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“Horrors and Heroes of Slavery in America”

Initially using historical fiction literature, 6th grade students will build on prior knowledge regarding slavery from 5th grade for a deeper understanding of the horrors and heroes of slavery in early America. Class will use a KWL chart to review prior knowledge, identify what they want to learn more about and record found information while reading their initial selection, A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia 1859. This historical fiction piece has many opportunities for class discussion and constructed responses.

Once the class has identified what information regarding the heroes and horrors that they would like to expand upon, each student will begin to research an abolitionist. Students will create a formal research paper and a collaborative Photo Story presentation that can be shared with fifth grade during the time that they are exploring the Civil War.

Using the resource, Using Primary Sources in the Classroom, by Kathleen Vest, M.A. Ed, students will evaluate different types of primary resources and decide how to use them within their research paper.

Abolitionists to be researched: Sojourner Truth, Abraham Lincoln, Lucretia Mott, John Brown, Grimke Sisters, Harriet Tubman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frederick Douglas, William Lloyd Garrison.

Grade Level: 5-6

Seminar impact: The seminar has influenced my decision to choose a project that encourages students to dig deeper into slavery in order to understand more clearly the horrors of slavery. This project is a result of the thought that typically we do a better job helping students to understand the horrors the Holocaust than we do slavery in America.

Central Questions:

- Why do slave owners not want their slaves to learn to read or write?
- What is an abolitionist? Identify and explore some of them.
- How did abolitionists “communicate” with slaves on plantations?
- Skin color does not completely determine if one is a slave. What determines whether a person is a slave?
- What was often the relationship between male slave owners and their female slaves?
- What methods were used to protest slavery?

Challenge Questions: (Questions for an advanced group)

- Is the meaning of “Freedom” the same for everyone?
- If you could choose one slave from the book A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia 1859, to escape with who would you choose and why?
- Is there a connection between abolitionists against slavery and women’s suffrage?

- How did the roles of women change when they began to speak out against women's suffrage?

Lesson Length:

The book should take about 4 weeks to read as a class, complete KWL chart and comprehension packets. The research paper and Power Point Presentation should take about three weeks as well and it may be started while students are reading A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia 1859.

Key ideas:

- Understanding slaves as "property"
- The role of trust and loyalty among the slaves
- Relationship between the master and some of the young female slaves (often inappropriate)
- Living conditions for the slaves
- Role of abolitionists
- Role of slaves as abolitionists
- Understanding that the fight for women's suffrage was emerging at the same time of the call for freedom of slaves
- The connection between women's suffrage and slavery

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand that there were many different ideas regarding slavery and freedom.
- Students will understand how abolitionists responded to slavery based on basic beliefs.
- Students will increase comprehension skills.
- Students will better understand the horrors and heroes of slavery in early America.
- Students will create and answer their own questions regarding slavery in early America.
- Students will make the connection between the fight for the freedom of slaves and women's rights.
- Students will practice computer skills while creating the Power Point Presentation.
- Students will explore the research process and create a final research paper that meets the State of Vermont's Expectation.
- Students will understand how to evaluate a source and understand the importance of the evaluation.

Vermont State Standards:

H&SS5-6:1 Students initiate an inquiry by...

- Asking relevant and focusing questions that will lead to independent research based on what they have seen, what they have read, what they have listened to, and/or what they have researched (e.g., How will global warming affect me and my community? Does intolerance exist in my school or community?).

H&SS5-6:2 Students develop a hypothesis, thesis, or research statement by...

- Using prior knowledge, relevant questions, and facts to develop a prediction and/or propose an explanation or solution.

H&SS5-6:3 Students design research by...

- Identifying the quality and quantity of information needed including primary and secondary sources.
- Identifying tools, tasks, and procedures needed for conducting an inquiry, including a plan for citing sources.

- Determining possible ways to present data (e.g., Power-Point, hypercard, report, graph, etc.).

H&SS5-6:4 Students conduct research by...

- Referring to and following a plan for an inquiry.
- Locating relevant materials such as print, electronic, and human resources.
- Applying criteria from the research plan to analyze the quality (e.g., credibility of a [web site](#)) and quantity (e.g., minimum number of sources) of information gathered.
- Describing evidence and recording observations using notecards, videotape, tape recorders, journals, or databases. (e.g., recording relevant details of a historical or geographical landmark)
- Citing sources.

H&SS5-6.7 Students communicate their findings by...

- Developing and giving oral, written, or visual presentations for various audiences.
- Soliciting and responding to feedback.
- Pointing out possibilities for continued or further research.

National History Standards:

Era 4: Expansion and Reform

Standard 4: The sources and character of culture, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period.

4A: The student understands the abolitionist movement.

