

Historical Investigation

Exodusters: Voting with their Feet

Museum Connection: Labor That Built a Nation

Purpose: In this lesson students will determine the costs and benefits of African American western migration after the Civil War. Students will reach their conclusions by conducting an historical investigation.

Course: United States History, African-American History

Time Frame: 1-2 class periods

Correlation to State and/or National Standards:

5.0 CONTENT STANDARD: HISTORY- Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs and themes; organize patterns and events; analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland and the United States.

Expectation 5.1: Students will demonstrate understanding of the cultural, economic, political, social and technological developments from Reconstruction to 1897.

1. Analyze the economic, political and social consequences of Reconstruction (5.1.1)

Objective:

d. Identify the legal and illegal methods used to deny African Americans civil rights including black codes, lynching, the Ku Klux Klan, voting restrictions, Jim Crow Laws and *Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)* (PS, PNW, E)

4. Analyze the causes and consequences of westward expansion (5.1.4)

Objectives:

a. Analyze the causes of westward expansion including the rise of industrialization, concept of Manifest Destiny, perceptions of overcrowding, increased immigration, opportunities for cheap land, and the discovery of gold and silver (PNW, G, E)

e. Describe the experiences of minorities in the west, such as extended rights for African-Americans, the mistreatment of Chinese and Irish immigrants, and the extension of political and legal rights to women (PS, PNW, G)

Common Core State Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

- Cite specific textural evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

Common Core State Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

- Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.
- Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Objective:

Students will analyze the consequences of African-American migrations to the West after the Civil War, focusing on the degree to which migrants were afforded equal rights and opportunities.

Vocabulary and Concepts:

Broadside	large piece of paper printed on one side; a common form of advertisement in the 19 th century.
Exodusters	Black migrants who left the South during and after Reconstruction and settled in Kansas, often in all-black towns.
Homestead Act of 1862	an act of Congress providing that any adult citizen or person intending to become a citizen who headed a family could qualify for a grant of 160 acres of public land by paying a small registration fee and living on the land continuously for five years. If the settler was willing to pay \$1.25 an acre, the land could be obtained with only six months of residence.
migration	The permanent (or relatively permanent) relocation of an individual or group to a new, usually distant, place of residence and employment.

Materials:

For the Teacher:

- Student Resource Sheet 3, “John Solomon Lewis” (Document 1)
- Student Resource Sheet 4, “The Shores Family” (Document 2)
- Student Resource Sheet 5, “Harper’s Weekly” (Document 3)
- Student Resource Sheet 6, “Testimony of Benjamin Singleton” (Document 4)
- Student Resource Sheet 7, “Middle Class Settlers” (Document 5)
- Student Resource Sheet 8, “The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States” (Document 6)

Student Resource Sheet 9, “Testimony of Henry Adams” (Document 7)
Student Resource Sheet 10, “Sojourner Truth” (Document 8)
Student Resource Sheet 11, “Nancy Guptil” (Document 9)
Student Resource Sheet 12, “Mr. and Mrs. William Ray” (Document 10)

For the Student:

Student Resource Sheet 1, “Background Information on the Homestead Act”
(narrative and organizer)
Student Resource Sheet 2, “Primary Source Analysis”
Student Resource Sheet 3, “John Solomon Lewis” (Document 1)
Student Resource Sheet 4, “The Shores Family” (Document 2)
Student Resource Sheet 5, “Harper’s Weekly” (Document 3)
Student Resource Sheet 6, “Testimony of Benjamin Singleton” (Document 4)
Student Resource Sheet 7, “Middle Class Settlers” (Document 5)
Student Resource Sheet 8, “The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States” (Document 6)
Student Resource Sheet 9, “Testimony of Henry Adams” (Document 7)
Student Resource Sheet 10, “Sojourner Truth” (Document 8)
Student Resource Sheet 11, “Nancy Guptil” (Document 9)
Student Resource Sheet 12, “Mr. and Mrs. William Ray” (Document 10)

Resources:

Publications:

Deverell, William F. and Anne F. Hyde. *The West in the History of the Nation: A Reader, Volume Two: Since 1865*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000.

Hine, Darlene Clark, William C. Hine, Stanley Harrold. *The African-American Odyssey*. Upper Saddle, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008.

Lesh, Bruce. *Reconstruction 1865-1877*. Rocky River, Ohio: The Center for Learning, 2000.

