

Lesson Plan #7 for *Genius of Freedom*: Exploring 19th Century African American Albums by Liz Taylor

Grade Level: Middle or high school

Topics: Social history, women's history

Pennsylvania History Standards: 8.2.9 A, 8.2.9 B, 8.3.9 A, 8.3.9 B,

Pennsylvania Core Standards: 8.5.6-8 E, 8.5.9-10 E, 8.5.11-12 E, 8.5.6-8 F, 8.5.9-10 F, 8.5.11-12 F

***African American History*, Prentice Hall textbook:** N/A

Overview: Among the treasures featured within the *Genius of Freedom* exhibit are several remarkable books by African American authors, many of which are available on Google Books. In this lesson, students will learn about the albums created by prominent and wealthy African American women and will use that genre to explore several of the books from the exhibit.

Background and Materials:

Information on the Women's Friendship Albums are contained on the Library Company of Philadelphia's website at <http://lcpalbumproject.org/>. These albums combined artistic endeavors, such as floral paintings, as well as poetry and essays. The Library Company holds the albums of Amy Cassey as well as those of the sisters Mary Ann and Martina Dickerson.

After students have been introduced to the albums, they will be briefly introduced to the people whose works they must choose from.

- John Stephens Durham, *To Teach Negro History: A Suggestion* <https://ia600401.us.archive.org/12/items/toteachnegrohist00durh/toteachnegrohist00durh.pdf>
 - For further information on the author, see Wynes, Charles E. "John Stephens Durham, Black Philadelphian: At Home and Abroad." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 106:4 (Oct. 1982). <https://journals.psu.edu/pmhb/article/view/43858/43579>
- Daniel Alexander Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/payne/menu.html>
 - For further information on the author, see "Daniel Payne." *This Far By Faith*. PBS. 2003. http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/daniel_payne.html
- James M. Trotter, *Music and Some Highly Musical People* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28056/28056-h/28056-h.htm>

- For further information on the author, see “James M. Trotter.” *Ohio History Central*.
http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/James_M._Trotter
- I. Garland Penn, *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors*
<https://archive.org/details/afroamericanpre00penngoog>
 - A review of the work: “The Afro-American Press by I. Garland Penn, Review of” *Library of Congress*
<http://www.loc.gov/item/mfd.25013/>
 - “I. Garland Penn 1867-1930.” *Cincinnati History Library and Archives*. <http://library.cincymuseum.org/aag/bio/penn.html>
- George Washington Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America: 1619-1880*. <https://archive.org/details/historyofnegrora00willrich>
 - Berlin, Ira. “Soldier, Scholar, Statesman, Trickster.” *New York Times* 17 Nov. 1985.
<http://www.nytimes.com/1985/11/17/books/soldier-scholar-statesman-trickster.html>

Procedure:

1. Ask students: “How many of you have ever made a scrapbook, maintained a sketchbook, or kept a book of your own writing?”, “What were the reasons you did this? List responses on the board. (Note: It is likely that more girls will have done this than boys which would be relevant and worth pointing out.)
2. Indicate that in the 1800s, many wealthy and prominent African American women created albums in which they would ask other prominent and skilled friends to paint watercolors, write poetry, essays and the like.
3. Students then use computers to examine the album of Amy Cassey. If not all students have computers, this can be done in pairs. If there are no computers, the teacher can project images from Cassey’s album. Students should make a list of the five most interesting parts of the album and share these points either in small groups or as a whole class.
4. Explain that students will create an album for one of the five historians whose books are featured in *Genius of Freedom*.
5. Put students into groups of five. Each group member will read information about a different man and will list three important points about his life. Students will share their information so that they will discuss the lives of all five and have a basis for choosing one of the men to further study.
6. Students will decide which historian they would like to create an album for and will alert the teacher at the beginning of class the following day. The teacher may allow more than one group to create an album for an

author if student interest so dictates. (If time is a concern, the teacher may choose to assign historians to groups.)

