

ORANGE COUNTY REGIONAL  
**HISTORY CENTER**

DOWNTOWN ORLANDO

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**  
to support your  
**BREAKING BARRIERS FIELD TRIP**



**FUN  
&  
FREE**

# Looking for more Breaking Barriers themed Classroom Activities?

Here's a few fun, hands-on activities that pair well with The History Center's Breaking Barriers Field Trip:

- **Bessie Coleman Paper Plane Activity**

After learning about Bessie Coleman from Educational Video's for Students [Bessie Coleman YouTube video](#) and [biography](#), make a paper airplane with your students and test out. Use Kids Activities' guide for [making paper airplanes with multiple designs](#), try adding paper clips, coins, or other materials to the planes. Have students observe how the planes fly differently with more weight added each time.

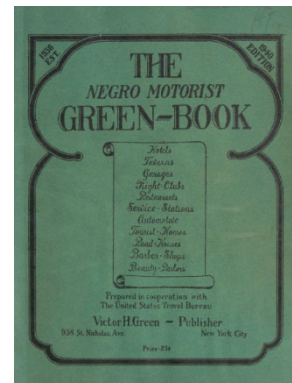


- **iPad Activity**

Use the attached iPad Activity Template to preview Famous Floridians and Historic Black Communities they will learn about on their tour! Individuals can include [Josiah T. Walls](#), [Jonathan Gibbs](#), [Mary McLeod Bethune](#), [James Weldon Johnson](#), and the [Highwaymen Artists](#). Communities can include [Fort Mose](#), [Eatonville](#), [Jonestown](#), [Hannibal Square](#), [Washington Shores](#), and [Goldsboro](#). For your convenience, see the following pages for biographies and community histories from digital sources like [blackpast.org](#) and other websites. Students can draw their App icons right on the iPad Worksheet or decorate the App icons on the separate page, glue them as little flaps, and summarize important information underneath the flap!

- **Green Book Lesson Plans**

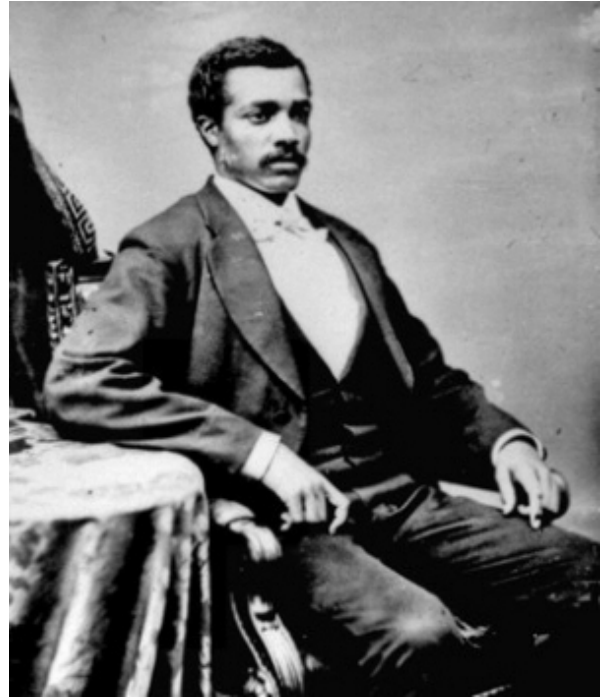
[CSPAN Classroom](#) offers a wealth of free video-based materials for social studies teachers. Use their [lesson plan on The Green Book](#) in which radio broadcaster Alvin Hall, author of "Driving the Green Book," discusses the basics of the Jim Crow era travel guide for African Americans. Their lesson plan includes a Google Doc graphic organizer, a Frayer Model activity, 11 video clips with follow up questions, and further bell ringers and resources on The Green Book.



## Josiah T. Wells

(1842-1905)

First elected to the Congress in 1870, Josiah T. Wells became Florida's first elected African American congressman. Wells was born a slave in Winchester, Virginia on December 30, 1842. He was conscripted by the Confederate Army and captured in Yorktown by Union forces in 1862. Wells then enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops Infantry Regiment in 1863, where he rose in rank to First Sergeant. Prior to his discharge from the army in 1865, Wells married Helen Ferguson of Newnansville, Florida.