Web Sites:

“Benjamin ‘Pap’ Singleton.” Kansas Historical Society,
http://www.kshs.org/portraits/singleton_benjamin.htm

“New Perspectives on the West: Benjamin ‘Pap’ Singleton.” Public Broadcasting System,
http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/singleton.htm

National Park Service, Homestead National Park of America
<http://www.nps.gov/home/homestead> a New Perspectives on the West: Benjamin ‘Pap’
http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/singleton.htmct.html
<http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Schomburg/text/migration9big.html>

Historical Background:

Interest in migration among African Americans in the South increased as the failure of Reconstruction to ensure equal rights and security became more apparent. There were several efforts to facilitate emigration to Africa, including a venture that transported several hundred African Americans to Liberia. Although some emigrants prospered, a significant number did not and some returned to the United States. A much larger group of African Americans decided that emigration to the American West was more practical and held higher chances for success. They called themselves “Exodusters,” a reference to kinship they felt with the Israelites who left slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus in the Old Testament.

Between 1865 and 1880, 40,000 African Americans migrated to Kansas seeking opportunities presented by the Homestead Act of 1862. This act provided 160 free acres of federal land to anyone who would settle on the land and farm it for five years. This was an especially attractive offer to those who had no money and, seemingly, no future in eastern or southern states.

African American migration was encouraged by some African American leaders and the efforts of determined individuals, such as Benjamin Singleton. Singleton was born a slave in 1809 in Nashville, Tennessee. He escaped and eventually lived in Detroit where he operated a boardinghouse that was used by runaway slaves. After the Civil War, he returned to Tennessee and attempted to buy Tennessee farmland for former slaves. When he was unable to purchase land at fair prices, he and a partner attempted to establish African American communities in Kansas. He used posters to advertise the availability of free land and organized a company to assist hundreds of African Americans in Tennessee to migrate to Kansas. African Americans lived in communities such as Wyandotte, Tennessee Town, and Dunlap Colony. Soon, organized efforts gave way to the mass exodus of thousands of African Americans. The rate of migration was so high that Congress held hearings to determine if the loss of African American labor threatened the Southern economy; Singleton was called to testify.

Life for the Exodusters was difficult. In addition to the hardships of frontier life African Americans endured the prejudices of whites in Kansas, not all of whom welcomed the arrival of thousands of former slaves. As reported by Henry King in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1880, “Public sentiment grew critical and apprehensive; the emotional view of the matter gave way to considerations involving serious fears and perplexities. Six months had sufficed to stamp the movement – the problem, as it was now seen to be – with national importance.” The town of Nicodemus can serve as an example. Founded in 1877, Nicodemus thrived for several years. However, decisions by three separate railroads to avoid Nicodemus removed the town from essential economic activity and the town and its citizens fell into deep economic decline. The African American community was divided over the wisdom of westward migration, with leaders such as Frederick Douglass insisting that there was more opportunity in the unreconstructed South than the unsettled West. Others argued persuasively that “Kansas was no Canaan, but it was a far cry from Mississippi and Louisiana.”

Sources:

“Benjamin ‘Pap’ Singleton.” Kansas Historical Society,
http://www.kshs.org/portraits/singleton_benjamin.htm

Deverell, William F. and Anne F. Hyde. *The West in the History of the Nation: A Reader, Volume Two: Since 1865*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000.

Hine, Darlene Clark, William C. Hine, Stanley Harrold. *The African-American Odyssey*. Upper Saddle, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008.

Lesh, Bruce. *Reconstruction 1865-1877*. Rocky River, Ohio: The Center for Learning, 2000.

“New Perspectives on the West: Benjamin ‘Pap’ Singleton.” Public Broadcasting System,
http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/singleton.htm

Resources:

National Park Service, Homestead National Park of America
http://www.nps.gov/home/homestead_act.html

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, In Motion: The African American Migration Experience <http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Schomburg/text/migration9big.html>

<http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/landing.cfm?migration=6&bhcp=1>

Lesson Development:

Motivation: Examine the following broadside and answer the accompanying questions.

All Colored People
THAT WANT TO
GO TO KANSAS,
On September 5th, 1877,
Can do so for \$5.00

IMMIGRATION.

WHEREAS, We, the colored people of Lexington, Ky., knowing that there is an abundance of choice lands now belonging to the Government, have assembled ourselves together for the purpose of locating on said lands. Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we do now organize ourselves into a Colony, as follows:— Any person wishing to become a member of this Colony can do so by paying the sum of one dollar (\$1.00), and this money is to be paid by the first of September, 1877, in instalments of twenty-five cents at a time, or otherwise as may be desired.

