

LP-CWR-1

BLACK VOICES OF THE PEEDEE: THREE PROMINENT CITIZENS

Gina Kesse

Fairfield Central High School, Fairfield County School District

Properties: Edmund H. Deas House (Darlington)
Joseph H. Rainey House (Georgetown)
Stephen A Swails House (Williamsburg)

Properties not listed: Friendly Society Cemetery (Charleston)
(Swails burial site)
Baptist Cemetery (Georgetown)
(Rainey burial site)

Standard Indicators: USHC-4.5; USHC-5-7

Literacy Elements: A, B, D, E, I, K, L, O, P, R, S, T, U,
V, W

Essential Questions

1. How were Black citizens (native or migrants) of the Pee Dee region able to overcome adversity and make significant contributions in local and state politics, economics, education, and culture?
2. Why did these particular Black citizens rise to the occasion to positively affect the lives of many other citizens of the Pee Dee region, of South Carolina, and the United States?
3. Explain the lasting legacies of these three Pee Dee region citizens.

Historic Content

The Gilded Age and Progressive Era, encompassing the time span of 1865-1920, represent roughly two generations of major transitions. One of those major transitions was the era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877. As America transformed from an agrarian, frontier society to a highly urbanized and industrialized nation, a way of life in the southern region ended. The antebellum world of slavery would end violently. The old relationship of master and slave changed rapidly as blacks were freed by the 13th amendment; conferred citizenship by the 14th amendment; and granted the franchise by the 15th amendment. Those hard-earned rights would have to be fought for by blacks on a continual basis throughout the southeastern region. Nearly 4,000,000 African American citizens would retain those civil rights in a very precarious situation until 1896. It was in that year that the United States Supreme Court would uphold the constitutionality of racial segregation in the landmark case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).

To the newly freed blacks, freedom was a positive event although it was also a time of trepidation. They were no longer property, were now mobile, reclaimed family units, owned property, entered into contracts, and had legalized marriages. However, the main focus of black communities/people/families was survival, establishment of their own churches, political power, and education.

As citizens, blacks viewed freedom from a cultural perspective; the government viewed freedom from the constitutional base. Men such as Edmund Deas, Joseph H. Rainey, and Stephen A. Swails, recognizing this disconnect, sought office and went above and beyond to ensure that

freedom would remain an absolute condition for their fellow black brothers and sisters. Although most initial changes were rejected by Redeemers, some reforms continued. The funding of public schools and the limited land redistribution did give many black citizens in the Pee Dee Region a foundation from which they could perpetuate a measure of independence within a society in which they were, after 1877 and especially after 1896, in a subordinate position.

South Carolina's Pee Dee Region encompasses the coastal zone, outer coastal plain, and inner coastal plain. It is divided into nine counties: Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Marion, Marlboro, and Williamsburg. Named for an Indian nation, the Pee Dee region would become the home of thousands of enslaved Africans by the 1730s. Africans and their descendants cleared many of the ancient pine trees and dredged swampy areas to cultivate rice and other plantation crops. By the 1740s, blacks would greatly outnumber whites in much of the Pee Dee region. By 1800, cotton would be cultivated by African slaves and the crop caused an economic boom for this northeastern area of South Carolina.

At the end of slavery, there was a critical need in the black communities of the Pee Dee for persons who would rise to the occasion and strive to make life better for their people. This lesson focuses on three prominent black citizens (Deas, Rainey, and Swails) of the Pee Dee as well as on the historic places associated with them. Information about their lives, accomplishments and contributions is examined.

Sources Needed

Primary Sources (in addition to the historic sites)

Freedmen's Contract between C.K. Singleton and 32

Freedmen, 22 January 1867, Singleton Family Papers, South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC. This document indicates the extent to which newly freed Black men took charge of their lives and lived up to their responsibilities regarding families and community.

Petition of Colored Citizens, Mobile, Alabama, 2 August 1865, in Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Alabama, National Archives Record Group 105: Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, National Archives Microcopy M809, Roll 23 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications), transcribed and available online at <http://freedmensbureau.com/alabama/mobilepetition.htm>, accessed 2 February 2008. This historical document shows how freed Blacks took charge of and demanded proper treatment concerning their political rights and economic conditions.

