





### JUANTA CRAFT A Texas-Sized Civil Rights Icon

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19(C), 22(B)(C)

★ ELAR: 1(A)

4th Grade Standards

\* Art: 1(A), 2(C), 3(A), 4(A)

★ Social Studies: 5(C), 17(A)(D), 18(B),

 $\mathbf{A}$ 

### Juanita Craft - A Texas-Sized Civil Rights Icon

Juanita Craft, born Juanita Jewel Shanks in 1902, was an American civil rights activist, politician, and an icon for her ability to organize and guide youth groups. Her work was pivotal in the civil rights movement, particularly in Dallas, Texas.

The granddaughter of slaves, Craft felt the impact of racial discrimination early in life. In 1918, when Craft was 16, her mother died of tuberculosis because she was denied hospital treatment based on the color of her skin. Understandably this tragedy, possibly avoidable had her mother been cared for properly by medical personnel, had a huge impact on Craft's future as an unwavering champion of social justice. Craft went on to attain a college education but upon moving to Dallas could only find work as a bell woman at the Adolphus Hotel. A trained seamstress and milliner, she later worked as a dressmaker.

Interested in fighting job discrimination, Craft joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1935, and there found her life's purpose. First appointed membership chair in Dallas, she went on to become a Texas NAACP field organizer, helping establish more than 180 branches of the NAACP. Craft was the first black woman in Dallas County to vote in a public election and served two terms on the Dallas City Council between 1975 and 1979. She also worked successfully to integrate the University of Texas Law School, University of North Texas and Dallas Independent School District.

Dallas public schools had a particularly harsh road to desegregation. In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled against the Topeka Board of Education, declaring segregation in schools was unconstitutional. Dallas dug in, refusing to abide by the ruling and continued to have segregated schools. Although progress toward

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desegregation began in 1961, there was a long fight ahead of Craft and other activists to truly change the racial injustices within the school district. Not until 2003 was Dallas ISD officially ruled desegregated.

Craft's house in South Dallas was often used as an organizing space for both youth and adult activists, and still stands today as a monument to the Civil Rights Movement. Situated in what was once an all-white neighborhood near the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X boulevards, the area was targeted by racist bombings in the early 1950's in an attempt to scare Craft and other activists away. However, she was not intimidated and lived in the same house the rest of her life.

Craft's work with youth is legendary. The NAACP Youth Council she organized in Dallas in the 1940's was the first of its kind and became the model for other youth branches throughout the country. Under Craft's guidance, youth in the council were inspired by speakers who were active in the Civil Rights movement, including college students who became role models for the younger participants. Through these sessions, youth learned why the NAACP existed, studied the causes supported by the NAACP, were well-informed of what was happening in other cities, and absorbed the tenets of civil disobedience.

Craft was a leader in teaching and modeling the importance of assembling in order to advocate successfully for what is right and just, and worked with the Youth Council to organize sit-ins, picket lines and other peaceful assemblies across the city to protest racial injustice. The youth silk-screened t-shirts and made posters to support their local demonstrations and also recruited new members (both youth and adult) for the NAACP.

Fighting against the segregation of the State Fair of Texas was a pivotal part of her work. For decades, the State Fair deemed "Negro Achievement Day" the only day that black people could visit the Fair. Starting in 1955, Craft organized years of peaceful protests with her youth and others until the Fair was fully desegregated in 1967. She went on to build strong relationships with Fair officials, and her memorial service was held at the Hall of State in Fair Park in 1985. To commemorate her legacy, the State Fair of Texas established an annual award in her honor in 2018.

Celebrated for her tireless efforts in fighting for civil rights, she received the NAACP Golden Heritage Life Membership Award in 1978 and the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award in 1984. Multiple Dallas locations are named in her honor, including the Juanita Craft Recreation Center, The Juanita J. Craft Swimming Pool, the Juanita Craft Post Office and the Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights House. She attended the inauguration of three US presidents - something that was uncommon during her lifetime. Although Craft passed away in 1985, her legacy and tireless efforts fighting for racial justice and civil rights remain, and the young people she mentored continue as adults to work toward a complete and just society.

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#### In this lesson students will:

- ★ Explore and discuss the life and legacy of Juanita Craft
- ★ Define an activist and their role
- **★** Create a presentation based on their knowledge and understanding of the impact of Juanita Craft's work on civil rights
- $\star$  Create an artwork that tells the visual story of an important moment in Juanita Craft's life

# 5th Grade Standards

- ★ Social Studies: 5(A), 5(C), 18(A), 22(C), 25(B)(C)(D) ★ ELAR: 1(A)(C)
- ★ Art: 1(A), 2(C), 3(A)(B)(C), 4(B)

#### Before You Go

★ Materials: Pencil, two sheets of blank paper and student access to the provided Juanita Craft biography in digital or hard copy.

