

High School Lesson Plan:
James Monroe Museum

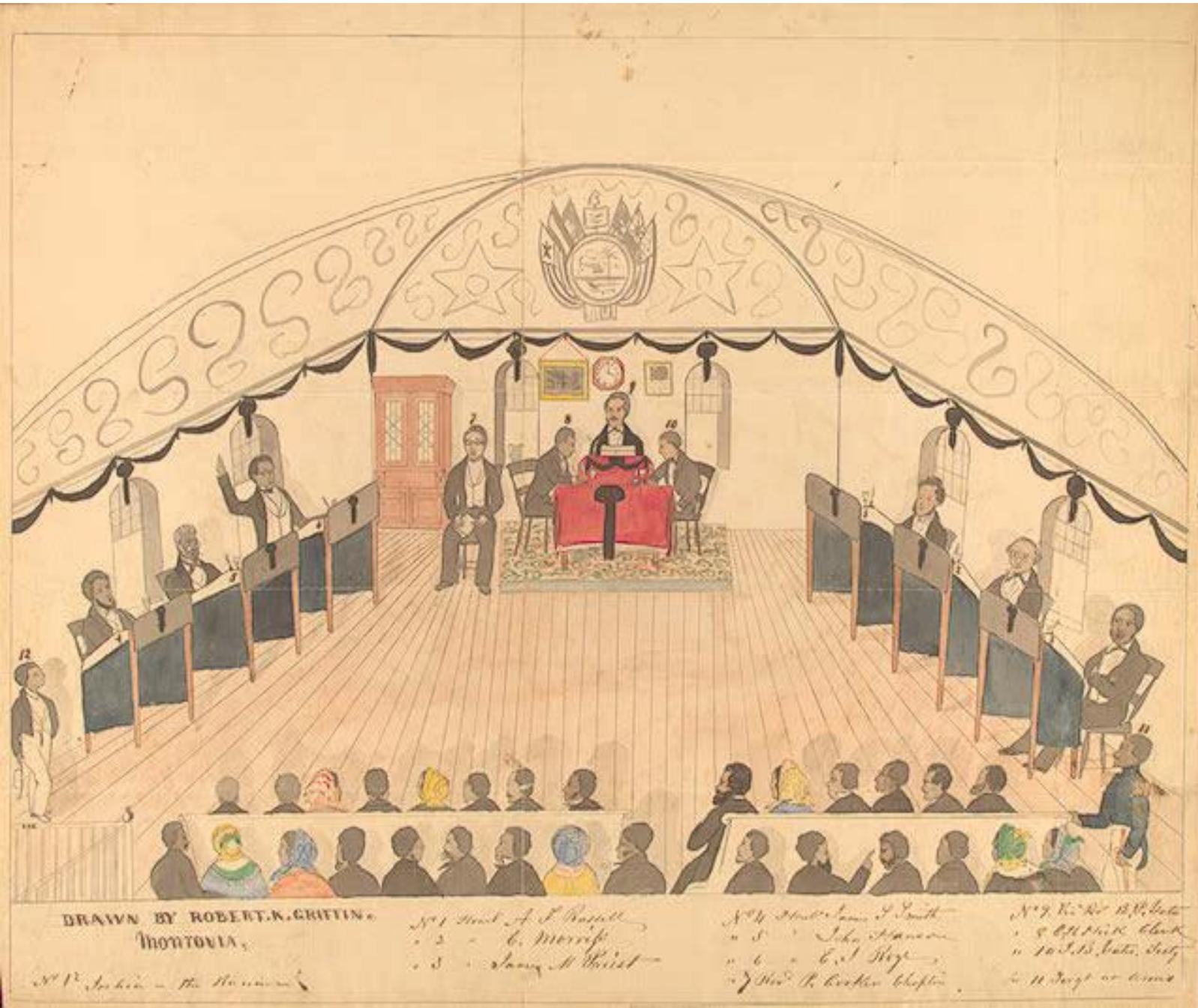


Image Credit: Robert K. Griffin "The Liberian Senate," Library of Congress

America Debates Slavery:
The Missouri Compromise 1820

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Standards of Learning: Virginia and U.S. History

Skills

- VUS.1 The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship, including the ability to:
- identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary source documents, records, and data, including artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, newspapers, historical accounts, and art, to increase understanding of events and life in the United States;
 - evaluate the authenticity, authority, and credibility of sources;
 - formulate historical questions and defend findings, based on inquiry and interpretation;
 - develop perspectives of time and place, including the construction of maps and various timelines of events, periods, and personalities in American history;
 - communicate findings orally and in analytical essays or comprehensive papers;
 - develop skills in discussion, debate, and persuasive writing with respect to enduring issues and determine how divergent viewpoints have been addressed and reconciled;

Expansion and Reform: 1788 to 1860

- VUS.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the major events from the last decade of the eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth century by:
- describing the cultural, economic, and political issues that divided the nation, including tariffs, slavery, the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements, and the role of the states in the Union.

Objectives:

- Students will understand the way slavery was being debated during Monroe's presidency.
- Students will learn about the politics behind the Missouri Compromise and how it was a precursor to the Civil War.
- Students will learn about early 19th century abolitionist ideas, like those of the American Colonization Society, and Monroe's actions regarding slavery.
- Students will be able to examine and interpret a primary source document in its context.