Nast, Thomas. "The Modern Samson," *Harper's Weekly*, 3 October 1868, and "The Union As It Was," *Harper's Weekly*, 24 October 1874, reproduced online at "Cartoons

of Thomas Nast: Reconstruction, Chinese Immigration, Native Americans, Gilded Era," www.csub.edu/~gsantos/cat15.html, accessed 2 February 2008. These famous cartoons sum up the end of Reconstruction and the descent into a virtual hell for millions of southern African Americans in the United States. Correctly titled "The Union As It Was," this cartoon is referred to as "Armed White Man's Leaguer and KKK Member Shake Hands" on this website.

Secondary Sources

Altman, Susan. *The Encyclopedia of African-American Heritage*. New York: Facts on File, 1997. This source contains information about the Reconstruction era and the following years 1877-1900.

Blight, David W. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001. This book provides much detailed insight into the conditions of the South during and after Reconstruction.

Ciment, James. *Atlas of African-American History*. New York: Facts on File, 2001. The Atlas contains biographical data about famous African Americans.

Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper & Row, 1998. This is a great source of information concerning the social, political, and economic aspects of black life during Reconstruction.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., and Cornel West. *The African-American Century: How Black Americans Have Shaped Our Country*. New York: The Free Press, 2000. This source provided much information on the first fifteen years of the 20th century black experience.

Segal, Ronald. *The Black Diaspora: Five Centuries of the Black Experience Outside of Africa*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1995. This source was used primarily for the information found in the chapter that deals with the black experience in the United States of America.

South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. "African American Historic Places in South Carolina." Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 2007.

_____. "Edmund H. Deas House, Darlington County, South Carolina," National Register of Historic Places nomination, www.nationalregister.sc.gov/darlington/S10817716019/index.htm. The nomination provides an understanding of the historical significance of the site as well as primary and secondary source information.

_____. "Joseph H. Rainey House, Georgetown County, South Carolina," National Register of Historic Places nomination, www.nationalregister.sc.gov/georgetown/S10817722018/index.htm. The nomination provides an understanding of the historical significance of the site as well as primary and secondary source information.

Tindall, George Brown, and David Shi. *America: A Narrative History*. Seventh Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

Williams, Lou Falkner. *The Great South Carolina Ku Klux Klan Trials, 1871-1872*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1996. This book provides a good context for understanding the social and political conditions in South Carolina during the Reconstruction era.

Lesson Procedures

1. E.Q. — How were black citizens of the Pee Dee region able to overcome adversity and make significant contributions in local and state politics, economics, education, and culture?

Introduce students to the three prominent black citizens of the Pee Dee region via handouts of biographical information. Provide maps of the United States and of South Carolina, dry erase markers, and paper to students. Have students trace the physical routes that these men traveled during their lives as they rose to prominence and embellish those accomplishments with biographical information as well.

2. E.Q. — Why did these particular Black citizens rise to the occasion to positively affect the lives of many other citizens of the Pee Dee region, of South Carolina, and the United States?

Have students analyze pictures of the historic places (monuments, graves, edifices, markers, etc.) and brief biographies associated with these individuals. Have students make connections to the situation of blacks in the Pee Dee after slavery, after the Compromise of 1877, and after *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) to the political achievements and contributions of these three black men.

3. E.Q. — How did these places (Darlington, Georgetown, and Williamsburg Counties) progress from the post-Civil War era to the present as a result of the contributions of these three black citizens?

Have students view a series of short films via United Streaming ('Palmetto Places: Darlington,' 'Palmetto Places: Georgetown,' 'Palmetto Places: Reconstruction') focusing on the history of the counties of the Pee Dee region. Students are making connections with the legacies of Deas, Rainey, and Swails in relation to the history of the Pee Dee and of South Carolina in general. (Students will complete a chart indicating progression from point A to point B).

Assessment Ideas

1. Have students write an evaluative essay in which they compare the accomplishments of Deas, Rainey, and Swails, to nationally well-known African Americans of the latter half of the nineteenth century (i.e., Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Hiram R. Revels, Robert Smalls, Robert Brown Elliott, etc.)
2. Students create a timeline of prominent black citizens in the Pee Dee Region and include the historic sites associated with them.

