

## Integrating *Blood Done Sign My Name* into Social Studies

### Overview

*Blood Done Sign My Name*, by Tim Tyson, examines the history of the civil rights struggle in the South. The book focuses on the murder of a young black man, Henry Marrow, in 1970, a tragedy that dramatically widened the racial gap in the author's hometown of Oxford, N.C. Tyson portrays the killing and its aftermath from multiple perspectives while interweaving the history of race relations in the South. This series of 13 lesson plans relies on excerpts from the book and interactive, engaging activities to assist students in untangling the complicated issues and beliefs surrounding race throughout North Carolina's history to present. A reading guide is also included.

### Grade

11

### NC Essential Standards for American History II

- AH2.H.1.3- Use historical analysis and interpretation...
- AH2.H.1.4- Use historical research...
- AH2.H.2.1: Analyze key political, economic, and social turning points since the end of Reconstruction in terms of causes and effects (e.g., conflicts, legislation, elections, innovations, leadership, movements, Supreme Court decisions, etc.).
- AH2.H.2.2: Evaluate key turning points since the end of Reconstruction in terms of their lasting impact (e.g., conflicts, legislation, elections, innovations, leadership, movements, Supreme Court decisions, etc.).
- AH2.H.4.1 - Analyze the political issues and conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted (e.g., Populism, Progressivism, working conditions and labor unrest, New Deal, Wilmington Race Riots, Eugenics, Civil Rights Movement, Anti-War protests, Watergate, etc.).
- AH2.H.4.3 - Analyze the social and religious conflicts, movements and reforms that impacted the United States since Reconstruction in terms of participants, strategies, opposition, and results (e.g., Prohibition, Social Darwinism, Eugenics, civil rights, anti-war protest, etc.).
- AH2.H.4.4 - Analyze the cultural conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted (e.g., nativism, Back to Africa movement, modernism, fundamentalism, black power movement, women's movement, counterculture, Wilmington Race Riots, etc.).
- AH2.H.5.1 - Summarize how the philosophical, ideological and/or religious views on freedom and equality contributed to the development of American political and economic systems since Reconstruction (e.g., "separate but equal", Social Darwinism, social gospel, civil service system, suffrage, Harlem Renaissance, the Warren Court, Great Society programs, American Indian Movement, etc.).

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**Preparation**

- It is important to set clear and firm expectations about respectful communication and tolerance in the classroom before discussing sensitive topics such as Jim Crow, intolerance, racism, etc. See the Consortium's classroom management and character education activities for establishing a community where controversial topics can be safely addressed. (Available in the Database of K-12 Resources in the "Activities" section, or contact [CarolinaK12@unc.edu](mailto:CarolinaK12@unc.edu) for recommendations.)

## Introduction to *Blood Done Sign My Name* with Chapter One

### Overview

Students will be introduced to *Blood Done Sign My Name* as they read and discuss Chapter One of the book. Students will begin to explore the tangle of issues and beliefs surrounding race in North Carolina and the country in the 1970s, and then illustrate their understanding of a Chapter One topic by creating a headline, picture, and caption representing it.

### Materials

- Copies of *Blood Done Sign My Name*
- North Carolina map

### Duration

1 class period

### Procedure

1. As a warm-up, pass out copies of the book *Blood Done Sign My Name*. Ask students to share anything they already know about the book. Also ask them to make predictions about what they think the book might be about based on its title and the image on the cover. Finally, explain to students that this book is about racial tension in North Carolina and the entire country, past and present, as illustrated by the 1970 murder of a young black man, **Henry Marrow**, in **Oxford, North Carolina**. Teachers may want to have a student volunteer read the back of the book out loud.
2. Next, ask students to find **Granville County** on a North Carolina map. Also instruct them to locate Oxford, Ask students to figure out how far Oxford is from their own North Carolina home. Encourage students to keep in mind that they are exploring the history of their own state.
3. Tell students that to introduce them to the book, you will be reading the first few pages aloud. Teachers may want to instruct students to follow along. Tell them to focus on the emotions they feel as they listen. Then, read pages 1-4 (stopping after the second paragraph with the sentence, "Sleep was slow to come.") Upon stopping, allow for a few moments of silent processing, then discuss:
  - How did what I just read make you feel? What are your initial thoughts and reactions? What surprised you?
  - The book opens up with a sentence containing the very controversial "n-word". (*If the class participated in the pre-activity Symbols and Words of Hate refer back to the lesson and their discussion of this word.*) Why do you think some people, such as Gerald Teel, use the word so freely, whereas others, such as Tim Tyson and his family, felt the word was "evil?"
  - What was the name of the man who we find out was "shot dead?" Thus far, what do we know about the reason he was killed as he "lay on his back, helpless, begging for his life?"
  - When did this murder take place? (*Write the date of **May 12, 1970** on the board.*) How long ago was this? (*Ensure they grasp the fact that the events they are going to be discussing happened only 38 years ago. To help students grasp the time, you may want to have them think of people they know who are 38 years old or older, pointing out that this event took place in their lifetime.*)
  - What is your first impression of Gerald Teel's daddy?
  - Tim notes that he and his family usually talk over dinner, but this evening "an eerie hush hung over the supper table." Why do you think this is?
  - Why do you think Tim says that he and his little sister "knew something perilous was unfolding?"
  - How does Tim feel as he goes to bed? Why do you think he feels this way?
  - Thus far, we know that Henry Marrow, a black man, has been shot by a white man. The alleged reason is that Henry Marrow "said something" to a white woman. What do you predict will happen next? What generally happens after a murder takes place? (*discuss proper police procedure, etc.*)

4. Instruct students to read the remainder of the chapter on their own. Once they have finished, discuss the following as a class:
- How did the rumor that the police were not going to arrest anyone for Henry's murder affect Oxford's black community?
  - Why do you think some African Americans responded to the situation by rioting? (*Discuss concepts such as **disempowerment**, feeling ignored/invisible, acting on anger, the feeling of having no other options, etc. with students.*)
  - Why do you think the rioters tried to pull down the Confederate monument?
  - On page 6, Tyson writes of the black rioters, "At last, they felt, the white people who ran Oxford would have to listen to them, and the sole reason for that was that they had finally resorted to open revolt." Have you ever been ignored or given the impression that you have to say is unimportant? How does this make you feel?
  - Evaluate Mayor Currin's response to the rioting. Why do you think he chose not to "interfere?" Do you think he made the right decisions? Why or why not?
  - How does Tim describe Oxford's classrooms in 1970? How do the segregated classrooms he describes compare and contrast to our classrooms today?
  - How did the situation in Oxford affect the children?
  - Tyson points out that similar tragedies were taking place across the country while Henry's murder occurred in Oxford, North Carolina. What other events does he describe?
  - *Read aloud the last two paragraphs of the chapter, starting at "So while this is the story of a small boy in a small town..."*, page 9. What lies does Tyson say that we tell ourselves today? Why do you think we are not taught the entire truth regarding the civil rights movement? What do you think Tyson means when he says "if there is to be **reconciliation**, first there must be **truth**?" Do you agree or disagree and why? What is your definition of the word truth?
  - Based on reading this chapter, what do you predict this book will be about?
5. As a culminating activity, tell students to think of everything that was discussed in Chapter One. Ask them to ponder what they feel was the most surprising, interesting, newsworthy, or intriguing occurrence or person discussed. Instruct students to create a newspaper headline, drawn picture, and caption depicting something introduced in Chapter One. Teachers may need to show students an example to further their understanding, such as:



6. Teachers should circulate as students brainstorm the aspect of the chapter they want to work with, and may also want to encourage students to choose different people/occurrences to ensure variety in final

products. Once students have completed their headline, image, and caption (assign for homework if needed) post student work around the room and allow the class to circulate and view all of the headlines. Then, choose a few to use as a catalyst for review by discussing what each represents.

## Slavery in North Carolina

### Overview

In this lesson, students will read pages 28-31 of *Blood Done Sign My Name* and discuss the lives of those enslaved in North Carolina during the early to mid 1800s. Students will also begin to explore the impact of slavery on race relations today. Students will read several primary sources from enslaved North Carolinians then assume the persona of an enslaved person and write a series of diary entries.

### Materials

- Post-It Notes
- Copies of *Blood Done Sign My Name*
- Images of Slavery, examples attached
- *North Carolina Slave Stories*, examples attached

### Duration

1-2 class periods for the lesson and a partial class period for sharing final diary entries

### Procedure

1. Before class, create a “KWL Chart” by dividing a sheet of poster board into 3 sections (this can also be done on a chalkboard). Head the three columns “Know,” “Want to Know,” and “Learned.”
2. Give each student 5 Post-It Notes as they arrive. As a warm-up, ask students to think about what they know about the culture and living conditions of North Carolina slaves prior to the Civil War. Ask them to write 3-4 things they know about the topic, each on a separate Post-It Note. Using the remaining Post-It Notes, ask them to write 1-2 questions they have about North Carolina slave culture, i.e. what do they want to know? As students fill out Post-It Notes, ask them to place them on the poster board in the appropriate column. When all students are finished, discuss some or all of the “Knows.” Ask students where they learned these things. Then discuss the “Want to knows” that students placed on poster board.

**Note:** It is assumed that students will have already studied slavery before completing this lesson. For lessons on introducing the subject of slavery, see the Consortium’s Database of Civic Resources, lessons for 8<sup>th</sup> grade North Carolina History, Goal 3. Lessons addressing slavery include: *Voices of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*; *An Overview of Slavery through Rotating Stations*; *Active Citizens of the 1800s*; *The 1787 Constitution and Slavery*; and more.)

3. Tell students that they will be reading an excerpt from *Blood Done Sign My Name* regarding slavery in North Carolina. Instruct students to turn to [page 28](#) and to begin reading at the start of the second paragraph with “In Oxford, white children often grew up with family stories...” Students should stop reading at the bottom of [page 31](#). Once students have finished their reading, have them discuss the following as a class or in small groups:
  - How did African American stories of slavery differ from the stories passed down in white families? Why do you think such a vast difference exists in the versions?
  - What types of hardships did enslaved people experience? Of the experiences explained in this excerpt, which do you think would be the hardest to go through and why?
  - In what ways did white preachers during this period use religion to promote servitude?
  - What role did music play in the worship of those enslaved? Why do you think music is still such an important part of many church services?
  - Why did those enslaved have to hold secret meetings for church? (*Discuss **slave codes** and **black codes**-laws each southern state had defining the status of slaves and the rights of masters; the code gave slave owners near-absolute power over the right of their human property. Slave codes restricted those enslaved from voting, moving freely, meeting in large groups, etc. After slavery, southerners created black codes, which were similar laws used to control and inhibit the freedom of ex-slaves.*)

- Some people in Oxford believed that “good race relations” existed in the decades after slavery. However, Tyson comments, “But these ties, even when the affection was genuine on both sides, were like a clay pot that had to be shattered for the tree inside to grow. What kind of fruit that tree would yield, in the long run, remained an open question.” (31) What message is Tyson trying to convey?
  - Based on the first chapter of the book, *Blood Done Sign My Name* is about the 1970 racial murder of a black man named Henry Marrow. Given that this murder happened in 1970, why do you think Tyson is discussing slavery? (*Begin to discuss with students how though no person alive today was enslaved or an enslaver, the lingering effects of slavery still affect society today.*)
4. Focus students back on the issue of the often told “mythology” of slavery by reading aloud the second full paragraph on page 28 (starting at “In Oxford, white children often grew up with...”) Discuss further:
    - Why are stories passed down through generations sometimes unreliable?
    - Since there are no people living today who were enslaved during the Civil War, what options do we have to hear their true stories? What sources might be more reliable than others and why? (*Explain that the words of the slaves themselves, or “primary sources,” are one of the best resources for answering the questions about past cultures.*)
  5. Ask students to take out a sheet of paper. Explain that you are going to present images of people who were enslaved, each image for 2 minutes (2 examples are attached). Explain to students that they are to silently write a brief description of what they see, their reactions, and any inferences they can make on the life this person may have lived. After you have presented all images, go back through them and allow students to share their reactions.
  6. Tell students to keep the images in mind. Distribute a copy of a North Carolina slave story to students (if students will only read one, teachers may choose to distribute several different stories among the class; narratives can be distributed one per student or per partner; two examples are attached, and additional stories can be found at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>). Explain that these are the actual words of people who were enslaved in our state. Teachers should also discuss some aspects of the slave stories students may be unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable with:
    - stories are written in the **vernacular** of the time
    - **phonetic spellings** are used (words are spelled the way they sound)
    - stories contain racial slurs (i.e. “n-word”)
  7. Explain to students that they will have 10 minutes to read the story given to them and to record responses on their notebook paper to the following questions:
    - What types of experiences did authors write about?
    - How would you describe the attitudes of the authors?
    - What can you tell about slave culture based on what you read?
    - How did reading stories written by actual people who were enslaved make you feel?
    - Did you find anything surprising? If so, explain.
    - How do these primary stories compare and contrast with the ideas of slavery held by some white people, as described in Tyson’s book?
  8. To segue into the next activity, discuss various things that people write about in diaries: events, emotions and feelings, thoughts, questions, goals, dreams, plans, etc. Remind students that diaries are personal accounts. As such, personalities of authors are very evident in their writing.
  9. Tell students they are going to be giving a voice to an enslaved North Carolinian will be writing 2 diary entries from the perspective of an enslaved North Carolinian or an ex-slave. In their writing they should address the following questions:
    - What is your name?
    - What kind of household do you work for? (i.e. plantation, small home, etc.)

- What kind of person or family owns you? What is your relationship with them like?
- What kind of work are you expected to perform?
- What are your living conditions like? Who do you live with?
- What are some things in life that are most important to you? Why?
- What are your hopes, dreams, and aspirations beyond enslavement?

Encourage students to write using the vernacular of the time, but ensure they understand how to be mature and appropriate in their writing.

10. After students complete their diary entries (which can be required for homework), have each of them share an account they wrote with the class. Again, set presentation standards and remind students to be respectful and appropriate.
11. As a closing activity, refer to the “KWL Chart.” Distribute one or two Post It notes to each student and ask them to write down anything they may have learned while reading ex-slave stories, writing their diary entries, or listening to others. Also encourage students to continue considering how the effects of slavery have lingered throughout history and to write any thoughts they have in this regard. Have students place Post It notes under the appropriate column on the chart. Discuss some of the things students learned. Check to see if the questions from the “W” column were answered. If not, address questions and discuss possible answers.

#### **Additional Activities**

- Have students read page 12-13 of *Blood Done Sign My Name*, regarding tobacco and slavery or page 171-173, regarding the anti-Confederate North Carolina guerilla group called “The Red Strings.”
- Have students read *Memories of a Childhood Slave* by Annie L. Burton, which can be found at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/burton/burton.html>.

## Slave Images



Source: <http://img219.imageshack.us/img219/1668/slave1am8.jpg>



Source: [http://img.timeinc.net/time/daily/2007/0703/a\\_slavery\\_maryland\\_0327.jpg](http://img.timeinc.net/time/daily/2007/0703/a_slavery_maryland_0327.jpg)

ANN PARKER

## Ex-Slave Story

An interview with Ann Parker in the Wake County Home,  
Raleigh, North Carolina.

"I reckon dat I is a hund<sup>e</sup>rt an' three or a hundert  
an' four years old. I wuz a 'oman grown at de end o'  
de war.

"I ain't had no daddy case queens doan marry an'  
my mammy, Junny, wuz a queen in Africa. Dey kidnaps her  
an' steals her 'way from her throne an' fetches her hyar  
ter Wake County in slavery.

"We 'longed ter Mr. Abner Parker who lived near  
Raleigh an' he had maybe a hundert slaves an' a whole heap  
of lan'. I ain't neber laked him much, case we had ter wuck  
hard an' we ain't got much ter eat. He ain't 'lowed us no  
fun, but we did have some, spite o' him.

"We uster git by de patterollers an' go ter de neigh-  
borin' plantations whar we'd sing an' talk an' maybe dance.  
I know onct do' dat we wuz in a barn on Mr. Liles' place  
when de patterollers comed, all dat could git out scated,  
but de ones dat got ketched got a whuppin'.

"I got seberal whuppin's fer dis, dat an' tother; but

I specks dat I needed 'em. Anyhow we wuz raised right, we warn't 'lowed ter sass nobody an' we ole'uns still knows dat we is got ter be perlite ter yo' white ladies.

"Daughter, did I tell yo' 'bout my mammy bein' a queen. Yes, she wuz a queen, an' when she tol' dem niggers dat she wuz dey bowed down ter her. She tol' dem not ter tell hit an' dey doan tell, but when dey is out of sight of de white folkses dey bows down ter her an' does what she says.

"A few days 'fore de surrender mammy, who am also a witch, says ter dem dat she sees hit in de coffee grounds dat dey am gwine ter be free so all o' us packs up an' gits out.

"We got along pretty good atter de war, an' on till lately. Atter I gits too ole ter wuck I sets on de post-office steps an' begs. I got a good pile o' money too, but somebody done stole hit an' now I'se ~~hyer~~ in de County Home.