Therefore the student will be able to:

- Analyze changing ideas about race and assess the reception of proslavery and antislavery ideologies in the North and South
- Explain the fundamental beliefs of abolitionism and compare the antislavery positions of the “immediatists” and “gradualists” within a movement. (Consider multiple perspectives)
- Compare the positions of African American and white abolitionists on the issue of the African American’s place in society. (Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas)

4C: The student understands changing gender roles and the ideas and activities of women reformers.

Therefore the student will be able to:

- Analyze the activities of women of different racial and social groups in the reform movements of education, abolition, temperance, and women’s suffrage. (Examine the importance of the individual)

Preparation for teaching: Items needed to complete unit:

- Class set of KWL charts
- Class set of A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia 1859.
- Class set of comprehension packets. (See Attached)
- Class set of research guidelines. (See Attached)
- Power Point Presentation of abolitionists for students to choose from. (See Attached)
- Mini-library of resources for students to BEGIN research from.
- Access to a larger library and Internet for students to research from.
- Student guidelines for citing sources. (See Attached)
- Guidelines for collaborative Photo Story (See Attached)

Primary Sources:

Gettysburg Address
Uncle Tom's Cabin
The Liberator
Letters to, from, and between abolitionists from Internet sites

Secondary Sources:

A Picture Book of Sojourner Truth, David Adler
Frederick Douglass: Fighter for Freedom, Cobblestone
Go Free or Die; A Story about Harriet Tubman, Ferris, Jeri
If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad, Levine Ellen
The Underground Railroad and the Antislavery Movement, Cobblestone

Other Resources:

American Heroes, Marge Ferguson Delano
A Writer's Reference: Fourth Edition, Diana Hacker
Behind the Blue and Gray, Delia Ray
Civil War 101, Donald Cartmell
Painless Research Projects, Rebecca S. Elliott, Ph. D., and James Elliott, M.A.
Primary Source Activity Packs for Social Studies Classrooms: The American Civil War, Mark Giansanti
The Making of America, Robert D. Johnston
Using Primary Sources in the Classroom, Kathleen Vest

Activities:

- read A picture of freedom; the diary of Clotee, a slave girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859.
- constructed responses to comprehension questions
- comprehension packet
- locating and evaluating primary source documents
- formal research paper
- Photo Story Presentation
- citing sources

Citing Sources for Bibliography

Basic Format for a Book:

Wagner, T. (2004). All about slavery. Vermont: Maple-Hill.

Author's last name, First initial.(most recent publishing date). Title of the book. Place it was published: Publishing company

Basic Format for a Book with Two or More Authors:

Martin, L. , & Truman, J. (2001). Abolitionists: Fearful of nothing. Dallas: Cactus Publishing.

Listed alphabetically, Author's last name, First initial. & Author's last name, First initial. (most recent publishing date). Title of the book. Place it was published: Publishing company

Document from a Website:

King, D. (2003, April 6). Abolitionists speak out. United States Heroes.

Retrieved March 16, 2009 from the World Wide Web:

<http://www.ush/abolitonists/987654.htm>

author of document. date website was last updated. Title of document. Title of Website. Date that the document was retrieved: web address

Assessments:

- **Vermont State Writing Rubric for Research**
- **comprehension questions**
- **Evaluating primary source documents**

Accommodations:

Because of the language used by the slaves in diary form in the initial book A picture of freedom; the diary of Clotee, a slave girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859, the book may need to be primarily read aloud. When students write their research paper, the writing process will be reviewed and modeled.

Attachments:

Power Point/Photo Story presentations for research paper
A Picture of Freedom Comp Packet

Annotated Bibliography

Delano, M. (2005). American heroes. Washington, DC: National Geographic.

This reference, published by National Geographic, contains fifty profiles of American Heroes. Each profile contains a short biography of the American hero and his or her time and place in history. Because this book is colorfully illustrated with primary and secondary resources, students are able to thumb through it for initial brainstorming. The information is clear and simply stated. This is a great book for middle school and up.

Ginsberg, L. (2005). Untidy origins: A story of woman's rights in antebellum New York. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press.

This book focuses on a little known group of six women in the North Country of Jefferson County, New York who petitioned their local government for equal rights for women. This unassuming group of women thought that the notion of women's equality made perfect sense. This book, geared for high school and above research, begged the question of just how many more reasonable thinking citizens believed in women's equality far before the parades, speeches, and fanfare of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848.

Hakim, J. (1994). A history of US; War, terrible war. New York: Oxford University Press.

This book, #6 in a series of 10 is a great resource for readers age 9-12. Although the focus is on the Civil War, it includes the roles of Harriet Beecher Stowe, President Lincoln, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, and John Brown and their quest to abolish slavery. This book within the series is packed with information on a reading level that accommodates young reader's independent reading and interest. This entire series is out of print, but still available. I have used this series several times when researching early American history.

