

Rosewood Heritage & VR Project



Rosewood Property Records Lesson Plan

The town of Rosewood, Florida was once home to a thriving African American community. The town was initially settled in the 1850s, although oral histories suggest that peoples of African descent may have been in the area even earlier, perhaps as part of a larger maroon population consisting of Seminoles and free peoples of African descent. African Americans began purchasing large farmsteads in the 1870s, and by 1900 the town was majority African American.

On New Year's Day 1923 accusations made by a White woman in neighboring Sumner motivated deputized Whites to attack several African American homes in Rosewood. Over the following days six African Americans would be killed, and two Whites would later die from injuries they sustained attempting to break into a Black home. By the following Monday, a large mob consisting of 100 or more Whites, reinforced by members of the KKK from nearby Gainesville would violently displace Rosewood's African American community and destroy every Black owned building in town. African Americans never returned to their properties.

This lesson plan uses property deeds, maps, and census records to understand the loss of African American owned properties following the destruction of Rosewood. While many assume that properties were forfeited for unpaid taxes, the vast majority of properties were purchased by local Whites in the months and years following the 1923 massacre.

Aligned Standards

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards.

- D2.Civ.10.9-12. Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.
- D2.Civ.14.9-12. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.
- D2.Geo.2.9-12. Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics.
- D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
- D2.His.9.9-12. Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.
- D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

For more information please visit www.virtualrosewood.com.

Pacing Guide

The Rosewood Property Records Lesson Plan can be conducted over the course of one or fewer class periods. The pacing guide below shows an example of a 50-minute activity.

Learning Task	Time	Description
Warm-Up Task	5 minutes	Discuss the history of Rosewood.
Discuss Assignment	5 minutes	Outline goals, break into groups.
Examine Documents	20 minutes	Students examine documents and take notes.
Group Discussion	15 minutes	Questions reinforce assignment.
Submit Assignment	5 minutes	Individual responses submitted.

Glossary of Terms

Argument: a well-formed statement in support of an opinion or stance that is meant to persuade others. All assertions supported with evidence.

Collaborate: to work together to achieve an outcome that all generally agree upon.

Discussion: the action or process of talking about something with the purpose of exchanging well-informed ideas.

Property Deed: a document describing the transfer of property ownership between a grantor (seller) and grantee (buyer). They often include information regarding date of sale, names of parties, description of property, boundaries of property, and location of those involved.

Metes and Bounds: the legal description of a property's boundaries. These often reference the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) in describing a properties dimensions and locations.

Census Records: public records relating to the demographics of an area. Federal censuses are taken every 10 (e.g, 1900, 1910) years on the decade, and many states included censuses every ten years on the 5 years between major decades (e.g., 1895, 1905) as in the case of Florida.

Assessments

This lesson builds critical-thinking and discussion-based skills. Throughout the lesson, students learn how to combine the spatial aspects of historic property deeds (maps provided) with census records to think about the fairness of property ownership and race through time. Students can work alone or in groups, and a variety of assessments are possible.

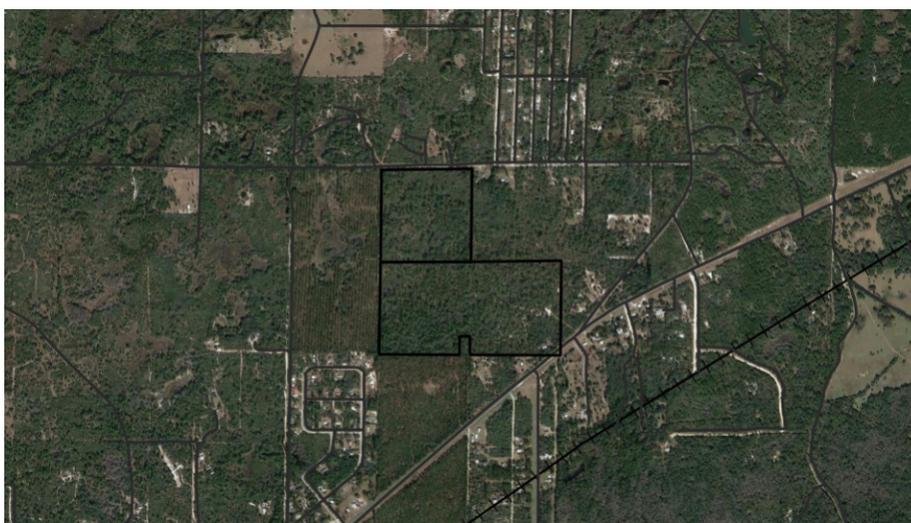
The following pages can be handed out to each student, or printed and handed to student groups. The final page includes discussion questions that can be asked of the groups, or provide additional materials for a larger assignment, such as an essay.