After leaving the U.S. Army, Wells settled in Alachua County, Florida and became active in local politics. After passage of the U.S. Military Reconstruction Act of 1867, Wells joined the newly formed Republican Party in Florida. He was an elected delegate to the 1868 state constitutional conventions and shortly afterward was elected to the lower house of the state legislature in 1868. He advanced to the state senate representing the 13th District, which was mostly Alachua County, in 1869.

Wells's six-year tenure as a U.S. Congressman was filled with controversy. He was the only black representative unseated three times by opponents challenging his elections in 1870, 1872, and 1874 including J.J. Finley, a former Confederate general. Despite these disputed elections, Wells compiled a legislative record which included introducing bills favoring land grants to railroads and securing connections to ports servicing Cuba and the West Indies. Wells also submitted measures to reinforce the Civil Rights Act of 1866. After serving in Congress he returned to the Florida State legislature and resumed farming on his 175 acre plantation near Gainesville, Florida that he had acquired in 1873. Wells also purchased a newspaper, *The New Era*. Wells remained active in politics serving at various times as mayor of Gainesville, a member of the County Board of Public Instruction and County Commissioner. In 1896, he moved to Tallahassee to become the Farm Director at what is now Florida A&M University.

Josiah Wells died on May 5, 1905 in Tallahassee.

Source: [Black Past Website](#)



# Jonathan Gibbs

## (1828-1874)

Jonathan Clarkson Gibbs was the first African American Secretary of State and Superintendent of Public Instruction in Florida, and one of the most powerful African American officeholders in Florida politics during Reconstruction.

Gibbs was born free in Philadelphia in 1828. He and his brothers attended a Free School as children but were forced to start working when their father died. Although anti-black and anti-abolitionist sentiments were the norm in this period, Gibbs was able to open the doors of opportunity for himself. A church scholarship sent him to Kimball Union Academy in New Hampshire, and from there he went to Dartmouth. Although the president of the school was pro-slavery, several African American students were admitted to the school in the years before the Civil War; Gibbs was the third African American man to graduate from Dartmouth. The Princeton Theological Seminary followed, and although Gibbs didn't graduate, he was ordained in 1856.



He became active in the abolitionist and underground railroad movements in Philadelphia, and in 1865 went to the Carolinas to do missionary work with freed people.

1868 found him involved in Florida politics; that year he was one of eighteen African Americans elected to the State Constitutional Convention. Governor Harrison Reed appointed him as Florida's Secretary of State from 1868 to 1872, and in 1872 Gibbs also served as a Tallahassee City Councilman. In 1873, Governor Ossian Hart appointed Gibbs Superintendent of Public Instruction. As Superintendent, he made many important contributions in Florida's public school system.

Jonathan Clarkson Gibbs died on August 14, 1874, of a stroke.

Source: *Online Encyclopedia*. 2011. Gibbs, Jonathan Clarkson (1828-1874). [Via crackercountry.org](http://Via.crackercountry.org).

# Mary McLeod Bethune

## (1875-1955)

Mary McLeod Bethune was a prominent educator, political leader, and social visionary whose early twentieth century activism for black women and civil rights laid the foundation for the modern civil rights era. Bethune mobilized African American women's organizations to challenge racial injustice and demand first class citizenship.



Mary Jane McLeod was born on July 10, 1875, the fifteenth of seventeen children of Samuel and Patsy McIntosh McLeod, former slaves in Maysville, South Carolina. Unlike her parents and all but two of her siblings, Bethune was born free and was formally educated at the Maysville School, a Presbyterian Mission School for African Americans. Shortly after her graduation in 1886, Bethune continued her education on a scholarship at the Scotia Seminary for Girls (now Barber-Scotia College) in Concord, North Carolina and graduated in 1894.

In 1898, at the age of 23, Mary McLeod married Albertus Bethune. The marriage lasted less than a decade because Albertus deserted the family in 1907. Juggling caring for her one son and work, Mary McLeod Bethune taught in Georgia, South Carolina, Florida and Illinois between 1895 and 1903, before settling in Daytona, Florida. Beginning in 1904, she opened a high school, hospital, and the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls. The popularity of Daytona Normal led to its merging with the Methodist-run Cookman Institute for Men in Jacksonville in 1923, thus becoming the Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune served as the merged college's first president from 1923 to 1942 and again from 1946 to 1947. She was, at the time, one of the few female college presidents in the nation.

While establishing crucial educational institutions, Bethune began decades of leadership among women's groups when she was elected President of the Florida Federation of Colored Women in 1917. In 1924, she was elected president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) which was founded by St. Pierre-Ruffin in 1896.

