Creating a Community:
Learning about Atlanta's African American History at Historic Oakland Cemetery

Grade 8
Teacher's Guide

HISTORIC
OAKLAND
FOUNDATION

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INTRODUCTION

About this Teacher's Guide

Made available by the Historic Oakland Foundation, this educational guide is designed to help teachers engage and inspire their students during a visit to Historic Oakland Cemetery. This guide examines the lives, conflicts, and contributions of the African American citizens laid to rest in Oakland Cemetery. A pre-visit lesson will orient students to Oakland and introduce several cemetery residents through an analysis of primary and secondary sources. During their visit, students will visit the African American section during a general tour of Oakland Cemetery. The guide also includes post-visit activities designed to encourage creativity and engage critical thinking skills.

This guide is designed to accompany a guided tour of Oakland Cemetery, but it can be used for off-site study. To provide historical context for educators, the guide includes an overview of the the growth of the African American community in Atlanta. The educational activities correspond to Georgia Performance Standards and Georgia Standards for Excellence for Grade 8. By participating in educational activities and exploring the historic landscape of Oakland Cemetery, students will be encouraged to forge connections between the past and the present.

Learning Goals

Students will:
1. Understand the relevance, purpose, and process of primary documentation research.
2. Explore how historical research can improve our knowledge and understanding of larger historic occurrences.
3. Investigate how history is connected to our present and future.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn about:
1. The lives of several notable African American residents of Oakland Cemetery and the significance of their contributions to the city of Atlanta, the state of Georgia, and the nation.
2. The social, economic, and political conditions of African Americans in Atlanta from 1850 to the Civil Rights Movement.
3. The history of segregation in the American South and how Jim Crow laws impacted Atlanta's African American community.
4. The impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Atlanta community, and how those factors influenced the development of the South and the United States from 1865 to the present.

About Historic Oakland Cemetery

Established in 1850 by the City of Atlanta, Historic Oakland Cemetery was founded when a small downtown graveyard proved to be insufficient for the city's growing population. Originally known as "Atlanta Cemetery," the six-acre green space eventually grew to approximately 48 acres. The cemetery reflects the diverse historical development of Atlanta; noted Georgians are buried next to ordinary citizens, former slaves rest across from Confederate soldiers, and men and women transcend the social barriers of life to coexist in death.

Oakland may be the city's oldest public park and a local historic site, but it is also nationally significant as a *garden cemetery*. Made popular in the nineteenth century, the garden cemetery developed to meet the demands for both urban recreation areas and burial space. With naturalistic views and a landscape full of Victorian art and architecture, Oakland Cemetery is a unique cultural resource.

Oakland Cemetery is divided into several distinct character areas. Each character area provides insight into the social customs of past cultures and the daily distinctions of life that have been maintained in death. These character areas include the cemetery's original six acres, the Confederate Memorial Grounds, the African American Grounds, Potter's Field, the Jewish Flat and Hill sections, and other burial areas.

Once considered to be a rural burial ground, Oakland Cemetery is now located in the heart of Atlanta. The City maintains the cemetery through a partnership with the Historic Oakland Foundation, a non-profit "friends of Oakland" organization founded in 1976. The Historic Oakland Foundation works to preserve, restore, enhance, and share the cemetery with Atlantans and visitors alike. Thousands of visitors come to Oakland Cemetery every year for recreation, research, and to learn more about Atlanta's rich history. Both a vibrant public park and a treasured historic resource, Oakland Cemetery is a unique site where visitors can honor Atlanta's past and celebrate its future.

ATLANTA'S AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Antebellum Atlanta and the Civil War

The city of Atlanta emerged from humble beginnings. Founded in 1837 as Terminus, the town developed around a small railroad junction and was incorporated in 1847 under its present name of Atlanta. The rapidly growing rail hub and manufacturing center attracted entrepreneurs, laborers, and skilled craftsmen, some of whom were slaveholders. When Oakland Cemetery was founded in 1850, the city's population included 2,058 whites, 18 free blacks, and 493 slaves. Atlanta lacked the large plantations so commonly associated with the antebellum South, so the majority of the men, women, and children held in bondage provided domestic labor or worked in the growing service and railroad industries. Atlanta's population of free people of color was also significantly smaller than other cities of the Old South, such as Charleston and New Orleans. Whether free or enslaved, the city's African American population was subjugated to legislation and a race-based social hierarchy that sought to control their movement as well as reinforce white racial solidarity.

Taken by photographer George N. Barnard, the photo depicts a black Union soldier sitting in front of a slave auction house on Whitehall Street in Atlanta in 1864. *Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Antebellum Atlanta continued to grow in physical size and population. The city became a crucial hub for the Confederacy during the Civil War. Confederate supplies traveled on rail lines through Atlanta and injured rebel soldiers journeyed to receive medical treatment at one of the city's hospitals. As a regional rail hub and nexus of military operations, the city was a critical target for Union forces. Led by General William T. Sherman, Union troops laid siege to Atlanta in the summer of 1864. The surrender of Atlanta and the damage inflicted during General Sherman's infamous March to the Sea campaign signified the approaching end of the national conflict.

