



SPECIAL ANGELS INVESTMENTS

Preserve, Protect, Educate

Lesson Plan: Zion and Community

Cemetery Spotlight: Zion Cemetery, Tampa FL

Subject Areas: Geography; World History

Grades: 6; 9-12

Student Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will be able to identify and recognize the physical and human characteristics of a cemetery.
- 2) Students will be able to utilize primary sources to study historical events.
- 3) Students will be able to argue the importance of cemeteries to communities.
- 4) Students will be able to apply methods of historical inquiry.

Cemetery Overview:

Zion Cemetery, located in Tampa FL, founded in 1901, is the first and oldest African American cemetery in Tampa. The land was originally purchased in 1901 by Richard Doby, an African American businessman. He used a portion of the property to build a schoolhouse and the remaining 2.5 acres to build what is known today as Zion Cemetery. However, during the early 20th century, segregationist policies erased the cemetery from city records and allowed storefronts to be built upon those buried in Zion land. When bodies were found during construction, records indicate the City of Tampa made no effort to cease building, and instead dedicated the new Robles Park Village in 1953. This housing was for white residents only. In 1962, a Robles Park resident discovered human remains while burying trash in his back yard. It is not until 2019, when death records repeatedly mentioning Zion Cemetery were discovered, that the city ordered ground penetrating radar tests to discover if people were laid to rest in this space. In this lesson, students will learn the history of Zion Cemetery, explore historical resources to make sense of this history, and discuss the relationship cemeteries have with the communities.

Curricular Connections

SS.6.W.1.4 – Describe the methods of historical inquiry and how history relates to the other social sciences.

SS.6.W.1.3 – Interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources

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

SS.6.W.1.4 – Explain how historians use historical inquiry and other sciences to understand the past.

SS.912.W.1.4 – Explain how historians use historical inquiry and other sciences to understand the past.

SS.912.G.2.1 – Identify the physical characteristics and the human characteristics that define and differentiate regions.

Teacher Background Information:

Richard Doby (see cemetery overview) was not just a successful businessman. He was a philanthropist who gave much back to the African American community. As the Jim Crow era intensified, much of Tampa's African American population would be segregated into their own living communities. One of these communities was Dobyville, named after Richard Doby himself. The community was home to African Americans working for the white residents of local Hyde Park. Doby himself would donate the land for Dobyville School. The community flourished with its own church leaders, teachers, and doctors. Doby also purchased and donated the land used for Zion Cemetery and the school built on its grounds.

Materials & Resources

Dry erase board/markers

Pens/pencils

Paper

Computer

Internet

Projector/smartboard

[Sway presentation](https://sway.office.com/AqYsIGnZvO7knqFR?ref=Link) (https://sway.office.com/AqYsIGnZvO7knqFR?ref=Link)

Documents 1-4 for each student

Learning Activities Sequence

Lesson Opener (10 minutes):

Break the students up into groups of 4-5.

Open with slide #2 and present the class with the following question. *“Have you, or do you know of someone who has lost a loved one? How would you honor and memorialize them after their passing?”* Have students think about this quietly, then share with their group. Bring the class back together, and discuss their answers. Write answers on the board and circle cemeteries (if this was not mentioned, add it and circle it). With a space on the board, ask students to collaboratively draw a cemetery. Offer prompts if the students struggle to do this, such as gravestones, a gate/fence, mausoleums, markers, etc. Students may also add names or dates to the gravestones themselves. Encourage them to make it as personal as appropriate so there is ownership when it is done. Save this drawing for later.

Explain to the class that you will be learning about a cemetery in Tampa, FL called Zion Cemetery. This cemetery was created in 1901, and is the oldest African American Cemetery in Tampa, FL.

Main Learning Activity #1: (10 minutes)

Advance to slide #3. As a class, review the information about Richard Doby/Dobyville. Make note of the fact that very little is known at this time about Doby's life, and most of what we know comes from research about Dobyville. Explore this with the students. *How was Doby important to the community? In what ways did the community ensure Doby was not forgotten?*

Explain to the class that Zion Cemetery and its neighboring school were built on land donated by Doby. This gave African Americans a space to learn and to memorialize their dead, something that was denied to them in white-owned spaces.

Advance to slide #4 and explain that today students will be looking at primary sources about Zion's history. These sources help put together Zion's story. Remind students that primary sources are firsthand looks at a time or event, written by people closest to the event. ***If needed, use the image on SLIDE # 4 to work as a class to analyze the primary source. Observe, evaluate, reflect.*** Pictured are students from the Dobyville schoolhouse.

