THE NEW JERSEY
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY
CURRICULUM GUIDE

Grades 9 to 12

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CONTENTS

Foreword 5
About the Authors 7
Preface 9
How to Use This Guide 11
Acknowledgments 13
Unit 1 African Beginnings 15
Unit 2 Africa, Europe, and the Rise of Afro-America, 1441–1619 31
Unit 3 African American Slavery in the Colonial Era, 1619–1775 50
Unit 4 Blacks in the Revolutionary Era, 1776–1789 61
Unit 5 Slavery and Abolition in Post-Revolutionary and Antebellum America, 1790–1860 72
Unit 6 African Americans and the Civil War, 1861–1865 88
Unit 7 The Reconstruction Era, 1865–1877 97
Unit 8 The Rise of Jim Crow and The Nadir, 1878–1915 106
Unit 9 World War I and the Great Migration, 1915–1920 121
Unit 10 The Decade of the Twenties: From the Great Migration to the Great Depression 132
Unit 11 The 1930s: The Great Depression 142
Unit 12 World War II: The Struggle for Democracy at Home and Abroad, 1940–1945 151
Unit 13 The Immediate Postwar Years, 1945–1953 163
Unit 15 Beyond Civil Rights, 1970–1994 186
DEDICATED TO

Vallie and Ralph Greene
and
Freddy
FOREWORD

Because the New Jersey African American History Curriculum Guide: Grades 9 to 12 is a unique educational resource, most persons interested in teaching African American history to New Jersey high school students will welcome its appearance. The guide is the first curriculum resource available to New Jersey high school teachers that weaves the strands of the American, black American, and black New Jersey pasts into a common thread.

This guide is also distinctive because it represents the intersection of three developments. The first of these, greatly separated in time from the remaining two, is historiographical. The guide indeed grows out of efforts begun by a few black Americans before the Civil War to chronicle black achievements and contributions in Africa and America. These early black historians hoped their writings would stimulate racial pride among blacks and refute the white charge of black racial inferiority so as to weaken opposition to emancipation. Concerned that the story of black accomplishments had never been told, they were interested in inclusion, which would ensure that the historical experiences of black Americans were a well-documented part of the general record of the American past.

Although the work of these pioneers and their followers had developed into a well-established tradition of black American history writing by the 1960s, the decade’s black social activism spurred efforts to make the black American’s active role in shaping the nation’s development more manifest. Such efforts, along with the decade’s considerable social agitation and the consciousness-raising experiences that it engendered, encouraged other groups to decry their marginal place in American history and to clamor, like the Afro-American, for a national history more reflective of the nation’s pluralistic nature. By the end of the 1960s, therefore, the proposition that in the American historical drama all citizens—irrespective of gender, culture, ethnicity, race, and religion—should be recognized as players had become much more tenable. The implications for the nation’s schools were, of course, enormously challenging. It became increasingly apparent that curriculum materials were needed that were informed historically by the nation’s heterogeneity, materials that addressed in particular the pasts and cultures of groups often ignored. That such materials were thought to foster greater tolerance for differences among groups and to lessen the divisions of race, color, gender, ethnicity, and religion only strengthened interest in their preparation and use. The New Jersey African-American History Curriculum Guide: Grades 9 to 12 is thus in part a product of the expanded interest in historical inclusion generated by the social protest of the 1960s.

A more recent development has also figured in this guide’s creation. The guide emanates directly from legislation passed in 1988 that authorized the New Jersey Historical Commission to prepare curriculum materials that would “treat the role of Afro-Americans in American and New Jersey history.” Without this specific legislation, and its appropriation, it is
doubtful that the special kind of curriculum resource we have in this guide, one that meshes black New Jersey history, black American history, and the history of the United States, would have been realized.

Contributing further to the import of this guide is the scholarly distinction of its authors, Drs. Larry A. Greene and Lenworth Gunther. I have known them both for a number of years and greatly respect their work as historians. They have not only a vast knowledge of African American life and history, but an uncommon ability to impart their masterly understanding of the subject to students. In addition, they bring to this guide the experience of teaching as well as working with teachers at the high school level. This guide clearly reveals their experience for it contains not only solid historical information about black Americans but also exciting and practical exercises that will encourage high school students to view historical events and situations in new ways. Thanks to them, this guide will enable students to go beyond the passive absorption of facts, names, dates, and places and to develop historical thinking skills and historical understanding.

Finally, this guide has merit because of its timeliness. It appears at a time when much work remains to be done in making Americans more appreciative of their nation's racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. The very careful and sensitive manner in which it presents the past of black Americans gives reason to feel that it will contribute to a greater acceptance of racial and cultural differences on the part of those New Jersey students who are exposed to it.

The New Jersey Historical Commission is immensely proud to publish this guide. Long overdue, the work is indeed exceptional in meaningfully placing for New Jersey high school educators and their students the history of black Americans and black New Jerseyans in the larger context of American history.

GILES R. WRIGHT
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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LENWORTH GUNThER is professor of history at Essex County College. His B.A., M.A., Master of Philosophy, and Ph.D. were all earned at Columbia University, where his areas of specialization were American History, African American History, West African History, and Russian Studies. His published works have appeared in numerous scholarly journals, and he has taught African, Caribbean, and African American studies at Rutgers University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Drew University, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and Ramapo State College. The founder and president of Edmedia Associates, an educational and motivational consulting corporation specializing in racial and ethnic history and interpersonal relations, Professor Gunther has lectured on college campuses nationwide. Very much a community activist, he has served on the East Orange Board of Education and is the host of “Impact,” a syndicated public affairs cable television program in northern New Jersey.
PREFACE

As both students and teachers of African American history, we have found the preparation of this curriculum guide to be a labor of love. In it we have tried to suggest the richness and uniqueness of the place of people of African descent in the mainstream record of American and New Jersey life. The guide reveals that from the earliest of times to the present, the story of black Americans has been one of triumphs and tribulations, success and failure, dignity and degradation.

Although our guide by no means records every aspect of a black past that has witnessed both achievement and agony, it treats chronologically those themes, events, concepts, and individuals we believe to have been of major and profound significance in the African American historical experience. The breadth and depth of this story allow it to both stand alone and to be harnessed with the stories of Americans of other races and cultures, that is, similar odysseys that have been or remain to be told. We believe our guide reveals the importance of recognizing the multiracial and multicultural dimension of American life and culture, the advantages gained by emphasizing inclusion and pluralism in recounting the history of America.

We should add that we believe our guide provides help, not hindrance—it is not just “something else to remember”—to our high school colleagues, who are consumed, if not overwhelmed, by long work schedules, pervasive paperwork, and the myriad social concerns now all too common in the classroom. We believe that the guide’s chronological, thematic, and comprehensive focus, as well as its narrative, key words, suggested activities, and bibliographies, will make it particularly helpful to teachers who want to integrate the history of blacks in America, and especially New Jersey, into courses dealing with American history at the 9–12 level. In addition, we believe it will well serve the needs of students in grades 9 to 12 who take courses dealing with such subjects as ethnic studies, world history, and social studies. However it is used, we believe strongly that it will encourage among students of all races and ethnicities a greater tolerance of cultural differences, as well as an appreciation for the singularity of the black historical presence in the United States.

LARRY A. GREENE
LENWORTH GUNTER
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is organized into fifteen lesson units. Each unit represents one chronological period of the African American experience, beginning with the African antecedents of this experience and ending with the year 1994. Each unit is divided into three main sections. The first, titled Background, should be read by teachers before teaching the lesson unit. This section comprises a brief historical overview of the period, the basic historical information needed to teach the unit. In this section teachers will find the unit’s key words highlighted in bold type. Teachers should define and explain these words for the students to facilitate their understanding of the unit’s history content.

In accordance with the commonly accepted practice of scholars in writing history textbooks, as well as the procedure in preparing guides similar to the one here, we have not identified sources for the historical information found in the Background section of each unit. With few exceptions, our sources are found in the annotated bibliographies included with the units. The guide’s maps have all been prepared by the New Jersey Historical Commission’s publications staff; they are based on research by Giles R. Wright, the director of the Commission’s Afro-American History Program. And whenever a commonly used phrase of a given historical period is used in the guide, it is placed in quotation marks.

The unit’s second section, titled Core Lesson, provides activities and resources that will help the students absorb the historical information. Each core lesson has several parts. The first is the theme, the major point of the lesson unit. Next is an identification of the materials that both the teacher and students should read to ensure full comprehension. Teachers should note in particular that these materials include required readings from three general texts on African American history. Two of the texts are for students: Langston Hughes, Milton Meltzer, and C. Eric Lincoln, African American History (Scholastic, 1990) and The African American Experience: A History (Globe Book Company, 1992). The third is for teachers: John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans (McGraw-Hill, 1994). A fourth book, which provides a succinct overview of black New Jersey history, contains required readings for both students and teachers. It is Giles R. Wright, Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History (New Jersey Historical Commission, 1988).

The amount of time needed to complete a particular lesson activity is also indicated in the second section. This is followed by the unit’s specific learning activities, with their objectives and evaluation methods. Additional learning activities are offered next, followed by “Key Persons,” a listing of the unit’s major historical figures. Annotated bibliographies, one for teachers and one for students, conclude the section.

The third section features the materials to be used with the lesson (for example, maps, photographs, excerpts); these are to be reproduced and distributed to the students.

Teachers should be mindful that the learning
activities are only suggestions that should be freely altered and modified to suit their needs. For example, where we have called for a 500-word essay in evaluating a particular activity, a play or debate can easily serve as a replacement. Similarly, given the number of excellent studies pertaining to African American history, teachers should feel free to substitute works for those found in the bibliographies. All of this is meant to suggest that rigidity and inflexibility should not inform the use of our guide. Rather, teachers should be as imaginative, thoughtful, and creative as possible in using it. In so doing, they will cause us to realize even more just how much a labor of love the preparation of this guide has been.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With any undertaking of this scope and magnitude there is an indebtedness owed those sincere and dedicated individuals whose support made it possible. Indeed, many people assisted us over the years and we are eternally grateful and thankful for their concerns and overall help in preparing this guide. Professor Clement Alexander Price of Rutgers University (Newark) is one of those who deserves special mention. He called every so often and kept us on course. The same and more can be said for Giles R. Wright of the New Jersey Historical Commission. His clear historical vision, knowledge, and suggestions, as well as his patience and faith in the project and us, helped in ways too great to express here. Many thanks also to our typists, who helped organize our thoughts, and to our researchers, who rechecked our details. All of you, especially Sandra K. Latson and Margaret Harahan of Seton Hall University, and Gwendolyn Slaton, Essex County College librarian, helped, along with the staff of the New Jersey Historical Commission, to guarantee the neatness and accuracy of our manuscript. Dorothy Frederique’s cheerful encouragement and clerical assistance helped us meet deadlines we otherwise might have ignored. Gwendolyn Walker’s support and courage gave new and poignant meaning to the words dedication and faith.

We also gratefully acknowledge the members of the project’s advisory committee, who read early drafts of our manuscript and made very helpful and constructive comments. They are Raymond Aklonis, Elizabeth High School, Elizabeth; Jeanette Cascone, historian-educator, Elizabeth; John DeSane, historian-educator, Englewood; Jeanne Holmes, Board of Education, Camden; Aisha Johnson, Principal, Ulysses S. Wiggins Elementary School, Camden; Alma Jordan, Board of Education, Newark; Charlotte McCane, Ridgewood High School, Ridgewood; Clement A. Price, Rutgers University, Newark; and Roberta Tate, Thomas O. Hopkins Middle School, Burlington Township.

June Peggs served as a consultant to the project and suggested historical novels suitable for inclusion in the students’ bibliographies. We thank her for her contribution.

A second project consultant, Dr. E. Alma Flagg, also deserves our thanks for editing early drafts of our manuscript.

Further, we owe a special thanks to Cheryl LuSane, who, as another project consultant, provided the guide with early suggestions about student learning activities.

And finally, we are especially indebted to the late Mildred Barry Garvin, among whose many contributions to black history and education in New Jersey was the sponsorship of legislation that provided additional funds for the New Jersey Historical Commission Afro-American History Curriculum Project, of which this guide is a product.
Unit 1
African Beginnings

BACKGROUND

Africa, the ancestral homeland of African Americans, covers 11,700,000 square miles, or one-fifth of the world's land area, and is the second largest continent. With a population of about 700,000,000, or about 60 persons per square mile, Africa is sparsely populated by world standards, having a little over half of the world's average (102 persons per square mile). Two-thirds of the continent lies in the tropics, and it has three major deserts: the Kalahari (South), Namib (South), and Sahara (North). The Sahara's desiccation occurred between 5,000 and 5,000 B.C. and resulted in a marked decline in its human and animal life. In the West, Central and Southwest regions, Africa has dense, sprawling rain forests that are often incorrectly referred to as jungles. Lakes and rivers are central to African life as sources of livelihood, commerce, and basic transportation. Africa's major rivers are the Nile (at over four thousand miles the world's longest) in the Northeast; the Zambezi in the Southeast; the Congo in the Southwest; and the Niger, Benue, and Senegal in the West.

The word Africa was used by the ancient Romans to refer to their colonial province in the area that is present-day Tunisia and eastern Algeria. Its possible derivations are the Latin word aprica, meaning "sunny," and the Greek word aphrike, meaning "without cold."

Archeological finds suggest that Africa is the cradle of humankind. The earliest fossil remains of humans, however one defines human, have been found in eastern and southern Africa. For example, if being human is defined as bipedality ("walking upright"), then the remains found in Ethiopia in 1974 of a four-million-year-old apelike creature apply. If defined as "making tools" (tools from stones that were sharpened or flattened), then the fossilized remains unearthed in 1986 in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge are particularly significant. About two million years old, they were those of Homo habilis, the first toolmaker. (Even more recent studies have led to the conclusion that humans first learned to fashion sophisticated tools in Africa, not in Europe, as many experts had thought. These tools, carved from the ribs of large mammals, include double-pointed blades with carved barbs and single points with ridges that could have been used for attachment to spear shafts. They were discovered in Zaire along its border with Uganda and are said to be between 75,000 to 90,000 years old.) If "using fire" defines being human, then the one-million-year-old remains found at Kenya's Lake Turkana of Homo erectus, the first creature to both make "hand axes" (pear-shaped, chipped-stone tools) and use fire, are critically important. Finally, it can be noted that the earliest remains of Homo sapiens, "thinking/talking man" or modern man, about one hundred thousand years old, have also been found in East Africa.

Although no one disputes the substantial evidence that the earliest human ancestors evolved in Africa and that migration from Africa at some point led to the global distribution of humans, there is some disagreement about when, where, and how early humans became transformed into modern humans. One
group of anthropologists and paleontologists holds that Africa was the place where, between two hundred thousand and one hundred thousand years ago, *Homo sapiens* evolved. From there, this group believes, these earliest modern humans began an out-migration, moving first into the Middle East and southern Europe and, by about sixty thousand years ago, into the rest of the world. As different groups encountered different climatic conditions, racial differences gradually developed. Thus, according to this group, races began to split apart only after their common forebears had already attained the status of *Homo sapiens* in Africa. This “out-of-Africa” theory has gained valuable support from molecular biologists whose forte is tracing genetic lineages. Their research has shown that the maternal ancestry of every person living today is traceable to an “African Eve,” a woman who lived in Africa one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand years ago. Also, finding a greater number of mutations in the genes from people of African descent, molecular biologists have concluded that Africans have been diversifying longer and, therefore, represent the earliest modern branch of the family tree.

A second group, supporting the “multiregional” school of thought, argues that *Homo Sapiens* did not emerge solely in Africa, that modern humans arose independently in different places in Africa, Europe, and Asia. This group thus stresses an earlier migration from Africa, which occurred about one and a half to two million years ago. It involved *Homo erectus*, an early human creature, spreading out from Africa and colonizing much of the globe. From *Homo erectus*, according to the multiregionalists, there emerged regional groups, relatively isolated, that evolved into several archaic versions of *Homo sapiens*. The multiregionalists thus believe that racial divergences occurred roughly a million years ago, during a more primitive phase of human evolution. They contend that racial groups evolved for long stretches in relative isolation and possibly at different rates, moving from *Homo erectus* to *Homo sapiens* either simultaneously or at different times. In support of their position, they point to fossil findings in an Israeli cave showing that modern-looking *Homo sapiens* lived in the Middle East as long as ninety-two thousand years ago.

In addition to occupying a very special place in the unfolding of the human evolutionary process, Africa’s early history is marked by the emergence of agriculturalists. Evidence suggests that this occurred as early as 5,000 B.C. with the cultivation of rice and millet in the North by pre-dynastic cultures that flourished in Egypt and in the West by the Nok people, who also developed an iron industry. Pre-dynastic Egyptian cultures, established by Africans from the areas of present-day Sudan and Ethiopia who followed the northward flow of the Nile, included as of 4,000 B.C. the Tasians (hunters, fishermen, and farmers); Badarians (pottery, jewelry, ivory, and copper craftsmen); and Amratians (builders of papyrus boats). In the fourth millennium B.C., after hunting had been abandoned in favor of farming, Lower and Upper Egypt were united. The Upper Nile’s King Narmer (Menes), the first pharaoh and first to start a dynasty, achieved this unification sometime between 3400 and 3200 B.C. and thus inaugurated the Old Kingdom (circa 3200 to 2050 B.C.). During the third and fourth dynasties the great pyramids were constructed as royal burial chambers. The first was designed and built by Imhotep, adviser to the pharaoh Zoser; in addition to being an architect, Imhotep was a physician whose knowledge of embalming and mumification enabled him to be the first to write about the human circulatory system. The pyramid he had built about 2650 B.C. at Saqqara, in Lower Egypt, is the oldest standing building in the world.

The economic and physical costs of constructing the pyramids fueled dynastic decline and ushered in the Middle Kingdom (2050 to 1750 B.C.). This was followed by the New Kingdom (1565 to 1085 B.C.), the era of Jewish bondage and the period during which Egypt reached the height of its imperial power. After 1090 B.C., civil wars left Egypt too weak to fend off invaders from Kush, western Asia, and Europe. Alexander the Great, the Greek conqueror, occupied Egypt in 331 B.C., and pharaonic rule ended three hundred years later when the Romans defeated Queen Cleopatra.

Ancient Egypt was the most impressive of the early civilizations. The annual overflowing of the River Nile stimulated along its banks a sedentary way of life noteworthy in at least three respects. First, no early civilization lasted longer than ancient Egypt’s five thousand years. Second, no other early civilization is associated with so many achievements (such as writing; the study of astronomy, geometry and geography; a 365-day calendar; irrigation systems; architecture; sculpture; beds and chairs; and wigs). Third, Egypt marked the greatest confluence of early cultures. Situated at the crossroads between Africa, Asia, and Europe, Egyptians had contact with the Mesopotamians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Kushites (Nubians), Greeks, and Romans. There is even evidence to suggest that the ancient Greek civilization, considered the primary basis for European civilization, was influenced considerably by the ancient Egyptians, especially in religion and art.

Links between some Africans south of the Sahara and the ancient Egyptians have been identified. The
legends of some ethnic groups (for example, Dogon, Yoruba, Bakuba, and Watutsi) speak of a migration from the general direction of the Nile Valley. Also, objects found in other parts of Africa resemble Egyptian ones and are therefore viewed as having originated in Egypt (headrests, musical instruments, ostrich fans). Further, there are words common to the Egyptian language and the languages of such African groups as the Yoruba and Wolof. Yoruba and Wolof words are among those West African words that have been found among the black residents of the Gullah Islands (Sea Islands) off the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina.

Historically, African societies have been extremely diverse. Some "stateless societies" have featured very simple political structures and have been technologically underdeveloped. Exemplifying this are societies whose economic activities center on hunting and gathering; they include the BaMbuti (so-called Pygmies) of the Ituri Forest in Zaire and the Khoi-San peoples (so-called Bushmen and Hottentot) in southern Africa. Pastoral and nomadic societies like the Nuer of the Sudan, the Masai of Kenya and Tanzania, and the Karamojong of Uganda have also usually been stateless. And there have been African stateless societies based on settled agriculture. Examples of such societies are the Dogon of Mali, the Kru of Liberia, the Tiv and Ibo of Nigeria, the Kikuyu of Kenya, and the Baule of Ivory Coast.

Other African groups developed high levels of political organization, such as complex empires and centralized kingdoms. Kush (Nubia), located to the south of Egypt, existed between 2000 B.C. and 350 A.D.; with its ruins of palaces, temples, and numerous pyramids, it constitutes an early example of an African civilization highly advanced both politically and materially. Although it was conquered and influenced by Egypt during its early history (Egyptian administrators and priests, craftsmen, and artists introduced Egyptian techniques and art forms), around 920 B.C. an independent Kushite dynasty arose and eventually conquered all of Egypt; between 716 B.C. and 654 B.C. Kushitic rule constituted the twenty-fifth Egyptian dynasty. Kush lost Egypt to the Assyrians in 654. From that time on Kush was ruled by a single dynasty for a thousand years, a record unequalled on the African continent.

Kush was one of the richest gold-bearing areas of the ancient world. Kush is also important because, with its fall in the fourth century A.D., many Kushites migrated southward and westward, taking with them such concepts as state organization and specialized skills such as iron smelting and metalworking. Since the language of the Kushites has not been deciphered, there is much that is not known about this urban, materially advanced, literate state. We do know, however, that it had dynamic relations not only with its immediate neighbors but, through trade, with an international community. In the first century A.D., after the Roman conquest of Egypt, Kush sent ambassadors to Rome, and Emperor Nero sent Roman emissaries to Kush. Around 350 A.D. Kush fell to Axum, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia and the name by which that kingdom was initially known.

Later notable examples of higher forms of political organization are the great medieval West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay. While all were highly centralized politically and located in the grassland zone of the Western Sudan, they also shared two additional characteristics: participation in the trans-Saharan trade, and interaction with the Islamic world.

The trans-Saharan trade was crucial to the development of all of these empires because, geographically near both the forest region and North Africa, they were able to serve as middlemen for these two areas; they provided a convenient meeting ground for the exchange of goods. It was thus important for each empire in the course of its imperial expansion to bring under its control the key trading centers where goods were exchanged. This control paralleled an attempt to control the sources of the more important items of trade, especially gold.

Gold was by far the key staple in the trans-Saharan trade for, until the exploration of America, the Western Sudan was the world's principal source of gold. After gold, slaves were the next most important export of the Western Sudanic states. Other exported items included spices, kola nuts, shea butter, hides, civet, musk, and ivory. In exchange for its commodities the Western Sudan received such items as salt, horses, cloth of all kinds, copper, silver, beads, glassware, dried dates and figs, and manufactured goods.

With trade came new ideas, especially Islamic ideas; the centers of trade became centers for the propagation of the Islamic faith.

Islam was initially introduced into the Western Sudan by nomadic Muslim groups (for example, Berbers) and traders (Berber, Arab, and native) who worked the internal routes of the Western Sudan. The adoption of Islam enabled wandering traders in particular to find hospitality, as well as a sense of community, among fellow Muslim traders in communities along the trade routes. As these traders moved farther into the interior, they carried Islam with them, stimulating a process of Islamization that ultimately involved the conversion of some chiefs and political rulers. The embrace of Islam by such leaders did not necessarily lead to the rapid Islamization of the bulk
of the population. Many rulers in fact maintained a middle position between Islam and the traditional African religion, while others turned completely toward Islam. Still others fell back on the tradition, which was generally characterized by a belief in a life force that permeated both the animate world of plants and animals and the inanimate world of natural objects (mountains, rocks) and phenomena (thunder, lightning, wind). The tradition also involved spirit possession, many dietsies, and the veneration of ancestors.

The spread of Islamic influence and ideas extended beyond purely religious matters. For example, although administration in the Western Sudan evolved from indigenous systems of government, Islam played a part in the development of better administrative practices. Muslim scholars, jurists, and administrators brought with them the most modern ideas of government from the Muslim world; they acted as interpreters, scribes, and treasurers to most of the rulers of the Western Sudanic empires. Additionally, what we know of these empires comes from contemporary accounts furnished mainly by Muslim sources.

Ghana (300–1076) was the first of the three great empires to emerge. Composed of a northern subgroup of the Mandingo, the Soninke people, its origins are shrouded in obscurity. It was certainly in existence by the beginning of the eighth century and had reached the height of its power by the tenth century. It was during this century that it, with the capture of the town of Awdaghast, gained full control of the southern section of the western trans-Saharan trade route.

In 1076 Ghana was conquered by the Almoravids, desert Berbers who zealously preached a strict and ascetic form of Islam. Although Ghana was able to retain its independence with the collapse of the Almoravid movement, it was conquered again in 1203 by the Susu people. With their defeat in 1240 by the Mandingo people, under the energetic ruler Sundiata, Ghana became part of the Mali empire.

Mali (1050–1488) emerged from the unification of a number of Mandingo chieftaincies and was already in existence in embryonic form in the early eleventh century. Sundiata is generally regarded as the founder of the empire; his defeat of Ghana in 1240 inaugurated a career of conquests that led to the emergence of Mali and his own transformation to a Mansa, or emperor. By the time of his death in 1255, Mali covered an extensive amount of territory and controlled the sources of most of the important articles of trade, such as the salt mines of Taghaza, the copper mines of Takedda, and the gold mines to the south. Sundiata also brought under Mali domination such important trading towns as Walata, Jenne, and Gao.

The second most important personality dominating the Mali empire was Mansa Musa, who ruled between 1312 and 1337. During his reign Mali reached its peak in prosperity, fame, and territory. His fame outside the Sudan was due mainly to his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324–25, during which he visited Cairo and left a strong impression; his generous gifts and expenditure of gold caused the latter to be devalued in Egypt. The pilgrimage of Mansa Musa, a devout Muslim, also served to attract to Mali more traders and Muslim scholars, who in turn helped further the economic and cultural development of the empire, especially in the commercial city of Timbuktu. The most famous of Mali’s cities, it was here that the Sankore mosque (university) was established; its possession of an impressive array of Greek, Roman, and Arabic manuscripts ultimately made it a leading center of Islamic learning. By the end of the fourteenth century Mali’s period of greatness was over and neighboring groups (such as the Mossi, Tuaregs, and Berbers) were successful in their attacks on the empire’s trading centers (including Timbuktu, Walata, and Jenne). The start of the gradual disintegration of the empire coincided with the rise of new Sudanic states, one of which was Songhay, the last of the great empires of the Western Sudan.

Songhay (1355–1591), composed of the Songhay people, had by the end of the fourteenth century freed itself from Mali domination. In the next century it started to expand its frontiers at the expense of Mali. Most of this expansion took place under Sunni Ali (1464–1492); in a series of campaigns he succeeded in bringing within the Songhay empire most of the important trading centers of the Sudan. Upon his death, one of his former soldiers, Askia Muhammad, was able to oust Ali’s son and establish a new dynasty (1493–1528). Like Mansa Musa, Askia Muhammad was a devout Muslim; under him Islamic influence became an even greater force in the Western Sudan. In trying to establish the Islamic law code in the Sudan, he devoted considerable time to training a class of Muslim judges capable of interpreting the law. He also maintained close connections with notable scholars from North Africa. At the same time he patronized Muslim scholars within the empire and raised the Muslim intelligentsia into a feudal class by granting them lands. As a result of such patronage, by the end of the sixteenth century Timbuktu had emerged as an even greater center of Islamic learning.

In spite of his achievements, in 1528 Askia Muhammad was deposed by his sons, an event that set in motion the rapid disintegration of Songhay.
Between 1528 and 1591, the empire, in the absence of a fixed law of succession to the throne, was beset with intrigues, plots, and civil wars following every succession. Such a state of disorganization aided the sudden destruction of Songhay in 1591 by an invading power from the north—the Moroccans—who had the advantage of superior weapons in the form of firearms and cannons. To place it in some kind of time perspective, note that the fall of Songhay occurred roughly one hundred years after Columbus’s first voyage to the New World.

Additional evidence of highly sophisticated political structures in traditional Africa can be found in the ruins at Great Zimbabwe, the center of government of Monomopata, the southern African empire that existed between 1425 and 1490. The eleven rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia, dating from the twelfth century, and the castles of Gondar, Ethiopia, the most imposing of which was erected in the mid-seventeenth century, also provide evidence of African societies that had advanced stages of technology.

If there was no monolithic African culture or single “African way of life” in the past, this is equally true today. Present-day Africa is home to over one thousand different ethnic groups (often called “tribes”). The traditional cultures of these groups vary in terms of such traits as language, economic activities, and lineage (patrilineal or matrilineal). Still, these cultures possess certain similarities (for example primacy of communal rather than individual interests; patriarchy; polytheism; polygamy; respect for elders; and an oral-aural tradition). Thus the often used phrase “diversity within unity” can be used to describe Africa culturally, both in a historical and contemporary sense.

In at least two vital ways Africa continues to have meaning for persons of African descent in America. Africanisms, cultural traditions derived from Africa (also called “African survivals”), constitute one of these. They permeate important aspects of black American culture such as foodways, music, dance, folklore, and religion. Spirit possession in religious worship, an emphasis on on verbal communication and performance, and improvisation in musical expression are particular Africanisms common to contemporary African-American life. Black Americans are also profoundly affected by a prevailing negative image of Africa. A view of the continent’s inhabitants as uncivilized and noncontributors to human progress is still used to validate the claim by some non-black Americans that blacks are their intellectual inferiors and are thus undeserving of rights and privileges accorded American citizens.

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**CORE LESSON**

**Theme**

The history and culture of Africa are of immense importance to the history of humankind in general and the history and culture of African Americans in particular.

**Materials and Preparation**


Students should also read the excerpt from Ali A. Mazrui’s *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (see page 28) and that from James E. Blackwell’s *The Black Community: Diversity and Unity* (see page 30).

Students should study the two maps of Africa (see pages 25 and 26) and the photograph of the Great Sphinx (see page 27).

The teacher should read chapters 1 and 2 in *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* ("Land of Their Ancestors" and "The African Way of Life").
Time Period

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

ACTIVITY 1

Assess the significance of the civilization of ancient Egypt, an African civilization, for the history of humankind.

a. Have students locate Egypt on Map #1 (see page 25). Ask students if they usually associate Egypt with Africa. Have them explore reasons for their answers.

b. Have students look at the photograph of the Great Sphinx (see page 27) as an example of a great achievement of the Egyptians. Based on the readings have them identify other achievements of the ancient Egyptians.

Evaluation: Have each student write a 500-word essay on a particular Egyptian achievement, pointing out its usefulness or significance in today’s world.

ACTIVITY 2

Recognize that Africa historically has produced both societies featuring elaborate centralized political structures and advanced stages of technology and stateless societies with less advanced technologies and that both have been defined as civilizations.

a. Ask students to provide a meaning of the term civilization.

b. Have students use Map #2 (see page 26) to locate the highly developed states or empires of Kush (Nubia), Monomopata, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, and Songhay, and the habitat of such stateless groups as the Dogon, Kru, Tiv, Ibo, BaMubuti, Khoi-San, Masai, Nuer, and Kikuyu. Ask the students whether either of the two contrasting types of society has been predominant in a certain geographical area of Africa.

c. Divide the class in half and, based on the excerpt from Ali A. Mazuri’s The Africans: A Triple Heritage (see page 28), let each group represent one of the two types of African societies to which the term civilization has been applied. In a debate let each group argue the merits of its particular society.

Evaluation: Have the students write a short play wherein the characters, African historians, debate which type of African society is a civilization.

ACTIVITY 3

Identify three areas of African American cultural life where African survivals exist.


b. Based on the excerpt from James E. Blackwell’s The Black Community: Diversity and Unity (see page 30), divide the class into groups, each representing a particular realm of African American life in which African survivals are found (such as music, dance, language, religion, foodways). Have each group discuss two examples of Africanisms in its particular cultural realm.

Evaluation: Ask the students to imagine they are journalists. Have them write a 500-word article on some aspect of African American life that reveals the presence of an Africanism.

Supplemental Activities

1. Visit a museum that has a collection of ancient Egyptian artifacts (such as the Metropolitan
Museum of Art in New York City or the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia)

2. Visit a museum that has a collection of African art (for example, the New Jersey State Museum, Newark Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, or University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology).

3. Have students prepare an exhibition for the classroom that is composed of photographs of artifacts representing the material culture of Africans (such as masks, stools, musical instruments, baskets, or pottery).

4. Show students the following two sixty-minute segments from the documentary series *The Africans* (obtainable from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838):

   “The Nature of a Continent”

   This segment examines Africa as the birthplace of humankind and discusses the impact of geography on African culture and history, including the role of the Nile in the origin of civilization, and the introduction of Islam to Africa from Arabia.

   “A Legacy of Lifestyles”

   This segment explores how African contemporary lifestyles are influenced by indigenous, Islamic, and Western factors. The program compares simple African societies with those that are more complex and centralized, and examines the importance of family life.

5. Show students the following two segments from the documentary series *Ancient Lives* (obtainable from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838):

   “The Village of the Craftsmen”

   This segment introduces the land of Egypt at the height of its power: its people, the pharaohs who are buried in the great tombs, and the craftspeople who built these tombs. The program shows the contrast between the lush greenery near the Nile and the aridity of the desert, between the land of the living and that of the dead; Tutankhamen’s tomb and its discovery by Howard Carter; who the villagers were, why their village flourished at the time of Egypt’s greatest power, and why we know so much about them (23 minutes).

   “The Valley of the Kings”

   This segment features a visit to the tombs of Ipi the workman and Kha the architect, which illustrates the daily round of ancient Egyptian life. Other highlights include: art as a communal activity in ancient Egypt; the tools, furniture, clothes, kitchen utensils, and foods of Ipi and Kha, and the money with which they were paid; how the Egyptians divided the person into body, soul, and image; the colossi of Memnon; the tomb of Tutmose III and what its hieroglyphs and paintings mean (29 minutes).

Key Persons

**Sunni Ali.** The first ruler of Songhay.

**Imhotep.** Engineer, physician, adviser to pharaoh Zoser and designer of the first pyramid, the oldest standing building in the world.
Askia Muhammad. The first major ruler of Songhay.

Mansa Musa. Mali ruler who made a famous hajj, or pilgrimage, to the Muslim holy city of Mecca, in Arabia, in 1324.

Sundiata. Founder of the empire of Mali.

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS


Denoon, Donald. 1972. *Southern Africa Since 1800*. Short, historical account of European and African interaction in the region, with a focus on South Africa.


Harris, Joseph E. 1987. *Africans and Their History*. Best short, general survey of African history from the earliest times to the present. The author focuses on black contributions to world civilization.

Jackson, John G. 1970. *Introduction to African Civilizations*. Examines African origins of humankind, the rise of ancient Egypt and West African kingdoms, and black Africa’s contributions to world history, including intercontinental exploration.


heritage of indigenous traditions, Islamic culture, and Western influence, showing how the conflict or synthesis of these forces has determined the Africa of today.


FOR STUDENTS


Shinnie, Margaret. 1970. Ancient African Kingdoms. Short, informative examination of the Sudanic, forest, and coastal empires of Africa. It also discusses the ruins at Great Zimbabwe.
MATERIALS
Map 1
Africa, 1995
Map 2
Some African Empires and Stateless Societies

SONGhay
circa 1500

KUSH (NUBIA)
circa 500 B.C.

ETHIOPIA
circa 1500

GHANA
circa 1000

MAU
circa 1300

Nuer

BalMubu

Kikuyu

Masai

Khoi-San

MONOMOTAPA
circa 1450
The facial features of the Great Sphinx, located at Gizeh, have traditionally been thought by Egyptologists to be those of Khafre, the Pharaoh of Egypt when the statue was carved. Recently, however, some scholars offer a different history. They argue that the Great Sphinx reveals a pattern of water erosion rather than wind and sand erosion, and that because water erodes substances more slowly, the statue is older than had been thought. They believe it to be over 9,000 years old. The prognathism of the Great Sphinx—the protrusion of its lower jaw—has long convinced many that its face is likely that of a black person.

Ali A. Mazrui

The Africans: A Triple Heritage (1986)

Yet strictly by the measurement of technology there seems to be little doubt that African societies which developed into states were often significantly more advanced in the use of sophisticated tools than African societies which were still primarily based on a pastoral or herding way of life. Some of the African states evolved into cultures of monuments, brick and mortar civilisations. At the pyramids of the Nile or the castles in Ethiopia, or at the awesome ruins of Great Zimbabwe, or at the remains of Gedi in Kenya, one is visually reminded of this monumental side of African history, the history of kingdoms and dynastic empires which also believed in using stone and brick to erect durable testimony to their life-styles. This is the theme of gloriana in African history.

But alongside these African societies of centralised complexity and gloriana have lived people who are either still hunters and gatherers primarily or, at a more advanced state of technology, have become societies which deal with domesticated animals. The hunters and gatherers include the Khoisan (“Bushmen”) of the Kalahari and, with even more complex skills, the BaMbuti (“Pygmies”) of Zaire. The pastoral and herding communities have included, as we indicated, the Somali and the Masai, and also a substantial section of the Fulani who are spread over much of west Africa (not to be confused with the Hausa-Fulani), the Tuareg of the southern Sahara and other pastoralists on the march. For centuries all these so-called “tribes without rulers,” illustrating civilisations of subtle simplicity rather than complex structures, have co-existed alongside the more elaborate states and monumental gloriana. Even the term “simplicity” underestimates the underlying intricacies of these pastoral and hunting societies, but there is little doubt that their technology has been significantly less developed than the technology either achieved indigenously or imported by African states and the makers of Africa’s monumental history.

The massive cultural arrogance of Europeans was later to influence the indigenous personality of the continent, and create at times schizophrenia among the Westernised Africans. Defending themselves against European contempt, one school of African thought emphasised that Africa before the European had had its own complex civilisations of the kind that Europeans regarded as valid and important—civilisations which produced great kings, impressive empires and elaborate technological skills. This particular school of African thought looked especially to ancient Egypt as an African civilisation, and proceeded to emphasise Egypt’s contribution to the cultures and innovations of ancient Greece.

We may call this school of African assertion a school of romantic gloriana. It seeks to emphasise the glorious moments in Africa’s history defined in part by European measurements of skill and performance, including the measurements of material monuments.
In contrast to this tradition of romantic gloriana is what might be called *romantic primitivism*. In this the idea is not to emphasise past grandeur, but to validate simplicity and non-technical traditions. Romantic primitivism does not counter European cultural arrogance by asserting civilisations comparable to that of ancient Greece. On the contrary, this school takes pride in precisely those traditions which European arrogance would seem to despise.

African Survivals

The debates between E. Franklin Frazier and Melville Herskovits of over a quarter of a century ago framed the issues of African survivals. The debates involved much more than a discussion of the prevalence of African survivals, and indeed concerned the emergence from them of a distinctive black culture in America. Their ideas seem to have an uninterrupted continuance in the arguments advanced today by scholars like Andrew Billingsley and Robert Blauner, on the one hand, and Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan and Irving Kristol on the other. Like Herskovits, Billingsley and Blauner take the position that in spite of the harshness of slavery and its deliberate efforts to dispossess blacks of their cultural past, a black culture has survived in America.

Much of what has survived originated in an African past. Survivals include family patterns and attitudes, songs, dance, religious practices, superstitions, ways of walking, verbal expressions, orientation toward recreation and pleasure, epicurean traditions, sex-related role expectations, music, given names for children, and traditional foods. Thus Blauner and others advanced the notion that an authentic black culture survived slavery and is to be found today largely in the urban ghettos of black America. That culture has its roots in the parallel institutions that evolved and crystallized social relationships among the members of the black community.

Frazier claims that Herskovits and his followers overstate the case for African survivals and a black culture. He maintains that the black American's African past was gradually "sloughed off" as a consequence of his experiences in America. Glazer and Moynihan and, to some degree, Kristol extend this theoretical position in their claim that blacks are peculiarly and distinctly American, knowing no culture other than the American culture. The disagreement between Frazier and Herskovits is not so much over kind as degree. The issue is not whether there are any African survivals at all in the United States, but rather the degree to which these survivals persist and whether they persist in sufficient strength to influence current or contemporary patterns of black behavior.

Unit 2

Africa, Europe, and the Rise of Afro-America, 1441-1619

BACKGROUND

The continuous presence of persons of African descent on soil that became the United States begins in 1619 with the arrival of twenty Africans at Jamestown, Virginia, aboard a Dutch warship from the West Indies. Their arrival was a part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade; lasting almost four centuries, (1501-1873) and accompanying the larger process of European colonization of the New World, this trade involved transporting African slaves to the Americas so their labor could be used in the economic development of this vast region.

Since members of all racial groups and some religious groups (for example, Jews, Christians and Muslims) have been enslaved at some point in time, Africans hold no monopoly on serving as slaves. Anglo-Saxons and Franks, for example, were among the Europeans who were enslaved during the Middle Ages. Other Europeans captured and sold each other as late as the mid-fifteenth century. Such activities often invoked the papal wrath, since many of these slaves were Christians shipped to Muslim lands such as the Sultanate of Egypt. The word slave, in fact, is derived from the word Slav. Slavic groups (for example, Poles, Ukrainians, Serbs, and Croats), often captured by the Crimean Tartars, provided many of the slaves used by the Turks of the Ottoman Empire for the better part of this empire’s history (1357-1918). And although slavery traditionally existed in some African societies, its nature there, similar to the nature of bondage in some other slave systems found throughout the world, was radically different from the system found in the Americas. Slaves in Africa, for example, usually did not pass on their status to their offspring, and they often were allowed opportunities for social mobility.