RESOLVED, That this Colony has agreed to consolidate itself with the Nicodemus Towns, Solomon Valley, Graham County, Kansas, and can only do so by entering the vacant lands now in their midst, which costs \$5.00.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall consist of seven officers—President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Trustees. President—M. M. Bell; Vice-President—Isaac Talbott; Secretary—W. J. Niles; Treasurer—Daniel Clarke; Trustees—Jerry Lee, William Jones, and Abner Webster.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall have from one to two hundred militia, more or less, as the case may require, to keep peace and order, and any member failing to pay in his dues, as aforesaid, or failing to comply with the above rules in any particular, will not be recognized or protected by the Colony.

(Broadside.Schomburg Center, Photographs and Prints Division.
<http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Schomburg/text/migration9big.html>

1. What is this broadside advertising?
2. What might motivate African Americans to respond to this advertisement?
3. Read and/or distribute the narrative (**Student Resource Sheet 1**) to the class and have them complete the accompanying organizer. Then raise the focus question at the end.

The Homestead Act of 1862 is often considered one of the most important pieces of legislation in the history of the United States. The Homestead Act, enacted during the Civil War in 1862, provided that any adult (21 years or older) citizen, or intended citizen, who had never borne arms against the U.S. government could claim 160 acres of surveyed government land. Claimants were required to “improve” the plot by building a dwelling and cultivating the land. After 5 years on the land, the original filer was entitled to the property, free and clear, except for a small registration fee. Title could also be acquired after only a 6-month residency and trivial improvements, provided the claimant paid the government \$1.25 per acre. After the Civil War, Union soldiers could deduct the time they had served from the residency requirements. Settlers from all walks of life including newly arrived immigrants, farmers without land of their own from the East, single women and former slaves came to meet the challenge of "proving up" and keeping this "free land." Eventually 270 million acres or 10% of the area of the United States was claimed and settled under this act.

Kansas, which had been a sanctuary for runaways during the Civil War, was the closest western state to the Old South that allowed African Americans to homestead in the 1870's. Thousands of African Americans chose to relocate there because they believed it to be free of racial restrictions and violence. As *The Topeka Colored Citizen* said, "Our advice . . . to the people of the South, Come West, Come to Kansas . . . it is better to starve to death in Kansas than be shot and killed in the South."

Conduct the historical investigation.

Focus Question: For African Americans, what were the costs and benefits of their “Exodus” to the West after the Civil War?

In order to answer the question students will examine several documents in small groups, but record their answers independently, since varying perspectives will emerge from the students' analysis of the sources. Analyze each document (**Student Resource Sheets 3 – 16**) by answering the following questions on the provided graphic organizer (**Student Resource Sheet 2**):

1. What evidence is there that this information is reliable?
2. When was this document written? Who wrote it? What was its purpose?
3. Explain the author's point of view.
4. How can this document help answer the focus question?

Note: It is not necessary for the students to analyze each of the documents to complete this investigation. Teachers may wish to select a portion of the documents for student analysis. It is recommended that teachers select at least 4-5 documents, however, and that students be provided with the opportunity to analyze a variety of different types of documents (visual as well as text-based).

Discussion

Following individual and group analysis, direct students to discuss the documents and the focus question. As students discuss interpretations of the documents, they should cite evidence for any opinions. Multiple interpretations can emerge and may or may not be accepted by all. Direct students to write group responses in the appropriate section of the graphic organizer.

Assessment: Once historians complete their research, they formulate a thesis that answers the focus question. The students will do the same. Summaries should answer the focus question below and be supported with details from the documents.

Focus Question: **For African Americans, what were the costs and benefits of their “Exodus” to the West after the Civil War?**

Closure: Conclude by having students respond to the following prompt in the form of a journal entry, quick write, or homework assignment:

“If you were an African American living in the South, would you have moved to Kansas after the Civil War? Why or why not?”

Thoughtful application: Direct students to compare opportunities available to the Exodusters to those available to participants in the Great Migration.

Lesson Extensions:

Direct students to analyze other examples of migration based upon economic opportunities that are within exhibits in the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture in Maryland

- Using the Underground Railroad, Maryland abolitionist Josiah Henson fled to Canada in October 1830 where he established the Dawn Settlement to train African American immigrants. Research the experiences of former enslaved African Americans who made Canada their new home.

- Visit the Museum. View exhibits that tell the story of slavery and freedom in Maryland.
- The Museum offers several school programs that connect to the curriculum lessons.
 - *Journey in History Theater* provides living history and theatrical performances which highlight African Americans in the museum's gallery.
 - Take the theme tour, *Paths to Freedom* and explore the story of slavery through the eyes of enslaved and free blacks from Maryland's colonial past to the end of the Civil War.
 - Contact group reservations for schedule updates.

