



Model Lesson Plan: Eighth Grade

While the African-American population in Montana has consistently remained small throughout its history, Black Montanans have participated in virtually every aspect of community life. In 1805, "York", the slave servant of William Clark, traveled to the area as a member of the Corps of Discovery and became the first documented person of African descent to spend time in what would become Montana Territory. In the following years African-Americans moved to the region where they participated as fur trappers, servants, interpreters, homesteaders, and business owners.

In many ways the African-American residents experienced life just as other citizens of Montana; they established churches and social organizations, served in the military, and worked the land. At the same time, they struggled to establish their rights to vote and gain an equal, not separate, education.

For the most part, the stories of these African-American residents have remained unheard. This is changing. By utilizing these lessons and the associated Montana Historical Society's [African-Americans in Montana Heritage Resources](#) web site, teachers will now be able to easily access primary source materials so their students might develop a better understanding of this important cultural group whose achievements and impact on Montana were greater than their small number.



Creation of a Community

STAGE 1 Desired Results

Established Goals:

Students demonstrate an understanding of African-American life in Montana and the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies. (SS8:B6.1,3 and 5)

Suggested Duration:

Approximately three to five 50-minute class periods

Understandings:

- While consistently small in number, African-Americans have maintained a significant presence in Montana since the early nineteenth century.
- In Montana, African-Americans found both prejudice and opportunity.

Essential Questions:

- How (and why) did skin color affect social status?
- Why did African-Americans organize their own institutions (e.g. first churches, first civic and social organizations, etc.)?
- How did laws relating to race affect African-Americans' economic, political, and social opportunities?

Students will be able to:

- Recognize the contributions and struggles that diverse groups can make to the entire state.
- Verbalize and create a written interpretation of their research.

Students will know:

- That historically, skin color had a major impact on social status.
- Montana African-Americans made social, economic, and political gains over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

STAGE 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:

- Students will analyze census data, photographs, and other available primary source material from the African-Americans in Montana website of the Montana Historical Society.
- Students will create brief feature articles, focused on a topic central to Montana's African-American history.
- Students will provide a brief oral presentation of research and findings during class.

Materials/Resources Needed:

Montana Historical Society, African-Americans in Montana Homepage, <http://mhs.mt.gov/research/AfricanAmerican/AfricanAmericanInMT.asp>

African-Americans in Montana

HERITAGE RESOURCES



> **Access links from above site:**

<http://mhs.mt.gov/research/AfricanAmerican/ContiguousStatesPopulation.pdf>

<http://mhs.mt.gov/research/AfricanAmerican/AAinMTCensusData.asp>

> **Suggested topics within this link:**

<http://mhs.mt.gov/research/AfricanAmerican/AAinMTTimelineMain.asp>

- 1866 Murder of Sammy Hayes
- 1872 School segregation law
- 1881 Lawsuit by William Woodcock
- 1888 St. James AME established
- 1890 Union Bethel AME established
- 1894 First black newspaper, *The Colored Citizen*, published in Helena
- 1900 AME Church organized in Billings
- 1901 Bethel Baptist Church organizes in Butte; founding of Afro-American Women's Club in Butte
- 1906 Publication of *Montana Plaindealer* newspaper in Helena
- 1907 Establishment of chapters of the National Negro Business League and the Afro-American Building Association in Helena
- 1907 Law passed by Montana Legislature nullifying marriage between African-Americans and whites
- 1912 Last Chance Club organized in Helena
- 1913 Booker T. Washington lectures throughout Montana
- 1914 All women, except Native Americans, gain the right to vote
- 1917 Legal hanging of three railroad workers; KKK organizes in Montana
- 1934 African-American CCC workers from NY & NJ ordered "repatriated to their residences"
- 1937 Discrimination law proposed to Montana House of Representatives, killed in committee
- 1942 Eight thousand white Butte miners walk out when experienced southern black miner-soldiers are furloughed to the copper capital to increase ore output for the war effort
- 1952 Interracial Committee appointed in Cascade County
- 1965 Street marches and ecumenical prayer service held in Billings and Missoula
- 1991 Montana becomes the 48th state to recognize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day as state holiday

> **Suggested Documents within this link:**

<http://mhs.mt.gov/research/AfricanAmerican/AAinMTBibliographyMain.asp>

- 946-124 Photographic Print, Garfield School, 1897
- 946-932 Photo, include African-American servant, ca. 1880s

African-Americans in Montana

HERITAGE RESOURCES



947-276	Photo, children and teachers w/five African-American boys and girls, Ft. Keogh, 1891
957-605	Photo, unidentified African-American man wearing fraternal yoke & apron, ca. 1890
957-990	Photo, Pvt. James D. Cowan, 25th Infantry, Ft. Custer, 1888
957-991	Photo, unidentified sergeant, 25th Infantry, Ft. Custer, 1888
957-993	Photo, African-American 10th Cavalry escorts to Gen. Merritt's party, St. Mary's, 1894
H-3615	Photo, African-American 25th Infantry bicyclists at Mammoth Hot Springs, 1896
Micro B-901	<i>The Colored Citizen</i> , Helena's African-American newspaper
Micro B-658	<i>Montana Plaindealer</i> , African-American (irregular) weekly
24GA1502	"Samuel Lewis House," National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form
24GN0195	"Morgan Case Homestead," National Register of Historic Places, Registration Form

STAGE 3 Learning Activities

Step 1.

Discuss essential questions. Teachers may also wish to use the K/W/L instructional technique, asking students what they know, what they want to know, and, at the conclusion of the lesson, what they have learned, about African-American history in Montana and in the United States.

Step 2.

Divide students into five groups and assign each group the task of researching a different aspect of African-American life in Montana. Groups should gather as much information as possible that applies to each of these questions. Then group members should organize themselves so that each student writes a short, one to two paragraph feature article on a different part of their research (e.g., a particular person or organization or event that helps answer the main question). Ask students within each group to read and edit each other's articles. Then have groups discuss what generalizations they can make about their research. Have them write an introductory sentence or paragraph that ties their research together.

Students in Group 1 will answer the question "What laws were enacted that were specifically directed to African Americans?" (education, voting, marriage)

Students in Group 2 will answer the question "What evidence is there of African Americans creating community life?" (jobs, churches, homeownership, organizations)

Students in Group 3 will answer the question "What were some of the successes that African-American Montanans experienced?"

African-Americans in Montana HERITAGE RESOURCES



Students in Group 4 will answer the question “What were some of the difficulties African-American Montanans faced?”

Students in Group 5 will answer the question “How did the African-American population change from 1910 to 1930?” (This group will need to work with the census data. The other groups will need to get information from the timeline and the bibliography.)

Step 3.

Have each group create a mini-magazine focused on their topic, and have them present their topic to the class.

Step 4.

Have the class merge all the “mini-magazines” into one binder. Create a table of contents for the magazine and donate a copy of it to your school library and/or community library.

Step 5.

Lead your students in a wrap-up discussion that engages your students' critical thinking skills and elicits their emotional responses with the following four questions, most easily remembered through the acronym DICE: What **disturbed** you about what the information you uncovered during this exercise? What **interested** you? What **confused** you? What **enlightened** you?