

Flow of History
The Turner Family: Encountering Implicit Bias

Overview

Slavery shaped the fundamental beliefs of white Americans about black people, race, and white supremacy. Like everywhere, people in Vermont viewed (and still view) people of color with an implicit bias that is hard to fully overcome. Black people were generally viewed as second-class citizens.

After the Civil War, Alec Turner found work in a mine in Maine. But in the spring of 1873 he left that job because his young wife Sally required medical attention in Boston. While in Boston, Alec saw a newspaper ad from a sawmill operation looking for woodchoppers, which turned out to be in Grafton, Vermont. He met with the owner and was hired. When Alec arrived in Grafton in November 1873, followed by Sally and three young children in June 1874, they were at first received somewhat uneasily by townspeople.

The sources in this lesson illustrate the implicit biases held by white people in Grafton, and demonstrate how they impacted Daisy Turner's life. Students will first define implicit bias, then look at the 1870 Grafton census and a newspaper brief announcing the arrival of a group of African American woodchoppers in town in 1873 to assess why the ladies of Grafton might have been "alarmed" by their presence. Then students will read or listen to the story *Daisy and the Doll* and write about how Daisy Turner experienced the shame of being stereotyped but also drew strength from her own inner sense of dignity and self-worth.

Grade Level

Middle-High School

Enduring Understanding

Systemic racism is a foundation of American society. Throughout history Black Vermonters have faced bias and discrimination, and this is still true today.

Topic(s)

Implicit bias

Compelling Question(s)

How does the Turner family story reveal the workings of implicit bias toward African Americans?

Historical Thinking Skills

Primary Source Analysis; Synthesizing Sources

Summative Task

Flow of History

The Turner Family: Encountering Implicit Bias

After examining the primary sources and reading the story *Daisy and the Doll*, write a brief essay that defines implicit bias and explains how and why the Turner family experienced implicit bias in Grafton, Vermont.

Outline	
Activating Prior Knowledge/Building Historical Context:	Formative Assessment
<p>Review the Turner Family Timeline, paying particular attention to the post Civil War sections.</p> <p>As a class, watch the short video Peanut Butter, Jelly, and Racism. Discuss, in groups or as a class: What is implicit bias? Where does it come from? Who is susceptible to it?</p>	Class discussion
Investigation of Primary Sources	
<p>As a class look at the 1870 census for Grafton (with worksheet) and notice the numbers of white and black people living in the town.</p> <p>Then read out loud the 1873 article from the Vermont Phoenix announcing the arrival of Alec Turner and a group of African American woodchoppers in Grafton. Conduct a close read of the article, noting with the students the race of the woodchoppers. Consider the language used to describe how they came to town. What words are associated with the word "march." Could that word be considered to be a biased description? Why or why not?</p> <p>Discuss why the ladies of Grafton might have been "alarmed" by their presence. How was this reaction an example of stereotyping and implicit bias?</p>	Close read; class discussion
<p>Examine the Grafton District School #11 photograph (with worksheet). Help students understand that this was a one-room schoolhouse with multiple grades.</p> <p>Find <i>Daisy and the Doll</i> in your library or watch this read-aloud video of the story Daisy and the Doll and use the discussion questions as prompts for a full class discussion. Conclude the discussion by focusing on how Daisy and her father responded to the incident with dignity and strength.</p>	Close read; summarizing; interpretation
Summative Assessment	Summative Assessment
After examining the primary sources and reading the story <i>Daisy and the Doll</i> , write a brief essay that defines implicit bias and explains how and why the Turner family experienced implicit bias in Grafton, Vermont. Conclude the lesson with an emphasis on how Daisy responded to the incident at school.	

Worksheet

1850, 1860, 1870 Population Census for Vermont Towns

Every ten years the United States government conducts a census (or count) of the population. This is a page from the Vermont report in town populations in 1850, 1860, and 1870s.

1. Look at the columns. What categories of people are being reported in each decade?
2. How do the categories change from 1850 to 1870? What changes occurred in the United States during those years that might make the government want to include new categories?
3. Find Grafton in Windham County. Create a graph to help you visualize the changes over time. What do you notice?
4. Write a paragraph describing the population of Grafton from 1850 – 1870.
5. Compare Grafton to Brattleboro. What differences can you see?



1850, 1860, 1870 Population Census for Vermont Towns

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POPULATION OF CIVIL DIVISIONS LESS THAN COUNTIES.

TABLE III.—STATE OF VERMONT—Continued.