"I fell an' broke my arm sometime a go, case my right side am daid an' I tries ter crawl offen de bed. When I gits back from de hospital dey ties me in dis cheer ter keep me from fallin' out, but I want ter git a loose. De nigger boy what helps me up an' down ain't raised lak I wuz, he fusses an' he he ain't got de manners what he ort ter habe."

L. E.

## AUNT BARBARA'S LOVE STORY

An interview with Barbara Haywood, 85 years old. Address  
1111 Mark Street, Raleigh, North Carolina.

"Anything dat I tells you will near 'bout all be  
'bout Frank Haywood, my husban'.

"I was borned on de John Walton place seven miles  
southeast of Raleigh. My father, Handy Sturdivant, belonged  
to somebody in Johnston County but mother an' her chilluns  
'longed ter Marse John Walton.

"Marse John had a corn shuckin' onct an' at dat  
corn shuckin' I fust saw Frank. I was a little girl,  
cryin' an' bawlin' an' Frank, who was a big boy said dat  
he neber wanted ter spank a youngin' so bad, an' I ain't  
liked him no better dan he did me.

"He 'longed ter Mr. Yarborough, what runned de  
hotel in Raleigh, but he was boun' out ter anybody what'ud  
hire him, an' I doan know whar he got his name.

"I seed Frank a few times at de Holland's Methodist  
Church whar we went ter church wid our white folks.

"You axes iffen our white folks was good ter us,  
an' I sez ter yo' dat none of de white folks was good ter

none of de niggers. We done our weavin' at night an' we wurked hard. We had enough ter eat but we wus whupped some.

"Jest 'fore de war wus ober we wus sent ter Mr. William Turner's place down clost ter Smithfield an' dats whar we wus when de Yankees come.

"One day I wus settin' on de porch restin' atter my days wurk wus done when I sees de hoss-lot full of men an' I sez ter Marse William, who am talkin' ter a soldier named Cole, 'De lot am full of men.'

"Marse Cole looks up an' he 'lows, 'Hits dem damned Yankees,' an' wid dat he buckles on his sword an' he ain't been seen since.

"De Yankees takes all de meat outen de smokehouse an' goes 'roun' ter de slave cabins an' takes de meat what de white folkses has put dar. Dat wus de fust hams dat has eber been in de nigger house. Anyhow de Yankees takes all de hams, but dey gibes us de shoulders.

"Atter de war we moved ter Raleigh, on Davie Street an' I went ter school a little at Saint Paul's. Frank wus wurkin' at de City Market on Fayetteville Street an' I'd go seberal blocks out of my way mornin' an' night on my way ter school ter look at him. You see I has been in love with him fer a long time den.

## North Carolina and the KKK

### Overview

Students will explore the origins, existence, and actions of the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina, using page 51-60 of *Blood Done Sign My Name* as a window into the Klan's actions during the mid-1900s. This lesson will culminate with students preparing a newscast that further explores an event discussed in the excerpt.

### Materials

- Copies of *Blood Done Sign My Name*
- Internet access, optional

### Duration

2 class periods

### Procedure

1. As a warm-up, have students participate in a "Think-Pair-Share" activity in which they consider the following questions (either project/write them in the front of the classroom, or hand them out). Once students have pondered the questions individually, instruct them to partner up and discuss their responses together. Teachers may want to have some partners report a summary of their discussions back to the class.
  - What is **racism**? What are some examples of racism?
  - Why do you think people are racist?
  - How has racism affected people's **civil rights**?
  - What do we lose by not respecting **diversity**?
  - What can we do to help create a **tolerant** environment and encourage respect for all people?
2. Next, ask students to list **hate groups** that spread **prejudice** and **racism**. Likely, a student will mention the KKK. Discuss:
  - What do you know about the **KKK**?
  - When and why did this group start? (*The Klan first began as a secret society in 1866 when it was founded by a group of **Confederate Army veterans**. Its purpose was to resist **Reconstruction** and use intimidation to return political power in the South to white men. Dressed in white robes and hoods, mobs of Klan members would threaten, attack, and kill African Americans, as well as whites that helped them. The KKK often used cross **burning** and **lynching** to intimidate any social or **ethnic group** they viewed as "different."*)
  - Does the Klan still exist? (***President Ulyssess S. Grant** passed the **Civil Rights Act of 1871**, also known as the **Ku Klux Klan Act**, in attempt to destroy the Klan. However, still today, KKK groups advocate for **white supremacy**, **anti-Semitism**, **racism**, **homophobia**, and **nativism**.)*
3. Review previous class discussions/readings regarding Robert Teel's murder of Henry Marrow. Explain to students that while it is not confirmed that Teel was a member of the Granville County KKK, it is likely. Tell students they are going to read an excerpt from *Blood Done Sign My Name* that refers to the KKK in North Carolina. Instruct students to begin reading on page 51 starting with "The evidence seems strong that at some point Teel joined the Granville County Klavern of the Ku Klux Klan." They should stop when they get to the end of the chapter on page 60. Have students answer following individually, discuss in partners/groups, or discuss as a class:
  - What evidence does Tyson note that Teel was a member of the Granville County Klavern of the KKK?
  - Why did Vernon Tyson take his sons to a Klan rally? Do you agree or disagree with this decision? Explain.
  - What do think Vernon Tyson means when he says, "I wanted you to know what hate looks like."
  - Does it surprise you that according to a 1965 report, North Carolina had 112 KKK groups and was "the most active state for the United Klans of America?" Why or why not?

- Cite examples of Klan terrorism during 1965 in North Carolina.
  - Why did the Klan burn a cross in Judge Winborne's lawn? How did he respond?
  - Tyson describes Reverend James "Catfish" Cole as an "evangelist of hate." What evidence does Tyson have that backs this characterization up?
  - What prompted the resurgence of the Klan in Granville County in the mid-1960s, when Teel most likely joined?
  - The **Fourteenth Amendment** of the Constitution requires states to provide **equal protection under the law** to all persons. Do you feel that Clyde Harding received equal protection under the law? Explain.
  - How did many of Oxford's black residents respond to the Clyde Harding incident?
  - "It remains a matter of curiosity for some people in Oxford as to why Teel, a man known to dislike black people and widely rumored to be a leader of the Ku Klux Klan, would set up shop in Grab-all." In your opinion, why did Teel open a store in this location when it meant serving predominantly black citizens?
  - Does it surprise you that a hate group like the KKK could terrorize so publically, without experiencing any legal consequences? Why or why not?
4. Remind students that they know the KKK was started in 1866, and while it may have gone through periods of inactivity, it was obviously quite active in North Carolina in 1970s. Ask students if they know of any recent Klan activity in North Carolina. Allow students to share their thoughts and then explain some of the recent incidents of cross burning in North Carolina (if possible, it is recommended that teachers try and include any occurrences in or near their county).
- September 25, 2007: An Ellenboro, NC resident burned a cross in front of the residence of an African American family "to intimidate and interfere" with them and their residence.
  - May 2005: Three crosses were found burning in separate Durham, NC locations. A flyer with KKK propaganda was found at one location.
  - June 2004: Grady Allan Carswell, 36, was sentenced to spend 20 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to federal charges in connection with his having erected and burned a wooden cross near the residence of African American neighbors in Morganton, located in Burke County, over a land dispute.
  - May 1999: Robert Nelson was sentenced to probation and five months' house arrest for burning a cross near the home of an interracial couple in Gastonia, North Carolina.
5. Facilitate student discussion regarding the significance of burning a cross. Explain that **cross burnings** are historically associated with Klan activities. Thomas Dixon's 1905 book *The Klansmen: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* depicted cross burnings as a way to celebrate the execution of former slaves. Traditionally, they have also been used to communicate threats of violence, and a strong association between the Klan and cross burning still exists. Discuss:
- Do you think that burning a cross should be illegal? Why or why not? (*After students have responded, explain that burning a cross without the permission of the property owner is a misdemeanor in North Carolina. The US Supreme Court ruled in 2003 that the **free speech clause** of the **First Amendment** does not protect cross burning when done with the intent to intimidate.*)
  - Do you feel cross burnings should be protected under freedom of speech in the First Amendment? Why or why not?
  - Regardless of the law, why might a burning cross be very hurtful or offensive to people?
6. As a culminating activity, divide students into small groups and tell them that they are to prepare a newscast recounting an event from the *Blood Done Sign My Name* excerpt just read. Suggested topics include:
- Judge Winborne's response to cross burning
  - KKK Clash with the Lumbee (Battle at Hayes Pond)
  - Resurgence of Granville County KKK and their actions

- Murder of Medgar Evers
  - Clyde Harding incident, trial, and boycott
  - Modern North Carolina event involving KKK or cross burning
7. Give students requirements for their final product, such as:
- Must be 3-5 minutes long
  - Must summarize the topic assigned to them
  - Each student in the group must contribute and be involved in the newscast in some way.
  - Final newscasts can involve interviews with those involved, reports “live” from the scene (with “live” action occurring behind), summaries provided from the news desk, etc.
  - Group members may play reporters, participants in the situation, interviewees, etc.
  - Information shared must be based in fact, but creative inferences that are realistic can be made.
  - All newscasts will be presented to the class.
8. Teachers should use their discretion regarding how much class time or homework time is given for completion. Teachers may also want to consider offering resources for further research on these topics, such as the Internet or library. When students present their newscasts to the class, it is advised that all audience members take notes on the presentations, offering positive feedback of “What I learned” and “What I liked” after each performance.

## The Fight for Civil Rights in Oxford

### Overview

Students will explore various frustrations experienced by African Americans in North Carolina and around the country during the Jim Crow Era and beyond, and how these frustrations prompted the fight for civil rights. Students will then explore various civil rights activists and teach classmates about a person of their choice in the culminating activity “I Stood Up for Democracy.”

### Materials

- Copies of *Blood Done Sign My Name*
- *I Stood Up for Democracy* assignment sheet, attached

### Duration

2-3 class periods plus homework time

### Procedure

1. As a warm-up, project and read the following prompt for students to respond to in writing:

Imagine that you are a Black American living in North Carolina in the 1940s. Our country is deeply involved in World War II, and because you love your country and believe that what Hitler is doing to the Jewish people is terribly wrong, you join the war. You understand that you are risking your life by doing this, but as an American citizen, you feel it is your duty to fight for your country. You are stationed in Germany for two years, where you face many close calls in battle. Luckily, you survive and are stationed back in North Carolina in 1944. However, once you return home, you realize things have not changed much while you have been away. Segregation still exists. You aren't allowed to eat in certain places, sit on certain benches, swim in certain pools, all because of the color of your skin. Even though you could have died fighting for this very country, America still has laws that penalize you for being black. How would this make you feel?

2. Once students have had time to write their responses, allow volunteers to share their thoughts with the class. Review the various **Jim Crow laws**, in place between 1876-1966 (for introductory lessons on the Jim Crow Era, see the Consortium's lessons *Life in the Jim Crow South* and *School Segregation in NC*, available under Goal 7 of the Database of Civic Resources.) Explain to students that it was during World War II that the **Civil Rights Movement** blossomed, largely due to African Americans experiencing the emotions students just inferred.
3. Instruct students to turn to the bottom of page 89 in *Blood Done Sign My Name* and to begin reading at the last paragraph (starting with “We arrived in Oxford at a moment when African American freedom movements across the region had begun to galvanize black folks...”). Instruct students to read until they reach page 96 (stopping at “So much for committees.”) Have students respond to the following either individually in writing, in a group discussion, or as a class discussion:
  - What racial tension existed in Oxford during World War II? Why were African American veterans particularly frustrated? Imagine enlisting to give your life for your country when that same country denies your basic rights. How would this make you feel? *Read aloud the following quotes for discussion:*
    - “Across the World War II-era South, dozens of black G.I.s died in uniform at the hands of their own countrymen.” (91)
    - “After the war, local black veterans came home determined that the war for democracy abroad would expand democracy at home...Though some whites recognized the contradictions in denying the ballot to black men who had risked their lives for democracy they remained silent. Black registration drives met with considerable resistance.” (92)
  - What prompted sixty black soldiers from Camp Butner to storm the Oxford jail?
  - Describe how Eddie McCoy responded to the growing civil rights movement in the south. What types of civil rights events took place in Oxford?

- How did the manager of Herring's Drugstore respond to the sit-in at his store?
  - Summarize what happened to James Lyons after the sit-in was broken up by KKK members. When running to the police station for help, how did the police officer respond?
4. Focus students on page 95-96 which describes Oxford's decision to set up a Human Relations Commission. Discuss:
- What was the purpose of the Oxford Human Relations Commission?
  - Evaluate the success of the various commissions and councils that existed in Oxford and for the state to promote communication and integration between blacks and whites. Was this what was needed? Why or why not?
  - Tyson classifies the commission as unsuccessful, stating: "The problem of course was that white Southerners may have needed 'communication' as a way of congratulating themselves on their paternalistic generosity toward 'the Negro,' but black Southerners needed what amounted to a whole new social structure, one that did not stigmatize and impoverish them." (96) What does Tyson mean when he refers to "paternalistic generosity?" Why was this not helpful to African Americans seeking equal civil rights?
  - According to Tyson, what did African Americans need?
5. Explain to students that while commissions and committees may not have resulted in much progress during the 1960s, there is one man who had a huge impact on the Civil Rights Movement-**Martin Luther King, Jr.** Instruct students to turn to page 66 in *Blood Done Sign My Name* and to start reading at the last paragraph, beginning with "The 1950s marked a lonely vigil for Southern liberals..." Students should stop reading after the first paragraph on page 71, ending with "...appeared in most medial accounts and history books." Discuss:
- Why do you think Martin Luther King, Jr. was referred to as a "Southern black Gandhi?" Do you agree with this characterization? Why or why not?
  - Tyson says that his father learned that "good intentions were not enough." Clarify this statement. How does this same idea apply to the failed Human Relations Commission?
  - What was the main point of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail?"
  - What does King mean when he explains that African Americans are "forever fighting a degenerating sense of 'nobodiness'?" (69)
  - Explain the "trap" that Dr. King and civil rights organizers set for Eugene "Bull" Connor.
  - In what way did Dr. King use the media to his advantage? In what ways do public figures use the media to their advantage in today's society?
6. Remind students that in order for the Civil Rights Movement to make a difference in Oxford, in the entire state of NC, and across the nation, many individuals organized, participated, spoke out, and became involved in various ways to ensure a change was made. Highlight the fact that those involved span far beyond the great Martin Luther King, Jr., and that many participants were young students. Hand out and explain the attached assignment, *I Stood Up for Democracy*. Teachers should use their discretion in terms of whether class time is provided for researching and working on the project.

On the day students will share their work, teachers should review class expectations for being a respectful audience member. Sharing their work also offers the opportunity for students to learn about many different civil rights participants. It is advised that students be instructed to take notes on each presentation (noting what they learned, what they liked, and what questions they have) and that students provide positive feedback to one another after each presentation.

### Additional Activities

- For additional lessons on the Civil Rights Movement and the Jim Crow Era, see the Consortium's Database of Civic Resources, lessons for 8<sup>th</sup> grade North Carolina History, Goal 7. Lessons include: *Life in the Jim Crow*

*South; School Segregation in NC; Moments in the Lives of Engaged Citizens; Sitting Down to Stand Up for Democracy; Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr.; and The Power of Youth: Exploring the Civil Rights Movement with "Freedom's Children."*

- Play various freedom songs and spirituals used by protestors during the civil rights movement. Instruct students to design a CD jacket for the song.
- Show the documentary *February One* or discuss the Greensboro sit-ins. See <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/februaryone/edu.html> for additional information.

## **I Stood Up for Democracy**

### Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement

1. Choose one of the civil rights activists discussed in *Blood Done Sign My Name* or someone from the list provided below. If you find another person not on the list you would like to focus on, you must clear it with your teacher first.
2. Research this person, and note the ways he/she stood up for democracy and equal rights. Determine why it is important that the person you choose should be remembered.
3. Create one of the following to teach others about this person, his/her life and legacy:
  - a song or rap
  - a speech
  - a skit
  - a painting, drawing, collage, or other artistic expression
  - a monologue
  - a PowerPoint presentation
  - a scrapbook or brochure
4. You will present your work to class on \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Choices other than activists discussed in *Blood Done Sign My Name*:**

The people listed below are direct or indirect civil rights activists. Some believed in using non-violent techniques and some felt violence should not be ruled out. Several from the list died for the civil rights cause.

|                         |                        |                     |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Ralph Abernathy         | Reverend George Lee    |                     |
| Marcus Garvey           | Julian Bond            | Jo Ann Robinson     |
| Lamar Smith             | Paul Guihard           | The Greensboro Four |
| Martin Luther King, Jr. | Fred Shuttlesworth     | Jackie Robinson     |
| James Chaney            | Virgil Lamar Ware      | Thurgood Marshall   |
| Coretta Scott King      | Aaron Henry            | Viola Gregg Liuzzo  |
| John Earl Reese         | Reverend Bruch Klunder | Tuskegee Airmen     |
| Rosa Parks              | Bob Moses              | Addie Mae Collins   |
| Willie Edwards Jr.      | Andrew Goodman         | Angela Davis        |
| Medgar Evers            | Malcolm X              | Denise McNair       |
| Mack Charles Parker     | Michael Schwerner      | Emma Goldman        |
| Harry T. Moore          | The Little Rock 9      | Carole Robertson    |
| Herbert Lee             | Charles Cheney         | Cynthia Wesley      |
| John Lewis              | Jimmie Lee Jackson     | Emmett Till         |
| Louis Allen             | Daisy Bates            | Golden Frinks       |
| Fannie Lou Hammer       | E.D. Nixon             | Simeon Oxendine     |
| Cpl. Roman              | Jonathan Daniels       | Daisy Bates         |
| Duckworth, Jr.          | Claudette Colvin       | Medgar Evers        |
|                         | William Lewis Moore    |                     |

## Taking a Stand

### Overview

Students will read excerpts from *Blood Done Sign My Name* and explore characters' choices about taking a stand to advocate for justice. Students will use this as a means of self-reflecting on their own individual behaviors.