Student Resource Sheet 1

Background Information on the Homestead Act

The Homestead Act of 1862 is often considered one of the most important pieces of legislation in the history of the United States. The Homestead Act, enacted during the Civil War in 1862, provided that any adult (21 years or older) citizen, or intended citizen, who had never borne arms against the U.S. government could claim 160 acres of surveyed government land. Claimants were required to “improve” the plot by building a dwelling and cultivating the land. After 5 years on the land, the original filer was entitled to the property, free and clear, except for a small registration fee. Title could also be acquired after only a 6-month residency and trivial improvements, provided the claimant paid the government \$1.25 per acre. After the Civil War, Union soldiers could deduct the time they had served from the residency requirements. Settlers from all walks of life including newly arrived immigrants, farmers without land of their own from the East, single women and former slaves came to meet the challenge of "proving up" and keeping this "free land." Eventually 270 million acres or 10% of the area of the United States was claimed and settled under this act.

Kansas, which had been a sanctuary for runaways during the Civil War, was the closest western state to the Old South that allowed African Americans to homestead in the 1870's. Thousands of African Americans chose to relocate there because they believed it to be free of racial restrictions and violence. As *The Topeka Colored Citizen* said, "Our advice . . . to the people of the South, Come West, Come to Kansas . . . it is better to starve to death in Kansas than be shot and killed in the South."

Student Resource Sheet 1 (continued)

Background Information on the Homestead Act

Directions: As you read the Background Information on the Homestead Act, complete the organizer below.

The Homestead Act

WHAT was it? WHEN was it passed?
What was its PURPOSE ?
What did it SAY ?
WHO did it affect? HOW ?
WHY is it important to African American history?

Now, consider this focus question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

Student Resource Sheet 2

Primary Source Analysis

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author’s point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question?
Document 1			
Document 2			

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author’s point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question?
Document 3			
Document 4			

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author’s point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question?
Document 5			
Document 6			

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author’s point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question?
Document 7			
Document 8			

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author’s point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question?
Document 9			
Document 10			

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author’s point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question?
Document 11			
Document 12			

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author’s point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question?
Document 13			
Document 14			

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author’s point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question?
Document 15			
Document 16			

Focus Question: FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS, WHAT WERE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THEIR “EXODUS” TO THE WEST AFTER THE CIVIL WAR?

	When was this document written? Who wrote it? What is its purpose?	Explain the author's point of view	How does this document help you answer the focus question
Document 17			

Student Resource Sheet 3

Document 1

John Solomon Lewis
Leavenworth, Kansas, June 10, 1879

Historical Investigation
Exodusters: Voting with their Feet

For Resources:

Cut and paste the link below to your Web Browser

<http://Tinyurl.com/yd9x5yh>

and/or

see the following book:

Painter, Nell Irvin. *Exodusters: black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1886. 3-4.

Student Resource Sheet 5

Student Resource Sheet 4

Document 2

**The Shores Family
Near Westerville, Custer County, Nebraska, 1887**



http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0500/frameset_reset.html?http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0500/stories/0501_0205.html

Student Resource Sheet 5

Document 3

Harper's Weekly
July 5, 1879

532

HARPER'S WEEKLY.

[July 5, 1879.]



TERMINAL STATION OF THE COLORED EXODUS—FLORAL HALL AND SECRETARY'S OFFICE, NOW IN USE AS BARBACKS—FAIR GROUNDS.



RELIGIOUS SERVICES IN THE NORTH WING OF FLORAL HALL.



GROUP IN THE SOUTH WING OF FLORAL HALL.

THE COLORED EXODUS—SCENES AT TOPEKA, KANSAS.—FOUR SKETCHES BY H. WOODRILL.—[SEE PAGE 533.]

Student Resource Sheet 6

Document 4

Testimony of Benjamin Singleton

Washington, D. C., April 17, 1880
before the Senate Select Committee Investigating
the "Negro Exodus from the Southern States"

Benjamin Singleton (colored) sworn and examined.

Question. Where were you born, Mr. Singleton?

Answer. I was born in the State of Tennessee, sir.