COUNTIES.	1870					1860		1850		COUNTIES.	1870					1860		1850	
	Total.	Native.	Foreign.	White.	Colored.	White.	Colored.	White.	Colored.		Total.	Native.	Foreign.	White.	Colored.	White.	Colored.	White.	Colored.
ORLEANS—Cont'd.										WASHINGTON—Cont'd.									
Jay	553	447	106	553	.....	474	.....	369	2	Waterbury	2633	2336	297	2631	2	2193	5	2350	2
Lowell	942	808	134	942	.....	813	.....	637	.....	Woodbury	902	890	12	905	.....	998	1	1070	.....
Morgan	614	490	124	614	.....	548	.....	480	.....	Worcester	775	732	43	773	2	684	.....	702	.....
Newport	2050	1674	376	2049	1	1191	6	742	6	WINDHAM.									
Salem	693	480	207	682	11	594	9	455	.....	Athens	295	288	7	294	1	322	.....	359	.....
Troy	1555	1161	194	1355	.....	1248	.....	1008	.....	Brattleboro	4933	4387	546	4923	10	3848	7	3805	11
Westfield	721	578	143	721	.....	618	.....	502	.....	Brookline	203	202	1	203	.....	243	.....	285	.....
Westmore	412	322	84	412	.....	324	.....	152	.....	Dover	635	633	2	635	.....	650	.....	709	.....
RUTLAND.										Dunsmuirton	916	875	41	916	.....	1021	.....	1645	.....
Benson	1244	1112	132	1234	10	1250	.....	1297	2	Grafton	1008	1001	7	1008	.....	1154	.....	1241	.....
Brandon	3771	2957	614	3570	1	3074	3	2820	6	Gallford	1277	1163	114	1277	.....	1287	4	1379	10
Castleton	3243	2495	748	3185	58	2822	30	2999	17	Halifax	1029	1017	12	1029	.....	1126	.....	1132	1
Chittenden	802	720	82	802	.....	763	.....	675	.....	Jamaica	1223	1211	12	1223	.....	1541	.....	1606	.....
Clarendon	1173	1070	103	1170	3	1234	3	1473	4	Londonderry	1252	1232	20	1252	.....	1367	.....	1374	.....
Danby	1319	1222	97	1317	2	1412	.....	1335	.....	Marlboro	665	659	6	665	.....	740	1	896	.....
Fair Haven	2208	1551	657	2203	5	1372	3	882	20	Newfane	1113	1106	7	1111	2	1191	1	1304	.....
Hubbardton	606	530	76	603	3	602	4	700	1	Putney	1167	1071	96	1164	3	1162	1	1423	2
Ira	413	353	60	413	.....	422	.....	400	.....	Rockingham	2854	2613	241	2853	1	2898	6	2827	10
Mendon	612	496	116	612	.....	633	.....	504	.....	Bellevue Falls	607	521	116	607	.....	105	.....	321	.....
Middleton	777	728	49	777	.....	712	.....	875	.....	Somerset	80	80	.....	80	.....	105	.....	321	.....
Mount Holly	1382	1404	178	1379	3	1530	2	1533	1	Stratton	294	293	1	294	.....	366	.....	256	.....
Mount Tabor	301	262	39	300	1	352	.....	308	.....	Townshend	1171	1163	8	1169	2	1376	.....	1351	3
Pawlet	1595	1394	111	1494	11	1539	.....	1842	1	Vernon	764	704	60	760	4	724	1	821	.....
Pittsfield	482	475	7	482	.....	492	1	511	.....	Wardsboro	866	858	8	865	1	1004	.....	1135	.....
Pittsford	2127	1766	361	2126	1	1830	.....	2004	22	Westminster	1238	1188	50	1219	19	1301	9	1721	.....
Poultney	2830	2267	569	2823	13	2278	.....	2328	1	Whitingham	1363	1257	6	1256	7	1372	.....	1380	.....
Rutland	9834	6871	2963	9763	69	7484	93	3678	37	Wilmington	1946	1239	7	1246	.....	1421	3	1372	.....
Sherburne	462	459	3	462	.....	525	.....	578	.....	Windham	544	541	3	544	.....	680	.....	763	.....
Shrewsbury	1145	1003	142	1144	1	1175	.....	1268	.....	WINDSOR.									
Sudbury	601	543	58	601	.....	696	.....	794	.....	Andover	588	573	15	586	2	670	.....	725	.....
Tinmouth	589	553	36	589	.....	620	.....	717	.....	Baltimore	83	80	3	83	.....	115	1	124	.....
Wallingford	2023	1827	196	2022	1	1747	.....	1636	2	Barnard	1208	1161	47	1207	1	1427	.....	1647	.....
Wells	483	437	46	483	.....	642	.....	804	.....	Bethel	1817	1720	97	1817	.....	1804	.....	1730	.....
West Haven	713	649	64	713	.....	579	1	718	.....	Bridgewater	1141	1128	13	1141	.....	1392	.....	1311	.....
WASHINGTON.										Cavendish	1823	1508	315	1820	3	1506	3	1370	6
Barre	1882	1827	55	1821	1	1839	.....	1845	.....	Chester	2032	1967	65	2031	1	2123	3	1998	2
Berlin	1474	1306	168	1469	5	1545	.....	1507	.....	Hartford	2480	2214	266	2474	6	2380	7	2157	2
Cabot (a)	1279	1225	54	1278	1	1318	.....	.....	.....	Hartland	1710	1635	75	1707	3	1748	.....	2061	2
Calais	1309	1288	21	1308	1	1409	.....	1410	.....	Ludlow	1827	1621	206	1826	1	1598	.....	1619	.....
Duxbury	833	750	143	801	2	1000	.....	845	.....	Norwich	1639	1600	39	1638	1	1756	.....	1974	4
East Montpelier	1130	1071	59	1130	.....	1328	.....	1447	.....	Plymouth	1285	1111	174	1284	1	1230	92	1294	2
Fayston	604	596	128	604	.....	600	.....	664	.....	Pomfret	1251	1219	32	1247	4	1376	.....	1540	6
Goshen Gore (a)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Reading	1012	995	17	1010	2	1159	.....	1170	1
Harris Gore (a)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Rochester	1444	1418	26	1441	3	1504	3	1492	1
Marshfield	1072	1051	21	1071	1	1159	1	1101	1	Royalton	1679	1612	67	1678	1	1739	.....	1849	1
Middlesex	1171	1074	97	1170	1	1233	1	1301	4	Sharon	1013	978	35	1013	.....	1110	1	1240	.....
Montpelier	3023	2583	440	3013	10	2405	6	2203	7	Springfield	2237	2228	109	2233	4	2238	20	2757	5
Moretown	1203	1120	143	1203	.....	1410	.....	1335	.....	Stockbridge	1337	1262	75	1334	3	.....	.....	1326	1
Northfield	3410	2971	439	3408	2	4326	3	2922	.....	Weathersfield	1537	1485	72	1537	.....	1765	.....	1851	.....
Plainfield	726	713	13	725	1	822	.....	808	.....	Weston	931	898	33	931	.....	932	.....	939	.....
Roxbury	916	825	91	916	.....	1060	.....	967	.....	West Windsor	708	698	10	708	.....	924	.....	1062	.....
Waitsfield	948	847	101	948	.....	1005	.....	1021	.....	Windsor	1099	1554	145	1673	26	1657	12	1907	21
Warren	1008	978	30	1008	.....	1041	.....	962	.....	Woodstock	2910	2717	193	2860	50	3009	53	2983	53