### Materials

Copies of *Blood Done Sign My Name*

### Duration

1-2 class periods

### Procedure

1. As a warm-up, project the following quote and ask students to write down what they think James Baldwin means:

“...a civilization is not destroyed by wicked people;  
it is not necessary that people be wicked,  
but only that they be spineless.”
2. Once students have had ample time to write down their responses, encourage them to share their thoughts with the class. Facilitate further discussion by asking:
  - What historical examples can you think of that show the validity of this quote or that illustrate spinelessness?
  - Are there examples from your own life, or examples you have witnessed in this school, when you or a classmate has not stood up for something or someone? Don't worry about being judged...just be honest. Explain.
  - What types of things can keep people from standing up for someone else or from doing what they know is right? Have you ever experienced a situation like this? Explain. (*Ensure students discuss the concepts of **peer pressure** and how groups can change an individual's mentality.*)
3. Read aloud page 61-63 of *Blood Done Sign My Name*, stopping at the end of the third paragraph with “My father had explained much of this to Vern and me at the Ku Klux Klan meeting, and that was far from the last lesson.” Once finished, discuss as a class:
  - How do you imagine Mrs. Fanny Mae McIver's son felt when taunted with racial slurs by Tyson and his friend?
  - Why does Tyson compare himself and David to the Poles? (*Re-read the quote on page 63 to the class for emphasis: “The very idea of ‘nigger’...was the heart of human evil, the avenue down which the Nazis had marched into Poland, and David and I, like some of the Poles, had somehow welcomed them .”*)
  - Tyson explains how he joined in the racial taunting of the little boy because he didn't want to lose his best friend, explaining: “Like many people who fail to live up to their best lights, I found that my deep sense of belonging and my tenacious desire for acceptance trumped my moral judgment. I joined in the song.” (63) Have you ever made a decision such as this or succumbed to peer-pressure? Explain.
  - Why do young people sometimes allow themselves to be swayed to do something they know is wrong?
  - “Though only a first grader, I was forced to confront what James Baldwin called ‘the realization that a civilization is not destroyed by wicked people; it is not necessary that people be wicked, but only that they be spineless.’” How do these words apply to the situation involving Tyson, David, and the housekeeper's son?
  - What choice do you think Tim Tyson should have made in the moment David began taunting the little boy? Why was it so hard for him to make a better choice?

4. Discuss with students that many people throughout history have made poor choices about treating others equally, from personal instances, such as the one Tyson recounts, to large-scale misuses of political power, such as the passing of **Jim Crow laws**. Assist students in connecting such historical situations to similar occurrences that take place at their own school, such as when students tease someone because of differences, and others join in or remain silent even when a peer is being humiliated.

Discuss how other people have made choices to speak out against what they felt was unjust, even if it meant backlash from their peers or community. Many people who participated in the Civil Rights Movement risked their jobs or even their life. *Again, make the connection to choices at school, noting how a student might speak up for someone who is being teased, even if it means they are ostracized from the group.* Ask students to silently consider which type of person they consider themselves to be...one who joins in with whatever the group decides, regardless of if it is right or wrong, or the type of person who will stand up and speak out for what is just, regardless of the consequences. Encourage students to consider how we sometimes want to be the person who does the right thing and who speaks out/stands up for the ill-treated, but perspective consequences and fear sometimes outweigh good intentions.

5. Bring the discussion back to the book by instructing students to turn to page 71 of *Blood Done Sign My Name*. Explain that before moving to Oxford, NC, Tyson's family lived in Sanford, NC in the 1960s. As the Civil Rights Movement unfolded and images of white violence against civil rights protestors in Birmingham, AL were broadcast across the nation, similar protests were inspired in Sanford. Tell students that they will be reading about the ways in which two people, Vernon Tyson and Miss Amy Womble, made the choice to speak their mind, even when they risked being shunned by their peers. Instruct students to read starting with the second paragraph, "Across the South, the news from Birmingham inspired dozens of..." on page 71 and to stop at the end of the chapter on page 81.
6. Once students have finished reading, either in individual written responses, in small discussion groups, or as a class, have students discuss:
  - Why did Vernon Tyson write a letter to the editor of the *Sanford Herald*? How did his letter compare to "King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail?"
  - What does it mean when Tyson says that "Daddy wrote a letter to the editor of the Sanford herald, not from jail but from the confines of his conscience?" (*Once students have shared their initial thoughts, read aloud and discuss the quote from page 71-72: "Daddy wrote a letter to the editor of the Sanford herald, not from jail but from the confines of his conscience in a community of white Christians that did not want to hear him. His letter clearly drew on the tone of King's Birmingham missive. 'Last night, a 14-year-old boy spent his first night in jail,' Daddy wrote. 'He was one of the more than 50 young people who were arrested yesterday in our city. His only real crime is that he had the wrong mother.'"*)
  - Explain what Vernon Tyson meant when he said "A moment of truth has arrived for Sanford." (72) What do you think Vernon expected Sanford residents to do?
  - What risk was Vernon taking by writing this letter? In what ways did various community members respond? (72)
  - After delivering his "I Have a Dream Speech," the Federal Bureau of Investigation said of Dr. King, "...mark him now, if we have not done so before, as the most dangerous Negro of the future in this nation from the standpoint of communism, the Negro, and national security." (73) Why do you think the FBI characterized Dr. King in this way? Even though Dr. King was hated by many, and even being monitored by the FBI, why do you think he continued to stand up and speak out for what he felt was just?
  - What events took place in 1963 that Tyson described as causing "the fixed stars and immovable pillars of American history...to reel and rock?" (73)
  - How did Vernon Tyson work to reverse what Dr. King referred to as "the most segregated hour in America?" (73) How did his parishioners respond to his choices?
  - What was Vernon risking by continuing to fight for Dr. Proctor's visit? Why is it sometimes difficult to fight for what you believe in?

- What gave Vernon the strength to continue fighting for Dr. Proctor's visit?
- How would you describe "Miss Amy" Womble? How did she help convince the segregationists to support Dr. Proctor's visit?
- Did all people behave as Vernon and Miss Amy, speaking out against inequality and racism? Explain.

7. To culminate the lesson, give students an opportunity to explore the concept of taking a stand and to apply it to their own personal lives. Complete one or both of the following activities (teachers may want to allow students to choose between the two activities, since some students may not have a personal reflection idea):

- **Personal Reflection**

Discuss with students that mistakes don't necessarily define who we are or become. For example, while Tyson made a poor choice in joining in the taunting of Mrs. McIver's son, he has since confronted that moment in his own personal history and admitted his mistake. Ask students if they have experienced a similar moment in your own lives, when they made a choice that they since regret. Further their thinking by asking if there has ever been a time when they wish they could have been braver to stand on their own rather than follow peers.

Instruct students to focus on a particular instance or period from their life, perhaps something Tyson's admission reminded them of, when they were not being their "best self." Incidents do not have to be racially motivated. Students should write a one-page reflection describing the incident, their behavior, their evaluation of why they made the choices they made, and their assessment of what they have since learned from the situation. Students may also choose to explore what they would have done differently.

Remind students that the purpose of this writing assignment is to describe a poor choice that they regret and to learn from it by reflecting on it. It is advised that students not share these reflections out loud, rather they turn the assignments in for only teacher review.

- **Exploring Actions Through Poetry**

Project or hand out the following poem and ask a student volunteer to read it aloud:

***First They Came for the Jews***

First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Jew.  
Then they came for the Communists  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Communist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a trade unionist.  
Then they came for me  
and there was no one left  
to speak out for me.

*Pastor Martin Niemöller*

Discuss:

- Who do you think "they" refers to and why?
- Why do you think they came for the Jews, Communists, and trade unionists? What historical event does this poem refer to?
- Why do you think the narrator did not "speak out?"

- What message is the narrator of this poem trying to convey? What evidence makes you think this?
- How does this message also apply to those living during the Civil Rights Movement? How does it apply to each of us today?
- What is a citizen's responsibility in terms of speaking out? Explain.

Instruct students to create their own poem in which they express their feelings about taking a stand, or not taking a stand, or perhaps the consequences of either choice. Poems can be based on facts, feelings, people, etc. that are related to any aspect of readings and discussions from the lesson. They can be literal or abstract. They can rhyme, but do not have to. Give students some guidelines for grading, such as:

- For full credit (100 points), poems must exhibit the following:
  - Focused on topic/theme from readings
  - Good understanding of poetic devices
  - Minimum fourteen lines or 4 stanzas
  - No spelling errors
  - Handwriting is legible in pen or poem is typed (preferred method)
  - Poem contains artistic expression visualizing the subject matter (optional)

## The Murder of Henry Marrow

### Overview

Students will examine the Jim Crow culture that existed in Oxford during the 1800s and 1900s and explore the connection between Jim Crow and the murder of Henry Marrow. Students will also read about Oxford's reaction to the murder and, assuming the roles of 1970 members of the Oxford Human Relations Commission, will develop solutions for bringing about peace and racial equality after the murder.

### Materials

- Copies of *Blood Done Sign My Name*
- Image of a Segregated Water Fountain, attached

### Duration

1 class period

### Procedure

1. As a warm-up, project the attached image of **segregated** water fountains. Ask students to discuss (either in a written response or as a class):
  - What do you see here? Infer what is happening in this picture.
  - Compare and contrast the two water fountains to one another.
  - What time period do you think this picture represents? What evidence makes you think this?
  - If the man in the picture were to express his thoughts and feelings about the two water fountains, what do you think he might say to you?
2. Remind the students that during the mid-1900s, there were laws and Constitutional Amendments that extended civil rights to all US citizens, but these laws were open to interpretation and subject to unfair historical perspectives of the time. Thus, individuals and groups of citizens had to struggle and fight for their access to these rights. As an example of this, review the **Thirteenth Amendment**, which freed enslaved people during the Civil War period. Remind students that even with the Northern victory in the War and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, the period of **Reconstruction** still saw the enactment of **Black Codes**, Southern terrorism against freed slaves and their descendents via the **KKK** and **lynch mobs**, and the unjust laws and expected etiquettes of the **Jim Crow Era**.
3. Ask students to estimate when the Jim Crow Era ended and when lawful segregation was no longer in existence. Explain that regardless of what they may think, Jim Crow's effects were still being felt in Oxford, NC in the 1970s. It was this type of culture that allowed for the murder of Henry Marrow to occur. Instruct students to turn to page 164 in *Blood Done Sign My Name* and to begin reading at the third paragraph with "McCoy was a graceful, broad-shouldered man..." Tell students that Eddie McCoy was a black Oxford resident who was active in protests that occurred after Henry's murder, and that his experiences shared in this passage were not at all uncommon for African Americans. Instruct students to read until the end of the chapter. Once finished, discuss:
  - What types of discrimination does Eddie McCoy recount? How did these experiences affect him?
  - According to Eddie McCoy, why might middle-class black children embrace nonviolence, whereas poor children embrace violence? Do you think that there are children today who feel as McCoy felt when young? In your opinion, what could be done to help children like this? (*Read aloud the following quotes for further discussion.*)
    - "The black children whose parents managed to provide them something like a middle-class existence, McCoy explained to my father and the college students, might embrace nonviolence. But the poor, to whom the system had been brutally indifferent, were faster to grab a brick or a fire bomb. 'It was always poor children,' McCoy observed, 'people that didn't have nothing to lose, and their parents were poor and didn't have nothing to lose...We was dispensable, we could see

that...I was a write-off kid from the time I was born. I won't gon' be nothing, won't nothing gon' become of me, I won't gon' finish school, I was supposed to go to jail..." (165)

- " 'A riot is at bottom the language of the unheard,' Dr. King told America..." (165)
- What does McCoy mean when he says "people no longer appreciated the sacrifices that had been made regardless of methods..."? (166) (*Read the following quote aloud for further discussion.*)
  - "In the years since the freedom movement ended, the memory of what had been required of people faded, McCoy explained to me, and people no longer appreciated the sacrifices that had been made regardless of methods. 'I was doing that stuff back then, sit-ins and marches and all the rest and nowadays nobody even knows what it was like. People right now think that the white man opened up his drugstore and said, 'Y'all come on in now, integration done come.'"

3. Tell students to keep in mind the type of environment that existed in 1970, and to remember that while we often like to think that racism, segregation, and Jim Crow are buried in ancient history, these issues were strongly present throughout the 1900s. It is this type of culture that allowed for the murder of Henry Marrow in Oxford, NC in 1970.

Instruct students to turn to page 118 and to read (individually or in partners) to page 125, stopping after the first paragraph on that page ("They sot him like you or I would kill a snake.")

- According to the information given, how would you describe Henry "Dickie" Marrow?
- "And he did not want to go to Vietnam; like most young African Americans of his generation, he considered this fiasco in Southeast Asia a white man's war and a black man's fight." (119) Interpret the meaning of this quote. Why might Marrow and other African American's have felt this way?
- How do you imagine Henry felt throughout this entire event? What was the worst thing he endured in your opinion?
- Why do you think Larry Teel beat and murdered Henry Marrow?
- Based on your knowledge of the legal process, as well as your personal opinion, what should happen next after Henry's murder?

4. Instruct students to continue reading from page 125-130, stopping after the second paragraph with "...days of the African American freedom struggle." Discuss:

- Why did Boo Chavis not want to go to the police station after his assault and Henry's murder? When he finally did go, what reception did he receive? (*Read aloud the following quotes for further discussion.*)
  - "I told them I won't going to the...police station, they won't gon' listen to a word I said..." (126)
  - " 'We went down there and sat down there – we stayed until two in the morning,' Chavis recalled. 'Mr. Yancey stayed with me the whole time. They didn't even try to talk with me, they didn't do nothing.' " (127)
- Why do you think that some of Oxford's African American community chose to riot after Henry Marrow's death? Do you think there was any way the riots could have been prevented? Explain. (*Read the following quotes aloud for further discussion.*)
  - "Word raced through black Oxford the next morning that Teel and his boys had killed Henry Marrow in front of several people and that the police had neither arrested Teel nor shown any interest in talking to the witnesses; it was several days later before the police finally got around to talking to Boo Chavis." (128)
  - "The anger in the black community that Tuesday night reflected a common belief that Teel and his sons were literally going to get away with murder." (128)
  - "It speaks volumes about the racial situation in the United States in 1970 that virtually every African American in the country believed that white men could butcher a black man in public and not even face arrest and prosecution, let alone conviction." (129)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of rioting.

