



LESSON

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject: History and Social Studies

Time needed: 1 to 2 class periods

MATERIALS

The North Starl Video is highly recommended, but not required. This lesson uses the North Starl segment about Prince Honeycutt titled "Prince of Fergus Falls"

Copies of handouts and primary sources

NORTH STAR CLASSROOM MATERIALS

PRINCE HONEYCUTT: PRINCE OF FERGUS FALLS

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students analyze evidence to discover why blacks migrated to rural, small-town Minnesota. They compare the motivations of black settlers to those of white settlers at the time and infer what the positive and negative experiences were for blacks settlers. In the final product, students compare what blacks would have considered the pros and cons of living in small-town, early 1900's Minnesota.

BACKGROUND

During the second half of the 19th century, Minnesota became home to many African Americans from the South. During the Civil War, free blacks and escaped slaves moved north to escape the war and slavery. Many blacks also met the advancing Union line and joined it. During the war, they worked for the army, and afterwards, they followed the troops back to Northern States.

After the war, blacks continued to move north for jobs and new opportunities, and the end of Reconstruction and the re-establishment of white supremacy in the South led to greater migration. In Minnesota, the newly arrived blacks faced suspicion and bigotry, as foreign immigrants and native laborers feared the newcomers would take their jobs. Most of the new African Americans moved into urban areas. A few moved to rural areas and began to farm. Unfortunately, by the end of the 1800s, most of the state's best agricultural land had been claimed already, and those who tried to become farmers often left after just a few years to move to towns and cities.

Because the total number of African Americans in Minnesota was low, and the percentage of blacks who were living in rural areas was small (between 8.7% in 1860 and 11.85% in 1910), there were very few small towns that had enough blacks to develop a strong black community. For a few years, Fergus Falls was one example of such a town, with a community numbering 56 in 1900, and 34 in 1910. Initially, this group relied on pre-existing social support systems; some Kentucky migrants attended the Swedish Baptist Church, and others attended the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1919,

however, the community founded its own church, the Central Baptist Church. In many similar small, rural communities, black churches became an important part of the social fabric, and many communities relied on itinerate preachers when necessary.

For more information about events during this time period, see the *North Star* website's timeline at http://www.tpt.org/northstar/Timeline.html

For suggested resources on Prince Honeycutt and rural blacks in Minnesota and this era, see the *North Star* website's Resources section at http://www.tpt.org/northstar/Resources.html

For background on Fergus Falls, visit the Prince Honeycutt section of the *North Star* website at http://www.tpt.org/northstar/MakingHome.html?quick_link=prince_honeycutt

OBJECTIVES

- To study white and black population settlement patterns in small-town Minnesota.
- To identify, compare, and contrast what characteristics appealed to rural small-town black and white settlers historically.
- To infer what might have been the positive or negative experiences of life for smalltown black settlers.

A NOTE ON DIVERSITY

Many students can empathize with the experience of being an "outsider." As you discuss the experiences of black rural or small-town settlers, ask students to keep in mind the feelings they have faced as newcomers, and ask them to consider what strength of courage these black settlers must have had. Many urban students may have little experience with rural or small-town life or history, so you may want to introduce these areas by discussing the risks, challenges, and rewards of farm life and small-town life.

CONTENT CONNECTIONS

This lesson fits well within the teaching of immigration and the black migration. Many modern Minnesotans have ancestors who came here for agricultural opportunities. Like many white immigrant farmers, many blacks who initially settled in rural or small-town areas eventually moved to cities. Discussing how recent Hmong immigrant farmers have adapted may help students identify historical parallels.

CONNECTIONS TO MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES

U.S. History, grades 9-12; I. U.S. History, J. Reshaping the Nation and the Emergence of Modern America, 1877-1916, "The Students will understand analyze the process of Westward Expansion in the late 19th Century."; I. U.S. History, J. Reshaping the Nation and the Emergence of Modern America, 1877-1916, "The students will understand the origins of racial segregation."; IV. Historical Skills, grades 9-12; C. Historical Inquiry, "The student will analyze historical evidence and draw conclusions."



INTRODUCTION

Connecting to Students' Experiences

Ask students to think about urban, suburban, and rural communities. What do those words mean? Ask students to brainstorm or draw what they imagine life is like in those different places. What are the businesses? How do people live? How do they get around? What is appealing about living in these places? Why might it be difficult to live in these places? Discuss with students what has drawn people to these different areas, both today and in the past.

Note: some students may have had little personal experiences with these different areas. If you have time, consider a field trip to one of these different communities, so students can get a better sense of what they are like. Or, arrange for your students to have email pen pals from a different area's school. Or, ask students who have traveled to these different places to describe their experiences.

Connecting to Immigration History

Ask students to brainstorm why people moved to Minnesota's rural or small-town areas from 1850 to 1930. What were the general occupations of people at this time? Why might African Americans have wanted to move to rural or small-town Minnesota? What might the advantages or disadvantages of small towns and rural life have been for black migrants?

PROCEDURE

This lesson works well either before or after showing the film segment. Divide the class into four groups, and give each group one of the primary sources. Ask the students to use their student worksheets to help guide their analysis (you may want to give them fresh copies of the worksheet for each source, or have them record their findings in a notebook). As they finish analyzing each source, move the source around so that every group gets a chance to analyze each source. As you move about the room, use the following questions to help guide each group's analysis, or after the groups are done, use the questions below to guide a class discussion of their findings.

PRIMARY SOURCE 1 ANALYSIS: CHESTER REALTY COMPANY AD FOR AFRO-AMERICANS

This advertisement and similar ones ran in *The Appeal*, an African-American newspaper. Like earlier advertisements aimed at European immigrants, this advertisement promotes the agricultural wealth of the land and promises success. Discuss the following questions:

- What is this document? When was it created? Who created it? Why was it created? What is it about?
- What kinds of crops does the ad say will grow well in this area?
- How else does this ad appeal to African Americans?
- Do similar advertisements exist today?

