Cedar Hill and Frederick Douglass

Property Ownership and the Freedmen’s Bank

First Name _____ Last Name _____ Date _____

Grade 6 interdisciplinary Research Simulation Task

Essential question

How did Douglass acquire Cedar Hill, and what do its purchase and preservation reveal about freedom, institutions, and ownership?

NJSLS Social Studies

6.3.8.CivicsPI.4 investigates how civic and economic organizations shape lives. 6.3.8.CivicsPD.3 develops claims connecting facts, viewpoints, and informed civic action.

NJSLS English Language Arts

RI.CR.6.1 cites evidence. RI.CI.6.2 identifies central ideas. RI.IT.6.3 examines how ideas and events develop. W.AW.6.1 develops arguments with reasons and evidence.

CCSS and CCLS literacy connections

RH.6–8.1 cites evidence. RH.6–8.2 identifies central ideas. RH.6–8.7 integrates visual information. WHST.6–8.1 writes arguments. These connections supplement the New Jersey standards.

Interdisciplinary and Amistad alignment

History and civics examine African American agency, economic institutions, and public memory. Geography uses the five themes. Mathematics analyzes acreage and modeled losses. Science literacy examines runoff and evidence. Amistad instruction connects freedom to ownership, institutional barriers, and community preservation.

Day 1 Freedom and Financial Institutions

Do Now

Why might saving money matter to a person building an independent life?

Source A The promise of the bank

Congress chartered the Freedman’s Savings and Trust Company in 1865. Commonly called the Freedmen’s Bank, it offered savings services to African Americans after emancipation. Customers included workers beginning to receive wages and families planning for greater security. Congress also created the Freedmen’s Bureau, but the bank and bureau were separate institutions. A congressional charter did not mean deposits were guaranteed by the federal government. [2, 3]

A deposit is money placed in an account. A depositor expects the institution to protect it and follow its rules. Ask how trustworthy management could help turn earnings into future opportunities. Freedom created possibilities, while access to reliable institutions affected whether families could use them.

Quick Write

Explain why a bank account could support freedom. Why did a congressional charter alone fail to guarantee safety?