



# SPECIAL ANGELS INVESTMENTS

Preserve, Protect, Educate

## **Lesson Plan:**

Cemetery Spotlight: Rose Cemetery

Subject Area: African American History, Florida History, Civics/Government

Grades: 9-12

**Theme:** Out of the Park: Community Action and Employment Discrimination in Tarpon Springs

## **Student Learning Objectives:**

- 1) Students will evaluate primary and secondary sources to explain the challenges faced by citizens facing employment discrimination.
- 2) Students will evaluate primary and secondary sources to explain how citizens overcome economic challenges through community action.
- 3) Students will design a public park map and newspaper blurb to highlight important public issues or concerns they address as local citizens.

## 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 1800s 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**

VA.912.S.1.3 Interpret and reflect on cultural and historical events to create art.

LAF.

SS.912.A.7.12 Analyze political, economic, and social concerns that emerged at the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century.

SS.912.CG.2.3 Explain the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and national levels.

SS.912.A.1.2 Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.

SS.912.W.1.3 Interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources.

## Learning Activities Sequence

### Lesson Opener: Visual Thinking Strategy

Display the first slide and ask students: what do you see? What is going on in this picture?

Allow students to raise their hand and make observations, probe for specificity on the reasons or causes for what they see.



Important discussion questions include but **are not limited to**:

- What is the small grave marker on the top right?
- Why is there a cinder block boundary around the graves? What might that mean?
- What else do you notice?

Say: *This is the grave plot of the Dorsett family at Rose (Hill) Cemetery in Tarpon Springs. The cinder blocks are to separate the family's section of the cemetery.*

*There are old West African and African American traditions of placing objects on graves. For the many different cultures in West Africa, they could mean different things. Some are materials to take in the afterlife, some are vessels for protecting or containing souls from wandering. Sometimes found objects would also be used to create boundaries like in family plots.*

Ask: *How does this help us understand what we see in the picture?* Allow students to answer and probe for specific examples in the picture.

Change to slide 2 and point out the small aluminum temporary funeral home marker for Tommy Dorsett. Switch to slide 3 and point out the aluminum sign in front of the new marker and the one in the background that are highlighted with red circles.

Ask: *Why do you think there are different types of markers? What might these little aluminum signs be used for?*



- Take students guesses, and then reveal that these are temporary funeral home markers to be placed on graves that are waiting to have a tombstone created. Because the community takes care of Rose (Hill) Cemetery, they do their best with what resources and volunteers they have. Sometimes headstones are never placed on graves, or they are damaged. The funeral home markers will then take the place of the headstone.

Ask: ***What might be a challenge of keeping the funeral home markers as permanent grave markers?***

- Allow students to answer. A possible follow up question could be: ***In Florida, what might be some environmental reasons funeral home markers being a challenge?***

Say: ***The funeral home markers are sometimes blown away in storms and not placed back in proper places. There are many challenges to maintaining a community run cemetery. Many of the burials are unmarked, even outside of the boundaries of the cemetery, including under the nearby road Jasmine Avenue. Though the caretakers of Rose (Hill) Cemetery maintain those challenges while keeping traditions and African cultural identity alive in their community.***

Main Learning Activity:

Say to students: ***To better understand some of the challenges faced by the African American community in Tarpon Springs, we are going to look at one of the members of the Dorsett family, Edward Dorsett.***

Distribute the handouts and the worksheet. Tell the students they are to read each primary & secondary source and complete the graphic organizer with a partner.

Tell the students to look at the graphic organizer. In the first box, ask the students to record anything in the documents that have to do with employment.

Say: ***What could be some examples of information regarding employment?***

- Examples include but are not limited to job conditions, job responsibilities, pay, work hours, and hiring practices.

In the second box, ask students to record anything in the documents that have to do with “community action.”

Say: ***What do you think are examples of someone engaging in community action?***

- Examples include but are not limited to volunteering, cleaning up, helping others in need, and improving local facilities.

Tell the students that when they have recorded examples of employment and community activism in the documents, they are to complete the third box with their partner and be ready to share.

Allow students 25 minutes to read the documents and complete their graphic organizer.

Lesson Closure: Debriefing Resources

Below are questions to debrief the resources once students are finished. These are suggested questions, and many are open-ended.