PRIMARY SOURCE 2 ANALYSIS: FURNESS COLONY LECTURE ANNOUNCEMENT

In the late 1800s, professional recruiters encouraged European immigrants to move to Minnesota. Some recruiters were paid salaries by states or local governments, others were hired by railroad companies with land to sell, and still others were hired to promote specific "colonies" developed by land speculators. While many recruiters focused their energies on new arrivals in East Coast towns, others recruited people in the "old countries" through newspaper advertisements, letters, pamphlets, and speeches. In 1873, in England, Robert Kerr offered a series of lectures promoting the opportunities of the new Furness Colony to be located in what is now Otter Tail County. English settlers did eventually arrive, but the Furness Colony was never that successful. Discuss the following questions:

- What is this source? When was it created? What does it show?
- Who is presenting? What is he presenting about?
- What factors does the presenter say are appealing about rural Minnesota?
- How do these factors compare to what was later promoted to African-American settlers?

PRIMARY SOURCE 3 ANALYSIS : MAP OF ETHNIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN MINNESOTA

This map shows the settlement location of major ethnic groups, and the line showing the frontier of settlement from 1860 to 1900. Discuss the following questions with your class:

- What is this source? What does it show?
- What do you notice about the pattern of the line of the frontier of settlement? Why might people have settled in that pattern?
- What major ethnic groups settled in each decade?
- When did African Americans begin to settle in Minnesota? Where might this map suggest that they would have settled? Is this map accurate for black settlement? Why or why not?

PRIMARY SOURCE 4 ANALYSIS: MRS. FLORENCE HIBBS DANIELS INTERVIEW

In 1974, historian David Taylor interviewed Mrs. Florence Hibbs Daniels about her experiences living in small-town Minnesota. Mrs. Daniels was first married to Mr. Hibbs, and they lived in Alexandria. Her descriptions of life there reflect similar experiences of blacks in other small rural communities.

- What is this source? When was it created? What does it show?
- What do we learn about life for the Hibbs family in small-town Minnesota. Do you think their experiences were unique or common?
- What evidence is there of appealing events in the Hibbs experience? What evidence is there on unappealing events for the Hibbs family?
- What other things do you wish Mrs. Florence Hibbs Daniels had spoken about in her interview?

FINAL ACTIVITY AND EVALUATION

Ask students to review the primary sources that they have analyzed, and consider what factors appealed to small-town black settlers during this time. Using what they have learned, ask students to create a list that describes the good parts and bad parts of life for blacks in Fergus Falls.

PRIMARY SOURCE 1: CHESTER REALTY COMPANY AD FOR AFRO-AMERICANS The Appeal Newspaper



PRIMARY SOURCE 2:

FURNESS COLONY LECTURE ANNOUNCEMENT



PRIMARY SOURCE 3: MAP OF ETHNIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN MINNESOTA

Developed by Douglas Marshall Adapted in 1976 edition of *Roots* magazine



PRIMARY SOURCE 4: MRS. FLORENCE HIBBS DANIELS INTERVIEW

July 3, 1974 Interviewed by David Taylor

Taylor:	When did Mr. Hibbs go to Alexandria?				
Daniels:	We went to Alexandria, Minnesota, about three or four months after				
	we married, and I was married when I was eighteen. I was married				
	in 1916, I think.				
Taylor:	Were there many negroes up there then?				
Daniels:	We were the only colored family. The Browns and the Hibbs. My son				
	was born in Alexandria, Minnesota. We bought our own home there.				
	The Browns owned their own home there. We was just two blocks				
	from Senator Knute Nelson. The old man had his home there.				
Taylor:	What type of business was Mr. Hibbs in?				
Daniels:	Mr. Hibbs had a shoe shining parlor in the Catholic building there.				
	There on Main Street, the Catholic people had asked Mr. Hibbs to				
	take care of their building. They also gave him an opportunity to				
	put in a shoe shining parlor. At that time the Catholics also offered				
	us our apartment right over the high school. So we had a lovely				
	apartment right with the Catholic people. That's the reason why the				
	boy was brought up Catholic, because my husband was working for				
	the Catholic people at the time. My son's godparents are Catholics				
	there in Alexandria, Minnesota.				
Taylor:	Did you have any communication with the Negroes in Fergus Falls?				
Daniels:	Yes, I did. We used to go to Fergus Falls to visit the Pennys. They				
	were in Fergus Falls, and he was a businessman.				
Taylor:	What did he do?				
Daniels:	I just have to think what he did. But I know he was a businessman.				
	They used to come down and visit us, and we used to go up and visit				
	them.				
Taylor:	Were there any other Negroes in that area?				
Daniels:	No, not that I remember.				

PRINCE HONEYCUTT: PRINCE OF FERGUS FALLS Student Worksheet

Name: _	 	
Date:	 	

STEP 1: ANALYZE THE SOURCES

1. What is the source? Describe what the source is, who created it, when it was created, and where it was created.

2. What does this source tell you about why African Americans or others might have moved to rural or small-town Minnesota? What things may have appealed to African Americans or others about life or opportunities there?

3. What does this source tell you about the actual experiences of life for blacks in rural or small-town Minnesota?

STEP 2: OUTLINE THE PROS AND CONS OF LIFE FOR BLACKS IN RURAL OR SMALL-TOWN MINNESOTA

Consider all the sources you have studied (including the documentary film) about life for blacks in Fergus Falls or rural Minnesota in general. Create one list that describes the good parts of life for blacks in Fergus Falls, and create a second list that describes the bad parts.