The Civil War is considered the bloodiest conflict in history of the United States. The devastating war ripped families apart, ravaged communities, and resulted in the near-destruction of an entire generation of men. But the conflict also resulted in the liberation of millions of enslaved people. Issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation proclaimed freedom for all slaves living in the Confederate states still in rebellion. Thousands of newly freed slaves made their way towards Atlanta and other cities in search of aid, employment, and education. Although these men, women, and children were faced with an uncertain future, they believed that life in Atlanta held the promise of new opportunities and a fresh start.

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free…."

The Emancipation Proclamation
January 1, 1863

A New Beginning

The people of Atlanta rallied to rebuild the devastated city after the war. The railroad industry, which had been instrumental in the founding of Atlanta as well as a significant cause of its destruction, drove the city's physical and economic development. The promise of employment lured thousands, including many freed blacks, to Atlanta. African American workers provided critical labor to help rebuild the city. Migrating African Americans were also drawn by the presence of aid organizations, such as the American Missionary Association and the Freedmen's Bureau, that were able to provide former slaves with clothing, food, and other necessities. These aid agencies and church organizations with similar missions were soon overwhelmed by demand. The influx of migrants resulted in a housing shortage. Many of the city's new black residents settled in areas on the edge of downtown Atlanta, which grew into clustered African American communities. Jenningstown, Summerhill, and Shermantown were just a few of these communities. By 1870, more than 21,700 residents lived in Atlanta, and nearly 46 percent of the population was African American.

Georgia, like other defeated Confederate states, operated under Union control in the years following the Civil War. During Reconstruction (1865-1877), the federal government and occupying Union troops exerted pressure on southern states to accept emancipation and grant equal protection to African Americans. Between 1865 and 1870, the Georgia state legislature reluctantly ratified the thirteenth amendment (abolishes slavery), fourteenth amendment (defines citizenship), and fifteenth amendment (guarantees that a citizen cannot be denied the right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude).

As a city councilman, Reverend William Finch (1832-1911) fought for public schools and jobs for the African American community. Reverend Finch is buried at Oakland Cemetery. *Image courtesy of the Historic Oakland Foundation.*

Atlanta's African American population achieved new rights during Reconstruction. In 1865, the Atlanta City Council pledged equal application of laws to whites and blacks. A school for black children, the first in Atlanta, opened the same year in a church building on Armstrong Street. Five years later, **William Finch** and George Graham became the first African Americans elected to serve on the Atlanta City Council. For the first time in Atlanta's history, newly enfranchised African Americans had a voice in government.

The Rise of Jim Crow

The failure of the Confederacy, the systematic destruction of slavery, and occupation under military troops shattered the status quo for white Southerners. Their need to regain social control and manage the influx of thousands of African Americans prompted action from Atlanta's white politicians. When Reconstruction ended in 1877 and federal troops left the southern states, African Americans lost their political protection. Southern state legislatures, which were

predominately (if not all) white, began to pass legislation that both reversed many of the political gains made during Reconstruction and sanctioned practices of racial discrimination. African Americans were disenfranchised and considered second-class citizens. Known as Jim Crow, this legalized system of racial segregation and discrimination spread across the South.

Jim Crow laws allowed for the racial segregation of public facilities and transportation. Schools, libraries, businesses, restaurants, and other facilities were separated by race, but had to be "equal." The separate-but-equal doctrine was upheld by the Supreme Court in the landmark Plessy vs. Ferguson decision of 1896. In southern cities like Atlanta, African Americans held some of the lowest paying jobs, were denied their constitutional right to vote through poll taxes and literacy tests, and were confined to segregated neighborhoods. The Jim Crow system of legalized discrimination forced Atlanta's African Americans to create their own community, economy, and culture.
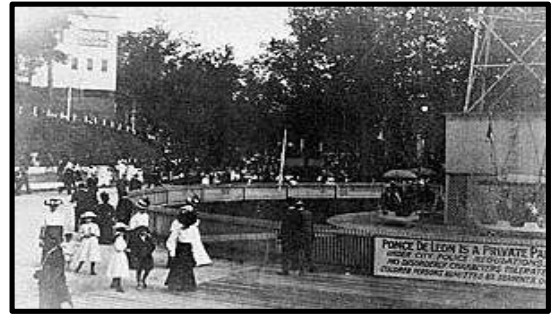
Atlanta's city parks were also segregated. This 1908 photograph depicts the entrance sign of Ponce de Leon Springs, a popular amusement park and lake. The sign reads "colored persons admitted as servants only." *Image courtesy of the Vanishing Georgia Collection, Georgia Archives, University System.*

Building the Black Economy

As Atlanta continued to grow in the post-war period, employment opportunities were abundant. Although often relegated to the lowest paying jobs, African American men could make a living wage in the personal service industry (as barbers, tailors, and shoemakers), construction trades (masonry, plastering, and carpentry), or working on the railroad. Women were mostly confined to domestic employment.

