

Indiana Black History Challenge 2007
Elementary School Activity
Indiana Avenue

Overview

Students will practice visual thinking strategies in this activity while learning about Indiana Avenue.

Historical Background

As the study guide describes, Indiana Avenue was the hub of activity in the Indianapolis African American community for many decades. Shopping, churches, restaurants, businesses, and homes were found in the area. One such business was the *Indianapolis Recorder*, a newspaper and printing company primarily serving the black community of Indianapolis.

Activity

Ask students to examine this image of the Indiana Avenue area and the *Recorder* office. After they have spent several minutes examining the image, discuss the image with the class using the discussion questions. The questions are intended to help students analyze and think about the things they see, or their perceptions of what the image represents. The questions may be asked in any order.



P303_BOX67_FOLDER16_UNNUMBERED_001

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Discussion Questions

1. From what materials is the building constructed?
 - a. What do you think the materials feel like? *For this question, assist the students in thinking about the whole building; doors, windows, screens, wood, bricks, etc.*
 - b. What kind of texture are the materials? *Rough, smooth, hard, heavy, hot, cool, etc.*

2. The image is black and white, but what colors do you think you would see?
(What colors would the various materials be?)
3. Where do the stairs go? *Differing opinions about this, i.e., apartments, offices.*
4. Do you see any advertisements that you still can find today? *Coca-Cola*
5. What time of year might it be? *Differing opinions about the open or closed windows.*
6. Name the other businesses near the *Indianapolis Recorder* office.
 - a. *Ike's Real Chile*
 - b. *Smiths Beauty Shoppe*
 - c. *A hotel*
7. If you were working, what types of businesses would you like to have nearby, within walking distance? *Differing opinions on what they would like.*

Source

Bass Photo Collection. (P303, Box 67, Folder 16). Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

Indiana Black History Challenge 2007 Middle School Activity George Stewart

Overview

This activity will present students with information about how George Stewart assisted politicians he felt were friendly to the rights of African Americans.

Historical Background

From the end of the Civil War until Franklin Roosevelt's election as president in 1932, most African Americans voted for the Republican Party, always considered the "party of Lincoln." In Indiana, George Stewart campaigned on behalf of many Republican candidates for office, both nationally and locally.

Two men Stewart campaigned for were U.S. Senator Harry S. New and U.S. Senator James E. Watson, both of Indiana. The following transcription of a pamphlet in the IHS collection was provided by Senator New to Stewart to distribute to African American voters in Indiana.

Activity

Read or have students read the following passage.

September 22, 1921

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that the undersigned
endorse the following statements while

Senator Harry S. New was Chairman of the patronage committee of United States Senate, with the co-operation of his colleague, Senator Watson, the following recognition of our people was made possible, which was never been before, viz: ---

1. Colored elevator conductors were appointed which had never been granted before.
2. Colored Clerks were placed in the Senate Post Office.
3. Colored Clerks were placed on different committees.
4. Abolished segregation in Senate galleries which had been established during the Democratic Administration.
5. Colored people were allowed Taxi-Cab privileges on the Senate Plaza, which had been denied them by the Democrats.
6. A clerk was appointed in the Secretaries Office of the Senate. This was the most honorable position of them all.

All of these and many other benefits have been derived through his administration of affairs of the United States Senate.

We, the members of:

THE NATIONAL COLORED PEOPLES' CO-OPERATIVE BENEFICIAL UNION of the District of Columbia in general, earnestly solicit our people in particular and all good citizens of Indiana to nominate and re-elect Senator Harry S. New to the U.S. Senate. He is a staunch friend of the Negro and his legislative ability cannot be excelled.

President,

DR. P. W. PRICE

NEW FOR SENATOR HEADQUARTERS
421 Severin Hotel
Indianapolis

Discussion Questions

Ask students the following questions:

1. In what city were these appointed jobs located? *Washington, D.C.*
2. Which political party appears to be blamed for segregation? *Democratic Party.*
3. Does this seem to be the perception today? *Multiple answers.*
4. What words in this passage are unfamiliar or have fallen out of use? Why do you think the words are no longer used? *Multiple answers.*
5. What does “patronage” mean? *Jobs or positions given in exchange for political service.*
6. What might have been the political costs and benefits to Senator New for giving African Americans jobs? *Multiple answers.*

Sources

George P. Stewart Papers, 1894–1924. (Collection #0556). Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

Indiana Black History Challenge 2007
High School Activity I
Willard Ransom

Overview

This activity will introduce students to the persuasive writing style of Willard Ransom.

Historical Background

Willard Ransom was deeply involved in the workings of the city of Indianapolis and was a prominent advocate for the concerns of social equality in the city. One of the major topics he dealt with was education and he served the NAACP as a state president and a lobbyist on this subject. In support of an editorial in the *Indianapolis Times* promoting desegregation of the Indianapolis Public School system, Ransom wrote this piece. Due in part to his efforts, the State of Indiana passed the Anti-Segregated School Law in 1949, well ahead of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Topeka, Kan., Board of Education*.

Activity:

1. Read this editorial to the students or have them read it themselves.
2. Ask students to list Ransom's points against segregation.
3. Ask students to answer the questions listed in the Discussion Questions section.

Segregated Schools Must Go!

One of the outstanding crusades conducted by the *Indianapolis Times*, has been its editorial fight against segregated schools. This form of separatism, which causes an insidious development of the psychology of master racism among many children, is preventing the progressive advancement of our city in many ways.