Lesson Activities

Complete the following worksheets:

1. KWLH Technique
2. Compare and Contrast
3. Fishbone Mapping
4. Interaction Outline
5. Problem/Solution

1. KWLH Technique

KWLH technique is a good method to help students activate any prior knowledge that they may possess of the Pee Dee region's prominent black citizens. This activity is done by grouping and giving each group an *African American Historic Places in South Carolina* booklet.

- K** — what students already **KNOW**
- W** — what students **WANT** to learn
- L** — what students identify as they read and **LEARN**
- H** — **HOW** students can learn more about the above topic

Use of this graphic organizer is helpful to groups of students in organizing their thoughts and information.

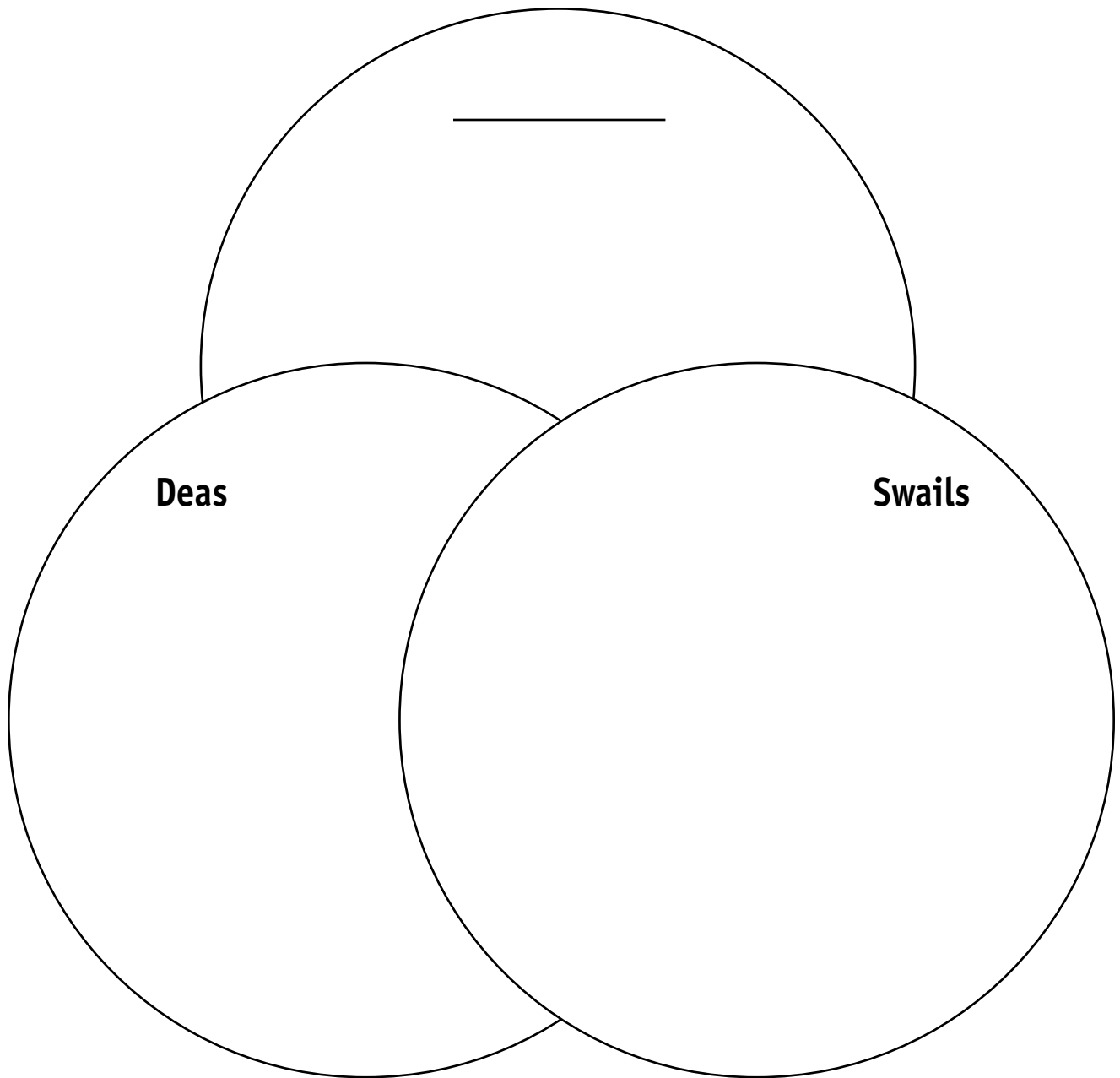
What We Know	What We Want to Learn	What We Learned	How We Can Discover More Information