## Debriefing Guide

<p><b>Source 1: Tampa Tribune Article 1972</b></p>	<p>What issues with the baseball field was Ed Dorsett trying to bring attention to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answers could include deterioration of the field, power poles improperly placed, and insufficient funding</li> </ul> <p>What does this document have to do with either community activism or employment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answers could include trying to bring the community together for recreation, improving the aesthetic of the local community,</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source 2: Letter to Tarpon Springs Board of Commissioners</b></p>	<p>What is the purpose of this document?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The purpose of the document is to request that the historic school Union Academy be converted to a community center.</li> </ul> <p>What does this document have to do with either community activism or employment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answers could include preserving a local historic school and seeking the input of the local community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source 3: St. Petersburg Times Article</b></p>	<p>What does this document have to do with either community activism or employment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answers could include local hiring discrimination preventing African Americans from obtaining jobs, and a close-knit community</li> </ul> <p>Follow up with: Why do you think James feels like African Americans are contained in one part of town? How would that happen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This is an open-ended discussion. Suggested follow up question is “How did James get employed in Tarpon Springs?”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source 4: Names Study</b></p>	<p>What does this document have to do with either community activism or employment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answers could include the study showing an implicit bias against minority candidates.</li> </ul> <p>Suggested follow up question: How does this relate to the situation with the Dorsetts?</p>
<p><b>Source 5: Tarpon Springs Resolution</b></p>	<p>What does this document have to do with either community activism or employment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answers could include the Baseball Park being named in honor of Ed Dorsett, and the achievements of Ed Dorsett outlined in the document.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Source 6: Oral History Transcript</b></p>	<p>What does this document have to do with either community activism or employment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answers could include ensuring equitable opportunities for employment, challenging possibly prejudicial hiring practices, and volunteering to work on the local board of Rose (Hill) Cemetery.</li> <li>○ Suggested follow up open ended questions: What do you think of the work ethic of this person? Do you feel that Sherry is a model citizen? Why?</li> </ul>
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Ask students: **In the last box, what did you put for how community action and economic challenges relate?**

- If necessary, a possible follow up question is: “What are examples of ways the African American community overcame employment discrimination?”
- What does this suggest about the importance of community involvement?

Ask students: **Many of the Dorsetts are buried at Rose (Hill) Cemetery. Who can recall the role that community involvement played in the care for Rose (Hill) Cemetery?**

- If necessary, display slide 1 again and ask: “Who took care of Rose Hill Cemetery? Why was it necessary? How did it relate to Ed Dorsett’s baseball field?”
  - Emphasize the status of these places being historically segregated required the community to care for them and protect them.

**Evaluation:** Design a Public Park

Tell students we are going to think now about our own community. Display the following questions on the board: (note: these are sample questions and not exhaustive)

- a. Is there something in the community you would like to improve?
- b. Are all the people/areas in your community equally wealthy?
- c. Does everyone have equal access to jobs?
- d. Does everyone have equal access to housing?
- e. Can the environment be improved?
- f. What recreations would you add to your community?
- g. What would make citizens in your community get along better?

Ask students to work with a single partner to brainstorm a list of improvements to their community. Give them 3 minutes to make a short list.

If time permits, ask students to share some of their ideas and write them on the board.

Ask students: *Who can recall the reason Dorsett Park was named after Ed Dorsett?*

When students have answered, tell them that places are commonly named after people who have positively impacted the community or broader population. Tell students they are going to create two things:

- 1) A map of a Tarpon Springs public park that they will be named after. The park can be recreational, a nature trail, a baseball park, or any other sports park that would be cared for by the county. Tell students they are permitted to be as creative as possible with their parks.
- 2) A one paragraph blurb to be published in the local newspaper with their park map. In the paragraph, students should explain what they accomplished in the community to have the park named after them. Encourage students to use their brainstorm list and to continue thinking about ways they could have positively changed their community.

### **Learner Accommodations**

ESE and ESOL students benefit from graphic organizer use with symbols.

### **Materials & Resources**

Printed Primary Resources

Printed Graphic Organizer

White Printer Paper

Pencils

Colored Pencils/Markers/Crayons

## **References**

- Inventory of items received regarding the Dorsett Family. Tarpon Springs Historical Society.
- Jamieson, R. W. (1995). Material Culture and Social Death: African-American Burial Practices. *Historical Archaeology*, 29(4), 39–58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25616423>
- Kang, S. K., DeCelles, K. A., Tilcsik, A., & Jun, S. (2016). Whitened Résumés: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 61(3), 469–502. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24758675>