

Day Three: Moses “Black” Harris



This lesson is going to focus on Moses “Black” Harris, a man that has many legends and stories told about him. Harris was an important figure in the early history of the Oregon Trail. Some writings suggest he was Black, but later researchers have disputed this. In this lesson, students will focus on reading a few articles that have been written about him.

Essential Questions

- ❖ How did Moses Harris help Oregon Trail voyagers?
- ❖ Why might Moses Harris’ race be something people cared about in the 1840s? Why might people care about his racial identity today?

Materials

- ☑ Using Primary & Secondary Sources video
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU8Tr6JChqY&ab_channel=OSLISEIementaryVideos)
- ☑ Moses “Black” Harris Slides
- ☑ Oregon Historical Quarterly
- ☑ Statesman Journal (1994)
- ☑ Statesman Journal (2005)
- ☑ Graphic Organizer

Procedure

10 mins | Warm-Up

Have the students respond to the following:

- What do you think it was like for the thousands of people who traveled by wagon to Oregon?
- What images or ideas supported your ideas?

5 mins | Video “Analyzing Primary Sources”

10 mins | Black Explorer #3: Moses “Black” Harris Slides

Show students the slides and have them complete their graphic organizer for the explorer “Moses Harris”

20 mins | Explore Primary and Secondary Sources

Have students self select from one of the options and add more information into their graphic organizer

Oregon Historical Quarterly

Statesman Journal (1994)

Statesman Journal (2005)

7 mins | Exit Ticket

Have the students respond to the following:

-Why do you think that stories of Moses Harris live on today?

-Many people have debated whether or not Moses Harris was Black. Do you think his race matters? Why or why not?