As NACW president, Bethune tried to steer it beyond traditional self-help and moral uplift toward the politics of agitation for integration by attacking racial discrimination and segregation in the Federal government. Frustrated by the difficulty of eliminating Jim Crow in the US government and the internal politics of the NACW, Bethune left the Association in

1935 and founded the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), an organization with a more explicit civil rights agenda.

#### [Bethune's friendship with First Lady Eleanor](#)

[Roosevelt](#) was one of the reasons for the creation of the NCNW. That friendship led to Bethune becoming the Director of the National Youth Administration's (NYA) Division of Negro Affairs, a post she held from 1936 to 1943. As director, she led an organization that trained tens of thousands of black youth for skilled positions that eventually became available in defense plants during World War II. She made sure black colleges participated in the Civilian Pilot Training Program which graduated some of the nation's first black pilots.



*Image Source: [Florida Memory Archives](#)*

Through the NYA, Bethune became the most prominent African American in Pres. Franklin Roosevelt's administration and because of her friendship with Mrs. Roosevelt, she influenced government policy in the 1930s. She was also the chair of the informal Black Cabinet of senior African American officials in the Roosevelt administration.

Bethune was instrumental in integrating the Red Cross, increasing public awareness of lynching, voter discrimination in federal elections, and segregation on interstate trains and buses. In 1949, President Harry S. Truman appointed her to lead the US delegation to Liberia to observe the inauguration of President William V.S. Tubman. In 1951, she served on President Truman's Committee of Twelve for National Defense.

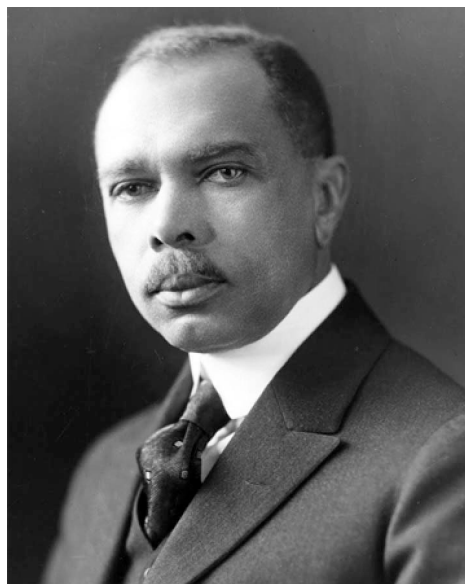
Mary McLeod Bethune died of a heart attack on May 18, 1955, at the age of 79. She lived long enough to see the US Supreme Court strike down de jure school segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education*, but she died seven months before the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which ushered in the modern Civil Rights Movement.

*Source: Edited from [Black Past](#) Website*

# James Weldon Johnson

## (1871-1938)

James Weldon Johnson, composer, diplomat, social critic, and civil rights activist, was born of Bahamian immigrant parents in Jacksonville, Florida on June 17, 1871. Instilled with the value of education by his father James, a waiter, and his mother Helen, a teacher, Johnson excelled at the Stanton School in Jacksonville. In 1889, he entered Atlanta University in Georgia, graduating in 1894.



In 1896, Johnson began to study law in Thomas Ledwith's law office in Jacksonville, Florida. In 1898, Ledwith considered Johnson ready to take the Florida bar exam. After a grueling two-hour exam, Johnson was given a pass and admitted to the bar. In 1898, Johnson became one of only a handful of black attorneys in the state.

Johnson, however, did not practice law. Instead, he became principal at the Stanton School in Jacksonville, where he improved the curriculum and also added the ninth and tenth grades. Johnson also started the first black newspaper, the *Daily American*, in Jacksonville. With his brother Rosamond, who had been trained at the New England Conservatory of Music in Massachusetts, Johnson's interests turned to songwriting for Broadway.

Rosamond and James migrated to New York in 1902 and were soon earning over twelve thousand dollars a year by selling their songs to Broadway performers. Upon a return trip to Florida in 1900, the brothers were asked to write a celebratory song in honor of Abraham Lincoln's birthday. The product, a poem set to music, became "Lift Every Voice and Sing," now known as the Black National Anthem.

In 1906, Johnson became United States consul to Puerto Cabello in Venezuela. While in the foreign service, he met his future wife, Grace Nail, the daughter of influential black New York City real estate speculator, John E. Nail. The couple's first year was spent in Corinto, Nicaragua, Johnson's diplomatic post.