Q. Where do you now live?

A. In Kansas.

Q. What part of Kansas?

A. I have a colony sixty miles from Topeka, sir.

Q. Which way from Topeka -- west?

A. Yes, sir; sixty miles from Topeka, west.

Q. What is your colony called?

A. Singleton colony is the name of it, sir.

Q. When did you commence the formation of that colony -- the first one?

A. It was in 1875, perhaps.

Q. That is, you first began this colonizing business in 1875?

A. No; when I first commenced working at this it was in 1869.

Q. You commenced your colony, then, in 1869?

A. No, I commenced getting the emigration up in 1875; I think it was in 1875.

Q. Well, tell us about it?

A. I have been fetching out people; I believe I fetched out 7,432 people.

Q. You have brought out 7,432 people from the South to Kansas?

A. Yes, sir; brought and sent.

Q. That is, they came out to Kansas under your influence?

A. Yes, sir; I was the cause of it.

Q. How long have you been doing that -- ever since 1869?

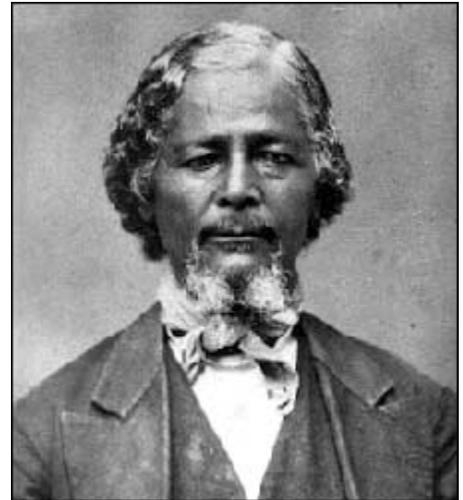
A. Yes, sir; ever since 1869.

Q. How did you happen to send them out?

A. The first cause, do you mean, of them going?

Q. Yes; what was the cause of your going out, and in the first place how did you happen to go there, or to send these people there?

A. Well, my people, for the want of land -- we needed land for our children -- and their disadvantages -- that caused my heart to grieve and sorrow; pity for my race, sir, that was coming down, instead of going up -- that caused me to go to work for them. I sent out there perhaps in '66 - - perhaps so; or in '65, any way -- my memory don't recollect which; and they brought back



tolerable favorable reports; then I jacked up three or four hundred, and went into Southern Kansas, and found it was a good country, and I thought Southern Kansas was congenial to our nature, sir; and I formed a colony there, and bought about a thousand acres of ground -- the colony did -- my people.

Q. And they went upon it and settled there?

A. Yes, sir; they went and settled there.

Q. Were they men with some means or without means?

A. I never carried none there without means.

Q. They had some means to start with?

A. Yes; I prohibited my people leaving their country and going there without they had money -- some money to start with and go on with a while.

Q. You were in favor of their going there if they had some means?

A. Yes, and not staying at home.

Q. Tell us how these people are getting on in Kansas?

A. I am glad to tell you, sir.

Q. Have they any property now?

A. Yes; I have carried some people in there that when they got there they didn't have fifty cents left, and now they have got in my colony -- Singleton colony -- a house, nice cabins, their milch cows, and pigs, and sheep, perhaps a span of horses, and trees before their yards, and some three or four or ten acres broken up, and all of them has got little houses that I carried there. They didn't go under no relief assistance; they went on their own resources; and when they went in there first the country was not overrun with them; you see they could get good wages; the country was not overstocked with people; they went to work, and I never helped them as soon as I put them on the land.

Q. Well, they have been coming continually, and adding from time to time to your colony these few years past, have they?

A. Yes, sir; I have spent, perhaps, nearly six hundred dollars flooding the country with circulars.

Q. You have sent the circulars yourself, have you?

A. Yes, sir; all over these United States.

Q. Did you do that at the instance of Governor St. John and others in Kansas?

A. O, no, sir; no white men. This was gotten up by colored men in purity and confidence; not a political negro was in it; they would want to pilfer and rob at the cents before they got the dollars.

O, no, it was the muscle of the arm, the men that worked that we wanted.

Q. Well, tell us all about it.

A. These men would tell all their grievances to me in Tennessee -- the sorrows of their heart. You know I was an undertaker there in Nashville, and worked in the shop. Well, actually, I would have to go and bury their fathers and mothers. You see we have the same heart and feelings as any other race and nation. (The land is free, and it is nobody's business, if there is land enough, where the people go. I put that in my people's heads.) Well, that man would die, and I would bury him; and the next morning maybe a woman would go to that man (meaning the landlord), and she would have six or seven children, and he would say to her, "Well, your husband owed me before he died" and they would say that to every last one of them, "You owe me." Suppose he would? Then he would say, "You must go to some other place; I cannot take care of you." Now, you see, that is something I would take notice of. that woman had to go out, and these little children was left running through the streets, and the next place you would find them in a disorderly house, and their children in the State's prison.

