

San Marcos Explorers Lesson Plan

FEBRUARY 2023

DATE: Thursday, February 9, 2023

LOCATION: Crockett Elementary School (Makerspace room) – 1300 Girard St, San Marcos, TX 78666

TIME: 7:55 am – 8:50 am

PARTNERSHIPS *(if any)*: Rachel Miller, Crockett Elementary School Librarian

PROMOTION PLAN: outreach to 5th grade teachers by Ms. Miller

TOPIC: Black and Hispanic community cemeteries in San Marcos, Texas

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF WORKSHOP & GOALS: generate understanding of the history of segregation in US and San Marcos, as well as pride for community history and resilience

MATERIALS & COSTS:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pencils, base of flowers ● Scissors ● Recycled paper ● Construction paper in shades: blue, pink, yellow, green ● Paperclips, to hold kits together ● Markers, pencils, for name plates ● Tape, to construct flowers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Free, use geography dept pencils ● Free, provided by library ● Free, collected ● Free, already have ● Free, already have ● Free, provided by library ● Free, already have
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LESSON PLAN ELEMENT CHECKLIST:

<u>Element</u>	<u>Application</u>
<p>Discussion: meeting students where they are. Formulate questions that will get them to talk about what they already know about the topic, or what they currently associate it with. Ex: Where have you seen ? Who has heard of ?</p>	<p>What are cemeteries? What do you think of when you hear the word ‘cemeteries?’ Have you ever been to one? How did it make you feel if you have/even if not? Theorize: why are cemeteries important?</p>
<p>Background: Lay the foundational knowledge that is essential for students to know to understand the topic at hand. Ex: explaining basics of the water cycle</p>	<p>State how cemeteries are important to us as historians and important to communities. Then discuss the definition of segregation.</p>
<p>Local Context: Bring the broader topic close to home by teaching about how it relates to their region/community. Ex: explaining what the Edwards Aquifer is</p>	<p>Bring it back home by talking about three main cemeteries: San Marcos, San Pedro, and San Marcos-Blanco</p>

<p>Food for Thought: Have another short discussion about how the students' new knowledge compares to what they knew before, or previously thought. Ex: How do you feel about ____ now that you know how it works? What are you going to do differently now?</p>	<p>Invite students to share how their views of cemeteries have changed over the course of the lesson. Did they feel scared or sad before? Has that perception changed?</p>
<p>Call to Action: A challenge or tangible action that students can do to apply their new knowledge. Ex: visit a museum, pick up litter, talk to their family, etc</p>	<p>Emphasize the goals of preserving, maintaining, and celebrating, then describe how what students are doing in the lesson itself is celebrating through their participation.</p>
<p>Activity: A hands-on or out-of-seat activity that helps students apply their new knowledge or engage with the material. Ex: Craft, competition/quiz, presentation, dance, science experiment/lab, etc.</p>	<p>Paper flowers.</p>

LESSON PLAN:

PREP (Before Lesson): Create kits for each of two paper flower options.

- Each Rain Lily Flower Kit must contain: one 2.5 in x 2.5 in piece of pink or white paper, one 1 in x 2 in piece of yellow paper, and one 1 in by 7 in piece of green paper. Make a kit by clipping one of each piece together with a paperclip.
- Each Bluebonnet Flower Kit must contain: one 2.5 in x 8.5 in piece of blue paper and one 1 in by 7 in piece of green paper. Make a kit by clipping one of each piece together with a paperclip
- Create an equal number of Rain Lily and Bluebonnet kits for students to choose from, and have prepared for lesson.

7:20-7:45 PREP: Distribute chairs to create groups of 4-5, and set up a table or space in front of the room for demonstration purposes. Ensure an equal number of each flower kits is present at the center of each table. If this is the first time seeing students, place a blank paper to be used as a name placard at each chair.

7:55-8:05 INTROS: Introduce self and ask that students fold blank paper in half and write name in large letters, position facing speaker. Time this and routinely make students aware of how many minutes they have left to complete their placards.

8:05-8:10 DISCUSSION: Begin a basic discussion with students, asking questions like *What are cemeteries? What do you think of when you hear the word 'cemeteries?'* *Have you ever been to one? How did it make you feel if you have/even if not? Theorize: why are cemeteries important?*

8:10-8:15 IMPORTANCE: Establish a basis for why cemeteries are important. Use the associate presentation slides to discuss how...

