

Title:

African American History - Pelagie Vital Amoureux, A Free Woman

Grade Level:

6-12

Subject:

US History, Social Studies, English Language Arts, French

Brief Description:

In this three-day lesson, students will use primary and secondary sources to learn about various aspects of slavery, including studying laws that applied specifically to African Americans from the mid -18th century to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. This lesson will entail students working in groups or independently to examine the following: census records of Ste. Genevieve and pre- and post-colonial Missouri laws pertaining to enslaved and free African Americans. Students will also be introduced to the main subject of this lesson plan – Pelagie Vital Amoureux, a Ste. Genevieve citizen who was born into slavery and eventually became a free woman. She lived from 1805 to 1890. Students will learn of her life through a secondary source AmoureuxHouse.org. This website tells her story with the support of census records and court documents.

Relevant State Standards: (see Missouri State Standards page)**Goals:**

1. **Enliven** students' curiosity about the times in which Pelagie lived, with a special emphasis on what it meant to be an African American during that period of American history.
2. **Lead** students in placed-based activities, including a visit to Amoureux House and other architectural treasures in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri.
3. **Encourage** students to engage in hands-on activities that make the history, culture, and architecture of Ste. Genevieve come alive for them.

Specific Objectives:

- Students will learn to analyze and interpret primary documents and secondary

sources.

- Students will learn about slavery, and view laws applied to African Americans in Ste. Genevieve as well as the entire state of Missouri.
- Students will gain an understanding of what life may have been like for an African American woman in Missouri during the 19th century.
- Students will be able to create and present a short video, poetry/spoken word, or other interpretive projects at a public event to be held in Ste. Genevieve on October 15, 2011.

Day #1: “Slavery and Law in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri”

Required Materials:

Computer

Internet access

Handout - Census information

Handout - Code Noir laws

Handout - Slave/free negro and mulatto laws

Photocopies of Amoureux family photo

Resources:

- Federal Census 1773, 1850, 2010 , Ste. Genevieve, Missouri
 - “Code Noir de La Louisiane 1724”, <http://www.centenary.edu/french/codenoir.htm>
 - 1847 Missouri Legislation, “Act respecting slaves, free negroes and mulattoes”.
 - Excerpts from books by Carl Ekberg and Bonnie Stepenoff
 - Missouri History Museum document of young slave sold in Ste. Genevieve,
- (For additional resources see Resource page)

Anticipatory Set (Lead-in):

What percentage of the total population in Ste. Genevieve in 1790 was African American? What role do you think African Americans played in the town’s development? Was there slavery in Ste. Genevieve? What do you know about slavery?

Lesson Plan Procedure:

- Inquire about what students know about slavery and ask if slavery existed in Ste. Genevieve.
- Break students into groups of two or three to discuss the 1790, 1850 and 2000 census records of Ste. Genevieve, noting the racial makeup of the county. Does the town have an African American history? Have the demographics changed? If so, how?
- Have students study Missouri laws relating to African Americans. (*Code Noir* to the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863). What do these laws tell us about the treatment of African Americans in that time?
- Show students the photograph of what is believed to be the Amoureux family on their porch, not telling students who is in this photo. Assign students to write essays about the people in the photo. (This assignment can be done either in class or as homework.) Spark their interest with questions, such as:
 - o In what year do you think the photograph was taken?
 - o What about the picture reveals when it was taken?
 - o Describe the racial makeup of this family.
 - o Describe what life may have been like for this family during this time period in Ste. Genevieve.

Closure:

Discuss with the students what they discovered by doing this lesson.

Day #2: “Getting to Know Pelagie Amoureux”

Required Materials:

Computer lab

Internet access – www.amoureuxhouse.org

Written Document Analysis worksheet - pdf

Resources:

All primary documents are available on the AmoureuxHouse.org website.

- Primary Documents

Inventory of Vital St. Gemme Beauvais Estate (pdf of original coming soon)

Emancipation Document 1832

Court Records, State of Missouri, County of Ste. Genevieve, 1840, 1841, 1848

Pelagie's obituary, *Ste. Genevieve Herald*, 1890

(For additional resources see Resource page)

Anticipatory Set (Lead-in):

Yesterday you learned about slavery by looking at laws, codes, and census records. Now you will investigate how this played out in Ste. Genevieve using an actual historical example, Pelagie Amoureux, whose family photograph you have recently studied.

