

LESSON 6

TOPIC: Celebrations - Hall of Negro Life: Agriculture, Business, Health, Mechanical Arts

OBJECTIVE: Students will:

Extend their study of Celebrations through traveling through four of the six exhibit halls revealing the accomplishments of the Negro.

Discover the individuals that helped make these exhibits a reality.

Discuss how the achievements of African Americans are highlighted in each room and the people who achieved them.

SYNOPSIS: The Hall of Negro Life was comprised of six rooms in the areas of Agriculture, Arts, Business, Education, Health, and Mechanical Arts which reflected the accomplishments of African Americans. They gathered, shipped, displayed artifacts and charts as well as brought in speakers that reflected what they wanted people to know about their accomplishments. It was one of the first times in history that African Americans were encouraged to tell their own story instead of Whites telling it for them. This lesson focuses on Agriculture, Business, Health, and Mechanical Arts.

INFORMATION: HALL OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Exhibit

This room showed the progress made in the science of agriculture, manufacturing of farm implements and change over time in the implements used in soil conservation, in the livestock barns, as well as the African Americans own homes.

There were dioramas and miniature models of farms showing the improvement of rural life of the African American farmer in Texas from 1863-1936. The models were created using ownership information of 3 years before Emancipation. In 1918, a son of an original owner of an African American owned farm came into full possession of the farm and made changes over time. The changes are reflected in a model dated 1936. This farm was chosen after a study of 38 African American farms by county agents who selected it as a good example of the farm changes from slavery to present (1936). This was directed by **Dr. Frederick D. Patterson** of Tuskegee Institute.

The research and experiments of **Dr. George Washington Carver** of the Tuskegee Institute were displayed. Dr. Carver was the best-known exhibitor in the agricultural section. His experiments showed the many by-products that can be made from sweet potatoes, peanuts, and cotton. Carver developed more than 100 products from the sweet potato, 150 uses for the peanut, and 60 articles from pecans. Another exhibit had seeds of southern products, sweet potato products, various types of clays from Alabama, and home-grown stock feeds. Additionally, there was a miniature

model of co-operative plant illustrating Carver's theory of self-help.

Saddles and harnesses, a farm tractor created from discarded car parts, and a display of the transition of agricultural implements were also in this exhibit.

ASSESSMENT/ACTIVITIES:

Choose one of the men below. Read their life story. Develop a monologue as though you are that person. Tell “your” story in first person.

Frederick Douglas Patterson

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/patterson-frederick-d-1901-1988/>

<https://uncf.org/pages/frederick-douglass-patterson-2>

George Washington Carver

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/carver-george-washington-1864-1943/>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1250256.pdf>

<https://www.nal.usda.gov/exhibits/ipd/carver/exhibits/show/farm-management>

INFORMATION: HALL OF BUSINESS

The Hall of Business exhibit showed charts, graphs, maps, and photos of insurance companies and business enterprises on a balopticon, a projector that reflected them on a screen. These images reflected the type and number of African American owned farms as well as White owned farms.

Texas reported 1,736 retail stores operated by African American proprietors in 1930. The principal kinds of business were grocery stores, restaurants, cafeterias and lunchrooms, and drug stores. These three lines of business accounted for 53.7 percent of the total sales made by African American proprietors of retail stores in the State. The average sales of all African American operated retail stores in the State were \$3,821, which was below the average of \$3,935 for the stores operated by African American proprietors in the United States. The sales per capita of African American population was \$7.76 as compared with \$8.51 for the United States.

Businesses owned and operated by African Americans were so small and isolated from large cities that the average person tended to under-estimate the number of such businesses, the number of people employed by African Americans, their volume turnover, and the amount of money African Americans received at the hands of members of their race as employees in African American owned and controlled businesses.

Newspaper Exhibit

The Newspaper exhibit was compiled by Claude A. Barnett, editor of the Negro Associated Press. It showed the progress in ownership, publication, and makeup of African American newspapers in the U.S. Because White visitors had never seen an African American newspaper and most blacks didn't know there were any, they were surprised to know that any were published.

This exhibit represented one of the most interesting exhibits in the collection. The weekly publications and the Atlanta Daily World told a story of the African American struggle for self-expression. This exhibit also emphasized the difficulties that African American editors had in promoting a favorable public opinion on behalf of the race on one hand and on the other hand to provide current news of African American culture and thought.

Reading the editorial pages of these publications revealed the large number of papers published at the time and the number of people reached, both White and African American, in all parts of the civilized world. Many of them had foreign correspondents and news gathering and distributing agencies from all corners of the earth.

Social Work

The Social Service Exhibit also consisted of charts, graphs, and data about the growth and spread of social work among African Americans; the number of African Americans employed in various fields of social work, and the number of African Americans in executive or administrative positions.

This showed a comparison over the years of the advancement African Americans had made in this profession. The Social Service exhibit gave a pictorial display of the spread of African American social workers and the character of positions many of them occupied, both with private and public agencies. In practically every field of social service, even in the most responsible positions, there were well trained and experienced African American social workers.

Additional Exhibits

- Booth with charts and statistics concerning value, expenditures, growth, and development of African American churches in the US and TX.

- Architect, Paul R. Williams, work on homes for famous people, Corrine Griffith, Lon Chaney, and Yehudi Menuhin were displayed

- The Bureau of Census had major collection showing Texas African American literacy, Texas home ownership, and Texas changes in acreage of African American farm operators in 1930—1935.