As historians, cemeteries can tell us-

1. **Where people used to live and settle** [ex: Texas Freedom Colonies, historian using cemeteries and churches to determine where black settlements after civil war were located]
2. **Information on historic events** [ex: cemetery in Alamo can tell us about how and when it was founded]
3. **Information on our ancestors and relatives** [ex: *does anyone know about ancestry.com?* Talk about how they help people know where they come from, who they are related to, where those people died]

To communities, cemeteries are important as-

1. **Places to celebrate life** [ex: mariachis in cemeteries on Dia de los Muertos, Mother's Day, birthdays, emphasize it isn't dark or scary but a place of joy]
2. **Places to enjoy the outdoors** [ex: *How crazy is this?* Show picture of Victorian girl reading in cemetery like a park, explain how before there were parks cemeteries were where people gathered]
3. **Places to resist discrimination** [ex: build of knowledge of how MLK died, explain how when certain groups of people were treated badly when they were alive, communities would come together to honor them in death, touch on subject of homegoings]

8:15-8:25 LOCAL CONTEXT: Continue the lesson by transitioning into the history of local cemeteries. The following is a suggestion for how to guide the conversation based on the presentation slides:

Slide 11

- *Do we know/Can someone tell us what the word segregation means?*
- *Right, segregation means keeping people apart. It is a type of discrimination because one group of people is treated unfairly. Here we have some examples of what segregation looked like, some of these may be familiar to you. There were separate water fountains for white and black people, restaurants that wouldn't serve Mexicans, and (do we know who Rosa Parks was?) buses had separate sections for white and black people as well.*
- *San Marcos was no different, segregation existed here too for a very long time before it was made illegal in 1964. And this didn't include just restaurants or water fountains, but cemeteries as well.*

Slide 12

- *Which brings us to our topic today- San Marcos Cemeteries.*

Slide 13

- *Does this picture look familiar to anyone, have you guys seen this place driving by maybe? This is the **San Marcos Cemetery**. It's on Old Ranch Road 12 which is very very close to this school actually, just right down the road. Its earliest burial was in 1876, and it's a really pretty place if you ever get the chance to go. But for a long time, this cemetery was only for white people who lived/died in San Marcos, so if you were Mexican or Hispanic or Black, you could not be buried here. Which meant that those communities had to establish their own cemeteries, and those are the ones we're focusing on today.*

Slide 14-16

- *This is the **San Pedro Cemetery**. Has anyone been to the outlets? This cemetery is actually right behind the outlets. This is a cemetery that was established by the Mexican American community in San Marcos in the early 1900s. The earliest burial that we know of was in 1910, and it was purchased by members of the community for \$150.*
- *Does anyone notice anything kind of different about these headstones? Right so they have these amazing mosaics on them. Many of the people who were buried here and who lived in this area were Hispanic construction workers and field workers, and for many of these graves which date to the 1930s, they used recycled materials from construction sites or other things to make these beautiful mosaics. [point to materials, maybe guess that they are from plates or bathroom tiles].*

Slide 17-?

- *This is the **San Marcos-Blanco Cemetery**. Similar to the San Pedro Cemetery, it was also founded because the city cemetery was only for white people, except this one was founded by the Black community here in San Marcos in the late 1800s. The land was purchased for \$200 by a group of five very successful black businessmen who each pitched in money for it, and the neighborhood set up an organization to take care of the cemetery (mowing, cleaning, etc). So again, we have an example of a community coming together, each contributing a little bit of either money or time to make this a nice place for their friends and family to be buried. And that is a really*

beautiful act of love, but also of resistance- to be able to say we are going to give our people the best cemetery we can with the resources we have.

8:25-8:30 CONCLUSION: Wrap up the presentation by ending on the slides that discuss the call to action for students. Below is some suggested dialogue:

- *That is why its important that as historians, and as people who live here in San Marcos we do these three things.*
 1. **Preserve:** *do everything we can to make sure that these cemeteries exist for future generations, so making sure it isn't destroyed or vandalized, which sometimes happens unfortunately.*
 2. **Maintain:** *Make sure that they are taken care of, that weeds don't grow and that floods don't damage it, because neglect or not taking care of it is another form of destroying it.*
 3. **Celebrate:** *this is what you guys are going to help do today! Our ancestors worked very hard to make sure these places existed for our communities, so it's our job today to honor their work by celebrating it and by learning about what makes it beautiful*
- *Part of what makes it beautiful is these wildflowers. Can anyone tell me what makes this type of flower special (state flower of Texas). Right, bluebonnets are our state flower, and they grow in abundance in places that are flat with lots of grass like cemeteries! Rain lilies are another type of native wildflower that grow commonly in cemeteries, they're called rain lilies because they bloom 1-2 days after heavy rain, then turn pink and disappear 1-2 days later.*
- *We are going to be making paper versions of these flowers today, because these flowers are just one of the many things that make our cemeteries beautiful. And wildflowers are also symbols of resilience, every year they come back even when there is flooding, even after the coldest winters they come back, just like how our communities still found ways to bloom when faced with hardships like discrimination.*

8:30-8:50 ACTIVITY

- Ask students to choose from kits in the center of table which flower they want to make.
- First demonstrate how to make rain lily, based on the following video tutorial: [How to Make Beautiful Flower with Paper - Easy Rain Lily Paper Flowers - Handmade Craft](#)
- After you have completed giving instructions on how to make the rain lily, demonstrate how to make bluebonnet (the video is for making lavender flowers, but you can make a bluebonnet by substitution the purple paper for blue): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXcUn6ZmQJI>
- Finish by asking students to pat themselves on the back and encouraging them to take the flowers home, either gifting them to someone they care about or keeping it in a safe place.