

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow

INTERGENERATIONAL DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE RISE AND FALL OF JIM CROW is a co-production of Quest Productions, Videoline Productions, and Thirteen/WNET New York.



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BROADCAST SCHEDULE

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow is scheduled
to air on the following dates:

Tuesday, October 1, 10 p.m. ; Tuesday, October 8, 10 p.m.
Tuesday, October 15, 10 p.m. ; Tuesday, October 22, 10 p.m.

For specific broadcast information, visit our Web site at:
pbs.org/jimcrow or contact your local PBS station.

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DEAR READER,



I consider myself as someone whose political and social awakening took place during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. As a foot soldier in a grand army on the march for humanity, I became aware that the struggle against Jim Crow that many of us were experiencing for the first time had been ongoing in the African American community for generations.

At that time, I was just beginning my career as a filmmaker. The complexity and richness of telling the Jim Crow story was far beyond my grasp. But as I learned my craft and began to make films, I continued to think about the 1960s — and the passions that informed that movement.

In 1992, I finally came up with the solution that had eluded me for so long — let African Americans tell the story of their own struggles themselves. And out of that shock of recognition came *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*.

I have been asked why is it so important to tell the story of Jim Crow. Because, in my judgment, the Jim Crow years are the crucible in which modern day race relations have been formed. You cannot understand why we continue to have racial difficulties without understanding this period of our history. Jim Crow is an American story, not just an African American story. It is a shared history for all of us. It is part of my legacy as a white person, as it is part of the legacy of black people.

Jim Crow is also a story that young people should know because young people need heroes, and they need to develop a moral sensibility. The Jim Crow story provides both and thus is needed by youth, especially in today's materialistic world.

Richard Womack

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow Intergenerational Discussion Guide has been developed to encourage communication between generations about the history and impact of the Jim Crow era. The guide's four sections include program descriptions, original essays, personal accounts, and compelling side bars. Each section offers questions that can be used to stimulate discussion. The art and music projects at the end of the guide will stimulate creative expression. A research activity offers readers the opportunity to explore the history of Jim Crow in their own communities. Finally, there are resources and a list of organizations that can help facilitate discussions about race and prejudice.

This guide may be photocopied and distributed to educational organizations, community groups, teachers, and individual viewers. To request a Guide, please write to: Jim Crow Guide, P.O. Box 245, Little Falls, NJ 07424-0245 or email us at guiderequest@thirteen.org.

Conducting an Oral History Interview

SEVERAL PROJECTS IN THIS GUIDE REQUIRE TAKING AN ORAL HISTORY.

Oral histories collect people's memories and personal commentaries through interviews recorded in audio or video format. The interviewee may be a family member, neighbor, civic leader, or some other individual who lived through a momentous period in history. You can make the oral history interview more useful for yourself or for a wider audience by following these recommendations:

1. Consider who will want to view and use the oral history. You may be the only one to conduct an interview with this person. Broaden the scope of your questions as much as possible.

2. Prepare for the interview by researching the period in which the interviewee lived (e.g. where he or she worked or worshipped). Learn about the

papers, photo albums, office files, etc. Ask the interviewee to recommend things for you to consult.

3. Use the best equipment possible, especially good microphones and high-quality tapes. Know how to operate the video camera or tape recorder and microphones. Bring extra tapes and batteries. Position the equipment unobtrusively, but close enough to you so that you can monitor it. You don't want the tape to run out in the middle of the dialogue!

4. Ask open-ended questions, not those that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." Listen carefully to the interviewee's answers and do not interrupt. Bring a list of prepared questions but be ready to respond to and discuss issues you had not anticipated. Never be afraid to admit that you did not know something or to ask for clarification.

5. If possible, interview the person more than once. This will enable you to build trust and confidence toward a more candid interview. Try to cover topics in chronological order, starting with the earliest events and moving forward. But keep in mind that people's minds do not always work so neatly. Talking about later events may trigger memories of earlier times.

6. Budget your time and funds wisely. Don't spend all your resources conducting a series of interviews and then

run out of funds before processing the tapes.

7. Document and archive the interviews. Transcribe the tapes when possible, or at least write a detailed summary of the topics covered. Preserve the tapes and transcripts under optimal conditions — ideally by donating them to a library or archives. You might also post the interviews on the Internet.

8. Establish copyright for the interviews. This will permit the interview to be published or used for research in the future. An interviewee owns his or her words until he or she has signed a deed or gift, giving the copyright to the interviewer, a library or the public domain.

9. Review your interviewing style to improve your technique. Listen to your tapes and think about the way you asked questions and about the questions you could have asked. Don't be discouraged by "glitches." Oral history is incremental, and interviewers can learn from their mistakes. Consult the Oral History Association's Evaluation Guidelines at www.dickinson.edu/oha/.