- What do you think the Mayor's purpose was in instating a curfew in Oxford? In what ways were blacks and whites affected differently by the Oxford curfew? (*Read the following quote aloud for further discussion.*)

5. Remind students that one of the ways Oxford attempted to reconcile the feelings of inequality and prevent violence was by forming a Human Relations Commission. Also review with students why the Human Relations Commission was largely ineffective. Tell students to imagine they are living in Oxford in 1970 after the murder of Henry Marrow and that they have been appointed to the new 1970 Human Relations Commission. Divide students into small groups and project/explain the following task:

**You are Appointed to the Human Relations Commission**

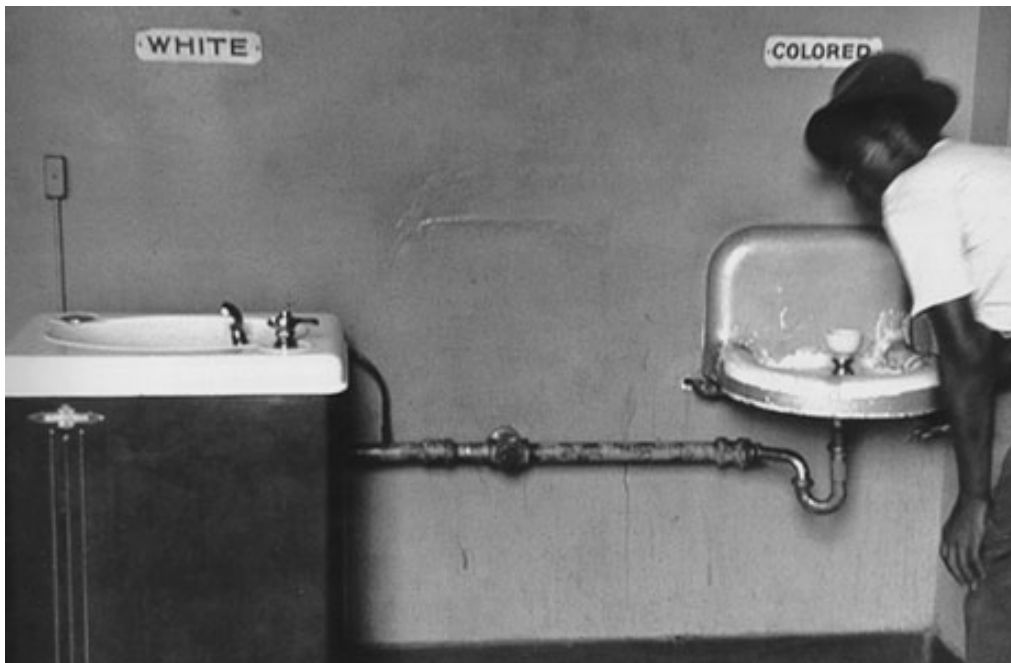
Imagine that you are living in the year 1970 and that you have been appointed to the Human Relations Commission in Oxford. Your task, as a committee, is to come up with strategies for easing racial tensions in Oxford and to try and prevent further violence. You have the luxury of knowing why the real Human Relations Commission failed, so be careful about making the same mistakes. As a group, complete the following tasks:

- a. Compile a list of what you feel are the most serious examples of inequality and sources of tension among blacks and whites in 1970 Oxford.
- b. Brainstorm solutions to easing the racial divide and stopping the violence occurring in Oxford (i.e. integration, promoting the hiring of African Americans, developing specific community events to promote tolerance, etc.) Be as specific and detailed as you can in your ideas. Also, remember to consider the reaction of both whites and blacks in 1970 to your proposed solutions.
- c. Create a final Action Plan that you will present to the remainder of class. The Action Plan must contain at least five ideas/strategies for addressing racial tension, inequality, and the violence occurring in Oxford. Each step should also contain at least one way to handle opposition to the proposed action.

Teachers should use their discretion regarding how much time to allow for completion (at least 15-20 minutes is recommended). Teachers may also want to have students read pages 135-139 in *Blood Done Sign My Name* before developing their Action Plans, since these pages further detail the violence occurring in Oxford and beyond.

6. As students work, circulate around the room to offer assistance. Ensure each group's plans do not entail magical outcomes-meaning, students need to think realistically about 1970 society's response to their ideas and how they can work to facilitate acceptance.
7. Once students have finished, have them present their Action Plan to the class. Allow groups to ask follow-up questions of one another. Once all groups have presented, instruct the students to vote on which Action Plan they feel would have the ability to realistically make racial progress.

**Image of a Segregated Water Fountain**



Source: <http://www.literacyrules.com/Black%20History/JimCrowPic3.jpg>

## Misconceptions

### Overview

Tim Tyson notes in *Blood Done Sign My Name* that the “social changes wrought by the black freedom movement came about by a complex mixture of violence and nonviolence, economic coercion and moral appeal.” In this lesson, students will explore some of the misconceptions that remain today regarding the Civil Rights Movement as well as why such misconceptions exist. Students will share dramatic presentations that demonstrate what they have learned.

### Materials

Copies of *Blood Done Sign My Name*

### Duration

1-2 class periods

### Procedure

1. As a warm-up, project/hand out the following quote on non-violence philosophy:

...But far beyond this, we call upon them [African Americans] to accept Christian Love In full knowledge of its power to defy evil. We call upon them to understand that non-violence is not a symbol of weakness or cowardice, but as Jesus demonstrated, non-violent resistance transforms weakness into strength and breeds courage in face of danger. We urge them, no matter how great the provocation to dedicate themselves to this motto:

“Not one hair of one white person shall be harmed.”

We advocate non-violence in words, thought and deed, we believe this spirit and this spirit alone can overcome the decades of mutual fear and suspicion that have infested and poisoned our Southern culture...

*Southern Negro Leaders Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration*

Discuss:

- What are the integration leaders asking of African Americans?
  - Which famous civil rights leader advocated non-violence? Why do you think Martin Luther King, Jr. felt this was a good way to achieve the movement’s goals?
  - Do you agree or disagree that “non-violent resistance transforms weakness into strength and breeds courage in the face of danger?”
  - If participants in lunch counter sit-ins had defended themselves with violence, what might the result have been?
  - How do you imagine the media would have portrayed such violence?
  - What would be most difficult about adopting the philosophy of non-violence? What does it say about civil rights protestors who were able to do this?
2. Next, ask students to respond to the following statement:
    - **True or False: All civil rights protestors believed that non-violence was the best way to achieve their goals.**
  3. Allow students to share their thoughts then ask the class what they already know about **Malcolm X**, national speaker for the **Nation of Islam**, an organization with a declared aim of resurrecting the spiritual, mental, social, and economic conditions of the black men and women of America and the rest of the world. After students have responded, project the following quotes from Malcolm X:

“When a person places the proper value on freedom, there is nothing under the sun that he will not do to acquire that freedom. Whenever you hear a man saying he wants freedom, but in the next breath he is going to tell you what he won't do to get it, or what he doesn't believe in doing in order to get it, he doesn't believe in freedom. A man who believes in freedom will do anything under the sun to acquire . . . or preserve his freedom.”

“I believe in the brotherhood of man, all men, but I don't believe in brotherhood with anybody who doesn't want brotherhood with me. I believe in treating people right, but I'm not going to waste my time trying to treat somebody right who doesn't know how to return the treatment.”

Discuss:

- Based on our discussion and these quotes, how would you compare and contrast Malcolm X's beliefs to those of Dr. King and the nonviolent philosophy?
  - How do you think Malcolm X would have responded to the violence bestowed upon protestors during sit-ins and freedom rides?
  - What does Malcolm X mean when he says, “A man who believes in freedom will do anything under the sun to acquire or preserve his freedom?”
  - What is your opinion of Malcolm X's view of the “brotherhood of man?”
  - Why do you think Malcolm X and the Black Power Movement is often left out of our lessons regarding the Civil Rights Movement? Why do we learn more about Martin Luther King, Jr.?
  - Many people stereotype Malcolm X and say that he perpetuated violence. Based on this quote, is he condoning unprecedented violence?
  - Why do you think some people may have been intimidated by Malcolm X, who was assassinated in 1965?
  - Likewise, why do you think some people were intimidated by Martin Luther King, Jr., who was assassinated in 1968?
4. Point out to students that many misconceptions remain today regarding the reality of the Civil Rights Movement, and that in truth, the “social changes wrought by the black freedom movement came about by a complex mixture of violence and nonviolence, economic coercion and moral appeal.” (252) Today, we are often taught a one-sided version of the Civil Rights Movement, or a story that reads like a fairy tale, when our history is much more complex.

To highlight this point, read aloud beginning on [page 106](#) with “The sugar-coated confections that pass for the popular history of the civil rights movement offer outright lies...” stopping at “But our memories about what actually happened in the civil rights era are so faulty that Dr. King's enemies can safely use his words to thwart his goals,” on [page 107](#).

Discuss as a class:

- Why do you think such inconsistencies exist in our understanding of the fight for equal rights in our country and in our state?
- Why do you think much of what we are taught involves “sugar-coated confections” that tell “outright lies” regarding white people's responses during the movement? Why is it important to face the truth?
- What message is Tyson trying to convey when he says, “In the years since his murder, we have transformed King into a kind of innocuous black Santa Claus, genial and vacant, a benign vessel that can be filled with whatever generic good wishes the occasion dictates...”?
- How can we prevent misconceptions such as these?
- “It is impossible to create a formula for the future which does not take into account that our society has been doing something special *against* the Negro for hundreds of years.” What point is being made? Why must we truly acknowledge all that society has done against African Americans before our communities can truly move forward?

- Why do you think some people refuse to acknowledge all of the wrongs that have been done to minorities in our country? Why do some people feel that we should move on and not “dwell in the past?” In what ways can we make others understand that the past has a great effect on our present and future?
5. Instruct students to read from page 247-253, stopping at the top of the page with “...was a white political backlash of sustained ferocity.” Afterwards, discuss (in small groups or as a class):
- What does Tyson mean when he says, “But truth and falsehood keep house on both sides of the color line, and we all have our own stories to tell?” (247)
  - Why did some blacks, particularly citizens who did not participate in the movement, “sometimes dismiss the movement with a wave of the hand”? (247)
    - “Having missed the freedom train in the 1960s and 1970s, the bystanders now told the story that the train had never come, that freedom had been an easy walk, or that the tracks had been laid by a federal grant.” (248)
  - Why might African American citizens have chosen not to participate in the Movement? If you were a middle class African American living in Oxford in 1970, what did you have to lose by participating in civil rights protests? What did you have to gain by participating? Imagine that you were an Oxford resident during this time. Do you think you would have participated or avoided participating in the civil rights movements? Explain.
  - Discuss and evaluate the role of the federal government during the freedom movement. What steps did the government take to ensure the rights of African American citizens? Do you feel the government did enough? Why or why not? In your opinion, what (if anything) should the federal government have done differently? (*Ensure discussion of the following topics.*)
    - Brown v. BOE, 1954
    - Civil Rights Act of 1964
    - Voting Rights Act of 1965
    - “The role of the federal government in the black freedom struggle *was* considerable – and yet added up to less than half truth, offered at least in part to defend the storytellers against the fact that many of them were freed by a movement they had been afraid to support.” (248)
  - According to Tyson, why did African Americans sometimes react to the inequality they were experiencing with violence? (*Read aloud the following quote for further discussion.*)
    - “And so sometimes it was necessary to escape from an endless and pointless conversation with white paternalism by striking hard and sometimes violently against the architecture of their oppression-Oxford’s tobacco warehouses being only the local example.” (249)
  - What role does memory play in shaping our history?
  - Describe the flawed memories and conceptions of the freedom struggle that exist. Why do you think such misunderstandings have developed over time? (*Read aloud the following quote for further discussion.*)
    - “The struggle was far more violent, perilous, and critical than America is willing to remember. Those who tell themselves that white people of goodwill voluntarily handed over first-class citizenship to their fellow citizens of color find comfort in selective memory and wishful thinking. And those who believe that the federal government rode over the hill like the cavalry and rescued the poor black folks from white ‘rednecks’ have forgotten or never knew what happened in the civil-rights era South.” (249)
  - Describe the role of the Granville County Steering Committee for Black Progress.
  - Beyond the injustice experienced in the court system, in what ways did blacks experience inequality in Oxford?
  - In what ways did the black community in Oxford work to ensure participation and support of the boycott among all African Americans? What impact did the boycott have on Oxford?
  - Think again about Tyson’s quote that “The social changes wrought by the black freedom movement came about by a complex mixture of violence and nonviolence, economic coercion and moral appeal.”

Cite examples from the movement in Oxford that fall into each of these three categories. Cite examples from the movement across the entire South that fall into each of these categories.

6. As a culminating activity, have students complete one of the following:

- **Partner Role Plays: “Hear My Point”**

You and your partner will role play a meeting between two people who participated in some aspect of the Civil Rights Movement, but who held different ideas regarding how to go about advocating for change. Possible choices include:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X
- A Freedom Rider and a Black Panther
- A sit-in participant and a rioter
- A white person afraid to participate and a black person attempting to convince him or her to participate
- Mayor Currin and an black Oxford veteran
- Ben Chavis and Vernon Tyson

Begin by researching the people involved in this role play, learning about his/her ideas and experiences. As you learn about this person, consider why they hold such beliefs. Role plays must involve each character sharing his/her views regarding how to bring about change, and advocating for his/her own philosophy. The purpose of this conversation is to clarify any misconceptions that exist and you discuss with one another in character, as well as to explain why you (as this character) made the choices you made during the Civil Rights Movement. Role plays will be presented to the class on the due date and must be at least 4 minutes in length.

- **Musical Composition: “I Sing the Truth”**

Write a song for someone you felt was instrumental in the Civil Rights Movement. Choices can be specific individuals, such as Dr. King, or generic participants, such as someone who boycotted. The song should detail what the Civil Rights Movement was really like from your perspective as this civil rights participant. Songs must be at least 2-3 minutes in length and must be performed for class on the due date. Lyrics created can be put to an already existing tune.

Ensure students understand that while their dramatic interpretations will be creative, the inferences they make must be based on factual information. If possible, it is recommended to allow students additional research time in class so that they may further explore their figure or topic. Teachers may also want to encourage students to dress as their persona when performing for the class.

## Confronting Our History

### Overview

Tim Tyson describes *Blood Done Sign My Name* as "...a story of the blues and a story of the gospel...the blues and the gospel started as Southern things but speak to the whole human dilemma. The blues are about looking a painful history straight in the eye; the gospel is about coming together as a community of faith in order to rise beyond that anguish. " In this lesson, students will explore how communities should go about "looking a painful history straight in the eye" by creating a "Museum of Truth and Reconciliation."

### Materials

- Copies of *Blood Done Sign My Name*
- *Powerful Words: More than 200 Years of Extraordinary Writing by African Americans*, by Wade Hudson
- *Reading Notes*, attached
- *Museum Response Sheet*, attached

### Duration

2 class periods; homework time for completion of museum exhibit; and class time for working on and presenting museum exhibit

### Procedure

1. As a warm-up, project the following quote and instruct students to write down their interpretation of it:

**"We are all captives of our origins, especially when we do not fully know and understand them."**

Once students have had a few minutes to explore the quote individually, discuss their thoughts as a class. Next, tell students you want them to continue considering this statement as you read a short excerpt to them from *Blood Done Sign My Name*. Instructing students to follow along, start at the bottom of [page 265](#) with "The American story did not start when Thomas Jefferson wrote that all men have certain inalienable rights..." and read until the middle of [page 266](#), stopping at "...more worthy and darker-skinned people intrinsically less worth."

Discuss:

- Consider once more Tyson's statement that "We are all the captives of our origins, especially when we do not fully know and understand them." In the paragraphs we just read, what "paradoxes and predicaments" does Tyson note from history that illustrate this?
  - Considering what Tyson mentions about Thomas Jefferson, what is ironic about Jefferson writing that "all men are created equal" and that they are entitled to "inalienable rights" and to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?" Did the Declaration of Independence apply to enslaved Africans living in America? Explain.
  - How did those who participated in the slave trade "justify" it? How do such historical injustices still affect us today?
  - Why do you think people often want to ignore this harsh history, or brush it under the table by saying it happened so long ago that we should forget it? Why is it important to truly understand what occurred in the past, and to confront it honestly as Tyson advises?
  - In your opinion, what needs to happen to ensure people know the full and true "American Story?"
2. Explain to students that misconceptions about the founding of our country as well as the slave experience are perpetuated to this day at certain historical sites. Instruct students to turn to [page 313](#) and explain that they will be reading an excerpt about a fieldtrip Tyson and his father lead for 40 college students, in which they traveled across the South, visiting various historical sites and people involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Tell students that the excerpt begins as Tyson and the students arrive at Destrehan, an old plantation open for tours in Louisiana. Instruct students to begin reading at the first full paragraph with

"This mixed blessing was never so clear as on that morning in New Orleans..." Instruct students to stop reading on page 315 when they reach "But this harder wisdom was less surprising to me, having once read a letter of protest signed 'A fellow sinner, Vernon Tyson.'" Discuss as a class:

- What occurred when the group visited Destrehan in Louisiana?
- Why were Tyson and the students frustrated?
- Why do you think the Destrehan tour did not address slaves or slavery, or the 1811 revolt?
- Have you visited any Southern tourist spots, such as plantations or museums, yourself? What was your experience like? Do you feel the site did a good job addressing the history of everyone who had roots at the location? How does Destrehan compare to other Southern tourist spots?
- If you could offer any advice to the Director of Tourism at Destrehan, what advice would you offer to improve the site and why?
  - **Optional Activity:** If Internet access is available, teachers may want to have students visit the website for Destrehan at <http://www.destrehanplantation.org/> and then compose a letter to the Director of Tourism offering their advice. Students can also be instructed to search historical site websites, evaluating whether the sites offer an encompassing history or not.