A former slave, Henry A. Rucker (1852-1924) was named a collector of internal revenue by President William McKinley in 1897, making him the first African American to hold this position. In 1904, he built the Rucker Building on Auburn Avenue. The three-story structure was the first office building built for and owned by African Americans in Atlanta. *Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Atlanta's black professional class was small, but prominent. This educated middle class of entrepreneurs, educators, physicians, ministers, and other professionals helped to grow the city's black business community. The first African American-owned business in Atlanta was a grocery store, opened by entrepreneur **James Tate** (an Oakland resident, d. 1897) in the 1860s. **Dr. Roderick Badger** (1834-1890) was the first African American dentist in Atlanta and served both black and white patients. **Dr. Henry Rutherford Butler** (1862-1931) and **Dr. Thomas Slater** (1865-1952) opened Atlanta's first African American-owned drugstore.

Many African American-operated businesses were located downtown, but Auburn Avenue would later become a crucial center for Atlanta's black business community. Former slave Alonzo Herndon founded Atlanta Life Insurance Company in 1905 on Auburn

Avenue. The Atlanta Life Insurance Company became the second largest black insurance company in the nation and Herndon became Atlanta's first black millionaire. The Rucker Building, constructed in 1904 by entrepreneur and politician Henry A. Rucker, was also located on Sweet Auburn. The street, referred to as the "richest Negro street in the world" by political leader John Wesley Dobbs, became a hub of Atlanta's African American community in the early twentieth century.

Church: The Foundation of a Community

As Atlanta's black population exploded during the Reconstruction period and beyond, the number of houses of worship also increased. As slaves, many African Americans worshipped under watchful eyes in segregated sections of white churches or would gather secretly to practice religious traditions in "hush harbors." Churches provided a link to the past, but also preached a hope for the future. These institutions not only served the community as places of worship, but also were centers for social activities and provided aid in the form of funeral services and economic assistance.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was one of the most prominent churches for African Americans in the late nineteenth century in Atlanta. Bethel A.M.E., better known as Big Bethel, grew out of the white Union Methodist Episcopal Church in 1847 and was originally known as Bethel Tabernacle. The congregation became associated with the A.M.E. church after the Civil War and appointed Reverend Joseph Woods as its first pastor in 1866. Big Bethel became a center for the African American community and a catalyst for growth on Auburn Avenue. Morris Brown College, a college started by African Americans, held its first classes in the basement of Big Bethel in 1881. Oakland resident **Bishop Wesley John Gaines** (1840-1912) was the second pastor of Big Bethel A.M.E. and a founder of Morris Brown College.

Friendship Baptist Church, founded by Oakland resident **Reverend Frank Quarles** (1862-1881), and First Congregational Church were also known for their size, influential ministers, and community involvement. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were more than twenty churches serving Atlanta's African American population.

Members of the First Congregational Church sit outside of the brick church in downtown Atlanta in this image. The photograph was taken by Thomas E. Askew, Atlanta's first African American photographer, in 1899 or 1900. Askew (c. 1848-1914) operated a successful studio from his home on Summit Avenue and was buried at Oakland Cemetery when he died. *Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Morris Brown, Morehouse, and More

Often denied access to education under the system of slavery, the black community established several institutions for higher education in the years following the Civil War. Atlanta University was founded in 1865 by the American Missionary Association. Before consolidating with Clark College (founded in 1869) in 1988, Atlanta University was the nation's oldest graduate institution serving a predominately African American student body. The establishment of Morris Brown College, Atlanta Baptist Seminary (renamed Morehouse College), and Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary (now known as Spelman College) marked Atlanta as a new center for black education. Atlanta still retains this reputation as the home of the Atlanta University Center Consortium, the largest contiguous consortium of African Americans in higher education in the nation.

These institutions produced an educated class of professionals and ambitious graduates who became leaders of Atlanta's black community. These men and women became educators, entrepreneurs, physicians, ministers, lawyers, and other prominent professionals. They drove community growth by building successful businesses, social organizations, schools, and civic groups that in turn encouraged the migration of other African Americans to Atlanta in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Members of the Morris Brown College baseball team pose for the camera, c. 1900. The photograph was collected by W.E.B. Du Bois and displayed at the *American Negro* exhibit at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900. *Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Four African American women sit on the steps of a building at Atlanta University. This photograph was taken by Thomas E. Askew in 1899 or 1900. *Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

Conflict and Culture in the Twentieth Century

Despite creating institutions for social growth and a burgeoning business community, Atlanta's African Americans remained confined under the yoke of Jim Crow discrimination in the late nineteenth century. African American leaders argued over how to gain political equality, drive economic advancement, and provide educational opportunities for southern blacks without provoking racial unrest. At the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition, Booker T. Washington delivered a speech to address concerns. Washington, a national leader and head of the Tuskegee Institute, urged African Americans to stress hard work and education in order to achieve prosperity. His speech seemed to accept racial separation, and it insinuated that a community struggle for equality and justice would only hurt race relations. Washington also encouraged whites to provide blacks with the opportunities to achieve economic advancement in agriculture and the industrial sector.