Since non-Africans have been slaves historically, the question arises why Africans were used in the New World slave trade. Two basic theories, each addressing the classic “chicken-or-the-egg” paradox between slavery and racial prejudice, have been offered. The first argues that racial prejudice preceded the slave trade, that Europeans arrived in Africa culturally pre-conditioned to perceive Africans as inferior to themselves and thus ideally suited for enslavement. This is said to have been particularly true of the English whose language, for example, has numerous negative usages containing the word black (for example, blackball, blacklist, black market, black sheep). The other theory suggests that Africans were enslaved because they constituted a large and accessible labor supply that was relatively close to the Americas. The European perception of African inferiority, therefore, is regarded as an afterthought, an attempt to rationalize African enslavement after it had been accomplished. As evidence this theory notes that initially Europeans enslaved native Americans and even used the forced labor (indentured servitude) of their own kind in the New World. Further, after slavery was abolished in parts of the New World in the nineteenth century (for example, the British Caribbean in 1833), Chinese and East Indians were brought in as indentured servants to replace the freed slaves, usually work-
ing under conditions that approached slavery. It is therefore reasoned that if China or India, countries with large populations in the sixteenth century, had been situated closer to the Americas than Africa was, then their people rather than Africans would have been New World slaves.

The Portuguese are acknowledged by historians to have inaugurated the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In 1441 two Portuguese explorers, Nino Tristao and Antonio Goncalves, sailed to what is today Mauritania in West Africa, kidnapped twelve natives, and returned home to present them as gifts to Prince Henry the Navigator. By 1460, seven hundred to eight hundred African slaves were being taken annually into Portugal, for use mainly as domestic servants. Between 1460 and 1500 the removal of Africans increased as the Portuguese and Spanish established forts and trading stations along the West African coastline. By 1500 about fifty thousand slaves had been taken out of Africa, most brought into Europe, where they were used mainly as domestic servants and artisans and in farming. The remainder were used in the Azores, Madeira, Canary, and Cape Verde islands on sugar plantations in a system that served as a model for the cultivation of commercial crops later in the Americas.

Columbus’s 1492 voyage to the New World, during which he established a settlement on Hispaniola (the present-day island of Haiti and the Dominican Republic), opened up the Americas for European settlement. Following the principles of mercantilism, New World colonies were to be exploited economically. The need to work the mines (gold, silver, and copper) and cultivate commercial crops (such as sugar, tobacco, indigo, and rice) created a demand for slave labor. In 1501, after the Spanish were largely unsuccessful in their efforts to conscript native Americans, Africans were brought for the first time from Europe (Spain) to work in the New World (Hispaniola). In 1510 the first sizable shipment of African slaves into the New World occurred (250 from Spain). Eight years later, African slaves were shipped by the Spanish directly from Africa to the New World.

The most recent research by slave historians suggests that from 1501 to 1873 between ten million and fifteen million African slaves were brought into the New World. Since it is estimated that for every slave landed in the New World two Africans perished from either the slave raids and wars in Africa, the slave caravans that marched to the coast, the coastal bulking stations (prison camps) where slaves were held prior to being transported, or from the horrors of the Middle Passage (the travel by sea from Africa to the New World), it is likely that more than forty-five million lives were lost to Africa from the slave trade. This loss, especially because it involved those who were young (child-producing population) and able-bodied, is regarded as having retarded Africa’s economic development down to the present century. By most economic indices Africa was worse off as it entered the twentieth century than when it entered the fifteenth century.

The flow of slaves across the Atlantic, rising slowly, with about 5 percent of all slaves imported before 1600 and about 14 percent in the seventeenth century, crested in the eighteenth century, when about 60 percent of the total was landed in the Americas. Since the remaining 23 percent arrived in the nineteenth century, over 80 percent of all of the slaves imported into the Americas arrived between 1701 and 1873. Cuba in 1875, it is generally believed, received the last shipment of African slaves to the West.

The principal areas of Africa from which these slaves were obtained were West Africa (Senegal to Gabon—fifty-five percent); Central Africa (Congo and Angola—twenty-five percent); and East Africa (mainly Mozambique—twenty percent). Those taken specifically to the United States were drawn from West Africa (Senegal to Gabon—seventy-three percent); Central Africa (Congo and Angola—twenty-five percent); and East Africa (mainly Mozambique—two percent). The removal of slaves from Africa followed a general pattern that, starting in West Africa, saw the prime source areas shifting eastward and southward over time. This meant that the following areas successively became focal points of obtaining slaves: Senegambia/Sierra Leone, Windward Coast, Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra, Congo/Angola, and Mozambique.

The Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English, French, and Americans were the main traffickers in the slaves brought to the Americas. Because Spain, for roughly two hundred years beginning at the end of the sixteenth century, granted to various merchants and statesmen its famous asiento, a license to carry slaves to its New World colonies, it did not become a major carrier of slaves until the end of the eighteenth century. Most of these slaves were taken into Cuba and, to a much lesser degree, Puerto Rico. Cuba, with seven percent of the total of slaves imported, ranks fourth among the five leading slave-importing countries in the Americas. The remainder (with their percent of the total importation) were Brazil (forty percent), Haiti (nine percent), Jamaica (eight percent), and the United States (four percent).

While much has been made of African complicity in the slave trade, and instances of African resis-
tance to European slavers often ignored, the trade's paramount cause was the European demand for African labor. Europeans were determined to maintain the trade with or without African assistance. Thus, for Africans, lacking a "continental" (Pan-African) or common identity, the trade was carried out under duress: African groups had to either enslave other groups or risk being enslaved. The crucial factor in this enslavement process was the introduction of firearms by Europeans; an early appearance of firearms in sub-Saharan Africa occurred in 1591 with the Moroccan expedition against the Songhay Empire. Simply put, Africans who acquired firearms could dominate and sell those who lacked them.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many African slaves became part of what was called the triangular trade. Under this trading network, rum from the British colonies of North America was carried to West Africa (Guinea Coast) and traded for slaves. These slaves were then carried to the West Indies, where they were used to cultivate sugar. The molasses produced from the sugar was then sold, along with more slaves, to the British colonies in North America. From the molasses rum would be produced in North America and the cycle would start again.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade ended in 1873. Its decline had begun as early as 1808 when Denmark abolished its slave trade. Great Britain and the United States followed in 1808, Holland in 1814, and France in 1815. After 1808, Great Britain in particular sought to suppress the trade conducted by others by patrolling the West African coast. Other factors influencing the decline of the slave trade were the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833 (owing in great part to the work of abolitionists like William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson), declining profits in the slave trade, and the realization by Great Britain that its interests were better served by using African labor to produce the continent's raw materials for Britain's burgeoning Industrial Revolution.

Some scholars, using oral tradition and certain linguistic, archeological, and anthropological evidence, argue that there was an African presence in the New World prior to Columbus' voyage in 1492. This thesis is best presented in Ivan Van Sertima's *They Came Before Columbus* (1976.) Certainly African slaves accompanied the early Spanish explorers of the New World like De Soto and Pizarro. Estevanico, the black Moroccan who accompanied the Spanish during their explorations in the 1530s of what is the present-day Southwest of the United States, was perhaps the best known of these. About 100 slaves were also a part of San Miguel, the 1526 Spanish settlement near present-day Georgetown, South Carolina, which lasted one year. It ended when the Africans rebelled, set fire to the settlement, and the 150 Spanish survivors returned to Hispaniola. The fate of the Africans in San Miguel remains unknown.

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**CORE LESSON**

**Theme**

The presence of black people in the United States is rooted in the arrival in 1619 of twenty Africans in Jamestown, Virginia, as part of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This trade was the largest incidence of forced migration in human history and involved the arrival of slaves in the New World (and the United States) from West, Central, and even East Africa. It had a profound impact on the African continent.

**Materials and Preparation**

Students should read either chapters 4 and 5 in *The African American Experience: A History* ("The Atlantic Slave Trade, 1500–1760s" and "The West Indies, First Stop for Africans, 1500–1760s") or chapter 4 in *African American History* ("New World Slave Trade").

Students should also study Map #3 of the slave trade (see page 39) and read excerpts from Winthrop D. Jordan's *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (see page 40);
Eric Williams’s *Capitalism and Slavery* (see page 42); Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (see page 44); Philip D. Curtin’s *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (see page 46); Gustavus Vassa’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, Written by Himself* (see page 48); and James A. Rawley’s *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A History* (see page 49).

The teacher should read chapter 3 *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (“The Slave Trade and the New World”).

**Time Period**

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

**Objectives/Activities**

**ACTIVITY 1**

**Compare and contrast** the theories that have been offered to explain why Africans rather than some other group of people were used in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

After students have read the excerpts from Winthrop D. Jordan’s *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (see page 40) and Eric Williams’s *Capitalism and Slavery* (see page 42), divide the class into two groups, one representing Jordan’s position and the other Williams’s. Have them debate the two positions. Point out to students the possibility of both positions having some merit.

**Evaluation:** Have students write a 500-word essay indicating whether they prefer the argument of Jordan or Williams, believe there is some merit in both arguments, or believe that neither has merit. Students should explain their selection of a particular position.

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Identify** the areas of Africa from which slaves were taken and those New World areas where they were landed.

After having students use Map #3 (see page 39) to become familiar with the major areas of Africa from which slaves were taken and the New World areas where they were landed, instruct students to discuss the ways in which we can document the presence of certain groups of Africans in specific parts of the New World (for example, ship records, African survivals).

**Evaluation:** Have students imagine they are a journalist whose assignment is to research and write a 500-word article about a folk religion found in Cuba, Haiti, or Brazil that has African origins. Have them identify the particular African group associated with this religion. Also have them note whether practitioners of this religion are among immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, or Brazil found in New Jersey.

**ACTIVITY 3**

**Assess** the implications of the trans-Atlantic slave trade for the African continent.

a. Ask students to imagine that they are an African king/chief who has been asked by European slavers to enslave a neighboring African group. Have them debate the pros and cons of accepting this offer. For example, if the king/chief doesn’t accept, then the neighboring group could receive guns from the Europeans and enslave his people. If he does accept, he will become dependent on the slave trade and on the guns received from Europeans. He will also have allowed the Europeans to divide Africans, setting them against each other.
b. After students have read the excerpts from Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (see page 44) and Philip D. Curtin’s *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (see page 46), ask them whether Africa benefited overall from, or was harmed by, the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

**Evaluation:** Have the students write a 500-word essay about what responsibility, if any, can be assessed to Africans for engaging in the slave trade. Or have students write a 500-word essay responding to the notion, articulated by some nineteenth century black leaders, that the slave trade could be considered “Providential Design,” a grand plan by which Africans were to be taken to the New World, civilized, and then returned to Africa to serve as civilizing agents.

**ACTIVITY 4**

**Explain** why the Middle Passage is considered to have been an extremely inhumane and horrific experience for the African slaves transported to the New World.

Have students read the Middle Passage excerpts from Gustavus Vassa’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, Written by Himself* (see page 48) and James A. Rawley’s *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A History* (see page 49). Ask students to discuss whether these excerpts support the notion that the conditions of the Middle Passage were particularly horrific.

**Evaluation:** Have the students imagine they are someone like Gustavus Vassa, an African who experienced the Middle Passage. Ask them to write, as part of an autobiography, a 500-word account of this experience.

**Supplemental Activities**

1. Show students the program described here from the documentary series *The Africans* (obtainable from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838):

   “Tools of Exploitation”

   This segment contrasts the impact of the West on Africa and the impact of Africa on the development of the West, looking at the manner in which Africa’s human and natural resources were exploited before, during, and after the colonial period. The segment also examines Africa’s own traditions of slavery (60 minutes).

2. Show students the film *Sankofa*, written and directed by Haile Gerima, an Ethiopian who is a Howard University film professor. This film depicts the slave trade through a black woman’s dream-like remembrances (125 minutes). It can be obtained from Mypheduh Film, 403 K Street, N. W., Washington, D.C. 20001 (202-289-6677).

**Key Persons**

**Olaudah Equiano** (Gustavus Vassa). Born in West Africa and placed in slavery in Virginia, he was one of the earliest blacks in America to write his autobiography. In it he detailed the Middle Passage. It was published in 1789 under the title *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, Written By Himself*.

**Estevanico.** A black Moroccan who accompanied the Spanish explorers of the present-day Southwest in the 1530s.
Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS


Fraginals, Manuel Moreno, ed. 1984. *Africa in Latin America*. A detailed, innovative collection that examines the cultural, social, and overall historical influences Africans have had on the development of Spanish and Portuguese New World societies.

Inikori, J. E., ed. 1982. *Forced Migration*. Historians' views of the disastrous impact on Africans of the trade in black slaves conducted by Europeans and Muslims. The essays highlight the cultural, demographic, and economic changes that occurred in societies that lost people to slavery.

Jordan, Winthrop D. 1968. *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812*. In this major study, which examines the origin and development of white attitudes toward blacks in America from the sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century, Jordan notes that Englishmen harbored certain views about color that alone would predispose them to think negatively of Africans, even before participating in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.


Rodney, Walter. 1972. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.* In this highly influential study, scholarly but very accessible, Rodney contends that the economic retardation of Africa from the sixteenth century on is attributable first to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and later to European colonialism and neocolonialism.

Williams, Eric. 1944. *Capitalism and Slavery.* Written by an economic historian who later became the first prime minister of a independent Trinidad and Tobago, this classic study makes two key points: the origins of the trade in African slaves across the Atlantic were economic, not racial, and this trade helped considerably to generate the capital used to finance the Industrial Revolution.

**FOR STUDENTS**


Haley, Alex. 1974. *Roots: The Saga of an American Family.* Drawing on generations of his family’s oral tradition, Haley traces his origins back to Kunta Kinte, who was abducted from his home in Gambia and transported as a slave to colonial America.

Meltzer, Milton. 1993. *Slavery: A World History.* An updated edition of the author’s earlier work on the subject, this study documents the universality of slavery, thereby invalidating the notion that Africans were somehow uniquely suited for their New World bondage. In the Preface, for example, the author writes, “The European immigrant who slurs black Americans whose ancestors came to the New World in chains probably had ancestors yoked in slavery, too.”

O’Dell, Scott. 1989. *My Name Is Not Angelica.* Raisha and Konje, her betrothed, are abducted along with others from their village in West Africa and placed aboard a slave ship bound for the Danish West Indian island of St. John. Here Raisha and Konje are purchased by a plantation owner, and Raisha becomes a house servant and Konje a field hand who plots a slave rebellion.

Yerby, Frank. 1971. *The Dahomean.* An epic tale that illuminates the problems, emanating from the slave trade and the dawn of European colonial rule, that an African people experiences.
Map 3
The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

The general directions of the main routes that brought African slaves across the Atlantic Ocean to the New World from the early 1500s to 1873.
White Over Black: American Attitudes
Toward the Negro, 1550–1812 (1968)

Englishmen found the natives of Africa very different from themselves. Negroes looked
different: their religion was un-Christian; their manner of living was anything but English;
they seemed to be a particularly licentious sort of people. All these clusters of perceptions
were related to each other, though they may be spread apart for inspection, and they were
related also to circumstances of contact in Africa, to previously accumulated tradition con-
cerning that strange and distant continent, and to certain special qualities of English society
on the eve of its expansion into the New World.

In England perhaps more than in southern Europe, the concept of blackness was loaded
with intense meaning. Long before they found that some men were black, Englishmen found
in the idea of blackness a way of expressing some of their most ingrained values. No other
color except white conveyed so much emotional impact. As described by the Oxford
English Dictionary, the meaning of black before the sixteenth century included, “Deeply stained with
dirt; soiled, dirty, foul . . . Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or invol-
vling death, deadly; baneful, disastrous, sinister . . . Foul, iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked.
. . . Indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment, etc.” Black was an emotionally parti-
san color, the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign of danger and repulsion.

Embedded in the concept of blackness was its direct opposite—whiteness. No other col-
ors so clearly implied opposition, “beinge colours utterlye contrary”; no others were so fre-
quently used to denote polarization:

Everye white will have its blacke,
And everye sweete its sowre.’

White and black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness,
beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil.

Whiteness, moreover, carried a special significance for Elizabethan Englishmen: it was,
particularly when complemented by red, the color of perfect human beauty, especially female
beauty. This ideal was already centuries old in Elizabeth’s time, and their fair Queen was its
very embodiment: her cheeks were “roses in a bed of lillies.” (Elizabeth was naturally pale but
like many ladies then and since she freshened her “lillies” at the cosmetic table.) An adoring
nation knew precisely what a beautiful Queen looked like.

Her cheeke, her chinne, her neck, her nose,
This was a lillye, that was a rose;
Her hande so white as whales bone,  
Her finger tipt with Cassidone;  
Her bosome, sleeke as Paris plaster,  
Held upp twoo bowles of Alabaster.

Shakespeare himself found the lily and the rose a compelling natural coalition.

"Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white  
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on.

By contrast, the Negro was ugly, by reason of his color and also his "horrid Curles" and "disfigured" lips and nose. As Shakespeare wrote apologetically of his black mistress,

    My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
    Coral is far more red than her lips' red:  
    If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
    If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
    I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,  
    But no such roses see I in her cheeks.

Some Elizabethans found blackness an ugly mask, superficial but always demanding attention.

    Is Byrrha Browne? Who doth the question aske?  
    Her face is pure as Ebonie jeat blacke,  
    It's hard to know her face from her faire maske,  
    Beautie in her seemes beautie still to lacke.  
    Nay, she's snow-white, but for that russet skin,  
    Which like a vaile doth keep her whiteness in.

ERIC WILLIAMS
Capitalism and Slavery (1944)

The institution of white servitude, however, had grave disadvantages. Postlethwayt, a rigid mercantilist, argued that white laborers in the colonies would tend to create rivalry with the mother country in manufacturing. Better black slaves on plantations than white servants in industry, which would encourage aspirations to independence. The supply moreover was becoming increasingly difficult, and the need of the plantations outstripped the English convictions. In addition, merchants were involved in many vexatious and costly proceedings arising from people signifying their willingness to emigrate, accepting food and clothes in advance, and then suing for unlawful detention. Indentured servants were not forthcoming in sufficient quantities to replace those who had served their term. On the plantations, escape was easy for the white servant; less easy for the Negro who, if freed, tended, in self-defence, to stay in his locality where he was well known and less likely to be apprehended as a vagrant or runaway slave. The servant expected land at the end of his contract; the Negro, in a strange environment, conspicuous by his color and feature, and ignorant of the white man’s language and ways, could be kept permanently divorced from the land. Racial differences made it easier to justify and rationalize Negro slavery, to exact the mechanical obedience of a plough-ox or a cart-horse, to demand that resignation and that complete moral and intellectual subjection which alone make slave labor possible. Finally, and this was the decisive factor, the Negro slave was cheaper. The money which procured a white man’s services for ten years could buy a Negro for life. As the governor of Barbados stated, the Barbadian planters found by experience that “three blacks work better and cheaper than one white man.”

But the experience with white servitude had been invaluable. Kidnapping in Africa encountered no such difficulties as were encountered in England. Captains and ships had the experience of the one trade to guide them in the other. Bristol, the center of the servant trade, became one of the centers of the slave trade. Capital accumulated from the one financed the other. White servitude was the historic base upon which Negro slavery was constructed. The felon-drivers in the plantations became without effort slave-drivers. “In significant numbers,” writes Professor Phillips, “the Africans were latecomers fitted into a system already developed.”

Here, then, is the origin of Negro slavery. The reason was economic, not racial; it had to do not with the color of the laborer, but the cheapness of the labor. As compared with Indian and white labor, Negro slavery was eminently superior. “In each case,” writes Bassett, discussing North Carolina, “it was a survival of the fittest. Both Indian slavery and white servitude were to go down before the black man’s superior endurance, docility, and labor capacity.” The features of the man, his hair, color and dentifrice, his “subhuman” characteristics so
widely pleaded, were only the later rationalizations to justify a simple economic fact: that the colonies needed labor and resorted to Negro labor because it was cheapest and best. This was not a theory, it was a practical conclusion deduced from the personal experience of the planter. He would have gone to the moon, if necessary, for labor. Africa was nearer than the moon, nearer too than the more populous countries of India and China. But their turn was to come.

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Many things remain uncertain about the slave trade and its consequences for Africa, but the general picture of destructiveness can be shown to be the logical consequence of the manner of recruitment of captives in Africa. One of the uncertainties concerns the basic question of how many Africans were imported. This has long been an object of speculation, with estimates ranging from a few millions to over one hundred million. A recent study has suggested a figure of about ten million Africans landed alive in the Americas, the Atlantic islands, and Europe. Because it is a low figure, it is already being used by European scholars who are apologists for the capitalist system and its long record of brutality in Europe and abroad. In order to whitewash the European slave trade, they find it convenient to start by minimizing the numbers concerned. The truth is that any figure of Africans imported into the Americas which is narrowly based on the surviving records is bound to be low, because there were so many people at the time who had a vested interest in smuggling slaves (and withholding data). Nevertheless, if the low figure of ten million was accepted as a basis for evaluating the impact of slaving on Africa as a whole, the conclusions that could legitimately be drawn would confound those who attempt to make light of the experience of the rape of Africans from 1445 to 1870.

On any basic figure of Africans landed alive in the Americas, one would have to make several extensions—starting with a calculation to cover mortality in transshipment. The Atlantic crossing, or "Middle Passage," as it was called by European slavers, was notorious for the number of deaths incurred, averaging in the vicinity of 15 to 20 per cent. There was also numerous deaths in Africa between time of capture and time of embarkation, especially in cases where captives had to travel hundreds of miles to the coast. Most important of all (given that warfare was the principal means of obtaining captives) it is necessary to make some estimate as to the number of people killed and injured so as to extract the millions who were taken alive and sound. The resultant figure would be many times the millions landed alive outside of Africa, and it is that figure which represents the number of Africans directly removed from the population and labor force of Africa because of the establishment of slave production by Europeans.

The massive loss to the African labor force was made more critical because it was composed of able-bodied young men and young women. Slave buyers preferred their victims between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five, and preferably in the early twenties; the sex ratio being about two men to one woman. Europeans often accepted younger African children, but rarely any older person. They shipped the most healthy wherever possible, taking the
trouble to get those who had already survived an attack of smallpox, and who were therefore immune from further attacks of that disease, which was then one of the world's great killer diseases.

From HOW EUROPE UNDERDEVELOPED AFRICA by Walter Rodney. Copyright (c) 1972 by Walter Rodney. By Permission of Howard University Press, Washington, D.C.
PHILIP D. CURTIN


It would be premature to generalize about the impact on the slave trade on African societies over these four centuries. On the other hand, historians have already begun to do so. The range of opinion runs the gamut from the view that the slave trade was responsible for virtually every unfavorable development in Africa over these centuries, to the opposite position that even the slave trade was better than no trade, that it was therefore a positive benefit to the African societies that participated. . . .

As for the migration of food crops, at least two New-World crops were introduced into Africa by the sixteenth century: manioc and maize spread very widely and came to be two of the most important sources of food on that continent. If other factors affecting population size had remained constant, the predictable result would have been population growth wherever these crops replaced less efficient cultigens. Since this process took place over very large areas, it seems possible and even probable that population growth resulting from new food crops exceeded population losses through the slave trade. Whatever population loss may have followed the introduction of new diseases would have been temporary, while more efficient food crops tend to make possible a permanently higher level of population. It is even possible that, for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, the net demographic effect of the three Atlantic migrations was population growth, not decline. Only further research in demographic and epidemiological history can give a firm answer. . . .

One of the key questions to be answered, for example, is the possible role of the slave trade in social and political change. One model frequently found in the historical literature depicts the transformation of a previously peaceful peasant community into a militarized slave-catching society, where slave-raiding becomes an economic activity consciously pursued for the sake of the European imports that could be bought with slaves, and slaves alone. If the European demand for slaves did indeed force this kind of adaptation on African societies, the slave trade can be shown to have had disastrous consequences for the hunters as well as for the hunted. Alongside the destruction and death caused by the raids themselves, human resources and creative effort among the hunters must have been diverted from the pursuit of innovation and progress in other fields.

But another possibility, or model, is conceivable. African societies, like those of other people in other places, settled disputes by military means. Warfare produces prisoners-of-war, who can be killed, enslaved, or exchanged—but they may be a by-product of war, not its
original cause. The African adaptation to the demand for slaves might be to change military tactics and strategy to maximize the number of prisoners, without actually increasing the incidence or destructiveness of warfare. In that case, the slave trade might have done little serious damage to the well-being of the African society.

GUSTAVUS VASSA

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, Written by Himself (1789)

From Chapter 3, “The Slave Ship”

... I feared I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty; and this not only shewn towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves. One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast, that he died in consequence of it; and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. . . .

The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship’s cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilent. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable, and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.

From Chapter 12, "The Middle Passage"

Men slaves, but not women or children, were placed in shackles as soon as they were put aboard ship. They were bound together in pairs. Left leg to right leg, left wrist to right wrist. Some masters removed the shackles once out to sea, others only during the day, and some not until the destination had been attained. Shipboard security varied with the origins of slaves. Captain James Fraser said he seldom confined Angola slaves, "being very peaceable," took off the handcuffs of Windward and Gold Coast slaves as soon as the ship was out of sight of land, and soon after that the leg irons, but Bonny slaves, whom he thought vicious, were kept under stricter confinement.

Violently removed from their customary way of life, cramped in narrow, floating quarters, dominated by white-skinned men, despondent and often in trauma, Africans were exposed to acts of brutality, incited to revolt on shipboard and driven to taking their own lives. On the Middle Passage there was little check to sadism and lust. Perhaps the most infamous atrocity in the annals of the slave trade was committed by Luke Collingwood, captain of the Zeng. In 1781 he loaded his ship at Saint Thomas on the African coast with a cargo of four hundred slaves and proceeded toward Jamaica, 6 September. By 29 November he had lost seven white people, over sixty slaves, and had many more who were sick. Discovering that he had left only two hundred gallons of fresh water, he ascertained that, if the slaves died a natural death, it would be the loss of the shipowners, but if slaves were thrown alive into the sea, it would be the loss of the insurers. He designated sick and weak slaves, and on that day fifty-four were thrown into the sea. On 1 December forty-two more were thrown overboard; on that day a heavy rain enabled the ship to collect in casks enough water for eleven day's full allowance. Even so, twenty-six more slaves, their hands bound, were thrown into the sea, and ten more, about to be bound for disposal, jumped into the sea.

Unit 3
African American Slavery in the Colonial Era, 1619–1775

BACKGROUND

Although the twenty Africans brought into Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619 arrived by virtue of the slave trade, they actually became indentured servants. Thus, they eventually gained their freedom, and some later actually owned slaves themselves. By the 1640s, however, the practices of enslaving Africans for life and hereditary servitude (the permanent enslavement of the children of slaves) had been established in Virginia and, within the following two decades, had achieved legal recognition. The increased importation of tobacco by the English, as their appetite for this commodity soared, facilitated the rise of a large-scale tobacco plantation system in Virginia, and by the 1690s most of Virginia's slaves were being imported directly from Africa. With the introduction and legalization of slavery in 1750 in Georgia, a system of black bondage became common to all of the thirteen colonies.

Although a few native American groups were enslaved in colonial America (especially between the 1670s and the early 1700s in Carolina, where predatory raids victimized the Timucas, Guaus, and Apalachees), Africans, for several reasons, became America's prime bondsmen. Indians were familiar with the terrain and could thus easily run away, and there was fear that their enslavement would bring about continual warfare and also disrupt the lucrative fur trade. Europeans, because of their color, could escape and be mistaken easily as free persons.

Because the climate and soil of the South were suitable for the cultivation of commercial (plantation) crops such as tobacco, rice, and indigo, slavery developed in the southern colonies on a much larger scale than in the northern colonies; the latter's labor needs were met primarily through the use of European immigrants, who usually served indentures of seven years at the most. In fact, throughout the colonial period, Virginia had the largest slave population, followed by Maryland. In South Carolina (Carolina was divided in 1663 into the North Carolina region and South Carolina region and into two colonies in 1701), however, slaves constituted a larger proportion of the total population than in any other colony—sixty percent of the population in 1765.

In general, the conditions of slavery in the northern colonies, where slaves were engaged more in nonagricultural pursuits (such as mining, maritime, and domestic work), were less severe and harsh than in the southern colonies, where most were used on plantations. Also there could be found in the northern colonies several influential religious groups that had moral precepts that encouraged them to practice a more benign form of slavery. The Quakers, the first organized group in the colonies to speak out against slavery, serve as the best example.

During the colonial period slaves resisted their bondage in various ways. Their forms of protest included the murder of their owners, sabotage (of crops, animals, and tools), suicide, and running away. Some of the runaways in Georgia and South Caro-
lina formed maroon communities that often raided nearby plantations for food. Rebellions constituted an additional form of protest. The larger slave population in the South made the fear of insurrection greater there. In fact, the largest slave rebellion of the colonial period, involving about one hundred slaves, occurred in Stono, South Carolina, in 1739: approximately twenty-five whites and fifty slaves were killed in the course of the uprising or its suppression. In order to control slaves’ behavior and minimize the possibilities of uprisings, slaves codes (black codes) were established in most of the colonies. Virginia established the first of these during the 1660s, and it served as a model. Under the codes slaves were forbidden to travel without the written permission of their owner and to congregate in large numbers without the presence of whites. Slaves found guilty of murder or rape were to be hanged; for petty offenses slaves were to be whipped, maimed, or branded.

By the end of the colonial period, blacks numbered about five hundred thousand and constituted their largest proportion of the total American population ever, nearly 20 percent. Also, since most were native-born Americans, many by this time had become hyphenated Americans in the true sense of the word. In varying degrees in different parts of the colonies, they had undergone an acculturative process that had created a new cultural group of people: African Americans. This process involved the melding of the different traditional African cultures into a pan-African culture and the retention of some aspects of this culture. Among the areas in which Africanisms or African survivals were most conspicuous were religion, music, dance, and foodways. This process also involved the adoption by slaves of the manners and customs of their land of enslavement. For example, slaves learned to speak English and other European languages (such as Dutch). Still, it should be understood that the process of cultural change did not move solely in one direction, and slaves influenced the behavior of whites in some cultural areas as well, for example, that pertaining to foodways.

As evidence of the acculturative process, blacks by the end of the colonial period had created institutions and organizations of a non-African nature and character. The most prevalent of these were churches, stemming in large part from the revivalistic spirit of the Great Awakening, which lasting roughly from 1740 to 1790, witnessed the conversion of large numbers of blacks to Christianity. Black Baptist congregations, for example, appeared in 1756 in Lunenberg, Virginia; in 1773 in Silver Bluff, South Carolina; and in 1776 in Williamsburg, Virginia. The Silver Bluff congregation was perhaps the most significant, since it is linked to several early black missionaries who established Baptist churches elsewhere. The first of these missionaries was David George. After the American recapture of Savannah in 1782, which followed the flight of Silver Bluff congregants from Savannah to take refuge behind the British lines, George sailed with the British to Nova Scotia, where he established his first church. Ten years later, he emigrated to Sierra Leone and founded a second congregation.

Another Silver Bluff exhorter was George Leile, who, when the British evacuated Savannah, accompanied those who went to Jamaica. There he established the first Baptist church in Kingston. Before leaving Savannah, however, Leile converted a slave named Andrew Bryan, who established the First African Baptist Church of Savannah in 1788. In addition to these Baptists, Harry Hosier (“Black Harry”), the constant companion of the English evangelist Francis Asbury, the person most responsible for spreading Methodism in the colonies, was an outstanding pre-Revolutionary War black missionary.

Aiding the acculturative process was the emergence by the end of the colonial period of the key African American social institution: the family. It is believed that between 1720 and 1740, with the increased arrival of fresh slaves from Africa, slaves had started to reproduce themselves in significant numbers, a process enhanced when the next generation of these slaves produced a greater balance in the sexes. By the end of the colonial period this process had given rise to several generations of American-born blacks who were connected by blood and had developed an affinity based on an awareness of common descent. These early black families also began the process of serving as socializing agents, helping younger generations acquire the adaptive mechanisms that would facilitate their survival in the face of the stresses and strains of bondage.

While it is possible that black slaves were on New Jersey soil as early as the 1620s, certainly slavery was encouraged by the colony’s first constitution, the Concessions and Agreement of 1664/1665. It provided additional land for those bringing servants or slaves into the colony. The earliest known record of slaves in New Jersey dates to 1680, when Colonel Lewis Morris of Shrewsbury, Monmouth County, is identified as owning approximately sixty to seventy slaves.

Slavery was more prevalent in East Jersey, which originally included the present counties of Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, and Monmouth and whose primary slave-importing port was Perth Amboy. The Passaic and Raritan river valleys, populated mainly by Dutch farmers who had a long history of slave ownership,
were in fact the sites of considerable holdings of slaves. In West Jersey (Burlington, Gloucester, Salem, and Cape May counties), where Cooper’s Ferry (Camden) was the principal port of entry for slaves, both the presence of a significant number of Quakers with antislavery sentiments and a tendency to rely on white immigrants for the area’s labor needs lessened the development of slavery.

Since most slaves in New Jersey worked on small farms that had about three bondsmen, they generally experienced a milder form of bondage than their counterparts in the South. Also, as in other northern colonies, more slaves in New Jersey were used in nonagricultural pursuits than in the South. They were, for example, employed in Charles Read’s ironworks in Burlington County, in copper mining on the Schuyler family lands in Bergen County, and in the skilled trades. Still, New Jersey was one of the few northern colonies where slave conspiracies occurred. Perhaps the most significant was discovered in Somerville in 1734; as a result of that discovery thirty blacks were apprehended, one hanged, several had ears cut off, and others whipped. Subsequent slave plots surfaced in 1741 in Hackensack, for which two slaves were executed by burning, in 1772 in Perth Amboy, and in 1779 in Elizabethtown.

Some whites also voiced protest against slavery in New Jersey, as in many of the other colonies by the time of the American Revolution. The Quaker John Woolman of Mount Holly, as reflected in his 1754 publication, Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes, was one of the earliest of these.

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**CORE LESSON**

**Theme**

The enslavement of Africans in colonial America, emanating from the arrival in 1619 of twenty slaves in Jamestown, Virginia, encompassed all of the colonies. The scope and nature of slavery in the northern colonies, however, differed considerably from the institution in the southern colonies, the former generally being milder than the latter.

**Materials and Preparation**


Students should study Map #4 of the original thirteen colonies (see page 57) and read the "Runaway Slave Notices" (see page 58).

Students and the teacher should read pages 18–23 in Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History. They should also read Larry A. Greene, "A History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey," The Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries (June, 1994), for information on blacks in New Jersey in the colonial period and later.

The teacher should read chapter 4 in From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans ("Colonial Slavery").

**Time Period**

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.
Objectives/Activities

ACTIVITY 1

Compare and contrast the scope and nature of slavery in the northern colonies with that in southern colonies.

Using Map #4 (see page 57), explain to the class that slavery evolved in different ways in the regions of the North and South. Explain, for example, that the towns, cities, and small farms in the North did not quite require the labor of large numbers of slaves as did the plantations in the South. Divide the class into two groups, one representing northern slaves and the other those in the South. Ask each group to explain its preference for its particular region. Slavery in the South might be favored because the larger holdings permitted greater social interaction among slaves and better conditions for maintaining African cultural traditions. The North might be preferred for its generally milder form of bondage.

Evaluation: Have the students write a short play in which the main characters are escaped slaves, one from New Jersey and one from South Carolina, who meet in Philadelphia. Have these fugitives, both field hands, compare the difficulties they experienced under slavery. Ask students to include such factors as the climate, nature of the work performed, and degree of contact with their owner.

ACTIVITY 2

Analyze a historical document as a primary source of information about colonial slaves.

Discuss running away as a common form of slave protest and the importance of runaway slave notices (see page 58). Explain that these notices are primary source documents, often containing considerable information about their subjects. Divide the class into groups and assign each group a notice. Have each group analyze its notice and then indicate what it learned from the notice about runaway slaves and slavery in general (for example, some slaves had markings indicating their ethnic group, some could read and write, women were among runaways, some runaways were skilled workers, some spoke several languages, some had African names). Ask students to discuss whether the information found in these runaway notices is likely to be accurate.

Evaluation: Have the students prepare a runaway slave notice. These notices should reflect accurately what we know about colonial slaves (such as names, occupations, African origins).

Supplemental Activities

1. Visit Virginia’s Colonial Williamsburg, which features the most ambitious living history portrayal of slavery during the colonial period.

2. Visit the graves of two colonial New Jersey slaves and read the tombstone inscriptions. These will provide particulars concerning these slaves. The fact that they were buried in the family plot of their owner should also be noted. One grave is that of Ambo, Rahway Cemetery, Rahway, and the other is that of Caesar, Scotch Plains Baptist Church Cemetery, Scotch Plains.

Key Persons

Andrew Bryan. An early black Baptist minister who in 1788 organized the First African Baptist Church in Savannah, perhaps the nation’s oldest continuous black congregation.

David George. One of the black missionaries associated with the early black Baptist church in Silver Bluff, South Carolina. He later organized churches in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone.
Harry Hosier ("Black Harry"). An early black Methodist evangelist who accompanied Francis Asbury in spreading Methodism and was highly regarded for his preaching talents.

George Leile. An exhorter also associated with the Silver Bluff, South Carolina, black Baptist church. He later organized the first Baptist church in Jamaica.

John Woolman. A Mount Holly Quaker whose 1754 Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes was one of the earliest antislavery documents in the colonies.

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS

Cooley, Henry S. 1896. Slavery in New Jersey. One of the first scholarly studies of New Jersey slavery, covering its beginning in the colonial era to its abolition in the early nineteenth century. Despite the study’s age, it contains valuable information about slavery’s legal history in New Jersey.

Greene, Lorenzo Johnson. 1942. The Negro in Colonial New England. Time has not diminished this study as the most comprehensive work on blacks in colonial New England. It is most informative in illustrating the regional differences between slavery in the South and New England.


Price, Clement Alexander. 1980. Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey. Included in this excellent collection of documents relating to New Jersey’s black history are those from the colonial and revolutionary eras. These are most useful in demonstrating the origins and constraints of slavery in New Jersey.

Sobel, Mechal. 1987. The World they Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia. An innovative work that examines the process by which black and white societies shaped, transformed, and shared each others’ values despite the harsh and oppressed conditions of black slaves.
Tate, Jr., Thad. 1965. *The Negro in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg*. The author traces the development of slavery in Virginia from its legal origins to its economic role in the South’s largest colony.

Wood, Peter. 1974. *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*. A remarkable book, not only because it provides a history of blacks in colonial South Carolina, but because it explores the rich African contribution to South Carolina’s economy and culture. Blacks, even under slavery, are shown not to be passive victims, but a people seeking to carve out as much individual dignity and freedom as possible.

**FOR STUDENTS**

The thirteen British colonies in North America in 1763.
Runaway Slave Notices (1772–1781)

Thirty Dollars Reward.

RUN-AWAY from the subscriber, living at Connecticut Farms, near Elizabeth-Town, New Jersey, the 13th of March, a negro man named BRET: He is the same fellow the Salmons have had at Weyomging for three years past; is stout and well made, near 6 feet high, about 33 years old: Had on when he went away, a red great coat half worn, a blue coat and a Kersey jacket of the same colour, with flat white metal buttons, buckskin breeches, and black and white stockings. He can read and write, and 'tis supposed will forge a pass. Whoever takes up and secures the said fellow in either Philadelphia or Easton goal so that his master may get him again, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges for bringing him to the subscriber. . . .

'Tis probable he may endeavour to get to the Mississippi; and in case taken there, and sent to New York, the above reward will be paid by Hugh Gaine. . . . If apprehended, unless well secured, he will endeavour to make his escape, being strong and very artful. Those that harbour said fellow, may depend on being prosecuted by

JECAMIAH SMITH.

—The New-York Gazette; and The Weekly Mercury, No. 1124, May 10, 1773.

FIVE DOLLARS REWARD.

RUN-away from Samuel Ogden, of Boontown, in the County of Morris, and Province of New-Jersey, on Sunday the 18th of October last: A Negro Man named Mingo or Tim, he is about 30 years of Age, has a Scar either on his Nose or on one of his Cheeks; is about 5 feet 7 or 8 Inches high, plays on the Violin, speaks good Dutch and English, and is much addicted to Strong drink: Had on when he went away a dark brown broad cloth Coat, with brass Philadelphia buttons, a brown broad cloth waist-coat, with basket mohair Buttons, a Pair of red coating Trowsers, a ozenbrig Shirt and wool Hat. He was formerly the property of Isaac Wilkins, Esq; of West-Chester, about which Place it is not unlikely he may be lurking. Whoever apprehends said Negro and returns him to his master, or secures him in any of his Majesty's goals, shall be paid the above Reward, and all reasonable charges by

SAMUEL OGDEN.

[1772]

FORTY SHILLINGS Reward.

RUN AWAY from the subscriber on Saturday last, the 26th instant, a Negro Man named Peter, about twenty years of age, about 5 feet high, a clumsy looking fellow, stoops a little in his walk. Had on and took with him, a light coloured wilton coatee, a red napdittto, a clouded knit waistcoat, light coloured jean breeches with silk garters, black plush ditto, almost new
shoes, clouded stockings, check shirt, plated buckles, an old beaver hat, and other articles. As he is a cunning artful fellow will endeavor to pass for a free man, he has a mother living in Trentown, a free woman named Violet, and it is likely he is gone that way. Whoever apprehends and secures said Negroe in any of his Majesty’s goals so that his master may have him again, shall have the above reward, and reasonable charges if brought home, paid by

JOHN M’CALLA

N.B. All masters of vessels and others are forbid to harbour or carry off said Negro at their peril.

— The Pennsylvania Gazette, No. 2323, June 30, 1773.

THIRTY DOLLARS Reward.

RUN-AWAY from the subscribers, living in Hopewell township, Hunterdon county, and province of New Jersey, on Sunday evening last, the 13th inst. three Negro men, viz. BONTURAH, by trade a shoemaker, 27 years of age, and a well-set fellow: Had on and took with him, a suit of black clothes, a brown silk camblet coat, three linen shirts, good shoes and stockings. The second named JACK, 23 years old, and exceeds the others in stoutness: Had on and took with him a yellowish brown close bodied coat, a vest, the fore parts calf-skin, with the hair on, new buckskin breeches, a new felt hat, good shoes and stockings. The third named FRANK, 19 years old: Had on and took with him, a green sagathy coat, a light coloured cut velvet vest, two striped Holland jackets, a brown coat, a red great coat, a pair of leather breeches, three shirts, the one ruffled, a pair of tow trowsers, a new castor hat, good shoes and stockings. They are all this country born, each near 5 feet 6 inches high, of the blackest kind, and as they can read, it is supposed they have passes, which the subscribers desire to have secured, with them. The one has a wife in Philadelphia. They took with them a fearnought great coat. Whoever takes up and secures said Negroes in any of his Majesty’s goals, so that their masters may have them again, shall have the above reward, or TEN DOLLARS for either, and reasonable charges, paid by SAMUEL STOUT, sen. BENJAMIN STOUT, jun. and SAMUEL STOUT, jun. or by THOMAS SHIELDS, in Philadelphia.