3. Ask students to make some guesses, based on what they have read thus far, as to why they think Tim Tyson wrote this book. Once students have shared their thoughts, instruct them to turn to page 317 and to begin reading at the second paragraph with "As a nation and as individual human beings, we would rather hear..." Students should stop at the end of the chapter on page 322. As a class discuss:

- Before you read, I asked you to consider why you think Tyson wrote this book. Did anything you read change or confirm your ideas? Explain.
- What is Tyson referring to when he mentions "unjust social orders" on page 317? According to Tyson, what does it take for unjust social orders to fall?
  - "Unjust social orders do not fall merely by appeals to the consciences of the oppressor, though such appeals may be an important element; history teaches us that they fall because a large enough number of people organize a movement powerful enough to push them down. Rarely do such revolutions emerge in a neat and morally pristine process." (317)
  - "More often, what grabbed white America's attention was the chaos in those streets and the threat of race war." (318)
- What does Tyson describe as the most popular memory of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement? In what way is the memory flawed? Why do you think such flawed memories exist and are perpetuated?
  - "The problem is why we cherish that kind of story: because we want to transcend our history without actually confronting it. We cannot address the place we find ourselves because we will not acknowledge the road that brought us here. Our failure to confront the historical truth about how African Americans finally won their freedom presents a major obstacle to genuine racial reconciliation." (318)
- Tyson notes that our future depends upon "an honest confrontation with our own history." (319) In your opinion, what does this entail? How do we confront our history, black and white, honestly? How do we bridge the "enduring chasm of race?"
  - "That history reveals that the blood that has signed every one of our names. The sacrifice has already been made, in the bottoms of slave ships, in the portals of Ellis Island, in the tobacco fields of North Carolina and the sweatshops of New York City. The question remains whether or not we can transfigure our broken pasts into a future filled with common possibility." (319-320)
  - "That history is not distant. Many of those who marched with Dr. King in Alabama and started the movement in Oxford were the grandchildren of slaves. The boy who told me "Daddy and Roger and 'em shot 'em a nigger: is barely middle-aged. And the enduring chasm of race is still with us, in some ways wider than ever." (320)
- What evidence does Tyson note that "white supremacy remains lethal?" (321)
- Why do you think that it "remains easier for our leaders to apologize for the past than to address its lingering impact in our society?" In what way can we encourage our leaders to change these ineffective habits?

4. Explain to students that they will continue exploring the concept of honestly confronting our past by creating a living “Museum of Truth and Reconciliation.” Teachers can lead this activity as a shorter, in-class activity, or assign it as a more intensive partner project (see descriptions below).

- **In-Class Activity**

- a) Partner students up and tell them that they will be reading about African Americans who have made important contributions to our history, and that these contributions should be acknowledged as we confront our history honestly. Teachers should assign each pair a different reading/person from *Powerful Words: More Than 200 Years of Extraordinary Writing by African Americans* (teachers should make copies of the excerpts they want to assign ahead of time), or assign students a particular person/excerpt from *Blood Done Sign My Name* (such as Henry Marrow). Teachers can also print biographies and articles off of the Internet, or use alternate books.
- b) After partners have read, hand out the attached reading notes and ask them to discuss and answer the questions. Tell students it is important the read carefully and discuss their person in depth, as they will be teaching classmates about this person in their next activity.
- c) Once students have finished reading and discussing, tell students that they will be creating a “living” exhibit for a museum exhibition on the theme of **“Truth and Reconciliation.”**
- d) Tell students there are two requirements of their exhibit:
  - **A statue/visual representation of the person assigned to you:**  
You and your partner will take turns playing the roles of “clay” and “sculptor,” sharing ideas and using your bodies to create a statue or image that represents the person you read about. The final statue/image must include at least one student of the pair (but can include both partners), props, and an attempt to show appropriate dress from the time period (ensure students understand they aren’t required to stitch outfits, but rather should just attempt to ‘look the part’ as best they can). The statue can be literal or abstract. The only requirement is that the final product is a visual and respectful representation of your person that aids museum guests in learning about him/her. It is advised that your final product be something that can be held in place for a short period of time.
  - **A verbal presentation about your statue/visual representation:**  
When visitors walk up to your exhibit, the museum docent (tour guide) should be able to tap the image, resulting in information about your person being shared. This information will be shared by one or both of you, and should be approximately 2 minutes long. (For example, a sculpture might come alive to tell his/her story in first person, or perhaps the sculpture remains frozen with one of the partners assuming the role of a narrator who delivers the information.) Once the information is shared, the “living” exhibit returns to its original position.
- e) Give students 15-20 minutes to prepare their museum exhibit. Once all students are finished, ask half of the pairs to assume the role of their exhibits, and instruct the other half of the class to join you. The teacher should now assume the personality of a museum docent (tour guide), taking half the class on an “art walk.” Lead students to each of their classmates’ “living” exhibits and ask them:
  - What do you see here?
  - Why do you think the artist has placed the clay in this position? What might this represent? What message is the artist trying to convey?
- f) Once students have discussed the piece, the teacher should tap the exhibit to “bring it to life,” at which point the student(s) will share the information they have compiled about their assigned person in whatever creative way they have chosen to present. Afterwards, the tour will continue on to the next piece of art. (Once a student’s exhibit has been visited, they can join the tour as

well. Also, students can relax their positions a bit while they are waiting for the tour to arrive to their exhibit.)

**Note:** Teachers may want to have students take notes on African American that they view. See the attached *Museum Response Sheet*.

- g) Once all sculptures have been viewed, the class should swap places, with all students who presented their exhibits now becoming tourists, and the students who took the tour now assuming the positions for their exhibit. Repeat the same process.
  - h) After all students have presented, debrief the museum by discussing:
    - Which exhibit did you find most interesting and why? Which person were you most impressed with and why?
    - How would you characterize the highlighted African Americans overall? Were there some you had never heard of? Why do you think that is?
    - In what ways did some of these African Americans experience injustice and/or inequality? In what ways did some of them engage themselves and others to bring about change in their societies?
    - We honor our ancestors by learning about and caring about the history they endured. What are other ways we can honor them? What are our responsibilities as citizens today to ensure laws such as those enforced during slavery and Jim Crow are not set or tolerated?
- **Partner Project**
    - a) Hand out the attached *The Museum of Truth and Reconciliation* assignment sheet. Partner students up and explain that they will be assigned an important African American who has ideas or experienced a particular situation that should be shared as part of confronting our history honestly. Go over the assignment's steps so that students understand what their final product will be.
    - b) In class, assign each pair either someone from *Powerful Words: More Than 200 Years of Extraordinary Writing by African Americans* or a character from *Blood Done Sign My Name*. Again, provide an initial reading for students to complete, explaining that they will then complete further research on this person and their time period. Teachers should use their discretion regarding how much class time is provided for research (i.e. providing Internet access, library access, etc.) Set a date by which students should have their research completed.
    - c) Allow class time for students to begin exploring their "living" statue for the exhibit, following the same guidelines for step c in the In-Class Activity description. Again, teachers should use their discretion regarding how much class time is provided for finalizing the "living" statues and planning props and costumes, creating the exhibit's verbal presentation. The project also includes creating a backboard or poster board with additional information about their assigned African American; students may need class time to prepare.
    - d) On the due date of the project, follow the same procedure as outlined above in steps d-g of the In-Class Activity description. Teachers may also want to consider hosting an evening event in which families and the community are invited to tour the "living museum" as well.

## Reading Notes

**Assigned Person's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

What is your initial reaction to the person you read about? Did anything surprise you about him/her or the time period in which he/she lived?

How would you characterize the person you read about?

What ideas did your person hold regarding society, citizenship, equality, etc.?

Did this person exhibit active concern for and engagement in his/her community?

What do you most admire about this person?

What is most important to teach about this person and why?



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## Reading Notes

**Assigned Person's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

What is your initial reaction to the person you read about? Did anything surprise you about him/her or the time period in which he/she lived?

How would you characterize the person you read about?

What ideas did your person hold regarding society, citizenship, equality, etc.?

Did this person exhibit active concern for and engagement in his/her community?

What do you most admire about this person?

What is most important to teach about this person and why?

## The Museum of Truth and Reconciliation

**Assignment:** Tyson describes his book as “...a story of the blues and a story of the gospel...the blues and the gospel started as Southern things but speak to the whole human dilemma. The blues are about looking a painful history straight in the eye; the gospel is about coming together as a community of faith in order to rise beyond that anguish.” How should communities go about “looking a painful history straight in the eye?” What will it take for us to “come together” and “rise beyond?”

One of the ways you and your partner will begin to do this is by designing a truthful “living” museum exhibit on a person assigned to you who lived anytime from slavery, all the way up to present. Each of these people had important ideas, had experiences that should be shared, or have something to teach us in some way. Your assignment is to ensure society is educated about these people, their ideas, and/or experiences so that we may face our true history and move further forward together as a community.

### Steps to Take for Completion

1. You and your partner will be assigned a person from history who has an important story to tell and who lived anytime from slavery, all the way up to present. Once you have been assigned your figure, you must research this person and learn all you can about his/her life, experiences, and contributions to the society in which they lived. Remember that this person may unfortunately be unfamiliar to many, and/or may come from a period from which many misconceptions exist. Ensure that as you research you focus on highlighting things that you feel museum visitors really need to know about this person and the years in which they lived.
2. Based on what you learned in your research, begin to design a creative and truthful museum exhibit that will teach visitors all about this person and the time in which he/she lived. Focus on what you feel is most important for people to know, things people may not know or understand, and what sets this person aside as someone who should be remembered. Consider questions such as:
  - What is your initial reaction to the person you read about? Did anything surprise you about him/her or the time period in which he/she lived?
  - How would you characterize the person you read about?
  - What ideas did your person hold regarding society, citizenship, equality, etc.?
  - Did this person exhibit active concern for and engagement in his/her community?
  - What do you most admire about this person?
  - What is most important to teach about this person and why?
3. Once you have a grasp on who this person is, and what needs to be shared about them, begin working on your “living” museum exhibit. Exhibits must contain:
  - **A statue/visual representation of the person assigned to you:**  
You and your partner will take turns playing “clay” and the role of “sculptor,” sharing ideas and using your bodies to create a statue or statuesque image that represents the person you read about. The final statue/image must include at least one student of the partnership (but can include both partners), props, and an attempt at dressing from the appropriate time period. The statue can be literal or abstract. The only requirement is that the final product is a visual and respectful representation of your person that aids museum guests in learning about him/her. It is advised that your final product be something that can be held in place for a short period of time.
  - **A verbal presentation about your statue/visual representation:**  
When visitors walk up to your exhibit, the museum docent (tour guide) should be able to tap the image, resulting in information about your person being shared. This information will be shared by one or both of you, and should be approximately 2 minutes long. (For example, a sculpture might come alive to tell his/her story in first person, or perhaps the sculpture remains frozen with one of the partners assuming the role of a narrator who delivers the information.) Once the information is shared, the “living” exhibit returns to the position it was originally in.

○ **A backboard or poster board containing information about your exhibit:**

Written work should be accurate, neatly and artistically presented on a backboard or poster board, and must contain important information about your exhibit, the person represented, and the society in which he/she lived. Remember to teach museum visitors about the things you feel are most important for them to know, and also address any misconceptions that may exist about this person or their lifetime. The final product should:

- Have a title that notes your person's name and the years he/she lived
- Contain at least one page of summarized information (in your own words)
- Contain at least one artistic representation of your person (created by you)
- Any other printouts, visuals, etc. of other important information you choose to include; remember the purpose of such information is to better educate us

**DUE DATES:**

**Research Completed:**\_\_\_\_\_ **First Draft:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Final Product /Presentation of Museum:**

**Notes:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Museum of Truth and Reconciliation Response Sheet

| Citizen name | Characteristics that describe him/her | Actions he/she took to affect society/change |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--|
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## **The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898**

### **Overview**

Students will learn about the events of the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot via a Power Point presentation, analyzing primary source documents, and class discussion. Students will explore the role of propaganda and spin in instigating the events of 1898 and will discuss the importance of learning about such history, though painful and controversial, today. This lesson will culminate with students creating a memorial design for teaching about the 1898 riot and honoring those affected.

### **Grade**

8

### **Course**

North Carolina: Creation and Development of the State

### **North Carolina Standard Course of Study**

- Objective 5.05: Assess the influence of the political, legal, and social movements on the political system and life in North Carolina.
- Objective 9.02: Identify past and present state and local leaders from diverse cultural backgrounds and assess their influence in affecting change.

### **Essential Questions**

- Why was Wilmington, NC considered a symbol of ‘black hope’ in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?
- What were the events of the 1898 race riot in Wilmington, NC?
- Compare and contrast the Democratic, Republican, Populist, and Fusionist Parties of 1898.
- What effect did propaganda and spin have on the unfolding of 1898 events?
- How did the events of 1898 impact African American progress?
- What are the most effective ways to remember the events of 1898 and honor those who experienced unjust actions?

### **Materials**

- The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 Power Point, available in the Database of K-12 Resources (in PDF format) or by sending a request to [CarolinaK12@unc.edu](mailto:CarolinaK12@unc.edu)
  - To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click “View” in the top menu bar of the file, and select “Full Screen Mode”
  - To request an editable PPT version of this presentation, send a request to [CarolinaK12@unc.edu](mailto:CarolinaK12@unc.edu)
- Power Point Response Sheet and Answer Key, attached
- Excerpt from “The Ghosts of 1898,” by Tim Tyson; special feature of the News and Observer, attached
- Discussion Questions for Excerpt, attached

### **Duration**

2 class periods

Additional homework time will be needed for the culminating memorial assignment

### **Student Preparation**

Students should have a basic knowledge of the Jim Crow Era, as well as an understanding of expectations for discussing controversial issues.

### **Teacher Preparation**

While the Wilmington Race Riot deals with sensitive topics, it is important for students to explore the events of 1898. In order to study this history effectively and safely however, teachers must have established a safe

classroom with clear expectations of respect, open-mindedness, and civil conversation. See the Consortium's "Activities" section of the Database of Civic Resources for ways to ensure a classroom environment conducive to the effective exploration of controversial issues.

## Procedure

### Day 1

#### Introduction to the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898

1. Project the image on Slide 2 of the Wilmington Race Riot Power Point and ask students to examine it, jotting down their observations and inferences. (Do not give students any indication regarding the events of the picture or time period represented yet.) Probe student thinking by asking:
  - What do you see here?
  - What appears to be currently happening? What do you think may have happened before this photo was taken? What would you predict will happen next?
  - When and where do you think this photo was taken? What evidence makes you think this?
2. Allow students to share their thoughts then explain that this photo was taken on November 10, 1898 in Wilmington, NC and give students an introduction to the Wilmington Race Riot, such as:

At 8:00 A.M. on November 10, 1898, about 500 white men assembled at the armory of the Wilmington Light Infantry. Led by soon-to-be mayor **Alfred Moore Waddell**, the crowd marched to the **Daily Record** office, the state's only black owned newspaper at the time. As they moved across town, the crowd swelled to approximately 2,000. The mob broke into the building, set it on fire, and watched it burn. The crowd then posed for a photograph in front of the burned-out frame.

Destroying the black-owned newspaper office was only one event in the string of racist actions taken by white supremacists in 1898 in Wilmington, North Carolina. In the name of white supremacy, dozens of Wilmington's black residents (the precise number isn't known) were murdered and many successful black citizens and their white allies were banished from the town. "A new social order was born in the blood and flames, rooted in what the News and Observer's publisher, Josephus Daniels, heralded as 'pernament good government by the party of the White Man.'" ")

This string of events, which became known as the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898, "was a crucial turning point in the history of North Carolina. It was also an event of national historical significance. Occurring just two years after the Supreme Court had sanctioned 'separate but equal' segregation in **Plessy v. Ferguson**, the riot signaled the embrace of an even more virulent racism, not merely in Wilmington, but across the United States." (Source: Tim Tyson, *"The Ghosts of 1898"*)

#### Exploring the Events of 1890s Wilmington, NC

3. Next, ask students how many of them have heard about the Wilmington Race Riots before or know something about what occurred in the 1890s in Wilmington. Have students share what they already know and note the number of students with prior knowledge, as this number will be relevant later in the lesson.
4. Explain to students that they are going to be learning about the Wilmington Race Riot, and the causes and effects of this tumultuous time period, via a Power Point presentation and discussion. Let students know that studying this period of history can be difficult due to the overt racism that was at play, as well as the unfair and violent treatment of African Americans by much of the white community. Let students know that you trust them to handle the information with maturity and encourage students to ask questions throughout the presentation and discussion. Provide students with the attached response sheet to fill out throughout the Power Point discussion. It is important teachers use the PPT as a basis for discussion rather than lecture. Example discussion questions:
  - Slide 3:

- Before we begin, take a few moments to examine this graph. What information does the graph provide?
- What do you notice about the population of whites to blacks?
- Based upon this population information, what inferences might we make about Wilmington's society during these years?
- Slide 5:
  - Why do you think Wilmington was considered a symbol of "black hope?"
  - How do you think the roles of African Americans in Wilmington compared to other Southern towns?
  - Why are such accomplishments by African Americans (such as being shop owners and professionals) even more noteworthy during this particular time period? *(Review with students that Reconstruction after the Civil War had only come to a close a few years earlier, in 1877.)*
- Slide 6:
  - Are the Republican and Democratic Parties of today the same as they were in the 1890s? (Discuss with students how Democrat and Republican mean different things than they did during the beginning of the party platforms.)
  - Based on the descriptions of these three political parties in the 1890s, do any of the parties have anything in common?
  - Let's assume an election was right around the corner - what might two of these three parties gain by fusing/merging into one party?
  - Which of these two parties would you think would be most likely to fuse and why?
- Slide 7:
  - Given what you know thus far about the Democratic Party during the 1890s, how do you think its members reacted to such changes?
- Slide 8:
  - Based on Daniel Schenck's comment that the 1898 campaign would be "the meanest, vilest, dirtiest campaign since 1876," what do you envision took place throughout 1898? What kind of tactics do you think the Democratic Party resorted to specifically?
  - Why do you think the Democratic Party was so passionate about winning the 1898 campaign?
- Slide 9:
  - What is propaganda? Can you think of any recent examples of propaganda that you have encountered?
  - Do political campaigns today still utilize propaganda? In what ways?
  - Is propaganda always a negative thing? Explain.
  - Do you think the type of propaganda utilized by the Democrats during the 1898 election was a bad thing? Why so?
  - Why is it important to be educated regarding propaganda, and to know how to identify it?
- Let students know they are going to be examining various pieces of propaganda from the 1898 election period on slides 10-12. Project each slide and have students examine it for a few silent moments, allowing them to walk up to the image projected at the front of the room for a closer look if they choose. After silent reflection, discuss each piece of propaganda.
- Slide 10:
  - What do you see? What do you first notice about this document?
  - Ask a student volunteer to read the text.
  - What is the purpose of this document? Who do you think created it and why?
  - How do you think you would feel seeing this document if you were a white Republican during 1898? If you were an African American Republican? If you were a white Democrat?
  - How do you think this document affected the election and why?
  - Let students know that this is an actual handbill distributed by Democrats throughout Wilmington to intimidate the six leading white Republicans at the time. After Republican Postmaster William Chadbourn gave in to Democratic pressures the "6" was changed to a "5" in local newspapers.
  - Why do you think Chadbourn folded to the pressure?