His words spread across the country and were met with mixed reactions. Most whites and many African American leaders were encouraged by Washington's peaceful plan for gradual advancement. His critics, which included W.E.B. Du Bois, argued that the speech called for African Americans to end their struggle for political and civil equality. Du Bois coined the term "Atlanta Compromise" to describe the speech and opposed Washington's policy of accommodation. In 1905, Du Bois co-founded the Niagara Movement, a black civil rights organization that called for the end of disenfranchisement and racial segregation. He also co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

Although divided over the best course to achieve civil rights, African Americans in Atlanta continued to build their society, much to the dismay of white Atlantans. Growing white fears over the success of the black community, the power of the black elite, and job competition between the races increased tensions in the white community. On September 22, 1906, several Atlanta newspapers reported four sexual assaults of white women by black men. In retaliation, dozens of white men began attacking African Americans throughout the city in what became known as the Atlanta Race Riot of 1906. The conflict left dozens injured and at least 27 dead, 25 of whom were African American.

The Atlanta Race Riot made international headlines. The French publication *Le Petit Journal* covered the conflict in their October 7, 1906 issue. The caption is translated into "Lynchings in the United States." *Image courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.*

Atlanta's African American community became even more isolated after the race riot. Over fears of continued violence, black business owners moved their operations from downtown Atlanta to seek safety and solidarity in African American neighborhoods, such as Auburn Avenue in the Fourth Ward. Virtually a separate economy, Auburn Avenue became one of the most significant African American commercial districts in the nation. Sweet Auburn became home to many African American families, including the family of future Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

A view of Auburn Avenue in the 1940s. Big Bethel is located in the background. *Image courtesy of the Atlanta History Center.*

Atlanta's African American citizens continued to develop their own opportunities in publications, sports, and culture in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1928, the *Atlanta Daily World* began publication and became the first successful black daily in national history. Sports fans could watch the Atlanta Black Crackers, a baseball team in the Negro Southern League, play ball at Ponce De Leon Park. Atlanta nightlife consisted of visiting restaurants and nightclubs along the mile-long corridor of Auburn Avenue, where patrons could listen to the performances of Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington. Opportunities for culture, education, and business continued to encourage the migration of African Americans.

The Civil Rights Movement and Modern Atlanta

The Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in the mid-twentieth century and Atlanta's African American institutions became crucial sites for action. Churches, including Ebenezer Baptist Church and Wheat Street Baptist Church, provided platforms for black religious leaders to speak out in favor of social and political equality. Students at the city's historically black colleges and universities campaigned for desegregation through sit-ins and other demonstrations. Many also became involved with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), an organization that formed to give younger African Americans a voice in the Civil Rights Movement. The move towards integration was more peaceful in Atlanta than in other southern cities because of the nonviolent approaches taken by these groups to effect social change.

Marchers protest segregation on Peachtree Street in February 1961. *Image courtesy of the Atlanta History Center.*

Legal segregation ended with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A new generation of African American leaders rose to prominence in Atlanta to implement integration. Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr. made history when he became the first African American to be elected mayor of Atlanta. During his three terms (1974-1982 and 1990-1994), Mayor Jackson improved race relations, created opportunities for minority-owned businesses, and was actively involved in the expansion of the city's airport, which was later renamed Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Buried at Oakland Cemetery after his death in 2003, Mayor Jackson left a legacy that reinforced Atlanta's position as a leader of the New South. Mayor Jackson also began a trend – the succeeding mayors of Atlanta have all been African American.

Today, Atlanta remains a crucial center for African American culture, politics, business, and education. Atlanta's significance can be traced to the accomplishments and advances made by members of the African American community and progressive supporters, several of whom reside at Oakland Cemetery.

Atlanta skyline. *Image courtesy of the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau.*
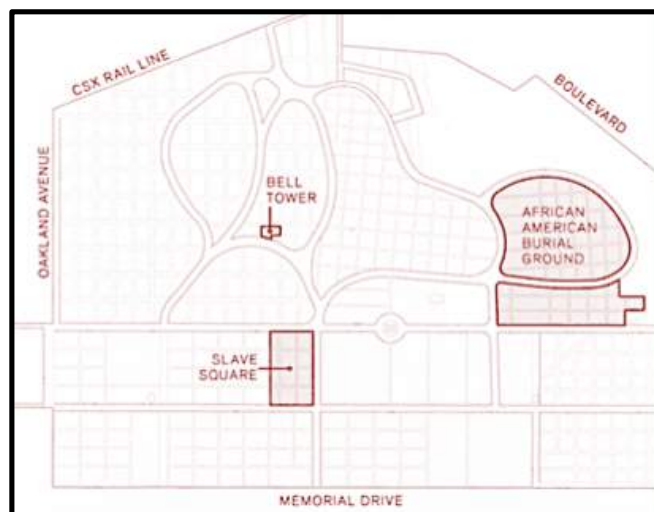
OAKLAND'S AFRICAN AMERICAN GROUNDS

Founded in 1850, Oakland Cemetery is one of Atlanta's oldest historic and cultural sites. More than 70,000 residents have been laid to rest in the 48-acre green space, city park, and outdoor gallery of Victorian art and architecture. Internments include city founders, soldiers, tycoons of industry, educators, artists, and more. Diversity is reflected throughout Oakland Cemetery, particularly in the African American section.

