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| <b>SECTION-TOPIC</b>           | <b>FLAGLER ERA – THE STYX</b>   |
| <b>SUNSHINE STATE STANDARD</b> | <b>Standard 3: <i>Analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in response to the industrial Revolution.</i></b><br><b>SS.912.A.3.13: <i>Examine key events and people in Florida history as they relate to United States history.</i></b> |
| <b>VOCABULARY</b>              | <b>Dwelling, Sanitation, Epidemic</b>   |
| <b>REQUIRED MATERIALS</b>      | <b>Styx Neighborhood Pictures, <i>The Styx</i> readings, and the Graphic Organizer Worksheet</b>  |
| <b>DURATION</b>                | <b>1 – 50 minute period</b>   |

**DO NOW OR PRE-READING** –

- Teacher will project the 2 picture (see below) from the *Styx neighborhood*.
  - Students will spend 5 minutes studying the pictures before answering the questions.
1. When you look at the pictures of the Styx neighborhood, what is the 1<sup>st</sup> thing that comes to mind?
  
  2. Does the Styx appear to have any major issues? (from the pictures)
  
  3. Do the houses and building match those of an average turn of the century dwelling?
  
  4. The Styx was an all-black neighborhood, in your opinion, does that mean they were forced to live there for racist and discriminatory reasons, or is the all-black community living together for support and familiarity?
  
  5. From looking at the pictures, could the argument be made that the Styx was an early 1900s middle to low class neighborhood that happen to be populated by black citizens, or was the Styx a middle to low class neighborhood because it was populated by black citizens and they were not given the means to upgrade their neighborhood?



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## **LESSON** –

- Teacher will make copies of the following reading, *The Styx*.
- Students will break into groups of 3 and complete the reading.
- Following the reading, students will stay in groups to complete the worksheet below.

### **The Styx**

This temporary camp, where Seaview Avenue is today, accommodated only white men. Flagler's black labor force, including many Caribbean and former slaves from northern states, formed a settlement called the "Styx," centered at today's Sunset and Sunrise avenues off of North County Road. After Flagler's hotels were completed, the Styx location remained convenient for the employees of those hotels and of the residents of the houses that followed. The Styx population built mostly rough shacks for their dwellings and businesses, although some structures were more substantial. In 1894 one of the churches established there, Tabernacle Missionary Baptist, moved across Lake Worth to Clematis Street and Tamarind Avenue and was approved for use as the first all-black school in Dade County.

The Styx has been said to have housed more than 2,000 African Americans, but the 1900 U.S. Census lists about 100 individuals as "Black" living on Lake Worth outside of the City of West Palm Beach; addresses were not recorded at that time.<sup>1</sup> The 1910 Census shows about 350 people as "Black" or "Mulatto" in the lake area (excluding Jupiter and the City of West Palm Beach), after many had left the Styx; the total Palm Beach County population was then 5,577.<sup>2</sup> Seasonal labor may have added many more temporary residents over the years, but the Styx population probably stayed below 200 residents at one time.

### **Temporary Homes: The Styx**

Several men owned and collected rent on portions of the land under the Styx community, including Henry Maddock, E.M. Brelsford, and James M. Munyon. Each of these landlords dealt with many tenants, other property owners, local and state officials, and usually an agent to represent his interests. During its last decade, *The Tropical Sun* newspaper reported the ongoing efforts of the white community to improve or remove the conditions in the Styx, revealing a complex (if one-sided) view of the situation:

May 1903: Sanitation conditions had greatly improved since Eugene F. Haines, Justice of the Peace of the Thirteenth District, had taken over as agent for James Munyon. Haines issued orders to the blacks to "observe perfect sanitary laws and keep their premises clean and tidy or pay a \$10.00 fine."

October 1903: Four blacks were arrested for operating a "blind tiger" (or "speakeasy," where alcoholic beverages were sold illegally). Another man, apparently white, was arrested for the same reason across the lake on Banyan Street.

January 1904: "East Side" property owners (Palm Beachers) Senator Elisha Dimick, Thomas Tipton "T. T." Reese, Enoch Root, and Harry Redifer (agent for Colonel E. R. Bradley) asked the West Palm Beach Board of Trade for help with conditions at the Styx. Flagler and others, they said, had also promised, "to rend what aid they could."

