

Pap Singleton & The Migration West

Lesson plans for primary sources at the Tennessee State Library & Archives

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Grade Level: 11th Grade

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Introduction: Tens of thousands of African Americans migrated to the west during the 1870s. Students will explore what motivated men and women to leave behind the familiar surrounds of the South to head west into unsettled territory and the risks they took in settling new territory.

Guiding Questions:

- What motivated African American men and women to move west?
- What risks did they face?
- How did the experiences of African Americans migrators differ from those who stayed in the South?

Learning Objectives: In the course of the lesson, students will

- identify African American involvement in the migration west
- analyze documents and images
- draw inferences about the motivations of African American Exodusters
- draw inferences about the risks that African American migrators faced
- write an essay that demonstrates knowledge of motivations and risks of African American migrators
- Explain the impact of the efforts of Pap Singleton

Curriculum Standards:

US.3 Explain the impact of Compromise of 1877, including: Jim Crow laws, lynching, disenfranchisement methods, the efforts of Benjamin "Pap" Singleton and the Exodusters, and the Plessy v. Ferguson decision. (T.C.A. 49-6-1006 (C,G,H,P,T,TCA))

Materials Needed:

1. Copies of, or computer access to, the following primary sources:
 - [“Making a Desert and Calling It Peace”](#) *The Atlanta Daily Sun* (Atlanta, Georgia), Wednesday, February 07, 1872; Issue 534.
 - [“GEORGIA has a ten dollar poll tax; yet the newspapers, cannot account for the steady exodus of colored laborers from that State.”](#) *Georgia Weekly Telegraph and Georgia Journal & Messenger* [Macon, Georgia] 10 Feb. 1874: n.p. *19th Century U.S. Newspapers*. Web. 23 July 2015.
 - [Chapter 130, Acts of Tennessee, 1875](#)
 - [“The Negro Hegira”](#) *Memphis Daily Appeal*, April 30, 1879 (Found in column 6)
2. Access to TSLA’s online exhibit [“This Honorable Body” African-American Legislators in 19th Century Tennessee](#) featuring the article, [Jim Crow and the Disfranchisement of Southern Blacks](#)

Background:

[“Pap Singleton: To Kansas!”](#)

Source Location: PBS Learning Media

[Benjamin “Pap” Singleton](#)

Source Location: Kansas Historical Society

Lesson Activities: Introductory Activity

- 1) Ask students to complete a KWL chart on Jim Crow laws and/or the role of African American westward migration prior to watching the video.
- 2) View the video [Pap Singleton: To Kansas!](#) from the PBS website.
- 3) Ask the students to divide a sheet of paper into three columns and label the columns “Motivations”, “Risks in Staying”, and “Risks in Going.” Or, you may distribute the following document.
- 4) Explain that you want them to make some predictions based on what they already know about living conditions in the South during Reconstruction. Give the students a few minutes to work on their predictions.

Lesson Activities Continued: Activity 2

- 1) Divide students into groups and distribute primary sources found under “**Materials Needed**” and the following graphic organizer to each group. Or, if you have access to multiple computers, direct students to the website where you have made the list of sources and the graphic organizer available digitally.
- 2) Have students discuss the predictions they made individually earlier and combine them into a master list for their group’s graphic organizer.
- 3) Direct the students to analyze the documents and images to understand why African Americans were motivated to migrate West and the risks they faced in doing so. Remind students that some risks such as injury or death were shared by all westward migrators. Ask them to consider if there were any risks that only African Americans faced.
- 4) As the students analyze, they should work together to revise their predictions by highlighting those supported by the evidence in the primary sources, and adding any additional motivations or risks that they uncover in the documents.
- 5) Allow time for students to share the results of their inquiry with the class.

Lesson Activities Continued: Activity 3

- 1) Read the article [Jim Crow and the Disfranchisement of Southern Blacks](#).
- 2) Students will write an essay citing evidence from this article and/or primary sources explaining the motivations and risks of African American migrators.

Lesson Activities Continued: Activity 4

The class will complete “L” in the KWL chart from the beginning of the lesson as wrap up for the lesson.