Categories of information we expect to use:

2. Comparison & Contrast

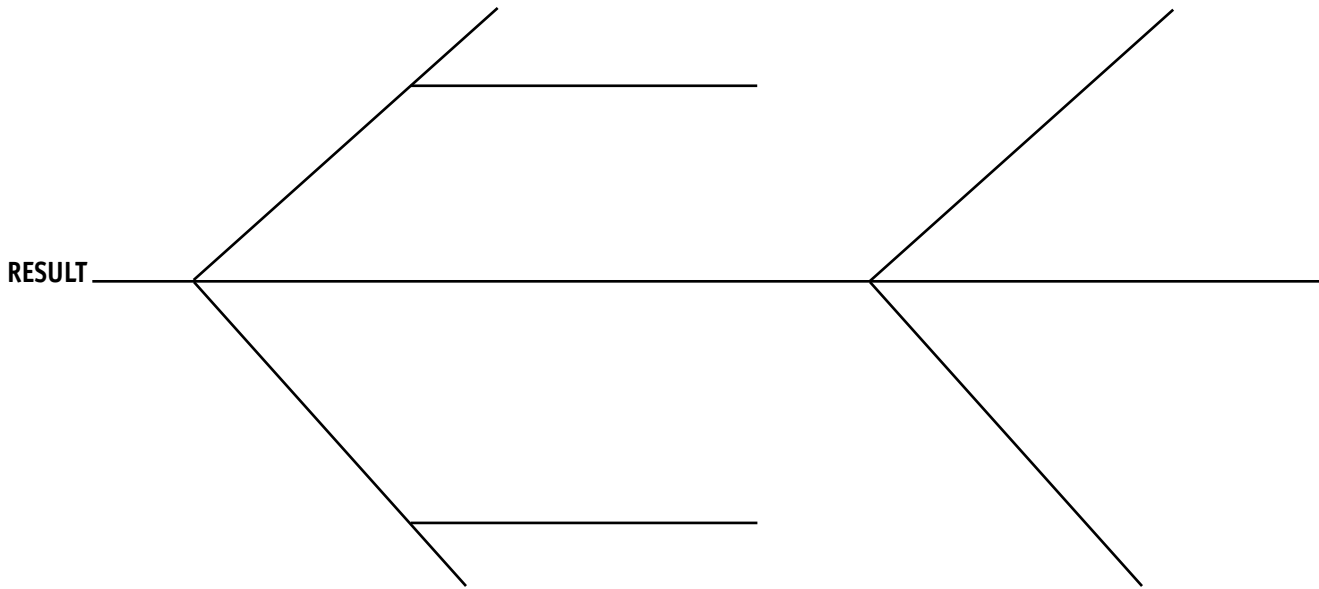
Comparison and Contrast is a tried and true method to get students to indicate similarities and differences. The graphic organizer below is what I consider an advanced model of a Venn diagram.

- 1-Rainey & Swails
- 2-Rainey & Deas
- 3-Deas & Swails
- 4-List what all three had in common