Well, now, sir, you will find that I have a charter here. You will find that I called on the white people in Tennessee about that time. I called conventions about it, and they sat with me in my conventions, and "Old man," they said, "you are right." The white people said, "You are right; take your people away." And let me tell you, it was the white people -- the ex-governor of the State, felt like I did. And they said to me, "You have taken a great deal on to yourself, but if these negroes, instead of deceiving one another and running for office, would take the same idea that you have in your head, you will be a people."

I then went out to Kansas, and advised them all to go to Kansas; and, sir they are going to leave the Southern country. The Southern country is out of joint... The great God of glory has worked in me. I have had open air interviews with the living spirit of God for my people; and we are going to leave the South. We are going to leave it if there ain't an alteration and signs of change. I am going to advise the people who left that country (Kansas) to go back.

Q. Now you say that during these years you have been getting up this colony you have spent, yourself, some six hundred dollars in circulars, and in sending them out; where did you send them, Mr. Singleton?

A. Into Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, and all those countries.

Q. You say your circulars were sent all over these States?

A. Yes, sir; to all of 'em.

Q. Did you ever hear from them; did anybody ever write to you about them?

A. O, yes.

Q. And you attribute this movement to the information you gave in your circulars?

A. Yes, sir; I am the whole cause of the Kansas immigration!

Q. You take all that responsibility on yourself?

A. I do, and I can prove it; and I think I have done a good deal of good, and I feel relieved!

Q. You are proud of your work?

A. Yes, sir; I am! (Uttered emphatically.)

<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/seven/w67singl.htm>

Student Resource Sheet 7

Document 5

**Middle Class Settlers Homestead, 1870's
Nicodemus, Kansas**



Student Resource Sheet 8

Document 6

The Negro Exodus from the Gulf States

BY FREDERICK DOUGLASS, 1879

THE negro, long deemed too indolent and stupid to discover and adopt any rational measure to secure and defend his rights as a man, may now be congratulated upon the telling contradiction which he has recently and strikingly given to this withering disparagement and reproach. He has discovered and adopted a measure which may assist very materially in the solution of some of the vital problems involved in his sudden elevation from slavery to freedom.... he has adopted a simple, lawful and peaceable measure. It is emigration -- the quiet withdrawal of his valuable bones and muscles from a condition of things which he considers no longer tolerable... Already apprehension and alarm have led to noisy and frantic efforts on the part of the South to arrest and put an end to what it considers a depleting and ruinous evil.

It cannot be denied that there is much reason for this apprehension and alarm. This exodus has revealed to Southern men the humiliating fact that the prosperity and civilization of the South are at the mercy of the despised and hated negro -- that it is for him more than for any other to say what shall be the future of the late Confederate States; that within their ample borders he alone can stand between the contending powers of savage and civilized life; that the giving or withholding of his labor will bless or blast their beautiful country. Important as manual labor is everywhere, it is nowhere more important and absolutely indispensable to the existence of society than in the more southern of the United States.

Machinery may continue to do -- as it has done -- much of the work of the North; but the work of the South requires bone, sinew and muscle of the strongest and most enduring kind for its performance. Labor in that section must know no pause. Her soil is pregnant and prolific with life and energy. All the forces of nature within her borders are wonderfully vigorous, persistent and active. Aided by an almost perpetual Summer, abundantly supplied with heat and moisture, her soil readily and rapidly covers itself with noxious weeds, dense forests and impenetrable jungles... From this condition, shocking for a Southern man to contemplate, it is now seen that nothing less powerful than the naked iron arm of the negro can save her. For him, as a Southern laborer, there is no competitor or substitute. The thought of filling his place by any other variety of the human family, will be found delusive and utterly impracticable. ...

Even if climatic and other natural causes did not protect the negro from all competition in the labor-market of the South, inevitable social causes would probably effect the same result. The slave system of that section has left behind it -- as in the nature of the case it must -- manners, customs and conditions to which free white laboring men will be in no haste to submit themselves and their families....

This, then, is the high vantage-ground of the negro: he has labor, the South wants it, and must have it or perish. Since he is free he can now give it or withhold it, use it where he is, or take it

elsewhere, as he pleases. His labor made him a slave, and his labor can, if he will, make him free, comfortable and independent. It is more to him than fire, swords, ballot-boxes or bayonets. It touches the heart of the South through its pocket. This power served him well years ago, when in the bitterest extremity of his destitution. But for it he would have perished when he dropped out of slavery. It saved him then, and it will save him again....

