

Wyandotte County Museum

The Potato King

J. G. Groves: Potato King Trunk Introduction

This virtual trunk will tell the story of J.G. Groves, who was born a slave and went on to become one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Wyandotte County's history. This program is built around a recently published children's book, "No Small Potatoes."

The museum has created two PowerPoint versions of this program. The K-6th version focuses on expanding the Grove's story and entrepreneurship. The 7th to adult version focuses on using historical resources to tell a story. Both versions can be adopted to for a wide variety uses. The content for this trunk can also be used in conjunction with earning entrepreneurial scout badges.

This trunk is intended to be a traditional travelling trunk with reproductions items, photographic prints, maps, and activity hand-oust to support the program. At this time, we will be offering downloadable PowerPoints, worksheets, and teaching guides for this program for virtual use in or outside of the classroom.

PowerPoints and teachers guide will be available through our website. Please contact the museum directly for additional classroom aids, comments, or questions. These documents are free to use for educational purposes.

This trunk is made possible through a Freedom Frontier National Heritage Area grant funded by the Barton P. and Mary D. Cohen Charitable Trust.

Museum Information

The Wyandotte County Museum is operated by the Unified Government of Wyandotte County with support from the Wyandotte County Historical Society and Museum Inc. It is located at 631 N. 126th Bonner Springs, KS 66012, inside Wyandotte County Park minutes from Kansas City Speedway, Legends, and Bonner Springs with easy access from I-70, Highway 7, or State Avenue. The museum is free and open to the public Monday-Saturday 9:00-4:00.

Programs can be scheduled by calling 913-573-5002 or emailing aloch@wycokck.org.

Teacher Info

The J. G. Groves Potato King Trunk is designed to offer versatile educational materials for students of all ages. Below are our suggestions on how to use these materials to meet the Kansas History,

Government, and Social Studies Curriculum guidelines, as of February 2020. Please feel free to adopt any of these materials to fit your classroom needs.

7th Grade – Kansas History

Focus 1: Choices have consequences.

Focus 2: Individuals have rights and responsibilities.

Focus 3: Societies are shaped by beliefs, ideas and diversity.

Focus 4: Societies experience continuity and change over time.

Focus 5: Relationships among people, places, ideas, and environments are dynamic.

Introduce the story of Junius Groves

Has anyone heard of him? Why do you think this is the case?

Read and discuss excerpts from “No Small Potatoes”

Talk about the story with the class as we go...

What do you think about this story?

Do you think there is a lot of risk in farming? Many risks weather, bugs, drought, bad seeds, etc.

Would you be willing to take big risks?

Would you be willing to live with very little, to make your dreams come true?

Why might he have been more successful than his neighbors?

What type of sources do you think they used to write it?

Analyze newspaper articles about Groves

Look at several different articles

How do they compare?

How else can we learn about his life?

Census records

Maps – show Land and business growth

Growth of Business Summary

He had a large family, how might this help his business grow?

He hired people who needed jobs, offered share cropping, and land purchase

He had multiple business interests besides potatoes and had many business partners

He founded Groves Center - African American community west of Edwardsville.

He helped found his community church and even had his own golf course

Sauerkraut factory clues?

Neighbor comparisons

Photos of houses, neighbors, business partners

Education

School info & comparisons

Booker T. Washington Article

Groves Death

articles

Will

Oral history / Family Interviews

How stories change with memory and each generation?

pros and cons

Groves Legacy

Recent articles and videos

How can we better preserve legacies for the future?

Other Important African Americans from KCK

By 1886 consolidated KCK population was 24% African American, largest ethnic group in city

Many businesses owners and professionals to provide services to the community

Sumner High School had many successful graduates (see related file)

What about other ethnic groups?

There are many cultural groups whose stories are not well represented in history

Where can we find sources to tell stories and learn more?

Newspapers, books, family photographs

Oral History, tradition