

Business Rights vs. the Public Good – A History of Laissez Faire Practices Issues during the Civil Rights Era in Champaign County

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Abstract:

In this lesson, students will learn about the practices of businesses during the civil rights era of Champaign County and discuss the rights of businesses over their property over the rights of people who frequent these establishments. They will investigate primary sources related to these actions and study how these practices mirror the struggles throughout the nation.

Essential Questions

- What rights do businesses have over their own business? Can the government tell them how to run their business?
- How do citizens stand up for the rights today vs. 50 years ago?

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on their discussions along with their completion of two Primary Document Analysis forms.

Activities: Lesson will take place over two days.

- 1.) Setting the purpose: The teacher should start the lesson asking students to brainstorm about businesses they like in the area. Students should then be asked if these businesses are allowed to run the business the way that they like. Ask students if they were to open a business, do they think that they could serve whoever they wanted and run it in whatever way they would like. Ask if there are reasons that they could not run it to the way of their liking.
- 2.) Teacher will split the class into three groups and hand out a Primary Document Analysis form. Students are then to look at one of three groups and discuss the document. The point of these three stations is to discuss the public smoking ban that took place in Champaign three years ago. Students are to discuss whether the government and voters have a right to ban something in a business owned privately. The documents included in each of the three groups are:
 - Station 1: Bar Owners Fighting Public Smoking Span: <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/business/miscellaneous/2006-06-28/champaign-urbana-bar-owners-unite-fight-smoking-ban.html>
 - Station 2: Restaurants would be affected by smoking ban: News Gazette Article: <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/politics-and-government/2005-09-12/proposal-would-ban-smoking-some-restaurants.html>

- Station 3: NY Times article on the different viewpoints of the smoking ban: New York Times: Should Smoking be Illegal in Public Places - <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/11/should-cities-ban-smoking-in-public-places/>
- 3.) Teacher will bring class together to discuss the student's findings. Teacher will propose the question if businesses should be allowed to have smoking in restaurants, shouldn't they be allowed to serve whomever they would like. Students will discuss the question.
 - 4.) Teacher will split the class into three groups again and hand out another Primary Document Analysis form. Students are then to look at one of three articles and discuss the documents. The point of these three stations is to discuss the reason for picketing three different businesses in Champaign County that took place in 50 years ago. Students are to discuss whether the government and voters have a right to ban practices in a privately owned business. The documents included in each of the three groups are:
 - Station 1: An article discussing the picketing of café's on the University Campus from African American students - Lily White Cafés Document from the CD
 - Station 2: An article discussing the picketing of grocery store called Collins Foods in Champaign for the hire practices – Collins Foods Document from the CD
 - Station 3: An article discussing the picketing of J.C. Penneys for their lack of hiring African American sale workers - Why Picket Penneys Document from the CD
 - 5.) Teacher will bring class together to discuss the student's findings. Teacher will review the earlier question of if business should be allowed to have smoking in restaurants, shouldn't they be allowed to serve whomever they would like. Students will discuss the question.
 - 6.) Students will then watch clips from the documentary *The Rosa Parks Story* in order to identify other Jim Crow Laws that existed in the south during the time and how these rules are unfair to those in the African American community.
 - 7.) Students will complete a primary document analysis sheet for motion pictures and come together to discuss their findings.

Analysis of Local Primary Sources:

In this lesson, students will analyze primary sources related to discrimination practices in Illinois, such as the picketing of Collins Food Store, White Lily Café, and JCPenneys. They will also

investigate the current arguments over the smoking ban in local business through articles in the local newspaper.

Ties to National Primary Sources:

In this lesson, students will link information about local business practices during the 1950-1960's to the Jim Crow laws that existed in the south and throughout the country during this time frame.

List of Sources:

- News Gazette Article: <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/business/miscellaneous/2006-06-28/champaign-urbana-bar-owners-unite-fight-smoking-ban.html>
- News Gazette Article: <http://www.news-gazette.com/news/politics-and-government/2005-09-12/proposal-would-ban-smoking-some-restaurants.html>
- New York Times: Should Smoking be Illegal in Public Places - <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/11/should-cities-ban-smoking-in-public-places/>
- Lily White Cafés Document from the CD
- Collins Food Document from the CD
- Why Picket Penneys Document from CD
- Movie: The Rosa Parks Story
- Primary Sources Analysis Document: http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf
- Primary Sources Analysis Document (Motion Picture) http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/motion_picture_analysis_worksheet.pdf