For more information please visit www.virtualrosewood.com.

Investigating Rosewood's Destruction with Documentary Sources

This assignment uses documentary evidence to explore the destruction of Rosewood, Florida during a 1923 race riot. Rosewood was home to a thriving African American community, who began purchasing large farmsteads in the 1870s, and by 1900 the town was majority African American. On New Year's Day 1923 accusations by a White woman in neighboring Sumner motivated Whites to attack Rosewood. Over the following days six African Americans were killed, and two Whites would later die from injuries they sustained attempting to break into a Black home. By the following Monday, a large mob of 100 or more Whites, reinforced by members of the KKK would violently displace Rosewood's African American community and destroy every Black owned building in town. African Americans never returned to their properties.

You will examine five historical documents related to a single property in Rosewood, the McCoy farmstead. The image below shows the ~150 acre property on a modern aerial image.



Examine the following property deeds. The first records the sale of the bottom 2/3 of this property. The second records the sale of the upper 1/3 of this property. The third records the sale of all this property to two local White men a few months after the riot. The fourth deed records the sale of a portion of this property (40 acres) in 1924. The fifth document is a page from the 1920 census provides information about the McCoy household.

Your assignment is to address the following questions in an essay.

1. How much did the McCoy family originally pay for the property? Determine the price per acre for both purchases contributing to the overall farmstead.
2. How much did the McCoy's sell their property for in 1923? Determine price per acre?
3. How much did the White men sell some of the property for? Determine price per acre?
4. What does this say about the fairness of these transactions?
5. Finally, add personal details to your essay from the 1920 census. How many people lived in the house? Who were they? What were their ages? How would an event like this impact them?

We will discuss this assignment during class. Remember, some pages may have information for more than one property, so make sure to read them carefully.

For more information please visit www.virtualrosewood.com.

This Indenture, made this day of January, A. D. 1903. Between F. S. & Jam. T. Bushnell this wife of the County of D. S. Gads and State of Florida party of the first part, and John M. McCoy of the County of _____ and State of Florida party of the second part, Witnesseth that the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Eighty Dollars, to them in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, has ^{bargained &} sold and transferred, and by these presents does bargain, sell and transfer unto the said party of the second part and his heirs and assigns forever, all that certain parcel of land lying and being in the County of Levy and State of Florida and more particularly described as follows: The South-West quarter of the North-East quarter of the South-East quarter of the North-West quarter of Section Thirty in Township Fourteen South of Range Fourteen East of Tallahassee Meridian in Levy County, Florida containing Seventy-nine and ninety-four hundredths Acres.

Excepting one acre deeded to the Episcopal Church in the South-West quarter of the North-East quarter. And a strip _____ feet wide off of the West side of the South-East quarter of the North-West quarter deeded to Sheldon

Together with all the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances, with every priviled right, title, interest and estate, dower and right of dower, reversion, remainder and reserved thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining. To have and to hold the same in fee simple forever.