— The Pennsylvania Journal, No. 1593, June 16, 1773.

FORTY SHILLINGS REWARD.

RUN away from the subscriber, living at Great Egg Harbour, in Gloucester county, West New Jersey, on the 20th of March, a certain negroe man, called PERO, about 28 years old, five feet eight inches high, hobbles in his walk, his left foot having been froze, the great toe of which is considerably shorter than the other; had on and took with him, a blue duffil great coat, cotton striped under jacket, one pair of grey nap trowsers, and one pair of white swanskin ditto, much worn, speaks broken English. Whoever takes up said negroe and secures him in
any of his Majesty's gaols, so that his master may have him again, shall receive the above reward, and reasonable charges, paid by

ELIJAH CLARK.

-Newcastle Gaol, April 28, 1773.

Ten Dollars Reward.

RUN-away last Thursday from the Subscriber, at Newark, a certain Negro Fellow named Jack, about 25 years old, a square well-built Fellow, pretty black, Guiney born, and spoke bad English: He took with him several Sorts of Cloths, his Master’s Gun, and a Grenadier’s Sword, with Brass Mountings: He is supposed to have had on a good Beaver Hat cocked in the Fashion, a light coloured fine Cloth Jacket, without Sleeves, and may wear a Blanket Coat, he has a Scar right down his Forehead to his Nose, his country Mark, can handle a File, and understands the Brass Founder’s Business. Whoever takes up the said Fellow, and delivers him to Mrs. Wilkins, near Ogden’s Furnace, in Newark, shall have the above reward; or in New-York, to

JACOB WILKINS.


RAN AWAY,

From the subscribers last night,

A Negro named Joe, and a Negro Woman named Hester: the man is about five feet six or seven inches high, well set, full faced, of an open countenance, was formerly a servant to a British officer, speaks the German language well; had on and took with him a brown great coat badly dyed, white pewter buttons with the letters U.S.A. in a cypher, a great coat with red cuffs and cape and yellow buttons, white jacket and leather breeches, a pair of boots and a pair of shoes, two or three pair of stockings, and two or three shirts. The wench is small though well made, and has a lively eye, being bred in Carolina has the manners of the West India slaves; she had on a red striped linsey short gown and petticoat and took with her a dark brown cloak and sundry other clothes. Whoever takes up and secures the above Negroes shall receive Six Spanish milled dollars each, and reasonable charges.

ROBERT L. HOOPER,

ROBERT HOOPS

Trenton, Jan. 8, 1781

New Jersey Archives
**Unit 4**

**Blacks in the Revolutionary Era, 1776–1789**

**BACKGROUND**

African Americans had an appreciable presence in the Revolutionary War. In fact, the first person to die in the Boston Massacre, regarded as the first critical event in the American effort to separate from the British, was a black seaman: Crispus Attucks. Following this, blacks participated in other outbreaks of hostility between the colonists and the British before the Declaration of Independence. During June 1775, for example, they were among the Minutemen alerted by Paul Revere; they were at Lexington and Concord; and they were members of the Green Mountain Boys. Peter Salem, Salem Poor, and Prince Hall, who later founded the first black lodge of Freemasons, were among the blacks who fought at Bunker Hill in July of 1775.

Because the colonists often offset manpower shortages by using blacks to aid in their wars against native Americans, it is not surprising that blacks participated in pre-Revolutionary War skirmishes against the British. In fact, virtually all colonial militias had black participants, though they generally forbade the actual recruitment of blacks. South Carolina enlisted blacks in its militia as early as 1703, and blacks participated in the French-and-Indian War (1754–1763). Still, in July of 1775, at a council of war held by George Washington, an order was sent to recruiting officers not to enlist blacks, or vagabonds, or enemies of liberty to America. In November of 1775, however, **Lord Dunmore's Declaration** was issued; it promised freedom to any slave who left his American owner and joined the British forces. One consequence of this act by the royal governor of Virginia was the decision by several thousand blacks to cast their lot with the British. One of the most notable was a fugitive slave from Shrewsbury (Monmouth County), Titus Cornelius, later known as Colonel Tye. After participating in the Battle of Monmouth (1778), he led several successful raids on the farms of Americans in Monmouth County before being killed in 1780. A second result of Dunmore's declaration was the reversal of the American policy of excluding blacks from military service. As of December 31, 1775, free blacks could enlist, and one who did was Oliver Cromwell. Born free in Columbus (Burlington County) in 1752, he enlisted in a company attached to the Second New Jersey Regiment, an enlistment later reinforced with the passage in 1777 of the New Jersey Militia Act. Along with several blacks, including Prince Whipple, he crossed the Delaware with Washington on December 24, 1776, and he later saw action at Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, and Yorktown. His honorable discharge was signed by General George Washington on June 5, 1783. By the end of the war, he had become one of about five thousand blacks of the total of three hundred thousand who fought on the American side. Blacks were present at all the major battles in New Jersey, such as Trenton (1776), Princeton (1777), Fort Mercer (1777), Monmouth (1778), and Springfield (1780), as well as those elsewhere, such as Saratoga (1777), Savannah (1779), and Yorktown (1781). Most black soldiers were free and from the northern colonies, but some were slaves...
like Samuel Sutphen of Somerset County, a participant in battles in New York and New Jersey between 1776 and 1780. Some bondsmen were freed for their war service, often for substituting for their owners. And three New Jersey slaves, all the confiscated property of Loyalists, were even manumitted by acts of the state legislature after petitioning that body: Peter Williams of Woodbridge (1784); Prime of Somerset County (1787); and Cato of Woodbridge (1789). In fact, as early as 1774, blacks, revealing a degree of acculturation reflected in the works of such early black writers as Lucy Terry and Phillis Wheatley and a willingness to use the libertarian rhetoric of the patriots to further their own interests, had begun petitioning legislative bodies for their freedom.

The Revolutionary War had a paradoxical effect on blacks, affecting them in both a positive and negative manner. On the positive side, and in the short run, it helped weaken slavery through a reduction in the slave population by about one hundred thousand. Some used the war’s chaos and confusion to flee to Canada, Florida, and to groups of native Americans. Others (possibly twenty thousand), some of whom were from New Jersey, left when the British departed between 1782 and 1783 and settled in Nova Scotia, Great Britain, and later Sierra Leone. Still others were manumitted by their owners or state legislatures because of service with the American forces. And some were manumitted by their owners in keeping with the spirit of the American Revolution’s emphasis on freedom and liberty.

Further, the American Revolution helped build abolitionist sentiment. In the North and Upper South (Virginia and Maryland), abolitionist societies were organized by those who increasingly saw a contradiction between human bondage and the ideals of the American Revolution and/or their religious beliefs. The first of these societies, formed in Philadelphia in 1775 by Quakers, helped make Pennsylvania in 1780 the first state to abolish slavery and Philadelphia a haven for fugitive slaves. By 1790, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont had all become, through legislation or court decision, part of the First Emancipation.

The anti-slavery sentiment spawned by the War of Independence is seen further in the Northwest Ordinance passed by Congress in 1787. In establishing the government for the Northwest Territory (north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River), the ordinance forbade slavery in any part of the territory.

The influence of abolitionist Quakers extended beyond Philadelphia and encompassed the Delaware Valley. Because of this, the area became known as the Cradle of Emancipation, the region in which the first massive manumission or emancipation of American slaves occurred. South Jersey was a part of this “cradle,” and, as a result, in 1790 most of its black population was free. (South Jersey counties had 851 slaves and 1,466 free blacks, while North Jersey counties had 10,572 slaves and only 1,266 free blacks.)

Finally, it should be noted that the Revolution marked an important watershed in the extension of suffrage rights and that the movement toward greater popular involvement in government often included blacks. For example, the constitution adopted by New Jersey in 1776 gave the franchise to free blacks and women who met certain age, wealth, and residency requirements.

On the negative side, and in the long run, the successful waging of the war by the patriots led to the creation of a sovereign state—the United States of America—that embraced slavery. Indeed, the document that created this political entity, the U.S. Constitution, strengthened and legitimized slavery by allowing each slave to count as three-fifths of a person for purposes of taxation and representation (article 1, section 2, clause 3); allowing slaves to be imported for the next twenty years (article 1, section 9, clause 1); permitting the federal government to assist in apprehending fugitive slaves who crossed state lines (article 4, section 2, clause 3); and prohibiting before twenty years any amending of the clause permitting a twenty-year slave-trade period (article 5).

There was a frenzied effort on the part of some Americans, fearful that the slave trade would end in 1808, to import as many slaves as possible before that year. In fact, more slaves (approximately one hundred thousand) were brought into the United States between 1787 and 1808 than during any other twenty-year period of the American slave trade. Three states imported slaves during this period: Georgia (1787–1798); North Carolina (1790–1794); and South Carolina (1804–1808). The fact that about forty thousand of these slaves disembarked at Charleston helped it become the nation’s foremost slave-importation center.

The constitutional clause pertaining to fugitive slaves was also very important in that it served as the basis for the fugitive slave acts of 1793 and 1850. In ensuring that slaves would not become “free” by escaping to “free” northern states, these laws in effect created a federally supported, nation-wide system for apprehending runaway slaves.

In 1787, the year in which the U.S. Constitution was written, two very significant black organizations were formed. The first, established in Boston, was the first black secret fraternal order—African Lodge
Number 459 (its charter number). Prince Hall, a free black, organized this body and became its Master. The Free African Society, perhaps the earliest black benevolent organization, was the other. It was established in Philadelphia, and Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and Cyrus Bustill were among its more prominent organizers. Bustill (1732–1806) is of particular interest because he was a New Jersey native. The great-great-grandfather of Paul Robeson, he was born a slave in Burlington and manumitted in 1769 by his third owner, who taught him to be a baker. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Philadelphia, where he became a leader of the black community (he baked bread for Washington’s troops at Valley Forge in 1777). Aside from his work with the Free African Society, he established and taught in one of the early free schools for blacks in Philadelphia.

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CORE LESSON

Theme

Black people participated fully in the American Revolutionary War and in the political, economic, and social changes it wrought. In some ways this conflict benefited African Americans and in some ways it did not.

Materials and Preparation


Students should also read the sections provided from the United States Constitution (see page 69) and “Prime’s Petition” (see page 70).

The teacher should read chapter 5 in From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans (“That All May Be Free”) and Frances D. Pingeon’s Blacks in the Revolutionary Era. Pingeon’s book is suitable for student use as well. It is out of print and you will have to photocopy portions of it for students to read.

Time Period

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

ACTIVITY 1

Evaluate the reasons why blacks fought on the American or the British side during the Revolutionary War, and assess the appropriateness of the choices black people made.

a. Tell the students to imagine that they were black during the time of the American Revolution. Ask them to choose which side—British or American—they would have supported. This question may be best addressed by dividing the class into two sides to contest it. Since a war is often written from the point of view of the winners, which makes the losers “wrong,” ask the students to try to forget what they know about American history since the Revolution.
b. Ask the students whether it would have made a difference to them in their choice of which side to support if they were free black people, instead of slaves. Why?

**Evaluation:** Ask students to imagine a situation wherein Colonel Tye, Oliver Cromwell, and, if you like, one or two other people from the list of “Key Persons” in this unit, are thrown together during the Revolutionary War. Have the students write a short play wherein the characters argue about why black people ought to support the British or the Americans. As a third alternative, one of the characters may take the view that blacks should remain neutral.

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Compare** and **contrast** the positive and negative effects of the Revolutionary War on blacks.

- **a.** After having the class read the sections of the U.S. Constitution in this unit (see page 69), you should emphasize that the Revolution did not benefit everyone in America. To make this point you might discuss briefly the Revolution’s effects on Native Americans and women. For black people it had both good and bad effects. Divide the class into two groups. Ask one group to develop a list of positive effects and the other a list of negative effects. After the groups present their lists in class, ask them to decide, on balance, if the American Revolution was largely “good” or “bad” for black people.

- **b.** Ask students to explain two compromises found in the U.S. Constitution: ending the slave trade, but not immediately, and the three-fifths provision. Why were they necessary? What motives—social, economic, political—may have prompted them? Ask students to speculate about the political and economic consequences for the United States if slavery had been abolished in 1789. How might American history have been different, in general terms?

**Evaluation:** Ask students to imagine themselves to be a literate African American in 1789, on the eve of the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, writing a letter to President George Washington. In this letter, the writer should describe how the American Revolution benefited some blacks, but not those still enslaved. The writer should enclose with his letter his revisions of the parts of the Constitution pertaining to slavery.

**ACTIVITY 3**

**Analyze** a historical document as a primary source of information about the experiences of a New Jersey slave during and after the Revolutionary War.

- **a.** Have the class read “Prime’s Petition” (see page 70). Ask students to list the experiences Prime describes that they think would have been common to many slaves during the American Revolution. What relatively unique experience did he have?

- **b.** Ask the students if they believe Prime’s testimony. Why might some of his descriptions be untrue or exaggerated? Did he write the petition himself? Is it likely the writer (probably a white attorney) edited the petition to inject his point of view? Since Prime did not write his petition himself, how “primary” is it as a source for historians?

- **c.** Inform students that it was common for slave owners to give their slaves only one name: a forename. Some historians have theorized that this was done to suggest that slaves were only half persons. The fact that these names were often fanciful and pompous (for example, classical names like Caesar, Cato, and Jupiter) has also led historians to attribute a certain sarcasm to slave owners in naming their slaves. Have students discuss the name “Prime” in light of such perceptions by historians.

**Evaluation:** To be sure the students understand what a primary source is and why historians need to be cautious in evaluating one, ask students to revise “Prime’s Petition” in ways that would make a historian mistrust it (such as enlarging his role in the Revolutionary War).
Supplemental Activities

Visit the Old Barracks Museum in Trenton. Its living history performers portray several black New Jersey personalities of the Revolutionary War period (including Oliver Cromwell).

Key Persons

Richard Allen. A founder of the Free African Society in 1787, he founded the First African Methodist Church, sometimes called “Mother Bethel,” in Philadelphia in 1794. In 1816, in the same city, he founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which is the oldest black religious denomination.

Crispus Attucks. An escaped slave who worked as a seaman on a ship near Boston, he was the first person killed in the Boston Massacre and was thus the first person to die in the cause of the American Revolution.

Cyrus Bustill. A native of Burlington, and the great-great-grandfather of Paul Robeson, he baked bread for Washington’s troops at Valley Forge and later helped found the Free African Society.

Oliver Cromwell. A free black from Burlington County who served with distinction as a private in the Continental Army, he crossed the Delaware with Washington and saw action at all the major battles of the American Revolution.

Prince Hall. A free black who served in the Revolutionary War, he later founded the first black lodge of Freemasons.


Salem Poor. Born a free black in Massachusetts, Poor enlisted in a Massachusetts militia company and served with valor at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Prime. A slave owned by the Loyalist Absalom Bainbridge of Princeton, he escaped from his owner during the Revolutionary War, fought on the American side, and later successfully petitioned the New Jersey legislature for his freedom.

Peter Salem. Born a slave in Massachusetts, Salem was freed for participating in the French and Indian War, was one of the Minutemen who fought at Lexington and Concord, and is believed to have fired the shot that killed British Major John Pitcairn at the Battle of Bunker Hill, thus contributing to the moral victory the patriots claimed for this skirmish.

Lucy Terry. The first known black American to write a piece of literature, a short doggerel titled “Bars Fight” written in 1746 when she was sixteen years old.

Colonel Tye. Monmouth County-born slave who joined the British forces after Lord Dunmore’s Declaration and then led several successful raids against the patriots in Monmouth County.

Phillis Wheatley. One of the earliest black American writers, this native of Africa, after being granted
her freedom in Boston in 1772, published nearly fifty poems before her death at approximately age thirty in 1784.

**Prince Whipple.** A native of Africa who served in the Revolutionary War as a bodyguard to General Abraham Whipple of New Hampshire, he is depicted in two paintings of Washington’s crossing of the Delaware.

**Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading**

**FOR TEACHERS**


Davis, David Brion. 1975. *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution.* A Pulitzer Prize-winning study of the intellectual and social origins of the international antislavery movement in England, France, and the Americas. The emphasis is on the democratizing philosophy of the enlightenment and political theories of the era of revolution in both America and Europe, which led to the eventual abolition of slavery in the western hemisphere.

George, Carol V. R. 1973. *Segregated Sabbaths: Richard Allen and the Rise of Independent Churches, 1760–1840.* An analysis of the creation of an early black independent church, Mother Bethel in Philadelphia, and the first black religious denomination, the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Richard Allen’s role as founder and first bishop is explored along with the influences of the revolutionary era on him and the struggle to create an institution capable of meeting the needs of oppressed northern free blacks.


Mellon, Matthew. 1969. *Early American Views on Negro Slavery.* This slim volume contains a large amount of information about, and very interesting quotations from, the founding fathers on race and slavery. It is also suitable for class use.

Pingeon, Frances D. 1975. *Blacks in the Revolutionary Era.* A small, very readable and scholarly study of New Jersey blacks during the American Revolution. The volume contains useful information about the state’s black population which should be included in any unit on the American Revolution. It is also suitable for class use.

Zilversmit, Arthur. 1967. *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North.* This work surveys abolitionism and the process of emancipation on a state-by-state basis in the North following the American Revolution. A significant amount of attention is given New Jersey, as well as neighboring New York and Pennsylvania.
FOR STUDENTS

Collier, James Lincoln and Christopher Collier. 1980. *War Comes to Willy Freeman.* The first part of the Arabus Family Saga, a trilogy of novels. Willy Freeman is thirteen when the story begins, during the last two years of the Revolutionary War. Her father, a free man, has been killed fighting against the British, and her mother has disappeared. Willy makes her way to Fraunces Tavern in New York, her uncle Jack Arabus having told her that Sam Fraunces may be able to help her.

—. 1981. *Jump Ship To Freedom.* This book focuses on Daniel, a slave belonging to Captain Ives. Daniel and his mother plan to buy their freedom with the soldiers’ pay notes from the American Revolution earned by Daniel’s father, who dies on a sea voyage. Mr. Ives takes the notes away from Daniel’s mother, but Daniel manages to steal them back. Captain Ives then forces Daniel onto a ship bound for the West Indies, where he will be expected to work in the cane fields.

—. 1984. *Who is Carrie.* The final part of the Arabus Family Saga, this story is created around a kitchen slave named Carrie. A curious young person, Carrie is always getting into mischief, partly because of her inquisitiveness about her unknown personal history. She works in Sam Fraunces’s famous tavern, which enables her to become part of the history of the post-Revolutionary War era. Eventually Carrie pieces together a plausible account of her background.

Crow, Jeffery J. 1983. *The Black Experience in Revolutionary North Carolina.* Readers will find that African Americans in North Carolina during the American Revolution were active, not passive, beings who, in the face of adversity, struggled to maintain their dignity and African heritage.

Davis, Bruce. 1976. *Black Heroes of the American Revolution.* While history books have long extolled the white heroes of America’s Revolutionary War, they have generally neglected to mention the black men and women who contributed enormously to the winning of this country’s independence. This book is a tribute to the nameless and countless black soldiers who fought gallantly in the hope of winning their own independence.


Quarles, Benjamin. 1961. *The Negro in the American Revolution.* This work remains the best general study of the military role of blacks in the American Revolution. It thoroughly examines the policies of Britain and America on the recruitment of blacks.
MATERIALS
Articles of the United States Constitution Pertaining to Slavery

Article I, Section 2, Clause 3
Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other persons.

Article I, Section 9, Clause 1
The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight; but a tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.

Article IV, Section 2, Clause 3
No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

Article V
The Congress whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate.
Petition of Prime for Manumission (1786)

To the Honourable The Legislative Council, and the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey—

The humble and earnest Petition of Negro Prime Sheweth

That your Petitioner heretofore belonged to Absalom Bainbridge, sometime of the County of Hunterdón, but at the Commencement of the late War, an inhabitant of the County of Somerset—

That the said Absalom Bainbridge adhered to the Enemies of this State and of the United States, in the Month of December 1776— in Consequence of which Defection his Estate became forfeited—

That your Petitioner remained for some Time at Princeton, and was sometimes in the Family of Mr John Taylor, of Monmouth, Father to the Wife of the said Absalom Bainbridge, whence he was taken over to Long Island where the Family of the said Absalom Bainbridge sided within the Enemies Lines, but from which Place your Petitioner escaped and returned to the Neighborhood of his former residence in the year 1778.

That your Petitioner having, with other parts of the Estate of the said Absalom Bainbridge, come into the Possession of Jacob Bergen, Esq one of the Commissioners of Forfeiture for the County of Somerset, he humanely declined setting up your Petitioner to Sale like a Beast of the Stall, and applied to His Excellency the Governour and the Honourable The Legislature, then sitting at Princeton, who seemed to be of [the] opinion that though no Law provided for Cases of this Kind, there was something very inconsistent in contending for Liberty under an appeal to Heaven and at the same Time selling for account of the Publick, the Bodies and Service of human Beings into perpetual Bondage— In the result Mr Bergen told your Petitioner he might go into the publick Service, which he did, and served as a waggoner in the American Army for a long Time during the late Troubles—

That in the Month of June 1784, your Petitioner being then in the Neighbourhood of Trenton, earning his Bread as a Day-Labourer, under the pleasing Persuasion that he was a free Subject of the State, he was seized and forcibly carried off by Mr John Vanhorne, then of Rocky-hill in the County of Somerset, under Pretext of a Purchase from the aforesaid John Taylor, who allegedged that he purchased your Petitioner from the wife of the said Absalom Bainbridge in the year 1777 by virtue of a license from General Putnam— Your Petitioner having obtained a Habeas Corpus his Case was argued before the Supreme Court when the Justices were of opinion that the Law would not authorize Manumission of your Petitioner. But Moore Furman, Esq., agent of Forfeiture for the County of Hunterdon, having in the mean Time applied to the Court by memorial, claiming your Petitioner as the Property of the
State, the Court ordered that your Petitioner should remain in Custody of the Law, until an issue could be tried between the State and the said John Vanhorne—

That in the Term of May 1786 the said Issue came on to be tried when, after a full and fair Hearing, a verdict and Judgment passed in Favour of the State, and your Petitioner by order of Court, was delivered into the Hands of Mr Furman—

Thus is your poor Petitioner the Slave of the State of New Jersey and liable to be sold as their Property— but he earnestly implores that he may be delivered from a Situation so distressing, and by the Compassion and Munificence of The Honourable The Legislature, entitled to that Liberty to defend, secure and perpetuate which the Fields of America have been dyed in the Blood of her Citizens—

Were your poor Petitioner to be sold, his Price would scarcely amount to the fifth Part of a Copper-penny to each Taxable in the State— and your poor Petitioner cannot believe that one Person can be found who would not willingly contribute the fifty Part of a Penny to release a human Being from a Bondage which must otherwise continue until his Eyes are closed in Death—

That your poor Petitioner is the more encouraged to hope for Success in this his humble application from observing the Goodness of the Legislature in a like Instance, manifested by their Act of 1 September 1784 in the Case of Negro Peter—

Your Petitioner, therefore, most humbly prays that The Honourable The Legislature, being ascertained of the Truth of the Facts set forth in his Petition, will grant him leave to present a Bill for his Emancipation.

And your humble Petitioner as in duty bound, etc.

Trenton 6 November 1786

his
Negro ——— Prime
mark

New Jersey Archives
Unit 5

Slavery and Abolition in Post-Revolutionary and Antebellum America, 1790–1860

BACKGROUND

Between 1790 and 1860, American slavery expanded on a grand scale: federal census records show the 1790 slave population of seven hundred thousand increased to nearly four million in 1860. This growth was linked to the phenomenal increase in cotton cultivation in the South. The invention in 1793 of the cotton gin was one factor in the emergence of the Cotton Kingdom. The gin separated (cleaned) the cotton seed from the fiber, making the “short” staple variety of cotton, which would grow anywhere but was harder to clean, more commercially profitable than the “long” staple variety, which was easy to clean but would only grow in the low-lying areas of Georgia and South Carolina. The Industrial Revolution, which began in England in the 1770s, was a second factor. Since the first commodity produced was cotton cloth, a great demand for cotton first for the mills of England and later for the mills in the northern states (particularly Rhode Island and Massachusetts) was created.

Accompanying slavery’s rapid growth was its expansion westward into the fertile virgin lands of the New and Lower South and its continued decline in the North. New Jersey, in fact, with its passage of the Abolition Act in 1804, became the last northern state to abolish slavery. Under the provisions of this gradual abolition law, all children born of slaves after July 4, 1804, were to be freed after serving as apprentices to their mother’s masters—females after twenty-one years and males after twenty-five. This law was superseded by New Jersey’s Abolition Act of 1846, which declared, “That slavery in this state be and it is hereby abolished, and every person who is now holden in slavery by the laws thereof, be and hereby is made free” and that “the children hereafter to be born to all such persons shall be absolutely free from their birth, and discharged of and from all manner of service whatsoever.” Although this act appeared to emancipate all the state’s slaves, this was not the case, for it also provided that every slave “shall, by force and virtue of this act . . . become an apprentice, bound to service to his or her present owner, and his or her executors or administrators; which service shall continue until such person is discharged therefrom, as is hereinafter directed.” Under the law’s provisions, therefore, all slaves were relegated to the status of “apprentices” for life, actually a modified form of slavery; this made New Jersey the last northern state to have slaves (the 1860 U.S. Census lists eighteen for New Jersey). The apprenticeship system ensured that slave owners would continue to support their slaves and that slaves would not become wards of the state (in 1846 there were nearly seven hundred New Jersey slaves, most over fifty-five years of age). It also afforded slaves greater legal protection. They could sue for their freedom if abused; they could not be sold without their written consent; they could not be sold out of the state.

Shortly after the enactment of New Jersey’s initial abolition law, the American slave trade closed. However, the 1808 slave-trade ban did not completely end slave imports to the United States and it is esti-
mated that between 1808 and 1861 roughly fifty-four thousand slaves were smuggled into the nation. For the additional slaves needed for the expanded production of cotton, slave owners, in the face of the ban, continued their emphasis on natural reproduction. This emphasis, unique among New World slave societies, gave rise to the practice of systematic slave breeding.

The end of the trans-Atlantic slave trade also gave rise to a domestic (interstate) slave trade that resulted in the forced migration or relocation of roughly one million slaves by 1860. As part of this trade, slaves from the Old South, especially Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina, were exported to the states of the New South: Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Kentucky. Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Charleston were the principal trading centers of the slave-exporting states, while Montgomery, Memphis, and New Orleans were the key centers where these slaves were received for distribution.

That slavery lingered so long in New Jersey facilitated the state’s participation in the nation’s domestic slave trade. A state law passed in 1812 increased penalties for exporting slaves to the booming slave markets of the South. Still, it allowed the export of slaves who had consented to their removal, a provision that opened the way for widespread fraud. Thus, while another law was passed in 1818 that absolutely prohibited the export of slaves and provided for increased penalties, in the 1820s there were reports of New Jersey slaves (selling for three hundred dollars in the state) being sold in New Orleans for seven hundred to eight hundred dollars.

The rapid growth of slavery in the New South that resulted from the spread of cotton cultivation was accompanied by the rise of its own plantocracy or planter aristocracy. This elite group complemented that of the Old South, leading to unity among the South’s ruling class against any threat to slavery. In 1860 this combined elite constituted only 12 percent of the total 385,000 slave owners, who themselves were a decided minority of the 1.5 million white southern families. Owners in this elite, each possessing twenty slaves or more (ten thousand owned more than fifty slaves and three thousand owned more than one hundred), owned the majority of slaves and symbolized a lifestyle to which most white southerners aspired. The size of this elite’s slaveholdings meant that the typical slave owner had fewer than twenty slaves and the typical slave lived among more than twenty bondsmen.

The tremendous growth in the antebellum slave population was accompanied by the development among slaves of a sense of community. Through this they provided mutual moral and physical support and developed an ethos and value system that were expressed through their songs, folktales, religion, and extended family network. For example, an ethical rule that pervaded the distinctive culture forged by slaves enjoined stealing from one another.

As a general rule, slave labor was both intensive and extensive. Still, the conditions under which slaves worked and lived were determined by many variables, including the time period (colonial or antebellum), size of the farm or plantation, location (rural or urban area), and the slave owner’s personality. Another factor was the kind of staple crop produced. For example, the cultivation of cotton was comparatively mild (children were used to chop cotton), that of rice perhaps more difficult (the task system which required a slave to complete a certain amount of work each day was used, but slaves developed arthritis from standing in water), and that of sugar extremely arduous (it mainly involved men’s labor).

Although the institution of slavery rested on the principle that slaves were property, its practitioners inevitably had to accommodate the basic humanity of the bondsmen. This allowed room for slaves to maneuver between the extremes of total mastery and total surrender, so that a subtle interplay occurred between coercion and conciliation on the part of the slave owner and deference and defiance on the part of the slave. Thus, although servitude was an ordeal, severe and inhumane, a slave culture and slave community with an interior life did develop and endure and prevented slaves from being entirely helpless. Indeed, a slave personality emerged that, far from being completely shattered or permanently scarred by the extraordinary stresses and strains of bondage, remained steadfast and unwavering in a deep-seated quest and yearning for freedom.

Slave resistance continued during the antebellum period; its expression ranged from work slowdowns, feigned illnesses, and flight, to insurrections. The most notable insurrections of the period were Gabriel Prosser’s in Richmond in 1800, Denmark Vesey’s in Charleston in 1822, and the largest, Nat Turner’s, in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1831, in which about sixty whites were killed. John Brown’s 1859 raid on the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia, in which five of the nineteen participants were free blacks, was not a slave insurrection. It heightened fears of slave rebellions, however, and Brown became a martyr to the abolitionist cause; southerners blamed the abolitionists for his rebellion. Its intent had been to incite a slave uprising that would spread throughout the South.
Opposition to slavery, especially after 1830, was also manifested in the growth and increased militancy of abolitionist societies in the North. Prominent white abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison, founder of the antislavery newspaper The Liberator in 1831 and of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, joined black abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, William Wells Brown, Henry Highland Garnet, and David Walker in taking a forceful stand against slavery. Walker’s “Appeal,” which some white southerners believed gave impetus to Nat Turner’s insurrection, was an 1829 essay that suggested that if the American colonists were justified in their revolt, then slaves were justified in using force to break the chains of their bondage. The 1852 novel Uncle Tom’s Cabin, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, also helped generate opposition to slavery.

Among the activities that bound many abolitionists was the Underground Railroad (UGRR), a secret network that helped slaves escape from the South and whose greatest figures were the conductor Harriet Tubman and the stationmaster William Still, a New Jersey native. It is estimated that forty thousand fugitive slaves came North via this network between the early 1830s and the start of the Civil War; many settled in Canada, where slavery had been abolished in 1833. Because of its geographical location between Pennsylvania and New York, New Jersey was an integral part of the UGRR’s eastern corridor, with stations in such communities as Salem, Woodbury, Camden, Mount Laurel, Burlington, Bordentown, Trenton, Princeton, New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, Newark, and Jersey City. Because New Jersey became a “free state” with its passage of the Abolition Act of 1804, some UGRR participants decided to settle in the state. In the process they helped create all-black communities (for example, Saddletown in Haddon, Camden County) and expand others (for example, Lawnside, Camden County, and Timbuctoo, Burlington County) that served as havens for fugitive slaves.

The notion that a better life for blacks could be secured through migration, so evident with the Underground Railroad, was also central to the work of those active in the colonization movement. Convinced that an egalitarian multicultural society in America was impossible, they sought to repatriate free blacks to Africa. The movement’s key organization was the American Colonization Society (ACS), which was formed in 1816 by prominent white Americans, one of whom, Robert Finley, was a Presbyterian minister from Basking Ridge. Finley was also the principal organizer in 1817 of the New Jersey Colonization Society, ACS’s New Jersey auxiliary. Some blacks were also attracted to the possibilities of colonization as the solution to the poverty and discrimination that free blacks faced in America, as well as a means of achieving the goal of Christianizing and uplifting members of their race in Africa. In fact, as early as 1815, Paul Cuffe, a wealthy black Quaker shipowner from Massachusetts, transported thirty-eight blacks to Sierra Leone, West Africa. And between 1816 and the Civil War, twelve thousand free blacks, including some from New Jersey, were settled in Liberia. Still, although black interest in emigration increased in the years immediately preceding the Civil War, by and large the efforts of ACS were opposed by the black antebellum leadership. Many saw ACS’s work as a slaveholders’ plot to get rid of free blacks, thereby robbing bondsmen of an important group that spoke on their behalf.

While the slave population had grown considerably by 1860, so too had the free black population, increasing from roughly 59,000 in 1790 to 488,070, of whom 250,787 were in the South and 237,283 in the North. Of the two groups, the free black northerners played a larger role in shaping black institutional life during this period. For example, in 1827, Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm founded in New York City Freedom’s Journal, the first black newspaper. Earlier, in 1816, Richard Allen had established in Philadelphia the first black religious denomination—the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, many of whose early churches were organized in New Jersey, especially Salem’s Mount Pisgah AME Church, one of the five congregations present at the 1816 AME founding conference.

The Colored Convention Movement is still another example of black antebellum organizational zeal. Organized in 1830 in Philadelphia with Richard Allen as its first chairman, it consisted of black leaders—the black intelligentsia—mainly from northern cities meeting periodically (1830; 1831; 1832; 1833; 1834; 1835; 1843; 1847; 1848; 1853; and 1864) to debate and formulate strategies and goals designed to better the condition of the race. New Jersey was represented in all of the conventions except for those held in 1830, 1831, 1843, 1848, and 1853. And when as an outgrowth of this movement blacks in individual states began to convene their own assemblies or state conventions, black New Jerseyans followed suit. In 1849 they held a convention in Trenton to plan a campaign for securing the franchise that, given to them and women in the state’s 1776 constitution, was lost through legislation passed in 1807. Their plea for the franchise was perhaps presented in its most eloquent form in an 1850 address to the citizens of New Jersey made by the Salem native John S. Rock, doctor, dentist, and, in 1865, the first black accred-
ized to practice before the U. S. Supreme Court.

Notwithstanding the work of the Colored Convention Movement, the conditions of free northern blacks worsened during the antebellum period. In many instances they experienced economic discrimination, often being displaced from their jobs by white immigrants who were arriving in increased numbers. Job competition was especially keen between the blacks and the Irish, since both groups were engaged mainly in unskilled work, in contrast to German workers, who were found in a number of skilled crafts. Northern blacks also suffered discrimination in suffrage rights, education, and public accommodations and were often, in urban areas, the targets of white mob violence. Philadelphia between 1830 and 1850 was particularly infamous for antiblack riotous behavior.

Coinciding with the increasingly hostile climate in the North for blacks were several political victories for the proslavery South in the 1850s. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which gave federal support to the capturing of fugitive slaves who had escaped to the North, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which repealed the Missouri Compromise and introduced the doctrine of popular sovereignty, were important, but the Dred Scott Case was the South's greatest triumph. In deciding that Dred Scott, a slave, had not become free by virtue of being carried into a free state by his owner, the Supreme Court held that blacks were not citizens of the United States and that Congress had no authority to prohibit slavery in any part of the nation.

In the face of such adversity, the political differences among black northerners became more pronounced. Some leaders advocated staying in America and struggling for equal rights and an end to slavery; others, like Martin R. Delany, disillusioned with the promises of equality, favored emigration to places like Canada, the Caribbean, and Africa. It should be noted that Frederick Douglass, a staunch antimigrationist in the Colored Convention Movement, even considered settling in Haiti during the late 1850s. The Civil War, however, with its implications for the destruction of slavery, which many blacks saw immediately, greatly lessened interest in emigration.

CORE LESSON

Theme

The antebellum period was a difficult one for black people. Slavery grew numerically and geographically in the South, and northern blacks, although emancipated and the builders of a varied institutional life, suffered from a rising tide of racial prejudice and discrimination.

Materials and Preparation

Students should read the excerpt from Solomon Northrup’s *Twelve Years A Slave* (see page 85), study the national map (see page 83) and New Jersey map (see page 84) of routes of the Underground Railroad (Map #5 and Map #6, respectively), and read John S. Rock’s “Address to the Citizens of New Jersey” (see page 86).


**Time Period**

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

**Objectives/Activities**

**ACTIVITY 1**

**Recognize** that slaves were able to forge a community with a distinctive ethos and culture.

Ask students why it was important that slaves were able to develop a sense of community among themselves. Have students identify some of the distinctive features of the slave community as they pertain to family life, religion, foodways, folklore, and music.

**Evaluation:** One feature of the slave community was the “extended family.” Have students write a 500-word essay describing the extended family and indicating how in several ways it was of value to the slave community.

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Identify** the main variables that determined the nature of the slave experience.

Indicate to students that one factor defining the slave experience was the particular crop cultivated. Have students discuss whether, if they were slaves, they would have preferred cultivating cotton, sugar, or rice.

**Evaluation:** Indicate to students that another factor was whether the slave was a house servant or field hand. Have students read Solomon Northrup’s *Twelve Years a Slave* (see page 85). Have them then write a short play in which the two main characters, one a house slave and the other a field hand, discuss why they would not want to exchange places.

**ACTIVITY 3**

**Explain** the Underground Railroad and New Jersey’s place in this network.

Have students examine Map #5 (see page 83) and Map #6 (see page 84). Have them assume they were a fugitive slave from Georgia, and then ask them to locate on Map #5 that part of Canada’s Ontario Province near Detroit where some fugitive slaves established several all-black communities.

**Evaluation:** Have students assume the identity of an Underground Railroad stationmaster in Burlington County. Have this person write a letter to a stationmaster in Middlesex County explaining the help he gave recently to a fugitive slave from Virginia.

**ACTIVITY 4**

**Describe** the problems free antebellum blacks faced in the North and the kinds of institutions and organizations they established in building a community life.
As a way of having students understand the difficulties northern antebellum blacks endured, have them read John S. Rock's 1850 plea for black suffrage in New Jersey (see page 86). Ask them to imagine they were Rock and have them write their own petition, indicating which of his arguments for the franchise they would emphasize most.

**Evaluation:** Have students write a short story in which John S. Rock attempts to persuade a New Jersey assemblyman who has voted to withhold suffrage from the state’s blacks to change his vote.

**Supplemental Activities**

1. Have students visit a selection of historic sites in New Jersey that pertain to the state’s earliest black churches. These include:
   - Mt. Pisgah AME Church, Salem (1800)
   - Mt. Pisgah AME Church, Lawnside (circa 1810)
   - Jacob’s Chapel AME Church, Mt. Laurel (circa 1813)
   - Mt. Zion AME Church, Trenton (1817)
   - Mt. Pisgah AME Church, Princeton (1818)
   - Mt. Zion AME Church, New Brunswick (1827)
   - Bethlehem AME Church, Burlington (1830)
   - Macedonia AME Church, Camden (1832)
   - Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church, Princeton (1840)
   - Wesley AME Zion Church, Burlington (1844)

2. Have students visit a selection of historic sites in New Jersey associated with the Underground Railroad. These include:
   - Goodwin Sisters’ House, Salem
   - Peter Mott House, Lawnside
   - Enoch Middleton House, Crosswicks Village, Chesterfield
   - Wheatley Pharmacy, Burlington
   - Croft Farm (Edgewater House), Cherry Hill
   - Timbuctoo, Westampton

3. Show students the film *A Woman Called Moses,* an NBC-TV production that explores the life of Harriet Tubman, the famed conductor of the Underground Railroad (196 minutes). It can be purchased from Michael Jaffe, Ltd., 7920 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90046 (213-464-4100).

**Key Persons**

**Benjamin Banneker.** Self-taught mathematician and astronomer, he assisted in the survey of the
District of Columbia in 1791 and wrote and published a widely distributed annual almanac between 1792 and 1797.

**John Brown.** Led the 1859 raid on the federal arsenal in Harper’s Ferry, Virginia.

**William Wells Brown.** Leading abolitionist, he was the author of a slave narrative and one of the earliest books on African American history.

**Samuel E. Cornish.** A cofounder of *Freedom’s Journal*, outstanding abolitionist, and pastor of the Plane Street Presbyterian Church in Newark in the early 1840s.

**Paul Cuffe.** Wealthy black Quaker shipowner from Massachusetts. As an early emigrationist, he transported thirty-eight blacks to Sierra Leone in 1815.

**Martin R. Delany.** A physician and leader in the Colored Convention Movement, he was a strong advocate of emigration, making a trip to Nigeria in 1856.

**Frederick Douglass.** Runaway slave who became a prominent abolitionist and black spokesperson.

**Robert Finley.** Presbyterian minister who organized the New Jersey Colonization Society.

**Henry Highland Garnet.** Clergyman, editor, and diplomat, he is perhaps best remembered as a prominent abolitionist.

**William Lloyd Garrison.** A leading white abolitionist, he founded the antislavery newspaper *The Liberator*.

**Jarena Lee.** Native of Cape May and probably the first woman preacher in the AME Church, she was also one of the few black women writers of the antebellum period, publishing her autobiography in 1836.

**Gabriel Prosser.** Led the slave rebellion in Richmond, Virginia, in 1800.

**John S. Rock.** A doctor, dentist, and lawyer who was a native of Salem, he was a leading abolitionist and was the first black permitted to practice before the U. S. Supreme Court.

**John Russwurm.** One of the earliest black graduates of an American college (Bowdoin, 1826) and a cofounder of *Freedom’s Journal*, he later emigrated to Liberia, where he became one of the country’s leading government officials.