While in the diplomatic service, Johnson had begun to write his most famous literary work, *The Autobiography of An Ex-Colored Man*. This novel, published in 1912, became a work of note during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. In 1914, Johnson became an editor for the *New York Age*. He soon gained notoriety when W.E.B. DuBois published Johnson's critique of D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* in the *National Association for the*



Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) publication *The Crisis*. Johnson was a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity.

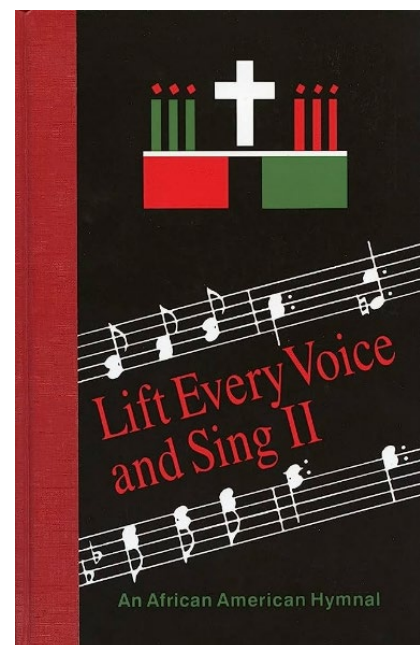
In 1916, Johnson became Field Secretary for the NAACP and dramatically increased NAACP membership and the number of branches. In 1917, he organized the famous “Silent March” down 5th Avenue to protest racial violence and lynching. The march, which numbered approximately ten thousand participants, was the largest protest organized by African Americans to that point. Johnson’s participation in the campaign against lynching continued for the next two decades.

Although he was a nationally recognized civil rights leader, Johnson continued to write and critique poetry in a column for the *New York Age*. His “Poetry Corner” column, published in 1922 as *The Book of American Negro Poetry*, became an important contribution to the emerging Harlem Renaissance particularly because of its inclusion of Claude McKay’s “If We Must Die.” Johnson’s other Harlem Renaissance contributions included *The Book of American Negro Spirituals* (1925), *God’s Trombones* (1927), and *Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* (1927).

In 1930, Johnson published *Black Manhattan, a Social History of Black New York*, and three years later (in 1933) his autobiography, *Along This Way*, appeared.

Johnson resigned from the NAACP in 1930 and accepted a faculty position in creative writing and literature at Fisk University. He maintained an active life in teaching and public speaking until he died in an automobile accident on June 26, 1938, while vacationing in Wiscasset, Maine. He was 67 at the time of his death.

Source: Edited from [Black Past](#) Website





# Highwaymen Artists

In 1958, a young high school student named Alfred Hair from the racially segregated Lincoln Park Academy in Fort Pierce, Florida met local artist A.E. Backus, and soon an idea was kindled: creating an artistic path beyond the prevailing racial barriers of the times and toward a brighter, self-made future.



The experienced artist recognized the emerging talent in Hair, and remembering the spirit of altruism that helped him start his own career, he became a mentor. With training in art, audience, and business, Hair launched a movement. He invented a new business plan for himself and a group of friends, whom he taught to paint and to sell paintings up and down the Atlantic coast of Florida, and beyond ... from the trunks of their cars.

Meanwhile, Harold Newton was trying to make his way as an artist. He had heard of the white painter who lived at the end of Avenue C, that he was welcoming to all, and in 1955 he thought it might be worth a visit. What he learned from Backus transformed him — mastering scenes of the Florida landscape, watching the older artist work especially with a palette knife, being encouraged to bring his paintings for helpful critiques — it all inspired Newton to paint like never before.

The roadblocks faced during the years of racial segregation in the 1950s and 60s were significant, but these enterprising artists were creative and persevered. With success, their number grew to more than two dozen, painting tens of thousands of works to meet the demand. They later became known as the Florida Highwaymen.

The original Highwaymen blazed their own trail by way of the arts. In 2004, they were recognized in the Florida Artists Hall of Fame, and in 2016, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture opened with 18 Highwaymen paintings in its collection, a testament to the inspiring story that began here.