10. Share the results with the interviewee. Offer free copies of the tape and transcript to the interviewee. Let him or her know how the interviews will be used and invite him or her to any public presentation of the materials.



specific people and events you expect to cover. Be creative in your research: Use newspapers, history textbooks, family



Black men collecting cotton in the rural agricultural post-slavery South.

PROGRAM ONE:

Promises Betrayed (1865–1896)

FROM THE DAYS OF SLAVERY THROUGH THE JIM Crow years, African Americans were passionate about education. Many men and women learned to read despite the risks involved. A slave caught reading could be whipped or branded. A freedman caught teaching other blacks could be re-enslaved or killed. After the Civil War, former abolitionists who came south to open schools found many freedmen and women defiantly building and maintaining their own schools.

uated from Fisk.

In the 1880s, when Booker T. Washington founded Tuskegee Institute, whites supported his efforts because they thought the school would accommodate white supremacy by training its students for labor. Yet, for many young people, Tuskegee was a godsend. After receiving a Tuskegee education, William Holtzclaw founded Utica College in Mississippi.

While some schools offered vocational education to get much needed white financial support, others “trained minds instead of hands.” Lucy Laney, Charlotte Hawkins Brown and other teachers saw education as a means of “uplifting the race.” Modeled on New England Colleges, Fisk and Atlanta taught their students academic subjects, aiming to produce “race leaders, not followers.” W.E.B. Du Bois declared that the mission of quality schools was to train the “Talented Tenth,” the ten percent of the black community that would lead the rest out of the snare of Jim Crow and into freedom. He was right. Many of the leaders and soldiers of the Civil Rights movement were students from black colleges. ■

Essay by Richard Wormser, the producer and episode writer/director of The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow.



Children hard at work in the schoolhouse.

Program Summary

Following the Civil War, whites denied African Americans their dreams of owning land and obtaining their political and civil rights. Whites subjected blacks to disfranchisement and segregation enforced by law, as well as lynchings, beatings and burnings. African Americans responded by creating opportunities for themselves — politically, economically and educationally. Booker T. Washington founded Tuskegee Institute; Ida B. Wells confronted segregation in Tennessee; and Isaiah Montgomery built the successful all-black town of Mount Bayou in Mississippi. In 1896, the Supreme Court, in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson, upheld the pernicious doctrine of “separate but equal.”

When the Jim Crow era began in the 1880s, Southern whites adamantly opposed anything but minimal education for black children. White planters felt that education spoiled “good field hands.” Urban whites felt that education made blacks “too uppity.” By the end of the 19th century, almost two-thirds of black children could not attend school because they had neither school buildings nor teachers. Whites often burned down black schools and killed or drove teachers out of the community. In spite of all this blacks were not deterred.

The black community supported their own schools; and local churches often provided education through Sabbath schools. Over 70 percent of all

black children in school attended private schools. Whenever blacks could influence state legislators, they asked that all children have access to public schools. Missionary societies from the North founded black colleges and training schools, such as Fisk, Atlanta University and Hampton, which produced future black leaders. Booker T. Washington attended Hampton in the 1870s. A decade later, W.E.B. Du Bois grad-

“She would hide me behind skillets, ovens and pots. Then she would slip me to school the back way...”

Ned Cobb, a tenant farmer in Alabama, grew up during the height of Jim Crow. He recounted his life story to Theodore Rosengarten, whose book, *All God's Dangers*, won the National Book Award: “My children weren’t going to school worth nothing then. It weren’t their fault, they wanted to go and it weren’t my fault. I wouldn’t of stopped them from going. The school for colored children up yonder, it’s run two or three weeks, maybe a month and a half on the outside and the word come down ... ‘cut the school out. Money’s gone’.... The money was comin’ here through white hands and they was concerned with keeping colored children out of school.... We was always left to wondering whether we would have any schools or not. White man could go up there and hire the colored children from their parents, nothing said. . . . Poor fellows, at home, cut loose from their books. White man come up there cotton choppin’ time in May . . . chaps couldn’t go to school, the school was closed down on them, . . . — better let ‘em work for him; don’t they’ll get mad with you and it’ll hurt you one way or another.”

All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw
by Theodore Rosengarten

DOOMED TO A LIFE OF SHARECROPPING IN Alabama in the 1880s, Addie and Jerry Holtzclaw passionately believed that with an education their children could escape the same fate. The Holtzclaws and fellow sharecroppers built a school and hired a teacher. The landlord wanted the children to pick cotton, but Addie “outfoxed him.” William Holtzclaw remembered: “She would hide me behind skillets, ovens and pots. Then she would slip me to school the back way, pushing me through the woods and underbrush until it was safe for me to travel alone.”