Main Learning Activity #2 (20-25 minutes)

This portion of the lesson plan can be taught in many ways, depending on your classroom.

1. Each group will be responsible for 1 document. For example, one group of students will focus entirely on document #1, the map of Zion Cemetery in 1901. These students will become experts on the document and will share their findings with the class at the end.
2. Each group will receive all documents and work together to move through them one by one.
3. The students will rotate stations, with each station containing one of the documents.

Keep track of time, giving the students no more than 5 minutes per document (20 minutes total).

For reference;

Document #1 (slide #5) –Map of Zion Cemetery 1901

Document #2 (slide #6) - Robles Pond Schoolhouse

Document #3 (slide #7) - Map of Zion Cemetery 1916

Document #4 (slide #8) – Lawsuit Article 1912

After each document has been explored, and the students have answered the questions provided, bring the class back together. Ask the question “*What do the primary sources tell us about Zion's community?*” The class should recognize segregation had an impact on resources, attitudes towards race, and community. For example, the schoolhouse was built because education was valued by the community, but it also lacked resources. Another example, using the 1916 map,

will show attitudes towards that community, with a clear separation of space delegated to the black community.

Lesson Closure:

Advance to slide #9 of the presentation. Ask the class to write a response to the questions: “*How did Zion Cemetery help foster a sense of community for the residents of Robles Pond? In what ways does a cemetery bring a community together?*” Have the students use information from the sources they analyzed to answer the questions. These responses can be submitted/modified in one of the following ways:

- 1) A brief exit slip.
- 2) Written in the student’s writing journal.
- 3) A tweet, or addition to the classroom Padlet.
- 4) A homework assignment

References

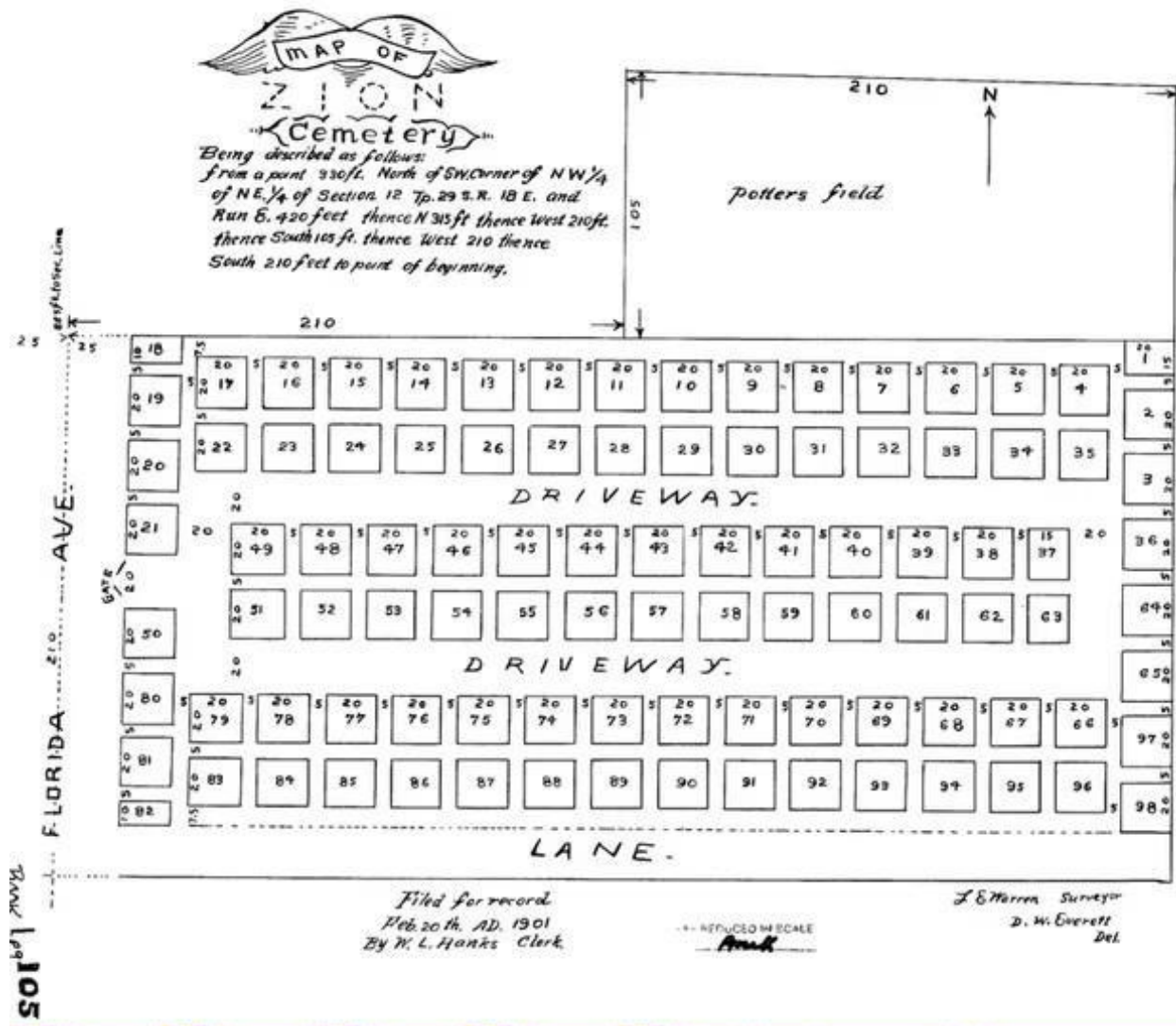
A complete timeline of Tampa's erased Zion cemetery. Tampa Bay Times. (n.d.). Retrieved January 23, 2023, from <https://www.tampabay.com/life-culture/history/2020/08/26/a-complete-timeline-of-tampas-erased-zion-cemetery/>