The accumulated scientific data compiled by the best minds Western civilization has produced, indicates that racial antipathies do not exist among young children, but are implanted in their minds by their environment, their educational experiences, and their parents.

The segregated school plays a big part in this process of poisoning that is weakening the American body politic. The child who attends such an institution is taught in an artificial environment that causes the growth of artificial attitudes. This is true among both the majority and minority groups.

For example, many individuals believe that the majority of American citizens are native white Protestants – when the facts are that 55.3% of our people are not native white Protestants. America truly is an amalgam of peoples – and as such that is her strength and glory. Let us not destroy this power that comes from the voluntary fusion of peoples by building walls to keep them apart.

I, therefore, heartily subscribe to the *Times* idea of sending students to school on the basis of their geographical districts of residence rather than on the basis of race.

In this connection, the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners has the power to end this antiquated condition, and candidates in the coming election should be responsive to the will of the people and should be conscious of the legal and moral responsibilities of America as a world power in eliminating hypocrisy at home.

Discussion Questions.

1. How does Ransom try to persuade the reader?

2. What words are the strongest?
3. Select one sentence that you think has the most power or is most effective.
4. What tone does he take with this piece?
5. What questions would you ask Ransom?
6. Can you put this piece in context?

Enrichment Activity:

Assign students the following activity.

Write a persuasive essay.

1. Select an editorial from a newspaper, magazine, news organization, blog, or web site on a topic of interest to you. This could be anything ranging from politics, style, music, or sports.
2. Read your selected essay thoroughly, noting the style, content, facts, figures, and tone.
3. Do you agree or disagree with the editorial? Are there parts of the editorial with which you agree? Are the stated facts correct? How can you check them for accuracy?
4. Reply to the editorial with your own perceptions, thoughts, ideas, and facts.
5. Send your reply to the original newspaper, magazine, blog, etc.

Source

Madam C. J. Walker (1867–1919) Papers, 1910–1980. (Collection #M0399). Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

Indiana Black History Challenge 2007

High School Activity II

Dr. Harvey Middleton

Overview

This activity will highlight Dr. Harvey Middleton's efforts to gain equality for African American medical professionals in Indianapolis.

Background Information

Dr. Middleton spent a great deal of his life striving to break down barriers in the medical field. This essay provides information about how he did this.

Essay

Prior to 1945 in Indianapolis, only City Hospital (now called Wishard Memorial Hospital) admitted black patients. Black doctors who served as interns and volunteers for the hospital were not allowed to treat white patients. Additionally, black patients were kept in separate wards and the hospitals often refused to hire black nurses. Dr. Harvey Middleton became the first African American doctor hired by City Hospital, but only after he persistently served as a volunteer for seven years and made a name for himself with his private electrocardiogram practice. (Hospital barriers on patient admittance began to relax in 1953 after local laws changed.)

Many physicians, including Middleton, joined professional organizations such as the Aesculapian Medical Society, which was an affiliate of the National Medical Association. (The NMA formed in 1895 in Atlanta, Georgia in response to the American Medical Association's refusal to allow black members. The AMA lifted its membership ban in 1950.) Involvement in these associations helped physicians stay current on new medical trends and also allowed them to look out for each other. For example, the Aesculapian Society had a Committee on Governmental Care of Indigents and Charities. One of the things this committee did was monitor the work of the Transient Bureau—a New Deal program that tracked the well-being of people who drifted around the country looking for work. The Transient Bureau often referred these individuals to different service providers such as doctors and dentists.

In 1935 Middleton wrote the State Medical Director of the Transient Bureau and stated, “We, the colored physicians and dentists...of this city are again totally left out of the set-up for medical and dental care of the indigent citizens of Indianapolis... We...will appreciate a just apportionment...of the medical and dental work this year in your set-up.”

Dr. George Bowman, the State Director of the Transient Bureau, responded that these claims were “not justified” and that “instructions [had been] issued to send such work as possible...and to refer cases to colored Physicians. To date, only one such opportunity [had] arisen. So [they] could see the colored doctors have not been left out...”

Middleton wrote again to say that Bowman's statement “supports our claim that a fair share of the work for colored physicians is still to be adjudicated... [R]outine service is hereby formally requested; namely, that a part-time salaried physician of our group be named and used for sick calls and infirmary care.”

Unfortunately, the historical record ends there and we do not know how Bowman responded. We do know that New Deal programs, which were federally funded, were required by law to distribute goods and services equally.

Discussion Questions

- 1.) Do you agree or disagree with Dr. Middleton's tactic of serving as a volunteer at City Hospital before being hired as their first black doctor?
- 2.) Can you think of any other organizations like the Aesculapian Society? That is, professional, civic, or religious organizations African Americans had to form on their own?
- 3.) What were these African American doctors asking for in their letters to the Transient Bureau?

- 4.) What do you think of the tone of Dr. Middleton's initial request and his follow-up request?
- 5.) Do you think Dr. Bowman and the bureau were purposefully discriminating?
- 6.) How do you think this situation was finally resolved?
- 7.) What other sources do you think you could use to help you determine the final outcome of this situation?
- 8.) Do you know what "Aesculapian" refers to? (Hint: Think Greek.)

Sources

Harvey N. Middleton Papers, 1928 – 1978. Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis.

New Deal Network. <http://newdeal.feri.org/index.htm>. (Sponsored by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute and the Institute for Learning Technologies at Teachers College/Columbia University.)

Rawls, George. *History of the Black Physician in Indianapolis, 1870 – 1980*. Indianapolis: [n.p.], 1984.