**William Still.** A native of Shamong (Indian Mills) in Burlington County, he was a major figure in the Underground Railroad in Philadelphia and later wrote of his experiences in assisting fugitive slaves in the classic *The Underground Railroad*, published in 1872.

**Harriet Beecher Stowe.** Author of the famous antislavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

**Sojourner Truth.** Leading African American female abolitionist.

**Harriet Tubman.** The most famous person identified with the Underground Railroad, she returned
to the South as a conductor over nineteen times to lead runaway slaves to freedom.

**Nat Turner.** Led 1831 slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia, in which about sixty whites were killed.

**Denmark Vesey.** Led 1822 slave rebellion in Charleston, South Carolina.

**David Walker.** Wrote militant “Appeal” in 1829, suggesting that slaves were justified in using force to attain freedom.

**Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading**

**FOR TEACHERS**

Berlin, Ira. 1975. *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South.* This is the most comprehensive study of free blacks in the South. It demonstrates the complexity of race relations and the precarious status of blacks neither in bondage nor really free.


Gutman, Herbert. 1976. *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom.* Gutman’s work is considered by many historians to be the best history of the black family written. While it is far too extensive for use by students, it contains a wealth of information to transmit to students.

Levine, Lawrence W. 1977. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom.* An analysis of the complexity of black culture based upon the folk tales and folk songs of African Americans. There are many examples of these sources for the teacher to draw upon in lectures and discussions; the book is too detailed for most high school classes.


Stampp, Kenneth M. 1956. *The Peculiar Institution.* Stampp’s work is a classic in the historical literature of slavery. It sparked numerous revisionist works on the subject of slavery, dispelling the myth of the happy slave and the benign character of the institution.

**FOR STUDENTS**


Bontemps, Arna, ed. 1969. *Great Slave Narratives*. Bontemps, the well-known novelist and poet, selected three interesting and compelling slave narratives for this volume. It is excellent for student use.


Brown, William Wells. 1853. *Clotel; Or, The President’s Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States*. One of the earliest novels written by an African American, this attack on slavery takes the form of the claim that Thomas Jefferson fathered several slave children, including a beautiful young girl sold at an auction. Historical in scope in tracing the lives of three generations of black women, it emphasizes the disruption of family life that occurred under slavery.


Douglass, Frederick. 1845. *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*. This is the first of three autobiographies by the most famous black leader, abolitionist, and orator of the antebellum era. This volume covers the slavery part of his life and his escape to freedom. Students should find this book very interesting and enjoyable.

Douty, Esther M. 1968. *Forten the Sailmaker, Pioneer Champion of Negro Rights*. James Forten of Philadelphia, businessman, abolitionist, champion of black rights, and a staunch opponent of the repatriation of American blacks to Africa, is the subject of this fine biography.


——. 1988. *Anthony Burns: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave*. This is a biography of an escaped slave from Virginia who was captured in Boston in 1854, arrested, tried, and subsequently returned to slavery. The narrative begins at the time of Burns’s arrest and uses a skillful flashback technique to reveal his early life. Burns, who died at the age of twenty-eight, overcame two periods of bondage, taught himself to read and write, and finally realized his lifelong dream of becoming a minister.

Hansen, Joyce. 1988. *Out From This Place*. This companion to *Which Way Freedom* follows Easter, Obi’s companion, in escape. She joins a group of slaves that escapes to the islands off the South Carolina coast. Here the group works on a plantation for pay and is given the opportunity to buy land. The story reveals Easter’s hunger for education and her determination to control her own life.

Huggins, Nathan Irvin. 1990. *The Life of Frederick Douglass: Slave and Citizen*. Within the context of Douglass’s life as a fugitive slave, abolitionist, journalist, and diplomat, this biography explores the black quest for freedom in the nineteenth century from the antebellum period through Reconstruction.
Johnson, Charles. 1990. *Middle Passage*. This National Book Award-winning story of tragedy, magic, and the slave trade takes place in 1830. In it, a freed slave, Rutherford Calhoun, flees New Orleans because of a huge debt and an ill-starred romance. His unfortunate means of escape is a slave ship bound for Africa to pick up cargo.


Lester, Julius. 1982. *This Strange New Feeling*. Three short stories that reveal the ingenuity of American slaves. The stories describe the feelings of slaves, the humiliation of the auction block, the cruelties of corporal punishment, and the unflagging zeal of slaves to be free.


Meltzer, Milton. 1990. *The Underground Man*. This story, set in 1835, is about Joshua Bowen, a logger on the Ohio River, who helps Sam, a runaway slave, escape to freedom. Based on a true story, the novel concludes with an extensive author’s note describing his research.

Rose, Willie Lee, ed. 1976. *A Documentary History of Slavery in North America*. This collection of primary sources contains a variety of short documents suitable for distribution to high school juniors and seniors for the purpose of stimulating discussion and analysis.


Stowe, Harriet Beecher. 1852. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. A best-selling novel that helped mobilize opposition to slavery. The character of Uncle Tom was based in part on Josiah Henson, an escaped slave whose narrative Mrs. Stowe had read.

Williams, Shirley Anne. 1986. *Dessa Rose*. This novel is set in the South before the Civil War. It tells the story of two women: Dessa Rose, a fugitive slave who attacked the master who killed her husband, and Ruth Elizabeth, who harbors runaways on her isolated farm. The heart of the story is the growth of a relationship between the two women, a relationship that allows them both to escape the roles and concepts of race and gender that antebellum society forced on them.
MATERIALS
Map 5
Underground Railroad Routes

The general directions of the principal routes of the Underground Railroad.
Map 6
Underground Railroad Routes in New Jersey, 1860
SOLOMON NORTHRUP

Twelve Years A Slave (n.d.)

When a new hand, one unaccustomed to the business, is sent for the first time into the field, he is whipped up smartly and made for that day to pick as fast as he can possibly. At night it is weighed, so that his capability in cotton picking is known. He must bring in the same weight each night following. If it falls short, it is considered evidence that he has been laggard, a greater or less number of lashes is the penalty.

An ordinary day’s work is two hundred pounds. A slave who is accustomed to picking, is punished, if he or she brings in a less quantity than that. There is a great difference among them as regards this kind of labor. Some of them seem to have a natural knack, or quickness, which enables them to pick with great celerity, and with both hands, while others, with whatever practice or industry, are utterly unable to come up to the ordinary standard. Such hands are taken from the cotton field and employed in other business . . .

The hands are required to be in the cotton field as soon as it is light in the morning, and, with the exception of ten or fifteen minutes, which is given them at noon to swallow their allowance of cold bacon, they are not permitted to be a moment idle until it is too dark to see, and when the moon is full, they often times labor till the middle of the night. They do not dare to stop even at dinner time, nor return to the quarters, however late it be, until the order to halt is given by the driver.

The day’s work over in the field, the baskets are “toted,” or in other words, carried to the gin-house, where the cotton is weighed. . . . This done, the labor of the day is not yet ended, by any means. Each one must then attend to his respective chores. One feeds the mules, another the swine—another cuts the wood, and so forth; besides, the packing is all done by candlelight. Finally, at a late hour, they reach the quarters, sleepy and overcome with the long day’s toil. Then a fire must be kindled in the cabin, the corn ground in the small hand-mill, and supper, and dinner for the next day in the field, prepared. All that is allowed them is corn and bacon, which is given out at the corncrib and smoke-house every Sunday morning. Each one receives, as his weekly allowance, three and half pounds of bacon, and corn enough to make a peck of meal. That is all—no tea, coffee, sugar, and, with the exception of a very scanty sprinkling now and then, no salt.

From TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE by Solomon Northrup. Copyright (c) 1968 by Louisiana State University Press. Used by permission of the publisher.
JOHN S. ROCK

Address to the Citizens of New Jersey (1850)

Citizens, in addressing you in favor of a disfranchised portion of the legal tax-payers of New Jersey, I feel, from the success our enterprise has already been crowned with, that intelligence, humanity and justice, may be styled characteristics of the citizens of this State.

Knowing, then, that I am speaking to an intelligent and human people, who believe that noble sentiment set forth in the Declaration of Independence, that “all men are created free and equal,” etc. I take the liberty of speaking freely to you, being one of the disfranchised, and I do not believe your hearts are so callous as not to listen to the voice of the oppressed.

Although the above Declaration declares that “all men are created free and equal,” those noble words, in their common acceptation, do not and cannot apply to the disfranchised people I am now speaking of; because, indirectly, you deny the disfranchised are men. You say that all men are created free and equal and at the same time, you deny that equality, which is nothing more nor less than denying our manhood. If we are not free and equal, (according to the Declaration of Independence), we are not men, because “all men are created free and equal.”

We confess there is something about this we never could understand. We are denied our rights as men, at the same time are taxed in common with yourselves, and obliged to support the government in her denunciations. If we are not men, why are we dealt with as such when we do not pay our taxes, or when we infringe the laws? Whenever we become delinquent in the one, or a transgressor in the other, there is then no question about our manhood; we are treated as men, to all intents and purposes. If we are men, when our taxes are due, and men when we transgress the laws, we are men when our taxes are not due, and when we do not transgress the laws.

There are many reasons why colored men should be enfranchised. We have been reared in this State, and are acquainted with her institutions. Our fidelity to this country has never been questioned. We have done nothing to cause our disfranchisement; on the contrary, we have done all a people could do to entitle them to be enfranchised.

It is said, “there is not sufficient intelligence amongst us to warrant the restoration of those rights,” and that we are not sufficiently acquainted with the government, etc.; but they do not say we do not have sufficient intelligence and knowledge of the government, to warrant us to pay our taxes, because we cannot thoroughly understand how the money goes!

If we, who have always been with you, do not understand something of the regulations of this country, how miserably ignorant are the thousands of voters who arrive in this country annually, who know nothing of this government, and but little of any government! There is no just plea, and apology for you to shut every avenue to elevation, and then complain of
degradation; what else can be expected, while we are looked upon as *things*, and treated worse than unthinking animals?

In the Revolution, Colored soldiers fought side by side with you in your struggles for liberty; and there is not a battle-field from Maine to Georgia, which has not been crimsoned by our blood, and whitened by our bones. In 1814, a bill passed the Legislature of New York, accepting the services of 2,000 colored volunteers. In the battle on Lake Erie, Commodore Perry's fleet was manned chiefly by colored seamen. Many black sailors served under Commodore McDonough when he conquered Lake Champlain. Many were in the battles of Plattsburgh and Sackett's Harbor. Gen. Jackson called out colored troops from Louisiana and Alabama, and in solemn proclamation attested to their fidelity and courage.

But some of our enemies say we "had better go to Africa." We ask, Why? They say, we "cannot rise in this country, the prejudices are too strong to overcome"; that we had better be "kings among beggars, than beggars among kings." As neither of the positions is enviable, we will not quarrel about the beggarly or kingly conditions. We think these titular philanthropists who try to make the people believe we can never rise in this country, and that money must be raised, by appropriation or otherwise, to expatriate us, would do well to hold their peace—give their extra change to the poor, emigrate to the country of their forefathers as quickly as possible, and take their incendiary reports along with them. . . .

Africa is urged upon us as the country of our forefathers! If this is good sophistry—and we think it will pass—then it follows that all men must go to the country of their forefathers: in this case, the blacks will go to Africa, and the whites to Europe; and where will the mixed races go? We suppose, in such an event, they would occupy the inter-medium—that is, the Mediterranean Sea! What would become of the Indians? Would they go to the country of their forefathers? If so, where is it?

This sophistry is not designed to aggrandize any but the descendants of the European nations: Africa is the country for the Africans, their descendants and mongrels of various colors; Asia the country of the Asiatics; the East Indies the place for Malays; Patagonia the country for the Indian; and *any place the white man chooses to go*. HIS country! . . .

*North Star* (Rochester, New York), 8 February, 1850
Unit 6
African Americans and the Civil War, 1861–1865

BACKGROUND

Spurred by Lincoln’s election to the presidency in 1860 and South Carolina’s continued articulation of its 1832 doctrine of nullification, eight states seceded from the Union between December 1860 and April 1861 and established a provisional government. In March 1861 in his First Inaugural Address, Lincoln indicated that although he had no intention of interfering with slavery where it existed, he would not permit secession, a confirmation of his initial intent to preserve the Union and not end slavery. Lincoln, in fact, regarded blacks as the intellectual inferiors of whites; believing the two races could not coexist peacefully, he supported black emigration as the solution to the nation’s racial problem. In 1862, for example, he implemented a pilot colonization project that used federal funds to settle about five hundred blacks on an island off the southern coast of Haiti.

By September 1862, Lincoln’s initial position regarding the war and slavery had changed. In this month he issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation: effective January 1, 1863, it made the abolition of slavery a war aim—a military objective. The untiring efforts of the abolitionists, who constantly reminded Lincoln of the military advantages of freeing the slaves, helped produce this document. The slaves themselves, who from the outset of hostilities constantly escaped to the Union lines, were also a factor. An estimated five hundred thousand of them (12.5 percent of the total slave population) ran away from their owners during the war. Thus, while the Emancipation Proclamation applied only to the Con- federate-held states and territories and actually freed no slaves, it did encourage more of them to escape. This loss of slaves eventually helped impair the South’s capacity to pursue the war.

Aside from emancipation, the Civil War also affected blacks through their participation in the war—their military service. Northern blacks were initially rejected when they volunteered to fight, since their participation implied equality and blacks were believed to be too servile and cowardly to fight whites; "this is a white man’s war," went a common expression in the North. However, because Union field commanders often found it expedient to use slaves, blacks actually saw action in the Civil War before their service was officially sanctioned. In May 1862, for example, General David Hunter declared slaves free in the South Carolina Sea Islands and impressed them into service, allowing them to fight along the Georgia coast before their regiment was disbanded.

By the summer of 1862, the official policy of not using blacks had been changed. Declining white manpower, linked to a series of military defeats that lowered northern morale and a war-weariness that sapped the willingness of many northern whites to join the army, forced the government to reconsider its exclusion of blacks. As a consequence, on July 17, 1862, Congress passed two acts providing for the enlistment of black soldiers. The first was the Confiscation Act, which empowered the President "to employ as many persons of African descent as he may deem necessary and proper for the suppression of the re-
billion." The second authorized the employment of free blacks as soldiers.

In November 1862, the First South Carolina Volunteers became the first regiment organized officially after the policy reversal. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an abolitionist from Massachusetts, was appointed colonel of this regiment. The first northern black unit, the **Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment**, was organized in January 1863. On July 18, 1863, it led an assault on Fort Wagner, a Confederate stronghold that guarded the entrance to the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. Its performance, the subject of the movie *Glory*, proved the bravery and courage of African American troops and facilitated their acceptance as northern soldiers. The Emancipation Proclamation and the War Department's establishment in May 1863 of a Bureau of Colored Troops, designed to coordinate the raising of black regiments, also fostered the use of blacks as Union soldiers.

By the war's end about 186,000 blacks, organized in 166 all-black regiments, had served in the Union army (out of a total of 1.8 million); about 26,000 blacks had served in the navy (out of a total of about 188,000). Most of the black participants were former slaves. For the most part, whites treated black soldiers with contempt; blacks were subjected to many indignities and injustices. For example, they received lower pay until June 1864 (ten dollars per month for a private versus sixteen dollars and fifty cents for a white of equal rank); their training was generally poor; their regiments were led by white officers; they were assigned disproportionately to heavy labor and fatigue duty; and they were often exploited, being given more dangerous assignments. Black soldiers experienced the highest casualty rate not only because of such deployment (37,000 of a total 360,000 Union deaths), but because the Confederate forces refused to take them prisoner. Probably the most infamous example of this policy was the **Fort Pillow Massacre** of April 12, 1864. After the rebels captured Fort Pillow, a Union outpost in Tennessee, an undetermined number (perhaps several score) of Union soldiers, mostly blacks, were executed after they had surrendered.

In addition to taking up arms against the South, African Americans rendered invaluable service to the Union forces behind the lines. They were scouts, spies, nurses, cooks, teamsters, carpenters, and laborers. For example, Harriet Tubman, the famed Underground Railroad conductor, saw duty as both a spy and a nurse for the Union army.

Of the 88,000 New Jerseyans who participated in the Civil War, blacks numbered 2,872 and represented 469 of New Jersey's 6,300 fatalities. Since the state did not organize any "colored" regiments, black troops were assigned to the regiments of other states and credited to New Jersey. For example, New Jerseyans served in the famous Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment. Black New Jerseyans also saw duty as sailors.

The North was not alone in using African Americans to aid its military effort. The South's use of its slaves enabled it to release a large number of white males for direct service with the Confederate forces. Slaves were mobilized to work mines, repair railroads, build fortifications, work in factories, and continue agricultural production. Although the South never officially used slaves as soldiers, in the final months of the war it did indicate its willingness to free any slaves who would fight for the Confederacy. On March 13, 1865, Jefferson Davis signed the Negro Soldier Law which promised slaves freedom for service in the Confederacy. Although some enlistment occurred and a few companies were raised in Richmond, no regiments were formed, and the war ended before any black Confederate soldiers actually saw action.

Aside from the war itself, violence occurred during the Civil War in the form of antiblack riots in several northern cities, including Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston, Troy, Newark, and Jersey City. Occurring mainly between 1862 and 1863, these riots were sparked primarily by job competition between white and black laborers and the white workingman's fear that emancipation would cause hordes of African Americans to come north, enter the labor market, and depress wages and by inflammatory statements expressing Copperhead sentiments of the Democratic press and Democratic politicians. The bloodiest of these disturbances was the notorious **New York City draft riot** of July 1863. It lasted for four days, during which eleven African Americans were killed and three hundred made homeless.

No northern state exceeded New Jersey in Copperhead strength and sentiment. Many white New Jerseyans indeed opposed the abolition of slavery, fearing that it would adversely affect the purchase of New Jersey industrial products in the South and that many freed slaves would migrate to northern states like New Jersey and compete for jobs. Opposition to abolition by some white New Jerseyans also rested in their strong belief that the emancipation of slaves by federal decree violated the rights of states. Notwithstanding such views, in December 1863, the **Thirteenth Amendment**, prohibiting slavery in the United States and any place subject to its jurisdiction, was introduced in Congress. By January 31, 1865, it had passed both houses in Congress, and by December it had been ratified by three-fourths of the states; New
Jersey failed to ratify it. This amendment, which fulfilled the unfinished work of the Emancipation Proclamation, freed all slaves.

In March 1865, several months before the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, the Freedmen's Bureau (officially, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands), the first federal welfare agency, was established. Charged with furnishing aid to ex-slaves in the form of food, clothing, medical services, education, and the supervision of work contracts, it lasted throughout most of the Reconstruction era. It also assisted white refugees in their efforts to recover from the war. Its first director, General Oliver Otis Howard, was a founder and the first president of Howard University.

Among earlier wartime efforts to assist ex-slaves were those on the Sea Islands (Gullah Islands) of South Carolina, which Union forces captured in November 1861. One notable participant in these efforts was Charlotte Forten, a black woman. A member of the famous Forten family of Philadelphia, she had received her training as a teacher in Massachusetts. She taught on Saint Helena Island between 1862 and 1864 as a part of the "social experiment" designed to prove that freedmen were as capable of self-improvement as whites. Her diary covering these two years is an important source of information about the life and culture of newly freed slaves.

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CORE LESSON

Theme

The Civil War, in which blacks participated in appreciable numbers, brought about the end of slavery and therefore constitutes a pivotal point in African American history.

Materials and Preparation

Students should read either chapter 17 in The African American Experience: A History ("The Civil War and the End of Slavery") or chapters 20 and 21 in African American History ("The House Divides" and "War's End Brings Freedom").

Students should read the Emancipation Proclamation (see page 95).

Students and the teacher should read pages 27–29 in Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History.

The teacher should read chapter 11 in From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans ("Civil War").

Time Period

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

**ACTIVITY 1**

Explain the main ways in which the Civil War facilitated the emancipation of African Americans. Point out to the students the role of the Emancipation Proclamation (see page 95) in encouraging slaves to seek freedom. Have students analyze this proclamation and respond to the assertion that it actually freed no slaves. Ask them to explain why it didn’t apply to areas over which Lincoln exercised authority.
Evaluation: Have the students imagine they were asked by President Lincoln to prepare a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. Have them prepare a draft that differs from the document issued by Lincoln. Ask them to justify their draft.

ACTIVITY 2

Describe the kinds of military roles blacks performed while serving in the Union forces.

Have students identify the various roles that blacks played in fighting for the North during the Civil War (such as soldiers, sailors, scouts, spies, nurses, cooks, teamsters, cooks). Have them discuss the importance of these roles.

Evaluation: Have students imagine they are blacks serving with the Union forces. Have each student write a 500-word essay indicating what role he/she would have preferred performing and why. Both combatant and noncombatant roles should be included. Students should also indicate the importance of the particular role chosen. For example, if a student would have preferred being a cook, he/she should explain the importance of meals or food to an overall military effort.

Supplemental Activities

1. Show students the film *Glory*, the story of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment (180 minutes). Point out that this unit, whose performance at Fort Wagner proved the capability of blacks for bravery and courage and thereby facilitated the acceptance of blacks in the Union forces, contained black New Jerseyans. The film can be obtained from any local video rental facility.

2. Visit black cemeteries that contain the graves of Civil War veterans and have students obtain various data from their headstones (for example, their units, year of birth, year of death). Such cemeteries can be found in a number of New Jersey communities, including Burlington, Mount Laurel, Westampton (Timbuctoo), Camden, Lawnside, Pennsauken, Greenwich (Springtown), Eatontown, Neptune, Tinton Falls, Aberdeen, and Matawan.

Key Persons

Aaron Anderson. Served in the Union navy and received the Medal of Honor for courage in a 1865 naval battle.

William H. Carney. A sergeant with the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment, he received the Medal of Honor for bravery in planting the flag under fire at the Battle of Fort Wagner.

Charlotte Forten. Poet, diarist, and schoolteacher who taught on Saint Helena Island, South Carolina, between 1862 and 1864 as part of an attempt to demonstrate that newly freed slaves could learn and were worthy of freedom.

Robert Smalls. South Carolina slave who stole a boat from the Confederate forces, piloted it safely to the Union forces, and subsequently became a captain in the Union navy and later a Congressman during Reconstruction from South Carolina.
Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS

Bernstein, Iver. 1990. *The New York City Draft Riots.* Examines the white political climate in New York City before, during, and after its 1863 draft riot, one of the worst racial incidents in American history.


Cornish, Dudley. 1956. *The Sable Arm.* Cornish details the part played by black soldiers in the northern army.


Glatthaar, Joseph T. 1990. *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers.* The author explores the personal lives and world of white Union Army officers who led black troops in the Civil War and their relations on and off the battlefield.


Quarles, Benjamin. 1953. *The Negro in the Civil War.* A comprehensive study of black soldiers in the war, and the political and social context of their recruitment, use, and impact.


FOR STUDENTS


Hansen, Joyce. 1986. *Which Way Freedom.* Obi escapes from slavery during the Civil War, joins a black Union regiment, and soon becomes involved in the bloody fighting at Fort Pillow, Tennessee. In exemplifying the commitment of all of those who fought to be free, he also illustrates the contribution made by many black soldiers to the Civil War.

Katz, William Loren. 1991. *Breaking the Chains: African-American Slave Resistance.* Beginning with early slave rebellions and concluding with those just prior to the Civil War, Katz concentrates on breaking the myth of the happy, contented slave. He has culled numerous first-person quotations from both slaves and slave owners, the famous and the unknown, to give the true feelings of many of the people who were part of the world of slavery.


Taylor, Susie King. 1902. *A Black Woman’s Civil War Memoirs, Reminiscences of My Life In Camp.* The author traces her matrilineal line back to Africa, then unfolds her remarkable story. A freed slave, at age fourteen she became a volunteer field nurse for black Union soldiers advancing through South Carolina.

Uya, Okon E. 1971. *From Slavery to Public Service: Robert Smalls, 1839–1915.* Short but detailed biography of the former South Carolina slave whose daring escape to freedom on a Confederate boat was followed by a long period of political service during and after Reconstruction.

Walker, Margaret. 1966. *Jubilee.* In this novel, the Civil War years are recounted from the imagined point of view of Vyry, a slave woman who was the author's great-grandmother. Vyry's mother had been the favored slave mistress of the plantation owner, Marse Dutton, and at an early age Vyry comes to live in the big house, first as a playmate and servant to Marse's daughter. Vyry marries a free black, they have two children, and, despite a series of harrowing events that were commonplace for blacks after the war, together they dream of an education for their children.
The Emancipation Proclamation (1863)

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
A PROCLAMATION

January 1, 1863

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

“That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.”

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. Johns, St. Charles, St James[, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New-Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South-Carolina, North-Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth-
City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk & Portsmouth [ ]; and
which excepted parts are, for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all
persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward
shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military
and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence,
unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed,
they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be
received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and
other places and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution,
upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor
of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States
to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one
thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of
America the eighty-seventh.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln

William H. Seward,
Secretary of State
Unit 7
The Reconstruction Era, 1865–1877

BACKGROUND

At the end of the Civil War the crucial question was, How was the defeated South to be treated? During the early period of Presidential Reconstruction (1865–1866), the Confederate states were treated very leniently, in keeping with Lincoln’s argument that they had never left the Union. After Lincoln’s assassination, Andrew Johnson continued Lincoln’s moderate Reconstruction plan, and by December 1865 all of the former Confederate states, with the exception of Texas, had established new governments that had been recognized by the presidency.

During 1865 and 1866 the newly formed southern state governments, dominated by former Confederates (Democrats), enacted the infamous Black Codes. These were laws designed to reestablish white supremacy and return African Americans to conditions similar to slavery. They prohibited blacks from voting; purchasing or leasing land in certain areas; testifying in court against whites; and bearing arms or congregating in large numbers. They also, in attempting to eliminate vagrancy, literally forced blacks to sign exploitive and binding labor contracts, imposing heavy penalties on African Americans not employed by whites and fining those absent from work.

The vagrancy provisions of the Black Codes also threatened the considerable physical movement that many ex-slaves undertook in the early post-Civil War period; they often viewed their ability to come and go as they pleased as confirmation of their freedom. Thousands moved to different plantations or cities in search of work or went about the South seeking to reunite scattered families. Postwar black geographical mobility also involved many freedmen returning “home” to their original plantation as a consequence of the massive uprooting and displacement of African Americans that occurred during the Civil War.

The Black Codes alarmed southern blacks, and they held people’s conventions all over the South in protest. These meetings constituted the first general black political movement ever organized in the region. The Black Codes also infuriated the Radical Republicans (including Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts and Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania), who claimed the South had left the Union and should be treated as a conquered territory. They were further convinced of the need to seize control of Reconstruction when large numbers of African Americans were killed, injured, and intimidated in 1866 in race riots in Memphis (May) and New Orleans (July), and through the emergence of secret white terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan (organized in 1866).

Using their considerable power in Congress, the Radicals began to orchestrate the passage of a series of laws designed to provide southern blacks with equal civil and political rights. One such law was the Civil Rights Act of 1866 (April), which granted African Americans national citizenship and entitled them to sue and be sued, to give evidence, and to buy, sell, and inherit land. Another was the Fourteenth Amendment. Ratified in July 1868, it made blacks both national (American) citizens and citizens of the states...
in which they resided, repudiating the 1857 Dred Scott decision; it also prohibited states from discriminating against blacks. When, through the elections of 1866, the Republican Party increased its congressional majority and the party came under even greater Radical influence, the stage was set for Radical Reconstruction or Black Reconstruction (1867–1877).

From 1867 to 1877, the Radical Republicans led Congress in enacting additional laws that attempted to ensure citizenship rights for blacks. The Reconstruction Act of 1867 (March) established the new procedure by which southern states were to be readmitted to the Union, and by 1870 all southern states had complied with it. Having enfranchised southern black males through this process, Congress in February 1869 next passed the Fifteenth Amendment; ratified in March 1870, it granted black males elsewhere the right to vote, especially in northern states, including New Jersey. (Although New Jersey rejected both the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the first African American to vote under the provisions of the latter was Thomas Mundy Peterson, in a municipal election in Perth Amboy in March of 1870.) Further, in response to the continued reign of terror by whites against blacks and their supporters in the South, Congress passed the Enforcement Acts of 1870–1871 to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. One of these laws, the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871, went beyond protecting freedmen against hostile state actions and for the first time made the infringement by private individuals of a person’s civil and political rights a federal crime. And, finally, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875 (March), which specifically offered protection to blacks against segregation in public accommodations.

Another major result of the Reconstruction Acts was the unprecedented participation of African Americans in southern politics. All of the state constitutional conventions had black delegates, but only in South Carolina did they constitute a majority of the delegates. In addition, as a result of the successful Republican voter recruitment efforts led by the Union League and reinforced by the presence of blacks in state militias, southern blacks were elected to varied important state and local offices. All state legislatures, for example, had black members. Among the statewide offices held were acting governor (P. B. S. Pinchback in Louisiana); lieutenant governor in three states (Louisiana, South Carolina and Mississippi); secretary of state in four states (Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, and South Carolina); superintendent of education in four states (Arkansas, Louisiana, Florida, and Mississippi); and state treasurer in two states (Florida and South Carolina). African Americans were elected to both houses of Congress, two serving as senators and twenty as representatives.

Although early studies of Reconstruction portrayed Reconstruction governments as corrupt and dominated by ignorant, inept, and corrupt black politicians allied with scalawags and carpetbaggers and justified the use of violence by whites to “redeem” the South, more recent scholarship acknowledges that such governments made major and lasting contributions to southern society. They established the South’s first systems of free public education, repealed imprisonment-for-debt laws, and abolished property qualifications for holding office. More recent studies also suggest that black politicians, far from being the dominant force during Reconstruction, actually exercised little collective and long-term influence throughout most of the South. The reasons for this include their relatively small numbers, the numerical superiority of whites in the South, white terrorism directed at such politicians and their supporters, and inconsistent and generally weak support from the national Republican Party and the federal government.

Because the post–Civil War period witnessed no meaningful land reform or redistribution of land (most plantations were restored to their former owners or leased or sold to northern investors), blacks failed to achieve in any significant sense their primary goal: obtaining land and becoming self-sufficient yeoman farmers. With their failure in this regard came the emergence during Reconstruction of a labor system that would dominate African American economic life well into the twentieth century: sharecropping. Under this system blacks rented a plot of land and paid to the plantation owner a certain percentage of the cotton crop, usually a third or half, depending on what the owner supplied in the way of implements, work animals, fertilizer, and seed. Because croppers had a vested interest in the crops and were more likely to work harder than wage laborers and not break their contracts like them, planters found an advantage in sharecropping. For the sharecroppers the system also had appeal. They could organize their own time and be more independent of direct supervision than could hired workers. They also regarded the contract labor system, under which one worked in labor gangs, as too reminiscent of slavery. (Individual families—father, mother, and children—rather than labor gangs became the primary sharecropping work unit.) Still, sharecropping became a system under which croppers were greatly exploited in a variety of ways. The planters weighed the cotton and kept all records.
Planters charged high prices and outrageous interest rates for food and clothing purchased by sharecroppers on credit at the plantation store (with the crop as lien). From this arose a form of debt peonage whereby insolvent croppers became tied to the land. Unable to repay debts from one year to another, they were legally required to work indefinitely for the same unscrupulous planters.

Next to landownership, the freedmen most desired education. They saw it not only as a mechanism for acquiring greater personal autonomy, but also as a vehicle for upward social mobility and a means for accomplishing such specific tasks as reading the Bible or a labor contract. Thus, after the war, young and old former slaves flocked to the newly organized schools (many held in black churches), often learning in the same classroom. In the forefront of efforts to satisfy the former slaves’ tremendous hunger for education were black northern churches and northern freedmen’s aid societies that were often sponsored by religious denominations. Such churches and societies sent teachers, black and white, into the South to instruct the ex-slaves. The Freedmen’s Bureau also played a major role in efforts to educate the former slaves; it often supplied the school buildings while the freedmen’s aid societies paid the salaries of teachers. Part of the overall effort to educate southern blacks during Reconstruction was the establishment of a remarkable number of institutions of higher learning. For example, just between 1865 and 1870 the following were established: Atlanta University, Virginia Union University, and Morgan State University (1865); Fisk University (1866); Talledega College, Morehouse College, Howard University, Johnson C. Smith University, Barber Scotia College, and Rust College (1867); Hampton University (1868); Tougaloo College (1869); Benedict College and Allen University (1870).

The religious life of southern African Americans also underwent considerable change during Reconstruction. There was a tremendous growth in the number of black Christians in the South. This development was aided in particular by the proselytizing activities of black missionaries from the North; they represented both white religious bodies (such as the Episcopal Church and Presbyterian Church) and black denominations (such as the AME and AME Zion). The second development was the establishment of an autonomous religious life, best expressed in the creation of separate black churches. By the end of Reconstruction the vast majority of African Americans who had been affiliated with white churches had withdrawn from them, in large part because these institutions continued to discriminate against blacks (for example, by seating them in separate pews). Many of these withdrawals were led by black Baptist and Methodist exhorters who proceeded to establish separate congregations. The founding in 1870 of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was an additional expression of this desire for autonomy.

By 1876, Democrats had “redeemed” (restored to home rule) all but three southern states, in the process effecting the withdrawal of federal troops from these states. Factors in the restoration of home rule included the use of violence by white secret orders (for example, the Ku Klux Klan, Knights of the White Camelia, and White Brotherhood) to terrorize African Americans and their supporters, and the Depression of 1873–1877, which devastated the southern states’ credit, tax rolls, and budgets and allowed the Democrats to gain support for their calls for fiscal retrenchment. Political corruption, which the Democrats used to discredit Reconstruction governments, and the thinking by those Republicans representing northern industrialist/financial interests that such interests could be best realized in the South through an alliance with southern planters/aristocrats, were additional factors. Finally, the racist attitudes of many northerners, reflected in widespread racial discrimination in the North, helped convince them that sectional reconciliation was preferable to erecting a racially egalitarian society in the South. The disputed presidential election of 1876 between the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, governor of Ohio, and the Democratic candidate, Samuel J. Tilden, governor of New York, set the stage for the final demise of Reconstruction: the Compromise of 1877. Marking a great retreat from the initial desire of the Radical Republicans to have the national government protect the fundamental rights of blacks as American citizens, the compromise meant that the welfare of African Americans was again in the hands of those who had oppressed them under slavery, those committed to upholding white supremacy.
CORE LESSON

Theme

Although African Americans made gains during Reconstruction (for example, the passage of federal legislation to protect the civil rights of southern blacks, the presence of southern blacks in the national legislature, and the presence of blacks in southern governments as executives and legislators), through actual or threatened antiblack violence the control of southern society was ultimately returned to those committed to restoring and maintaining white domination.

Materials and Preparation

Students should read either chapter 18 in The African American Experience: A History ("The Promise and Failure of Reconstruction") or chapters 22–24 in African American History ("Rebuilding the South," "Blacks in Politics," and "Reaction Sets In").

Students should read the excerpt from Eric Foner's Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877 (see page 105).

Students and the teacher should read pages 45–54 in Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History.

The teacher should read chapters 12 and 13 in From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans ("The Effort to Attain Peace" and "Losing the Peace").

Time Period

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

ACTIVITY 1

Differentiate between Presidential Reconstruction and Radical Reconstruction (Black Reconstruction).

Lead a class discussion on the pros and cons of both Presidential Reconstruction and Radical Reconstruction (Black Reconstruction). Students should be able to say whether they would have dealt with the South harshly or leniently in returning it to the Union.

Evaluation: Have the students write a 500-word essay on why Radical Reconstruction was either good or bad.

ACTIVITY 2

Explain how the sharecropping system worked, why it was initially favored by both croppers and planters, and the opportunities the system provided for the exploitation of the sharecroppers.

Lead the students in a discussion of why the sharecropping system came into being and how it worked. It has been termed a form of peonage. Have students define peonage and compare it with sharecropping.

Evaluation: Have each student write a short story about a sharecropping family coping with the abuses and injustices of the sharecropping system.
ACTIVITY 3

Explain the significance of education to the ex-slaves and the various efforts undertaken to educate southern blacks.

Have students read the excerpt from Eric Foner’s Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877 (see page 105) and then suggest specific ways that education was important to former slaves. Among these should be: as a vehicle for social mobility; as protection for entering into labor contracts; reading the Bible; and as a general means of self-improvement. Have students assess the importance of these factors. Are some of the reasons for an interest in education shared by other ethnic groups in American society?

Evaluation: Have students reenact a situation in which former slaves, spanning three generations, are students in a one-room school. Have members of each generation indicate why they are interested in learning how to read and write. For example, an elderly person might want to become literate in order to read the Bible. A young adult male might want to become literate in order to read a labor contract.

Supplemental Activities

Have students read Robert C. Morris’s Reading, Writing, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861–1870, (1976), and prepare a book report of 500 words.

Key Persons

Blanche Kelso Bruce. The second black to be elected a United States senator, he represented Mississippi from 1875 to 1881.

Thomas Mundy Peterson. The first black to vote in the United States under the provisions of the Fifteenth Amendment, he voted in a municipal election in Perth Amboy on March 31, 1870.

P. B. S. Pinchback. One of three African Americans to serve as lieutenant governor of Louisiana, in 1873 he became acting governor and served for forty-three days when the elected governor was impeached.

Hiram Revels. A Republican from Mississippi, he was the first African American to serve in the United States Senate, serving from 1870 to 1871.

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS


Bullock, Henry. 1967. A History of Negro Education in the South. Provides a general introduction to contributions of black and white individuals, churches, and politicians to the creation of schools for the southern freedmen after the Civil War.

DuBois, W. E. B. 1935. *Black Reconstruction*. A classic revisionist study by a preeminent black scholar, it challenges the racist and paternalistic interpretation of Reconstruction that justified the restoration of white rule in favor of a triumphant, class analysis of racial conditions.


Painter, Nell Irvin. 1979. *Exodusters*. This study examines African American migration to the American West during and after Reconstruction.

Rabinowitz, Howard, ed. 1982. *Southern Black Leaders of the Reconstruction Era*. Best collection of biographical portraits of black politicians in all parts of the South, including former slaves and northern and southern free blacks.

Rose, Willie Lee. 1964. *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment*. This excellent study shows that many of the federal government’s short-lived efforts to provide relief and limited self-help initiative for the newly freed slaves of one of South Carolina’s Sea Islands foreshadowed policies and thinking that came to dominate Reconstruction.

Thornbrough, Emma. 1972. *Black Reconstructionists*. Well-rounded collection of biographies of Reconstruction leaders, contemporary black and white views of the leaders, and words by the latter.

Trelease, Allan. 1971. *White Terror*. Pioneering, detailed study of organized southern white racism during Reconstruction. It examines the origins and impact of the Ku Klux Klan, among other groups.

Walker, Clarence. 1982. *A Rock in a Weary Land*. Informed and groundbreaking study of the aid the African Methodist Episcopal Church gave to the freedmen during and after the Civil War.

FOR STUDENTS

Jones, Jacqueline. 1980. *Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865–1873*. Examines the success and failures that northern educators experienced in their work with ex-slaves in Georgia after the Civil War.

Lamson, Peggy. 1973. *Glorious Failure: Black Congressman Robert Brown Elliot and Reconstruction in South Carolina*. Major study of a northern black's noble but doomed efforts to campaign, while he was both in and out of office, for his southern brethren after the Civil War.

MATERIALS
From Chapter 5, "The Meaning of Freedom"

Perhaps the most striking illustration of the freedmen’s quest for self-improvement was their seemingly unquenchable thirst for education. Before the war, every Southern state except Tennessee had prohibited the instruction of slaves, and while many free blacks had attended school and a number of slaves became literate through their own efforts or the aid of sympathetic masters, over 90 percent of the South’s adult black population was illiterate in 1860. Access to education for themselves and their children was, for blacks, central to the meaning of freedom, and white contemporaries were astonished by their “avidity for learning.” A Mississippi Freedmen’s Bureau agent reported in 1865 that when he informed a gathering of 3,000 freedmen that they “were to have the advantages of schools and education, their joy knew no bounds. They fairly jumped and shouted in gladness.” The desire of learning led parents to migrate to towns and cities in search of education for their children, and plantation workers to make the establishment of a school-house “an absolute condition” of signing labor contracts. (One 1867 Louisiana contract specified that the planter pay a “5 percent tax” to support black education.) Adults as well as children thronged the schools established during and after the Civil War. A Northern teacher in Florida reported how one sixty-year-old woman, “just beginning to spell, seems as if she could not think of anything but her book, says she spells her lesson all the evening, then she dreams about it, and wakes up thinking about it.”

For many adults, a craving “to read the word of God” provided the immediate spur to learning. One elderly freedman sitting beside his grandchild in a Mobile school explained to a Northern reporter, “he wouldn’t trouble the lady much, but he must learn to read the Bible and the Testament.” Others recognized education as indispensable for economic advancement. “I gets almost discouraged, but I does want to learn to cipher so I can do business,” an elderly Mississippi pupil told his teacher. But more generally, blacks’ hunger for education arose from the same desire for autonomy and self-improvement that inspired so many activities in the aftermath of emancipation. As a member of a North Carolina education society put it in 1866, “he thought a school-house would be the first proof of their independence.”

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Unit 8
The Rise of Jim Crow and The Nadir, 1878-1915

BACKGROUND

The post-Reconstruction period in the South, which witnessed the rise of the Jim Crow system, marked a time when American race relations are thought to have reached their nadir, with whites pursuing efforts to reassert hegemony over blacks on every front, from disfranchisement to school segregation.

The term Jim Crow is believed to have originated between 1828 and 1831, when Thomas Dartmouth Rice, considered the “father of minstrelsy,” developed a song-and-dance routine that mimicked an old, crippled slave named James Crow. This routine became immensely popular, and by 1838 the term Jim Crow had become synonymous with “Negro.” By the late nineteenth century the term, as used principally by southern whites, had come to refer to a system of racial segregation and discrimination that was beginning to take hold in the South, a system designed to perpetuate the subjugation of African Americans that had occurred under slavery.

