Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum

- 10,000 years of history
- Stories of many people
- Tobacco plantation since 1600s
BACKGROUND

Program History

• One room schoolhouse trip
• Call from the community

Kids Work/Is Your Share Fair

• Didn’t match curriculum
• Limited by age
Foster insight into how social and economic systems in post-Civil War Maryland impacted rural Black families

- Provide factual understanding of daily life and work
- Humanize and make relatable the hardships facing sharecropping families
Sharecropping in Maryland
OUR CHALLENGES

First Challenge

Our lack of comfort with the topic.

- Outside our expertise
- All white staff
- 8th graders!
- Sensitive subject in community
“I ... want to encourage the students to realize that during the time period we are discussing there was little, if any, difference between the day to day lives of African American children and white children. This was a time when everyone in Calvert improvised.”
CHALLENGE: DISCOMFORT

Solution

- Educate yourself and ask advice
- Be respectful
- Pick a story you can tell well
- Telling a more complete story is good for all
CHALLENGE: DISCOMFORT

Case Study

- “How do you do history”
- Failed first attempt
OUR CHALLENGES

Second Challenge

Logistics

• Long day for students
  ○ Dreaded after lunch
• Content timing
• Short field trip
Solution

- Meet physical needs
- Dynamic and engaging activities
- Focus on impact over facts
- Address lack of prior knowledge
- Stay focused on essential questions
When was this site being used?

What was this site? What did it look like?

Who was using this site?

What were their lives like?
OUR CHALLENGES

Third Challenge

Sources
CHALLENGE: SOURCES

Solution

Leverage your assets

- Sukeek’s Cabin & artifacts
- Oral Histories, photos
- Landscape
- Community member reflections
CHALLENGE: SOURCES
Case Study
CHALLENGE: SOURCES
Case Study
COMMUNITY RECEPTION

Formal vs informal feedback
- formal - surveys and questionnaires
- informal - what you observe/ conversations
- both are key

“Everyone was terrific. Very courteous & knowledgeable. The activities are well spaced & timed to retain the kids attention. Also, Jeff’s beard is epic! Thank you all.”

Who is your audience
- School
- District/Teachers
- Students
- Chaperones

“Aw man, they’re being racist again!”
OUR PROGRAM

Oral History Lens
Identify what life was like for children of sharecroppers.

Archaeology Lens
Make inferences about the lives of the people who lived at the site based on artifacts found there.

Pulling it All Together:
The Sharecropping Life
Gain insights into the difficult decisions confronting African American families in their quest for success.
SHARECROPPING LIFE

Hands on and engaging

Impactful

Highlight agency within an unjust system
CONCLUSION

Goals

• Create clear and achievable objectives
• Believe in the importance of the stories you tell
• Know your audience

Embrace Change

Your program should never be set in stone
THANK YOU

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