Background:

The Missouri Compromise

Tensions were building between southern and northern states. When Missouri wanted to join the union as a slave state, it threatened to tip the balance of power. President Monroe developed a compromise to appease both sides. This compromise allowed Missouri to join as a slave state and Maine to join as a free state. It also created an imaginary line on the 36°30' line, dividing future free and slave states within the Louisiana territory.

James Monroe's Views on Slavery: Colonization

James Monroe held only one cabinet meeting on the issue of slavery, to address the "Missouri Question," since the issue made him uncomfortable. However, Monroe was actively engaged in discussing slavery's future in the United States with colleagues and friends. On the Missouri Compromise, Monroe said, "I have never known a question so menacing to the tranquility, and even the continuance of our Union." (JM to Thomas Jefferson, Feb. 19, 1820.) Monroe endorsed sending illegally seized Africans back to their homeland and praised the American Colonization Society, who made this their mission. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Daniel Webster, and Henry Clay all shared this view. In 1819, Congress authorized Monroe as President to provide for the safekeeping and removal of all slaves captured from foreign traders, and to appoint agents in Africa to receive them. In 1820, Congress gave \$100,000 to the American Colonization Society. By 1860, more than 10,000 free blacks and newly freed slaves had emigrated to the new colony of Liberia, whose capital was named "Monrovia" in the president's honor.

Preparation Activity:

Before the field trip to the Museum, the students should have a foundational understanding of the history of slavery in the United States, and some of the ways it had been addressed since the founding of the nation. In class before the field trip, students should learn about the Missouri Compromise and the abolition movement of the early 19th century in the United States. Students should also discuss the expansion of the United States during this time.

On Location Activity:

Note: The museum activity can also be completed virtually through the accompanying online exhibit.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

- The American Colonization Society document

Procedure:

1. Students may be divided into two groups. The first group will tour the museum while the second completes an activity, and then the two will switch.
2. The first group will move to (the conservation lab, courtyard, intro room) and meet with the curator, who will have the American Colonization Society document.
3. The teacher will introduce Monroe's views on slavery and ask the group about the early abolition movement. (See Background on page 5.)
 - What were the goals of the early abolition movement?
 - Why do you think they wanted to accomplish these goals in America?
4. The curator will introduce the document and allow the students to view it. A student or the teacher will read:

(pg. 31-32)

Art. 1: This society shall be called "The American Society, for colonizing the free people of colour of the United States."

Art. 2: The object to which its attention is to be exclusively directed, is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing (with their consent) the free people of colour, residing in our country, in Africa, or such other place as Congress shall deem most expedient.

- What was the mission of the American Colonization Society?

5. Students will read a printed transcription from the same document:

SIR- O desire to return you the Board of Manager of the colonization Society, my grateful thanks for the confidence you and they repose in me; I have received your letter and people. I thank you for the first and will take care of the last. Africa is wide and long- Africa is fertile- Africa is afflicted- "Rachel mourneth for her children," and "will not be comforted till they come home." Send more, and more, and more. I wish you could see our sons and daughters growing up by our sides, tall, and healthy and strong; you would say, "surely it is a goodly land." You must not slack your hand. You must strive to send my brethren home. You must not mind the talk of those coloured people in your own country who oppose you. They are ignorant of our climate, and soil, and fruit and cattle. It may be, they are wicked too, some of them, and do not wish their "Zion well." You must not listen to the

words of those white persons who try to stop people of colour from coming over. They are blind, sometimes, perhaps. You cannot send too many... God bless you. I can say all in one word- God bids you "colonize." I know it is God's will. God has sent me here and set me down to make a place for my brethren. I say, God has taken up the matter and you must go on, my father, and work with Him in this great work...Farewell: I say, "colonize!"

*Your friend,
JOHN KIZELL*

- Why do you think the American Colonization Society chose to print this letter in its publication?
- What does this letter tell you about the mission and the motives of colonizationists?
- What themes stuck out to you in the letter as arguments for colonization?
- What can you deduce about the author? How would more information be helpful?

Background: John Kizell was a first-generation African-American who was sold into slavery and brought to Charleston, South Carolina. He, along with 1,200 other African Americans, migrated to Sierra Leone where he led the settlement of the colony Settler Town. He was a Baptist preacher and an agent for the American Colonization Society.

- How does this knowledge about the author of the letter impact the way you read it?
- Kizell references opponents to colonization. What arguments do you think could be made opposing the American Colonization Society?

Extension and Enrichment Activity:

- Students will answer the following questions in writing or class discussion:
 - How did the two different viewpoints about slavery develop? What were each sides arguments?
 - Do you agree or disagree with the American Colonization Society's plan? Why?
 - How effective was the Missouri Compromise? Was there an alternative solution?

(Assessment/Worksheet goes here)

Visiting the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library

For more information about visiting the museum or organizing a class field trip, please call:

Phone: (540) 654-1043

Or email _____ .

Hours:

The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. During the months of December, January and February, the museum closes at 4 p.m. daily.

Directions:

The James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library is located in historic downtown Fredericksburg, Virginia, only one hour's drive from Washington, D.C. or Richmond, Virginia.

From Interstate 95, take exit 130A to Route 3 East. Follow Business Route 3 past the University of Mary Washington. Continue on Business Route 3 (William Street) to Charles Street. Turn right on Charles Street. The museum is housed in a one-story brick building on the right. On-street parking is available.