When the boys got older, they had to work, but Addie arranged for them to get some education. “One day I plowed and he went to school.” William Holtzclaw recalled. “The next day he plowed and I went to school. What he learned during the day, he taught me at night and I did the same for him.”

William desired a richer education, so he wrote to Booker T. Washington, the head of Tuskegee Institute: “Dear Book, I wants to go to Tuskegee to get an ejercashun. Can I come?” “Come,” Washington replied. Tuskegee transformed William Holtzclaw and enabled him to open his own school — Utica College in Mississippi.



Champion
of education,
Charlotte
Hawkins Brown.

Discussion Questions

- In the Jim Crow era, African Americans attended segregated schools because they had no choice. Today, some African Americans argue that all-black schools are better for black students. What’s your opinion?
- Do you think that black and white students today have equal educational opportunities? What evidence do you have that supports your belief?
- Do you think that colleges should take race or ethnicity into consideration in their admission policies? Why or why not?

Personal Account

The experience of a whole race beginning to go to school for the first time presents one of the most interesting studies that has ever occurred with the development of any race. Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any idea of the intense desire, which the people of my race showed for an education. As I have stated, it was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young and none too old to attempt to learn. As fast as any kinds of teachers could be secured, not only were the day schools filled but the night schools as well. The great ambition of the older people was trying to learn the Bible before they died. With this end in view, men and women who were sixty and seventy years old would be found in the night school. Sunday schools were formed soon after freedom but the principal book studied in the Sunday school was the spelling book. Day school, night school, Sunday school, were always crowded and often many would have to be turned away for lack of room.

Booker T. Washington

Fighting Back (1896–1917)

WHEN GENERAL O. O. Howard visited the Walton Spring School for formerly enslaved students in Atlanta, he asked a class what message they had for the children of the North. One student, Richard R. Wright, proudly answered: “Tell them we are rising!”

From the end of the Civil War through Reconstruction to the end of the Jim Crow era, African Americans continued to rise. Wright himself became a bank president. Although whites tried to thwart any black progress during the Jim Crow era, they

failed to do so. Black businessmen believed that through economic uplift, racial solidarity and loyalty to America, African

Americans would triumph over segregation. Booker T. Washington advised his black audience they could prove their worthiness as Americans by succeeding economically. “There was room at the top,” he said. As the *New York Age* expressed it, “The almighty dollar is the magic wand that knocks the bottom out of race prejudice.”

Black businesses catered to the white community during the 1880’s, but as Jim Crow intensified, they served only the black community. Men and women

like George Merrick, C.C. Spaulding, Minnie Cox, and Alonzo Herndon built successful life insurance companies. Frank Church became a real estate magnate, Maggie Walker a banker. Others founded successful funeral homes, barber shops, saloons, livery stables, and construction companies.

Few professions or white-collar jobs were available to black women. Some worked in churches and women’s clubs. The one profession that was open to them was teaching. By the turn of the century, there were more

women teachers than men.

Black bourgeois families mirrored the Victorian model, which stressed monogamy, chastity, hard work, thrift, godliness, cleanliness, and patriarchal rule. But if black professionals identified with their white counterparts, whites did not reciprocate. Middle class whites felt more in common with “poor whites,” whom they generally loathed, than with middle class blacks.

Most middle class blacks subscribed to a doctrine of racial uplift — especially when it came to the working class poor. Black women dedicated their energies to improving the life of poor people. While racial uplift provided needed help, it also served to divide the black community between middle class and working class.

Despite numerous obstacles, the black middle class played a major role in providing leadership for the black community. It provided numerous leaders for the Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ■

Essay by Richard Wormser, the producer and episode writer/director of The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow.



A 19th century photograph of customers frequenting a black-owned pharmacy.

Program Summary

Denied their rights, blacks created their own churches, schools, businesses, and clubs. In Wilmington, North Carolina, a successful black middle class became the target of rioters in a white supremacist political campaign. African Americans persisted. Charlotte Hawkins Brown built quality schools while black musicians created the blues and jazz. The black community in Atlanta, Georgia, maintained five colleges despite a violent riot in 1906. In 1910, W.E.B. Du Bois left Atlanta to join the newly founded National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), an interracial civil rights organization. Dr. Du Bois fought for black rights and against segregation in the federal government.

The following is an excerpt from *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. Garvey was a charismatic black leader who formed the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in the early twentieth century, hoping to organize a massive emigration of blacks back to Africa. His goal was to uplift the race.

“Lift up yourselves men, take yourselves out of the mire and hitch your hope to the stars; yes, rise as high as the stars themselves.”