In 1852, the city council ruled that people of color were to be buried separate from whites, in the public grounds on the eastern boundary of Oakland's Original Six Acres. Prior to this time, African Americans were buried in church graveyards or private family lots. Oakland Cemetery's segregated section was formerly known as "Slave Square." The first recorded burial in this section was on February 10, 1853 for a 14-year-old boy named John. By the beginning of the Civil War, more than 800 men, women, and children were buried in this separate section.

In 1866, the city set aside another section in a newly expanded area of Oakland, where African Americans could buy burial space. In 1877, all those buried in Slave Square were moved to this newer section. Two African Americans remained in the general section of Oakland despite segregation laws: Georgia Harris, a former slave and servant to Mrs. I.S. Boyd, and Catherine Holmes, who worked for the Boylston family, were granted special permission for their interments by the presiding mayor of Atlanta and surrounding lot owners. Legal segregation at Oakland ended in the early 1960s, when the City of Atlanta banned segregated public facilities.

The African American section is nearly 3.5 acres in size. The exact number of graves is unknown but cemetery records list a total of 12,354 African Americans who have been buried at Oakland in the African American section and in Potter's field. Many African Americans used natural grave markers, like wooden crosses, personal items, and shrubs that deteriorated over time. From entrepreneurs to educators and mayors to ministers, many of the residents of Oakland Cemetery's African American grounds helped to shape the history of Atlanta.

Activity Overview

Students will choose an African American resident of Oakland Cemetery for this research activity. Each student will identify several primary and secondary sources that provide clues about their resident. Using their sources, students will choose one of the following projects to complete:

- ❖ Write an elegy (a poem to mourn the dead) for their resident.
- ❖ Create an obituary for their Oakland resident.
- ❖ Write a song or rap about the resident.
- ❖ Create a comic book about the resident.
- ❖ Imagine that social media existed during the life of the resident. As your resident, complete an *Oakbook* profile page or post on *Oakstagram* (templates in the **Appendix**).
    - ❖ *Oakbook*: Make sure to include a profile picture, biography, status updates, and posts about what is happening in "your" life.
    - ❖ *Oakstagram*: Draw an image and post a caption about a significant event in "your" life. Have other students comment on your post.

Reconstructing the Past: What is the difference between a primary and secondary source?

How do we learn about the past? We can read a textbook or watch a historical film, but history can truly come alive by listening to the voices of those who participated in or witnessed the events of the past. **Primary sources** are original documents and records produced by people who lived during a particular historical period. These sources contain rich details and insightful perspectives. Primary sources are also subjective, as they reflect the author's personal interpretation of the past. There are many different kinds of primary sources, some of which are listed below.

Text: Letters, diaries, original documents, maps, advertisements, laws, and inventories
Audio: Music, interviews, oral histories, and memoirs
Images: Photographs, drawings, paintings, videos, and films
Objects: Clothing, tools, weapons, gravestones, and structures

A **secondary source** interprets and analyzes a primary source. Secondary sources are often a step or more removed from a historical event and benefit from hindsight. Examples of these sources include textbooks, magazine articles published after an event, encyclopedias, and commentaries. Like primary sources, secondary sources come in different forms.

By analyzing primary and secondary sources, we can better understand how people lived before our own time. It is important to remember that sources are interpretations and can reflect different, sometimes conflicting, views of the past. Sources are filled with fact and opinion, and are therefore both objective and subjective.

Notable African American Residents of Oakland Cemetery

- Selena Sloan Butler
- Dr. Henry Rutherford Butler
- Dr. Thomas Slater
- Bishop Wesley John Gaines
- Carrie Steele Logan
- Antoine Graves, Sr.
- Reverend William Finch
- Dr. Roderick Badger
- Mayor Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr.
- Marie Woolfolk Taylor
- James Tate
- Henry A. Rucker
- Reverend Frank Quarles
- Ransom Montgomery
- Daughtery Hutchins
- Augustus Thompson
- Malcolm Claiborne
- Thomas E. Askew
- Henrietta Curtis Porter

Atlanta's African American History

What was the impact of the Civil War on African Americans living in the Georgia and the southern states?

What did the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the constitution accomplish?

What was Jim Crow and why was it important?

Why was the Civil Rights Movement significant? What was Atlanta's role in the Civil Rights Movement?

How do the residents of Oakland Cemetery teach us about Atlanta's African American history?

Historic Oakland Cemetery

What is the role of a cemetery?

How do different cultures honor the dead? Provide examples.

What makes Oakland Cemetery a historic site?

What can Oakland Cemetery teach us about the history of Atlanta?

How did the Victorians convey messages about the dead?

What are some of the separate sections of Oakland Cemetery? Why would people be buried in different parts of the cemetery?