Firmly locked in place throughout the South by 1915, Jim Crowism had two cardinal features. One was the legalized separation of the races, which, under slavery, was not necessary because the master/slave relationship implied white supremacy and because the control of slaves was actually best maintained by a large degree of close master/slave contact. Once blacks were freed, however, their social status was unclear, and the white desire to continue to “keep blacks in their place” necessitated a new physical and social distance between the races. Thus, after Reconstruction, states and local communities passed laws that segregated blacks in virtually every aspect of public and social life (schools, trains, restrooms, water fountains, parks, dance halls, barbershops, penitentiaries, restaurants, theaters, hospitals, asylums, institutions for the blind and deaf, cemeteries). As early as 1870, Tennessee, regarded as having pioneered in effecting Jim Crow legislation, passed a law prohibiting interracial marriages.

The second feature of Jim Crowism was the disfranchisement of African Americans. But, this disfranchisement was gradual. Initially, whites opposed to black political equality did not always bother to disfranchise blacks; sometimes they simply used bribery, violence, intimidation, and ballot-stuffing to record black votes for the Democratic Party. In fact, there were enough black voters between 1877 and 1901 to enable eleven black southerners (all Republicans) to sit in Congress. In 1890, however, Mississippi became the first state to effectively disfranchise African Americans, using a literacy test (it required an interpretation of the state constitution) and a poll tax as its methods. Other legal methods used in the South were the grandfather clause and white primary; extralegal methods included violence and terror (for example, lynchings, riots) and the denial of credit and employment to blacks. By 1915 the combined use of such methods had effectively stripped southern blacks of the franchise.

Efforts to eliminate black suffrage were basically inspired by the desire to remove the possibility that
blacks would use any political strength to oppose the second-class citizenship status to which they were being relegated. The destruction of the Republican Party in the South thus became imperative. Another concern of those opposed to the franchise for southern blacks involved the rise in the 1880s of the Populist movement in the South. Essentially representing small white farmers against monied interests, its general desire for a more equitable distribution of wealth was reflected in such specific demands as the regulation of railroad rates, building of farmers' cooperatives, cheap money, and decreases in taxes. Its principal organization, the Southern Farmers' Alliance (SFA), despite restricting its membership to whites, believed that poor black and white farmers shared economic interests. Such sentiment helped lead in 1886 to the formation of a black SFA affiliate, the Colored Farmers' Alliance and Cooperative Union, which, with 1,250,000 members, was perhaps the largest black organization of its time. This biracial cooperation of farmers spilled over into politics and resulted in some black support for the People's (Populist) Party (organized in 1892), making the black vote pivotal in some elections. This development greatly alarmed the Democrats, prompting them to negate it through the elimination of African American suffrage. Democrats also raised the specter of disfranchising poor whites if the Populists continued their efforts at wooing African American voters. In response, Populist leaders (for example, Thomas E. Watson of Georgia, Benjamin "Pitchfork" Tillman of South Carolina, and J. K. Vardaman of Mississippi) not only capitulated to the demands of the Democrats, but became the South's shrillest and most virulent race baiters, in the process aiding those subsequent white efforts that virtually eliminated the black southern vote. This disappointing experience with the Populists made some blacks suspicious of political coalitions with whites for decades to come.

An increase in violence against African Americans, especially lynchings, accompanied the rise in Jim Crowism. During the 1890s, lynchings occurred with greater frequency than in any other decade. In 1892, for example, 161 blacks were lynched in the South, the highest yearly total ever (3,446 blacks were lynched between 1882 and 1964).

The epidemic of race riots that swept the nation in the early twentieth century added to black feelings of insecurity. Perhaps the most sensational instance of white lawlessness during this period took place in Atlanta, Georgia, in September 1906. Lashed into a fury of race hatred as an outgrowth of earlier efforts to disfranchise blacks, the city was paralyzed for four days as white mobs set out on a general destruction of black property and lives. Four African Americans were killed and many injured.

Helping to provide a philosophical justification for wholesale white terrorism was Social Darwinism, the pseudo-scientific application of Darwin's evolution theories to human society. Thus, distinguished white scholars in the biological and social sciences argued that the Negro was the least intelligent of all racial groups—a separate species next to the ape. Drawing on the notion of "survival of the fittest," they also asserted that the evolutionary process had actually stopped for blacks who, in the face of an increasingly scientific, technical, and industrialized world, would become extinct. At a more popular level, antiblack, racist thinking was promoted through such works as Charles Carroll's The Negro a Beast (1900); Thomas Dixon's The Clansman (1905), which served as the literary basis for D. W. Griffith's Birth of a Nation (1915), a blatant cinematic appeal to white racism and sexual fantasies/fears about black men; Robert Shuler's The Negro: A Menace to Civilization (1907); and Edgar Rice Burroughs's novel Tarzan (1914), which became a movie series in 1918.

The ascendency after Reconstruction of the idea of "the white man's burden," the mission of whites to "civilize" (rule) the darker and inferior peoples of the world, served to support southern racist sentiment. This belief in whites as "civilizers" coincided with the rise of European imperialism, especially in Africa (the 1884–85 Berlin Conference partitioned the continent), and the emergence of the United States as an imperial power itself, mainly as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898 (through which its major acquisitions were Puerto Rico and the Philippines).

Two key decisions by the Supreme Court added to the difficulties that blacks faced during the post-Reconstruction period. In 1883 the Supreme Court invalidated the 1875 Civil Rights Act, contending that the Fourteenth Amendment did not apply to discriminatory acts by individuals or local governments. Even more far-reaching was its Plessy v. Ferguson ruling in 1896, which upheld a Louisiana law requiring separate railroad coaches for blacks. This ruling established the "separate but equal" doctrine that became the key legal sanction for Jim Crow laws.

One of the ways in which African Americans, especially the masses, responded to the rise of Jim Crowism and the "nadir" period was migration. In this sense their movement was a form of protest, one that, to the extent it involved movement out of the South, was opposed by leaders like Frederick Douglass, who felt that the salvation of blacks rested in struggling to achieve their citizenship rights in the
South. The exploitive conditions of sharecropping and the violence attendant to political activities were the main motivating factors for this movement. One area to which blacks moved in large numbers was the rural Midwest. Through the *Exodus of 1879*, the first significant movement of blacks out of the South, approximately six thousand migrants from Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Tennessee, and Kentucky, trekked to Kansas, where they established, in one instance, an all-black community, Nicodemus (1879). Roughly a decade later, in 1890, about seven thousand blacks from Arkansas joined the "rush" to Oklahoma. Black migration to Oklahoma, which occurred when the black-town idea was attracting considerable interest, also led to the founding of all-black towns (including Langston in 1891 and Boley in 1904), some established with the intent of forming the nucleus of an all-black state in the West. After Reconstruction five thousand other African Americans headed West to become cowboys, participating in the great cattle drives that linked Abilene, Texas, and Dodge City, Kansas.

A second post-Reconstruction black migration pattern was the movement to cities, both southern and northern. New Jersey cities such as Newark were among those in the North that attracted such migrants. One migrant from North Carolina, Timothy Drew, or Noble Drew Ali, established in Newark in 1913 the Moorish Science Temple, the first major expression of the Islamic faith among black Americans. Drew eventually moved this religious group to Chicago, and from it emerged the Nation of Islam of Elijah Muhammad.

Atlantic City, with only fifteen blacks in 1870, experienced the most phenomenal influx of blacks during this period as a result of its growth as a resort center that offered many service jobs traditionally filled by blacks (maids, cooks, butlers, porters). By 1910 it had roughly ten thousand African Americans, the largest black community in New Jersey.

Movement of southern blacks to New Jersey during this period also added one more all-black community: Whitesboro. Probably the last community of its kind established in the state, it was named after George H. White of North Carolina, who left Congress in 1901 as the last black congressman of the post-Reconstruction period. A group of African Americans decided to leave Wilmington, North Carolina, after a race riot in 1898, and White helped them find and purchase land in Cape May County in 1899.

Emigration to Africa also continued to appeal to some southern blacks. During the period about four thousand left the country and settled in Africa, principally Liberia. Several groups were responsible for organizing these repatriation efforts: they ranged from the American Colonization Society, to the International Migration Society of the AME Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, to Chief Sam, an alleged Ashanti chief, who in 1915 carried a few hundred blacks from Oklahoma to the Gold Coast (Ghana). These emigration activities provided a continuum for interest in emigration to Africa that was to appear more markedly shortly thereafter in Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Black American leadership adopted essentially two divergent responses to Jim Crowism. Until 1910 the prevailing response was *accommodationism* which deemphasized the pursuit of social and political equality for southern blacks. Its standard-bearer was Booker T. Washington, who as the founder of Tuskegee Institute in 1881, was from the time of his famous 1895 Atlanta Cotton Exposition speech (1895 Atlanta Compromise) until his death in 1915 the acknowledged leader of black Americans. (Frederick Douglass, the previously acknowledged leader, died in 1895.) Mutating his criticism of Jim Crowism and the terror and violence against southern blacks that accompanied it, he counseled that through self-help, character development (work ethic, frugality, temperance), property accumulation, and industrial (vocational) education blacks would elevate themselves and eventually obtain their citizenship rights. Establishing the National Negro Business League in 1900, Washington held up the self-made black businessman as the model for the struggling masses. His principal antagonist was W. E. B. DuBois. A founder of the *Niagara Movement* in 1905 and the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (NAACP) in 1909, DuBois was the most outspoken advocate of full integration and militant protest against white racial injustices. He stressed such measures as demonstrations and litigation. In contrast to Washington's glorification of the black capitalist, DuBois argued that the *talented tenth*, an elite corps of educated blacks, would guide the future course of African American people. He thus stressed an academic education for blacks, one that emphasized the dignity of the mind—the importance of intellect in human affairs.

The debate between Washington and DuBois over the type of education African Americans should receive—industrial education versus academic education—was in particular played out in New Jersey through the establishment in 1886 of the *New Jersey Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth*. Located in Bordentown, its founder, the Reverend Walter A. Rice, an AME minister, was a Washington disciple; the school, reflecting its emphasis
on vocational training, came to be called the "Tuskegee of the North." Also giving impetus to its establishment was a 1881 New Jersey law that prohibited forcing blacks to attend segregated schools, but allowed the continuation of the long-standing tradition of establishing such schools if they were chosen voluntarily by blacks. By far the most celebrated and famous of the state's all-black schools, "Bordentown" was closed in 1955 as a result of the 1954 Supreme Court decision making racially segregated public schools unconstitutional. Throughout its existence it was New Jersey's only wholly state-supported Jim Crow school.

Between the late 1870s and the early twentieth century the modern black community was born; the structure and shape assumed by the community during this period have lasted essentially to the present day. Free blacks and former slaves became politically and culturally fused, black institutions were built on an unprecedented scale, blacks became more urban and increasingly residents of all-black neighborhoods, and blacks undertook greater self-help initiatives in order to survive the de facto and de jure debasement received from all levels of white society. Among the social and economic changes was a decline in the size and status of an entrepreneurial class (such as caterers and skilled artisans) dependent on a white clientele and the emergence of a class of professionals (such as doctors and lawyers) and businessmen (such as undertakers and storekeepers) that catered largely to the black community. African Americans also established certain kinds of enterprises for the first time. The most notable of these were banks (the first two were founded in 1888), realty associations, and insurance companies (the first was established in Mississippi in 1889, and the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company, currently the largest black insurance company, was established in 1905). Moreover, as blacks became more literate the black press flourished, and new organizations like the Greek-letter fraternities were founded (Alpha Phi Alpha in 1906 was the first). It was, however, the fraternal orders that enjoyed perhaps the most phenomenal success; through their "mutual aid" function, many served as incipient insurance companies. In the forefront of this growth were the Odd Fellows, the Masons, and the Knights of Pythias. In the religious realm the most striking development was the rise in the 1890s of pentecostal churches (Holiness, Sanctified), of which the Church of God in Christ, founded in Memphis, became the largest. It was through such churches, located mainly in the rural South, that certain slave religious practices rooted in African traditions (for example, shouts, hand-clapping, foot-stomping, and jubilee songs) were continued and expressed in forms of worship that included spirit possession, improvisatory singing, and the use of drums and other percussive instruments. Finally, the nation's two oldest civil rights organizations were formed during this period. The previously mentioned NAACP, established in 1909 by blacks and white Progressives, used mainly litigation to win equal rights for African Americans. The Urban League was formed in 1911 to address the problems (notably employment and housing) that newly arrived black southern migrants encountered in northern cities.

African American women were very much in the vanguard of the struggle of the race against discrimination and oppression. Ida B. Wells-Barnett led anti-lynching campaigns and joined DuBois and others in organizing the NAACP. Mary Church Terrell established the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) in 1896 to protest disfranchisement and lynching. NACW's formation gave impetus to the founding in 1915 of the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, the oldest statewide New Jersey black women's organization. The Federation's founder and first president, the Reverend Florence Spearing Randolph, was an AME Zion minister who, beginning in 1925, guided the growth and development of the Wallace Chapel AME Zion Church in Summit.

Black women also had a presence in entrepreneurial activities. One outstanding example was Madame C. J. Walker, a native of Louisiana. Her cosmetology business, which catered to black women, began in 1905 in Saint Louis and moved in 1910 to Indianapolis, where its manufacturing plant ultimately employed three thousand persons. By the time of her death in 1919, Madame Walker had amassed a fortune of a million dollars. A second notable woman was Maggie Lena Walker of Richmond, Virginia. Having successfully managed a black mutual benefit society, in 1903 she founded and became president of the Saint Luke Penny Savings Bank; she was thus the nation's first black woman bank president. The bank she established, which absorbed the other black banks in Richmond and became the Consolidated Bank and Trust Company, is the oldest continuously existing black-owned and black-operated bank in the nation. Both Walkers were known for their liberal contributions to African American philanthropic causes.
CORE LESSON

Theme
Although the emergence of Jim Crowism in the South and numerous acts of violence against blacks explain why the years between 1878 and 1915 are considered the nadir in American race relations, the modern black community also begins to take form during these years. Nationally, free blacks and former slaves come together to expand black institutional life as part of an effort to cope with the rising tide of racism.

Materials and Preparation

Students should read the excerpt from Booker T. Washington’s address at the 1895 Atlanta Cotton Exposition (see page 117) and the excerpt from Dr. W. E. B. DuBois’s article “The Talented Tenth” (see page 119).


Time Period
Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

ACTIVITY 1
Describe the key features of Jim Crow after it evolved as a system in the South.
Lead the students in making a list of the areas of public and social life in the South that were segregated. Have the students indicate which form(s) of segregation they believe to have been the most harmful and most humiliating and why. Students, for example, might conclude that disfranchisement was the most harmful, while the refusal of service in public accommodations was probably the most humiliating. Or they might think that being forced to attend an all-black school was more onerous than being denied the vote.

Evaluation: Have the students imagine they are late-nineteenth century journalists. Ask them to write a 500-word newspaper article about what they believe is the most humiliating Jim Crow practice in the South.

ACTIVITY 2
Explain the ways in which blacks responded to the harsh conditions of racial segregation in the South from 1878 to 1915.
Ask students to imagine they are blacks living in the South between 1878 and 1915. How would they respond to the racial segregation they faced? Would they speak out against laws of racial segregation and disobey them as did Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the 1950s and 1960s? Or would they simply keep quiet and obey the laws and customs of the Jim Crow system? Would they try to leave the South? In responding to these questions the students should bear in mind the prevalence of antiblack violence during this period. For example, tell students that the greatest number of African Americans lynched in one year, 161, occurred in 1892.

**Evaluation:** Have students research and write a 500-word essay that identifies three all-black communities (including Whitesboro) that were established between 1878 and 1915. The establishment of these communities should be seen in the context of black migration as a response to the difficulties of life under Jim Crowism.

**ACTIVITY 3**

**Differentiate** between the approaches used by Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois in fighting racial injustice.

Point out to the students that these men differed, among other things, in the kind of education they advocated for black youths. Washington favored an education that prepared blacks to work with their hands, to learn a craft or trade such as masonry, plumbing, or carpentry from which they could ultimately start a business. DuBois, on the other hand, favored a classical education that would create the “talented tenth” from which the leadership of the black race would emerge. In light of conditions in the South at the end of the nineteenth century, have students indicate which of these approaches best served the needs of the black race. Divide the class into two groups, one representing the industrial education championed by Washington and the other the academic education desired by DuBois. Each group should present the merits of its type of education.

In presenting their positions, have the groups read the excerpt from Washington’s famous address at the 1895 Atlanta Cotton Exposition (see page 117) and the excerpt from DuBois’s views on the “talented tenth” (see page 119). This will enable each group to be more familiar with its own position and that of the opposing group. Also have both groups discuss the implications for southern black migration and protest of Washington’s repeated exhortation to “Cast down your bucket where you are.”

**Evaluation:** Have the students write a play in which the main characters are Booker T. Washington and Dr. W. E. B. DuBois. Have the two men debate the issue of how best to educate black youth.

**Supplemental Activities**

1. Have students read Norman L. Crockett’s *The Black Towns* (1979) and prepare a 500-word book report on it.
2. Take students on a trip to Whitesboro, an all-black community established in 1899 in Cape May County.
3. Show students the film *Booker T. Washington*, a documentary that treats the life of the outstanding race leader and educator who founded famed Tuskegee Institute (30 minutes). It can be obtained from The Black Filmmaker Foundation, 375 Greenwich Street, New York, New York 10013 (212-941-3944).
4. Show students the film *Two Dollars and A Dream*, which explores the life of Madame C. J. Walker, whose success in producing and marketing cosmetic products for black women made her one of the most successful businesswomen of the early twentieth century (56 minutes). It can be obtained from the Filmmakers Library, 124 East 40th Street, New York, New York 10016 (212-808-4980).
5. Take students on a trip to Bordentown to visit the grounds of the old Bordentown School (New Jersey Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth). Known as the “Tuskegee of the North,” it was New Jersey’s most important educational institution for black students.

Key Persons

Noble Drew Ali (nee Timothy Drew). A North Carolinian who migrated to Newark, where in 1913 he established the Moorish Science Temple, black America’s first major Muslim group.

W. E. B. DuBois. A founder of the Niagara Movement and the NAACP, this advocate of militant protest against racial injustice was the foremost black American intellectual from the 1890s until his death in 1963.

Florence Spearing Randolph. An ordained minister who helped build the Wallace Chapel AME Zion Church in Summit, she organized in 1915 the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, the state’s oldest women’s organization.

Mary Church Terrell. She established the National Association of Colored Women in 1896 to protest disfranchisement and lynching.

Henry McNeal Turner. Bishop of the AME Church (1880–1892) and member of the Georgia legislature during Reconstruction (1868–1870), he was the leading advocate of emigration to Africa during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Madame C. J. Walker. Based on her formula for treating the hair and skin of black women, she became one of the most successful business women of the early twentieth century, amassing a fortune of a million dollars.

Maggie Lena Walker. A successful businesswoman in Richmond, Virginia, she was the first black woman to become president of a bank.

Booker T. Washington. The founder of Tuskegee Institute, he was the acknowledged black leader from 1895 until his death in 1915.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett. A fearless journalist who initiated the early antilynching campaign and helped found the NAACP.

George H. White. The founder of Whitesboro, he served in Congress from North Carolina until 1901; at his departure he was the last black congressman of the post-Reconstruction period.

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS

Bogle, Donald. 1973. Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks. A study that examines the stereotypical and defiant black entertainers who performed in the movies and on the stage from the 1890s to 1970.


DuBois, W. E. B. 1903. The Souls of Black Folk. In providing a view of America’s race problem at the dawn of the century, Dubois writes about his belief in racial “twoness” and the black elite’s vanguard role in creating change for the race.

Frederickson, George. 1981. White Supremacy. This is a groundbreaking comparison of the rise of racist dogma and policy in Jim Crow America and South Africa.


Meier, August. 1963. Negro Thought in America, 1880–1915. This study explores the major trends in the thinking of black leaders of the period and focuses in particular on the contrasting positions of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois on a variety of issues.

Meier, August, and John H. Franklin, eds. 1982. Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century. This outstanding collection of studies by white and black scholars includes the major male and female leaders of early-twentieth-century African-American life.

Meier, August, and Leon Litwack, eds. 1988. Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century. This collection of biographies of African American activists of the nineteenth century is notable for its inclusion of rarely publicized leaders.

Morton-Neverdon, Cynthia. 1989. Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895–1925. A history of the major attempts of black women in five communities (Atlanta, Hampton, Tuskegee, Nashville, and Baltimore) to educate and improve the health of blacks, stamp out vice and immorality, and effect a rise in racial consciousness during the early part of the twentieth century.

explores the southern black's attempts to avoid rural reminders of slavery through migration and industrial, commercial, political, and self-help opportunities in the southern city. White reactions are also examined.


Shapiro, Herbert. 1988. *White Violence and Black Response*. A far-reaching study of racial tensions and their physical results. The author looks back into American history and demonstrates the varieties of black responses to white violence, from accommodation and avoidance to militant assertiveness.

Williamson, Joel. 1984. *The Crucible of Race*. This volume examines the psychosexual, cultural, economic and political roots and dynamics of American racism during the Jim Crow period.


FOR STUDENTS


Crockett, Norman L. 1979. *The Black Towns*. This study examines five all-black towns established between 1879 and 1904: Nicodemus, Kansas; Mound Bayou, Mississippi; Langston, Oklahoma; Clearview, Oklahoma; and Boley, Oklahoma. The rationale for such communities as articulated by their founders and supporters is also provided.

Dunbar, Paul Laurence. 1902. *The Sport of the Gods*. This story is about the Hamiltons, a close-knit black family that moves from the South to New York City in the mid-1890s after the father has been unjustly convicted of a crime and sent to prison. The city exacts its toll on the family. The son, Joe, falls in with a fast crowd, becomes an alcoholic, and goes to prison for murder. When the father’s innocence is discovered, he is freed and he rescues his wife and returns to their small southern home town.

Durham, Philip, and Everett L. Jones. 1965. *The Negro Cowboys*. A vivid account of the black cowboys and pioneers who migrated west before and after the Civil War.


Lester, Julius. 1972. *Long Journey Home*. This book of historical fiction consists of six short stories featuring such characters as a runaway slave (Louis), a black cowboy (Bob Lemmons), and a couple separated by slavery (Jake and Mundy).

McKissack, Frederick and Patricia McKissack. 1990. *W. E. B. DuBois*. This biography emphasizes the dedication, determination, disappointments, and triumphs of the great African American writer, educator, historian, sociologist, and journalist who was an intellectual and one of the most important civil rights leaders of the twentieth century.

114
Ritchie, Andrew. 1986. *Major Taylor*. This is the dramatic story of Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor, who, against enormous odds, in 1899 became a world champion cyclist and the first black American athlete to win a national title.


Washington, Booker T. 1900. *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography*. This autobiography traces the upward path of its author from his slave origins to his position as the foremost African American leader and educator of his time.
MATERIALS
BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
Excerpts from an Address at the Atlanta Cotton Exposition (1895)

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors and Citizens.

One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success. I but convey to you, Mr. President and Directors, the sentiment of the masses of my race when I say that in no way have the value and manhood of the American Negro been more fittingly and generously recognized than by the managers of this magnificent Exposition at every stage of its progress. It is a recognition that will do more to cement the friendship of the two races than any occurrence since the dawn of our freedom.

Not only this, but the opportunity here afforded will awaken among us a new era of industrial progress. Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill; that the political convention or stump speaking had more attractions than starting a dairy farm or truck garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, “Water, water; we die of thirst!” The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” A second time the signal, “Water, water; send us water!” ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River. To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbour, I would say: “Cast down your bucket where you are”—cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.

Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man’s chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial
and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it
learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of
life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow
our opportunities.
W. E. B. DUBOIS

“The Talented Tenth” (1903)

The problem of training the Negro is to-day immensely complicated by the fact that the whole question of the efficiency and appropriateness of our present systems of education, for any kind of child, is a matter of active debate, in which final settlement seems still afar off. Consequently it often happens that persons arguing for or against certain systems of education for Negroes, have these controversies in mind and miss the real question at issue. The main question, so far as the Southern Negro is concerned, is: What under the present circumstance, must a system of education do in order to raise the Negro as quickly as possible in the scale of civilization? The answer to this question seems to me clear: It must strengthen the Negro’s character, increase his knowledge and teach him to earn a living. Now it goes without saying, that it is hard to do all these things simultaneously or suddenly, and that the same time it will not do to give all the attention to one and neglect the others; we could give black boys trades, but that alone will not civilize a race of ex-slaves; we might simply increase their knowledge of the world, but this would not necessarily make them wish to use this knowledge honestly; we might seek to strengthen character and purpose, but to what end if this people have nothing to eat or to wear? A system of education is not one thing, nor does it have a single definite object, nor is it a mere matter of schools. Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house walls, which molds and develops men. If then we start out to train an ignorant and unskilled people with a heritage of bad habits, our system of training must set before itself two great aims—the one dealing with knowledge and character, the other part seeking to give the child the technical knowledge necessary for him to earn a living under the present circumstances. These objects are accomplished in part by the opening of the common schools on the one, and of the industrial schools on the other. But only in part, for there must also be trained those who are to teach these schools—men and women of knowledge and culture and technical skill who understand modern civilization, and have the training and aptitude to impart it to the children under them. There must be teachers, and teachers of teachers, and to attempt to establish any sort of a system of common and industrial school training, without first (and I say first advisedly) without first providing for the higher training of the very best teachers, is simply throwing your money to the winds.

I would not deny, or for a moment seem to deny, the paramount necessity of teaching the Negro to work, and to work steadily and skillfully; or seem to depreciate in the slightest degree the important part industrial schools must play in the accomplishment of these ends, but I do say, and insist upon it, that it is industrialism drunk with its vision of success, to imagine that its own work can be accomplished without providing for the training of broadly cultured men and women to teach its own teachers, and to teach the teachers of the public schools.
Men of America, the problem is plain before you. Here is a race transplanted through the criminal foolishness of your fathers. Whether you like it or not the millions are here, and here they will remain. If you do not lift them up, they will pull you down. Education and work are the levers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work—it must teach Life. The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.

Unit 9
World War I and the Great Migration, 1915–1920

BACKGROUND

African Americans were very much a part of the effort, in the words of President Woodrow Wilson, “to make the world safe for democracy.” Indeed, between the American entry in World War I (April 1917) and the war’s end (November 1918), roughly 386,000 blacks served in the nation’s armed forces (380,000 in the army, 6,000 in the navy), making up about 10 percent of the total wartime American servicemen population. Approximately 200,000 black soldiers saw service in Europe; 38,000 served as combat troops, while the rest performed backbreaking chores in labor and stevedore battalions. In combat engagement 750 African Americans were killed and 5,000 wounded.

Racial discrimination pervaded the experience of black World War I servicemen. Blacks, for example, were excluded outright from the marines and army aviation corps and were restricted to serving as messmen (for example cooks and stewards) in the navy. It was assumed that blacks were less capable of combat duty than whites, so in order to minimize the number of black combat troops, the four standing black regiments (Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry; Ninth and Tenth Calvary) all in existence by 1870, were assigned stateside during the war. Only the newly formed Ninety-third Division, composed of national guard units from several states and one regiment of draftees, and the Ninety-second Division, composed solely of draftees, saw combat in France. The four regiments of the Ninety-third were in fact assigned to the French army, becoming the only American units completely integrated into a foreign army; they wore French uniforms and used French weapons. Further, black draftees were organized overwhelmingly into all-black labor battalions that, both at home and in Europe, performed arduous tasks (loading and unloading ships, felling trees, building and repairing roads and railroads, and building warehouses and supply dumps). Finally, because it was felt that the army and the war effort would be best served by having black troops led by white officers, a ceiling was placed on the advance of black officers beyond the junior grades; all black troops were commanded by whites.

The 38,000 African Americans who saw combat in France fought well on the whole, especially the Ninety-third Division. Members of New York’s famed 369th Infantry Regiment (the “Men of Bronze”), the division’s first regiment to arrive in Europe, were the first black soldiers to whom the French awarded the Croix de Guerre, their highest military honor. Needham Roberts of Trenton was one of the first two black recipients of this award.

Wartime experience helped many black servicemen resist racial discrimination more aggressively on their return home. Some developed this attitude through training for combat duty. In others it came as part of a broadened world view, acquired by simply leaving home and witnessing alternative living and work situations. And those who traveled to France were generally treated there with a civility that prob-
ably made white American racial bigotry more difficult to tolerate.

Although blacks served in World War I, black leadership was divided over their service. Among those who believed African American participation would earn the gratitude of whites, improve the racial climate at home, and give new meaning to American democracy were W. E. B. DuBois, whose famous "Close Ranks" editorial in the Crisis of July 1918 expressed this view, and Emmett J. Scott, Tuskegee Institute's secretary, who served as the adviser on black affairs to the secretary of the army. A. Philip Randolph, who was the coeditor of Messenger, a labor/socialist publication, and would become black America's foremost labor leader, was perhaps the most outspoken foe of African American participation. In fact, for urging blacks to resist conscription he, along with Chandler Owen, the other editor of Messenger, was arrested in 1918 under the Espionage Act of 1917. Charges against them were ultimately dropped.

Perhaps the greatest effect of World War I on African American life was its triggering of the first phase of the Great Migration, the unprecedented movement of southern blacks northward. During this phase, between 1915 and 1920 (the second phase was between 1920 and 1930), approximately 500,000 blacks trekked northward; the years between 1916 and 1918 had the greatest volume. After believing, wrongly, that blacks would return quickly to the South, white southerners became truly alarmed as the pace of migration quickened. They resorted to legal (the arrest of northern labor recruiters) and extralegal (refusal to sell African Americans train tickets for travel to northern cities) methods to prevent the relocation of the black labor force that had supported the southern economy.

The migration reflected a push/pull syndrome. The pull involved the great wartime demand for labor in the North. This demand resulted from the increase in war production, the draft's removal of many workers from the labor force, and the unwillingness of European immigrants, the traditional source of labor for northern industries, to risk the wartime dangers of trans-Atlantic boat travel. Other factors that helped lure migrants northward were the region's relative greater racial safety, its better educational opportunities, the specific urgings to come North by the black northern press, especially Robert Abbott's Chicago Defender, and labor recruiters sent South by northern companies to persuade African Americans to take jobs in the North. Push factors in the South that prompted blacks to leave the region included the Jim Crow system and its attendant threats of lynchings and mob violence. Many sharecroppers left after becoming unemployed when heavy rains and the boll weevil that flourishes under wet conditions combined to ruin cotton crops in 1915 and 1916.

New Jersey was one of the principal states to which southern blacks moved in great numbers between 1915 and 1920. Aside from the availability of jobs and the general search for a better life, some migrants settled in New Jersey because its cities were of a medium size, offering a somewhat slower urban pace than the great northern metropolises. The state's cities also accommodated the spillover from the large migration to its two neighbors, New York City (Harlem in particular) and Philadelphia. Of New Jersey's major cities, Newark and Trenton had by 1920 experienced the greatest percentage increase in black population. For both cities the number of African Americans nearly doubled, Newark's black population rising from 9,475 in 1910 to 16,977 in 1920, and Trenton's from 2,581 in 1910 to 4,315 in 1920. Reflecting chain migration, migrants to New Jersey and other northeastern states tended to come from southern states along the Atlantic coastline (Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida) while migrants to the midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio followed a migration route that led directly north from such states as Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Louisiana.

The Great Migration had many consequences, among them the first entry of black workers on a large scale into the industrial work force—the making of a black urban proletariat. The rapid rise of large, racially segregated communities in the urban North—black ghettos—was another, one with enormous implications for black political power and black business opportunities. Also, through the transporting of black southern folkways into the North, migrants transformed northern black cultural life. The "blues" and foodways were among the features of black southern culture transplanted to the North.

Northern white resistance to the migrants, the creation of racial friction and conflict, was another consequence of African American movement northward. White social and economic fears (the latter focusing on job competition) surfaced and prompted race riots in many northern cities. Such outbreaks of violence occurred in two years in particular: 1917 and 1919.

Newark witnessed a racial clash in 1917. Termed a "race riot" by the Newark Evening News, it occurred on September 3 and lasted for several hours. It was precipitated by a dispute arising from a dice game
involving black and white youths near Broome and Montgomery Streets, where the black population had recently increased appreciably. At its height, black and white mobs, armed with revolvers, knives, bottles, clubs, and bricks, fought each other. Many were injured and one black and one white were hospitalized. Fifteen blacks were arrested; the presiding judge at their arraignment questioned the fairness of the arrest of only blacks.

The most serious racial incident of 1917 took place in East Saint Louis, Illinois, when forty-two African Americans were killed. That eight whites lost their lives reflects clearly an increased black tendency, in the face of the upsurge in assaults by whites, to engage in retaliatory violence. This willingness to strike back was even more pronounced several weeks later in Houston, when members of the Twenty-fourth Infantry’s Third Battalion, after being insulted and beaten by whites, broke into their camp’s ammunition storage room, then marched into Houston and killed fifteen whites while suffering four casualties. Their perfunctory trial, which led to thirteen soldiers being hanged on charges of murder and mutiny, provoked considerable outrage in the black community nationwide.

The year 1919 witnessed an even greater number of riots, some twenty-six taking place during what was called the Red Summer. The riot in Chicago was by far the nation’s most devastating; thirteen days without law and order resulted in the deaths of twenty-three blacks and fifteen whites.

Helping to fuel increased interracial friction and strife (the number of black lynchings rose from 36 in 1917 to 76 in 1919) was the 1915 rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan in Atlanta, Georgia. In addition to African Americans, the new Klan targeted Jews, Catholics, and foreigners. In so doing, it reflected both the general xenophobia of the wartime period and the rise in nativist sentiment that occurred as the new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe entered this country between the late nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century on a scale unprecedented in immigration history.

In the face of the upsurge in white racism during and after the war, black nationalist and separatist sentiments appealed to African Americans on a greater scale. Perhaps the growth of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) exemplifies this best. Brought to this country in 1916 by the Jamaican-born Marcus Garvey, the UNIA, headquartered in Harlem, began its own newspaper in 1918—The Negro World—and in 1919 incorporated the Black Star Line, an ill-fated, three-ship fleet created primarily to effect better international trade and travel opportunities for blacks. By 1919 the UNIA claimed over two million members.

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**CORE LESSON**

Theme

World War I had a tremendous impact on the black American community. Through the demand it created for black labor in northern industrial cities, it effected the first truly massive movement of blacks out of the South. Black veterans, their horizons broadened, contributed to the emergence in the 1920s of what was called the New Negro, a black American more given to assuming a defiant protest mode in challenging white racism.

Materials and Preparation


The students should read the letters of black migrants to the *Chicago Defender* (see page 130) and become familiar with the Great Migration patterns shown on Map #7 (see page 128).

Students and the teacher should read pages 54–68 in *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History.*

**Time Period**

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

**Objectives/Activities**

**ACTIVITY 1**

*Compare* and *contrast* the opposing arguments black leaders voiced over black American participation in World War I.

Remind students that some black leaders (for example, W. E. B. DuBois) supported black participation in World War I, while others (for example, A. Philip Randolph) did not. Those in support argued that blacks would be rewarded for their patriotism, that the perception of being unpatriotic would only heighten hostility toward black Americans, that opposition to the war could lead to imprisonment, and that America, notwithstanding its flaws, was still the best place for black Americans. Those opposed to participation maintained that white America, because of its racist attitudes and practices, was undeserving of black support, that support would incline whites to take blacks for granted and continue their racist practices, and that blacks would encounter discrimination in the service. Divide the class into two groups and let the two groups of students debate the issue of black participation in World War I.

**Evaluation:** Have the students pretend they are (like Dr. W. E. B. DuBois) the editor of *Cr"is"is*. They should write a 500-word editorial that argues either for or against black participation in World War I.

**ACTIVITY 2**

*Analyze* a historical document as a primary source of information about the Great Migration.

Have students read copies of letters written to the *Chicago Defender* by prospective migrants (see page 130). Ask students what these letters reveal about the migrants (such as places of origin, educational background). Students should also use these letters as a basis for identifying those factors, some "push" and some "pull," that motivated multitudes of African Americans to leave the South during World War I.

**Evaluation:** Have students pretend they are a young black woman who, as a part of the Great Migration, has recently left Georgia and is now living in Newark. Have her write a letter home in which she mentions her reason(s) for leaving Georgia and what her living and work conditions are like in Newark. Point out to students that physical/sexual abuse by black and white men often motivated black women to leave the South.

**ACTIVITY 3**

*Identify* the Great Migration's main corridors.

Students should be informed that historically African Americans in certain parts of the South moved to particular northern areas. For example, blacks from Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, and Maryland have traditionally relocated to northern cities like Philadelphia, Newark, and New York City. Divide the class into two groups of migrants. One group should represent blacks who moved from the South to the North along the Atlantic coastline axis. The other group should be composed of those blacks who used the migration axis between midwestern cities like Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland and states like Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama. Have each group discuss life in its particular area of the North. For example, male newcomers to Chicago and Detroit might discuss working in the meatpacking and
automobile industries respectively while a counterpart who settled in Newark might talk about working on the docks. Northern weather, especially the winters, might also be a topic for discussion.

**Evaluation:** Have the students pretend they are a Newark journalist in 1919 whose assignment is to write about the recent influx of migrants from the South. The article should include Map #8 (see page 129), on which the journalist should indicate the overall migration patterns associated with the Great Migration as shown on Map #7 (see page 128). It should also offer a profile of a recent black newcomer from South Carolina who points out what he or she likes or dislikes about Newark.

**Supplemental Activities**

1. Show students the film *Men of Bronze*, an exciting documentary about the all-black 369th Regiment, which served in France under the Fourth French Army during World War I (58 minutes). It can be obtained from Worldview Entertainment, Inc., Killiam Collection, 500 Greenwich Street, Suite 501A, New York, New York 10013 (212-925-4291).


**Key Persons**

**Robert Abbott.** Founder and editor of the *Chicago Defender*, a major black newspaper that encouraged African Americans to leave the South and migrate north.

**Marcus Garvey.** Jamaican native and black nationalist who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, the largest black mass protest movement ever in the United States.

**A. Philip Randolph.** Coeditor of *The Messenger*, a labor/socialist publication, and an outspoken opponent of black participation in World War I. He later became the foremost black labor leader as the head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids and one of the outstanding civil rights leaders of the 20th century.

**Emmett J. Scott.** The Secretary of Tuskegee Institute, he served as the adviser on black affairs to the secretary of the army during World War I.

**Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading**

**FOR TEACHERS**


Harris, William. 1982. *The Harder We Run*. A short, data-filled study of black workers from the Civil War to the 1970s that includes an examination of migration and urbanization.

Haynes, Robert. 1976. *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917*. This story of black soldiers
rioting shows the kind of discriminatory conditions blacks in the military faced on the homefront during World War I, their reactions, and the shameful consequences they suffered.

Henri, Florette. 1975. *Black Migration*. A study that examines the push/pull of the Great Migration to the North and how northern urban life was altered by this movement.

Higham, John. 1955. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1880–1925*. Classic study of the racist and ethnocentric reactions in a generally xenophobic America to changing socioeconomic developments at the turn of the century. It provides a basic backdrop to understanding the underlying condemnation blacks faced when they migrated to the North before and during the Great Migration.


Kusmer, Kenneth. 1976. *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870–1930*. This volume examines black life in Cleveland from 1870 to the Depression and the racial problems the black community encountered.


FOR STUDENTS

Barbeau, Arthur, and Florette Henri. 1974. *Unknown Soldiers: Black American Troops in World War I*. Best account of the black doughboys, whose battlefield exploits were more heralded by their European allies, particularly the French, than by their fellow Americans.


MATERIALS
Map 7
The Great Migration

The general directions of the main routes of the Great Migration of 1915–1930.
Map 8
The United States at the Time of the Great Migration
Mobile, Ala, 4-26-17

Dear Sir Bro: I take great pane in dropping you a few lines hoping that this will find you enjoying the best of health as it leave me at this time present. Dear Sir I seen in the Defender where you was helping us a long in securing a posision an I can do cement work an stone work. I written to a firm in Birmingham an they sent me a blank stateing $2.00 would get me a ticket an pay 10 per ct of my salary for the 1st month and $24.92c would be paid after I reach Detroit and went to work where they sent me to work. I had to stay there until I pay them the sum of $24.92c so I want to leave Mobile for there. If there nothing there for me to make a support for myself and family. My wife is seamstress. We want to get away the 15 or 20 of May so please give this matter your earnest consideration an let me hear from you by return mail as my bro. in law want to get away to. He is a carpenter by trade. So please help us as we are in need of your help as we wanted to go to Detroit but if you says no we go where ever you sends us until we can get to Detroit. We expect to do whatever you says. There is nothing here for the colored man but a hard time wich these southern crackers gives us. We has not had any work to do in 4 wks. and every thing is high to the colored man so please let me hear from you by return mail. Please do this for your brother.

Mobile, Ala., April 25, 1917

Sir: I was reading in the paper about the Colored race and while reading it I seen in it where cars would be here for the 15 of May which is one month from to day. Will you be so kind as to let me know where they are coming to and I will be glad to know because I am a poor woman and have a husband and five children living and three dead one single and two twin girls six months old today and my husband can hardly make bread for them in Mobile. This is my native home but it is not fit to live in just as the Chicago Defender say it says the truth and my husband only get $1.50 a day and pays $7.50 a month for house rent and can hardly feed me and his self and children. I am the mother of 8 children 25 years old and I want to get out of this dog hold because I dont know what I am raising them up for in this place and I want to get to Chicago where I know they will be raised and my husband crazy to get there because he know he can get more to raise his children and will you please let me
know where the cars is going to stop so that he can come where he can take care of me and my children. He get there a while and then he can send for me. I heard they wasn't coming here so I sent to find out and he can go and meet them at the place they are going and go from there to Chicago. No more at present. hoping to hear from you soon from your needed and worried friend.

Montgomery, Ala., May 7, 1917

My dear Sir: I am writing to solicit your aid and advice as to how I may best obtain employment at my trade in your city. I shall be coming that way on the 15th of May and I wish to find immediate employment if possible.