Source: A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery, [\*Blazing the Trail: The Story of the Florida Highwaymen\*](#)

## Fort Mose, Florida (1738-1820)

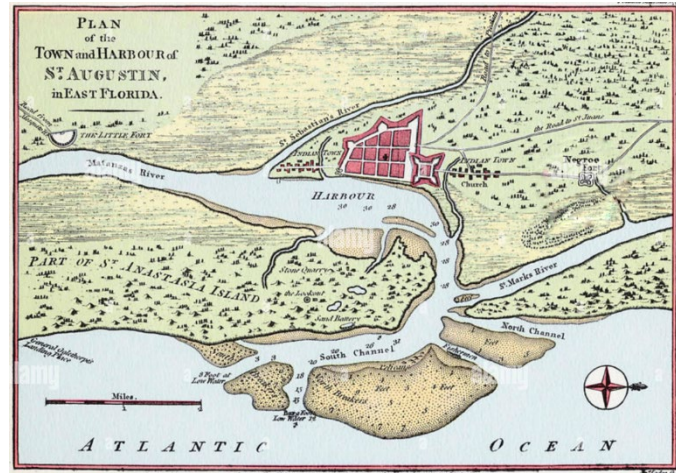
Established in 1738, Fort Mose was the first free black settlement in what is now the United States. Located just north of St. Augustine, Florida, Fort Mose played an important role in the development of colonial North America.

As Great Britain, France, Spain and other European nations competed for control of the New World and its wealth they all in varying ways came to rely on African labor to develop their overseas colonial possessions. Exploiting its proximity to plantations in the British colonies in North America and the West Indies, King Charles II of Spain issued the Edict of 1693 which stated that any male slave on an English plantation who escaped to Spanish Florida would be granted freedom provided he joined the Militia and became a Catholic. This edict became one of the New World's earliest emancipation proclamations.

By 1738 there were 100 blacks, mostly runaways from the Carolinas, living in what became Fort Mose. Many were skilled workers, blacksmiths, carpenters, cattlemen, boatmen, and farmers. With accompanying women and children, they created a colony of freed people that ultimately attracted other fugitive slaves.

When war broke out in 1740 between England and Spain, the people of St. Augustine and nearby Fort Mose found themselves involved in a conflict that stretched across three continents. The English sent thousands of soldiers and dozens of ships to destroy St. Augustine and bring back any runaways. They set up a blockade and bombarded the town for 27 consecutive days. Hopelessly outnumbered, the diverse population of blacks, Indians and whites pulled together. Fort Mose was one of the first places attacked. Led by Captain Francisco Menendez, the men of the Fort Mose Militia briefly lost the Fort but eventually recaptured it, repelling the English invasion force. Florida remained in Spanish hands and for the next 80 years remained a haven for fugitive slaves from the British colonial possessions of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia and later when these possessions became part of the United States.

Source: [Black Past Website](#)



# Eatonville, Florida

The first all-black city to be incorporated in Florida, Eatonville was established in 1887 after being settled two decades after the Civil War ended by former slaves. Located six miles north of Orlando, the town was first named Maitland and got its start when former slave, Joseph C. Clarke, along with northern philanthropist Lewis Lawrence, bought over a hundred acres of land from Josiah Eaton, one of the few white landowners willing to sell to African Americans. They then sold the acres to black families from the surrounding area of central Florida. On the fifteenth of August 1887, the town was officially incorporated when twenty-seven registered black voters indicated their intention to create a municipality. They named the town in honor of Josiah Eaton who eventually also served as its mayor. The new town's citizens, however, chose Columbus H. Boger as its first mayor to head an entirely black-staffed government.

The life of Eatonville, like other all-black towns and the black sections of mostly white communities, revolved around its church and its school. [The St. Lawrence African Methodist Episcopal Church](#) (A.M.E.), then simply called the Methodist Church, was the first religious institution in the city. The church predates the town by six years, became the first African American church in the area, and still and continues to serve the community to this day.

Along with St. Lawrence A.M.E., the town's first post-primary school, the Hungerford Normal and Industrial School, was central to the town's culture. The school, which was founded by Professor and Mrs. Russell C. Calhoun in 1889, sat on land that was donated in the memory of Dr. Robert Hungerford, a white doctor who had died while caring for sick African Americans. The Hungerford School, headed by Tuskegee Institute graduates, the Calhouns, was modeled on Tuskegee's principles—teaching vocational, literacy, and life skills to African Americans in Central Florida.