Guzzo, P. (2019, June 28). *What happened to nearly 400 people buried in Tampa?* AP NEWS. Retrieved January 23, 2023, from <https://apnews.com/article/5f750d958e04415e92547c5d85ef5720>

A historic sign has the wrong name for an African-American pioneer. but much more needs fixing. Tampa Bay Times. (n.d.). Retrieved January 23, 2023, from <https://www.tampabay.com/hillsborough/a-historic-sign-has-the-wrong-name-for-an-african-american-pioneer-but-much-more-needs-fixing-20190805/>

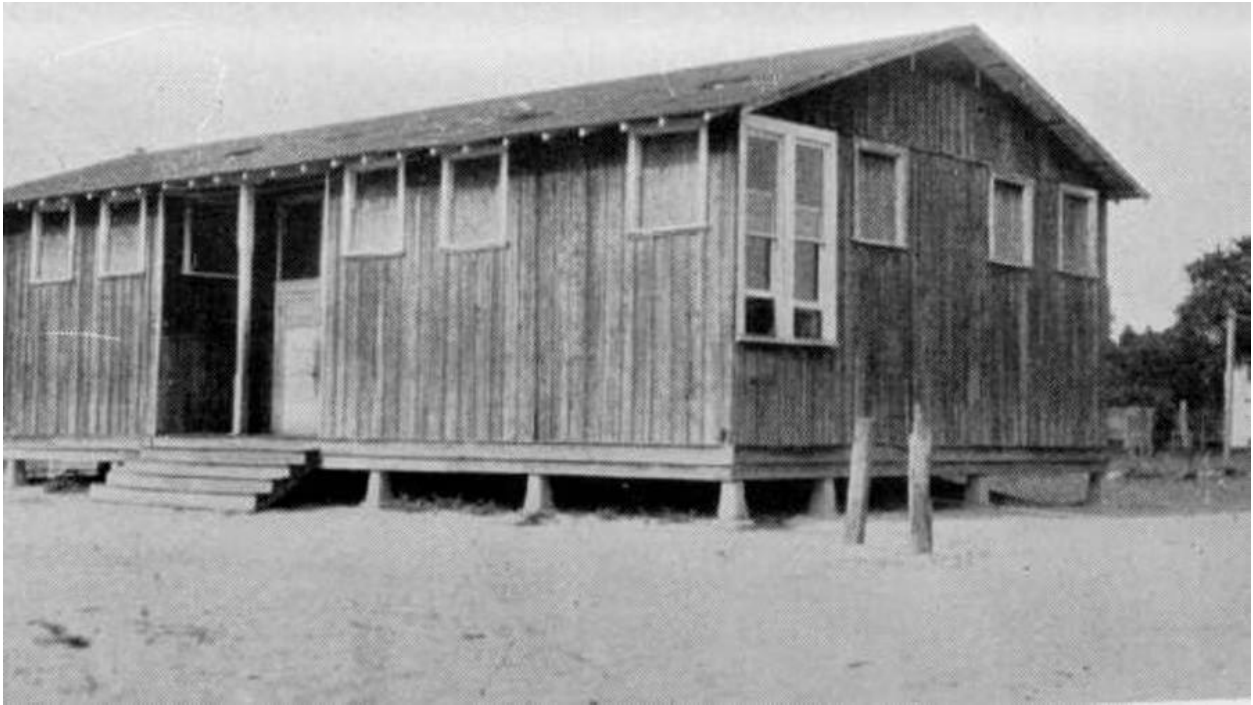
Welcome to the Tampa Housing Authority. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2, 2023, from <https://www.thafl.com/Zion/Default.aspx>