I have varied experience as a compositor and printer. Job composition is my hobby. I have not experience as linotype operator, but can fill any other place in a printing office. Please communicate with me at the above address at once. Thanking you in advance for any assistance and information in the matter.

Augusta, Ga., May 12, 1917

Dear Sir: Just for a little information from you I would like to know whether or not I could get in touch with some good people to work for with a firm because things is awful hear in the south let me here from you soon as possible what ever you do dont publish my name in your paper but I think peple as a race ought to look out for one another as Christians friends I am a schuffur and I cant make a living for my family with small pay and the people is getting so bad with us black peple down south hear. now if you ever help your race now is the time to help me to get my family away. food stuf is so high. i will look for answer by return mail. dont publish my name in your paper but let me hear from you at once.

Unit 10

The Decade of the Twenties: From the Great Migration to the Great Depression

BACKGROUND

The passage of the immigration laws of 1921 and 1924 restricted the volume of southern and eastern European immigrants entering the United States. The demand for African American labor in the North thus persisted during the 1920s and the large-scale movement of southern blacks to northern industrial centers continued. This movement, peaking between 1923 and 1925, was also prompted by the slow decline in cotton production that began around 1923 with the advent of synthetic fabrics. With the Great Depression, which was rooted in the stock market crash in October of 1929, the northern movement of African Americans declined considerably.

As part of the Great Migration, a steady stream of southern blacks continued to pour into New Jersey in the 1920s; the state’s African American population increased by roughly 78 percent (from 117,192 to 208,828). Of the state’s major cities, Newark again registered the highest percentage increase in black population; its 38,880 blacks in 1930 were more than double its 16,977 blacks in 1920.

The arrival of black southerners to northern urban centers in the twenties facilitated the continued development of black ghettos. The first and largest of these, which also resulted from a large influx of black Caribbean immigrants, was New York’s Harlem. Heightened demand for black housing and various discriminatory housing practices, notably restrictive covenants, and block-busting, were the principal features of the ghetto-creation process, itself essentially a function of the exclusion of blacks from white residential areas.

With the rise of the ghettos came a host of major social ills, such as overcrowded and deteriorated housing, inadequate sanitation, a high incidence of communicable diseases, and crime. These features of ghetto life soon led to an equation of ghettos with slums.

Life in the “promised land” witnessed other developments as well. On the political front the expansion of a black electorate enabled African Americans to gain public office in the North for the first time. For example, Oscar DePriest, a Chicago Republican, was elected in 1928 to the House of Representatives, becoming the first black congressman since Reconstruction and the first of his race from the North. It was also during this decade that the first black New Jerseyan was elected to the state legislature. This was Walter G. Alexander, a Republican from Orange, who entered the state assembly in 1921.

The growing ghetto population also facilitated the expansion of the black community’s institutional structure, as blacks sought refuge among themselves. Black churches, the community’s traditional social centers, multiplied in number and enlarged their congregations; some even held double services in order to accommodate the spiritual and social needs of ghetto dwellers. Storefront churches, appealing to those African Americans who desired a more intimate and emotional form of religious worship, appeared
for the first time and proliferated. The concentration of blacks in specific areas of a city also encouraged the growth of social clubs and fraternal orders and benefited black professionals and businessmen who relied on the patronage of the African American masses.

Coinciding with the growth of black ghettos was greater interracial tension and strife in northern cities. Competition for jobs, which were not as plentiful as they had been during wartime, in particular contributed to much of the hostility northern black urbanites experienced. Many hotels and restaurants that had previously served African Americans now barred them. Jim Crow schools surfaced in many northern communities, usually the result of school boundaries drawn by school boards and the transfer policies of such bodies. And northern blacks were also affected by the rapid growth of a Ku Klux Klan that was national in scope. By the middle of the decade this organization had over two million members, many of whom could be found in New Jersey, which ranked tenth among states in Klan membership. With the addition of its southern blacks to its many "new immigrants," many of whom were Catholics and Jews, the state was indeed home to most of the targets of the new Klan’s bigoted propaganda. Opposition to the Klan in New Jersey peaked in 1923 with two anti-Klan riots in Perth Amboy.

The first anti-Klan riot took place on June 5, when a mob composed of Poles, Russians, Hungarians, Czechs, Irish, Danes, Jews, Italians, Germans, and African Americans, many from surrounding communities, gathered outside of a Klan meeting and stormed the hall. They attempted to attack the Klan spokesman, but the police engineered his escape. The protesters were dispersed an hour later, after overturning trash cans and damaging several automobiles. The second riot, much larger, occurred on August 30. Between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. more than six thousand people from the same ethnic groups that had disrupted the June 5 meeting assembled outside a hall where the Klan was to meet. At around 8:30 they tried to enter. Several Klansmen were severely beaten as they fled, and the police attempted to rescue the rest by escorting them through the back doors and windows into waiting paddy wagons. But the mob discovered these efforts, brushed aside the police, and beat the Klansmen it captured. Thereupon, for the first time in New Jersey history, a riot alarm was sounded for the state police. Even after the troopers arrived, however, the crowd continued to throw rocks and bottles at the meeting hall and to overturn and burn automobiles thought to belong to Klansmen. Indeed, the disturbance spread into the downtown area of the city. Around 5:00 a.m. the besieged Klansmen were finally evacuated and normalcy was restored.

Finally, the 1920s also witnessed the emergence of what was called the New Negro. This term referred in one sense to a more militant, defiant, and assertive mood by black Americans in responding to racial injustice in the postwar period. Returning black veterans, many of whom had been trained to be violent and combat-ready and had received civil treatment from the French, in particular contributed to this mood. Evidence of it was seen when African Americans took up arms to defend themselves from attacking whites as, for example, in the race riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921, in which nine whites and twenty-one blacks were killed. In the Sweet Incident in Detroit in 1925, a white mob attacked a home purchased in a white neighborhood by a black physician, Dr. O. H. Sweet, and a member of the mob was killed by gunfire from the house. With the help of the NAACP, Dr. Sweet and several others who were in the house during the attack were acquitted of the charges brought against them.

The term the New Negro was also associated with the Harlem Renaissance. This cultural movement composed mainly of Harlem-based artists and intellectuals, flowered during the 1920s and helped make Harlem the center of African American intellectual and cultural life. It is perhaps best remembered as a literary expression; Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, James Weldon Johnson, Wallace Thurman, and Jessie Redmon Fauset (a New Jersey native) were among its more celebrated figures. Such artists, aware that a few white writers (for example, Eugene O’Neill and Carl Van Vechten) were beginning to treat the Negro in their works, also began to draw on themes from black life and history. They used their prose and poetry to assail social and economic wrongs, to proclaim pride in the black race and its cultural heritage, to perpetuate a group identity, and to assert the value of a black subculture.

Others identified with the Harlem Renaissance were performing artists such as the actor/singer Paul Robeson (a New Jersey native), singer Roland Hayes, composer J. Rosamond Johnson, and the jazz musicians Duke Ellington, Eubie Blake, Noble Sissle, Fletcher Henderson, and Louis Armstrong. They were joined by visual artists such as the painters Aaron Douglas, William H. Johnson, Hale Woodruff, Palmer Hayden, and Malvin Gray Johnson and the sculptors Augusta Savage, Richmond Barthe, and Sargent Johnson, as well as such intellectuals as the bibliophile Arthur Schomburg, Charles S. Johnson, E.
Franklin Frazier, A. Philip Randolph, Cyril V. Briggs, Hubert Harrison, W. A. Domingo, and Walter White. Alain Locke, a Howard University philosophy professor and the first black Rhodes Scholar, was the foremost advocate and interpreter of the Harlem Renaissance. His anthology, *The New Negro*, published in 1925, was instrumental in conveying the artistic and social goals of the movement. And another Washington, D.C. resident also exemplified the extraordinary scope and character of black intellectual and scholarly life in the 1920s. This was Carter G. Woodson, the "Father of African American History." Founder in 1915 of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and the *Journal of Negro History* the following year, in 1926 Woodson inaugurated the celebration of *Negro History Week*, which in 1976 was transformed into Black History Month.

America’s failure to practice democracy on the homefront after World War I also stimulated a defiant mood that enabled the black nationalist UNIA to continue to attract support during the 1920s and to become the largest black American protest movement ever. With its emphasis on African Redemption, race pride, self-help, and black business development, the UNIA replaced “accommodationism” as the major ideology in opposition to the militant integrationism identified with W. E. B. DuBois and the NAACP.

Marcus Garvey was imprisoned in 1925 for using the mails for fraudulent purposes; he was released and repatriated to Jamaica in 1927. His confinement and departure, which separated him from his followers and exacerbated factional disputes and rivalries within the UNIA, hastened the UNIA’s decline. The hardships of the Great Depression, which eroded the financial resources of many Garveyites, also contributed to the UNIA’s difficulties. Meanwhile, the NAACP came to play an even greater role in fighting racial injustice, focusing on the passage of a federal antilynching bill and the use of litigation to secure enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Although federal antilynching legislation was never enacted, the NAACP did rally considerable public support for this cause, and the number of lynchings decreased during the 1920s.

Still another important area of organizational activity among African Americans during the twenties was the labor movement. In 1925 A. Philip Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids (Pullman Porters). Through serving as the president of this union, the largest black labor body in the nation’s history, Randolph emerged as the black community’s foremost labor spokesman of all time and one of its most prominent civil rights leaders. A division of the Pullman Porters was organized in 1936 in Jersey City, a key railroad terminal until the 1950s, and Nora Fant, president of this division’s ladies auxiliary, was a member of the Ladies Auxiliary International Executive Board.

As the decade began to wind down, the economic prospects of many in the black community began to dim. Indeed, as early as 1927 the demand for black unskilled and semiskilled labor in northern industry had slackened considerably, and it was estimated that a third of the black northern industrial work force was unemployed. With the market crash in October 1929, the economic difficulties of black Americans only worsened.

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**CORE LESSON**

**Theme**

During the 1920s southern blacks continued to move to northern industrial centers in massive numbers, in the process forming the early black ghettos. By 1990 over 90 percent of the African American population could be found in urban areas, so the rise of these kinds of communities essentially defined the nature of black life for the remainder of the twentieth century.
Materials and Preparation


Students should read the excerpt from Marcus Garvey’s “An Appeal To The Soul of White America” (see page 141).


Time Period

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

**ACTIVITY 1**

Assess the Harlem Renaissance and identify its major figures in the areas of literature, music, and art.

Have students read selections of poems by Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and other writers associated with the Harlem Renaissance and then lead them in discussing the themes and images employed by these writers. Or have students bring in pictures of the works of the visual artists associated with the Harlem Renaissance for a discussion of the themes and images shown in these works. You might also play for the students some recordings of musicians associated with the Harlem Renaissance and then discuss the contributions of these artists.

**Evaluation:** Have students write a 500-word essay on one of the major poets of the Harlem Renaissance. Students should provide biographical information on the subject and indicate the way in the subject’s poetry conveys the thoughts and feelings of the New Negro, that is, a black more assertive in seeking to end racial injustice in America and more conscious and proud of the African ancestral heritage.

**ACTIVITY 2**

Explain the rise of the black ghettos as a consequence of the Great Migration, including the ghetto-formation process, and its social, economic, and political consequences.

After leading the students in compiling a list of the ways in which African American life in the North was altered with the formation of ghettos (such as the election of black public officials, growth of black businesses, creation of storefront churches, and proliferation of black social organizations), point out to the students that long-time black residents of the cities to which southern migrants flocked often resented the arrival of these newcomers. Ask the students to imagine they were a long-time resident. How would they have reacted to the influx of black southerners? What advantages would they see in having them in their community? What disadvantages?

**Evaluation:** Have the students write a 500-word essay indicating how they, as a long-time black resident of Camden, would have responded to the arrival in Camden of large numbers of black migrants from the South. Would they have welcomed their arrival? Why? Or would they have expressed dissatisfaction with the arrival of the migrants? Why?
ACTIVITY 3

**Assess** the philosophy and activities of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association, the largest black mass protest movement ever in the United States.

Have students read the excerpt from Marcus Garvey’s article (see page 141). Then divide the class into two groups. Have one group support the black nationalism advanced by Garvey, which was based on his belief that the black race would be best served by the creation of a strong and unified African continent, and that black Americans were key to the realization of this goal. Such a strong pan-African entity would protect the interests of black people irrespective of the country of which they were citizens. Have the other group oppose Garvey’s black nationalist thinking, pointing out the need for black Americans to devote all their energies to gaining all of their rights and privileges as American citizens.

**Evaluation:** Have the students write a 500-word essay in which they discuss the pros and cons of Garvey’s militant self-help program, which stressed black nationalism and racial pride.

**Supplemental Activities**

1. **Show students the film From These Roots** (28 minutes). The Harlem Renaissance, its meaning and significance, is the focus of this documentary. It can be obtained from The Black Filmmaker Foundation, 375 Greenwich Street, New York, New York 10013 (212-941-3944).

2. **Show students the film Marcus Garvey: Towards Black Nationhood** (42 minutes). This documentary examines the career of the pioneer black nationalist from his birth in Jamaica to his death in London. Garvey (1887–1940) captured the imagination of black Americans during the 1920s with his impassioned call for an independent and unified Africa. This film shows how Garvey’s legacy inspired the civil rights movement in the United States and black liberation movements throughout the world. It can be obtained from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838).

**Key Persons**

**Walter G. Alexander.** This Orange, New Jersey, resident became in 1921 the first African American elected to the New Jersey State Assembly.

**Louis Armstrong.** Outstanding jazz trumpeter and one of the few truly innovative figures in jazz music.

**Contee Cullen.** One of the finest poets of the Harlem Renaissance, Cullen is perhaps best known for his “Heritage,” which focuses on his African roots.

**Oscar DePriest.** Chicago Republican who in 1928 became the first African American elected to the House of Representatives after the post-Reconstruction period.

**Duke Ellington.** Composer and pianist whose orchestra, which came to fame through its 1927 engagement at Harlem’s Cotton Club, was one of the most outstanding in the jazz idiom.

**Jessie Redmon Fauset.** A native of Fredericksville, New Jersey, Fauset was a novelist, editor, teacher, and poet whose writings provided the first real and compassionate portrait of black middle-class life.

**Langston Hughes.** The most famous figure of the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes was a prolific writer of poems, novels, short stories, plays, essays, and librettos.
Zora Neale Hurston. The most prolific woman writer identified with the Harlem Renaissance, Hurston, as an anthropologist, was also a pioneer in the study of black American folktales and folklore.

James Weldon Johnson. A lawyer, diplomat, and civil rights activist (he was the first black NAACP executive director) who began to write poetry late in his life, Johnson wrote the lyrics to “Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing” and edited several major volumes of poetry during the Harlem Renaissance.

Alain Locke. The first black Rhodes Scholar, a professor of philosophy at Howard University, and the foremost interpreter of the Harlem Renaissance as reflected in his The New Negro (1925).

Claude McKay. A Jamaican, McKay is perhaps best known for his protest poem “If We Must Die” (1923) and his novel Home to Harlem (1928).

Paul Robeson. A native of Princeton, and an outstanding athlete, scholar, lawyer, stage and screen actor and singer, Robeson’s artistic career began in the 1920s when he starred in The Emperor Jones (1924) and All God’s Chillun Got Wings (1924).

Augusta Savage. Outstanding sculptor who worked primarily in marble, plaster, and wood and used her art to express her opposition to racial injustice.

Arthur Schomburg. A Puerto Rican of African descent, Schomburg was a writer, curator, and bibliophile whose massive collection formed the basis for the New York Public Library’s Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Jean Toomer. On the strength of Cane (1923), he is considered one of the most original American writers of his time.

Carter G. Woodson. Considered the “Father of African American History” because he authored twenty books dealing with black American history, founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (1915), founded the Journal of Negro History (1916), and inaugurated the celebration of Negro History Week (1926).

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS

Anderson, Jervis. 1982. This Was Harlem: A Cultural Portrait, 1900–1950. A fascinating panoramic survey of a half-century in the life of what is probably black America’s most famous community. It covers the social and cultural life of Harlem from the beginning of its small black population at the turn of the century.

Cooper, Wayne. 1987. Claude McKay: Rebel Sojourner in the Harlem Renaissance. McKay was one of the leading figures of the Harlem Renaissance. The Jamaican born poet was the most militant on the Harlem literary scene in the 1920s. Cooper quite adroitly traces his career from Jamaica to the United States to Europe and his return to America.

Duberman, Martin. 1988. *Paul Robeson*. An exhaustive, definitive biography that offers a broad picture of national and global developments, including the post–World War II years, that served as the backdrop to Robeson’s life.

Garvey, Amy Jacques ed. 1925. *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*. Marcus Garvey built the Universal Negro Improvement Association into the largest mass movement of black people in America or the world. His wife edited this volume of his speeches and writings.

Hemenway, Robert E. 1978. *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography*. The most comprehensive biography of one of the great literary figures of the Harlem Renaissance.

Huggins, Nathan ed. 1976. *Voices From The Harlem Renaissance*. An excellent collection of essays, poems, short stories, and excerpts from novels from the Renaissance years. Some of the shorter works would provide a class with an introduction to the themes and ideas current among black intellectuals during this period.


FOR STUDENTS


Hughes, Langston. 1940. *The Big Sea*. An autobiography by the most famous of the Harlem Renaissance writers whose literary career transcended far beyond the period. Although somewhat long for the average high school student, it is very readable and a fascinating survey of the personalities of the Harlem Renaissance.

—. 1958. *Tambourines To Glory*. This comedic novel, set in the 1920s, describes two radically different Harlem women who decide to start a church of their own. One, Essie, is a good, honest woman; the other, Laura, is motivated simply by the desire to make money and live it up. When they make money, they set in motion a number of hilarious incidents.

—. 1958. *The Langston Hughes Reader: The Selected Writings Of Langston Hughes*. This comprehensive anthology combines highlights from Hughes’s novels, short stories, plays, poems, songs, and essays that made him famous with many previously unpublished writings.


Killens, John O. 1954. *Youngblood*. This novel tells the moving story of a black family, the Youngbloods, living in the 1920s in a Georgia factory town.
Lyons, Mary E. 1990. *Sorrow’s Kitchen: The Life and Folklore of Zora Neale Hurston*. Zora Neale Hurston struggled from her childhood in a small Florida town to her later life in New York City to be herself, to get an education, and make her mark. That she succeeded is remarkable considering the time and the roles then prescribed for black women. Her accomplishments were for a time eclipsed, but they have recently been restored to their true importance through the efforts of black writers such as Alice Walker. The text contains eleven excerpts from Hurston’s writings and is liberally sprinkled with photographs.

McKay, Claude. 1937. *A Long Way from Home*. This autobiography is as enlightening as Hughes’s. In addition, it contains interesting portraits of white literary bohemia in the 1920s and penetrating insights into a young Soviet nation based upon McKay’s visit.

McKissack, Frederick, and Patricia McKissack. 1989. *A Long Hard Journey: The Story of the Pullman Porter*. This is a history of the Pullman porters and their union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids, founded by A. Phillip Randolph in 1925. Covering a fifty-year period, this account focuses on the porters’ lives and working conditions, the development of the union and its struggles for recognition, and the role played by the Brotherhood in the civil rights movement.

Robeson, Paul. 1958. *Here I Stand*. This autobiography of an extremely talented and gifted black American also serves as a platform for him to answer the criticisms that led to his blacklisting during the McCarthy era.

Robeson, Susan. 1981. *The Whole World in His Hands: A Pictorial Biography of Paul Robeson*. This book, by Robeson’s granddaughter, can serve as a fine introduction to young readers who are not familiar with Paul Robeson. Numerous photographs and a well-written narrative provide insight into the life and times of her grandfather, perhaps New Jersey’s most illustrious native son.


Toomer, Jean. 1923. *Cane*. This classic literary work, consisting of sketches, poems, and a play, is set in rural Georgia in the 1920s and suggests the cultural and spiritual dislocation of black people in America.

Walker, Alice. 1979. *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing...And Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive*. This anthology contains selections from Zora Neale Hurston’s autobiographical works, collections of black American and West Indian folklore, essays, and fiction. Hurston examines the problems of love more than the problems of race and centers her works around the people of the all-black town Eatonville, Florida, and the tales they told on the porch of the town store.

MARCUS GARVEY

“An Appeal To The Soul of White America” (1923)

The Negro must have a country, and a nation of his own. If you laugh at the idea, then you are selfish and wicked, for you and your children do not intend that the Negro shall discommodate you in yours. If you do not want him to have a country and a nation of his own; if you do not intend to give him equal opportunities in yours; then it is plain to see that you mean that he must die, even as the Indian to make room for your generations.

Why should the Negro die? Has he not served America and the world? Has he not borne the burden of civilization in this Western world for three hundred years? Has he not contributed his best to America? Surely all this stands to his credit, but there will not be enough room and the one answer is “find a place.” We have found a place, it is Africa and as black men for three centuries have helped white men build America, surely generous and grateful white men will help black men build Africa. . . .

Let the Negroes have a Government of their own. Don’t encourage them to believe that they will become social equals and leaders of the whites in America, without first on their own account proving to the world that they are capable of evolving a civilization of their own.

From AN APPEAL TO THE SOUL OF WHITE AMERICA by Marcus Garvey. Soper Library, Morgan State University.
Unit 11
The 1930s: The Great Depression

BACKGROUND

The nation’s most devastating economic downturn, the Great Depression, affected blacks more adversely than any other group of Americans. Throughout this economic crisis unemployment rates were considerably higher for blacks than for whites. For example, among male workers in thirteen large cities in 1931 the rate was 31.7 percent for whites and 52 percent for blacks. And in spring 1933 while the general unemployment rate was 25 percent, for blacks it was 50 percent. Also, the percentage of African Americans receiving welfare was higher than that of whites. In 1935, 25 percent of the black population was receiving welfare as opposed to 15 percent of whites.

The reasons for greater black suffering during the Great Depression are linked to racial discrimination. For example, because African Americans were concentrated in those jobs and industries most sensitive to economic cycles and were the “last hired and first fired,” they became jobless in disproportionate numbers. Black unemployment was also aided by the racist attitude that whites should not be without work while blacks were employed; this resulted in whites moving blacks out of jobs they had traditionally occupied (such as porters, elevator operators, trash collectors). Further, racial wage differentials (wages for blacks averaged 30 percent less than for whites) caused African Americans to experience the Great Depression in harsher terms than whites. Finally, some New Deal policies had disastrous consequences for blacks. The Agricultural Assistance Agency’s crop subsidy program, for example, actually led to the displacement of about 192,000 black sharecroppers because, contrary to the program’s rules, they failed to receive any portion of the federal funds given white planters for reducing cotton production.

Because the Great Depression appreciably reduced employment opportunities in the North for blacks, the pace of southern black emigration slowed considerably during the thirties (an estimated three hundred thousand blacks left the South during this period). The Great Depression did, however, increase the number of African American migrant workers. Many were part of a major migratory cycle in which workers started in Florida in the spring, worked their way northward and completed the fall harvest in the North, then returned to Florida to begin the cycle anew. New Jersey was part of this cycle; workers came to the state to work primarily on produce farms in South and Central Jersey.

While the Great Depression generally caused black people to uproot themselves less than in the 1920s, organizational activity among them increased, prompted no doubt by conditions associated with the Great Depression. Some of these efforts were directed toward ameliorating the misery derived from the economic crisis. For example, black churches were spurred to widen their services to the community considerably. These services included providing food, clothing, and housing for the needy. Also, perhaps as a reaction to the despair and pervasive gloom that beset many African Americans, several black religious
sects, radically different from traditional black Baptist and Methodist churches, gained significant followings. Among these urban phenomena, all of which claimed black New Jerseyans as members, were the Nation of Islam and the United House of Prayer of All People of Daddy Grace. The Kingdom of Peace Movement of Father Divine, which offered free and inexpensive meals and lodgings, was perhaps the most popular of these religious groups. Among its properties were the 250-bed Divine Riviera Hotel in Newark and the Fairmont Hotel in Jersey City.

Perhaps as a response to the poor economic conditions of the Great Depression, black back-to-Africa sentiments found greater expression. These appeared mainly under the aegis of the Peace Movement of Ethiopia (PME), organized in 1932 by Mittie Lena Gordon of Chicago, a former UNIA member, and of the UNIA itself. By 1939 their collective efforts were responsible for two and a half million signatures on a petition calling for the repatriation of American blacks to West Africa. This petition was presented to Congress in support of a bill, sponsored by the arch-segregationist Senator Theodore Bilbo of Mississippi, that provided for the voluntary emigration of blacks to Liberia and nearby areas of West Africa.

Black protest took other forms during the 1930s. For example, blacks mounted successful campaigns to boycott white businesses that did not employ blacks. Such campaigns were conducted mainly in the ghettos of cities such as Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Cleveland, and especially Harlem, where blackspicketed before stores carrying signs with the motto “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work.” It was in Harlem, in 1935, that intense feelings against white merchants and landlords helped produce another form of protest, the black ghetto riot; this one was the first to have characteristics similar to the civil disorders of the 1960s. During this disturbance one black was killed, two hundred stores smashed, and more than two million dollars worth of damage done.

Electoral politics occupied the attention of black Americans during the Great Depression. In fact, as seen in the 1936 presidential election in which blacks voted overwhelmingly for Franklin Delano Roosevelt, blacks switched their political allegiance from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party during the 1930s. A factor in this development was the feeling among African Americans that many of President Roosevelt’s New Deal programs of relief and recovery were especially beneficial to them (for example, social security, unemployment insurance, and the minimum wage). Eleanor Roosevelt’s liberal support for civil rights also enhanced the president’s image among African American voters. An additional factor was Roosevelt’s appointment of a number of black advisers to government agencies. These advisers, known unofficially as Roosevelt’s black cabinet, included Robert C. Weaver (Interior), Mary McLeod Bethune (National Youth Administration), William H. Hastie (Interior), Robert L. Vann (Justice), and Eugene K. Jones (Commerce). This change in party support by African Americans was discernible in 1934, when Arthur W. Mitchell of Chicago, who had been a Republican, became the first black Democrat elected to Congress. It was also reflected in 1938 in New Jersey, when Guy Moorhead of Newark became the first black Democrat elected to the state assembly.

The Great Depression also witnessed the entry of African Americans into the ranks of organized labor in unprecedented numbers. The formation in 1938 of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), an outgrowth of the American Federation of Labor’s Committee for Industrial Organization established in 1935, was crucial to this development. In advancing the cause of industrial unionism, the CIO sought to organize all the workers in a given industry, including the steel, automobile, rubber, and meatpacking industries, in all of which blacks were concentrated in large numbers. This was in sharp contrast to the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the nation’s largest labor body, which mainly represented the interests of the skilled workers in the trades/crafts, and whose affiliates, if not excluding African Americans outright, permitted them to form segregated locals. Still, the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, which gave labor the right to organize, helped both the CIO and AFL to grow and increase the number of blacks in their affiliates. This act, however, was of little help to attempts by such bodies as the Southern Tenants Farmers Union to unionize black and white sharecroppers and tenant farmers.

The Communist Party, very active in attempting to address the problems and difficulties spawned by the Great Depression, continued its efforts to speak out against racial injustice and woo African Americans. These had begun in the late 1920s when it emphasized “self-determination” for the Black Belt as an oppressed nation. These efforts, through which the party expanded its influence in the black community during the 1930s, especially among intellectuals like Richard Wright and Max Yergan, took several forms. For example, some CIO organizers were party members who took a special interest in unionizing black workers. The party was also active in organizing black sharecroppers in Alabama, Mississippi,
Louisiana, and North Carolina. In addition, anti-vicrion activities on behalf of urban tenants, many of whom were black, won it support from some blacks, as did the party's work in defending nine blacks in the celebrated 1931 Scottsboro Case.

Finally, African Americans were not unmindful of the rising tide of Fascism in Europe during the 1930s, and they were among the earliest and most vocal Americans to condemn it, due in great part to the notion of white supremacy that accompanied fascist ideology. In the case of Mussolini-led Italy, the brutal Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, inspired by Mussolini’s grandiose vision of reviving the Roman Empire and his desire to avenge the humiliating defeat of the Italians in 1895 by the Ethiopians at Adowa, aroused black anger. In order to collect funds to aid Ethiopian refugees, blacks formed organizations such as the International Council of Friends of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian World Federation. The Nazi doctrine of Aryan supremacy that emerged from Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich in Germany also provoked African American anger and resentment. Blacks were particularly incensed by Hitler's snubbing of Jesse Owens during the 1936 Olympics in Berlin after Owens had won an unprecedented four gold medals. Given black opposition to Fascism, the boxing victories of Joe Louis over the Italian Primo Carnera in 1936 and the German Max Schmeling in 1938 (in which Louis avenged his 1936 defeat) acquired a special symbolic meaning for black Americans as "race" victories.

African Americans during the thirties were also well aware of the imperial policies and activities of Japan, the third of the Axis powers that would eventually oppose the United States in World War II. They were particularly aware of Japan’s efforts to win their support and allegiance by portraying itself as the savior of the darker races. It was mainly through the Pacific Movement of the Eastern World, organized in Chicago in 1932, that Japan sought to convince American blacks that it was the international leader of nonwhites in the struggle against white supremacy.

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**CORE LESSON**

**Theme**

Black Americans were more adversely affected by the Great Depression than other Americans, and perhaps out of frustration and/or attempts to cope with the agony and misery spawned by the depression, they engaged in considerable organizational activity during the thirties.

**Materials and Preparation**

Students should read either chapter 27 in *The African American Experience: A History* ("The Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929–1941") or chapter 38 in *African American History* ("Black America and the Great Depression").

Students should in addition read the excerpt from Lester B. Granger’s article (see page 150).

Students and the teacher should read pages 54–68 in *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History.*

The teacher should read chapters 19 and 20 in *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* ("The New Deal" and "The American Dilemma").

**Time Period**

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.
Objectives/Activities

**ACTIVITY 1**

**Identify** the major ways in which African Americans were affected adversely by the Great Depression.

Lead the students in discussing the great impact the Great Depression had on the black community (such as high unemployment rates, high welfare recipient rates, job displacement). As part of this discussion, indicate to students that various New Deal programs (for example, the Works Projects Administration) proved somewhat beneficial to black Americans. Also inform students that such programs encouraged black Americans to switch their allegiance from the Republican to the Democratic Party.

**Evaluation:** Have the students write a short story about a poor New Jersey African American family living during the Great Depression. The story should indicate how this family’s plight is alleviated somewhat by a New Deal program (such as the Civilian Conservation Corps).

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Describe** the major organizational activities in which black Americans engaged themselves during the 1930s.

In addition to mentioning the religious sects to which many African Americans flocked during the 1930s (for example, Father Divine’s Peace Movement and Daddy Grace’s United House of Prayer for All People), explain to the students that during the 1930s many black workers joined unions, especially those belonging to the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Then have students read Lester B. Granger’s “The Negro—Friend or Foe of Organized Labor?” (see page 150). Have them imagine they are black workers in the 1930s. Ask them which worker in Granger’s article they believe “acted wisely”? Divide the class into two groups, each group representing one of the workers, and let the groups debate the pros and cons of each worker’s position.

Be certain to let students know that historically craft unions (skilled workers) have been more hostile to African American workers than industrial unions (unskilled workers) have been. Explain that skilled workers, through apprenticeships, have always tried to maintain a scarcity of labor as a way of keeping wages high, and that this also led them to exclude women workers and immigrants from their ranks. Their strength lay in having relatively few workers whose skills could not be acquired in a relatively short time. Unskilled workers on the other hand, realizing that they were easily replaceable in case of a strike, have stressed the need to organize everyone in a given industry, including blacks and women. Their power is in their numbers.

**Evaluation:** Have the students write a short story in which the two main characters are black workers living during the Great Depression. They have been asked to join the autoworkers’ union, an industrial union. One is opposed, stating that the company has been nice to him. Among other things, it hired him when other companies discriminated against him, and it has contributed funds to his church. The other worker, while not denying the company has been nice, argues that all of this can easily be taken away, that without a union there is no job protection.

Supplemental Activities

1. Show students the film *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (96 minutes). It centers on the youthful years of the writer Maya Angelou in Arkansas during the Great Depression. It can be obtained from Knowledge Unlimited, P.O. Box 52, Madison, Wisconsin 53701-0052 (800-356-2303; 608-836-6660).
2. Show students the film *The Jesse Owens Story*, which, in the form of a docudrama, lays out the
life of Jesse Owens, the great track star who won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics (175 minutes). It can be obtained from Knowledge Unlimited, P.O. Box 52, Madison, Wisconsin 53701-0052 (800-356-2503; 608-836-6660).

3. Show students the film Almos' A Man (39 minutes). Adapted from Richard Wright's short story, it depicts a misunderstood black teenage farmworker in the 1930s rural South who thinks that owing a secondhand gun will give him manhood. He gets the gun and accidentally shoots a mule, opening himself anew to ridicule. To pay for the mule he must work for twenty-five months. He chooses instead to hop a freight train, gun in pocket, in search of power and dignity. This film can be obtained from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838).

Key Persons

Mary McLeod Bethune. The founder in 1904 of the Daytona Normal and Industrial School in Daytona, Florida, which is today the Bethune-Cookman College, she was the first black woman to hold a high position in the federal government and the only woman member of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “black cabinet” during the New Deal.

Father Divine. Born George Baker near Savannah, Georgia, around 1880, he founded the Peace Mission movement, which during the 1930s became the foremost of the nation’s black religious sects.

Daddy Grace. Charles Emmanuel Grace, a native of the Cape Verde Islands, established the House of Prayer for All People, one of the religious sects that black people joined in great numbers during the 1930s.

Joe Louis. The second black man to become heavyweight boxing champion of the world, a crown he won in 1938, Louis was probably the first quintessential “race hero.”

Arthur W. Mitchell. Chicago politician who became the first African American Democrat elected to Congress.

Jesse Owens. Great track star, he won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics, the first person ever to accomplish this feat.

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS

Carter, Dan. 1969. Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South. One of the most celebrated legal cases of the 1930s involved nine black youths falsely accused of raping two white women in Alabama. The case pitted southern injustice against the feuding defenses of the youths by the NAACP and the Communist Party.

Harris, William H. 1977. Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 1925–1937. Harris explores the origins and development of this important black labor union, which became a training ground for black labor leaders and civil rights leaders.

Martin, Charles H. 1976. *The Anglo Herndon Case and Southern Justice.* The case of a black Georgia Communist whose labor activism incurred the wrath of Georgia authorities and illuminated the undemocratic features of the American South in the 1930s.

Naison, Mark. 1983. *Communists in Harlem During the Depression.* This work thoroughly explores the efforts of the Communist Party to attract African Americans, the attractiveness of the party to a segment of the black population, and the party's militant anti-discrimination stance.

Painter, Nell. 1979. *The Narrative of Hosea Hudson, His Life as a Negro Communist in the South.* Painter tells the fascinating story of a man who dared to be black and Red in the American South when either could be dangerous.

Sitkoff, Harvard. 1973. *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: the Depression Decade.* In clear prose, Sitkoff surveys the organizational activities and thoughts of blacks during the Depression. The author sees the origins of the modern civil rights movement in the struggle of African Americans to secure equal treatment by both the private sector and New Deal agencies.

Weiss, Nancy. 1983. *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of F.D.R.* A comprehensive exploration of the factors behind the change of black voting patterns from historically overwhelmingly Republican to predominantly Democratic during the depression, a political realignment that has lasted to the present.


**FOR STUDENTS**


Mead, Chris. 1985. *Champion: Joe Louis, Black Hero in White America.* This biography shows that Joe Louis was not only a great fighter, but also a symbol of the potential progress of black people in America.


——. 1981. *Let the Circle Be Unbroken.* In this work of fiction—a sequel to *Roll of Thunder,
*Hear My Cry*, a Logan family friend is brought before an all-white jury on a charge of murder.


Wright, Richard. 1937. *Native Son*. Set in the 1930s, this is the story of twenty-year-old Bigger Thomas, who, hired as a chauffeur for a rich white family in Chicago, is bewildered by the kindness shown to him by the family and their Irish housekeeper and becomes involved in a tragedy of mammoth proportions.

MATERIALS
LESTER B. GRANGER

“The Negro—Friend or Foe of Organized Labor” (1935)

WHO HOLDS FIRST claim on the loyalty of the Negro worker—his fellow workers who toil side by side with him, or his employer who hires and pays him, sometimes against the wishes of white labor? Is it wisdom for Negro workers to protect the interest of white labor, which has so often kicked them in the face, or should they line up with employers against labor unions, even to the point of scabbing and strike-breaking?

This is no longer an academic question to be disputed to hairline extremities by soft-handed theoreticians. It is an urgent problem facing the black man in the street every day, the answer to which will have tremendous effect upon the fortunes of Negro populations in every large city of America within the next ten years. Visible results may come even sooner, so amazing is the speed with which our national industrial picture is being transformed under the pressure of economic upheaval. Every day comes account of some new development in Negro-white labor relations—some new problem to be solved presently by black workers for their permanent profit or loss.

A few months ago the staff of a New Jersey white daily newspaper protested to the publisher against unfair working conditions. They were members of the Newspaper Guild, and when their demands were not met they went out on strike. On the staff, and a member of the Guild, was a Negro editorial writer who had been given his chance and promoted from the ranks by the publisher personally. He refused to strike with his fellow union members, stating that the publisher needed him and he could not desert his employer-friend in this hour of need.

In New York, on the other hand, sixty employees of a whole sale drug company went out on strike to protest the dismissal of three workers because of union activities. Among the strikers was a Negro who held an excellent job and stood high in the employer’s favor. He walked out on strike, not because of any personal dissatisfaction, but because he resented the boss’s attempt to break up the union—because he felt that his own job could not be safe unless his fellow workers were also secure.

Which Negro acted wisely? Was the drug clerk a scatterbrained young fool, as his friends advised, to risk his own prospects in joining with his white fellow workers? Was the newspaper man a treacherous scab, to violate his union pledge and betray the strike for better working conditions? It is a question which comes up with increasing frequency to plague the Negro worker employed with a small concern where close personal relationships are established between worker and boss.

Unit 12

World War II: The Struggle for Democracy at Home and Abroad, 1940–1945

BACKGROUND

African Americans again saw fit to "close ranks" once the United States entered the war in 1941, notwithstanding their treatment as second-class citizens and the siren call by the Japanese for their support against the United States as World War II approached. But while they viewed Germany and Japan as the aggressors, they also saw the elimination of racial discrimination as a war aim. They sought to use the war to achieve greater opportunities and their full rights as American citizens—to make the Four Freedoms (freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear) enunciated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt available to themselves and to wage a Double V Campaign: victory against international fascism abroad and victory against white racism and bigotry at home.

Official American military policy regarding blacks during World War II can best be described as offering greater opportunity within the framework of segregation, that is, perpetuating the Jim Crow system while improving the treatment of blacks. As evidence of segregation one can point to the continued army policy of organizing blacks into separate units, a policy later adopted by the Army Air Corps and Marine Corps. Additional indicators of military racial discrimination involved the general opposition to blacks serving overseas and engaging in combat, as well as the practice of placing blacks under the command of white officers. By the war's end, however, although segregation was still the military's officially sanctioned policy, the manpower demands of the war, the need for efficiency, and the proddings of civil rights leaders (including Judge William H. Hastie, special adviser to the War Department on racial matters, and his successor, Truman K. Gibson, Jr.) had led the military to discard some of its racist practices. For example, in 1941 African Americans were admitted for the first time to the Army Air Corps; this resulted in the highly publicized training of nearly one thousand African American aviators at famed Tuskegee Institute. A year later the Marine Corps admitted its first blacks; its long tradition (since 1798) of excluding blacks perhaps accounted for it being the only service branch not to have a black officer during the war (the first black Marine officer was commissioned in November 1945). Also in 1942, the navy, in which blacks traditionally had served in certain occupations rather than in separate units, began accepting blacks for "general service" positions like gunners, electricians, radiomen, and machinists. Later, to show that blacks could even operate a modern warship, the navy undertook a limited experiment in having all-black crews (initially under the command of white officers) man both the destroyer USS Mason, which served on the North Atlantic convoy route, and a submarine chaser, PC 1264. During the war African Americans
generally gained free access to theaters, exchanges, and recreational facilities on military bases.

The resistance of black servicemen to segregation and discrimination during the war often led to racial clashes with white civilians, especially in southern military-base towns (for example, Tuskegee, Alabama, and Durham, North Carolina), as well as conflicts with white servicemen on military bases (such as Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi; and Freeman Field, Indiana). In terms of the number of black participants, perhaps the most serious racial incident involved a mutiny by black sailors at Port Chicago, California, in July 1944. This mutiny followed the detonation of hundreds of tons of ammunition that tore apart two ships and killed 300 persons, 250 of whom were blacks assigned to a segregated labor unit that was loading ammunition on board the two vessels. Fifty of the survivors refused to resume this dangerous work, believing it to have been assigned to them because of their race. A court-martial convicted them of mutiny and sentenced them to prison, but the African American press and civil rights organizations campaigned successfully to have the men returned to duty.

Nearly 1,000,000 African Americans served in the armed forces in some capacity during World War II: 702,000 in the army; 165,000 in the navy; 20,000 in the Marine Corps; and 5,000 in the Coast Guard. Of this number more than half served overseas, mainly in a noncombat capacity. For example, in the army they served mainly in units like the quartermaster, transport, and engineer. Of the two black army divisions, the combat units of the Ninety-third Division (Pacific theater) are thought to have performed better than those of the Ninety-second Division (European theater). Probably the most outstanding unit of the two divisions was the Ninety-third's Twenty-fifth Infantry, which fought on the island of Bougainville and later, along with the 368th and 369th Infantry, served as the garrison force on such islands as Biak, Morotai, and Mindanao. Generally even more effective were the smaller black combat units that were in neither division and fought as components of larger white units. These included the Twenty-fourth Infantry which received official recognition for its service as the garrison unit on Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas Islands; the 761st Tank Battalion, which fought in the Battle of the Bulge and served in six European countries, including France, Germany, and Austria; the 969th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment, which defended Hawaii against aerial attacks during much of the war; the 969th Field Artillery Battalion, which received the Distinguished Unit Citation for its contribution to the defense of Bastogne; and the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which fought in Germany and was the first black ground unit to receive the Distinguished Unit Citation during the war.