When we come to consider the history of man, was not the Negro a power, was he not great once? Yes, honest students of history can recall the day when Egypt, Ethiopia and Timbuktu towered in their civilizations, towered above Europe, towered above Asia.... Why then should we lose hope? Black men, you were once great, you shall be great again. Lose

not courage, lose not faith, go forward. The thing to do is get organized: keep separated and you will be exploited, you will be robbed, you will be killed. Get organized and you will compel the world to respect you.... Lift up yourselves men, take yourselves out of the mire and hitch your hope to the stars; yes, rise as high as the stars themselves.

Left: Portrait of the Sadgwar family, prominent members of the Wilmington middle class. **Right:** A young girl receives piano lessons from a black piano teacher.



Discussion Questions

- When the black middle class emerged after the end of slavery, it began to distinguish itself from the working class. Do you think that class distinctions still exist today within the African American community?
- Do you think that black businessmen and women today have a relatively equal chance of succeeding? Do you know any black businesspeople who have done so? How did they succeed?
- Do you think that those who have succeeded in the African American community have any responsibility to those who have not been as fortunate? Why or why not?

Personal Account

The success of the black middle class and its attempts to win political power infuriated many whites. They saw it as an attempt by blacks to get out of “their place.” In 1898, a race riot occurred in Wilmington, North Carolina. Middle class blacks were one of the main targets. The following quote is an eye-witness account of the riots by Reverend Alan Kirk, a black minister.

Firing began and it seemed like a mighty battle in wartime. They went on firing it seemed as every living Negro, poured volleys into fleeing men like sportsmen firing at rabbits in an open field; the shrieks and screams of children, of mothers and wives, caused the blood of the most inhuman person to creep; men lay on the street dead and dying while members of their race walked by unable to do them any good.

Don't Shout Too Soon (1918–1940)

THE RETURN OF BLACK SOLDIERS FROM overseas at the end of World War I fueled a heightened determination among blacks, North and South, to secure the promise of democracy. Nearly a quarter of a million black soldiers had fought on the battlefields of Europe. Their experience led to the “New Negro” movement of the post-war era. A local NAACP leader in Austin, Texas, reported, “They have returned to old homes but they are not going to submit to old ways.”

Whites mounted fierce resistance to any changes in the racial status quo, and tensions exploded in race riots and lynchings during 1919 — a reign of terror that suppressed many

against lynching, in the efforts of black sharecroppers to organize, and in the pioneering legal work of Charles Hamilton Houston.

Houston, a veteran of World War I, came back from the war committed to studying law and “fighting for those who could not fight back.” After completing his law degree at Harvard Law School, he joined the faculty at Howard University Law School, where he trained a generation of civil rights lawyers, among them Thurgood Marshall.

In 1934, at the height of the Depression, Charles Hamilton Houston became general counsel for the NAACP. With Marshall working as his assistant, Houston tapped into the

Program Summary

African American soldiers returning home after World War I faced an epidemic of race riots while the NAACP expanded an anti-lynching campaign.

When the white president of Fisk University accommodated the Jim Crow views of influential white funders, black students forced his removal with a strike. Hundreds of thousands of blacks left the South, including musicians and writers who gave birth to the Harlem Renaissance. In the cotton fields, sharecroppers, aided by Communist organizers, began to oppose their landlords. The NAACP, now led by Walter White and Charles Hamilton Houston, began to challenge Jim Crow in the courts. Houston's strategies would become the basis for the final assault against Jim Crow 20 years later.



Black American soldiers dance with French women, breaking a strictly upheld taboo in America.

of the promising efforts that came out of the war.

But the spirit of the New Negro endured. It nurtured an outpouring of cultural, literary and musical creativity that flowered in the Harlem Renaissance, in the works of people like Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, Sterling Brown, and Aaron Douglas. It also found expression in Marcus Garvey and his United Negro Improvement Association, the largest mass black organization in the United States, which celebrated racial pride and promoted black economic development. Scattered protests continued into the Depression era, on black campuses, in the campaign

rising expectations stirred by the New Deal and launched a concerted campaign to dismantle Jim Crow laws. Houston and Marshall traveled thousands of miles throughout the South, enlisting blacks in a struggle that would be played out in communities, at the polling booths and in courtrooms — quietly laying the groundwork for the Civil Rights movement of the post World War II decades. ■

Essay by Patricia Sullivan, author of Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era.

Left: Flag flown at NAACP's New York headquarters.
Right: Harlem Renaissance artist Aaron Douglas working at easel.



Discussion Questions

■ W.E.B. Du Bois looked to the “Talented Tenth” to provide leadership in the struggle for black liberation and civil rights. Why do you agree or disagree with this? Is this an elitist concept?

■ In 1934, Du Bois argued that the interests of black students would be best served in separate schools, sparking a spirited debate within the NAACP. What factors led Du Bois to this conclusion? What relevance, if any, does this debate have today?