Hanson, J. (2003). Dear America: I thought my soul would rise and fly: The diary of Patsy, a freed girl, Mars Bluff, South Carolina, 1865. New York: Scholastic.

This historical fiction book, written for readers age 8-12 naturally follows A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859. Written in diary form, this book focuses on the little talked about questions in middle grades. What happened to the slaves when they were set free? Were they really free? How were they treated? Patsy, the diary's author, is kind, optimistic, and brave. Although she experiences many of the hardships that newly freed slaves experienced, her secret ability to read and write helps her to adjust easier to freedom. Although I did not read this book this year with my language arts class, I would include it in my reading list another year. Like A Picture of

Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859, it is out of print, but still available.

Leighow, S., Sterner-Hine, R. (1998). The antebellum women's movement, 1820 to 1860. University of California: Organization of American Historians and the National Center for History in the Schools.

This teacher resource, created for teacher of grades 8-11 contains instructional material regarding the Women's Movement from 1820-1860. Although the actual lesson plans would not be appropriate for young middle school students, they could easily be adapted for lessons examining and discussing primary secondary source documents. The background information for teachers was useful and could be used to confirm information that students collect.

Moss, J., & Wilson, G. (1994). Profiles in American history; Significant events and the people who shaped them; Indian removal to the anti-slavery movement. U.X.L

This resource, part of an 8 volume set, is perfect for middle school students looking for straight forward information. Included in this reference are abolitionists and women's rights activists Sarah Grimke and Angelina Grimke Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglas, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Beecher Stowe.

One of my sixth grade students used this as a solid base for his research on the Grimke Sisters. Until he found this in our school library, the information regarding these remarkable ladies written on his independent reading level was scarce. This student clearly understood the Sisters roles as "promiscuous" speakers.

McKissack, P. (1997). A picture of freedom; The diary of Clotee, a slave girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859. New York: Scholastic.

This historical fiction piece, written for the reading and interest level of students ages 8-11, creatively discusses many ideas about slavery. Written in diary form, the diary's author is a brave slave girl who teaches herself to read and write. She eventually makes a connection with an abolitionist and has to make an adult decision between escaping to freedom and living freely as a slave abolitionist on her plantation. The book visits the question that Clotee struggles to answer. What is freedom?

Because this book is written to reflect the voice of Clotee, a slave girl, it is a bit difficult to read for students who struggle. I read the book aloud and encouraged my students to read ahead. About ¾ of the way through the book, students were able to read more independently as students became familiar with Clotee's voice and her English improved.

Pearson, J., Robertson, J. (2006). Slavery in the nineteenth century. California: The Regents, University of California.

This teacher resource book contains study units for grades 5-8. Along with lesson plans and activities that correlate with the National History Standards. This book contains valuable background information for teachers regarding slavery in Early America and encourages that examination and use of primary sources.

The lessons in this book do not just inform students, they encourage student's higher level thinking and ask students to look at both sides of slavery. Another feature to this teacher resource book is a valuable annotated reading list in the back of the book. These suggested readings are grade level appropriate for students in grades 4 and up.

Salerno, B. (2008). Sister societies. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

This book highlights small anti-slavery grassroots movements comprised of women at a time when a women's place was clearly expected to be in the home. Salerno shows how these conventional women with strong beliefs against slavery managed to tie their opposition to slavery and advocacy for slaves, as well as their quest to end women's suffrage in with their everyday chores. It includes information regarding specific female abolitionists such as Lucretia Mott and the Grimke Sisters as well as the contributions of William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglas. This book is a great resource for teachers looking for back ground information.

Stauffer, J. (2001). The black hearts of men; Radical abolitionists and the transformation of race. Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press.

This book intertwines the lives of John Brown, Frederick Douglas, Gerrit Smith, and James McCune Smith, four abolitionists with very different lives and backgrounds. Although the story line did not flow well, I found this to be helpful when researching isolated topics. A sixth grade student used this book as resource when researching John Brown. It included specific information regarding Brown's role in the Syracuse Convention, showing that he was not just a radical man who used violence to speak for his opposition to slavery, but that he had the support from others.

Ray, D. (1990). A nation torn; The story of how the Civil War began. New York: Puffin Books

This juvenile non-fiction book discusses in story form how the Civil War began. It includes information regarding President Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman, William Lloyd Garrison, and John Brown and their roles to abolish slavery.

The story begins with Major Robert Anderson, Commander of Fort Moultrie: an army post on an island off Charleston, South Carolina. South Carolina has just seceded from the Union and he is waiting for further instruction from Washington.

As the story of the Civil War progresses, the book story includes the works of Lincoln, Tubman, Garrison, and Brown and their affect on America.

This easy read for young readers is essential for the middle school classroom library.