#### copy them down on a sheet of paper. They should leave space to answer each question. Also, mention that answering the

On the Board or Projector

Essential Question on the second sheet of paper will be an exit ticket for the day.

**★** Display the four questions below and instruct students to

- What was segregation and how was it used to exclude African Americans from different aspects of society? • What is an activist? Can you be one? How?
  - What impacts did Juanita Craft have on society?
  - What role did Juanita Craft play in desegregating the State Fair of Texas?

#### Essential Question

How did Juanita Craft expand opportunities for African Americans during the civil rights movement?

After students have written down the questions, take time to read each question to students so that they know what they should be able to answer throughout the lesson.



Next, play the following news clip and instruct students to write down five things they observe in the video that they would like to discuss after. They should do this on the back of the paper where they wrote the questions that you displayed. This video provides a first-hand account of a person who experienced segregation and how Jim Crow laws prevented him from attending a Texas university. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc03d8iTfQ4

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- Conduct a Think-Pair-Share after the video clip.
  Give students 30 seconds to think and write down something they want to share and one minute to discuss with a partner what they saw in the video and what they wrote down.
  - \* Next, spend a few minutes asking students to share something that they learned or discussed with their partners (adjust times at your discretion). Either call on students randomly or ask for volunteers.
  - Be sure to point out that the video illustrates why people began to join organizations to desegregate Texas.
- \* Take this opportunity to point out that youth were advocating for equal rights too—it was not limited to adults.

Following the class discussion, show students the following video to introduce them to Juanita Craft and her work in Dallas. Instruct them to write down at least five things they observe in the video to discuss after watching.

https://vimeo.com/270924864



- ★ When the video concludes, have students read the provided biography of Juanita Craft individually or as a group, then ask students to Think-Pair-Share the same way they did earlier.
- Give them 30 seconds to think and write down something they want to share and one minute to discuss with a partner what they saw in the video or read in the bio and wrote down.
- Next, spend a few minutes asking students to share something that they learned or discussed with their partners (adjust times at your discretion). Either call on students randomly or ask for volunteers.
- Be sure to touch on these main points, if they are not brought up first by the students:
- \* Juanita Craft was an activist in the NAACP (explain to them what an activist is and provide some examples).
- $^{\star}$  She was the first black woman to vote in Dallas County.
- \* She helped desegregate several Texas institutions, particularly in the Dallas area, including the State Fair of Texas.

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- ★ Ask students to imagine what life may have been like as an African American living in Dallas, TX in the 1950s, before desegregation.
  - Explain that historically the State Fair of Texas only allowed African Americans to attend on one day, Negro Achievement Day. Even then, not all of the vendors and rides were open to them.
  - Explain to them that Craft and others wanted to change this and advocated for desegregation.
  - Be sure to define the word activist for students.
  - Tell students to brainstorm ways to advocate for a cause and have them write down some examples.
  - Give them about two to three minutes.
  - First, have them discuss this with a partner, then as a class. They should come up with things like, protesting, petitions, organizing and boycotts. (And if they don't, talk about these and what they are).

Next, explain how in 1955, Craft activated the Youth Council of the Dallas NAACP to picket outside of the State Fair on Negro Achievement Day. She urged African Americans to visit the Fair every day but Negro Achievement Day to draw attention to the unfairness of the segregation at the event. Explain that the Fair did not fully desegregate until the 1960s.

★ Have students take turns reading aloud the following article to the class or have them work in small groups or with partners to read over the piece. <u>https://www.thestoryoftexas.</u> <u>com/discover/artifacts/naacp-state-fair-spotlight-012315</u>

To close, have students answer the essential question on a new sheet of paper.

- Tell them their response needs to be at least three sentences long.
- Give students five to eight minutes.
- Have them turn the activity in as they leave class.

While You're There	Essential Question
Provide copies of the Student Edition	• How did the contributions of Juanita Craft shape
and have students complete the activities	the culture in Dallas?
while at the State Fair. Students should	<ul> <li>How did she influence the overall fight for</li> </ul>
take notes while at the State Fair and	civil rights in America?
bring them to class for a discussion of	<ul> <li>What responsibility do we have in working</li> </ul>
their findings.	toward equality in today's society?
	• How do our experiences shape who we are and
	what we are passionate about?