7. Each student will create an artistic work (e.g. painting, sketch, poem, letter, diary entry, postcard) and a brief written explanation of this work for an album. If time allows, more than one work/explanation may be required.
 - All of the pieces must be “created by” people who are discussed in the historian’s work. Each student should choose a different historical figure from within the historian’s work.
 - All of the pieces in the album must bear some relevance both to the historian and to the historical person who has “created” the entry.
 - A table of contents must list the documents in the album and have a one-paragraph description of each of the people who “created” an entry.
 - A beautifully decorated cover must be included.
8. Students will need several days to read sections of the work and to create the entries. This could be assigned for homework and/or for work in school.
9. After the albums are finished, they should be presented or displayed via a gallery walk so that students can learn about the historians they did not choose to study. At the conclusion of the gallery walk, students should write an “exit ticket” answering one of the following questions:
 - a. Which historian is most like and most unlike “your” historian and why?
 - b. Which historian seems most interesting and why?
 - c. Which album most impressed you and why?

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HISTORY.

A SUGGESTION.

BY

JOHN STEPHENS DURHAM, B.S., C.E.,

Formerly United States Minister to Haïti and Chargé d'Affaires to Santo Domingo.

PHILADELPHIA :
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BY

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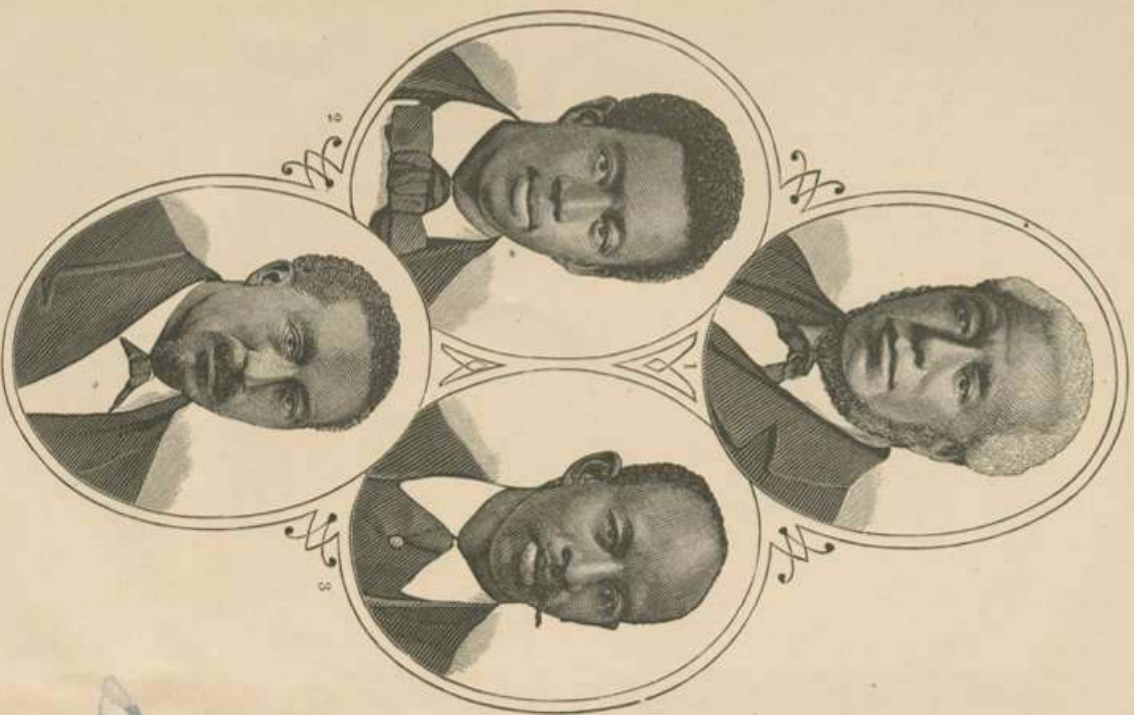
The artist by John Johnston, 1887.

Richard Allen

*Rev. Richard Allen,
the Bishop of the African M. E. Church.*

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