Senator Dimick (chair of the East Side owners) had approached the state health officer,

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<sup>1</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Lake Worth Precinct 2, Dade County, Florida, at [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com).

<sup>2</sup> Population by Counties, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/cencounts/files/fl190090.txt>  
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who said the local officer was authorized to handle the problem. Officers had already come from two other areas and presumably reported to Tallahassee, but nothing had changed. Dimick believed, “if the health officer was to insist that the property owners put in sewers it would have to be done or else remove the buildings.” Dr. Henry J. Hood, chair of the West Side (West Palm Beach) owners and supervisor of the local health officer, Dr. Richard B. Potter, offered to speak with him. Dr. Hood also acted for E. M. Brelsford, who he said would evict his tenants if others did. Representatives for Sidney Maddock, [unnamed] Russell, and Munyon were sure their clients would agree.<sup>3</sup> A three-man committee was organized to act as liaison with the Styx residents.

February 1904: At a subsequent meeting, Enoch Root, the Palm Beach postmaster, called conditions “bad beyond all powers of imagination.” He described the Styx as “hundreds and hundreds of unsightly huts, some of them but little more than shoeboxes, all jumbled up together, and with no system of sewerage, and the filth was allowed to remain. ... [M]oral conditions were such as to cause all decent people to shudder [with] scores of houses of ill-fame, blind tigers and other dens of iniquity.”

All property owners were said to have agreed to “do what was best.” Munyon authorized George Currie (then Dade County treasurer) to have a deputy serve his 150 tenants with 30 days’ notice to remove their dwellings. Maddock said he would follow suit when the season ended. Guy Metcalf had given 30 days’ notice to Russell’s tenants, not only to vacate, but also “to remove their ‘shacks.’” The unnamed purchaser of Russell’s property, Metcalf said, intended “to make a cleaning out of all [illegible] element, and conditions that have brought about so much fear of epidemic.”

In 1910 T. T. Reese convinced his employers, brothers Edward R. and John R. Bradley, to purchase Munyon’s land in the Styx, adjacent to their existing property, from the Beach Club northward 264 feet to John Bradley’s cottage, and from the lake to the ocean. The plan for that summer, the *Tropical Sun* reported, was to remove all the old shacks on the Bradley property, fill in the marshy sections, remove “ugly barn-like buildings” along the water’s edge that were “damaging the value of contiguous estates,” and add a road along the lakefront.

There was no mention of the residents, who apparently had relocated for the most part about 1906 to the all-black Northwest neighborhood of West Palm Beach, which had been established since 1894. According to the *Palm Beach Daily News*:

*Many negroes had been allowed to put up “topsey-like” houses, [which] have seen their best days [and] will disappear within the next few months. The entire tract will be leveled, filled in, and ornamental trees ... will be planted. ... [T]hree large and commodius [sic] villas ... will be built of concrete and Miami stone.*

The rest of the Styx residents were not asked to leave until 1912, as the Bradleys developed their land into the town’s second subdivision, Floral Park. That year Pleasant City, established in 1905, was incorporated into West Palm Beach. A 1913 ad in the *Tropical Sun* advertised its remaining lots for sale by Currie Investment and Title Guaranty Company: “This is a high class colored subdivision north of town. Four hundred lots have already been sold and

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<sup>3</sup> Lee Russell’s cottage was completed 11/9/1895; and Lee Russell and E. E. Geer, “old residents,” opened a steam laundry 1896 in West Palm Beach (1896-97 Business Directory and History)