- Slide 11 & 12:
  - What do you see? What do you notice first?
  - What text is being used in this political cartoon?
  - What symbols are being used?
  - What message is the artist trying to convey? What is his goal?
  - In what ways might the cartoon have influenced voters?
  - What about this cartoon is offensive to our modern day perspectives? How does our perspective compare to that of 1898 society?
- Slide 13:
  - How would you characterize the Red Shirts?
  - Are there other hate groups the Red Shirts remind you of? (i.e. KKK)  
Why do you think such hate shows itself in groups of people in this way? (*Begin discussing the concept of mob mentality with students.*)
- Slide 14:
  - Why do you think fear is such a good motivator in situations like this?
  - What do you think certain members of the white community were so afraid of?
- Slide 15:
  - How would you characterize Alex Manly and why? What do you think of his decision to fight back with his pen? Do you think he knew what the consequences would be? What do you think you would have done?
- Slide 16:
  - What was Waddell's goal in this speech?
  - If you were an African American living in 1898, how would this speech make you feel and why?
  - How might you respond if you were an African American Republican? A white Republican? A white Democrat? What might the consequences be of such responses?
  - Predict what is going to happen on Election Day. What makes you think this?
- Slide 17:
  - Why do you think so many Democrats turned out at the polls?
  - What do you think the consequences were for those who illegally stuffed ballots? (*There weren't any consequences for them!*)
  - Do you think the peace will last? Why or why not?
- Slide 18:
 

Based on everything you have learned so far, how would you characterize Waddell?
- Slide 19:
  - Characterize the response of the Committee. Why do you think they responded in this way?
- Slides 20-21:
  - Who was there to stop this mob of 2,000 angry men? How do you imagine it would feel to be in Wilmington on this day if you were an African American or a white Republican?
  - Do you think the mob is going to stop here?

### **Create a Newscast from the Daily Record**

5. At this point, pause on Slide 22 and as a way to have students reflect on what they've learned thus far, tell students to imagine that they are a television reporter standing in front of the Wilmington Daily Record's office as the white mob is being photographed. Tell students to prepare a 3-minute newscast live from the scene, recapping what has happened. The newscast must include at least six facts from the discussion and must be realistic to the actual history. Students should write out their script and should also be prepared to deliver their news report to classmates at the start of the next class. (Students can complete this for homework.)

**Teacher Note:** Teachers should point out to students that this is simply a creative way for them to summarize what they have learned, and that in actuality there was no TV reporter there that day, since television had not been invented yet. Also, teachers should discuss what language is appropriate to use in

their TV cast. While racial slurs would have been utilized in 1898, students should not make use of such language in their assignment.

## Day 2

6. Start class by having a few student volunteers present their newscasts to class. Correct any misinformation and use the information students share as conversation starters. Encourage students to consider not just the facts, but also the emotions experienced in 1898 Wilmington. Also, if there are any differences between the stories or angles students take in their newscast, point this out as it will be relevant to the later “Propaganda & Spin” activity.
7. Continue with the PPT and discussion, picking up with Slide 23.
  - Slide 23:
    - What do you imagine the atmosphere was like in Wilmington on this day?
    - What protection would you have? If you were harmed by the white mob, what recourse do you think you would have?
  - Slide 25:
    - How did Waddell manage to overthrow the local government?
    - Did the black citizens who were unfairly fired have any recourse? Why?
  - Slide 26:
    - Of all the unjust treatment we have learned African Americans experienced, which do you think would have been most difficult to deal with and why?
  - Slide 27:
    - What trend do you notice that occurred in Wilmington’s demographics?
    - What might this tell us regarding what was occurring in Wilmington at the time?
  - Slide 28:
    - Looking over this four-pronged plan, do you think the title of “Wilmington Race Riot” is appropriate? Meaning, given that the riot was only one part of a calculated campaign of white supremacy, what other title might better describe this period?
    - “For more than a century, most historians have obscured the triumph of white domination in 1898 by calling it a ‘race riot,’ though it was not the spontaneous outbreak of mob violence that the word ‘riot’ suggests...historian H. Leon Prather calls it a ‘massacre and coup.’ What another scholar terms the ‘genocidal massacre’ in Wilmington was the climax of a carefully orchestrated campaign to end interracial cooperation and build a one-party state that would assure the power of North Carolina’s business elite.” (Tim Tyson)
  - Slide 29:
    - How did the events of 1898 affect the African American community in Wilmington? The Wilmington community at large?
    - What lingering effects do you think resulted?
    - At the start of the lesson, I asked how many of you knew anything about the riot and most of you did not. Even though this is such a monumental aspect of our state’s history, why do you think it is largely hidden/not discussed?

### Optional: Propaganda and Spin

8. Optional: Tell students that you want to focus on the media’s role in the 1898 events, which would have consisted of newspapers. Divide students into small groups and tell them that they are first going to do some practicing as a news reporter, specifically as groups of reporters representing the school newspaper. Write the following statement up front where all students can see it:
  - As of next month, all snack machines are being removed from school premises.

Tell students that you want them to write a short blurb (paragraph) announcing this news in the school newspaper. However, they must write it from the perspective of a group that you assign to them. Hand

out one of the following assignments to each group (group assignments can be repeated if you have a larger class):

- Group 1: School administrators who are tired of the snack machines getting knocked over and vandalized
- Group 2: Student health advocacy group called “Making Healthier Choices”
- Group 3: Student athletes, who raid the snack machines daily when starving after practice
- Group 4: 12<sup>th</sup> graders who can’t leave campus for lunch and despise the cafeteria food
- Group 5: Cheerleaders who have been advocating for low calorie and fat-free snacks to be put in the vending machines
- Group 6: The Booster Club, who has relied on the proceeds from the vending machine to fund athletics (i.e. new uniforms, improved football field, etc.)

9. Give students 5-10 minutes to compile their news blurb then have each group share their blurb with class. Discuss:

- In what ways did our blurbs differ?
- Even though we were all responding to the same topic, why did our blurbs differ? (*they were told from people with differing perspectives and agendas*)
- In what ways does this happen in the media today?

Explain to students that when newsworthy events occur, those involved (be it politicians, citizens, etc.) often utilize “**spin**,” which is a heavily biased portrayal in one's own favor of an event or situation. “Spin Doctors” provide their point of view or interpretation of an event in a way that is compatible with their own agenda in an effort to sway public opinion. While traditional public relations may also rely on creative presentation of the facts, “**spin**” often, though not always, implies disingenuous, deceptive and/or highly manipulative tactics. Politicians are often accused of spin by commentators and political opponents, when they produce a counter argument or position. Discuss:

- In what ways do you use spin in your own lives?
- How was spin and propaganda used to fuel the conflict of 1898? (*Review how Democrats used racist propaganda and spin to break up the Fusion Coalition; how Daniel Russell used the News and Observer to publish newspaper stories to spread fear and anger regarding black citizens; review Alex Waddell’s “White Declaration of Independence”*)
- For any given event, is there a single truth about what happened or does it always depend on who is telling the story and how they tell it? Explain.

10. Project (or handout copies of) Slide 30, which is an image of the Wilmington Morning Star and discuss with students:

- What do you see here?
- According to this article’s headlines, what happened in 1898 Wilmington?
- What is the goal of this article?
- Does this article utilize propaganda or spin? Explain.

Project (or handout copies of) Slide 31, containing an image of a New York Herald article and continue discussing:

- What do you see in this second image?
- How does this article compare and contrast with that of the Wilmington Morning Star’s?
- Why is there such a vast difference in these two articles?
- Which article do you think represents the “truth?” Why? In 1898, which article do you think citizens would have assumed was the “truth?” Why?

### Remembering the Events of 1898 Today – Construct a Memorial

11. Hand out the attached excerpt from the News and Observer's 2006 special feature on the Wilmington Race Riots. In small groups, instruct students to read the article then discuss and answer the questions provided. (If each group member is to write their responses down, they'll need to do so on notebook paper.) Once students have discussed in small groups, come back together as a class so that students can share their thoughts as a whole.
12. Tell students that the a group called the 1898 Foundation was organized in 1996 with the following mission: to "tell the story" of 1898 and its legacy, "honor the memory" of those who were killed or suffered in 1898 (as well as those who have worked for racial progress since those times), "heal the wounds" by continuing to work for reconciliation and "foster the hope" by envisioning an inclusive society. To reach these goals, it was determined that an art memorial to the 1898 riot would be constructed.
13. Explain to students that as a culminating activity, they are going to create such a memorial. Teachers should determine whether to have students complete this as an individual, partner, or small group assignment, then project/explain the following:

You work for an art firm that is hoping to construct the memorial commissioned by the 1898 Foundation for the 1898 Wilmington Riot. It is your job to come up with an idea for the memorial then design a small version of it to present to the 1898 Foundation, in hopes that they will hire your firm based on your design. The memorial can be anything you choose, as long as it works towards the goals of:

- Telling the story of the 1898 events
- Honoring the memory of those who were killed or suffered
- Healing wounds and working towards reconciliation
- Fostering hope by envisioning an inclusive society

Your memorial can be designed on paper; in 3-D form using clay, wire, cardboard, or in any creative way you see fit. Your memorial can be literal or abstract, but must connect to the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot in the ways listed above.

Good luck with your design, and may the best art firm win!

14. Let students know when their memorial is due in class, as well as how they will be presenting it. It is recommended that teachers reserve an open space, such as the library, where students can set up their various works of art. Teachers can give students time to freely rotate among the memorials then hold a vote where the class assumes the role of the 1898 Foundation and picks which memorial receives the "bid."

### Culminating Activities

- In groups, have students research another urban race riot in U.S. history (i.e. the New York City riots during the Civil War, the "Red Summer of 1919," the hate-strikes of 1943, etc.) and present their findings in the form of a newspaper's front page. For a detailed lesson and rubric, go to:  
[http://www.inmotionaame.org/education/lesson.cfm?migration=9&id=9\\_000LP](http://www.inmotionaame.org/education/lesson.cfm?migration=9&id=9_000LP)

### Resources

- Wilmington Race Riot Commission: <http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/1898-wrrc/>
- 1898 Memorial Closer to Reality: <http://www.starnewsonline.com/article/20060710/NEWS/607100371/-1/news28>
- "The Ghosts of 1898," by Tim Tyson; New and Observer: <http://www.newsobserver.com>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 – Power Point Response Sheet

1. Why was Wilmington, NC considered a symbol of “black hope” at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
2. Complete the following chart with information about the political parties at play in 1898 Wilmington:

| Democratic Party | Populist Party   | Republican Party |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                  |                  |                  |
|                  | Fusion Coalition |                  |

3. What tactics did white Democrats use to break the alliance of the black and white Fusion Coalition in efforts to win the 1898 campaign?
4. What role did the media and propaganda play in the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot?
5. How did Alex Manly’s editorial fuel the Democrats’ campaign of propaganda and white supremacy?
6. Characterize Alfred Waddell:

7. Who were the Red Shirts and what “scare tactics” did they use to affect the 1898 campaign?
8. What affect did Waddell’s “White Declaration of Independence” have?
9. Summarize the four-pronged plan that occurred in Wilmington, NC:
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_:
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_:
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_:
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_:
10. Summarize the aftermath of the events in Wilmington. Out of the various types of injustice the African American community experienced, what do you think would have been most difficult to deal with and why?
11. Why is it important to study this period of history today, even though it might be difficult to hear based on the racism, violence, and calculated cruelty that was at play?

## The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 – Power Point Response Sheet

### ANSWER KEY

1. Why was Wilmington, NC considered a symbol of “black hope” at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

*Answers can include: It was a strong religious community that supported charitable organizations, and promoted educational improvements for African Americans; African Americans from a wide range of backgrounds were able to manage their own businesses and buy homes throughout the city; African American entrepreneurs owned barbershops, restaurants, tailor shops, and drug stores. The city boasted numerous black professionals such as attorneys, and African Americans held positions as firemen and policemen. In greater numbers than in many other North Carolina towns, Wilmington’s African Americans participated in politics and held municipal and political positions. The black male literacy rate was higher than that of whites.*

2. Complete the following chart with information about the political parties at play in 1898 Wilmington:

| Democratic Party  | Republican Party   | Populist Party  |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Originally the party supporting slave holding; developed into a coalition of wealthy, working class, and rural white members; controlled the NC state and local governments from 1876-1894; coalition began to break up after 1880s/depression</i>   | <i>Originally emerged as the anti-slavery party in the mid-1850s, though was not officially organized in NC until 1867; platform consisted of free enterprise, racial toleration, and political equality for African Americans</i> | <i>The “People’s Party”; founded by working class and rural whites (predominately farmers) who left the Democratic Party;</i> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fusion Coalition</b></p> <p><i>As the economic depression deepened, white Populists joined with Black Republicans forming the “Fusion Coalition” from 1894-1896; championed local self-government, free public education, and electoral reforms that would give black men the same voting rights as whites; won every NC statewide office in 1894 and 1896 elections; elected Daniel Russell to be governor</i></p> |  |   |

3. What tactics did white Democrats use to break the alliance of the black and white Fusion Coalition in efforts to win the 1898 campaign?

*Wilmington Democrats determined that a campaign of racism would appeal to Wilmington citizens; causing doubt and fear in white residents with white supremacist propaganda would ultimately shatter the fragile alliance between whites and blacks in the Fusion Coalition; Intimidation of white Republicans and African Americans throughout the campaign was channeled through groups such as the White Government Union and Red Shirt brigades, both developed and engineered by Simmons*

4. What role did the media and propaganda play in the 1898 riot?

*Newspaper stories and public speeches of white supremacists were used to create fear in white citizens of blacks; white society was cautioned of “black beasts” who would harm white women and white society if not stopped; with the support of the racist editor of the News and Observer, Josephus Daniels, who continually supported and printed such propaganda, white citizens were convinced that black equality would mean the end of their society as they knew it; Students may also mention the political cartoons discussed as part of the PPT*

5. How did Alex Manly’s editorial fuel the Democrats campaign of propaganda and white supremacy?

*He was outraged by a speech that supported the cruel act of lynching (black men were often lynched when accused of attempting a relationship with or making any type of comments to white women). Manly pointed out that white women may choose to be with a black man. This gave the Democrats support for their propaganda, and they begin to spread more hate and violence regarding Wilmington blacks.*

6. Characterize Alfred Waddell:

*He was a former Confederate soldier; passionate speaker; racist, white supremacist; spread hate and propaganda in fiery speeches that were aimed at turning white citizens against blacks, thus giving Democratic Party more power;*

7. Who were the Red Shirts and what “scare tactics” did they use to affect the 1898 campaign?

*Group of Democratic Party members who disrupted African-American church services and Republican meetings; patrolled streets before the election and intimidated black citizens from voting in the 1898 election*

8. What affect did Waddell's "White Declaration of Independence" have?  
*Wilmington's Fusionists remained in office after the 1898 election, since they had not been up for reelection in this year; Waddell and the Democrats wanted them gone however, so he issued the "White Declaration of Independence" calling for the disenfranchisement of black voters; the day after the declaration, he lead the march of 2000 whites to destroy the Record; Red Shirts rode into black communities on horseback spreading violence against blacks; during the chaos, a coup d'état was staged forcing the Fusionist mayor, aldermen, and police chief to resign; they were banished from the city and replaced by Democrats such as Waddell, who became mayor*
9. Summarize the four-pronged plan that occurred in Wilmington, NC:
  - *Steal the election. Under the banner of white supremacy, the Democratic Party used threats, intimidation, anti-black propaganda and stuffed ballot boxes to win the statewide elections on Nov. 8, 1898.*
  - *Riot. On Nov. 10, armed whites attacked blacks and their property.*
  - *State a coup. As the riot unfolded, white leaders forced the mayor, police chief and other local leaders to resign from their offices, placing themselves in charge.*
  - *Banish the opposition. After seizing power, whites removed opposition by banishing their most able and determined opponents, black and white.*
10. Summarize the aftermath of the events in Wilmington. Out of the various types of injustice the African American community experienced, what do you think would have been most difficult to deal with and why?  
*Answers will vary.*
11. Why is it important to study this period of history today, even though it might be difficult to hear based on the racism, violence, and calculated cruelty that was at play?  
*Answers will vary.*

### Excerpt from “The Ghosts of 1898”, by Tim Tyson

Despite their importance, the events in Wilmington have remained largely a hidden chapter in our state’s history. It was only this year [2006] that North Carolina completed its official investigation of the violence. The report of the Wilmington Race Riot Commission concluded that the tragedy “marked a new epoch in the history of violent race relations in the United States.” It recommended payments to descendants of victims and advised media outlets...to tell the truth about 1898.

