

## Seventh Grade Lesson Plan

### African American Land Ownership in Texas: The Sabine Farms Community and William Goyens

#### Introduction

Sabine Farms, a project of the New Deal, helped African American Farmers in Texas gain ownership of their own farms during the Great Depression. One hundred years earlier, in the Republic of Texas, another African American dealt with a different federal government to obtain his own land ownership. He was William Goyens, the first African American landowner in Texas, and as such, he had much in common with the Sabine farmers.

#### Objective

Students will use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast various aspects of land ownership by the Sabine Farms Project participants and early Texas settler, William Goyens.

Lesson Duration One 45 minute class period

#### TEKS Social Studies Requirements Seventh Grade

(1) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in Texas history. The student is expected to:

(A) identify the major eras in Texas history, describe their defining characteristics, and explain why historians divide the past into eras, including

**Revolution and Republic; Texas in the Great Depression** (4) History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues shaped the history of the **Republic of Texas** The student is expected to:

(A) identify individuals, events, and issues during the administrations of Republic of Texas Presidents Houston, Lamar, and Jones, including **William Goyens**, and the roles of racial and ethnic groups

(7) History. The student understands how individuals, events, and issues shaped the history of Texas during the 20th century. The student is expected to:

(E) analyze the political, economic, and social impact of major events, including **the Great Depression** on the history of Texas

(19) Culture. The student understands the concept of diversity within unity in Texas.

The student is expected to:

(B) describe how people from various racial, ethnic, and religious groups attempt to maintain their cultural heritage while adapting to the larger Texas culture

(21) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired through established research methodologies from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, **comparing, contrasting**, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions

### **Teacher and Student Materials**

1. *Building Hope: Sabine Farms* DVD

2. Student Handouts:

- *William Goyens 1838 Land Petition*
- *Venn Diagram - Comparing and Contrasting*

3. Venn Diagram Answer Key

### **Lesson Vocabulary**

Great Depression - a severe worldwide economic depression, which started in about 1929 and lasted until the late 1930s or early 1940s

New Deal – President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s federal program that included a wide variety of laws and programs designed to fight the Great Depression

petition - a request to do something, usually addressed to a government official

headright - legal grant of land to settlers.

league – Spanish land unit equivalent to 4,428.4 acres. Most of the original Texas settlers combined ranching and farming and received a league and a labor.

labor - Spanish land unit measuring 177 acres. Under the Mexican colonization act by which the first settlers entered the Stephen F. Austin colony in Texas, heads of families engaged in farming were to receive a labor of land each.

### **Procedures for the Teacher**

1. Introduce students to William Goyens, the first African American landowner in Texas. A good short biography of him is available in *The Handbook of Texas Online! Texas State Historical Association*

<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fgo24>

2. Distribute copies of *William Goyens Land Petition* of 1838 to students and read it aloud with them, explaining that misspelled words were part of the primary source document. Define unfamiliar terms, using the Lesson Vocabulary list.

3. Introduce students to the Sabine Farms community. There is a short description of it on the back of the *People's History in Texas Sabine Farms* DVD.

4. Inform students they will be comparing information about two sorts of Texas landowners, Sabine Farm participants and William Goyens. Distribute the *Venn Diagram* handout to students. At the top of the handout, on the left hand line, have students write **Sabine Farmers**. On the right hand line, have them write **William Goyens**. Explain that on their Venn Diagrams, they will list at least four (4) ways that the landowners differ in the outside sections of the diagram. On the inside section, they will list at least four (4) ways they were similar.

5. Have students view the video, *Sabine Farms*, reminding them that they will be comparing and contrasting information they obtain in the video, in discussion, and in the *William Goyens' Land Petition of 1838*.

6. Allow students to work with a partner to complete their Venn Diagrams.

7. Have several students share their diagram information with the class and discuss.

### **Extension Activities**

Read about efforts of the Sabine Farms Educational Society to preserve the history of their community. Discuss why communities might want to save their historical records. [http://www.texasbar.org/content/news/downloads/NewsletterTXCBAR\\_5\\_07.pdf](http://www.texasbar.org/content/news/downloads/NewsletterTXCBAR_5_07.pdf)

View two separate Texas historical markers commemorating William Goyens and point out that some of the information on one differs from information on the other. Discuss with students why this discrepancy might exist. <http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=29461>

View 47 photographs of life on Sabine Farms and discuss. <http://afrotexan.com/harrison/Sabine/sabine.htm>