But now, after fourteen years of service, and fourteen years of separation from the visible presence of slavery, during which he has shown both disposition and ability to supply the labor-market of the South, and that he could do so far better as a freedman than he ever did as a slave; that more cotton and sugar can be raised by the same hands, under the inspiration of liberty and hope, than can be raised under the influence of bondage and the whip, he is again, alas! in the deepest trouble -- again without a home, out under the open sky, with his wife and his little ones. He lines the sunny banks of the Mississippi, fluttering in rags and wretchedness, mournfully imploring hard-hearted steamboat captains to take him on board; while the friends of the emigration movement are diligently soliciting funds all over the North to help him away from his old home to the new Canaan of Kansas...

But in contemplating this exodus, it should be kept in mind that the way of an oppressed people from bondage to freedom is never smooth. There is ever in such transition much to overcome on both sides. Neither the master nor the emancipated slave can at once shake off the habits and manners of a long-established past condition. The form may be abolished, but the spirit survives and lingers about the scenes of its former life. The slave brings into the new relation much of the dependence, improvidence and servility of slavery, and the master brings much of his pride, selfishness and love of power. ...

Objection may properly be made upon many grounds. It may well enough be said that the negro question is not so desperate as the advocates of exodus would have the public believe; that there is still reasonable ground of hope that the negro will ultimately have his rights as a man, and be fully protected in the South; that in several of the old slave States his citizenship and his right to vote are already respected and protected; that the same, in time, will be secured for the negro in the other States; that the world was not the work of a day; that even in free New England all the evils generated by slavery did not disappear in a century after the abolition of the system, if, indeed, they have yet entirely disappeared...

Bad as is the condition of the negro to-day at the South, there was a time when it was flagrantly and incomparably worse. A few years ago he had nothing -- he had not even himself. He belonged to somebody else, who could dispose of his person and his labor as he pleased. Now he has himself, his labor, and his right to dispose of one and the other, as shall best suit his own happiness. He has more. He has a standing in the supreme law of the land, in the Constitution of the United States -- not to be changed or affected by any conjunction of circumstances likely to occur in the immediate or remote future. The Fourteenth Amendment makes him a citizen, and the Fifteenth makes him a voter. With power behind him, at work for him, and which cannot be taken from him, the negro of the South may wisely bide his time. The situation at the moment is exceptional and transient. The permanent powers of the Government are all on his side. What though, for the moment, the hand of violence strikes down the negro's rights in the South, those rights will revive, survive and flourish again....

Without abating one jot of our horror and indignation at the outrages committed in some parts of the Southern States against the negro, we cannot but regard the present agitation of an African exodus from the South as ill-timed, and, in some respects, hurtful. We stand to-day at the beginning of a grand and beneficent reaction. There is a growing recognition of the duty and obligation of the American people to guard, protect and defend the personal and political rights of all the people of all the States; to uphold the principles upon which rebellion was suppressed, slavery abolished, and the country saved from dismemberment and ruin. National ideas are springing up all around us -- the oppressor of the negro is seen to be the enemy of the peace, prosperity and honor of the country.

Why should a people who have made such progress in the course of a few years, now be humiliated and scandalized by exodus agents, begging money to remove them from their homes? especially at a time when every indication favors the position that the wrongs and hardships which they suffer are soon to be redressed...

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=DouGulf.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=publ&part=1&division=div1>

Student Resource Sheet 9

Document 7

Testimony of Henry Adams *Senate Report 693, 46th Congress*

Question: Now tell us, Mr. Adams, what, if anything, you know about the exodus of the colored people from the Southern to the Northern and Western States; and be good enough to tell us in the first place what you know about the organization of any committee or society among the colored people themselves for the purpose of bettering their condition, and why it was organized. Just give us a history of that as you understand it.

Henry Adams: Well, in 1870, I believe it was, or about that year, after I had left the Army—...After we had come out a parcel of we men that was in the Army and other men thought that the way our people had been treated during the time we was in service—we heard so much talk of how they had been treated and opposed so much and there was no help for it—that caused me to go into the Army at first, the way our people was opposed. There was so much going on that I went off and left it; when I came back it was still going on, part of it, not quite so bad as at first. So a parcel of us got together and said that we would organize ourselves into a committee and look into affairs and see the true condition of our race, to see whether it was possible we could stay under a people who had held us under bondage or not. Then we did so and organized a committee.

Question: They traveled over the other States?

Henry Adams: Yes, sir; and we worked some of us, worked our way from place to place and went from State to State and worked—some of them did—amongst our people in the fields, everywhere, to see what sort of living our people lived; whether we could remain in the South amongst the people who had held us as slaves or not. We continued that on till 1874.

Question: Was the object of that committee at that time to remove your people from the South, or what was it?