Even as we finally acknowledge the ghosts of 1898, long shadowed by ignorance and forgetfulness, some ask: Why dredge this up now, when we cannot change the past? But those who favor amnesia ignore how the past holds our future in its grip, especially when it remains unacknowledged. The new world walks forever in the footsteps of the old. The story of the Wilmington race riot abides at the core of North Carolina’s past.

And that story holds many lessons for us today. It reminds us that history does not just happen. It does not unfold naturally like the seasons or rise and fall like the tides. History is made by people, who bend and shape the present to create the future. The history of Wilmington teaches us that the ugly racial conflict that shaped North Carolina and the nation during much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not inevitable. So long as we remember that past, we might overcome its legacy.

...

When the violence ended, a war of memory persisted. Our politically correct public history, carved into marble on our university buildings and the statehouse lawn, exalts the men who overthrew an elected government in the name of white supremacy, including Charles B. Aycock and Josephus Daniels. No monument exists to the handful of visionaries who were able to imagine a better future, beyond the bounds of white supremacy. Nor do we remember those who gave their lives for simple justice. Instead, we mistake power for greatness and celebrate those responsible for our worst errors. The losers of 1898, though flawed themselves, have far more to teach us than the winners.

...

A new Fusion movement, one rooted in hope and generosity, and encompassing not only blacks and whites but new immigrants to the state, could still redeem the best dreams that have made us. We look to Wilmington in 1898, then, not to wring our hands in a fruitless nostalgia of pain, but to redeem a democratic purpose. And so we hold fast to what Charles Chesnutt, an African American from North Carolina and one of our great writers, called “the shining thread of hope,” which permitted him, over a century ago, to close his own story of the Wilmington catastrophe: “There’s time enough, but not to spare.”

*Tim Tyson, “The Ghosts of 1898”*

*Special Feature, News and Observer, November 17, 2006*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Discussion Questions for “The Ghosts of 1898”

1. Tyson states of the 1898 events in Wilmington that “despite its importance, the riot has remained a hidden chapter in our state’s history.” Why do you think this is?
2. Tyson recounts the question that some people ask, “Why dredge this up now, when we cannot change the past?” What answer does he provide for why it is important to study the past, even as difficult as it may be?
3. In your opinion, why is it important to be aware of the 1898 Wilmington events? What can we still learn from this history in today’s world?
4. What message is Tyson trying to convey when he says that “history does not just happen?”
5. Tyson states “When the violence ended, a war of memory persisted.” What is he referring to in his description of a “war of memory?”
6. Many monuments exist across our state (from the names of college dorms to statues in downtown areas) of people who may have made contributions, but also often made bad choices. In your opinion, what should happen to such monuments and why? (i.e. should they be torn down, should they be amended with additional information, should other monuments be added, etc.)
7. Why do you think Tyson notes that the “losers” of history are flawed also? What does he mean when he says they have far more to teach us?
8. Tyson mentions the Wilmington Race Riot Commission, which was formed in 2000 to develop a historical record of the event and to assess the economic impact of the riot on African Americans locally and across the region and state. Why do you think this Commission was finally formed over 100 years later?
9. The Commission’s final report recommended that descendants of victims of the riot receive payments for the wrongs done to their ancestors (reparations.) Do you agree with this recommendation? Why or why not? What are other ways that those treated wrongly in 1898 can be honored today?
10. What does Tyson mean when he says that “We look to Wilmington in 1898, then, not to wring our hands in a fruitless nostalgia of pain, but to redeem a democratic purpose?”
11. When Tim Tyson calls for a new Fusion movement, what do you think he is encouraging? In what ways, in your everyday life, can you meet this call?

## Reading Guide

*The following questions can be used for class discussion, written responses/journal entries, literature circles, test questions, etc. The questions are a mixture of comprehension checks, questions to encourage higher order thinking, and questions to encourage students to relate the book to present society and their own individual lives. Relevant quotes for further discussion and exploration are bulleted under appropriate questions.*

### Chapter 1- *Baptism*

*Pages 1-10*

1. According to the first page of the book, why did Robert Teel shoot Henry Marrow? (1)
2. The evening after Henry's murder, young Tim Tyson went to sleep "wondering about what had happened and fearing, without really knowing what to fear, the things that might happen now." (4) Infer why he felt this way.
3. Describe how some members of Oxford's black community responded to the beating and murder of Henry Marrow. Why do you think they chose to behave in this way? (4-6)
4. Tyson writes that "a group of rioters ran to the Confederate monument, threw a length of rope around the old Rebel's neck, and tried to pull him off his granite pedestal, but the bronze infantryman would not budge." (5) Why do you think the African American rioters tried to pull down the Confederate monument? How is the statue's refusal to fall symbolic? (5)
5. Evaluate Mayor Currin's decision to keep Oxford's police force under restriction, instructing his men to not shoot at rioters. (5)
6. What immediate effects did the murder of Henry Marrow, and the subsequent riots, have on Oxford, NC?
7. Eddie McCoy commented of integration, "They didn't just open the door up and say, 'Y'all come in, integration done come.' " (9) What point was he trying to convey?
8. What other conflicts were occurring across the country during 1970, when America "seemed to teeter on the brink of apocalypse..."? (9)
9. Tyson's friend Thad Stem commented that "...it is better to understand a little than to misunderstand a lot." (9) How does this comment apply to the studying and discussion of past and present issues regarding race?
  - o "So while this is the story of a small boy in a small town one hot Southern summer, it is also the story of a nation torn apart by racial, political, social, and cultural classes so deep that they echo in our lives to this day. The cheerful and cherished lies we tell ourselves about those years - that the black freedom movement was largely a nonviolent call on America's conscience, which America answered, to cite the most glaring fiction - do little to repair the breach." (10)
10. Tyson ends this chapter by stating, "...any psychiatrist can tell you that genuine healing requires a candid confrontation with our past...if there is to be reconciliation, first there must be truth." Do you agree or disagree? Explain. Why is confronting the past, even when it is controversial or difficult, important to do?
11. Should the United States form a Truth and Reconciliation Commission similar to South Africa's? Why or why not? What should such a committee do if formed? (10)

### Chapter 2- *Original Sins*

*Pages 11-42*

1. What evidence does Tyson cite that he feels classifies his family as "Southern?" (11) Do you relate to a "Southern culture" yourself? Explain.
2. Tyson explains, "Tobacco put food on our tables, steeples on our churches, stains on our fingers, spots on our lungs, and contradictions in our hearts." (13) Interpret this comment and explain the importance of tobacco in Oxford. (12-13)
3. How did many white residents of Oxford view 'race mixing' in church? Characterize Vernon Tyson's response to such views.
  - o "Just find me a racial formula from the New Testament and I'll follow that, if you find one." (p. 17)

4. "White supremacy permeated daily life so deeply that most people could no more ponder it than a fish might discuss the wetness of water." (17) What message is the author trying to convey?
5. How did white residents of Oxford respond to the Civil Rights Act of 1964? (18-20)
  - "The law meant little in Oxford." (18)
6. In reflecting on Oxford's response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a resident commented, "The grown-ups were all scared. We should have listened to the children." Analyze the resident's meaning. (20)
7. Based on this chapter, evaluate views regarding the role of women in 1970. In what ways did Mrs. Tyson contradict such expectations?
  - "In those days some people at church considered it somewhat disgraceful for a white woman – especially the preacher's wife – to work after she got married." (p. 21)
8. Tyson explains, "My mother grew up in the shade of that spreading paternalist oak of 'good race relations,' but she herself broke free of it." (32) Explain the symbolism in this quote. In your opinion, what enabled Mrs. Tyson to "break free"?
  - "This was the first sign for Mama that there existed a world on yonder side of the color line, where white eyes and ears could not readily penetrate and where black people did not necessarily accept white valuations of moral worth." (26)
9. Explain the concept of "white paternalism". (24-25)
  - "My mother had been raised by lovely people who believed that white people belong on top and that white people, especially the better classes, had an obligation to treat blacks charitably and help lift them up, though not to the point of 'social equality.' (23)
  - "Paternalism was like a dance whose steps required my grandmother to provide charity to black people as long as they followed the prescribed routine..." (24)
10. Tyson describes the charitable nature of his grandparents on page 26-27, yet notes that "the hierarchy of white supremacy, at its heart, was as rotten as that pile of old shoes, and the generations that follow will be many years cleaning it up." (27) Interpret the meaning of this quote. Why was charity, or white paternalism, not as beneficial for the African American community as the white community thought?
11. How did African American stories of slavery differ from the stories passed down in white families? (28) Why do you think such a vast difference exists in the versions?
12. In what ways did white preachers during slavery use religion to promote servitude? (30)
13. Some people in Oxford believed that "good race relations" existed. However, Tyson comments, "But these ties, even when the affection was genuine on both sides, were like a clay pot that had to be shattered for the tree inside to grow. What kind of fruit that tree would yield, in the long run, remained an open question." (31) What message is Tyson trying to convey?
14. What impact did integration have on Oxford? In what ways did white residents avoid school integration? (40-42)
15. Explain why so many whites considered the murder of Henry Marrow to be "justifiable homicide." (42)
16. Throughout this chapter, Tyson describes several manifestations of white supremacy. Which did you find most disturbing and why?
  - 'nigger knocking'
  - limitations on African American employment (i.e. cook the food but can't serve the food)
  - ignoring Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - close Oxford establishments rather than integrate
  - change establishments (i.e. Rucker Pool) to 'privately owned'
  - black soldiers having to eat outside Biscoe's
  - memories of slavery
17. After reading this chapter, explain what Tyson meant when he said "The color line in Oxford was as bright as blood." (14) Cite evidence from the chapter to back up your answer.

### **Chapter 3- Too Close Not To Touch**

*Pages 43-60*

1. Based on the information shared in this chapter, characterize Robert Teel. What quote in this chapter do you feel best summarizes his personality?
  - "I've always had the ambition to want a nice home," said Teel, "a ten-thousand-dollar brick home, a nice, big Cadillac, at least one boy, things like that." (47)
  - "Cozart strolled calmly out of the barbershop, feeling no need to prove himself in a fight with a little bantam rooster of a white man whom he regarded as a dangerous idiot." (46)
  - "Good barber, and a right good fellow, too, though I would not advise you to cross him." (47)
  - "He was hotheaded, his wife was hotheaded, and the children were hotheaded. I think it was just in their blood to be hotheaded. I mean, you just didn't need to be messing with the Teels." (48)
  - "He made money not from an inherited plantation or a position at the bank, but with his own hands." (48)
  - "Not all of the clashes at Teel's place involved race. 'He didn't care who it was,' observed one young black man who frequented the abandoned Tidewater Seafood Market next door. 'He was a mean person-to anybody. Didn't make no difference who, black or white,'" (50)
  - "He was his *own* law, as far as he was concerned." (50)
  - "It was bound to happen...With his temper and his attitudes, it was like two naked electrical wires, that if they ever touched, all hell would break loose—and they were too close not to touch." (60)
2. What evidence does Tyson note that Teel was a member of the Granville County Klavern of the KKK? (51)
3. Why did Vernon Tyson take his sons to a Klan rally? Do you agree or disagree with this decision? Explain. (52)
  - "I wanted you to know what hate looks like." (52)
4. Cite examples of Klan terrorism during 1965 in North Carolina. (53)
5. Why did the Klan burn a cross in Judge Winborne's lawn? How did he respond? (54)
6. Tyson describes Reverend James "Catfish" Cole as an "evangelist of hate." What evidence does Tyson describe that backs this characterization up? (55-57)
7. What prompted the resurgence of the Klan in Granville County in the mid-1960s, when Teel most likely joined? (58)
8. The Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution requires the states to provide equal protection under the law to all persons (not only to citizens) within their jurisdictions. Do you feel that Clyde Harding received equal protection under the law? Explain. (58-59)
9. How did many of Oxford's black residents respond to the Clyde Harding incident? (59)
10. "It remains a matter of curiosity for some people in Oxford as to why Teel, a man known to dislike black people and widely rumored to be a leader of the Ku Klux Klan, would set up shop in Grab-all." In your opinion, why did Teel open a store in this location when it meant serving predominantly black citizens? (60)

#### **Chapter 4- Miss Amy's Witness**

*Pages 61-81*

1. How do you imagine Mrs. Fanny Mae McIver's son felt when taunted with racial slurs by Tyson and his friend?
2. Why does Tyson compare himself and David to the Poles?
  - "The very idea of 'nigger'...was the heart of human evil, the avenue down which the Nazis had marched into Poland, and David and I, like some of the Poles, had somehow welcomed them ." (63)
3. Tyson explains how he joined in the racial taunting of the little boy because he didn't want to lose his best friend, explaining: "Like many people who fail to live up to their best lights, I found that my deep sense of belonging and my tenacious desire for acceptance trumped my moral judgment. I joined in the song." (63) Have you ever made a decision such as this, or succumbed to peer-pressure? Explain. Why do young people sometimes allow themselves to be swayed to do something they know is wrong?
4. "Though only a first grader, I was forced to confront what James Baldwin called 'the realization that a civilization is not destroyed by wicked people; it is not necessary that people be wicked, but only that they

- be spineless.” (61) Interpret the meaning in Baldwin’s words. How do they apply to the situation involving Tyson, David, and the housekeeper’s son? (60)
5. Interpret the following quote: “In our family at least, if you didn’t take a stand at all, you weren’t much of a man or much of a preacher; the ‘race question’ was the acid test of integrity. (64)
  6. How would you describe Vernon Tyson’s decision to not say the words “liberty and justice for all” when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, even though he was standing beside his future father in law? Why did Vernon Tyson feel he could not say these words? (65)
    - “When the meeting opened with everyone standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, my father would not say the words. ‘It said ‘liberty and justice for all,’ and I knew that was a lie, and just not true,’ Daddy told me years later. ‘I knew it ought to be true, but it was no more true than the tooth fairy. I couldn’t say it.’” (65)
  7. Why was it difficult for Vernon Tyson to register as a “conscientious objector” to war? Have you ever experienced a similar difficulty? Explain. (65)
    - “ ‘He was trying to put his hand over my mouth before I had even opened it,’ Daddy remembered.” (66)
  8. Why do you think Martin Luther King, Jr. was referred to as a “Southern black Gandhi”? (67) Do you agree with this characterization? Why or why not?
  9. Tyson says that his father learned that “good intentions were not enough.” Clarify this statement. (67)
  10. What was the main point of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”?
    - ...King penned his famous ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail,’ an eloquent critique of ‘the white moderate who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to ‘justice.’ (69)
    - “ ‘It explained that the “biggest obstacle...was the sympathetic white liberal who wanted to preserve peace and civility.” (69)
  11. What does King mean when he explains that African Americans are “forever fighting a degenerating sense of ‘nobodiness’?” (69)
  12. What effect did Martin Luther King have on Vernon Tyson? (69)
    - The effect of King’s words on my father was electric...Dr. King hit him with the conviction that he needed to do something.” (69)
  13. Explain the “trap” that Dr. King and civil rights organizers set for Eugene “Bull” Connor. (70)
  14. In what way did Dr. King use the media to his advantage? In what ways do public figures use the media to their advantage in today’s society?
  15. Why did Vernon Tyson write a letter to the editor of the *Sanford Herald*? How did his letter compare to “King’s Letter from a Birmingham Jail?” (71-72)
    - ...Daddy wrote a letter to the editor of the Sanford herald, not from jail but from the confines of his conscience in a community of white Christians that did not want to hear him. His letter clearly drew on the tone of King’s Birmingham missive. ‘Last night, a 14-year-old boy spent his first night in jail,’ Daddy wrote. ‘He was one of the more than 50 young people who were arrested yesterday in our city. His only real crime is that he had the wrong mother.’ “ (71-72)
  16. Explain what Vernon Tyson meant when he said “A moment of truth has arrived for Sanford.” (72)
  17. What risk was Vernon taking by writing this letter? In what ways did various community members respond? (72)
  18. After delivering his “I Have a Dream Speech,” the Federal Bureau of Investigation said of Dr. King, “...mark him now, if we have not done so before, as the most dangerous Negro of the future in this nation from the standpoint of communism, the Negro, and national security.” Why do you think the FBI characterized Dr. King in this way? (73)
  19. What events took place in 1963 that Tyson described as causing “the fixed stars and immovable pillars of American history...to reel and rock.?” (73)
  20. How did Vernon Tyson work to reverse what Dr. King referred to as “the most segregated hour in America?” (73) How did his parishioners respond to his choices?
  21. What was Vernon risking by continuing to fight for Dr. Proctor’s visit? Why is it sometimes difficult to fight for what you believe in?