What was your favorite part about visiting Oakland Cemetery? What did you learn?

Epitaphs: A Dialogue with the Dead

Often inscribed on gravestones or memorial plaques, an epitaph is a short text that honors a deceased person. Epitaphs establish a continuing dialogue between the dead and the living. An epitaph can include biographical information, historical references, warnings, testimonies, words of comfort and hope, or prayers. A good epitaph can capture the essence of a personality. It can give insight into the life of an individual or convey the feelings of those who knew them best. Cryptic epitaphs leave more to the imagination. Several examples of Oakland epitaphs are below:

✤ Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr. (1938-2003)
"Mayor of Atlanta, 1990-1994 and 1974-1982
Vice Mayor, 1970-1974
A servant devoted to his family and friends and to the politics of inclusion for *all* Atlantans."

✤ Dorothy Louise Copeland Connally (1896-1977)
"Her strength flowed from her beauty, intellect, and faith."

✤ Captain A.H. Benning (1840-1904)
"The sailor has returned home, from over life's sea, and entered his last port, heaven."
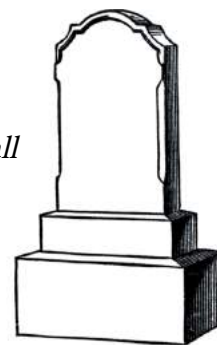
For this activity, students will write their own epitaph. Students should consider how they would want to be remembered a hundred years from now. If students are uncomfortable with writing their own epitaph, they can choose another historical figure or resident of Oakland to memorialize.

Unveiling Victorian Sculpture

As students walk through Oakland, they will notice that the cemetery is also an outdoor gallery of Victorian art and architecture. In memorializing their dead, the Victorians would use headstones covered in symbols, beautiful monuments, and fascinating sculptures to express how they felt about the dead or reveal characteristics of the dead.

In this activity, students will identify a sculpture at Oakland and write a one-page reflection on the piece of art. Students should strive to answer the following questions:

✤ Describe the sculpture. What do you see? Is it a figure or an object?
✤ Describe the material, size, and other physical or visual aspects of the sculpture.
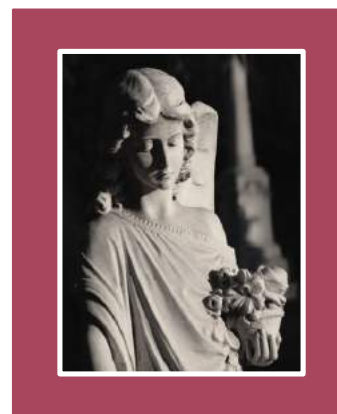
- ❖ Where is the sculpture located? Is it memorializing a specific person? If so, who?
- ❖ Are there any symbols on this sculpture?
- ❖ Does this sculpture have any religious or cultural elements?
- ❖ What idea/message is the artist, or the loved ones of the deceased, trying to get across to the viewer?
- ❖ How do you feel when you look at this sculpture?

If this information is available, students should identify the title of the sculpture, the date of creation, and the name of the artist. Students should include a photograph or they should draw their interpretation of the sculpture.

Students can also reinterpret the sculpture through another art form, such as music or dance. How would the Victorians, or the artist, convey their emotions through music or dance?

The Power of Flowers

Oakland Cemetery is often viewed as a green oasis located in the heart of downtown Atlanta. Timeless gardens, flowering shrubs, and dozens of different tree species occupy the historic landscape of this rural garden cemetery. Many of the plants found on the grounds are based on historic records and plants inventories from centuries past.

In memorializing their dead, the Victorians would often decorate gravestones with images and symbols to convey their feelings about the recently departed. This use of symbolism extended to plants and flowers. Rosemary would be planted for remembrance, cedar trees to represent a long life, weeping willows for sorrow, and ivy to indicate eternal friendship.

While visiting Oakland Cemetery, ask students to take note of the different plants, flowers, and trees they find. Students can then research the plants and create a brochure that highlights Oakland Cemetery's botanical life. Each entry should include the scientific and common name of the plant, an image, facts about its origin, historical use, and symbolism.

Suggested Books

- ❖ Armstrong, William H. *Sounder.* New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 1969.
- ❖ Myers, Walter Dean. *The Glory Fields.* New York: Scholastic, 1994.
- ❖ Taylor, Mildred D. *Let the Circle Be Unbroken.* New York: Penguin Group, 1981.
- ❖ Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.* New York: Penguin Group, 1974.

Additional Resources

- ❖ Cohen, Rodney T. *The Black Colleges of Atlanta.* Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.
- ❖ Dorsey, Allison. *To Build Our Lives Together: Community Formation in Black Atlanta, 1875-1906.* Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2004.
- ❖ Mason Jr., Herman "Skip." *Black Atlanta in the Roaring Twenties.* Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 1997.
- ❖ Taylor, Dee. *African-American Education in DeKalb County.* Great Britain: Arcadia Publishing, 1999.

