

Name of Lesson: Behind the Big House

Grade levels: 4-12 **Subjects:** U.S. History, Mississippi Studies, & Local Culture **Prepared By:** Pamela Zelman & Rhondalyn K. Peairs

Overview & Purpose Students who participate in the Behind the Big House project will observe demonstrations of the activities of enslaved people that supported the “big house” - the plantation or townhouse owned by wealthy White families. Students will gain an understanding of how enslaved people supported the plantation, local and regional economies, and created ways of doing that are now thought of as more globally “Southern” (i.e.: food, music, dialect, etc.)

Education Standards Addressed

Mississippi Studies

2. c. Analyze the development of slavery in Mississippi including the various factors (economic, geographic, and social) that contributed to its development and explain the opposition to slavery in Mississippi.
5. b. Analyze the economic impact of the Civil War on Mississippi.
6. b. Analyze the ways Mississippians have adapted to change and continue to address cultural issues unique to the state (e.g., the establishment of historical and commemorative markers like Confederate icons).

US History - Pre-Columbian to Colonization

3. c. Critique the development and impact of slavery in North America, including the causes, conditions, and effects on enslaved Africans in North America.

US History - Exploration through Reconstruction

1. b. Analyze the philosophy of government expressed in the Declaration of Independence, with an emphasis on government as a means of protecting individual rights (e.g., phrases such as —all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights).
2. Understand how technology, geography, and social conflict has impacted the development of the United States.
 - d. Trace the origins and development of slavery; its effects on African Americans and on the nation’s political, social, religious, economic, and cultural development; and identify the strategies that were tried to both overturn and preserve it.
 - e. Analyze the causes, key events, and consequences of the Civil War.
4. a. Analyze how conflict, cooperation, and interdependence (e.g., social justice, diversity, mutual respect, and civic engagement) among groups, societies, and nations influenced the writing of early historical documents.

	Student Guide	
Objectives (Specify skills/information that will be learned.)	Students will learn more specifics about the roles of enslaved persons, how they contributed to the economy and Southern culture, and why the preservation of slave dwellings and their uses is so important to our national discussion of race and equality.	Materials Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Plantations & Slavery in Mississippi • Behind the Big House: Craft House Narrative
Information (Give and/or demonstrate necessary information)	Through the history of the Hugh Craft House, students will hear about the history of Holly Springs as a boom town during the mid-1800s. They will interact with interpreters who will explain the slave dwelling, cooking, laundry & brickmaking. Students are encouraged to take notes, photos and ask questions.	
Assessment (Steps to check for student understanding)	Fact-based questions are attached to the Young Person’s Guide. These could be given as guiding questions before the tour, or a wrap-up after the tour.	Other Resources (e.g. Web, books, etc.) Website: http://preservemarshallcounty.org/behind-the-big-house/ Website: Joseph McGill’s Slave Dwelling Project http://slavedwellingproject.org/ Book: <i>Understanding and Teaching American Slavery</i> (2016) Blogsite: Michael Twitty’s cooking blog, Afroculinaria https://afroculinaria.com
Activity (Describe the independent activity to reinforce this lesson)	Teachers are encouraged to have students write about what: 1) life was like for those who lived in slave dwellings and 2) for those who lived in the Main House. How were their interdependent? How did plantation slavery differ from urban slavery?	
Summary	Since the very beginning, the narrative of the South has been firmly rooted in stories of the wealthy planter class. The stories of the other segments of Southern society have been marginalized or omitted altogether. People have glorified and preserved the lovely antebellum homes of the Deep South, but in doing so have only told a part of the story. Most discussions of slavery seem to minimize the impact of or justify the institution itself. The enslaved person often ceases to be a human being and becomes more of an object. In bringing to light more details about lives of enslaved people and how they saw the institution of slavery, we bring balance to that story. Students will gain not only knowledge of the whole story, but will learn to see the enslaved with the respect and dignity they are due.	Additional Notes It is important to note that the vast majority of White people in Mississippi at the time were small farmers who did not use slave labor. Most enslaved people lived and worked on big plantations owned by wealthy white planters. Their labor was used to grow cash crops like cotton which were the economic generators of the day.