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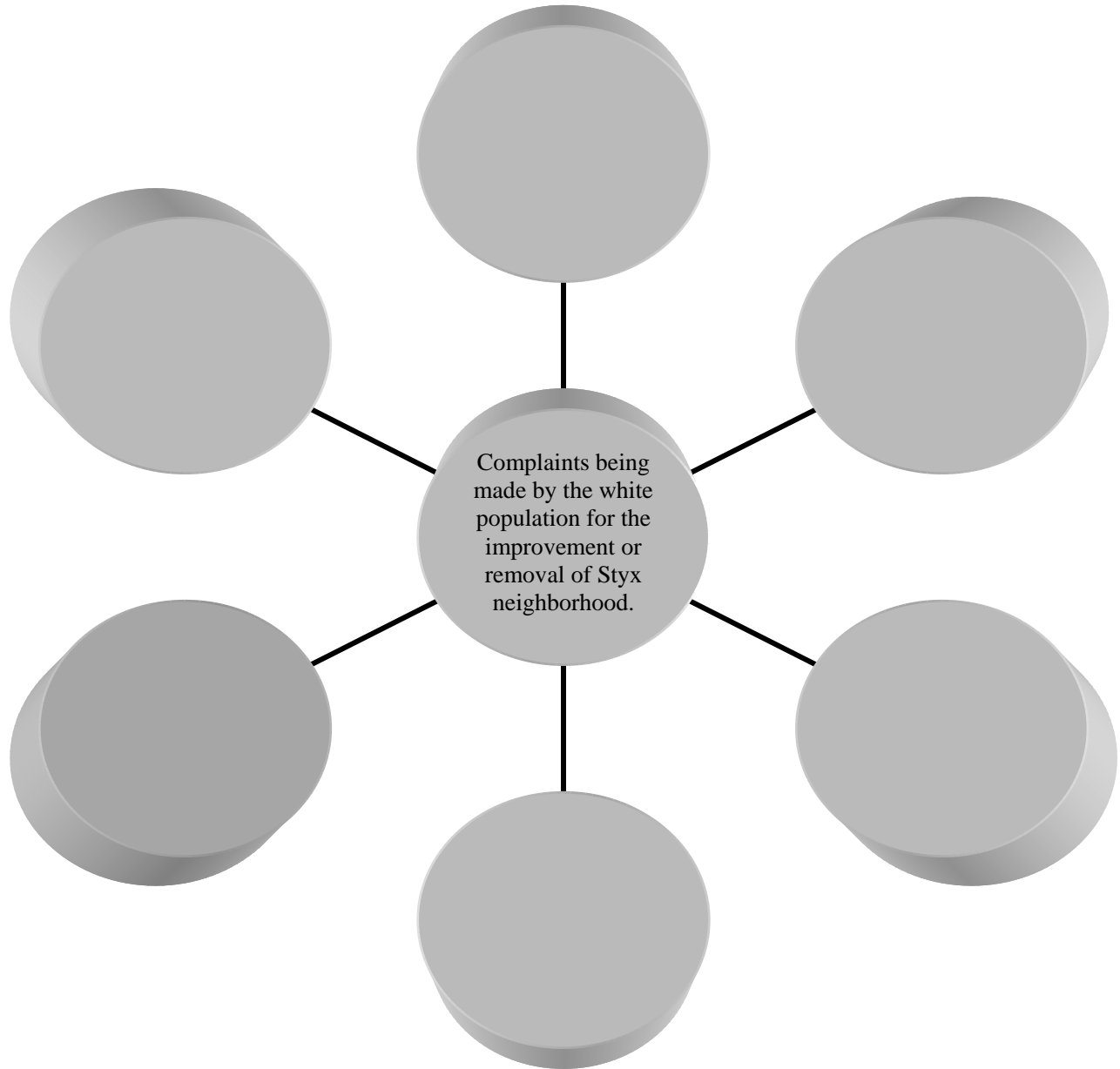
we have about 75 more yet for sale from \$150.00 up.” Currie chose ‘pleasant’ names for the streets: Beautiful, Comfort, Merry, Cheerful, and Contentment—even an Easy Street. Pleasant City was bordered on the north by Northwood Road, on the south by 15<sup>th</sup> Street, on the east by Dixie Highway, and on the west by the FEC railroad tracks.

**ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION** -

- Teacher will make copies of the **Graphic Organizer Worksheet (see attached)**.
- Students will work in their groups of 3 to fill in the bubbles on the worksheet and answer the question.
- All students work is due by the end of the period.

# GRAPHIC ORGANIZER WORKSHEET

**Directions:** Using the reading, *Temporary Homes: The Styx*, complete the bubbles surrounding the main topic.



**Question** – Do you feel the reasons stated above are justified reasons for improvement of a neighborhood or do the reasons justify a complete removal of all people and removal of the neighborhood? Explain your answer.

## GRAPHIC ORGANIZER WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