Play one or two of the video segments to introduce Pelagie.

Lesson Plan Procedure:

- Briefly recall what was covered yesterday, and possibly share students' answers about the photo of the family on the porch.

- Play a few of the video segments found on AmoureuxHouse.org.

- In groups of two or three, have students analyze the primary documents connected with this lesson (available on AmoureuxHouse.org) and have them complete the Written Document Analysis Worksheet. Students will then meet with another group to compare answers on the Written Document Analysis Worksheet and to ensure accurate information.

- Encourage students to explore AmoureuxHouse.org further to learn more about Pelagie. Each group will create a timeline of Pelagie's life using information from AmoureuxHouse.org and primary documents. They will then insert significant historical events surrounding Pelagie's life into their timeline. Students should note on the timeline positive and negative events in Pelagie's life and in U.S. History.

Closure:

After completion of the timeline, students should write down questions about Pelagie's life that remain unanswered.

Day #3: “A Visit to the Amoureux House”

Required Materials:

- Secondary resource packet
- Project information sheet
- Group grading sheet
- Signup sheet

Anticipatory Set (Lead-in):

Have students stand on the porch and imagine Pelagie's life as a freed woman in a time when freedoms were limited for her race. (For those students who aren't able to visit the Amoureux House, go to THE HOUSE section of AmoureuxHouse.org and explore the house virtually). Applying what students learned yesterday, ask them what freedoms Pelagie experienced? What hardships did she experience?

Lesson Plan Procedure:

- If available, have students physically visit the Amoureux House for a short tour/presentation recapping Pelagie's life.
- Have students recall the freedoms Pelagie experienced as well as the hardships.
- Ask students why they think she is an important figure in Ste. Genevieve and nationwide.
- Hand out secondary resource packet.
- Hand out information on their project.
- Brainstorm with students for the rest of the class period.

Closure:

Students should break into groups of two or three to brainstorm about what project they intend to do. Then have them present this decision on the signup sheet so that the event organizers know what project the students chose.

Assessment and Notes

Plan for Independent Practice

Students may independently research more about the Amoureux House. This may entail learning

more about the families that lived there or about the significance of architecture of the house. Students may also conduct additional research on Pelagie via

AmoureuxHouse.org.

Assessment Based on Objectives

Students will be assessed on participation in the tour/presentation at the Amoureux House, and the quality of their project.

Connection to other Subjects

This lesson can be connected to other subjects including language/communication arts, political science, civics/government, and French classes.

Adaptation and Extension

This lesson may be adapted for those students unable to visit Ste. Genevieve or the Amoureux House by going to THE HOUSE page on this site. Students can also choose to conduct research about their own family or the history of their communities. Armed with historical information, analytical thinking, and research skills, students may want to trace their own family roots.

Missouri State Standards Addressed: Show Me Standards (Missouri): Days 1-3

SS 3a: Knowledge of continuity and change in the history of Missouri and the United States.

· Analyze Missouri History as it relates to major developments of US History including

1. Exploration and settlement
2. **Mid 1800s (conflict and war)**
3. Urbanization, industrialization, post-industrial societies.

SS 6l: Knowledge of relationships of the individual and groups to institutions and cultural traditions.

Analyze how the roles of class, **ethnic, racial, gender**, and age groups have changed in

society, including causes and effects.

SS 7: Knowledge of the use of tools of social studies inquiry (such as surveys, statistics, maps, and documents).

7a: Distinguish between and **analyze** secondary sources and **primary sources**.

7f: **Interpreting** maps, **statistics**, charts, diagrams, graphs, **timelines**, **pictures**, political cartoons, audiovisual materials, continua, **written resources**, art and artifacts.

CA – Information Literacy

A. Develop and apply effective research process skill to gather, analyze and evaluate information.

B. Locate and use primary and secondary sources.

Relevant United States History Standards for Grades 5-12:

- Era 2: Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763)
 - o Standard 3C-*The student understands African life under slavery.*
- Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)
 - o Standard 2D-*The student understands the rapid growth of "the peculiar institution" after 1800 and the varied experiences of African Americans under slavery.*
 - o Standard 3B-*The student understands how the debates over slavery influenced politics and sectionalism.*
- Era 5: Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)
 - o Standard 1A-*The student understands how the North and South differed and how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.*