Henry Adams: O, no, sir; not then; we just wanted to see whether there was any State in the South where we could get a living and enjoy our rights.

Question: The object, then, was to find out the best places in the South where you, could live?

Henry Adams: Yes, sir; where we could live and get along well there and tow investigate our affairs—not to go nowhere till we saw whether we could stand it.

Question: What was the character of the information that they gave you?

Henry Adams: Well, the character of the information they brought to us was very bad, sir.

Question: In what respect?

Henry Adams: They said that in other parts of the country where they traveled through, and what they saw they was comparing with what we saw and what we had seen in the part where we lived; we knowed what that was; and they cited several things that they saw in their travels; it was very bad.

Question: Do you remember any of these reports that you get from members of your committee?

Henry Adams: Yes, sir; they said in several parts where they was that the land rent was still higher there in that part of the country than it was where we first organized it, and the people was still being whipped, some of them, by the old owners, the men that had owned them as slaves, and some of them was being cheated out of their crops just the same as they was there.

Question: Was anything said about their personal and political rights in these reports, as to how they were treated about these?

Henry Adams: Yes, some of them stated that in some parts of the country where they voted they would be shot. Some of them stated that if they voted the Democratic ticket they would not be injured.

Question: But that they would be shot, or might be shot, if they voted the Republican ticket?

Henry Adams: Yes, sir.

Question: State what was the general character of these reports—I have not yet got down to your organization of 1874—whether what you have given was the general character; were there some safer places found that seemed a little better?

Henry Adams: Some of the places, of course, were a little better than others. Some men that owned some of the plantations would treat the people pretty well in some parts. We found that they would try to pay what they had promised from time to time; some they didn't pay near what they had promised; and in some places the families—some families—would make from five to a hundred bales of cotton to the family; then at the end of the year they would pay the owner of the land out of that amount at the end of the year, maybe one hundred dollars. Cotton was selling then at twenty-five cents a pound, and at the end of the year when they came to settle up with the owner of the land, they would not get a dollar sometimes, and sometimes they would get thirty dollars, and sometimes a hundred dollars out of a hundred bales of cotton.

Senate Report 693, 46th Cong., 2nd Sess., part 2, pp. 101-111.

<http://www.yale.edu/glc/archive/1129.htm>

Student Resource Sheet 10

Document 8

Sojourner Truth

For Resources:

Cut and paste the link below to your Web Browser

<http://tinyurl.com/bpclp9v>

and/or

see the following book:

Wormer, Richard. *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003. 35.

Student Resource Sheet 11

Document 9

Nancy Guptil

“Came from Middle Tennessee. Heard neighbors talking of Kansas two or three years. We received two or three circulars that told about Kansas...I find things here a heap better than I expected. We have forty acres. We came last May. We built our house in the fall. My husband finds enough work around here to support us. We had plenty of supplies to live on through the winter. We got them by working for white neighbors. Politics never pestered us at the South, but the people took all we made. People treats us better here than they did there, because they is willing to pay us what we work for...”

Source:

Report of Colonel Frank Fletcher, Agent Appointed by the St. Louis Commission to Visit Kansas for the Purpose of Obtaining Information in Regard to Colored Emigration, page 3-4.

<http://www.inmotionaame.org/texts/?migration=6&topic=99&type=text>

Student Resource Sheet 12

Document 10

Mr. and Mrs. William Ray

Mrs. William Ray-

“Came from Texas in a wagon of our own; stopped a while at Fort Scott. We left Texas because they treated us so bad. They took out my husband’s brother-in-law and shot him three times in the face. They came after my husband one night and made him give up his pistol. They took my aunts and son-in-law out and beat them. They struck my aunt and cut her, because she would not tell where her son was. We have been on this place between four and five years. We have a hundred and sixty acres. My husband hires help.”

Mr. William Ray-

“Last year I raised five hundred and sixty bushels of corn, fifty bushels of wheat, one hundred and sixty bushels of oats, two hundred and fifty bushels of potatoes. I sold fifteen dollars’ worth of garden vegetables, one cow, ten hogs, four or five dollars worth of chickens, six bushels of plums, three hundred pounds butter and two bushels of eggs. I have now seven horses, twenty hogs, and eight head of cattle. My children are learning to read and write. They go to the same school with the whites. We have church and Sunday-school in the schoolhouse. We are Baptists.”

Source:

Report of Colonel Frank Fletcher, Agent Appointed by the St. Louis Commission to Visit Kansas for the Purpose of Obtaining Information in Regard to Colored Emigration, page 4.

<http://www.inmotionaame.org/texts/?migration=6&topic=99&type=text>