



Lesson Plan:

Cemetery Spotlight: Rose (Hill) Cemetery

Subject Area: African American History, American History

Grades: 9-12

Theme: White Sheets in the Orange Groves: Black Codes and Violence in Tarpon Springs & Florida

Student Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will analyze primary and secondary sources to describe the effects of segregationist culture on African Americans.
- 2) Students will classify examples of some of Florida's Black Codes and some KKK actions into categories of legal, violent, or both using a Venn Diagram.
- 3) Students will create a poem or a set of song lyrics to explain the effects of the Black Codes and segregationist violence on African Americans in Florida and Tarpon Springs.

Cemetery Overview:

Rose (Hill) Cemetery is a historically segregated cemetery in Tarpon Springs, and as of 2023, the oldest known active segregated cemetery in Pinellas County. The region of Tarpon Springs was originally settled by Bahamian sponge fishermen. These men and generations of African American Pinellas residents dating back to the late 1800's are buried at Rose (Hill). There are approximately 600 grave markers, although it is estimated to have over 1000 burials. Rose (Hill) was originally a segregated part of Cycadia Cemetery. The Lake Butler Villa Company, which owned much of early Tarpon Springs real estate, transferred ownership of the cemetery to the Rose Hill Association. The name was later changed to Rose Cemetery to not conflict with Rose Hill Memorial Park in Tampa. Though Cycadia Cemetery receives local government funding, Rose (Hill) Cemetery instead relies on community volunteers and donors for funding and maintenance. Activists and community members work to preserve the culture and history of a once segregated community. Rose (Hill) has gone through periods of disrepair and revival throughout the 20th century and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.

Curricular Connections

SS.912.A.1 : Use research and inquiry skills to analyze American history using primary and secondary sources

SS.912.A.2.5 Assess how Jim Crow Laws influenced life for African Americans and other racial/ethnic minority groups.

SS.912.A.2.6 Compare the effects of the Black Codes and the Nadir on freed people.

Lesson Opener: Visual Thinking Strategy

Comparing Rose Cemetery and Cyclopedia

Rose (Hill) and Cyclopedia Comparison (5 minutes)

Project the Pictures of Rose Cemetery and Cyclopedia Cemetery.



Cyclopedia Cemetery

Rose (Hill) Cemetery

Ask students: *What differences do you notice about Rose (Hill) Cemetery and Cyclopedia Cemetery?*

- Allow students to comment on the difference in quantity and quality of grave markers, landscaping, flowers, etc.

What could be some reasons for the difference in the two cemeteries?

- When debriefing, refer to the information in the “cemetery overview” to explain the background of Rose Cemetery as a segregated cemetery.

Main Learning Activity:

Project the first image of the KKK rally in the PowerPoint. Ask students: what is the KKK (Ku Klux Klan)? What did they do? What were their beliefs?

Briefly take answers and then refer to the picture of the Ku Klux Klan rally. Ask the students: What cultural symbolism do we see in the picture?

Follow up questions could include:

- **Why are they wearing white coverings?**
 - *Symbolism of white supremacy*
- **Why do they wear long robes and resemble priests? What do you think they show the cross for?**
 - *Infusion of religious beliefs to justify violence/immorality*
- **What is the significance of fire?**
 - Intimidation/fear
- **Where are the women?**
 - The KKK believed in patriarchy



Tell them to turn to the student next to them and discuss:

What places and time periods do you associate with KKK meetings? When did they happen, and where?

Give students a minute to speak. Call on students to share where and when they think KKK meetings happened. Share the four examples of KKK rallies, emphasizing their time and location.



Ask the students: How do these photos compare to your answers about where you felt the Klu Klux Klan was, and when it mainly existed?

Display the slide with the title and essential question. Distribute the following resources:

- **Florida Black Codes 1: Excerpts from “Florida Black Codes”**
- **Florida Black Codes 2: Table of Lake City Court Cases**
- **Klan Resources: Letter from Florida Grand Dragon & Tarpon Springs KKK Registration Letter**
- **News Article: Man whipped and Told Not to Vote**
- **Venn Diagram**

Sort students into pairs. Preview each resource with the students by reading the source line and the title. Explain that the students that they will be classifying examples of segregation using a Venn Diagram. Have students draw two intersecting circles and label one “violence” and one “law.” As they read the text, any example that is physical violence or a threat of violence students will write under “violence.” Any example they feel is strictly legal they will write under “legal.” Examples that have characteristics of either will go in the intersecting region of the diagram.