■ With the normal channels of political participation closed to African Americans in the South in the 1930s, Charles Hamilton Houston envisioned the black lawyer as “a social engineer,” as one who would “anticipate, guide, and interpret his group’s advancement.” How successful was Houston in realizing this ideal?

“It was a great shock . . . and made many people face up to a situation.”

In the spring of 1931, nine young black men were charged with raping two white women near Scottsboro, Alabama. They were quickly tried amid a mob atmosphere and sentenced to death. Charles Hamilton Houston called it a “judicial lynching.”



W.E.B. Du Bois.

The International Legal Defense, the legal arm of the American Communist Party, secured new trials and mounted mass protests demanding that the “Scottsboro Boys” be freed. It would be years before all of the men were released from prison. But their lives were spared, and the publicity surrounding the case revealed the harsh realities of segregation. A contemporary compared it to the dramatic impact of the police assault on protesters in Birmingham in 1963: “It was a great shock . . . and made many people face up to a situation.”

For Houston, the Scottsboro case represented a pivotal event in the development of black protest. All who joined in the fight, Houston wrote, “were made to feel that even without the ordinary weapons of democracy . . . [they] still had the force . . . with which they themselves could bring to bear pressures and effect the result of the trial and arbitrations.” It would be remembered, he said, as “a milestone” in American history.

Personal Account Walter White on Election Terror in Florida, *New Republic*, Jan. 12, 1921

The recent election brought into full play all of the fear that “white supremacy” would crumble if Negroes were allowed to vote, augmented by the belief that the recent war experiences of the Negro soldier had made him less tractable than before. In many southern cities and towns, parades of the Klan were extensively advertised in advance and held on . . . the Saturday before the election. . . Today, the Negro is neither so poor nor so ignorant nor so easily terrified [as in the days after Emancipation], a fact known by everybody but the revivers of the Ku Klux Klan. Instead of running for cover, frightened, his mood now is to protect himself and his family by fighting to the death.

This can best be shown by the attitude of the Negroes of Jacksonville [Florida]. An old colored woman, standing on Bay Street as she watched the parade of Klansmen on the Saturday night before the election, called out derisively to the marchers:

“Buckra [poor white people], you ain’t done nothing. Those German guns didn’t scare us and we know white robes won’t do it now.”

. . . Whatever the intentions of the sponsors of the parade, it acted as an incentive to bring to the polls on Election Day men and women voters who had before been indifferent. . .



A black American soldier with captured Nazis in Germany, 1945.

PROGRAM FOUR:

Terror and Triumph (1940–1954)

I SPENT THE SUMMER OF 1971 IN A CENTRAL ALABAMA town where I had gone to interview a former cotton farmer by the name of Ned Cobb. Forty years earlier, Cobb had belonged to a militant organization called the Sharecroppers Union. He spent twelve years in prison for his part in a shoot-out with the sheriff's deputies who tried to take

away his neighbor's livestock for non-payment of debt. Mornings I would sit with Cobb on the veranda of his tool shed as he whittled strips of live oak and answered my questions about the past. Afternoons I would cool off in a nearby lake — the municipal pool had been drained years before and filled with concrete so that white and black children would not swim together. Evenings, I coached a baseball team in the local Dixie Youth League — an organization founded in 1954 when the national office of the Little League ordered its state branches to integrate. Now Dixie Youth was defying its origins as the walls of separation came tumbling down around the baseball diamonds of the rural South. "Once you play ball with them," the father of my first baseman confided, as his son's black teammates climbed into the back of his pick-up after a game, "you don't

out of the same boat or to sit at the table and play cards or checkers? What interest was served by requiring black and white witnesses to swear on different Bibles? Were whites and blacks who worked in cotton mills really expected to obey a law that forbade them from looking out of the same window? The minutia of Jim Crow may strike us today as comical, but its intent was deadly serious.

Black GI's returning from World War II expected to find things changed when they got home but were bitterly disappointed. They had fought like men, but whites persisted in calling them "boy." Their uniforms and medals were met with derision. They still had to tip their hats, step aside in the streets, sit at the back of the bus, and make way for whites at intersections. But while they were fighting to free Europe of Hitler, black GI's had re-imagined their place in a democratic society. The ones who returned to fight inequality and discrimination battled in virtual anonymity in the era before television.

Time, which had appeared to stand still in the era of the mule and plow, was now on the side of the downtrodden. The defeat of Nazism had discredited the doctrine of "scientific racism," and the nation was less willing to accept a southern solution to the race question. In a historic turn-about, Harry S. Truman, a president from the border state of Missouri, declared that the federal government stood with Americans who aspired to equal rights. The courts became platforms for challenging the status quo. The law was beginning to side with the disfranchised. Black protest rose rapidly to revolution. ■

Essay by Theodore Rosengarten, author of All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw and TOMBEE: Portrait of a Cotton Planter.