Georgia Performance Standards for Grade 8

While participating in a school tour of Oakland Cemetery, students will gain a sense of the development of Atlanta, the state, and the American South. The following performance standards might be addressed:

- ❖ SS8H6: The student will analyze the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia.

    b. State the importance of key events of the Civil War; include Antietam, the Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, the Union blockade of Georgia's coast, Sherman's Atlanta Campaign, Sherman's March to the Sea, and Andersonville.

    c. Analyze the impact of Reconstruction on Georgia and other southern states, emphasizing Freedmen's Bureau; sharecropping and tenant farming; Reconstruction plans; 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the constitution; Henry McNeal Turner and black legislators; and the Ku Klux Klan.

- ❖ SS8H7: The student will evaluate key political, social, and economic changes that occurred in Georgia between 1877 and 1918.

    a. Evaluate the impact the Bourbon Triumvirate, Henry Grady, International Cotton Exposition, Tom Watson and the Populists, Rebecca Latimer Felton, the 1906 Atlanta Riot, the Leo Frank Case, and the county unit system had on Georgia during this period.

b. Analyze how rights were denied to African-Americans through Jim Crow laws, Plessy v. Ferguson, disenfranchisement, and racial violence.

c. Explain the roles of Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois, John and Lugenia Burns Hope, and Alonzo Herndon.

❖ SS8H11: The student will evaluate the role of Georgia in the modern civil rights movement.

a. Describe major developments in civil rights and Georgia's role during the 1940s and 1950s; include the roles of Herman Talmadge, Benjamin Mays, the 1946 governor's race and the end of the white primary, Brown v. Board of Education, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the 1956 state flag.

b. Analyze the role Georgia and prominent Georgians played in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s; include such events as the founding of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Sibley Commission, admission of Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter to the University of Georgia, Albany Movement, March on Washington, Civil Rights Act, the election of Maynard Jackson as mayor of Atlanta, and the role of Lester Maddox.

Georgia Standards of Excellence for Grade 8

Orientation Activity: Voices from the Past

❖ ELAGSE8RL1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

❖ ELAGSE8RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

❖ ELAGSE8RL5: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

❖ ELAGSE8RI1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

❖ ELAGSE8RI5: Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

❖ ELAGSE8W1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

❖ ELAGSE8W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

❖ ELAGSE8SL1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 8 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

❖ ELAGSE8SL4: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

<u>Post-Visit Activities</u>

- ❖ ELAGSE8RI1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- ❖ ELAGSE8RI2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
- ❖ ELAGSE8RI3: Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
- ❖ ELAGSE8W1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- ❖ ELAGSE8W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- ❖ VA8AR.1: Critiques personal artworks as well as artwork of others using visual and verbal approaches.
- ❖ VA8AR.2 Reflects and expands the use of visual language throughout the artistic process.
- ❖ VA8C.1: Applies information from other disciplines to enhance the understanding and production of artworks.
- ❖ VA8C.2: Develops fluency in visual communication.

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👤 Update Status   📝 Write Note   🖼 Add Photos   🎥 Video

What are you doing?

