

TEACHER NOTES

This unit was created to enlighten students about a little-known building at the Texas Centennial called the Hall of Negro Life. Since it would be difficult to merely study the Hall of Negro Life due to needed context, it was determined that the concept of Celebrations was a good anchor for Texas Centennial, Hall of Negro life, African American accomplishments, and examination of racial attitudes of the past as well as consider present conditions.

This unit begins with the concept of Celebration, its definitions, and characteristics. We then look at the Texas Centennial with two important buildings: the magnificent Texas Hall of State and compare it to the Hall of Negro Life. The many rooms in the Hall of Negro Life were created by African Americans to tell their own story, instead of whites telling it for them. We look at famous Black artists of the Harlem Renaissance and the importance of art in celebrations. The displays in the halls reflect the excitement of a new age with equal rights for all; however, it was short lived. We end with the mysterious disappearance of the Hall of Negro Life and the return to the status quo in race relations. The good news is that though the building was removed, this period of 10 months was a spark for the beginning of the later civil rights movement.

This unit uses the term Negro instead of African American or Black when there are direct quotes, or a website or book with Negro in the title. This was the terminology of the time and the name of the Hall. The lessons can be separated into individual lessons. Celebrations, the two lessons: Hall of State and Building of the Hall of Negro Life; the Hall of Negro Life, the four 4 rooms (Health, Agriculture, Mechanic Arts, Business/Industry), the 2 rooms (Education and Fine Arts); Aaron Douglas; Disappearance and Legacy.

This unit could be used as an enrichment project for Texas History or an independent study for gifted or older students. At the end of each lesson there is an opportunity to evaluate the characteristics of celebrations to determine if, how, and for whom there was a celebration...or not.

There are many activities that involve higher level thinking such as analysis, comparisons, creating, and evaluating that can demonstrate student learning. There are also worksheets, charts, and art products that students can choose based on their multiple intelligence preference to show what they have learned, extend learning, or create something new.

Julia Peterson
B.Mus., M. Ed/Gifted

