African-American Lives: “The Promise of Freedom”



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Video: In this episode, Gates makes dramatic discoveries about how his guests’ ancestors rebuilt their lives and their families in the first years of freedom after the Civil War.

Instructions: Watch the video, then respond to the questions and be prepared to share and discuss your answers.

1. Can you discuss the hopes that many African-Americans had as they gained their freedom following the end of the Civil War?
2. Why was owning property so important to people during this time period? What was the connection between owning land and being free?
3. What was the practical value of gaining an education (especially learning to read and write) to those who had formerly been slaves and now were free?
4. How do old document and records help us better understand the institution of slavery? What do these kind of documents reveal?
5. Schools for blacks like the Utica Institute were based on the educational philosophy of Booker T. Washington. According to Washington, what should the focus of education be for blacks? Why?
6. Whoopi Goldberg discovers that her great, great grandparents were property owners in Florida through the Homestead Act. How does that seem to make her feel? Why do you think she has this reaction?
7. By watching the video, can you explain the kind of hardships that many newly-freed African Americans faced during the Reconstruction years following the Civil War?
8. By watching the video, can you explain ways that many newly-freed African American persevered and made the best out of their situation during the Reconstruction years following the Civil War?