Black pilots saw perhaps more combat action during the war than did any other group of black servicemen. The first black Army Air Corps unit to engage in combat was the celebrated Ninety-ninth Fighter Squadron. It first saw service during the Sicilian campaign in the summer of 1943, then distinguished itself again in downing twelve German planes over the Anzio beachhead on January 27 and January 28 of 1944, receiving a Distinguished Unit Citation for each of these campaigns. By the time the war ended, eight black squadrons had been formed. Four of these, constituting the 477th Bombardment Group, never served overseas, but the 332nd Fighter Group—made up of the 99th, 100th, 301st, and 302nd squadrons—served from mid-1944 on as a pursuit unit that escorted bombers deep into Germany. In addition to downing a number of German interceptors, the group boasted that no bomber entrusted to it had ever been lost to German aviators. Its commander, Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., son of the first black army general—Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis, later became the first black lieutenant general in the air force, the highest rank attained by an African American in the military up to that time.

In Dorie Miller the navy could claim the first African American hero of World War II. During the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Miller, a steward on the bombed and burning USS Arizona, dragged the battleship's wounded captain from the exposed bridge, manned a gunner's station, and shot down four Japanese planes. Despite Miller's heroism, which earned him the Navy Cross, and his obvious skill with the machine gun, he was still serving as a steward when he died in the sinking of the escort carrier Liscome Bay on November 24, 1943.

All the black marines who served overseas were in the Pacific theater. Ironically, the two black marine combat units—the Fifty-first and Fifty-second Defense Battalions—did less fighting than the black depot and ammunition companies that unloaded and distributed munitions and other cargo during amphibious landings on islands like Saipan, Guam, and Iwo Jima. At Saipan, for example, Private First Class LeRoy Seals became the first black marine killed in action.

African Americans in the Coast Guard, as in the navy, served ashore and afloat. The latter service included rescue work in Atlantic, Pacific, and Alaskan waters. Black coast guardsmen were also among the first to go ashore at Okinawa in early 1945.

As it did for other Americans, World War II es-
sentially ended the Great Depression for blacks, enabling them to make a significant contribution to the war production effort on the home front. With the demand for workers heightened by the expansion in defense production, as well as the removal from the labor force of millions for military service, the need for black participation in the labor market was greatly enhanced. Initially, however, African Americans experienced considerable opposition to their efforts to gain employment in the defense industries. In an attempt to redress this injustice, as well as integrate the armed forces, A. Philip Randolph, the labor and civil rights leader, threatened in January 1941 to mobilize fifty thousand to one hundred thousand blacks to march on the nation's capital in July. He created the \textit{March on Washington Movement} (MOWM) to organize this effort; it inaugurated the tactic of mass protest that would be used so successfully during the modern civil rights movement of the 1960s. President Roosevelt, after several failures to dissuade Randolph from carrying out the march, issued \textit{Executive Order 8802} on June 25, 1941. It prohibited discrimination in employment in defense industries and established the \textit{Fair Employment Practices Commission} (FEPC) to monitor compliance with the directive. Despite violations of the order, black employment in industrial jobs increased considerably (in 1942 blacks were 3 percent of the war production work force, and in 1944 8.3 percent of this force). The skills of African American workers were also upgraded in wartime training programs, enabling them to occupy skilled and semiskilled jobs. Black women in particular made significant employment gains, leaving domestic work in record numbers to enter defense industry jobs. The overall employment gains of blacks during World War II helped effect the most rapid closing of the white/black income differential at any time in American history. For example, in 1939 the median income of blacks was 41 percent that of whites; in 1950 it was 60 percent that of whites.

Very much connected to the wartime expansion of the African American industrial work force was the migration out of the South of large numbers of blacks in search of industrial employment. It is estimated that over a million blacks left the South during World War II. Many of these migrants, like those who participated in the migration triggered by World War I, settled in New Jersey, especially in such urban centers as Newark, Trenton, Camden, Paterson, and Passaic; they came, again, mainly from southern states along the Atlantic coastline. And for the first time, blacks moved in large numbers to the West Coast: California alone received over 340,000 black southern migrants between 1940 and 1945. Cities (Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, San Diego, Seattle, and Portland in particular) experienced huge increases in their African American populations. States furnishing a disproportionate number of migrants who went to the West Coast during World War II were Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

The large-scale wartime movement of African Americans into the nation’s urban centers in search of better economic opportunities helped create racial tensions in these places not unlike those that had contributed to the racial strife that followed World War I. Indeed, against a wartime background of increased urban racial segregation (black ghettos expanded) and racial conflict, sometimes aggravated by scarce housing and black use of parks and other amusement/recreational facilities that had formerly been tacitly reserved for whites, several serious race riots erupted. Buffalo (1943), Harlem (1943), Detroit (1943), and Philadelphia (1944) were the sites of the more notable of such incidents. The greatest loss of life occurred in Detroit (twenty-five blacks and nine whites), but the riots in Harlem and Philadelphia were also significant because they, like the 1935 Harlem riot, were ghetto riots, having the features and characteristics of the civil disorders of the 1960s, (for example, the destruction of property).

In contrast to many unpleasant contacts between the races in northern cities during World War II, there also occurred the formation of a civil rights coalition that was somewhat sustained by the nation’s slowly changing attitudes about the treatment of blacks. The work of this coalition, composed largely of blacks and Jews, aided by sympathetic whites among Catholics, Protestants, and non-church goers, assumed many forms. Included were the struggles in Congress and state legislatures for fair employment laws, the desegregation of the governing boards, staffs, memberships, and clients of numerous social organizations and agencies, and the mounting of a number of interracial and interfaith conferences. This pattern of mutual cooperation among men and women of good will of both races continued into the postwar period.

While the black struggle for equality was strengthened by the work and support of various interracial bodies, African Americans, as a consequence of their movement out of the South, also continued to reap benefits from their increased presence in the nation’s cities of the North and West. For example, Harlem in 1944 became the second northern district to send a black to Congress. This congressman was Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., pastor of the famed Abyssinian Baptist Church (in the 1980s its ten thousand members made it the nation’s largest black congregation).
He combined a gift of oratory with militant social protest to become a civil rights leader and the most powerful black politician during his stay in Congress, which lasted until 1967. Powell’s election also had import because he was the first major black politician (he was a Democrat) to fashion his own political machine, one independent of Tammany Hall, the white-controlled machine that then dominated New York City Democratic politics.

CORE LESSON

Theme

World War II, like World War I, had a major impact on black American life. In addition to the military experience it afforded thousands of blacks, it triggered an exodus of blacks from the South in search of better opportunities. For the first time, many southern migrants went to the West Coast. Migration helped African Americans intensify their struggle against racial bigotry and discrimination, to seek the “Four Freedoms” and wage a “Double V Campaign.”

Materials and Preparation

Students should read either chapter 28 in The African American Experience: A History (“World War II and African Americans, 1941–1945”) or chapters 33 and 34 in African American History (“Black America and the Great Depression” and “Patriotism and Prejudice”).

Students should read the excerpt from the oral history interview of Reginald W. Maddox, which describes an incident of racial discrimination he experienced while serving in the navy during World War II (see page 162).

Students should study the black migration patterns during World War II shown on Map #9 (see page 160).

Students and the teacher should read pages 68–77 in Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History. The teacher should read chapters 20 and 21 in From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans (“The American Dilemma” and “Fighting for the Four Freedoms”).

Time Period

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

ACTIVITY 1

Identify the kinds of discriminatory treatment African American servicemen experienced during World War II.

Discuss first with the students the discrimination African Americans encountered in the nation’s military branches. Remind students that while the army segregated blacks into separate units, the navy allowed blacks and whites to serve on the same ship but limited the kinds of positions blacks could hold on these ships. Have students discuss whether they would have preferred serving in the army or navy and why. Next, have students read the brief account of the racial incident experienced
by Reginald W. Maddox at the Memphis train station in 1943 (see page 162). From this they will learn that black servicemen faced racial discrimination in nonmilitary situations.

**Evaluation:** Have students write a 500-word essay comparing the treatment of blacks as World War II servicemen with their treatment during World War I. The students should indicate which war they, as a black serviceman, would have preferred serving in, and why. In making their comparisons, students should note that blacks were able to serve in the air force and the marines for the first time during World War II.

Or have students imagine that are among the black sailors who were with Reginald W. Maddox when he saw German prisoners of war being served in the restaurant for whites at the Memphis train station. Have them write a 500-word essay about how they would have responded to this incident. The students should be reminded that racial segregation in America was both legally and socially acceptable as late as World War II.

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Assess** the significance of oral testimony in documenting the black past.

a. Have students discuss the pros and cons of using oral testimony to reconstruct the past. They should, for example, discuss the reliability of memory as a source of historical documentation. Inform them that critics of oral history cite the fallibility of memory and the likelihood of bias. They argue that subjectivity might color an account of the past; they also contend that oral history involves looking at the past from the perspective of the present, so that the past may be distorted by subsequent changes in values and points of view. Defenders of oral history maintain that memory is likely to be accurate when what is remembered is of interest and significance; they point out that bias can also be found in written primary sources. They stress that with any primary source one must look for plausibility, seek confirmation from other sources, and be aware of potential bias.

b. Have students discuss whether oral history might be of particular significance in recreating the black American past because people of African descent have a strong and rich oral tradition. Students should focus on black “orality,” the special emphasis placed on oral communication in black societies throughout the world as witnessed in the “griot” (oral historian), “talking drum,” games of verbal competition (signifying), and most recently, the emergence of the popular music form rap. Black communities accord considerable admiration and esteem to those who are very skillful and able in verbalizing orally.

Inform students that the use of oral history has grown considerably since the 1960s thanks to a new approach—the “new social history” or “history from the bottom up”—which was spawned by the increased social consciousness that developed during the 1960s. This approach has tended to move history beyond great individuals and events and to focus on nontraditional historical subjects that did not usually generate written records. Students should be informed that oral history helps to democratize historical research; it has facilitated greater study of the black American past. In making this point, introduce students to Theodore Rosengarten’s *All God’s Dangers*, the life history of a black Alabama sharecropper as recounted orally.

**Evaluation:** Invite a black veteran of World War II to your class and conduct an oral history interview based on the veteran’s World War II experiences with racial discrimination. Have students prepare a 500-word report on that interview that indicates what they learned about World War II and their assessment of the value of oral history.

**ACTIVITY 3**

**Compare and contrast** the black migration that accompanied World War II to that accompanying World War I.
Have students discuss the following in comparing and contrasting black southern out-migration for World War I with that for World War II: push/pull syndrome, volume, and routes. In other words, students should discuss the forces that operated to uproot black southerners during the two wars, the scale of black migration for the two wars, and where wartime migrants on both occasions settled.

Also have students compare Map #7 (see page 128) with Map #9 (see page 160) and indicate the key difference(s) between the migration patterns shown in the two maps. Then have students, using Map #9, identify those states whose black migrants used two distinct migration corridors in uprooting themselves.

Evaluation: Have students write a short play about a single black family’s wartime migration experiences. The play should show one part of the family leaving the South during World War I and the other during World War II and identify ways in which their experiences were similar and dissimilar.

Or have students, using Map #9 (see page 160) as a guide, use Map #10 (see page 161) to indicate the migration patterns associated with World War II (i.e., copy map #9 on map #10). Students should understand that these migration patterns established essentially the present-day distribution of the nonsouthern black population.

**Activity 4**

Explain the major economic gains resulting from the employment of African Americans in defense industries during World War II.

Point out to the students that black income and the percentage of blacks doing skilled and semiskilled work rose considerably during World War II and that this war witnessed the fastest closing of the income gap between blacks and whites. Finally, mention that black women in particular gained from working in World War II defense industries and that this helped large numbers of them to leave domestic work.

Evaluation: Have the students imagine they are reporters interviewing an African American woman about her wartime work experiences in Newark. They should write a newspaper article about her leaving employment as a domestic worker to work in a munitions factory.

**Supplemental Activities**

Show students the film *A Soldier’s Story*, an account of racial discrimination and murder at a World War II army base that is based on an award-winning play by Charles Fuller (123 minutes). Although fiction, it is faithful to the climate of the era. It can be obtained from most local video rental facilities.

**Key Persons**

**Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.** Commander of the 332nd Fighter Group during World War II, he later became the first black lieutenant general in the military.

**William H. Hastie.** Appointed special adviser on racial matters to the War Department during World War II. Afterward, he was the first black to serve as governor of the Virgin Islands and to be appointed to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

**Dorie Miller.** Navy steward who shot down four Japanese planes during attack on Pearl Harbor and became the first black hero of World War II.
Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Harlem minister who became a civil rights leader and powerful politician in Congress from 1944 until 1967.

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS

Buni, Andrew. 1974. Robert L. Vann of the Pittsburg Courier: Politics of Black Journalism. Vann was the nationally known editor of the black newspaper the Pittsburgh Courier. He initiated the “Double V Campaign” among African Americans, which sought victory against international fascism abroad and domestic racism at home.

Dalfiume, Richard M. 1969. Fighting on Two Fronts: Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces, 1939–1953. The goals of desegregating the armed forces and obtaining jobs in American defense industries were the focus of black leaders during the World War II years. Dalfiume views this protest activity as the forerunner of the modern civil rights movement.

Garfinkle, Herbert. 1969. When Negroes March. While World War II stimulated the resurgence of American industry, blacks were disappointed that they did not receive their share of the new jobs. Blacks were also displeased with the racially segregated armed forces. A. Philip Randolph led the March on Washington Movement organization to obtain integrated armed forces, equal employment opportunity in defense industries, and the vote for southern blacks. Garfinkle explores these important issues in detail.

Lee, Ulysses. 1966. The Employment of Negro Troops. A good survey of the black contribution to the American military. The work contains valuable information on African American involvement in World War II.

Nalty, Bernard C. 1986. Strength For the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military. The most comprehensive one-volume study of African Americans in the armed forces from early American history to the 1980s. The study has excellent chapters on the black soldier in World War II and the desegregation of the military.

Ruchames, Louis. 1953. Race, Jobs, and Politics: The Story of the FEPC. The March on Washington Movement organization succeeded in pressuring President Roosevelt to issue an executive order creating the Fair Employment Practices Committee, which enforced anti-discrimination employment policies with companies having government contracts. Ruchames explores the creation, structure, and effectiveness of this agency.

Sandler, Stanley. 1992. Segregated Skies: All-Black Combat Squadrons of World War II. The campaign during World War II to acquire combat training for black aviators, their deployment, and their outstanding performance are covered in this thorough study.

Silvera, John D. 1947. The Negro in World War II. A survey of the black contribution to the war effort. It is valuable for its depiction of attitudes on race current during the war years among some segments of the American population.

State of New Jersey. Urban Colored Population Commission. 1945. New Jersey Negro in World War II. This study contains interesting data on the social and economic condition of New Jersey’s black population during the war.
Washburn, Patrick S. 1986. *A Question of Sedition: The Federal Government’s Investigation of the Black Press During World War II*. A thoroughly researched and documented study of the campaign waged by certain sectors of the federal government to prohibit the black press’s criticisms of racism and unfair governmental racial policies. It is a disturbing example of how close the federal government came to censorship.

**FOR STUDENTS**

Davis, Benjamin O. Jr. 1991. *An Autobiography*. Commander of the first all-black squadron to fight in World War II, Davis helped integrate the American armed forces. His is indeed a story of achievement: he became the first black to reach the rank of lieutenant general in the American armed forces.


Killens, John Oliver. 1984. *And Then They Heard the Thunder*. This is a story about the black American GI’s bloody encounter with racism and hatred during World War II. The principal character, Solomon Saunders, a proper Negro, discovers the humiliation of racism during his stay in the army.

Powell, Adam Clayton, Jr. 1972. *Adam By Adam*. The autobiography of the flamboyant and colorful preacher/politician from Harlem who was elected to Congress in 1944. His *Marching Blacks* (1945) should be read for additional commentary on the black protest movement before, during, and after World War II.

Rosengarten, Theodore. 1974. *All God’s Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*. The oral autobiography of an eighty-eight year-old black Alabama sharecropper that is narrated in the wonderfully expressive language of a storyteller.
MATERIALS
Map 9
Black Migration Routes During World War II

The general directions of the main routes of black migration during World War II.
Map 10
The United States During World War II
A seventy-seven year-old black native Philadelphian, Reginald W. Maddox, recalled a particular incident of racial discrimination he experienced while serving in the navy during World War II. He described this incident in the following manner:

After we finished our basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station near Chicago, we were sent to the Millington Naval Air Station in Tennessee. At this base, several miles north of Memphis, I underwent training as an aviation machinist mate for about six months. At the completion of this training, around October of 1943, I, along with eleven other black seamen, was transferred to the naval air base at Pasco, Washington. In order to get there, we took a bus to Memphis where we were to get a train that would carry us to Seattle. We arrived at the train station and, after getting off the bus, marched to an area close to the entrance to the station’s restaurant for whites. As we stood there, we could see into this restaurant. And inside we saw a group of about thirty fellows dressed in brown shirts with large white letters that said “PW.” These letters reached from the shoulder to the waist, front and back. We didn’t know who they were. One of us asked the white seaman in charge of us who they were. And we were told that they were German prisoners of war. This caught everyone’s attention for a moment or two. And someone said, “Daggone. Germans can go in there and we can’t. Isn’t this something.” And we were thinking that here we have on the uniform of this nation and the people who we are fighting against—who might have to shoot at us and we at them—are able to go into a restaurant that we can’t enter. But they were white, and white was right. So, we didn’t think about it too long because we knew we were in the South where there were the regular signs everywhere saying “White” and “Colored.” So we marched on off, went around the back, upstairs, to the station’s colored restaurant, and waited for our train.
Unit 13
The Immediate Postwar Years, 1945–1953

BACKGROUND

Because African Americans made important strides during World War II in eliminating racial discrimination, they entered the post-war period with buoyed hopes and an intensified resolve to achieve complete equality. And while that intensified resolve contributed to further improvements in the prospects for the race, and some significant gains were made, the pace of change remained painfully slow as it had during the wartime years.

Indicative of the energy with which African Americans pressed for full equality after the war was the work of various black organizations, often invigorated by World War II veterans whose wartime experiences tended to make them less deferential to white racism on returning home. The NAACP, whose membership between 1940 and 1945 increased from 50,556 to 351,151, was notable among these bodies. Rulings in several important civil rights cases that it brought before the Supreme Court signaled a trend in judicial thinking that would have far-reaching consequences for the demise of segregation, although they did not end Jim Crow immediately. For example, in Morgan v. Virginia (1945), the Supreme Court ruled that a Virginia law requiring segregation on interstate bus travel was unconstitutional; in Henderson v. United States (1950) it ruled unconstitutional the Jim Crow sections of railroad dining cars; in Shelly v. Kraemer (1948) and Hard v. Hodge (1948) it invalidated “restrictive covenants” in state and federal courts, respectively; and in Sweatt v. Painter (1950) it ordered a black admitted to the law school of the University of Texas because Texas had no separate law school for blacks, marking the first time that the high court directed admission of a black to a previously all-white school.

In several significant ways President Harry S. Truman also contributed to the improved status of African Americans in the postwar period. In 1946 he appointed a distinguished interracial committee to examine the issue of civil rights; its report, To Secure These Rights, called for the elimination of racial segregation from American life. One year later, in a strong symbolic gesture, Truman became the first chief executive to address a convention of the NAACP in person. His appointment of William H. Hastie as governor of the Virgin Islands (1946) and later to the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals (1949), made Hastie the highest-ranking black judicial figure up to that time in American history. Truman’s standing in the black community was elevated by his support, albeit somewhat tepid, of a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission. Of perhaps greatest significance, however, was his issuance of Executive Order 9981 in 1948. Issued in the face of another threatened march on Washington by A. Philip Randolph (Randolph urged young men, black or white, who opposed racism to refuse to register for the draft) and a strong civil rights plank adopted at the 1948 Democratic National Convention, it ordered an end to segregation in the military. Thus began the slow but steady desegregation of the military, which was not fully accomplished until the mid-1950s.

Perhaps the development that contributed most
to the implementation of Executive Order 9981 was
the Korean War (1950–1953). During this conflict the
U.S. Army for the first time fought on an integrated
basis. The first integrated regiment replaced the all-
black Twenty-Fourth Infantry Regiment, whose poor
combat performance was attributed to its Jim Crow
status. The success of this new unit in turn led to the
integration of the entire army in the Far East Com-
mand and, in the spring of 1952, the beginning of
the racial integration of the troops stationed in Eu-
rope. The manpower pressures of the Korean War
also accelerated the integration of the Marine Corps,
and racially integrated marine combat units saw ac-
tion in the war. Similarly, the Korean War forced
the navy to broaden its opportunities for blacks and re-
move barriers that still virtually restricted them to
the steward branch. By 1956, three-fourths of the 37,000
blacks in the 591,000-man navy had received assign-
ments in the general services. Since the racial in-
tegration of the Air Force was accomplished faster than
that of any other service branch, and was well un
der way when the Korean War started, the war had little
influence on its desegregation efforts. Perhaps indica-
tive of the Air Force’s lead in effecting racial integra-
tion was the fact that in 1975 Daniel “Chappie” James,
a captain and pilot during the Korean War, was the
first black American to don four stars, becoming the
commander-in-chief of the North American Air De-
fense Command.

The antidiscrimination work of organizations like
the American Friends Service Committee, the Ameri-
can Missionary Association, the National Council
of Churches, and the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai
B’rith, as well as members of the Roman Catholic
clergy, helped to continue the slow but perceptible
acceptance of blacks by an increasing number of
American whites and thus helped erode racist senti-
ments. Perhaps nowhere was this erosion more dra-
matic and visible than in the entertainment world,
particularly athletics. The postwar period witnessed,
for example, the penetration of the color barrier in
major league baseball. In 1947 Jackie Robinson be-
came the first black to integrate major league base-
ball, joining the Brooklyn Dodgers. A year later, Larry
Doby, an outstanding athlete from Paterson, became
the second black major leaguer and the first in the
American League; he played with the Cleveland In-
dians. As more African American players left to join
formerly all-white teams in the “big” leagues, the
Negro Baseball League declined and eventually dis-
appeared. Its disappearance foreshadowed a fate that
was to befall other aspects of black institutional life
in the face of the integration victories of the modern
civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

The growing perception that a foreign threat, in
the form of the Soviet Union and an international
Communist movement, menaced the United States
also contributed to the feeling in some quarters that
the nation could no longer afford the luxury of rac-
ism. It was pointed out, for instance, that racial segre-
gation enabled the Communist world to score propa-
ganda victories as it sought to portray itself as the
only true friend of the millions of colonial subjects in
Asia and Africa. On the other hand, the Cold War,
the fears of Communist expansion in the United
States, fostered a conservative mood and backlash
that, led by Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, of-
ten took the form of a witch hunt for supporters of
liberal or progressive causes. Since many of the most
rabid anti-Communists were also among the most
outspoken advocates of racial segregation (for ex-
ample, southern members of Congress), for an Afri-
can American to speak out forcefully for civil rights
was to risk being branded a “Commie” or fellow trav-
eler. Thus a number of black civil rights activists were
charged during this period with being sympathetic
to the Communist cause; the two most prominent
were Dr. W. E. B. DuBois and Paul Robeson. In fact,
Robeson’s passport was revoked in 1950 by the State
Department because his projected travels abroad were
deemed “contrary to the best interests of the United
States.” The hysteria of the McCarthy era also
prompted some civil rights leaders and prominent
blacks, fearful of being labeled subversive and unpa-
triotic and thereby “weakening” the civil rights move-
ment, to temper their criticism of the nation’s racial
policies, to repudiate earlier statements and positions,
and to denounce blacks identified with the radical
left. The net effect of the rise of strong anti-Commu-
nist sentiment was thus a temporary lessening in some
quarters of the intensity of efforts to eliminate racial
injustice.

Notwithstanding an overall decline in organized
radical and even moderate opposition to Jim Crow
during the heyday of McCarthyism, two protest ef-
forts served as models for future attempts to destroy
segregation in the South. One was the Journey of
Reconciliation, an early “freedom ride” conducted
in 1947 in Virginia by the Congress of Racial Equal-
ity (CORE). Using a small interracial group that rode
interstate buses with its blacks sitting in the front and
whites in the back, it attacked segregated seating on
such buses in the South. The second, Operation Face
Lift, involved a ten-day black bus boycott in June 1953
to end seating and employment discrimination in the
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, bus system. It was led by the
Reverend T. J. Jemison, who later served as an adviser to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott. The state of New Jersey joined the antidiscrimination efforts of the period. In April 1945 the state legislature passed the Act Against Discrimination, which prohibited discrimination in employment, although enforcement was weak and penalties were mild. Moreover, the state’s new constitution, adopted in 1947, contained an antidiscrimination section that banned discrimination in education and in the national guard; it was the first state constitution with such provisions. Marion Thompson Wright, a pioneer in the writing of New Jersey African American history, influenced the drafting of this section with her seminal work, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey*. Published in 1941, it documented the inferior education blacks historically had received in the state’s public schools, many of which practiced various forms of segregation. Finally, the Freeman Act, signed by Governor Alfred E. Driscoll in 1949 and co-written by NAACP members Herbert E. Tate, Sr., and J. Mercer Burrell, prohibited discrimination in public accommodations.

A final key development in black life during the postwar years was the continued movement by black southerners, a movement marked by two tendencies. One, in the face of the increased mechanization of agriculture in the South (the first mechanical cotton picker capable of being mass-produced was perfected in 1944) and the continued availability of industrial jobs in northern and western urban centers, was their continued migration to these centers. And for southern blacks moving northward, New Jersey continued to be a major state of settlement, with most of the settlement taking place in cities in the northern part of the state (such as Newark, Jersey City, and Paterson). The second, largely influenced by the increased use of machinery in agriculture, was their movement to cities in the South. Because of such movement, by 1950 about 60 percent of the African American population could be found in cities, a major shift from 1900, when about 90 percent of this population was rural.

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**CORE LESSON**

**Theme**

Although blacks scored significant gains in their quest for first-class citizenship during this period, they were dissatisfied with the painfully slow pace at which these gains were achieved. Most of these gains were achieved through the time-honored approach of challenging through litigation the legal basis for racial segregation and discrimination.

**Materials and Preparation**

Students should read either chapter 29 in *The African American Experience: A History* ("Gains and Losses in the Postwar Years, 1945–1960s") or Chapter 35 in *African American History* ("Rights Reaffirmed").

Students should read the resolution of the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs to the 1947 New Jersey Constitutional Convention (see page 171).

Students and the teacher should read pages 68–77 in *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*.


165
Time Period

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

**ACTIVITY 1**

**Explain** the major factors that combined to eliminate some aspects of institutional racism in the postwar period, and **identify** the areas in which desegregation occurred and some of the consequences for black institutional life.

Point out to students that desegregation in postwar America was aided by successful black-initiated legal challenges to Jim Crow, the work of liberal white organizations and individuals, and, as part of the Cold War, the embarrassment and shame that American racist practices brought to the nation’s foreign policy efforts to woo Third World nations. Also explain that one of the by-products of desegregation was the demise of some black institutions, organizations, and businesses that had provided services to blacks that whites had been unwilling to offer. Among these were black-owned hotels, theaters, and hospitals. Another, and very conspicuous example, was the black professional baseball league, which, with the integration of major league baseball, disappeared almost overnight. This should prompt a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of desegregation. While students will probably know the advantages, inform them that some blacks feel that integration helped retard black self-initiative and self-reliance and erode a sense of community among black people. Divide the class into two groups and have them debate the pros and cons of integration.

**Evaluation:** Have students write a 500-word essay about Jackie Robinson and his role in the integration of major league baseball. In the essay have them address the issue of why the desegregation of major league baseball occurred and how it affected the Negro Baseball League. Point out to students that some major league team owners, aware of the popularity of the Negro Leagues, saw integration as a sound business proposition.

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Explain** how the advent of the Cold War and the threat of Communist subversion posed risks for African American protest activities, especially those that involved a condemnation of European colonial rule in Africa.

Point out to the class that because the major colonial powers (Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal) were American allies, and the Soviet Union unequivocally condemned colonialism, those who attacked colonialism in Africa and Asia during the McCarthy period were often charged with being Communist sympathizers. Also explain that because of this charge, some civil rights leaders thought that speaking out forcefully against colonialism would jeopardize the civil rights movement and perhaps ruin their personal careers. Have students discuss whether they agree with such a position, whether they, as a civil rights leader during this period, would have taken a strong anticolonial position.

**Evaluation:** Have students write a short play in which the two main characters are black civil rights leaders during the McCarthy era. Using the difficulties Paul Robeson and W. E. B. DuBois experienced as examples, have one leader oppose a strong anticolonial position. The other leader should support speaking out against colonialism, justifying this position on the basis of the need to oppose racism consisently and the right of all peoples to self-determination.
ACTIVITY 3

**Describe** the kinds of discriminatory practices that black New Jerseyans faced in the immediate postwar period.

Have the class read the resolution of the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs to the 1947 New Jersey Constitutional Convention (see page 171). Ask students what this document reveals about the forms of racial discrimination in New Jersey after World War II.

Have students imagine they were black New Jerseyans in the immediate postwar period fighting to eliminate racial discrimination. Ask them which of the forms of discrimination identified they would try to eliminate first, and why. This question should prompt different responses from the students. Remind students that their choice could be influenced by the form of racial segregation that was the easiest to abolish. Thus, some students might choose eliminating restrictive covenants, while others might see abolishing segregation in public accommodations as their first target.

**Evaluation:** Have the students write a short play about a black Trentonian who has been discriminated against in a public accommodation. The play should reenact the incident (for example, being refused service at a restaurant, or being seated in a certain section of a movie theater) and what action, if any, the victim intends to take (such as contacting the NAACP or organizing a boycott of the offending establishment).

Supplemental Activities

1. Show students the film *Go Tell It On The Mountain* (98 minutes). Adapted from James Baldwin’s first novel, it centers on a postwar black urban family haunted by tragic memories of the rural South. A stern, domineering preacher and his gifted young stepson come into conflict over the boy’s preference for school over church. As the preacher’s past unfolds, through flashbacks, we see the roots of his religious rigidity. The film can be obtained from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838).

2. Show students the film *Before You Can Say Jackie Robinson* (65 minutes). This documentary examines the Negro Baseball League, with special emphasis on the Newark Eagles, who won the Negro Baseball League World Series in 1946. It can be obtained from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838).

Key Persons

**Ralph Bunche.** In 1950, because of his work for the United Nations in negotiating the 1948 Arab-Israeli armistice after the creation of Israel in 1948, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the first black so honored.

**Daniel “Chappie” James.** Captain and pilot during the Korean War, he was the first black American to become a four-star general.

**Jackie Robinson.** The first African American to integrate major league baseball, he later became a corporate executive and a civil rights spokesperson.

**Marion Thompson Wright.** A pioneer in the writing of black New Jersey history, she was a professor at Howard University and an associate of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the acknowledged “Father of African American History.”
Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS


Cautie, David. 1978. *The Great Fear*. A general overview of the McCarthy era that helps explain the retreat of some blacks from activism.


FOR STUDENTS

Baldwin, James. 1952. *Go Tell It On The Mountain*. Baldwin’s first novel, set in Harlem in the early 1950s, tells the story of a young man’s religious conversion on his fourteenth birthday and, in flashbacks, the lives and sins of three earlier generations of his family.

Ellison, Ralp. 1962. *Invisible Man*. This novel can be taken as a metaphor for the invisibility and powerlessness of black people when they allow their lives to be directed by others—both people and faceless institutions.

Rivlin, Benjamin, ed. 1989. *Ralph Bunche: The Man and His Times*. Composed of essays from scholars and Bunche’s associates, as well as some of Bunche’s more important speeches, this volume addresses the historic contributions to justice at home and peace in the world of this scholar, statesman, and diplomat who was the first black to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Robinson, Jackie, and Alfred Duckett. 1972. *I Never Had It Made*. This is the story of Jackie Robinson, who rose from a poor southern family to become the first African American baseball player in the major leagues, a successful businessman, a civil rights leader, and a political adviser.

Taulbert, Clifton. 1989. *Once Upon A Time When We Were Colored*. In this touching autobiography, Taulbert discusses his childhood and early youth in Mississippi during the late 1940s and early 1950s, making his personal story a loving testament to the Taulbert family and all black families who kept the faith in the segregated South.

Van Raven, Pieter. 1990. *Pickle and Price*. Set in the rural South in the early 1950s, the main characters of this novel are John Pickle Sherburn, a thirteen-year-old white boy whose father runs a detention farm, and Price Douglas, a black man from Detroit who is serving time at the farm for a crime he didn’t commit. Pickle plans Price’s escape from the farm, steals his father’s truck, and decides to drive Price to Detroit and then head west to California.
Resolution of the New Jersey State Federation
of Colored Women's Clubs (1947)

WHEREAS, it is the object of the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs to "Work and Serve the Hour" in helping solve the many problems confronting the race, and to study the conditions in cities and counties, with a view to raising the educational, industrial and economic standards of all people and improve the public health and general welfare of the public of the State; and

WHEREAS, for the past 32 years this organization has conducted a program working toward equal opportunity for all people and the full enjoyment of the rights, privileges and benefits of the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, it has long been recognized that the restrictive covenant is a device used by real estate interests in conformity with narrow community attitudes to confine housing areas to favored racial groups and for the exclusion of other groups, most frequently the Jewish and Negro segments of our population; and

WHEREAS, a large percentage of the population of the State of New Jersey, in a general way, was denied opportunity for business and industrial employment (public utilities included) under the existing State Constitution until Executive Order 8802, superseding our state laws, was issued by the late President Roosevelt during the emergency, making such practices unlawful; and

WHEREAS, the recent survey of the school systems of the State of New Jersey, made by the N.A.A.C.P., showed the great extent of the segregation and discrimination in education as practiced in the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, not much success has come out of remedies sought by education and legislation, because the average man holds hard to his prejudices, it is agreed that a strong and forthright declaration set forth in the Bill of Rights of the proposed New Constitution is needed, and will provide for all the people the instrument through which all rights and privileges accorded a citizen might be realized;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that we do respectfully submit to and urge the adoption by the 1947 Constitutional Convention, the following:

1. That this paragraph, as written in the new New York Bill of Rights, be added to section 5 under "Rights and Privileges":

"No person shall be denied the equal protection of this State or any subdivision thereof. No person shall, because of race, creed, color or religion, be subject to any discrimination in his
civil rights by any other person or by any firm, corporation or institution, or by this State or any agency or subdivision of this State."

2. That the following sentence be added to section 17 under "Rights and Privileges";

"Property taken for public use shall be enjoyed without discrimination because of race, color, religion or national origin."

Be It FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Constitution Convention, the subcommittee on Rights and Privileges, the press, and a copy recorded in the minutes of our 92nd Annual Convention.

Unit 14

BACKGROUND

A watershed in black American history was reached in May of 1954 when, in a landmark case, Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, the Supreme Court ruled that the doctrine of separate but equal as applied to public education was unconstitutional. This decision had a tremendous psychological effect on black Americans. In lifting their spirits and emboldening them to try to dismantle the entire Jim Crow system, it gave impetus to the modern civil rights movement.

The Supreme Court's 1954 ruling on school integration also hardened and intensified the opposition of southern whites who favored segregation. They removed their children from public schools and established private all-white "academies." Segregationists organized White Citizens Councils (the first one in Mississippi in July 1954) and they attempted to outlaw the NAACP. They threatened violence against civil rights leaders and called for economic reprisals against blacks and whites who were active in the fight to desegregate schools. A few states, like Georgia, incorporated the Confederate flag into the state flag as a symbolic gesture of defiance. In September 1957, one of the most celebrated instances of white resistance to school integration exploded upon the national scene. Menacing white mobs and the Arkansas National Guard deployed by Governor Orval Faubus barred nine black teenagers from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. The admission effort was spearheaded by Daisy Bates, NAACP state president. President Eisenhower was thus forced to federalize the Arkansas National Guard, removing it from Faubus's control, and to send in army troops and federal marshals to restore order and compel Faubus's compliance with a court order admitting the students to the school. A somewhat similar incident involved the efforts of James Meredith to integrate the University of Mississippi in the fall of 1962. When Governor Ross Barnett, after being found in contempt of court, failed to prevent Meredith's admission, a student mob took over the campus. In the rioting that ensued two men were killed. Again federal troops had to be deployed to force compliance with desegregation. This time they were called in by President John F. Kennedy.

December 1, 1955, can be viewed as another turning point in the recent African American past. On that date, in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks refused to obey an order by a driver on the segregated bus system that she yield her seat to a white passenger and stand in the rear Jim Crow section. Five days following her arrest, and in the wake of calls for protest action by community activists JoAnn Robinson of the Montgomery Women's Council and E. D. Nixon, a leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and former state and local NAACP president, the Montgomery Bus Boycott began. Its leader was the young Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., acting under the aegis of the newly formed
Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). Despite bombings and the arrest of Dr. King for violating a state law against boycotts, the MIA boycott succeeded because of community-wide black support (blacks constituted 75 percent of the pre-boycott bus ridership). In November 1956 the Supreme Court sealed the boycott’s victory by upholding a lower court decision that racial segregation in local transportation violated an individual’s fundamental right of citizenship. Consequently, on December 21, 1956, African Americans rode integrated Montgomery buses for the first time. The boycott brought Dr. King to the fore as a civil rights leader, catapulting him into national and international prominence.

The modern civil rights movement, which emphasized nonviolent direct action, and whose undisputed leader King became, expanded quickly. In January 1957 the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a black church-led protest organization headed by King, was established to continue the nonviolent crusade against racial discrimination in other parts of the South. That year also witnessed the passage of the first civil rights bill since 1875. Seeking mainly to prevent the denial of voting rights to blacks, it allowed the attorney general to file federal suits against officials (registrars) who prevented blacks from voting and federal courts to try and convict violators. It also created a Commission on Civil Rights to investigate charges of deprivation of voting rights because of color, race, religion, or national origin.

During the late 1950s the tempo of nonviolent direct action increased; there occurred more direct challenges to segregation in such forms as boycotts of segregated bus systems (Tallahassee and Birmingham, for example) and of local merchants because of racially motivated disfranchisement (Tuskegee). A factor affecting this tempo was blacks’ increased awareness of the limited usefulness and slow pace of legal and legislative action. Also, due in part to the rise of independent African nations, American blacks began to acquire a new self-image, a new confidence in the future: a sense of rising expectations. In short, blacks no longer felt inclined to accept the humiliations of second-class citizenship. And more white Americans during the late 1950s began to oppose racial segregation, many realizing in particular that it had an especially baneful effect in the African-Asian world, where the ideological battle of the Cold War was being waged with the Soviet Union.

In 1960 another crucial step forward in the modern civil rights movement was taken, one that also enhanced the technique of nonviolent direct action. On February 1, 1960, four North Carolina Agricul-
King, for example, was designated 1963 "Man of the Year" by Time, and in 1964 he received the Nobel Peace Prize, at age thirty-five the youngest recipient ever. Largely because of events in Birmingham, President Kennedy became convinced of the need for a new civil rights bill and in June he called for one. Within twenty-four hours of his call, however, violence appeared again in the form of the assassination of the Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers.

In an effort to pressure Congress into passing Kennedy’s civil rights legislation, the historic March on Washington was organized. Held on August 28, it drew more than 250,000 black and white demonstrators (one of the largest demonstrations in the history of the nation’s capital) and witnessed the delivery of Dr. King’s stirring “I Have a Dream” speech. Little more than two weeks later, on September 15, a bomb tore through a Sunday school classroom in a black church in Birmingham, killing four young black girls. Two other African Americans were killed in the unrest that followed. And, of course, the violence that had marked much of the year resonated again in November with the assassination of President Kennedy.

During the administration of Lyndon B. Johnson, Kennedy’s successor, the civil rights movement achieved its highest legislative goals; by 1966 there was no enforceable law in the United States that discriminated against blacks on the basis of race. The Kennedy civil rights bill became the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the most far-reaching and comprehensive civil rights law ever enacted. It forbade racial discrimination in most places of public accommodation and gave the attorney general additional power to protect citizens against discrimination and segregation in voting. It also outlawed racial discrimination in employment by employers and labor unions, establishing an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with the power to receive, initiate, and investigate charges of discrimination, to bring action in a federal court, and to refer cases to the Justice Department for legal action. A complainant could also bring a private action in a federal court. Another legislative gain in 1964 was the ratification of the Twenty-fourth Amendment (passed in 1962), which made unconstitutional the requirement of the poll tax in federal elections. Finally, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for all practical purposes eliminated the literacy test as a requirement for voting. It suspended it and similar devices in states and counties that had used them and where less than 50 percent of the adults had voted in 1964. The attorney general was authorized to send federal examiners to register African American voters if local registrars were found to be negligent in this regard.

President Johnson also made two notable appointments involving blacks. In 1966 he made Robert C. Weaver the first black cabinet member and the first secretary of housing and urban development; in 1967 Johnson named Thurgood Marshall the first black justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. And another first that made African Americans extremely proud during Johnson’s presidency, though the president was not responsible for it, was the election in 1968 of Shirley Chisholm of Brooklyn, New York, as the first black woman to serve in Congress.

Johnson had not been in office a year when, in addition to civil rights activity in the South, African American anger and dissent assumed another form: the eruption of riots in the nation’s urban black ghettos. Some argued that the collective violence manifested was mainly the work of social misfits, criminals and riffraff guided by impulses of opportunism and destruction. Others contended that the urban riots were expressions of political protest that both revealed the lack of access to effective channels for redressing grievances and sought to effect social change.

