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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2014 Volume I: Understanding History and Society through Images, 1776-1914

Pain to Pride: A Visual Journey of African American Life in 19th Century Richmond, VA

Guide for Curriculum Unit 14.01.09, published September 2014

by Rodney Robinson

The story of African-Americans in the city of Richmond is one of strength, perseverance, independence and pride. This unit is designed to develop pride in my students by teaching them their personal history using imagery, art, and architecture. They will learn to tell the stories of people who have the last name, lived on the same block, and attended the same school as them. The unit will focus on Richmond as the economic foundation of the slave trade during the 18th and 19th century in America. It will also tell the story of how blacks rose from those horrible beginnings to become the center of black economic pride and power in the south during the late 19th and early 20th century. The students must analyze visual images to tell the story of blacks in Richmond by creating a photo journal. Students will use historical pictures and photos as well as their own artistic interpretations and digital photos to tell the story in their journal. I want my students to finish this unit inspired by what they produce and what they can accomplish as black residents of the city.

(Developed for AP U. S. History and U. S. History, grade 11; recommended for U. S. History and AP U. S. History, Secondary grades)

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