

# HISTORYMIAMI

## Virginia Key Beach Park Pre and Post Visit Activities

### **Introduction:**

The following are a list of ideas of how to introduce the rich cultural history of Miami, and the effects of Jim Crow segregation. We recommend these ideas be used as pre- and/or post-visit lessons for this site based program.

**Grades:** 3-12

### **Objectives for PROGRAM:**

- Students will discover how Miami's African American's turned beach segregation into an opportunity to create a beach escape with many attractions like those found at white beaches.

### **Vocabulary:**

Desegregation

Disenfranchisement

Jim Crow Laws

Non-violent Protest

Segregation

Separate But Equal

### **Introduction to the site (for teacher to familiarize themselves with the topic):**

Virginia Key Beach was set up in the 1940s to be the "colored" beach in Miami. Up until that point Blacks were not allowed on any beaches in the Miami area unless they were working. The site includes all the structures on the site as well as a nature walk.

# Pre-Visit Conversations

## Activity 1: What is in a museum?

*Duration of Activity: 40 minutes*

### Objectives of activity:

- To introduce students to collections and in particular those at HistoryMiami.
- The museum collects within four categories, Documents, Fossils, Artifacts and Replicas.

### Instructions:

#### STUDENTS:

Take out a piece of paper

Fold the paper in half (vertically)

Number both halves of paper from 1-10

Label the upper left side: My Collections and the upper right side: Museum's Collections

Write down what you collect on the left and what you think the museum collects on the right.

#### TEACHER:

A book, letter or map (a document), a rock or leaf (can be a fossil someday), an object that is authentic (an artifact like a family heirloom) and an object that is a replica (maybe a piece of costume jewelry)

- After everyone has done this, have students share some of their collections.
- Then have students share their ideas for a museum collection (there is no right or wrong)
  - You can then share with the students the four things you put aside.
  - Have them try to put them into categories (documents, fossils, artifacts and replicas)
  - You can share with them that these are the four categories the Museum at HistoryMiami collects in.
  - Have the students try to pull four similar objects from their person – their textbooks, something from their backpacks – they will see how they are carrying collections with them at all times as well.
  - Have students explain WHY those pieces from the collection are in the category they are in.

### Key questions for students:

- What is a collection?
- Why do people collect?
- Why do museums collect?

## Activity 2: What do people remember?

*Duration of Activity: 30 minutes*

### Objectives of activity:

- Introduce students to the reactions of people when they visited Virginia Key Beach.

#### Instructions

Write each of the quotes attached onto a piece of newsprint.

Post the quotes around the room. Have students walk around room and write reaction to the quotes onto the newsprint.

Choose one quote to discuss as a class

The instructor can now share with the class that they are going to be learning more about Virginia Key Beach Park.

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### **Key Questions for Students**

- Did any of the reactions surprise you? Why?
  - Does Virginia Key sound fun? Why?
  - Would you want to go there? Why?
  - Do you think it was fair to segregate the beaches? Why?
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## **Post-Visit Conversations**

### **Activity 1: Draw it out!**

*Duration: 30 minutes*

#### **Objectives**

- To demonstrate that they have learned, understood, and remember the content of the Virginia Key Beach Park program through a creative activity.

#### **Instructions:**

Students will draw a picture of what they think a day a Virginia Key Beach was like in the 1950s.

### **Other Potential Post-Visit Ideas**

Socratic Seminar

1. Discuss the following topics
  - a. What was segregation like in Miami before 1960?
  - b. Is there still discrimination today? – If so how?

### **Activity 2: Log writing**

*Duration of Activity: 15 minutes or homework*

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will reflect on their visit and connect with their growth.

#### **Instructions:**

After the museum visit, students will spend time on writing a personal log. This will help with retention of information they have gathered.

#### **Key Questions for students:**

- Where and when did you go?
  - What did you see, hear, touch, do?
  - What was your favorite part? – Why?
  - What new piece of information changed the way you thought about the world? – Why?
  - Which words and ideas stood out the most? – Why?
  - What do you think about the experience?
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## **Thank You!**

Thank you again for your participation and we look forward to working with you again soon!

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At HistoryMiami we offer more than 10 different educational programs. These are listed on our website [www.historymiami.org](http://www.historymiami.org) and can also be seen in our brochure.

Regards,

HistoryMiami  
101 West Flagler Street  
305.375.1492

### **Virginia Key Quotes**

Beverly Robinson Ware

My wonderful thoughts of Virginia Key Beach include the huge dance floor, the snack bar delicious corn dog, lots of palm trees for shade and the aromas coming from the bar-b-q pits. Last but not least, our senior picnic that required the (6T6) class to walk from Dixie Park Pool to Virginia Key Beach. We sang every hit song, told jokes, even danced along the way to make the trip a memorable one. Yes, some fellow Washingtonians cheated but for the most part, the majority walked the entire trip.

Kevin C. Butler

I remember the adventures my family and friends have taken to Virginia Key Beach. I remember getting to the causeway entrance and to my left was the giant shark spinning telling tourist to stop at the Seaquarium. By this time all of the kids in the car were so excited. It was only a few minutes to that point from Overtown but we thought we were on a two day trip. There was the food, the music, the blankets, the coals for the bbq, the pillows, the games, all stuffed in the car and sometimes we had one of the elders along and that is a story in itself. By the time we got halfway over the first bridge the car was usually quiet all heads turned looking at the blue waters but then by the time we over that bridge there were the signs on the left there was huge clamshell bandstand all the kids and some of the grown folks WOWED and AHHHHH

Patricia A. Miles Bendross

When I think of Virginia Key Beach a smile comes to my face. I grew up in the fifties and sixties and there was nothing more exciting for me than going to the beach with my family and with my friends. My favorite thing to do was to dance on the cement dance floor. We'd have to feed coins to the music box but that was never a problem. The music just kept coming. God bless this project.

Don Deresz

I hope that a plaque will be prominently displayed in the Park quoting part of the Park's "re-"dedication speech that was given by Ms. A. Range, who explained the need for everyone to remember the history of the Virginia Key Beach Park and the invitation that the Park is forever "open to people of all colors."

Robert Hall

A special part of growing up in the Overtown section of Miami in the 1950s and 60s was going to Virginia Key Beach. Where else, besides church, could you meet another person who knew your

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cousins--the ones living in Brownsville. The cabanas, train, and merry-go-round were always larger than life. I can still smell the salt air.

Eugenia B. Thomas

The Baker's Haulover Protest Wading Mrs. Thomas, the widow of Attorney Lawson E. Thomas, who actually led the protest at Baker's Haulover, was as close anyone to the events of that day. Shortly thereafter, it was publicly announced that Virginia Key Beach was opened in August 1, 1945.

*If you need a sign language interpreter, or materials in accessible format, please call 305-375-5379 or email: [accessibility@historymiami.org](mailto:accessibility@historymiami.org).*

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