(a) In 1855 Cabot, Goshen Gore "by Plainfield," and Harris Gore from Caledonia County.



Grafton Notice
Vermont Phoenix, 1873

Grafton.

--About one week since, a half-dozen negroes marched into town. So rare a sight alarmed some of our ladies, but the young men passed quietly on and pitched their tent about two miles south of the village, where they are engaged in chopping wood.

Worksheet

Grafton District School # 11, 1890

1. Why do you think this is “School number 11?” If you guess that was because there were at least 11 schools in Grafton in 1890, you are right! Every neighborhood had its own school.
2. Look carefully at the photograph. Can you find the teacher?
3. How many students are in this photograph? _____
4. Do you think they are all the same age? Why or why not?
5. How many girls do you see? How many boys?
6. What else do you notice about the students? If you noticed that there are both Black and White students, perhaps you might wonder if one of the students was Daisy Turner. She is sitting next to her sister Susie, the second girl in the front row. Susie’s twin brother Willie is standing in the back next to the teacher.





Daisy and the Doll—Discussion Questions

1. What was the end-of-the-year activity that is described in the story?
2. Why was Daisy Turner angry about being given a black doll to hold during her recitation?
3. Why was Daisy angry about the poem the teacher wrote for her to recite?
4. What awakening did Daisy have from talking about Miss Clark's poem with her father Alec (Papu)?
5. What happened at the recitation?
6. How did Daisy take the bias implicit in Miss Clark giving her a black doll and turn it into a strength for herself?