- There was a 15th census of the U.S. housed here which covered the complete span of life.

ASSESSMENTS/ACTIVITIES:

Since little information is provided about the specific names of businessmen and women in the Business Exhibit in the Hall of Negro Life, use the sites below to learn about African American businesses during this time. Choose a way to show what you have learned.

History of African American Owned Businesses

<https://www.hiscox.com/blog/history-black-owned-businesses-us>

Famous African American Businessmen and Businesswomen

<https://tech.co/news/21-successful-black-entrepreneurs-throughout-history-2015-02>

<https://stacker.com/business-economy/25-black-businesspeople-who-helped-shape-america>

Oldest Black Owned Business

<https://www.blackhistory.com/2019/03/ee-ward-oldest-african-american-owned-business-united-states.html>

Black Wall Street

<https://www.history.com/news/tulsa-massacre-black-wall-street-before-and-after-photos>

<https://daily.jstor.org/the-devastation-of-black-wall-street/>

REFERENCES:

https://digitalcollections.smu.edu/digital/api/collection/tex/id/4519/page/0/inline/tex_4519_0

Thomas, Jess O. (1938). *Negro Participation in the Texas Centennial*. Christopher Press, Boston USA.

INFORMATION: HALL OF HEALTH

The Hall of Health exhibited posters, pictures, charts, maps, diagrams, and urns of hospitals and nurse training schools. Also pictures of health activities and photos of successful physicians. Many organizations exhibited in the health area which included the National Tuberculosis Association of New York, directed by Dr. M.O. Bousfield, the Texas Medical Association, and the United States Public Health Service. The information displayed showed the cooperation of Health Departments teaching sanitation to parents and children, and in the schools. Additionally, Public Health Services, Schools of Medicine, Hospitals and individual contributions of information which made for the increased capacity of knowledge for good health practices.

Dr Daniel Hale Williams' work was highlighted. He was the - first surgeon reported to have performed a successful operation on the heart and pericardium in 1893 at Provident Hospital in Chicago.

One booth was dedicated to the health work being done only in Texas.

Questions for Research and Discussion: Select one article to read and discuss the questions with your classmates.

1. The African American has always been more susceptible to diseases such as tuberculosis, typhoid, cholera, or typhus. Read the article below. What do these diseases have in common, and why do you believe African Americans are more susceptible to these diseases?

https://uh.edu/class/ctr-public-history/tobearfruit/story_1900-1926_section05.html

2. Healthcare has been a concern for African Americans. What are the disparities? Research, by reading the article below, why there are disparities in healthcare between Whites and African Americans.

<https://www.news-medical.net/health/What-are-Health-Disparities.aspx>

3. What are the results of disparities in healthcare?

<https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/eliminating-racial-ethnic-disparities-in-health-care-what>

4. Using the websites below, develop a plan for reducing the disparities in healthcare for minorities.

<https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/eliminating-racial-ethnic-disparities-in-health-care-what>

<https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/minorities>

INFORMATION: HALL OF MECHANICAL ARTS

Dr W. R. Banks assembled the Hall of Mechanical Arts exhibit with most of the items coming from the Tuskegee Institute. There were wood carvings, model houses with updated home construction techniques and ownership, candle sticks, card tables, magazine racks, sheet metal work, electrical engineering, shoemaking, tailoring, photography, landscaping, and gardening. Also, miniature models of inventions by African Americans such as trains, cars, ships, and oil derricks. A couple of untrained teen boys exhibited an automobile that would run, and another had an oil well with all the parts to go through the process of drilling and pumping oil. There was also a replica of the carriage used by Napoleon Bonaparte built to scale. Booker T Washington High School of Houston was responsible for many of these contributions.

Tuskegee Institute of Alabama also had miniature models showing transitions in home building beginning with the home where Booker T Washington was born and homes of slaves, progressing to a home built for African Americans during Reconstruction and finally a home typical of “better class” African Americans of today (1936).

Tuskegee and Hampton Institutes are famous for the quality of workmanship done in their trade schools.

ACTIVITIES/ASSESSMENTS

Choose one of the following:

1. Create a craft from the Depression era such as making a candle, creating wire sculptures, jewelry, tin punch, quilt squares, knitting, needlework/sewing/cross stitch/embroidery, wood carving. Create a product to sell at a classroom market.

<https://www.candlescience.com/learn-candle-making/>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Punch-Tin>

<https://stitchedmodern.com/blogs/news/a-beginners-guide-to-cross-stitch>

<https://restless.co.uk/leisure-and-lifestyle/learning/a-beginners-guide-to-whittling>

<https://aprettyfix.com/7-basic-embroidery-stitches-beginners>

2. Read about inventions by African Americans that did not receive credit for them. Select 5 inventions and create a PowerPoint about these inventors and their inventions.

<https://interestingengineering.com/lists/the-a-z-list-of-black-inventors>

3. Read about Granville Taylor Woods. Though he was not displayed in the hall, he is important to Mechanic Arts. Why? What did he create? Create a Podcast to tell his story.

<https://seattlemedium.com/granville-t-woods-possibly-the-greatest-inventor-in-american-history/>

4. Who was Dr. W. R. Banks? What qualifications do you believe he had to be chosen to assemble the exhibits for the Hall of Mechanical Arts?

<https://easttexashistory.org/items/show/373>