3. Fishbone Mapping

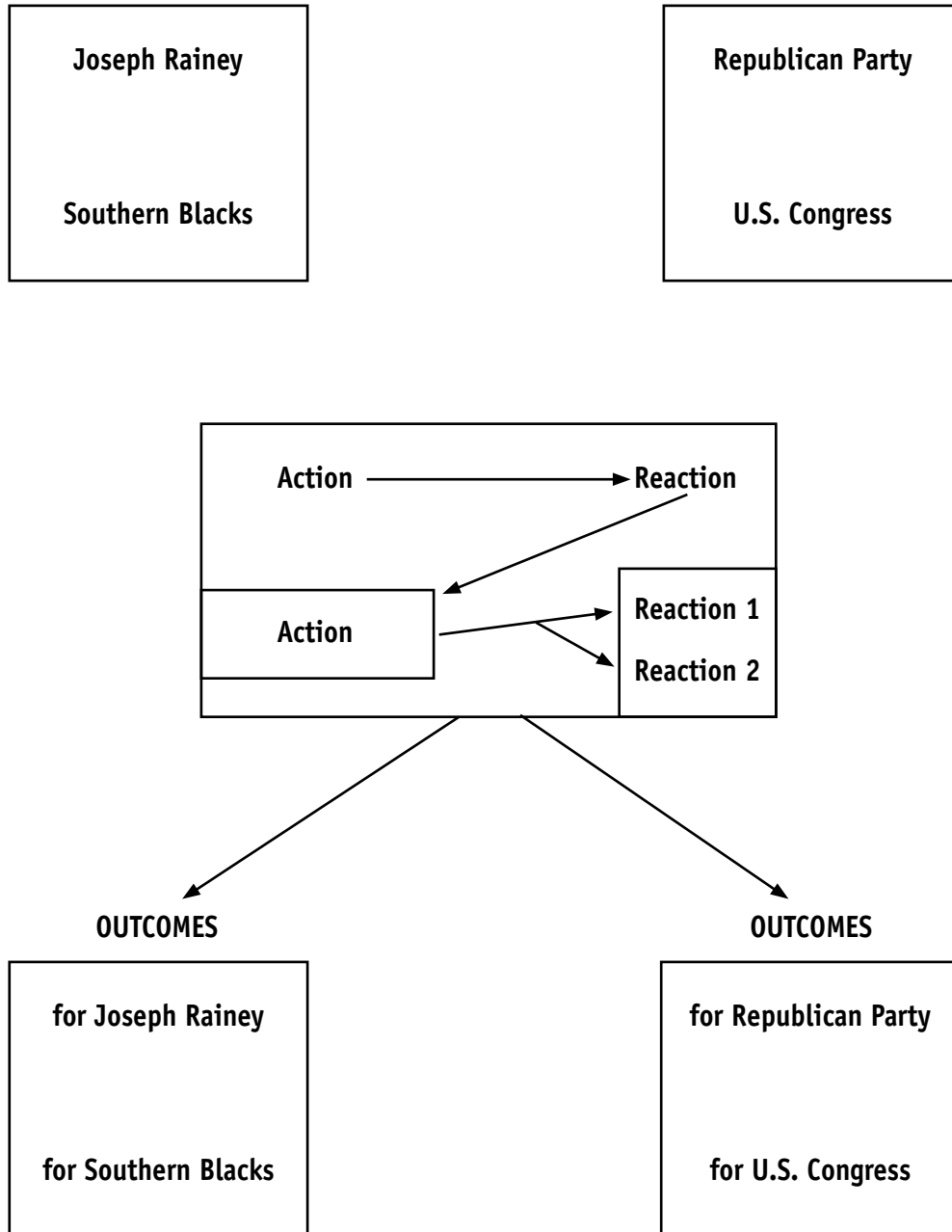
Use the fishbone map to demonstrate the causal interaction of black politicians during the Reconstruction era (1865-1890) in the Pee Dee region.



1. What are the factors that caused the establishment and growth of independent black churches in the Pee Dee Region?
2. How were black freedmen and women able to establish schools for their children?
3. What factors helped former slaves to survive in an economy largely closed to them?
4. Are the factors that caused a coalescence of the black community in the Pee Dee prior to 1900 the same that cause it to continue in the present day? Why or why not?

4. Interaction Outline

The interaction outline requires students to indicate the nature of an interaction between persons or groups at the local, state, and national levels.



1. What were the goals of persons and groups involved in Reconstruction politics?
2. Did they conflict or cooperate?
3. What was the outcome(s) of each person or group?
4. What was the effect(s) of the goals and outcomes upon the black people of the Pee Dee region in South Carolina?

5. Problem/Solution

This method requires students to identify a problem encountered by one historical figure and consider multiple solutions and possible results. Apply this method to Deas, Swails, and Rainey.

Who: Lieutenant Stephen A. Swails

