

Life After Reconstruction Activity

Activity for 4th and 5th Graders:

- This activity works well with:
SOL VS.8: The student will demonstrate knowledge of the reconstruction of Virginia following the Civil War by:
 - a) identifying the effects of Reconstruction on life in Virginia;
- Students will engage in a simulation activity, adopting identities of people alive in Harrisonburg after reconstruction, during the opening of Effinger Street school.

Steps:

1. Give some background on reconstruction: the period following the Civil War in America. The main purpose was to “reconstruct” the South after the devastation brought about by the Civil War. There were efforts to rebuild roads, buildings, etc as well as **establishing schools for African Americans** and finally incorporating them into society. President Abraham Lincoln ordered these projects, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and enforced the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments.
13th amendment- abolished slavery in the United States, 1865
2. Give some background for the scenario: It is 1883. Finally, with the push of reconstruction, the first official African American school has been opened in Harrisonburg – the Effinger Street school.
3. Teacher will then explain that students will be given identity cards of people who were alive during this time.
4. After reading their identity card, students will write 2-3 sentences adopting the feelings of the person they have been given, focusing on their feelings towards the new school opening.
5. Students will get into groups of 4 with people who hold different identity cards from them, and share what is written on their card and their 2-3 sentences.

Materials:

- Identity cards

Resources:

McCray, Carrie Allen. *Freedom's Child: The Life of a Confederate General's Black Daughter*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 1998. Print.

Name: Lucy F. Simms

Age: 26

Background:

- You are an African American woman who was born into slavery but was freed and able to go to college
- You became a teacher and taught African American students in church basements since there were no real schools
- Now you will finally get the chance to reach students in a real school (Effinger Street school)



Name: George Newman

Age: 27

Background:

- You are an African American man who was taught to read and write at a young age even though it was illegal for African Americans
- You have left Harrisonburg, but have heard about the opening of the school and will return to be the principal



Name: Mary Magdalene Rice

Age: 7

Background:

- Your mother was born into slavery and never got the chance to go to school
- You have been going to classes in an old, small schoolhouse, however, now you will finally get the chance to go to a real school at the Effinger Street school



Name: Malinda Rice

Age: 26

Background:

- You were born as a slave, however, because of the 13th Amendment you have been freed, and now work as a maid
- You never went to school but your daughter, Mary, is about to attend the new Effinger Street school.