Program Summary

Returning home from military service in World War II, African Americans like Charles and Medgar Evers were unwilling to resume life in segregated America. With a Supreme Court decision making all-white political primaries illegal, blacks like John Wesley Dobbs in Georgia organized voter registration drives. President Harry Truman involved the federal government in civil rights issues for the first time since Reconstruction. A student strike organized by Barbara Johns against unequal schools in Farmville, Virginia, became one of five cases that the U.S. Supreme Court reviewed when it ruled segregation unconstitutional in May of 1954 in Brown v. Board of Education.

want to play without them."

People accommodated quickly to the new order, so why had Jim Crow ruled for so long? Why had the southern states deemed it a crime for white and black people to fish

contend that the Negro is the creative voice of America, *is* creative America, and it was a happy day in America when the first unhappy slave was landed on its shores. There, in our tortured induction into this “land of liberty,” we built its most graceful civilization. Its wealth, its flowering fields, its handsome homes, its pretty traditions, its guarded leisure, and its music were all our creations. . . .

It is our voice that sang “America” when America grew too lazy, satisfied and confident to sing, before the dark threats and fire-lined clouds of destruction frightened it into a thin, panicky quaver.

We are more than a few isolated instances of courage, valor, achievement. We’re the injection, the shot in the arm that has kept America and its gotten principles alive in the fat and corrupt years intervening between our divine conception and our near-tragic present.

Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington, 1941

Left: Blacks exercise their right to vote.
Right: A mock lynching.



Mrs. Nettie Hunt with her daughter Nickie on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court, after the Brown vs. Board desegregation ruling.

“It is our voice that sang ‘America’ when America grew too lazy, satisfied and confident to sing....”

Discussion Questions

- Opposition to Jim Crow was not confined to the North and not confined to black people either. Many white southerners hated segregation but did not speak out, yet tried in private to treat all people with dignity. What circumstances in your life keep you from protesting injustice? Do you feel responsible for correcting conditions that may stem from past social practices?

- Are there circumstances under which you could justify joining a sorority, fraternity, or social club that openly discouraged membership by blacks, Jews, or any other group?

- How would you respond to the argument that segregation created more opportunities for blacks than integration, because separate black institutions employed more principals and teachers, for example, in schools set aside for blacks, than did racially mixed schools?

- Does the display of the Confederate battle flag bother you? Construct an argument in favor of taking the flag down or leaving it up on the dome of a state capitol building.

- What passages from the books of your religious tradition would you cite to support your position on the role that race should play in modern life?



“It was in the state of Georgia, in 1946, that a young Negro veteran named Maceo Snipes learned that by Supreme Court ruling he had a right to vote. No Negro had voted in his county since Reconstruction, but Maceo Snipes went down and registered. The following morning he was sitting on his porch and a white man came up and killed him with a shotgun. His funeral was held the next day and in the midst of the funeral oration, Maceo’s mother rose and moved up through the crowd, up to his coffin, where they waited to lower it into the earth. And she asked her second son to come forth. He was 17. And she said to him, ‘Put your hand on this coffin, and swear on the body of your brother than when you get to be 21, you’re going down to the courthouse to do what he did — to vote.’ ”

Henry Wallace
Progressive Party Candidate for President
“Radio Address,” September, 1948

THE PROJECT: ORAL HISTORY

Prepare a set of questions that will guide your investigation. In addition to your own questions you can use the following:

- Did your community or city once go by a different name or nickname? What were the neighborhoods called? Can you link these names to Jim Crow practices?
- Were there segregation laws and practices in existence that enforced Jim Crow in social, educational or economic settings? What were these laws? Who signed them into local legislation?
- Was there any resistance from blacks or whites? Were there heroes who spoke or acted out against the laws and practices?
- How large was the community? Try to find demographic information for neighborhood populations.
- Were there lynchings?
- What do the voting records indicate about black suffrage?

WRAP-UP

You will need to organize, analyze and interpret the information you gather. Information should be presented to neighbors, family members and community representatives. Display charts, tables and brief reports to summarize your community investigation. Include topics such as community history, leadership and resistance movements. Request written or oral feedback from community members.

THE PROJECT: QUILTING

Before beginning, look over directions for sewing quilts and view some examples from the web and book resources listed below. It is recommended that your quilting group include members who are of different ages and races.