Those who viewed the urban disturbances, begun in the summer of 1964, as political acts argued that the main causes of such unrest lay in the sense of frustration, hopelessness, and despair born of such social and economic ills as high unemployment and underemployment rates, poor and overcrowded housing, large numbers of high school dropouts, and frequent instances of police brutality. New York City (Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant), Rochester, Philadelphia, Chicago, and three New Jersey cities (Paterson, Elizabeth, and Jersey City) were among the urban communities affected by civil disorders in 1964. By the end of the 1960s over four hundred disorders, often fueled by the cry of “Burn Baby Burn” and varying in degree of seriousness, had occurred. The most severe in terms of fatalities took place in 1965 in the Watts section of Los Angeles (34 deaths) and in 1967 in Detroit (43 deaths) and Newark (26 deaths). The Newark incident was by far the most devastating, considering how many died in comparison to the size of Newark’s black population. It began on July 12 after a black cab driver in the predominately black Central Ward was arrested for a traffic violation and allegedly beaten by the police. The event reinforced a long-held impression of police brutality against black Newarkers. In the next few days there was widespread looting, and numerous fires were set in the Central Ward. The state police and national guard were called in to quell disorders, which ended on July 17. Property damage exceeded 10 million. Other New Jersey ur-
ban centers where disturbances occurred after 1964 were Englewood (1965), Plainfield (1966), New Brunswick (1966), Camden (1967), and Atlantic City (1967).

The launching of the War on Poverty, as part of President Johnson's Great Society, involved increased federal spending on programs designed to aid the nation's neediest citizens, but did little to quell the urban unrest. Only when it became evident that the destruction in black neighborhoods hurt blacks more than whites, that mostly black deaths occurred, and that violence did not bring appreciable improvement in the lives of ghetto residents, did the disorders cease. Racial disturbances declined sharply in both number and severity after 1968.

One major consequence of the riots was the almost immediate exodus of whites in large numbers from the nation's urban centers. This "white flight" had been historically aided and abetted by federal policies that supported suburban development, such as government subsidies for highway construction and government-guaranteed-mortgage loans from savings and loan associations. With the continued massive influx of southern blacks into northern and western cities, an in-migration pattern that ended by 1970, black ghettos expanded considerably and by the end of the 1960s, African Americans became the majority population in some cities, notably Newark, Detroit, and Gary, Indiana.

Helping to fuel the ghetto riots was a defiant, militant, and aggressive mood among many urban blacks, especially in cities outside the South. The popularity in these places of the slogan "Black Power," which first appeared in 1966, symbolized this mood. Part of this slogan's appeal lay in its myriad meanings for those who embraced it. For some it meant black political control of ghettos. Others saw it as emphasizing self-help and racial unity, ranging from the creation of independent, self-sufficient black businesses to control of public schools in black ghettos. To still others, among the most militant, it meant retaliatory violence, ranging from the legal right of self-defense to the justification of looting and arson by rioters to guerrilla warfare and armed rebellion. The influence in the cities of organizations that espoused black nationalism, such as Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, with its forceful spokesman Malcolm X, or militant liberationism, such as the Black Panthers (organized in Oakland, California, in 1966), left little room for support of the message of passive resistance among the nation's black urbanites.

The Selma, Alabama (Pettus) Bridge Compromise (March 9, 1966) also contributed to the decline of Dr. King's stature in the civil rights movement. The compromise grew out of a decision to march to the governor's office in Montgomery as a way of highlighting the campaign to end discrimination in voter registration practices in Selma. After the first march was brutally thwarted by state troopers and the Selma police, Dr. King led a second march. However, unknown to the marchers or the leaders of the other participating organizations (SNCC and CORE), King, in the face of a federal court order enjoining the second march, promised emissaries from President Johnson that the march would be halted after crossing the Pettus Bridge. Despite the successful federally authorized march to Montgomery twelve days later, some Movement blacks (especially young militants) saw this compromise as a sellout and began to view King as being too dependent on the goodwill of liberal whites and the federal establishment.

In response to criticism that he was too moderate, as well as his growing awareness of the deep relationship of racism to economics and poverty and his increased maturation as a protest leader, King expanded his targets of protest. For example, at New York's Riverside Church on April 4, 1967, he voiced unequivocally his opposition to the Vietnam War. This position earned him the enmity of President Johnson and criticism from other African American leaders, who felt he jeopardized the civil rights cause by linking it with such a controversial issue.

Earlier, in January 1966, King had opened the "northern phase" of SCLC's work, launching a campaign to eliminate housing discrimination in and around Chicago. Ending in a stalemate, it further eroded his influence. Finally, in February 1968, he inaugurated the Poor People's Campaign, which he envisioned as a trek to Washington of massive numbers of disadvantaged poor people of all races to demand an end to poverty and all forms of discrimination through a domestic program of intrinsic social and economic reform. King's assassination on April 4, 1968, effectively aborted this campaign and virtually killed the civil rights movement. Following his assassination, violence broke out in approximately 125 cities, claiming forty-six lives. Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Chicago were the cities most devastated by this rioting.

Dr. King's opposition to the Vietnam War, in which American involvement deepened after 1964 and which was the first war in the nation's history fought on a completely racially integrated basis, underscored the war's significant impact on black Americans. First, because the war was increasingly fought by those who were poor and less educated
(for example, those unable to obtain college deferments or flee the country to escape the draft), blacks were well represented in the war; 274,937 of the approximate total of 2.8 million Americans who served in the war were black. Moreover, during the war’s bloodiest fighting (1968 to 1970), African Americans made up a disproportionate number (21 percent) of the casualties. By the end of hostilities, however, 5,681 black lives had been lost, roughly 12.6 percent of the total 65,869 American casualties.

Second, there was considerable division within the black community over the war. In addition to citing the unfairness of the fewer opportunities blacks had to avoid the war, black war critics charged that the monies spent in pursuing the war could be better utilized in alleviating many of the country’s urban problems. In perhaps the most controversial case of black opposition to the war, Muhammad Ali, the world heavyweight boxing champion and a member of the Nation of Islam, refused to be drafted and sought status as a conscientious objector; he received a sentence of five years’ imprisonment and a fine of ten thousand dollars before his conviction was overturned by the Supreme Court in 1971. African Americans who supported the war often did so out of a sense of patriotic duty and, in the case of black servicemen, often out of a desire to build a career in an integrated military. In 1967, for example, blacks reenlisted at three times the rate of whites.

Finally, reflecting in part the racial turmoil at home, there was considerable tension between black and white servicemen in Vietnam, especially in the late 1960s when many black draftees held Black Power sentiments. Hate-filled graffiti, written by both blacks and whites, and fights at military bases, sometimes provoked by the flaunting of the Confederate flag and the burning of crosses by white racist servicemen, were among the signs of racial conflict in Vietnam. Many black Vietnam veterans would find that the scars from such racial experiences, as well as those related to combat and drug use, would require years to heal. Indeed, when they returned home, where jobs were scarce and where the general public, including many African Americans, did not regard them as heroes, many veterans had trouble adjusting to civilian life. Some suffered from depression and struggled with drug and alcohol abuse.

In several significant ways the black experience in New Jersey typified that of the larger black population. The ubiquitous ghetto riot was certainly no stranger to the state. Few states, in fact, had more disturbances of this kind than New Jersey, perhaps because it is the nation’s most urbanized state. And even the nonviolent direct action approach used to fight racial segregation in the South found expression in New Jersey. One dramatic example of this was the 1962–63 struggle to desegregate the Englewood elementary schools. As part of this protest effort, African American parents withdrew their children from the all-black Lincoln School and enrolled them in improvised Freedom Schools that were established in private homes. The parents even held sit-ins with their children at the three all-white elementary schools before these schools were finally integrated in the fall of 1963 by an order of the state commissioner of education.

Nonviolent methods to eradicate racial discrimination were also seen in the work of the NAACP, in southern New Jersey in particular. In the late 1950s the NAACP in communities like Vineland, Bridgeton, and Glassboro, aided by Dr. Ulysses S. Wiggins, president of the NAACP Camden branch, took the initiative in breaking down racial barriers in elementary schools and public accommodations (such as movies and restaurants). In the early and mid-1960s the focus of black activism in these communities switched to discrimination in employment and public services.

In the early and mid-1960s New Jersey also reflected the strides made in eliminating racial discrimination in housing, perhaps the most dramatic example of this occurred in Willingboro, a planned suburban community established in 1958. By 1962, owing largely to litigation efforts backed by the NAACP, Willingboro had its first African American residents.

The movement to suburbia by New Jersey blacks, as revealed in Willingboro’s integration, also mirrored another national pattern. This was the rapid expansion of the black middle class, due in large part to the civil rights movement’s success in removing racial barriers in employment, as well as the many well-paying positions African Americans occupied in the Great Society programs of the Johnson administration. In New Jersey, as elsewhere, however, the migration of middle-class blacks from cities to suburbs weakened the social and economic stability of urban black neighborhoods. Additionally, it meant that for the first time affluent blacks were physically separated from the poorer ranks of the race, denying the latter their traditional proximity to viable mainstream role models.

Black New Jerseyans, like their kith and kin across the nation, were also affected by the advent of the postindustrial age. Indeed, structural changes in the economy leading to the decline in unskilled and semiskilled jobs and the expansion of the service sector contributed in large part to the appear-
ance of what was termed an **underclass**. These were urban African Americans who, lacking any permanent connection to the work force, appeared locked in a seamless life of poverty and social misery characterized by violence, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, poor academic performance, and welfare dependency. Thus, by the end of the 1960s in New Jersey and elsewhere, a disturbing trend was apparent: groups within the black community were beginning to experience very unequal opportunities for upward mobility. The social classes at the community's two polar extremes—the non-working poor and the privileged—were growing the fastest; the socioeconomic gap among blacks was widening.

Finally, New Jersey during this period foreshadowed a key development in the political realm: the election of African Americans to significant public offices. Newark perhaps illustrated this better than any other New Jersey city. In 1970, Kenneth Gibson was elected the first black mayor of Newark, the state's largest city.

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**CORE LESSON**

**Theme**

While the direct action nonviolent protest efforts (sit-ins, boycotts, marches) of African Americans led to the dismantling of the legal base for American racial segregation by 1970, especially in the South, rioting by blacks, as an expression of dissatisfaction with the conditions they faced, brought the plight of black urban America to the attention of the nation and spawned the creation of a variety of social welfare programs to better these conditions. The 1954–1970 period also witnessed certain key social and economic developments, such as the shift of the economy into a postindustrial phase, with a concomitant reduction in employment opportunities for working-class blacks, and the widening of the socioeconomic gap between the black poor and the black elite.

**Materials and Preparation**


Students should read the summary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,’s discussion of nonviolent resistance (see page 185).

Students and the teacher should read pages 68–77 in *African Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*. The teacher should read chapters 22 and 23 in *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* ("African Americans in the Cold War Era" and "The Black Revolution").

**Time Period**

Each of the activities below will take one class period.
Objectives/Activities

**ACTIVITY 1**

**Explain** the work of the civil rights movement in the South, beginning with the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and ending with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968.

Point out to the students that the civil rights movement in the South used nonviolent protest. Have them read the summary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,’s discussion of nonviolent resistance (see page 185), which sets forth his belief that nonviolence resistance is the most desirable form of protest. Then divide the class into two groups, one supporting Dr. King’s philosophy of nonviolence and the other opposing it. Have each group argue the merits of its position. Dr. King’s position is laid out in the summary. Those opposed to it can suggest that successful nonviolent resistance requires a certain kind of oppressor. For example, if one is dealing with an oppressor who lacks a moral conscience (such as a Hitler), then such an approach risks extermination. Thus, it can be argued that nonviolent resistance should be employed only in those situations where it is likely to prove effective.

**Evaluation:** Divide the class into several groups and have each group role-play a particular situation where southern African Americans faced discrimination (lunch counters, waiting rooms at bus stations, voter registration, employment at department stores, seating on city buses). Have each group depict the methods used by civil rights activists in desegregating each of the situations listed (boycotts, marches, sit-ins, pickets, freedom rides).

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Describe** the causes and consequences of the urban riots of the 1960s.

Lead the students in a discussion that makes them aware of the grievances blacks had that gave rise to the urban disorders of the 1960s. Among these were high rates of black unemployment, police brutality, and poor housing conditions. Students should be informed, too, of the white flight from cities and the social welfare programs (War on Poverty) that occurred as a consequence of the urban riots. Students should also be told that these urban riots have been interpreted in different ways. Some persons have seen them as revolts and rebellions, as acts directed against authority symbols such as the police. Others, at the opposite end of the political spectrum, see nothing political about these disturbances and submit that they are simply the deeds of thugs and the criminal element in the black community. They point to the acts of looting and stealing as evidence of this. Divide the class into two groups, one arguing that the riots were politically motivated expressions of the desire to overthrow the existing political system, while the other group counters that these disorders were essentially the work of criminals and others who, caught up in the hysteria of mob rule, committed acts of vandalism and looting. Make the students aware of the possibility that there is some truth in both positions, that persons involved in these disturbances might have had different motives.

**Evaluation:** Have students research New Jersey newspapers for articles on a civil disorder that occurred in New Jersey during the 1960s (for example, the Newark riot of 1967). Based on this research, have them write a 500-word essay about the event, pointing out its causes, the area(s) of the city affected, the number of fatalities, the number of arrests, and so on. The students should also indicate how the riot was interpreted by the press: a rebellion or the collective acts of criminals.

Supplemental Activities

1. Show students the television film series *Eyes On The Prize: America’s Civil Rights Years*, a comprehensive history of the people, stories, events, and issues of the civil rights struggle in America. The series can be obtained from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28
West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838). Individual sixty-minute segments are available:

“Awakenings: 1954–1956” (Episode 1)
Events in post World War II American history that led to the modern black freedom struggle. The episode depicts southern race relations prior to 1954 and illustrates patterns of racial discrimination that prevailed at the beginning of the civil rights movement.

“Fighting Back: 1957–1962” (Episode 2)
Law as both a tool for change and resistance to change, particularly as it relates to education. This program examines the political, social, and psychological implications of school segregation and desegregation

This segment links four related stories of the period: the lunch counter sit-ins of 1960; the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; the impact of the sit-ins on the Kennedy-Nixon presidential campaign; and the freedom rides of 1961.

“No Easy Walk: 1962–1966” (Episode 4)
Major protest efforts in three American cities: Albany, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; and the march on Washington, D.C.

“Mississippi: Is This America?: 1962–1964” (Episode 5)
Starting in 1961, Mississippi became a testing ground of constitutional principles and of the human spirit as the civil rights movement focused its energies on the right to vote.

“Bridge To Freedom: 1965” (Episode 6)
Ten years after the Montgomery bus boycott the civil rights leadership had become sophisticated in the use of protest strategy. This program explores efforts by civil rights activists in Selma to sustain nonviolent street protest to generate nationwide sympathy and federal intervention, thereby bringing about better conditions for blacks.

2. Show students the film I Have a Dream: The Life of Martin Luther King (35 minutes), which explores the factors that shaped his life and led him to a place of leadership among black citizens. The film also chronicles the modern civil rights movement in America, identifying the gradual evolution of the movement from the boycott stage through attempts to build political power with the vote, the introduction of the sit-in, the use of freedom riders, mass demonstrations, and the emergence of the call for black power as an ideology competing with King’s philosophy of nonviolent resistance. The film can be obtained from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838).

Key Persons

Muhammad Ali. World heavyweight boxing champion and member of Nation of Islam who, because he became a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War, was stripped of the championship.

Shirley Chisholm. In 1968 became the first black woman elected to Congress.

Medgar Evers. Leader of the NAACP in Mississippi who was assassinated by southern racists in 1963.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Baptist minister who became the acknowledged leader of the modern civil rights movement and the winner of Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

Thurgood Marshall. A leading lawyer for the NAACP who argued many of its key cases (including Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas), he was appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967, becoming the first black justice.

James Meredith. Integrated the University of Mississippi in 1962.

Elijah Muhammad. Leader of the Nation of Islam, a religious group that espoused a form of black nationalism and contributed much to the conversion of many black Americans to the Islamic faith.

E. D. Nixon. Montgomery community activist who urged that Rosa Parks’s arrest be used to test the constitutionality of Montgomery’s segregated bus system.

Rosa Parks. Seamstress who refused to obey an order by a driver on segregated bus system that she give up her seat to a white passenger. Her arrest prompted the successful Montgomery bus boycott by blacks.

JoAnn Robinson. Community activist in Montgomery who initiated the call for a boycott of the city’s bus system after the arrest of Rosa Parks.

Robert C. Weaver. A Harvard-trained economist who began in 1933 to hold a number of key positions in the federal government, he was appointed secretary of housing and urban development in 1966, becoming the first African American cabinet member.

Malcolm X. Converted to the Nation of Islam, he became its forceful spokesman and an influential figure in raising the level of black political awareness in the early 1960s.

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

**FOR TEACHERS**


Farmer, James. 1985. *Lay Bare the Heart*. Farmer, one of CORE’s founders, provides in this autobiography a candid and revealing account of the civil rights struggle.
Garrow, David J. 1986. *Bearing the Cross.* Pulitzer Prize-winning, controversial, and revealing biography of Martin Luther King, Jr. Notable for the author's access to FBI files and his exhaustive research.


—. 1985. *In Pursuit of Power.* These two volumes trace the struggle for and results of southern black political representation and empowerment from the 1950s to the 1980s. The volumes constitute the most comprehensive study of the entire southern crusade.

Lincoln, C. Eric. 1961. *Black Muslims in America.* One of the earliest studies of the Nation of Islam's growth and espousal of a distinctive brand of religion and nationalism under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad aided by Malcolm X.


FOR STUDENTS


Marshall, Paule. 1959. *Brown Girl Brownstone.* In this story about racial and cultural conflict, the brown girl of the book’s title is a daughter of immigrants from Barbados, and the brownstones are the once socially desirable houses in a section of Brooklyn they have moved into.

Meredith, James. 1966. *Three Years in Mississippi.* A first-person account of what it was like to integrate the University of Mississippi.

Moore, Yvette. 1991. *Freedom Songs.* In this first-person narrative, fourteen-year-old Sheryl and her family leave their comfortable Brooklyn home for an Easter visit with Sheryl’s grandmother in North Carolina. When Sheryl’s nineteen-year-old uncle announces plans to become a Freedom Rider that summer, the entire family is shaken. His tragic death causes Sheryl to pursue her fundraising objectives in New York with even more dedication and conviction.


Williams, Juan. 1987. *Eyes on the Prize.* The companion volume to the PBS television series *Eyes On The Prize: America’s Civil Rights Years,* it contains profiles and interviews of outstanding personalities associated with the civil rights movement, as well as important documents pertaining to it.
MATERIALS
Summary: The Nonviolent Resistance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In discussing nonviolent resistance in Stride Toward Freedom, Dr. King identified it as having five basic characteristics.

1. Nonviolent resistance means neither cowardice nor passivity. Nonviolent resisters are not cowards but strong individuals; it takes strength to resist the use of violence. If, however, resisters are nonviolent because of fear or because they do not have the means of violence, they are not practicing true nonviolence. Also, nonviolent resistance is not a "do-nothing method"; it is only passive in that the resister commits no physical aggression against the opponent. "The method is passive physically, but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive nonresistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil."

2. The goal of nonviolent resistance is not to defeat anyone, but to create friendship and understanding. Instead of destroying the opponent, the nonviolent resister tries "to awaken a sense of moral shame.... The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness."

3. Nonviolent resistance attacks evil rather than the evildoer. There is a distinction between evil and the person committing the evil. Thus, in fighting racial injustice, the struggle is not between races, but rather between "justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness." Nonviolent resistance seeks "to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust."

4. Nonviolent resistance involves turning the other cheek, not responding to violence with violence. The nonviolent resister is willing "to accept blows from the opponent without striking back,.... to accept violence if necessary, but never to inflict it." Why? King quoted the Indian leader and foremost advocate of nonviolent resistance, Mahatma Ghandi, who said, "Suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason."

5. Love is central to nonviolent resistance. The nonviolent resister avoids not only physical violence but also spiritual violence, refusing to hate the opponent. To act otherwise would only increase the hatred in the universe. "Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives.

Unit 15
Beyond Civil Rights, 1970–1994

BACKGROUND

A major development in the black community between 1970 and 1990 was the decline of the civil rights movement and the weakening of the push for the greater integration of blacks into the mainstream of American society. Several factors contributed to this development. Perhaps the most important was the movement’s very success in eliminating de jure discrimination in crucial areas (public accommodations, housing, voting, and employment) and getting many white Americans to see the extent to which racial discrimination violated the nation’s basic creed of equality of opportunity. With this success the interest of many African Americans in civil rights groups began to wane as they started to give greater attention to taking advantage of the opportunities wrought by the success itself.

Another factor was the passing from the scene, mainly through death, of most of the civil rights leadership of the 1950s and 1960s. Among the deaths were those of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 and the Urban League’s Whitney Young in 1971. A. Philip Randolph and the NAACP’s Roy Wilkins retired in 1968 and 1977, respectively. Those who replaced these individuals generally lacked their leadership skills, talents, and/or charisma.

The growth of white conservatism also contributed to a slowing of civil rights progress. The presidential campaigns of Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964 and Democrat George Wallace in 1968, in exploiting white concerns about urban riots, helped encourage this conservatism (often termed the white backlash). By linking the urban unrest and turmoil of the 1960s to the civil rights movement, many whites came to believe that the latter had gone too far, that American society was coming apart, and that law-abiding people like themselves had been forgotten. Richard Nixon, in winning the presidency in 1972, pandered to these sentiments, referring to those who held them as the Silent Majority. As president, he kept the support of many such whites by focusing on returning power to the state and local levels of government, cutting back on funds for some of the Great Society programs, and preventing government officials from taking action against school districts that had not desegregated. Such policies, along with the ethnic competitiveness stimulated by the economic recessions of 1973 and 1979, indeed helped create a racial climate in the nation that displeased most African Americans. They found signs of this climate in the opposition of some whites to affirmative action, quotas, and busing, as well as several reverse discrimination suits (the most notable was Bakke v. University of California in 1978, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against a medical school quota admissions policy). Continued white residential flight to the suburbs, aided by red-lining, strengthened de facto housing segregation and reinforced black perceptions that the national mood was less supportive of the general well-being and interests of African Americans. In fact, blacks generally perceived this mood as compatible with policies emanating from the White House (excluding the administration of Democrat...
Jimmy Carter (1977–1981), whom black Americans seemingly viewed as being somewhat sympathetic to their struggle for equality). For example, the laissez-faire policies of Nixon (1969–1974) were basically unkind to the economic interests of low-income Americans, among whom blacks were disproportionately represented; and these policies were in essence continued under the Republican Presidents Ford (1981–1977), Reagan (1981–1989), and Bush (1989–1993).

About the presidency of Reagan, who was enormously popular in the white community, the historian John Hope Franklin has noted that his first budget, as well as subsequent ones, reduced the number of people eligible to participate in federal social programs such as food stamps, Medicaid, student loans, unemployment compensation, child nutrition assistance, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Such slashes in spending on social programs affected adversely countless African Americans, especially children. Franklin has also noted that Reagan’s tax program offered more tax relief to higher-income groups than the low-income group where most blacks could be found. And citing another reason why African Americans found it difficult to reconcile themselves to Reagan, Franklin has offered Reagan’s reluctance to support the establishment of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a national holiday.

Not all Republicans by any means were perceived by blacks as hostile to their interests. The Republican governor of New Jersey, Thomas H. Kean, who held office between 1982 and 1988, serves as a case in point. His stand on economic and social issues, combined with his constant calls for greater racial understanding in the state (under his administration New Jersey in 1985 became the first state to establish a Martin Luther King, Jr., Commemorative Commission), made him very popular in the black community. In running for a second term he received the endorsement of Coretta Scott King, Dr. King’s widow, and obtained more black votes than his Democratic Party opponent. In fact, he received a higher percentage of black votes than any statewide Republican candidate in New Jersey history.

Between 1970 and 1990 the unprecedented bifurcation of the black community into “haves” and “have-nots,” which had begun to emerge in the late 1960s, continued. For example, as the availability of jobs that required little education and training declined, and as the economy shifted from manufacturing to service-related industries, unemployment among blacks, particularly youths and men, increased, and the number of blacks living below the poverty level also increased. The convergence of this development with other mounting social problems such as the high incidence of female-headed households (56.2 percent of all black households in 1990 as opposed to 17.2 percent in 1950), the increase in babies born out of wedlock (66 percent of all black babies in 1989 as opposed to 16.8 percent in 1950), the high proportion of black young males involved with the criminal justice system (25 percent of all of those between the ages twenty and twenty-nine in 1989), and the advent of “crack” cocaine in 1986, expanded the underclass in particular. On the other hand, more blacks moved into the American mainstream. For example, the proportion of families with median incomes of fifty thousand or more expanded from 5 percent of all black families in 1969 to 14 percent by 1990.

There was perhaps no place where African Americans enjoyed greater success in entering the nation’s mainstream than in the holding of public office. Barbara Jordan and Andrew Young, for example, in 1972 became the first blacks to be elected to Congress from the South since the turn of the century. By 1990 twenty-seven blacks were members of Congress, and blacks served as mayors of thirty American cities, including the largest (David Dinkins in New York City) and the second largest (Tom Bradley in Los Angeles). In 1990 an African American was elected governor of a state for the first time (L. Douglas Wilder in Virginia). And, although unsuccessful, the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns of Jesse Jackson, under his Rainbow Coalition, were very significant as they represented the first major attempt by a black to gain the presidency.

During the last two decades African Americans also made great strides in occupying appointed positions of considerable power and prestige. Aside from the presence of an African American in every presidential cabinet since 1970 and the late 1991 appointment of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court (Thurgood Marshall had retired earlier in 1991), perhaps the most notable example was the appointment in 1989 of General Colin Powell as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the military’s highest position.

Another key development in African American life between 1970 and 1990 was the continued geographical mobility of black Americans. Many were suburbia-bound, giving rise by 1990 to a few suburban communities in which blacks constituted a majority. In New Jersey, such a community is Willingboro; in 1990 it had 20,350 blacks out of a total population of 38,000.

The continued flight of whites from the nation’s urban communities between 1970 and 1990 increased the number of cities with black majorities. New Jersey was a part of this trend. Thus, according to the 1990 U.S. Census, the following New Jersey cities (with the number of black residents indicated) had black
majority populations: Newark (160,885); East Orange (66,157); Camden (49,362); Irvington (42,760); Plainfield (30,573); Orange (21,045); Atlantic City (19,491); and Asbury Park (9,977). Trenton, with 43,689 African Americans in 1990, fell 489 shy of having a black majority.

The 1990 U.S. Census also documented that for the first time in this century the percentage of blacks living in the South increased (56 percent versus 52 percent in 1980). Aiding this increase was the return of considerable numbers of northern black retirees, including some from New Jersey, to the South, many to their place of origin. The warmer climate in the South, its lower costs of living (appealing especially to those on fixed incomes), the elimination of Jim Crowism, and concerns about physical safety in urban areas are among the factors that have influenced their movement.

CORE LESSON

Theme

The recent period of black American history has been characterized by a growing white indifference to the black struggle for social justice and an unprecedented bifurcation of the black community into an expanding middle class, benefiting from the victories of the modern civil rights movement, and an expanding underclass that is plagued with the social ills identified with contemporary urban life.

Materials and Preparation


Students should read the essay "Reparations for Black Americans" (see page 194).

Students and the teacher should read pages 68–77 in Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History.


Time Period

Each of the activities that follow will take one class period.

Objectives/Activities

**ACTIVITY 1**

Identify and assess the most critical problems facing the African American community today and evaluate the role of racism as the cause of these problems.
Lead the students in listing the black community’s major problems (for example, unemployment, substance abuse, school dropouts, teenage parenthood) and assessing the significance of these problems. Also point out that there is disagreement over the extent to which racism is believed to be responsible for these social ills. For example, there are those who contend that such problems are a function of class, rather than race, that the values held by disadvantaged blacks prevent their upward social mobility. Others, in contrast, believe that an overarching racist climate has given rise to the conditions found in the nation’s inner cities, where black social problems are most acute. Citing, for example, the debilitating effects of widespread drug use, they note both the relative ease with which drugs flow into black urban communities and the absence of black control of drugs entering the country. Students should be reminded that differences of opinions about the role of racism are usually rooted in the notion of “past racism” versus “present racism” and the amount of emphasis one is willing to accord racism.

**Evaluation:** Have students write a 500-word essay that examines whether racism explains the present-day condition of black Americans. Students should explain, given the existence of racism, why some African Americans are successful and others are not and whether those who are successful are, because of racism, not as successful as they should be.

**ACTIVITY 2**

**Explain** the decline of the civil rights movement between 1970 and 1990, identifying the contributing factors.

Have students discuss whether the civil rights movement, in light of its victories of the 1950s and 1960s, has outlived its usefulness. Are the traditional programs and activities of civil rights organizations relevant to the kinds of contemporary problems that beset the black community? If not, what kinds of programs and activities should these organizations put in place?

**Evaluation:** Have students imagine they are the director of a major civil rights organization. Have them prepare a 500-word position paper that identifies what the director believes to be the most crucial problems of the African American community and the organization’s proposal for remedying these problems.

**ACTIVITY 3**

**Explain** the factors that between 1970 and 1990 created an unprecedented bifurcation of black community into “haves” and “have nots” and discuss the implications of this bifurcation for the community.

Tell the students that it has been argued by some that the absence of a physical presence of middle-class African Americans in the nation’s innercities has, in denying inner-city residents the opportunity to see alternative role models, contributed to the social malaise found in the innercities. Ask students to discuss whether middle-class blacks should return to the innercities and help revitalize life there. If not, in what way should they help, if at all, in alleviating the problems of the innercities?

**Evaluation:** Have the students write a short play in which the main characters are middle-class, suburban blacks who discuss what role, if any, they should play in helping their kith and kin in the innercities. Point out that any number of positions can be adopted, ranging from returning to live in the innercity, to serving as a Big Brother or Big Sister to an inner-city youth, to financial contributions to inner-city organizations, to expressing no identification with the problems of inner-city residents.
ACTIVITY 4

Describe the major approaches that exist among blacks in terms of seeking redress for their past mistreatment.

Point out to the students that black Americans have sought redress in a variety of forms (such as reparations and affirmative action). Divide the class into two groups and have them debate the pros and cons of affirmative action. Point out that both blacks and whites can be found on both sides of this issue. For example, some blacks are opposed to affirmative action because they contend it cheapens the accomplishments of its beneficiaries, while some whites argue that it amounts to reverse discrimination.

Or have students read the essay “Reparations for Black Americans” (see page 194) and have them debate the pros and cons of this form of relief. Students should be reminded that both whites and blacks can be found on both sides of this issue as well.

Evaluation: Have the students write a short play in which the main characters are a white student and black student who are seeking admission to the same medical school. Have them debate whether the medical school should give some form of preferential treatment to the black student. The students should be reminded that schools often give preferential treatment to applicants based on a variety of factors, such as whether a parent is a graduate of the school.

Or have students write a 500-word essay in response to “Reparations for Black Americans.” The essay should put forth the position that a black or white American could adopt in stating support for or opposition to reparations.

ACTIVITY 5

Identify and assess the significance of the positions in the New Jersey state government held by several African Americans between 1970 and 1994.

Tell students that throughout black American history those African Americans who made a noteworthy accomplishment in a particular field have generally been noted. In light of this, give the students the names of six blacks (listed below) who held important positions in the state government between 1970 and 1994. Then have the students discuss which of these positions—Justice of the Supreme Court; Commissioner of Community Affairs; member of the General Assembly; Secretary of State; member of the State Senate; and Speaker of the General Assembly—they find to be the most important and why. To help students in this activity, divide the class into groups and make each group responsible for researching the basic duties of one of the positions identified and reporting on this position to the class.

James H. Coleman, Jr., in 1994 became the first African American to serve on the New Jersey Supreme Court.

Leonard S. Coleman, Jr., in 1982 became the first African American to become a member of the Governor's Cabinet. Initially appointed the Commissioner of Energy, he subsequently served as the Commissioner of Community Affairs.

Mildred Barry Garvin, in 1978 became the second black woman elected to the New Jersey General Assembly.

Lonna R. Hooks, in 1994 became the first black woman to serve as a member of the Governor’s Cabinet and the first African American to serve as New Jersey Secretary of State.
Wynona M. Lipman, in 1971 became the first African American woman elected to the New Jersey State Senate.

S. Howard Woodson, Jr., in 1974 became the first black American to become Speaker of the General Assembly.

Evaluation: Have students write a 500-word essay that indicates which one of the six identified positions in the state government—Justice of the Supreme Court; Commissioner of Community Affairs; member of the General Assembly; Secretary of State; member of the State Senate; and Speaker of the General Assembly—they would like to occupy and why.

Supplemental Activities

1. Show students “Affirmative Action vs. Reverse Discrimination,” episode 12 (58 minutes) of the thirteen-part series The Constitution: That Delicate Balance. This segment examines the accusation that modern American society, in using affirmative action to redress discriminative practices of the past, actually fosters reverse discrimination. It can be obtained from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838).

2. Show students the film Ethnic Notions, a historically accurate, skillfully crafted treatment of racial stereotypes and images that have plagued black people since the slavery era (56 minutes). The servile, happy, and childlike Sambo of the antebellum minstrel shows, for example, offered proof that black people were content with slavery. By the end of Reconstruction, a new stereotype came into dominance. Gruesome caricatures such as the “Brute” (vividly depicted in Thomas Dixon’s The Clansmen, later adapted into the film Birth of a Nation) and the “Pickaninny” portrayed black people as savages in need of “domestication.” They helped justify segregation, disfranchisement, even lynchings. The film can be obtained from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Media Resource Center, 28 West State Street, Sixth Floor, Trenton, New Jersey 08608 (609-695-4838).

3. Show students the film Black in White America, which examines the experiences of contemporary black Americans, especially as differentiated along class lines (60 minutes). It can be obtained from Resolution Inc., 19 Gregory Drive, South Burlington, Vermont 05403 (800-862-8900).

4. Show students “Black on White,” episode 5 (60 minutes) of The Story of English. It looks at the evolution of Black English. Black American speech is thus seen as having roots in Africa and as including the recent phenomenon of rap music. It can be obtained from Films Inc., 5547 N. Ravenswood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60640-1199 (312-878-2600).

Key Persons

Tom Bradley. Elected in 1973 the first black mayor of Los Angeles.

David Dinkins. Elected in 1990 the first black mayor of New York City.

Patricia Roberts Harris. Appointed secretary of housing and urban development in 1977, she was the first African American woman to become a cabinet member.

Jesse Jackson. Leading civil rights activist who was an associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., founder of People United to Save Humanity (PUSH), and a presidential candidate in 1984 and 1988.
Colin Powell. Appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1989, the highest military position ever held by an African American.

Clarence Thomas. Appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1991, he was the second African American to serve on the nation’s highest tribunal.

L. Douglas Wilder. In 1990 elected governor of Virginia, first black to be elected governor of a state.

Annotated Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FOR TEACHERS

Billingsley, Andrew. 1992. Climbing Jacob’s Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African American Families. An examination of the black family, this book looks at its historical and present-day dimensions and offers an optimistic forecast because of the perceived strength, endurance, resilience, and adaptive qualities of the black family.

Blair, Thomas L. 1977. Retreat to the Ghetto. A study of the urban economic and social realities confronting African Americans in the 1970s in the wake of civil rights reforms and flight of the urban middle class.

Davis, George and Glegg Watson. 1982. Black Life in Corporate America. Racial realities for black executives in the business world from the 1950s to the 1980s, as told to the authors, who also provide an overview.

Dreyfuss, Joel and Charles Lawrence. 1979. The Bakke Case. A study of the pivotal California court case that introduced “reverse discrimination” into the vocabulary of race relations and the legal battlefield.

Gans, Herbert J. 1967. The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community. A sociological study of the early years of Levittown, New Jersey, a Burlington County suburban community that, beginning in 1958, was built by the developer, William Levitt. In chapter 14 Gans discusses the community’s racial desegregation, including the developer’s initial policy in 1958 of excluding African Americans and his decision, in the early 1960s in the face of litigation, to allow blacks to purchase homes in the community. In 1963 the community voted to change its name to Willingboro, its original name; today Willingboro has a black majority population.


Hacker, Andrew. 1992. Two Nations, Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal. Using the most recent relevant statistical data, the author provides a candid and forthright analysis of contemporary race relations in America.

Pinkney, Alphonso. 1980. The Myth of Black Progress. A sociologist discusses the absence of economic gains, spread of social ills, and overall racial impotence that followed the civil rights reforms of the 1950s and 1960s.


—-. 1984. Civil Rights: Rhetoric of Reality. These studies, written by a “black conservative,”
examine the absence of black society's infrastructural development, the community's dependence on the government, and the negative consequences of both.


——. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Both studies, written by a black sociologist, examine the growing blight of the inner cities and an increasingly alienated black underclass whose problems the author believes derive less from white racism and more from macroeconomic changes and intraracial community malaise.


FOR STUDENTS


McKissack, Patricia. 1989. *Jesse Jackson: A Biography*. A treatment of the civil rights leader and politician whose early work involved an association with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Naylor, Gloria. 1985. *Linden Hills*. In this novel, a pair of African American poets work their way through the middle-class community of Linden Hills and experience its residents’ hypocrisy, pain, and passions.
MATERIALS
CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

"Reparations for Black Americans" (1990)

"Nobody's asking for reparations. I'm asking you to give us the crumbs from the table," said Craig Washington, one of five black Congressmen from the South, on the floor of the House. What crumbs? More and stronger affirmative action as mandated by the Civil Rights Act of 1990.

George Bush, an aristocrat who hates to deny crumbs to anyone, vetoed the bill anyway, on the ground that it encouraged racial quotas. But the bill was more than just bad legislation. It was a sign of intellectual bankruptcy in our thinking about race. As race relations worsen, as ethnic divisions harden, as an ex-Nazi pulls nearly as many votes in Louisiana as did the 1988 Democratic presidential candidate, the country has run out of ideas.

Take the Civil Rights Act of 1990. It makes it easier for minorities to sue the boss if the employee roster does not meet some statistical measure of racial balance. A nightmare for employers, a bonanza for lawyers, a crumb for blacks. How many, after all, would be helped by such legislation, and at what cost?

There is no denying that affirmative action has started some blacks on the ladder of advancement and thus helped create a black middle class.

There is equally no denying that because it violates the rights of some people purely on the grounds of race, it has exacerbated racial resentments.

But as Shelby Steele argues, preferential treatment for blacks has an even more pernicious cost: it creates corrosive doubt in the eyes of both whites and blacks about the worth of the black achievement. However much people may deny it, no one can see a black professor or doctor without having the thought run through his mind: Did he make it on his own or did he get through on a quota? These doubts gratuitously reinforce in both blacks and whites a presumption of racial inferiority.

Moreover, the idea that affirmative action is just a temporary remedy is a fraud. With every new civil rights act, like the one just attempted and soon to be reintroduced in the 102nd Congress, ethnic quotas and race consciousness become more deeply woven into American life. The current uproar over race-based college scholarships reminds us just how divisive the issue can be.

What is to be done? Representative Washington has it exactly backward. Forget the crumbs; demand reparations. It is time for a historic compromise: a monetary reparation to blacks for centuries of oppression in return for the total abolition of all programs of racial preference. A one-time cash payment in return for a new era of irrevocable color blindness.

Why reparations: First, because they are targeted precisely at those who deserve them. By
now affirmative action has grown to include preferential treatment for Hispanics, women, the
ehandicapped and an ever-expanding list of favored groups. This is absurd. By what moral
standard should, say, a Marielito, already once rescued by America, enjoy a preference over,
say, an Italian-American vet or an Irish cop? A Richmond ordinance struck down two years ago
by the Supreme Court assigned 30% of city subcontracts to firms owned by minorities, defined
as “Blacks, Spanish-speaking [citizens], Orientals, Indians, Eskimos or Aleuts.” Richmond,
capital of the Confederacy, is not known for its mistreatment of Eskimos. Yet under the law,
Richmond would have had to prefer an Alaskan Eskimo to a local white in city contracting.

Let us be plain. Richmond’s sin—America’s sin—was against blacks. There is no wrong in
American history to compare with slavery. Affirmative action distorts the issue by favoring
equally all “disadvantaged groups.” Some of those groups are disadvantaged, some not. Black
America is the only one that for generations was officially singled out for discrimination and
worse. Why blur the issue?

Reparations focus the issue most sharply. They acknowledge the crime. They attempt resti-
tution. They seek to repay some of “the bondsman’s 250 years of unrequited toil.” They offer
the wronged some tangible means to elevate their condition.

For that very real purpose, reparations should be more than merely symbolic. Say, $100,000
for every family of four. That would cost the country a lot—about 50% more than the cost of
our S&L sins—but hardly, for a $6 trillion economy, a bankrupting sum. (A 10-year 75c gas tax,
for example would pay the whole bill.) Recession may not be the best time to start such a
transfer, but America will come out of recession.

The savings to the country will be substantial: an end to endless litigations, to the ineffici-
cencies of allocation by group (rather than merit), to the distortion of the American prin-
ciple of individualism, to the resentments aroused by a system of group preferences. The fact
is, we already have a system of racial compensation. It is called affirmative action. That system
is not only inherently unjust but socially demoralizing and inexcusably clumsy. Far better an
honest focused substitute: real, hard, one-time compensation.

But is not cash-for-suffering demeaning? Perhaps. But we have found no better way to
compensate for great crimes. Germans know that the millions they have dispersed to Holo-
caust survivors cannot begin to compensate for the murder of an entire civilization. Yet for
irremediable national crimes, reparations are as dignified a form of redress as one can devise.

Racial preferences, on the other hand, are a demeaning form of racial tutelage. Better the
dignity of a debt repaid, however impersonally, than the warm glow of condescension that
permeates affirmative action.

It is time to reclaim the notion of color blindness before it is too late. A one-time repara-
tion to blacks would help real people in a real way. It would honor our obligation to right
ancient wrongs. And it would allow us all a new start. America could then rededicate itself to Martin Luther King Jr.’s proposition that Americans be judged by the content of their character, not by the color of their skin.

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