Allow students to work in pairs to read the documents and categorize examples.

Give students time to work.

Project or draw a collective Venn diagram on the white board. Go over each document with students, calling on students to discuss how they categorized examples of segregation in the documents as legal, violent, or both. Discuss with students and come to a class agreement where examples from the documents belong in the Venn Diagram.

When finished, **ask students:**

Who benefited from the Florida Black Codes, and how?

- If students need support, ask specifically questions like “Who economically benefitted from the Black Codes, and what role did violence play in protecting those benefits? How did the Black codes change who had power?”

In what ways did Klu Klux Klan try to appeal to white Americans to join their cause?

- Answers could include how the KKK appealed to nationalism, racism, capitalist-ideology (being against “communism”) and religion (being Christian)
 - Follow up question: Do you know other organizations that try to control people with fear and use religion to justify their actions?

Open Ended Discussion: What do you think was the purpose of the Florida Black Codes and Klu Klux Klan?

Lesson Closure:

Tell students that you are going to share an excerpt from an interview with a Tarpon Springs resident, and they are to connect the ideas from these documents to the excerpt of the interview. The following questions are open-ended and intended for students to discuss as a class.

Excerpt from ‘Dwayne Monroe’ Oral History

“In 1971 or 72, if you were black, you couldn’t live in Palm Harbor. On Alternate 19 here, as the buses drove to Ozona Elementary School, there was this huge concrete block set up in the median area, as you’re heading into Palm Harbor. And on that median was this huge KKK paint on the actual wall on both sides. My mother cried when she found out I was being bussed there. Our buses got rocked and egged, by—you would think it would be kids but it was actually adults.”

Ask students: Based on what you know, what ways are the actions of these adults similar or different to the Klu Klux Klan?

“If you went on US 19 and Tampa road, that area used to be orange groves. You could drive down that road, and they would be burning crosses. Right there in the orange groves off the road. So when we played youth football, and we were coming back from a game, my coaches used to tell us to duck because back then you could ride in the back of a truck. We would be in the back of a truck and our coach would tell us to duck because the Klu Klux Klan was out there having a meeting.”

Dwayne Monroe, Tarpon Springs

Ask students: What was the purpose of telling the football players to duck?

“What are some ways fear is used today to make individuals or groups of people feel unwelcome in certain places?”

Dwayne indicated that his father, who is black, is buried in Cycadia Cemetery, the Greek Cemetery, and not Rose Cemetery.

Ask students: What things do you think have changed since Dwayne’s childhood in the 1970’s? What things do you think have continued?

How did these changes and continuities affect Dwayne’s decision on where he was buried?

- If no student points it out, say that one positive change is that Dwayne’s family now have the option to bury their family where they please. They are not legally required or will receive a threat of violence if they bury their family in Cycadia, the Greek cemetery, and not Rose (Hill).

Evaluation: Historical/Protest Poem or Song Lyrics

Play [Strange Fruit by Billie Holiday](#) and display the lyrics as an example of how art can address difficult history, including violence from the Ku Klux Klan and segregation.

Students will use their Venn Diagram to write a poem or song lyrics that show the different ways that segregation affected African Americans in Tarpon Springs or Florida. In this creative assignment, they are encouraged to be as specific as possible and are required to reference the specific examples from the text.

Tell students that they are encouraged to use as many examples from the lesson as possible: from Dwayne's story, the documents, and Rose (Hill) Cemetery. They should reference Rose (Hill) Cemetery and erased or segregated African Americans cemeteries at some point in their poem or set of song lyrics.

Materials & Resources

Projector

Handouts

Paper

Pencils

References:

Burke, R. R. (1977). *Close-up view showing KKK members during their downtown rally in Tallahassee, Florida*. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.
<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/18692>

Cross burning by the KKK north of Dobbs Brothers Book Bindery - Saint Augustine, Florida. (1964). State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.
<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/39376>

Ku Klux Klan rally - Tampa, Florida (1923). State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.
Accessed 15 Mar. 2023.<<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/32831>

Richardson, J. M. (1969). Florida Black Codes. *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, 47(4), 365–379.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30140241>