Elders and youth can work together to create their own Intergenerational quilt. Each panel of the quilt will depict a scene or symbol that represents Jim Crow's suppression of African Americans or one of the many ways blacks and whites challenged segregation laws and triumphed over Jim Crow. Scenes and symbols might include voter registration cards,

blacks riding in the front of a bus, Jim Crow signage indicating segregated facilities, black students reading books in school, sharecroppers toiling in the fields, activists marching or protesting, headlines from famous events, or court decisions. What symbols can participants come up with? Your group should sit down to decide what each panel will show and who will sew it. Create the scenes and symbols with fabrics, felt letters and small mementos. To include photographs or text, photocopy them onto iron-on transfers, and iron them onto 100% cotton fabric.

WRAP-UP

When you have finished sewing the quilt, share it with family and friends by displaying it at a local community center, retirement home, library or church.

BOOK: Freeman, Roland L., *A Communion of the Spirits: African American Quilters, Preservers and Their Stories*. Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1996.

WEBSITE: www.womensearlyart.net/powers/Biography_of_19th_century_quilter_Harriet_Powers.

THE PROJECT: LISTENING

In the following group activity, you are invited to share a selection of music from any genre composed and performed by African American musicians that you think illuminates your understanding of Jim Crow and the color line in America. To the degree possible, your group should include people of diverse backgrounds.

Each participant brings a song that he or she would like the group to listen to and discuss. For each song: Briefly introduce the song: artist, title, genre, and year it was recorded and released. Play the song. Explain why the song has meaning for

you: how the song evokes memories of Jim Crow for older participants, how the song comments on contemporary race relations, how the song helped you emotionally or spiritually, how it shaped your thoughts on segregation or the black experience. Open the discussion up to the group with inviting questions, or perhaps the group has already jumped in. How or what does the song communicate across generations? Does its meaning change for people of different ages and races? If an older song, does it have a political or social message for today's younger generation? If a new song, does it move the older generation or put them off?

WRAP-UP

After concluding the listening session, your group may consider the following activities:

1. Organize a community concert that features local musicians or participants from the listening session.
2. Have each member of the group write lyrics to a song that looks at race relations in present day America. Share the lyrics with the group.

THE PROJECT: MURAL

Mural Content: With your group, paint a mural that depicts an important historical event in the struggle against Jim Crow. To learn more about race relations in your community in the Jim Crow era, have each member conduct an oral history interview. (See the **Oral History** section of this guide.)

After completing the interviews, discuss your tapes and videos. Decide which local events (or national events shown in the *Jim Crow* series) you would like to commemorate. Conduct additional research to gather background information in preparing for your initial sketches.

Location: If you don't already have a location in mind, you will have to scout out a large open wall for your mural. **You must get permission from the property owner to paint your mural.** If a permanent location is not possible, use a large canvas or sheet of heavy paper and display it.

Mural Form: Decide how the group would like to illustrate these historical events. The mural could be a single large panel or a series of three or four panels showing related events. Draw preliminary sketches and an outline. Paint your mural in bright house paints.

WRAP-UP

Consider organizing an event for the entire community to celebrate the mural's completion with introductory remarks and an open discussion about the depiction of a critical time in African American history.

BOOK: Prigoff, James. *Walls of Heritage, Walls of Pride: African-American Murals*. Rohnert Park, CA: Pomegranate Communications, 2000.

WEB SITES: www.muralart.com/africanamericanmurals.html
www.urtonart.com/history/Harlem.htm

Family & Community Projects

LISTENING session

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Over the course of the 20th century, African American musicians, responding to their immediate social, economic and musical surroundings, shaped the course of popular American music and culture. Sharecroppers living in the rural plantations of the Mississippi Delta sang and played the blues, sometimes melancholy, sometimes uplifting tunes that described the hard-living experiences of everyday people. Musicians in New Orleans first played jazz at funerals, parades and bars, using brass and reed instruments. For several generations spirituals and gospel filled Baptist churches throughout the South. Civil Rights marchers belted out Freedom Songs during Civil Rights protests to illustrate racial unity and to inspire Americans to stand up courageously against segregation legislation and discriminatory law enforcement. ►

Family & Community Projects

ORAL history

WAS JIM CROW IN MY COMMUNITY?

