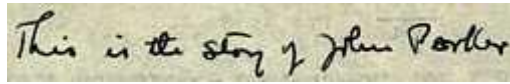


PRIMARY SOURCES OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD



This is the story of John Parker

SUBJECT: American History

GRADE: Fifth

TOPIC: Underground Railroad/Primary Sources

LENGTH: One hour

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will compare and contrast two different historical perspectives of the same story.
2. Students will deduce what a primary source is.
3. Students will evaluate potential historical sources.

MATERIALS:

1. His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad. Edited by Stuart Seely Sprague.
2. Freedom River by Doreen Rappaport.
3. Several different historical sources as deemed appropriate by the teacher.

PROCEDURE:

1. Have the students answer the following two questions in their American History notebooks:
 - A. What is history?
 - B. How do historians know they are accurately telling the story?
2. Discuss the students' answers to the above questions.
3. Tell the students you are going to read to them the same story as told by two different people. Read aloud Freedom River by Doreen Rappaport and pages 105-117 from His Promised Land.
4. Make a large Venn Diagram on the board. Compare and contrast the two different versions of the story. Discuss.
5. Ask students what story they think is more historically accurate and give reasons.
6. Tell students that historians use primary sources to recreate historical stories.
7. Help students to deduce the meaning of a primary source.

ASSESSMENT:

Share with students several sources of historical information. Through class discussions, help them to evaluate which sources would be considered primary sources.

RESOURCES:

1. The Autobiography of John Parker – Duke University Special Collections Library
www.duke.edu/~njb2/history391/parker/parker.html
2. The Faces of Science: African Americans in the Sciences
www.lib.lsu.edu/lib/chem/display/faces.html