**Lesson Plan #14 for *Genius of Freedom*: *The Shackle Broken – By the Genius of Freedom* by Charlene Weigel**

**Grade Level:** High School

**Topics:** Civil Rights Act of 1875, African American legislators during Reconstruction

**Pennsylvania History Standards:** 8.1.6 B, 8.1.9 B, 8.2.9 A, 8.2.9 C, 8.2.9 D, 8.3.9 A, 8.3.9 B, 8.3.9 D

**Pennsylvania Core Standards:** 8.5.9-10 A, 8.5.11-12 A, 8.5. 9-10 B, 8.5.11-12 B

***African American History,* Prentice Hall textbook:** pages 428-435, 444

**Overview**: After studying the military and political upheaval of the Civil War, Pennsylvania high school students may be surprised by the degree to which the country continued to struggle during Reconstruction. Complementary and conflicting programs cut across political, social, and economic sectors at the federal, state, county and local levels. Allies and opponents shifted along racial, political, geographic, social, and economic lines. The country struggled to create a new economic, political, and social structure that incorporated the newly freed Americans while responding to the changed economic circumstances of white Southern planters and rebuilding after the destruction of war. As textbooks cover presidential policies, the actions of the Radical and moderate Republicans, the response of the Southern Democrats, and local Black Codes and Jim Crow laws, students study the actions of the white majority politicians. Students may not, however, grasp either the struggles of and the agency shown by black Americans elected to the local, state and federal offices during Reconstruction. By thinking critically about the primary source lithograph *The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom*, students can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and efforts of this pioneering generation of black legislators and the voices of the newly freed Americans for whom they advocated. Students will examine and analyze the lithograph that focuses on a major address by Congressman Robert B. Elliott (R-SC) in support of what would ultimately become the Civil Rights Act of 1875. They will analyze the messages in the lithograph in the context of key historical events.

**Materials:**

* From the Exhibit: Copy of lithograph *The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom* (Pub. E. Sachse & Co., 5 N. Liberty St., Baltimore, c1874)
* *Distinguished Colored Men* – a chromolithograph showing Robert Elliott, Frederick Douglass and other prominent pre-and post-war African-American leaders
* Worksheets:
  + Worksheet A: Robert Elliott Biography Analysis Worksheet
  + Worksheet A Robert Elliott Biography Analysis Worksheet Answer Key
  + Worksheet B: What is Genius?
  + Worksheet B: What is Genius? Answer Key
  + Worksheet C: “The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom” Image Analysis Sheet
  + Worksheet C: “The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom” Image Analysis Sheet Answer Key
* Political Cartoon, *Southern Chivalry: Argument versus Club’s, 1856* depicting Congressman Preston Brooks (D-SC) striking Senator Charles Sumner (R-MA) with a cane in 1856: <http://www.visitthecapitol.gov/civilwar/html/slide_9a.html>
* Smartboard/Overhead projector

Additional Teacher Background:

* Additional context on the history of African-Americans in Congress in this e-book available for free download:

Office of History and Preservation Office of the Clerk U.S. House of Representatives. *BLACK AMERICANS IN CONGRESS 1870 - 2007 - H. DOC. 108-224*. Comp. The Committee on House Administration of the U.S. House of Representatives. *GPO*. U.S. Government Publishing Office, 15 Oct. 2008. Web. 5 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-CDOC-108hdoc224/content-detail.html>>.

**Procedure:**

1. Set stage for lesson by reminding students of the deep political divide that was growing between the North and South in Congress during the years leading up to the Civil War. Display *Southern Chivalry: Argument versus Club’s, 1856* depicting the caning of Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner by South Carolinian Congressman Preston Brooks. If this event was addressed in prior curricular work, ask students to recap the issue leading up to the caning and the significance of the event at the time. If this event was not included in the prior curriculum, use the context included in the legend of the cartoon to give students appropriate background. Inform students that both actors (Sumner and Brooks) became popular symbols within their respective parties as a result of this event (Sumner was viewed as heroic by Radical Republicans and Brooks by Southern Democrats). Ask students to analyze whether the artist was writing in favor of Sumner or Brooks given the title/caption. (Teacher Note: *The use of the term “Southern Chivalry” in the context of the brutal caning is sarcastic, indicating that the artist was being critical of the act of the Southern Congressman Brooks.)*
2. Show image of chromolithograph *Distinguished Colored Men* to students. Ask students to recap the role of Frederick Douglass and to hypothesize about why the image might show him at the center. Ask students to identify any other men in this image that they may recognize.
3. Point out Robert Elliott in the chromolithograph. Distribute Worksheet A (Robert Elliott Biography Analysis Worksheet), reviewing the key points about Robert Elliott in the first column. Ask students to complete the second and third columns of the worksheet. This worksheet may be an appropriate homework assignment.

* Source: Pages 78-83 of *BLACK AMERICANS IN CONGRESS 1870 - 2007 - H. DOC. 108-224* <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-CDOC-108hdoc224/content-detail.html>) (See full source in Additional Teacher Background section).

1. Facilitate class discussion on Worksheet A (see Answer Key for some suggested responses).
2. Explore the concept of what it means to be a genius. Distribute Worksheet B: What is genius? Give students five minutes to work individually on the questions. Then have students pair up for five minutes. Facilitate group discussion using Answer Key for some suggested discussion questions.
3. Distribute copies of the lithograph to students or display on Smartboard/projector. Break students into five groups to work on Worksheet C: *The Shackle Broken – By The Genius of Freedom* Image Analysis Sheet.
4. Have students jigsaw sharing their observations on the assigned portion of the lithograph to lead a discussion with their peers. The goal is for students to use their assigned segment of the image to educate their peers about the key messages of that portion of the lithograph (see Worksheet C). Allow time for students to ask questions of those leading the discussion for the assigned portion of the lithograph.
5. Facilitate final discussion about the center portion of the lithograph: Elliott’s speech.
   1. Focus on center image of “*Hon. Robert B. Elliott of South Carolina delivering his great speech on civil rights in the House of Representatives, January 6, 1874*.” Focus on words on banner: “*What you give to one class, you must give to all. What you deny to one class, you shall deny to all. Hon. R. B. Elliott’s speech, page 7*.” Also note text at bottom stating, “*The rights contended for all in this bill are among the* ***sacred rights of all mankind*** *which are not to be rummaged for among old punishments or musty records, they are written as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of* ***human nature****, by the hand of Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power. Hon. Robert B. Elliott*.”
      1. Facilitate a discussion comparing Elliott’s words to Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence
         1. “… Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God…”
         2. “…certain unalienable rights…”
         3. “…life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness…”
      2. How is Elliott using the founding documents of this country to support extending equality to black Americans?
      3. Just as Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address argued that the entire nation was born with the original sin of slavery (not just the South), Elliott argues that all men are affected when the rights of some are denied. Do you agree with this assessment?
      4. Does Elliott show evidence of genius given your definition? Discuss the American Dream in which a self-taught immigrant can rise to the level of an American Congressman against the racial, economic and social obstacles of the time. Unlike Carnegie, Vanderbilt and other self-made men of the time, he did not focus his talent on capitalism but rather on extending democracy to all.

