bibliographies)

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