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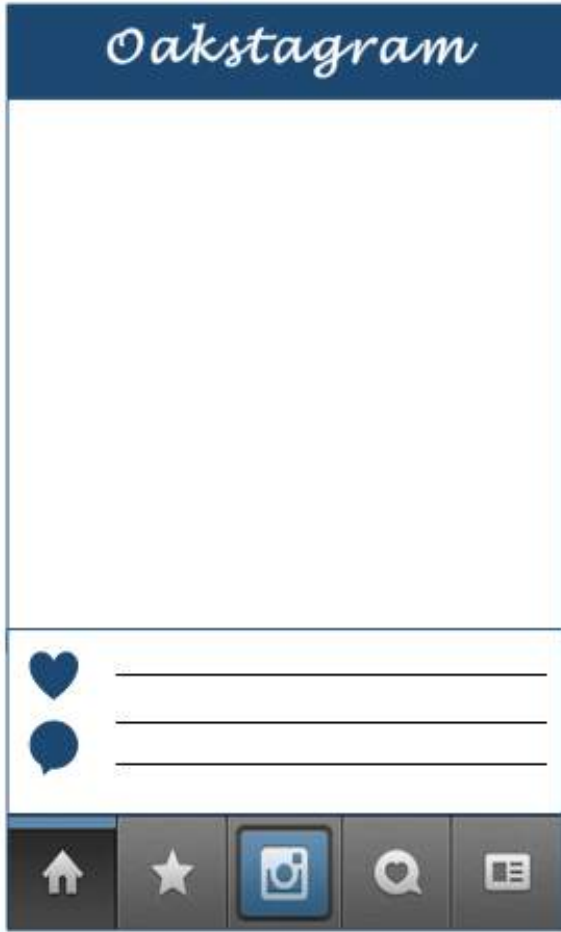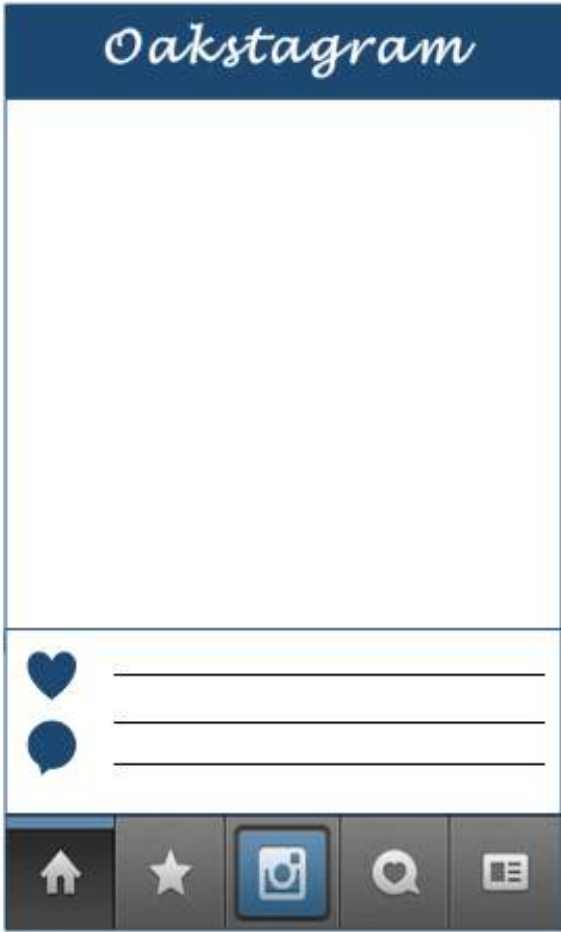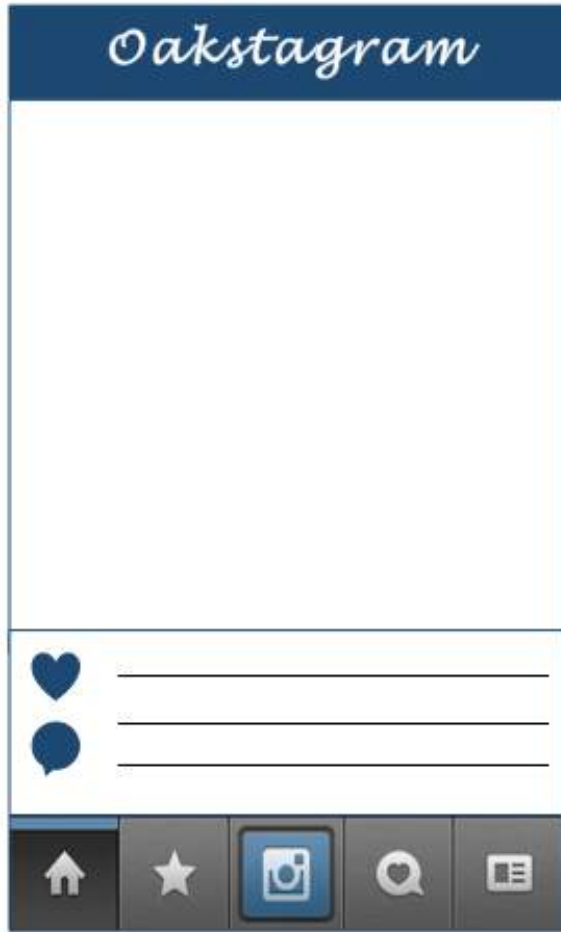
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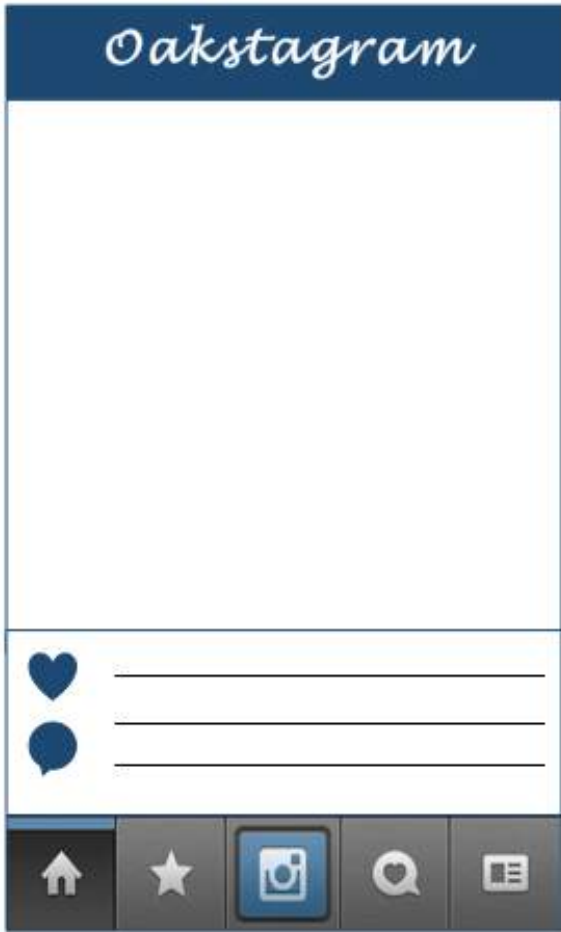
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