Image Source: [Stephen M. Dowell, Orlando Sentinel](#)

Eatonville is best known, however, for its most famous daughter, Zora Neale Hurston. Her preacher father, John Hurston, who would become the town's mayor in 1897, had moved with his family to the town in 1894 when Zora was three. Although born in Notasulga, Alabama, she always considered Eatonville her home. In 1990 the town established the Zora Neale Hurston Museum of Fine Arts. Now Eatonville holds an annual Zora Festival, a nearly month-long celebration of the arts and humanities in January.

Source: Edited from [Black Past Website](#)

## Jonestown, Florida

According to the city of Orlando, Jonestown was not an official city when it was founded in 1880. Then, Jonestown was a 12-block community inhabited by Blacks near the banks of Fern Creek and Greenwood Cemetery.

The town was named after Sam Jones and his wife, Penny, who are recognized as its first residents. Little is known about these early African-American settlers, aside from the fact that they were once slaves. Most people who lived in Jonestown were workers who lived in small houses or shacks, but there were also some residents who owned businesses. By 1891, 21 families resided there, according to Orange County Regional History Center.



Over the years, flooding became a major issue for the community. Jonestown was located in a low-lying area, so during rainy seasons, nearby lakes flooded the area and damaged homes. Many people who lived there were forced to move, according to historian William R. O'Neal.

The community survived and by 1939, there was one school, at least one store and two churches in the community, including Mount Olive CME church, which still stands today, across the street from what is now Jones High School.

Though they share the same name, Jones High School apparently has no relation to Jonestown, other than the fact that they both are historically Black. The school is named after principal L.C. Jones, who put together a land deal for the then new school at Parramore Avenue and Washington Street. It opened 100 years ago in 1921.

In 1939, nearly 18 years after Jones High opened, a fire destroyed a South Street resident's home in Jonestown. That led to the destruction of all the homes in the community and Blacks were forced out because white residents protested to city officials, citing poor conditions of neighboring structures.

Ultimately, Orlando's Housing Authority decided to demolish the buildings in Jonestown and relocate Black residents to a public housing development in Parramore called Griffin Park.

Today, Parramore is known for its predominantly Black roots, most of which derived from those who lived in a community once known as Jonestown.

Source: [News 6 Website Article](#) by Robert Brown



# Washington Shores, Florida

In 1949, the Orlando Negro Chamber of Commerce presented the details on the upcoming housing development, Washington Shores. Many citizens from all throughout the state came to visit and inspect the new developments progress. This community was unlike any other housing development of this time since all the houses were going to be “owned and peopled by Negro citizens.” The Washington Shores community was going to be one of the first developments in the nation to start “setting a pattern... for meeting the housing shortages of minority groups, especially Negroes.”

The concept for a Negro-owned community was created in 1947 when John Graham, a tile manufacturer in Central Florida, was faced with the task of finding housing for a Negro employee of his. Appalled when finding that White landowners were charging outrageous rental fees in African American areas of Orlando, Graham gained aid from the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, and the city government to help ease “congested quarters of the Orlando Negro section” by establishing a non-profit organization to fund the housing development. Segregation of white and black housing communities in this era was a major issue, often “during the 1950s urban expansion...discriminated forced blacks into small, disconnected communities and to travel longer distances for goods and services than did whites.” Thus, the idea of a Negro-owned community close to the hustle and bustle of Orlando was met with excitement.

The development of the Washington Shores community “presents a remarkable case study of civic cooperation.” Throughout Orlando, citizens and businesses contributed to the development of the housing. The Orlando legislature expanded the city limits in order to ensure that the community would have adequate fire and police protection, as well as necessary utilities, such as sewer, electricity, and paved streets. And a Negro real estate firm was given the job of handling the sales of all housing. The cities cooperation with the development of Washington Shores aided many African Americans planning on moving to this community, the First National Bank of Orlando gave financial aid to those purchasing homes in the community.

The Washington Shores community of Central Florida was met and enjoyed with wide appeal. The attractive new development gave African Americans the chance to live life in stable and prosperous new housing. The development of Washington Shores to this day is a highlight of Central Florida History.

Source: Edited From Richmond University's [Washington Shores Article](#)

# Hannibal Square, Florida

Hannibal Square (the "west side") was officially founded in 1881, only 40 years after Florida became the 27th state, and 14 years after the state reentered the Union after seceding and co-founding the Confederate States in 1861.