By gathering materials from your local library and historical society and by conducting oral history interviews you can learn about Jim Crow in your community, city or town. Please consult the **Oral History** section of this guide to learn how to conduct an interview. You can research archival photographs, newspapers, university newsletters, and other primary documents. Before beginning your research, ask yourself these questions and jot down some notes:

- What do you know about your city or community's history, generally and as it pertains to Jim Crow and race relations?
- Do you think your city or town had legal or de facto Jim Crow practices? What do you expect to find out? ►

Family & Community Projects

JIM CROW mural

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Aaron Douglas, considered by many to be the leading visual artist of the Harlem Renaissance, painted a number of famous murals that depict significant events and people in African American history, including the four-panel mural *Aspects of Negro Life*, commissioned in 1934 by the WPA, in the Harlem Branch of the New York City Public Library. Convinced that public art could effect political and social change and educate people about African American life, Charles White painted *Contribution of the Negro to American Democracy* at Hampton University in Virginia in 1943. Inspired by White, John Biggers began painting murals, one of which was *The Contribution of Negro Women to American Life and Education*, created for the YWCA in Houston. (See the reverse side of this card for books and web sites that contain examples of African-American murals.) ►

Family & Community Projects

HISTORY IN quilting

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During the years of slavery, African Americans used quilts to relay clandestine messages to each other and to map out escape routes along the Underground Railroad. Quilts also preserved a family's traditions, culture and lineage. Employing traditional African applique techniques, blacks made quilts by sewing figures and shapes, cut from cotton or recycled fabrics, onto a top and a backing. Harriet Powers, one of the first black folk artists of the mid-19th century, is renowned for her quilts that documented Southern black folklore and illustrated biblical stories. ►

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TAPING RIGHTS

Off-air taping rights for *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow* are available to educators for one year following each broadcast release.

ORDERING INFORMATION

To order the home video version only, please call 1-800-336-1917 or write to *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*, P.O. Box 2284, South Burlington, VT 05407.

RESOURCES

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Woodward, C. Vann. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Wright, Richard. *Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth*. New York: Harper & Row, 1937.

These organizations will provide assistance in facilitating discussions about race relations:

American Friends Service Committee
(Mid Atlantic Region)
4806 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212
410-323-7200 (phone)
410-323-7292 (fax)
Contact: Gary Gillespie
E-mail: ggillespie.org@AFSC.org
www.afsc.org/afscmahp.htm
The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service.

Center for Creative Aging/Elders Share the Arts
138 S. Oxford St.
Brooklyn, NY 11217
718-398-3870
Contact: Susan Perlstein,
Executive Director
www.elderssharethearts.org
Elders Share the Arts (ESTA) is a nationally recognized arts organization dedicated to bridging generational divides and generating a sense of com-

munity through the arts.

Generations Incorporated
59 Temple Pl. Suite 200
Boston, MA 02111
617-423-0401
Contact: Mary O'Donnell,
Training Associate
www.generationsinc.org
By incorporating the generations to strengthen individuals and communities, we bring together youth and older adults in relationships that make a difference in each other's lives.

Healing the Heart of Diversity
712 Staunton Ave. NW
Roanoke, VA 24016
540-343-5192 (phone)
540/343-0407 (fax)
Contact: Monica Byrant,
Project Administrator
E-mail: hthd@mindspring.com
www.healingtheheart.org
Healing the Heart of Diversity® (HHD) is a professional leadership development program that fosters a deeper understanding of diversity issues and encourages ways of

living and working with the complexities and beauty of diverse relationships.

National Association for Community Mediation
1527 New Hampshire Avenue,
NW Washington, D.C. 20036
202-667-9700 (phone)
202-667-8629 (fax)
Contact: Erica Hartwick,
Program Assistant
Ehartwick@nafcm.org
www.nafcm.org
The National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM) is a membership organization comprised of community mediation centers, their staff and volunteer mediators, and other individuals and organizations interested in the community mediation movement.

National Conference for Community and Justice
70 West 36th Street, Suite 1004
New York, NY 10018
212-967-3111 (phone)
212-967-9112 (fax)

Contact: Michael McPhearson,
Director of Youth Programming
E-mail: mmcphear@nccj.org
The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education.

Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning
1601 North Broad St.,
Room 206
Philadelphia, PA 19122
215-204-6970 (phone)
215-204-3195 (fax)
Contact: Andrea Leerman,
Training Manager
www.TempleCIL.org
The Center for Intergenerational Learning at Temple University is dedicated to strengthening communities by bringing generations together to meet the needs of individuals and families throughout the life cycle.

WEB SITE

The Web companion to *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow* (pbs.org/jimcrow) will allow its visitors to learn about the institutional inequality of Jim Crow segregation in the American South throughout the century following the Civil War. Using first-hand accounts, historical documents, video, images, interactive features, lesson plans, and original essays, the site will illuminate African-American efforts to overcome Jim Crow as well as the responses — often violent — of white Americans in the North and South. This companion website will be targeted to a general audience. It seeks to rescue from the oblivion of the past a missing piece of American history, and is designed to reach out locally as it informs its audience about events that affected communities throughout America.

Educators also are invited to visit a related site, www.jimcrowhistory.org. Designed exclusively for educators, the site includes essays, narratives and geography lessons as well as lesson plans, photographs, reading lists, glossaries, WebQuests and other creative interactive tools that support the curriculum consistent with national and state education standards.

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