

FREE BLACK ENTREPRENEUR
Bobbie Avery/John F. Kennedy High School
Applied Business Technology
Grades 9-12

Scope of Curricular Package: 2 to 4 weeks

Introduction: This curricular package highlights the life of Jehu Jones, a free black entrepreneur in early 19th century Charleston. It is designed to integrate business concepts with history, language arts, and math. Its purpose also is to show that during the years of slavery not all men were slaves.

Background: As early as 1712, South Carolina society had divided into three classes - white, free black, and slave. There were some differences. "People of color " acted as a buffer between the white and slave populations, enjoyed freedom without restrictions, and had access to courts. But while they emulated the white class, which held political power and made decisions that affected their lives, they could not vote. They achieved only partial equality.

The life of Jehu Jones exemplifies the life of a free black living in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Charleston. Born a slave in 1769, Jones belonged to Christopher Rogers, a tailor. He learned the trade and became proficient by practicing the craft on his own. In 1798 when his master freed him, Jones set up his own shop. Often he had trouble collecting money his white patrons owed. As a free black, however, Jones could sue customers who owed him large sums.

In 1802 Jones began to invest in real estate both within the city and on Sullivan Island. His ventures were successful. In 1809 he paid \$2,000 for a lot and house on Broad Street behind St. Michaels Church. At a public auction six years later he bid \$13,000 for the adjacent house at 33 Broad. Jones and his wife, Abigail turned the house at 33 Broad Street into an inn that catered to travelers on extended visits. Together the Joneses ran a popular establishment. Elite white society patronized it and praised it highly for its comfort and fine food. Jones purchased slaves to work in his various enterprises.

Jones was a figure of importance in Charleston's free black population. He moved in social circles and became a trustee of the Brown Fellowship Society. This organization had been founded in 1790, and it had a membership of fifty mulatto, or light-skinned," men, who maintained a cemetery, operated a school for the children of members, and used the funds from rental properties throughout the city to support charities and social functions. The good life remained until 1822 when the Denmark Vasey rebellion disturbed the harmony.

Jones died in 1833. He left an estate estimated at \$40,000 to his three sons and his step-daughter, Ann Dees.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Students will be exposed to a variety of primary documents.**
- 2. Students will expand their knowledge of local and state history and place it in a national context by having them complete written assignments.**
- 3. Students will develop their inquiry process by answering questions based on original documents.**
- 4. Students will become familiar with the use of documents.**
- 5. Students will use facts to draw conclusions and formulate opinions.**
- 6. Students will be able to work independently and creatively.**
- 7. Students will sharpen their research skills by using computers and other sound research procedures to complete assignments.**
- 8. Students will reinforce writing skills by answering questions that force them to present the facts in a logical manner.**

SUGGESTED TEACHING PROCEDURES:

The Background

Before assigning the packet, read the background material aloud, or make a tape recording that can be used either individually or as a group. Or, if you prefer, duplicate the background material for students to read themselves. The background sets the scene for the work they will do with the documents.

The Documents

The packet contains transcribed copies of the original documents. Directions for students are given for each document. You can reproduce the documents for individual use, and you can also make them into transparencies for the overhead projector or by using power point.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary sheet lists words and terms that might be new to students. It defines the words according to their context. You may wish to duplicate the entire sheet. Or, You may wish to duplicate only the words and let students find the definitions. If there are other words that need explanation, students may add them to the list.

Culminating Research Project

African-American Entrepreneurs

Description: Organize a study of America's most successful African-American entrepreneurs.

Procedure: Have students research the Internet, study books, reference sources, newspapers, and magazines for information about successful black business people and write a research paper.

Students may select one of the names below or they may choose on of their own.

- Madame C. J. Walker, Cosmetic and Hair Care
- John H. Johnson, publishing and broadcasting
- Raymond V. Haysbert (Parks Sausage Co.)
- David Lloyd (Bay City Marine), ship building and repair
- Reginald L. Lewis (Beatrice International), food processing and distribution)
- Carl A. Brown (Mandex), telecommunications
- Al Watiker, highway and bridge construction
- Leamon M. McCoy (True Transport), transportation
- Edward Lewis (Essence Communications), magazine and television production
- Bidly Mason, real estate investment
- Wally Amos (Famous Amos Cookies), bakery goods
- John Cornelius Asbury, burial services
- Thomy Lafon, H.C. Haynes, and John Jones, merchandising
- David Bing (Bing Steel)
- Spike Lee (40 Acres and a Mule), merchandising
- Herman J. Russell, construction and communications
- John Merrick and A. M. Moore (North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance)
- Susan dePasse (Gordy/dePasse Productions)
- Joshua Smith (Maxima) and Gayle Sayers (Crest Computer Supplies), computers
- Naylor Fitzhugh (Small Business Center)
- Paxton K Baker (PKB) Arts and Entertainment Television
- Robert J. Hurst (president of Michigan Bell Telephone)
- Bill Cosby and Oprah Winfrey, television production
- Robert Johnson (head of Black Entertainment Television)
- Merdith Gourdine (Gourdine Industries), manufacturing of electro-gas dynamics equipment
- Larry A. Huggins (Ritway Construction)
- Maggie Lena Walker (ST. Luke Penny Bank)
- Bernard Beal (M. R. Beal Investments)

- Richard R. Wright (Citizens and Southern Bank & Trust Co.)
- Earl G. Graves, publications
- Robert S. Browns, technical development
- Leroy Callender, engineering
- Berry Gordy (Motown Industries)
- Berry Gordy (Mowtown Industries)
- Ronald Brockett (Dover Graphics), advertising

Sources:

***Black Enterprises*, October 1992.**

Buy, Pat, "Magazines Seek Minorities, "USA Today, October 22,1992, p. 4B.

Estell, Kenneth, ed., *The African American Almanac*, 6th ed, Gale, 1993.

"JCP Publisher Succeeds against Odds," *Jet*, November 9, 1992. P. 6

Randall, Eric D., "Black Financiers Gainers: Good Education Adds Up," *USA Today*, September 22, 1992, p. 8B.

Smith, Jessie Carney, ed., *Notable Black American Women*, Gale, 1992.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITY:

Have students interview entrepreneurs in their community or city and make oral presentations to the class using power point, overheads, tape recorders, and any other available technology.