The free black families who lived here provided a ready source of labor for building a town to serve wealthy white winter residents and visitors. Although Florida and Winter Park were to stay deeply segregated into the 1960s, the non-agricultural railroad jobs and domestic service positions with Winter Park's wealthy white families resulted in educational opportunities and comparative prosperity and privilege for Winter Park's black residents.

On October 12, 1887, young Republican Gus Henderson lead a march of black registered voters across the railroad tracks to Ergood's Drugstore. The Oct 12, 1887 election was held during the day. This established the quorum, which then voted to incorporate the town of Winter Park, which included Hannibal Square, in its boundaries. In addition, two black men from Hannibal Square, Walter B. Simpson and Frank R. Israel, were elected Aldermen and served from 1887 to 1893.

From its beginnings, Hannibal Square was rooted in faith, family, and community. The west side was characterized by high levels of education, business and home ownership, and by professional standing among its black residents.

Today, the City of Winter Park, known worldwide for its wealth and quality of life, is one of the most desirable addresses in Florida. This prime location has fueled development and gentrification of Hannibal Square, with significant loss of cultural landmarks and native residents. Members of the community have rallied to preserve what is left of its heritage, and that is where the Hannibal Square Heritage Center story begins.

Source: [Hannibal Square Heritage Center Website](#)



# Goldsboro, Florida

A community of African American citizens living west of Sanford, Florida dreamed of having their own incorporated township. Lead by Mr. William Clark, a store owner, carpenter, and community leader eventually those dreams came to fruition.

Mr. William Clark was the brother of Joe Clark, one of the founders and incorporators of Eatonville, the first incorporated all black township in the United States.

In 1891, Goldsboro became the second all black incorporated township within the United States.

During the Goldsboro Township, there lived a community of educated, hardworking, and Christian Value led people.

In 1911 Goldsboro lost its charter, when Forrest Lake, a powerful Sanford banker and state lawmaker, devised a plan to dissolve the charters of both Sanford and Goldsboro, to create a new charter that would bankrupt Goldsboro and make it a community within Sanford.