#### Juanita Craft Civil Rights House

This link will take you to the National Park Service (NPS) website for the Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights House: <u>https://www.nps.gov/places/texas-juanita-j-craft-civil-rights-house.htm</u>

★ Before going to the Fair, have students read about the Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights House and, if possible, visit the house. The information and experience will give them more insight into Craft and her contributions to Dallas and the State Fair of Texas.

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#### The Juanita Craft Humanitarian Awards Ceremony

- ★ This link will take you to the site for this year's ceremony: <u>https://bigtex.com/event/</u> juanita-craft-humanitarian-awards-ceremony/
- ★ If you can attend, instruct students to document the honorees and how they are continuing Juanita Craft's legacy.

#### African American Museum

- ★ Explain to students that Fair Park, home to the State Fair of Texas, has an African American Museum that houses exhibits on significant individuals and their contributions to society.
- $\star$  Have them relate what they observe in the displays to Craft's activism.

#### After the Fair Essential Question Option 1: • How did Juanita Craft expand opportunities for African Have students create a video or Americans during the civil rights movement? • What responsibility do we have in working toward equality in a slide presentation to share today's society? with the class that outlines the legacy of Juanita Craft and her contributions that have Questions to answer in the shaped American society. Be presentation: sure students understand that 1. During which period(s) did they will answer the Essential Craft live? Question from the first day and 2. How would you describe the questions below in their Craft in three words or presentation. If needed, allow less? them to refer to their exit 3. Why was Craft considered ticket. an activist? 4. Explain what citizen If they were able to visit the right Craft used when she Juanita J. Craft Civil Rights organized a picket outside House, attend the awards of the State Fair of Texas. ceremony or visit the African 5. How did she accomplish her American Museum, have them goals? Provide examples. include in their presentation 6. How can we work together something they learned or found to ensure equality today? particularly interesting.

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#### Suggested criteria:

- ★ Slide Show (Google Slides, PowerPoint, Prezi):
  - The presentation should include a minimum of five slides.
  - Include pictures and backgrounds on each slide.
  - The presentation should be organized and easy to follow.
- ★ Video (Flipgrid, iVideo or other approved method):
  - The video should be at least one minute long.
  - It should be informative and provide examples of Ms. Craft's activism.
  - It should be clear and easy to understand.

#### Option 2:

Instruct students to think of ways that they could positively impact their own community or school. Juanita Craft witnessed and experienced the injustices of inequality and its effects first hand and fought hard against what she knew was wrong. In her drive and determination to create a more just society, she inspired many along with way to join her and they continue to carry on her legacy and fight today.

In the spirit of Juanita Craft, have students work together in small groups to identify an issue within their school or community where they feel they could create positive change. For example, a group might create posters or flyers to combat bullying and display them around the school, or they might create a fundraiser and donate the funds to a charity of their choosing. The focus of the project should be to create positive change, just as Craft did in her tireless efforts as an equal rights advocate.

Students should present their ideas to the class either in slide show or video format. The presentation should include the ways in which Craft impacted her community and how their efforts or ideas could have a similar positive impact in their own community or school.

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#### Arts Connection

During the Civil Rights Movement, many artists created work that reflected the obstacles, hardships and victories that African Americans endured in their fight for racial justice. One of the most well-known among these artists was Jacob Lawrence. His most famous works include "The Migration Series." In this body of work, Lawrence tells the visual story of the migration of African Americans from the south to the north in search of better lives.

Show your students the following video from the Khan Academy that discusses some of the works in "The Migration Series."

https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/later-europe-and-americas/ modernity-ap/v/lawrence-migration-series

Instruct the students to write down anything that they notice in the artworks that might tell the story of the migration. For example, what colors are used? How are the figures drawn? How do their faces look like? How are their bodies arranged?

After the video, discuss as a class how the artist used certain colors and symbols to create meaning in the works. (Refer to the questions above if the students are having trouble identifying specific details in the paintings.)

Talk with the students about visual storytelling (telling a story using only images with no words). That is what Jacob Lawrence did in his work detailing the history of African American migration to the north.

The students will create their own visual story based on the work of Juanita Craft. Each student should choose an important event that Craft led or participated in during the Civil Rights Movement. Once they have chosen an event, they should create a painting, drawing or collage that tells its visual story. When finished, have students present their work to the class and talk about how the creative choices they made help to tell a visual story about Craft.