Source #1



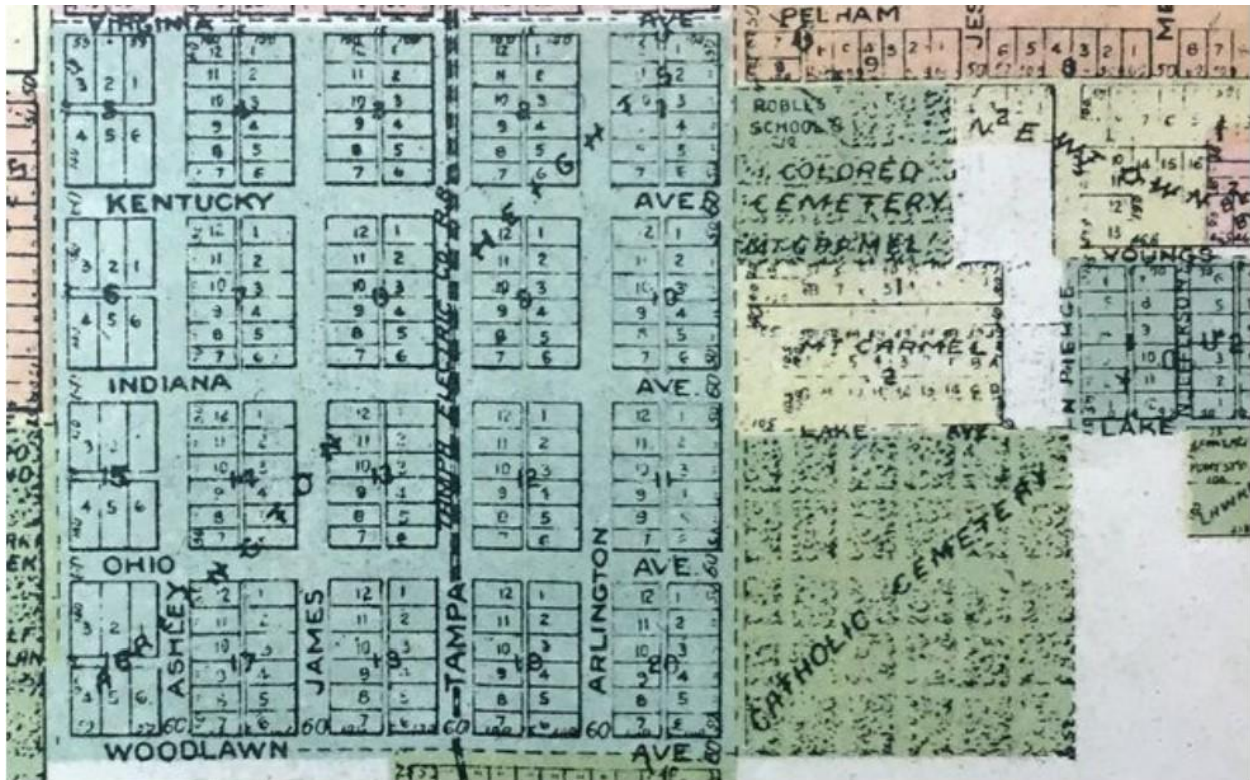
1. What type of document is this?
2. Why do you feel this was created?
3. What information can you gather from any text on this document?
4. For whom was this document created?
- 5.

Source #2



1. What is your first thought when you view this photo?
2. Where and when do you think this photograph was taken?
3. What function do you think this building served?

Source #3



1. Review the wording in this document. What is it referring to?
2. For whom was this document created?
3. What was the intended purpose of this document?

DR. HEAD GETS NEGRO GRAVEYARD IN SUIT

**Good Story Brought to Light When
Attorney R. W. Davis Asks for a
New Trial.**

Dr. J. J. Head, County Treasurer, is undisputed owner of a negro cemetery on Florida Avenue north of the city limits, as the result of a suit he brought in Circuit Court and tried a few days ago. Dr. Head had a tax deed for the land and the previous occupancy of the property by the negroes for cemetery purposes constituted a cloud on the title. The suit was undefended and the decision given Dr. Head. At the time the case was brought before him Judge Robles did not know that the property in question had been a negro cemetery.

1. What type of document is this? When do you think it was written?
2. For whom was this document created?
3. Summarize what this document is trying to tell the reader.