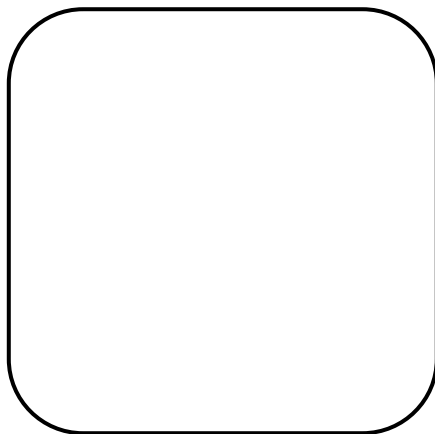
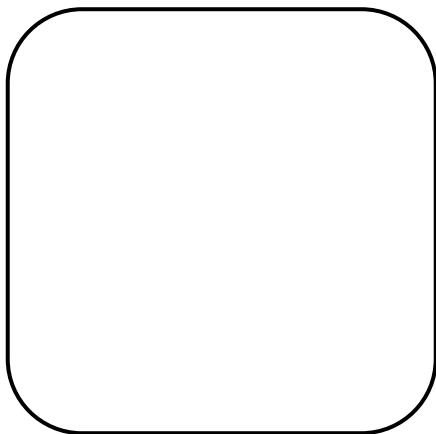
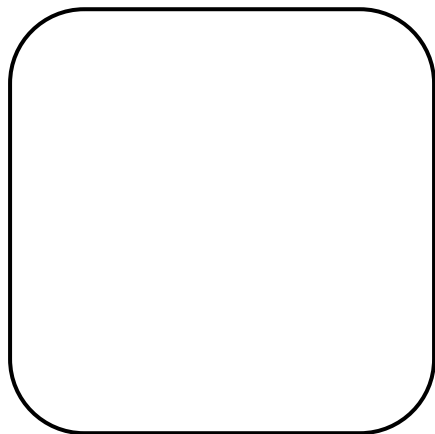
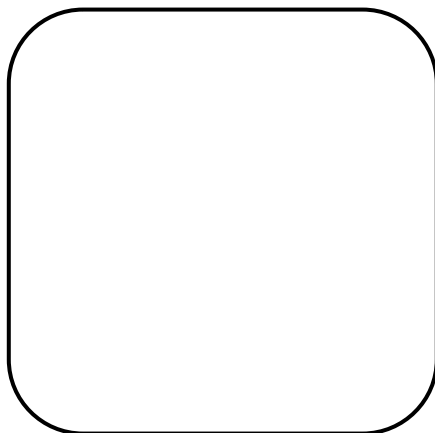
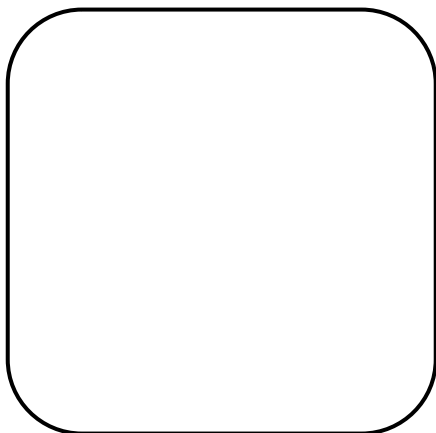
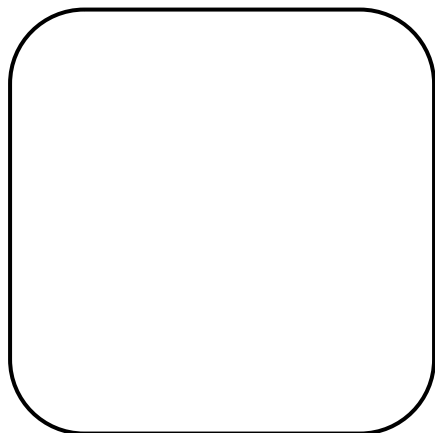
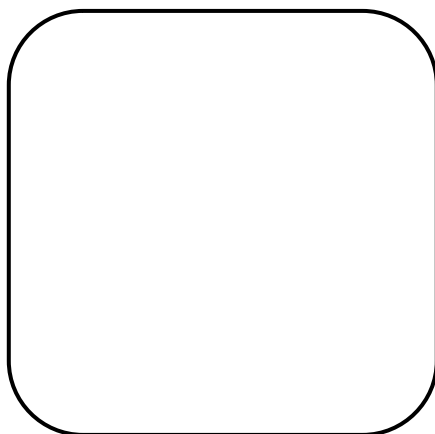
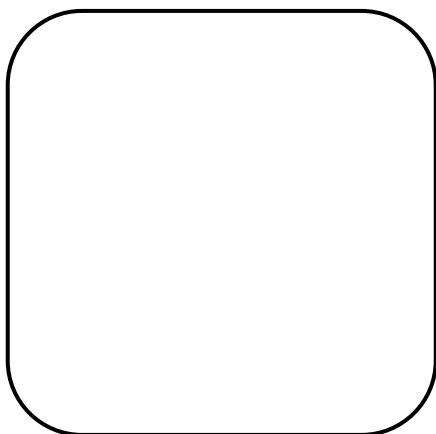
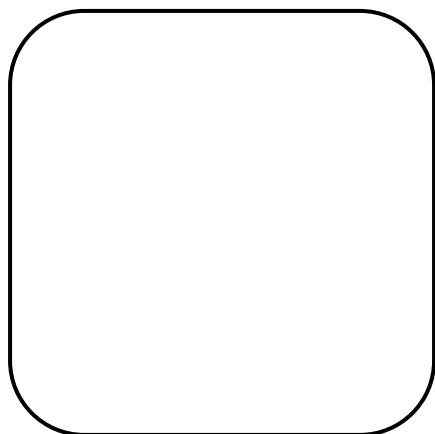
After the demise of Goldsboro, the town began a downward spiral with abandoned buildings, rising unemployment, and the loss of identity.

In 2009, spearheaded by Francis Oliver, a group of leaders created The Goldsboro West Side Community Historical Association, Inc. to celebrate and preserve the history of Goldsboro. Mrs. Oliver collected the town's history including pictures, artifacts, and documents for over 40 years. To acknowledge the town's history on its 100th year anniversary of its death 1911-2011, The Goldsboro Museum was born.

Source: Goldsboro Museum [About Us Page](#). Please visit the [Goldsboro Museum Webpage](#) for more information and resources.

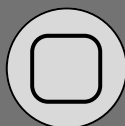


Image Source: mynews13 Article ["Sanford Leaders want to Revitalize African American-Founded Goldsboro"](#)



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Name





## My iPad Apps Activity

**Directions:** Decorate your app icon. Cut it out. Glue or tape your icon onto your iPad worksheet.