And the said parties of the first part do covenant with the said party of the second part that they lawfully seized of said premises that they are free of all incumbrances, and that they good right and lawful authority to so the same, and that they will warrant and defend the same against the lawful claims of

This Indenture, made this day of January, A. D. 1903. Between F. S. & Jane J. Bushnell, his wife of the County of D. S. State of Florida party of the first part, and John M. McCoy of the County of _____ and State of Florida party of the second part, Witnesseth that the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Eighty Dollars, to them in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, has ^{bargained} sold and transferred, and by these presents does bargain, sell and transfer unto the said party of the second part and his heirs and assigns forever, all that certain parcel of land lying and being in the County of Levy and State of Florida and more particularly described as follows: The South-West quarter of the North-East quarter of the South-East quarter of the North-West quarter of Section Thirty in Township Southern South of Range Fourteen East of Tallahassee Meridian in Levy County, Florida containing Seventy-nine and ninety-four hundredths Acres.

Excepting one acre deeded to the Episcopal Church in the South-West quarter of the North-East quarter. And a strip _____ ft wide of the West side of the South-East quarter of the North-West quarter deeded to Sheldon

Together with all the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances with every priviled right, title, interest and estate, dower and right of dower, reversion, remainder and easement thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining. To have and to hold the same in fee simple forever.

And the said parties of the first part do covenant with the said party of the second part that they lawfully seized of said premises that they are free of all incumbrances, and that they good right and lawful authority to so the same, and that they will warrant and defend the same against the lawful claims of

THIS INDENTURE Made this 5th day of May 1923 between John McCoy, sometimes spelled McKoy, and his wife Mary Ella McCoy of the County of Levy and the State of Florida, party of the first part, and L.L. Johns and H.B. Rogers of the County of Levy and State of Florida parties of the second part, WITNESSETH: That the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of Three Hundred and no/100 Dollars to them in hand paid by the said parties of the second part, the receipt whereof, is hereby acknowledged, has granted, bargained and sold to the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns forever, the following described lands, lying and being and situate in Levy County, Florida, to-wit: The North East quarter of the North West quarter and the South East quarter of the North West quarter and South West quarter of the North East quarter of Section 30, Township 14 S, Range 14 East-Excepting one acre as described in instrument recorded in Deed Book "H" at page 71 and except five acres as described in instrument recorded in Deed Book "D" at page 703 public records of Levy County, Florida.

And the said parties of the first part do hereby fully warrant the title to said lands, and will defend the same against the lawful claims of all persons whomsoever.

In witness whereof, the said parties of the first part have hereunto set their hands and seals the day ~~xxx~~ above written.

Signed sealed and delivered
in our presence as witnesses
R.D. Whiddon

John McCoy SEAL
Mary Ella ^{her} McCoy SEAL)
mark

C.C. Whiddon
State of Florida
Levy County,

I hereby certify that before me personally came John McCoy and Mary Ella McCoy, to me well known to be the individuals described in, and who signed, sealed and delivered the foregoing instrument and who acknowledged to me that they signed sealed and delivered the foregoing instrument for the uses and purposes therein set forth and expressed.

I further certify that before me personally appeared Mary Ella McCoy, to me well known to be the wife of John McCoy and the individual described in and who executed the foregoing instrument, who, being examined by me separate and apart from her husband, the said Mary Ella McCoy did acknowledge before me that she executed the said instrument for the purpose of conveying and relinquishing her right of dower, separate estate, and other rights in and to the said property described in said deed and for the purpose therein expressed, and that she executed the same freely, voluntarily and without compulsion, constraint, apprehension or fear of or from her said husband.

I further certify that I am duly commissioned Notary Public duly authorized to take acknowledgments of instruments of conveyance in Florida and that my Commission does not expire until 14 day of Feb'y 1926.

Witness my hand and official seal this the 5 day of July 1923.

NOTARIAL SEAL ATTACHED.

C.C. Whiddon
Notary Public, State of Florida at Large
My Commission expires February 14, 1926.

