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Subject/Course: Government
Class Period: Two week/50 Min lesson

*Lesson Plan

"Slavery by Another Name": Convict Leasing and the Reintroduction of Slavery in the South after the Civil War



<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/10/books/10masl.html>

Slavery by Another Name tells a story about convict leasing in the south. Thousands of black men, women, and children were arrested on vagrancy charges and other corrupt charges and leased out to private companies and plantation owners. These companies and plantation owners would pay off fines and court fees of prisoners to the prosecutor and local sheriff in exchange for the prisoner's labor. Convicts worked for private companies or plantation owners

until fees were paid off. Many blacks worked for years for private companies and plantations in dangerous factories and other horrible conditions that damaged their health and caused many deaths before they could even complete the sentence. This lesson will look at the system of convict leasing and examine how the system impacted black families.

Guiding Questions

1. What is convict leasing?
2. Why did convict leasing start?
3. In what ways did convicts advocate for freedom and justice?
4. Are current prisons a new form of the convict leasing system?

Students will:

- Analyze the system of convict leasing and the impact it had on blacks in the south.
- Examine the impact convict leasing had on prisoner's health.
- Complete a compare/contrast analysis of the convict leasing system and the current prison industrial complex.
- Examine individuals who attempted to destroy convict leasing.

College and Career Readiness Standards

- CR.1 Identify ways that people in roles of power can influence people's rights and freedom.
- SL 9-10 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussion (one-on-one, in groups and teacher led).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Activity (1)

Open lesson with the viewing of the PBS special "Slavery by Another Name." Pair students up in groups of 2-3 to discuss the following questions:

Link:

<https://www.pbs.org/video/slavery-another-name-slavery-another-name-spanish-subtitles>

1. Now that you have watched part 1 of Slavery by another name, define what you think it is.
2. What do you think about convict leasing?

3. If you were a victim of convict leasing in 1865, circle a word from the word bank below that would describe your feelings. You can add words if your word is not in the word bank.

Circle a Word that describe your Feelings

Angry

Depressed

Hopeless

Lack of Control

Sad

Scared

Activity (2)

The great debate: Split the class in half to debate convict leasing. Have one half of the class debate for convict leasing and the other half of the class against convict leasing. Students will use the following debate warm up worksheet to build the case.

https://www.worksheetplace.com/mf_pdf/Classroom-Debates-2.pdf

Activity (3) Group Research

Students will research the impact convict leasing had on prisoner's overall health and identify cases where prisoners died as a result of deplorable factory and plantation working conditions.

Students will also research persons who resisted convict leasing and identify what happen to those who did resists.

Once students complete research, we will have a "come together meeting" to discuss our findings.

Activity (4)

Pair students up in groups of 2-3 to complete the compare /contrast worksheet to identify the similarities and differences between convict leasing and the current prison industrial complex.

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/285697170085780742/?autologin=true>

Activity (5)

Have students research the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) and have them start a Social Justice Book Club to read and discuss Bryan Stevenson's book *Just Mercy* .

<https://eji.org/get-involved>

Assessment

1. Review activity 4 in class to determine findings and discuss the similarities between convict leasing and private companies that operate in private prisons today.
2. Give a quiz on the health and conditions of convicts who worked on plantations and for private companies.
3. Based on research, students will put together a bulletin board to be displayed outside of classroom wall of those who resisted convict leasing as well as the names of those who were victims of convict leasing.

Lesson Extensions

Exploiting black labor after the abolition of slavery

<http://theconversation.com/exploiting-black-labor-after-the-abolition-of-slavery-72482>

Freedom and Convict Leasing in the Postbellum South

<https://escholarship.org/content/qt0w11j3sq/qt0w11j3sq.pdf?t=pj14tq>

Alabama Ends Convict Leasing

<https://www.nytimes.com/1928/07/01/archives/alabama-ends-convict-leasing-800-happy-negroes-sing-old-time.html>

Bodies believed to be those of 95 black forced labor prisoners

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2018/07/18/bodies-of-95-black-forced-labor-prisoners-from-jim-crow-era-unearthed-in-sugar-land-after-one-mans-quest/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.1a4e69910672

Reference Websites

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2018/07/18/bodies-of-95-black-forced-labor-prisoners-from-jim-crow-era-unearthed-in-sugar-land-after-one-mans-quest/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.1a4e69910672

https://archives.alabama.gov/ahei/Convict_Leasing_in_Alabama_A_System_That_Re-Enslaved_Blacks_After_the_Civil_War_Nov_2011.pdf

<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/618.html>

<https://news.rice.edu/2018/07/23/activists-archives-of-convict-leasing-system-reside-at-rice/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/10/books/10masl.html>

Materials and Media

https://www.worksheetplace.com/mf_pdf/Classroom-Debates-2.pdf

<https://www.pbs.org/video/slavery-another-name-slavery-another-name-spanish-subtitles>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/285697170085780742/?autologin=true>