

8th of August Teacher's Guide

Discussion Questions



Use the questions below to lead a class discussion after viewing the film.

1. Describe Andrew Johnson's life prior to his arrival in Greenville. Do you think his experiences as an apprentice affected his views on slavery? Why or why not?
2. In the film, Johnson is quoted as saying " So far as I am concerned, if it suited him and his inclination led him that way, I wish every head of a family in the United States had one to take the drudgery and menial service off his family." What does this quote reveal about Johnson's views on slavery.
3. Why did Johnson want Tennessee exempted from the Emancipation Proclamation?
4. Why is 8th of August celebrated as Emancipation Day in Tennessee?
5. While the 8th of August celebrations in Greeneville, Newport and Knoxville varied, what are some commonalities in all the celebrations.
6. What role did the Great Migration, the migration of Black Southerners to northern cities, play in the diffusion of 8th of August celebrations?
7. In what ways did segregation impact 8th of August celebrations in Newport and Knoxville?

Connections to Today

1. Many politicians today refer to themselves as being "outsiders" and not part of the political establishment. Was Andrew Johnson a political "outsider"? Why or why not?
2. How could social media help to document the history of August 8th celebrations in East Tennessee?
3. What role do celebrations of ethnic or religious groups play a pluralistic society such as the United States?

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Research the origin of Juneteenth celebrations. Compare and contrast Juneteenth with 8th of August Celebrations in Tennessee.
2. Visit an archive to find newspaper articles on 8th of August Celebrations in East Tennessee. Chart the evolution of the celebration from 1871 until today.
3. Use newspaper articles and census records to develop a biography of Sam Johnson, who was credited as the founder of the celebration in Greeneville.

Other Resources

[Should Juneteenth Be a National Holiday?](#) Video and Lesson from PBS Learning Media

[Slaves of Andrew Johnson](#) by The National Park Service

Books

8th of August: Emancipation Day by William Isom II & Holly Rainey - Black in Appalachia, Knoxville, 2020 - ISBN: 978-1-71-527549-5

Andrew Johnson and the Negro by David Warren Brown - The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1989 - ISBN: 0-87049-584-4

Blacks in Tennessee: 1791 - 1970 by Lester C. Lamon - The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1981 - ISBN: 0-87049-323-X

O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations by William H. Wiggins Jr - The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1987 - ISBN: 0-87049-520-8

Slavery's End in Tennessee: 1861-1865 by John Cimprich - University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 1985 - ISBN: 0-8173-0257-3