FIFTY CENT U.S. INT. REV. STAMP ATTACHED & DULY CANCELLED.

FILED & RECORDED JULY 9TH A.D. 1923

L.W. DRUMMOND, CLERK

BY *Ruby Drummond* D.C.

THIS INDENTURE, Made this 26th day of June A.D. 1923, BETWEEN TOWN OF WILLISTON a municipal corporation existing under the laws of the State of Florida, having its principal place of business in the County of Levy and State of Florida party of the first part, and John Harvey and Clerk Harvey and J.A. Harvey, Co-partners trading under the ~~firm~~ firm name and style of Harvey Motor Company of the County of Levy and State of Florida parties of the second part, WITNESSETH, that the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of EIGHT HUNDRED Dollars, to it in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, has granted, bargained, sold, aliened, remise, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell, alien, remise, release, convey and confirm, unto the said parties of the second part and their heirs and assigns forever, all that certain parcel of land lying and being in the County of Levy and State of Florida more particularly described as follows: Lot Ten (10) in Block number Nineteen (19) of the Town of Williston according to the Nolle survey of said town on file in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court and recorded in plat book one page one of the public records of Levy County Florida

TOGETHER with all the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances, with every privilege, right, title, interest and estate, reversion, remainder and easement thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same in fee simple forever.

And the said party of the first part doth covenant with the said parties of the second part that it is lawfully seized of the said premises; that they are free ~~from~~ of all incumbrances, and that it has good right and lawful authority to sell the same, and the said party of the first part does hereby fully warrant the title to said land, and will defend the same against the lawful claims of all persons whomsoever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said party of the first part has caused these presents to be signed in its name by its President of Council and its corporate seal to be affixed, attested by its Clerk the day and year above written.

TOWN OF WILLISTON CORP. SEAL ATTACHED.)

Attest: J.K. Scott
Clerk

TOWN OF WILLISTON

By Wm. Jarrett
President of the Town Council.

STATE: Ill. Ill.
COUNTY: Clark
TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY: 9th Precinct

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
FOURTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1920—POPULATION

SUPERVISOR'S DISTRICT NO. 2
ENUMERATION DISTRICT NO. 98

WARD OF CITY: Summit
SHEET NO. 26477

NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE: Summit
DATE OF INCORPORATION: 1856
NAME OF CITY: Summit
DATE OF CENSUS: April 15, 1920
SUPERVISOR: C. E. Rice
ENUMERATOR: 556

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Final Notes for Instructors

The following questions are offered for group discussions or to adjust/extend this lesson. The questions are associated with their related College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards.

- D2.Civ.10.9-12. Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights.

Relevant Question(s): How did local Whites use the process of purchasing properties to further harm African Americans following the 1923 riot/massacre?

- D2.Civ.14.9-12. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

Relevant Question(s): Think about the ways African Americans not only lost their properties, but also their livelihoods. The event that took place in Rosewood was similar to hundreds of other events across the US in the 19th and 20th centuries. What are the long term affects of these events for modern America?

- D2.Geo.2.9-12. Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics.

Relevant Question(s): Using the maps and satellite images, think about what might have happened if the McCoy's remained. Indeed, what if all of Rosewood had remained? For instance, what can you tell about the property today? Could the McCoy family still use it in the same way?

- D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

Relevant Question(s): From what you know about American history, how does this event connect to other aspects of the country's present condition? If thousands of African American families were denied their properties in this way, what does that say about rural property ownership in the present? How can these families be compensated for what they lost a century ago?

- D2.His.9.9-12. Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.

Relevant Question(s): Previous research into Rosewood's destruction assumed that properties were abandoned by their African American owners. How does your review of these documents intersect that interpretation? How would you build on those ideas?

- D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

Relevant Question(s): Summarize what you have learned today while commenting on how this may or may not be relevant to modern America. Can you think of additional documents or data sources that might improve your understanding? How/where would you find these data?

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