- "I was a politician, trying to lead people and preserve my influence and do my job as best I could...I wanted to do the right thing, but I didn't want to pay that kind of price [of losing his job]." (76)
22. What gave Vernon the strength to continue fighting for Dr. Proctor's visit? (76)
  23. How did "Miss Amy" Womble help convince the segregationists to support Dr. Proctor's visit? (77-78)
  24. How did Dr. Proctor put Vernon's congregation at ease? (79-80)

## **Chapter 5 - King Jesus and Dr. King**

*Pages 82-118*

1. What racial tension existed in Oxford during World War II? Why were African American veterans particularly frustrated? Imagine enlisting to give your life for your country when that same country denies your basic rights. How would this make you feel?
  - "Across the World War II-era South, dozens of black G.I.s died in uniform at the hands of their own countrymen." (91)
  - "After the war, local black veterans came home determined that the war for democracy abroad would expand democracy at home...Though some whites recognized the contradictions in denying the ballot to black men who had risked their lives for democracy they remained silent. Black registration drives met with considerable resistance." (92)
2. What prompted sixty black soldiers from Camp Butner to storm the Oxford jail? (90-91)
3. Describe how Eddie McCoy responded to the growing civil rights movement in the south. What types of civil rights events took place in Oxford? (93)
4. How did the manager of Herring's Drugstore respond to the sit-in at his store? (94)
5. Summarize what happened to James Lyons after the sit-in was broken up by KKK members. When running to the police station for help, how did the police officer respond?
6. Evaluate the success of the various commissions and councils that existed in Oxford and for the state to promote communication and integration between blacks and whites. (96) If you could give the leaders of these commissions and councils advice, what would you tell them?
  - "The problem of course was that white Southerners may have needed 'communication' as a way of congratulating themselves on their paternalistic generosity toward 'the Negro,' but black Southerners needed what amounted to a whole new social structure, one that did not stigmatize and impoverish them." (96)
  - "...Coltrane tended to stress the importance of 'communication' between the races, as if slavery and segregation had been some terrible misunderstanding. The 'race problem,' his calm words suggested, could be solved if the right people were on the committee." (97)
  - "We're about three hundred years late for the... 'Good Neighbor Council.'" (97)
7. Characterize Thad Stem. Describe the impact his friendship had on Vernon Tyson, as well as Tim Tyson. Do you have a friend who has made such a huge impact on your life? Explain.
  - "He taught me, with his unforgettable stories, that the poet and the preacher-if they're both doing their jobs-are only working different sides of the same street, even if Thad was pretty sure that his side was more fun." (98)
8. What types of challenges did Vernon Tyson face when trying to host integrated church events, such as inviting Reverend Gillespie to speak and hosting a memorial service for Dr. King? How did he deal with these challenges to his decisions?
9. What message is Tyson trying to convey when he says, "In the years since his murder, we have transformed King into a kind of innocuous black Santa Claus, genial and vacant, a benign vessel that can be filled with whatever generic good wishes the occasion dictates..."? (107)
10. Describe Dr. King's views on poverty. Why do you think these views are often excluded from modern portrayals and characterizations of King?
  - "There remains no place in American memory for the economic vision of King, who said in 1957, 'I never intend to accommodate myself to the tragic inequalities of an economic system which takes necessities from the many in order to give luxuries to the few.' Not many people today recall the King

who dies in an attempt to organize the downtrodden of America into a nonviolent revolution to take political and economic power from the rich.” (107)

- “We must recognize that we can’t solve our problem now until there is a radical redistribution of economic and political power.” (107)
11. How did America respond to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.? Why do you think people reacted in these ways?
    - “More than a hundred cities had exploded overnight into the flames King had worked so hard to forestall.” (108)
    - Ronald Reagan, then governor of California, blamed Dr. King’s assassination on King himself and the politics of nonviolent direct action, calling it “a great tragedy that began when we started compromising with law and order, and people started choosing which laws they’d break.” (111)
  12. Do you feel that Dr. King’s vision of racial equality and reconciliation has come to fruition today? Explain.
  13. Tim Tyson confronts his own “received assumptions that white people were somehow better than black people”, explaining that “...white supremacy was like the water and we were the fish, and of course we were all drenched to the skin.” (112) Spend some time following Tyson’s example and self-reflect. Are there prejudices, biases, or other character traits you inhabit that could be improved? Explain.
  14. Many white employers felt that by being kind to their black employees, they were not participating in society’s racist culture. How does Tyson view this attitude?
    - “ ‘Why she’s just like family to us,’ was the paternalist explanation. (113)
    - “There was nothing clean about the way white people’s houses got cleaned in Oxford, North Carolina, including our own house.” (113)

## **Chapter 6 - *The Death of Henry Marrow***

*Pages 118-145*

1. According to the information given, how would you describe Henry “Dickie” Marrow?
2. “And he did not want to go to Vietnam; like most young African Americans of his generation, he considered this fiasco in Southeast Asia a white man’s war and a black man’s fight.” (119) Interpret the meaning of this quote. Why might Marrow and other African American’s have felt this way?
3. Why do you think Larry Teel beat and murdered Henry Marrow?
4. Why did Boo Chavis not want to go to the police station after his assault and Henry’s murder?
  - “I told them I won’t going to the...police station, they won’t gon’ listen to a word I said...” (126)
  - “ ‘We went down there and sat down there – we stayed until two in the morning,’ Chavis recalled. ‘Mr. Yancey stayed with me the whole time. They didn’t even try to talk with me, they didn’t do nothing.’ ” (127)
5. Why do you think that some of Oxford’s African American community chose to riot after Henry Marrow’s death? (128) Do you think there was any way the riots could have been prevented? Explain.
  - “Word raced through black Oxford the next morning that Teel and his boys had killed Henry Marrow in front of t several people and that the police had neither arrested Teel nor shown any interest in talking to the witnesses; it was several days later before the police finally got around to talking to Boo Chavis.” (128)
  - The anger in the black community that Tuesday night reflected a common belief that Teel and his sons were literally going to get away with murder.” (128)
  - “It speaks volumes about the racial situation in the United States in 1970 that virtually every African American in the country believed that white men could butcher a black man in pubic and not even face arrest and prosecution, let alone conviction.” (129)
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of rioting.
7. What do you think the Mayor’s purpose was in instating a curfew in Oxford? In what ways were blacks and whites affected differently by the Oxford curfew?
  - “After the murder, despite Mayor Currin’s curfew and the presence of dozens of state troopers, Oxford was a tinderbox and matches were not in short supply.” (135)
8. How did white and black views of the North Carolina Highway Patrol differ? (138)

9. Based on the handling of Henry Marrow's case, evaluate Sam Cox's statement that "there is no justice in the judicial system in Granville County." (142) Cite evidence to back up your answer.
10. What types of racial inequalities were described by African Americans attending the Human Relations Council Meeting? (142)
11. "The shooting and the burning and the destruction which followed it [the shooting] are only the fever, not the disease...The disease has been around for three hundred years." (143) Interpret Vernon Tyson's meaning. What does "the disease" symbolize?
12. Recount the events of "Black Thursday." To what other civil rights events across the state did "Black Thursday" compare?

### **Chapter 7 - *Drinkin' That Freedom Wine***

*Pages 146-166*

1. As some citizens reacted to the situation in Oxford with violence, why do you think they specifically targeted tobacco warehouses?
2. "Like the mother in Ohio who told a journalist that same week, after the National Guard had killed four student protestors, 'Anybody who appears on the streets of a city like Kent with long hair...deserves to be shot,' the department store manager apparently cared more about what was on Daddy's head than what was in it." (149) What does Tyson mean when he says the manager cared more about what was on his father's head than in it? What other examples can you think of when people judge others by their appearance rather than the "quality of their character?" How does this relate to your own experiences in life?
3. Characterize Golden Frinks.
  - " 'I was restless because I had been introduced to a type of freedom that the truth was in.' Frinks knew his role. 'I was the stoker,' he laughed, 'that kept the fire burning. I would stick that fire to it and shake it and keep it hot.' " (151)
  - "Racial separatism, as a philosophical position, made no sense to Frinks at all. But he shared the Black Power cohort's militant opposition to white domination, their sensible emphasis on economic uplift, and especially their fiery assertion of African American pride" (152-153).
4. How did Frinks and Dr. King differ in their views of whites who did not support the civil rights movement?
  - "The old freedom fighter knew that many whites, though they benefited from white domination, did not whole heartedly support it, even if most of the dissenters were afraid to say anything. Dr. King, in his 'Letter from Birmingham Jail,' argued that such people were often worse than outright opponents. But Frinks saw them as an opportunity. 'A lot of the good whites couldn't just come down here and speak. 'You're wrong, Mr. Teel,' they couldn't say that, but they had what you might call a silence that I could hear. If you forgot that, you wouldn't be nowhere. A man like Teel, getting his badge of honor from the murder of a man who had no cause to be put to death, that man was somewhat out of place. Lots of them supported him, but lots of them didn't, and some that did was ashamed of themselves. You couldn't forget that." (152)
5. What philosophies did Frinks share with the Black Power movement? In what ways did he differ? (153)
6. What opportunity did Frinks see in Oxford after the killing of Henry Marrow?
  - "And in Oxford, Frinks detected a moment of Divine purpose and historic opportunity for the shaken movement to pick up the disparate threads of protest and restitch freedom's quilt." (153)
7. Why are citizens such as Henry Marrow viewed as part of the civil rights movement, even if they weren't activists?
  - " 'And after Oxford, we could all look back and say, "You gonna be a symbol to us for a long time." ' " (153)
8. What did it take to convince the Chief of Police to let Henry's funeral procession march?
  - "You know as well as I do that tightening the valve ain't gonna keep the boiler from blowing." (156)
9. Why did Vernon Tyson and Thad Stem not participate in the march downtown after Henry Marrow's funeral?

- “The two of them ducked out of the march and turned toward home, and out of history, for there was nowhere else to go.” (159)
10. In what way did the failure of whites to participate in the freedom movement (whether by choice or by exclusion from the Black Power movement) hinder progress? How might outcomes have been different if this were not the case?
- “The tragic irony was that by the time mainstream white liberals had mastered a few verses to ‘We Shall Overcome,’ the young Black Power insurgents had begun to sneer that the lyrics should be changed to ‘we shall overrun.’” (157)
  - “In some respects, the split between white liberals and black radicals was a failure of memory. This tragic parting of the ways occurred across the country. That may have been inevitable, but it would have mixed and enduring consequences for American history.” (159) What point is Tyson conveying?
  - “In the 1890’s, however, when black and white North Carolinians managed to set aside some of their differences, their combined forces routed corporate domination, returned power to local governments, reformed election laws, and regulated some of the worst excesses of monopoly capitalism.” (161)
11. Why did Frinks feel it was important to lead Marrow’s funeral procession in a march to the Confederate monument?
- “To confront white supremacy was not just about confronting white people, Frinks believed, but also a matter of stamping out internalized feelings of inferiority among blacks.” (162)
  - “For hundreds of black citizens in Granville County, this was a moment of healing, a moment when they stood up for themselves, defying subjugation with such force that centuries of fear evaporated like spilled lemonade on hot pavement.
  - Freedom pounded in their hearts. Several hundred black citizens marched silently to the courthouse, spirits soaring with possibility despite the sadness of the occasion. ‘We was drinkin’ that freedom wine,’ Frinks liked to say.
12. Why did Ben Chavis feel the Confederate monument needed to be moved?
- “The monument needed to be moved, he said, ‘because it’s a stigma, because it stands for hundreds of years of a repressive period—slavery, segregation, Jim Crow, discrimination, bigotry, and all of that complicity of keeping a people down.’” (163)
13. What types of discrimination does Eddie McCoy recount? (164-165)
14. According to Eddie McCoy, why might middle-class black children embrace nonviolence, whereas poor children embrace violence? Do you think that there are children today who feel as McCoy felt when young? In your opinion, what could be done to help children like this?
- “The black children whose parents managed to provide them something like a middle-class existence, McCoy explained to my father and the college students, might embrace nonviolence. But the poor, to whom the system had been brutally indifferent, were faster to grab a brick or a fire bomb. ‘It was always poor children,’ McCoy observed, ‘people that didn’t have nothing to lose, and their parents were poor and didn’t have nothing to lose...We was dispensable, we could see that...I was a write-off kid from the time I was born. I won’t gon’ be nothing, won’t nothing gon’ become of me, I won’t gon’ finish school, I was supposed to go to jail...’” (165)
  - “‘A riot is at bottom the language of the unheard,’ Dr. King told America...” (165)
15. What does McCoy mean when he says “people no longer appreciated the sacrifices that had been made regardless of methods...”? (166)
- “In the years since the freedom movement ended, the memory of what had been required of people faded, McCoy explained to me, and people no longer appreciated the sacrifices that had been made regardless of methods. ‘I was doing that stuff back then, sit-ins and marches and all the rest and nowadays nobody even knows what it was like. People right now think that the white man opened up his drugstore and said, ‘Y’all come on in now, integration done come.’”

## **Chapter 8 - Our “Other South”**

*Pages 167-196*

1. Compare and contrast Frederick Douglass's views on improving equal rights to that of Vernon Tyson. Whose view do you most agree with and why?
  - " 'Power conceded nothing without a demand,' as Frederick Douglass had pointed out a century earlier; it never had and it never would. But my daddy longed for justice to roll down like waters, for the crooked places to be made straight and the rough places to be made smooth, and for all flesh to see it together. But both Daddy's committed Christian faith and his Eleanor Roosevelt liberalism led him to yearn that white people would concede power rather than black people merely seize it." (168)
2. Whereas Tyson notes that some people criticized his family for being "fanatics" in terms of their views on race, how does he characterize his family?
3. What does Tyson mean when he refers to many accounts of the civil rights movement being "conventional narratives" full of "saints and heroes?" Why do you think so much of the civil rights movement has been reduced to such narratives, rather than told in a realistic and truthful way?
  - "Some people criticized my father and some of his brothers for being 'fanatics,' and it would be soothing and self-congratulatory now, after the fact, to accept that critique and portray my kinfolks as the kind of saints and heroes that populate many conventional narratives about the civil rights movement." (169)
  - But the truth is that the Tysons ... were [not] crusading heroes or political leaders so much as that they were passionate, willful, stubborn Christians responding to the world around them....they drank deeply from that uncompromising and rebellious pride that moves in the hearts of both ruthless tyrants and saintly visionaries" (169).
  - "...we do well to remember that they rebelled not only against an unjust social order but sometimes against their own best lights, too." (170)
4. Throughout the book, Tyson explains that he and his family were "not untainted" by white supremacy, yet they were "dissenters from the majority opinion among whites on the matter of race." (170) What factors influenced his family to be more supportive of equal rights than many other white citizens?
  - "Terms like 'nigger lover' were intended to hurt, but they became a badge of honor for the Tyson boys." (186).
5. Tyson devotes much time in the book to being self-reflective of himself and his family, honestly sharing that while they were perhaps more open-minded than many white citizens, there were still not perfect. Why is it important to constantly examine and reexamine your own principles and behaviors, in all aspects of life?
  - "Most of us would rather claim to have always been perfect than admit how much we have grown." (176)
6. Who were "the Red Strings" and for what reasons did men join them? (171)
7. When discussing the Civil War, what misconceptions does Tyson note that white supremacists have spread?
  - "Some of them will even try to tell you that the slaves loyally supported the Confederacy, which is just a...lie. In fact, as soon as federal troops under General Ambrose E. Burnside, guided by runaway slaves, invaded eastern North Carolina, thousands of those 'loyal darkies' fled straight to the Union encampments." (172)
8. What contradiction does Tyson note regarding the assumption that "poor, rural white Southerners" are the "worst racists in the country"?
  - "Though people tend to think of poor, rural white Southerners as the worst racists in the country, these were not the people who redlined black folks out of their neighborhoods, the way northern bankers and real estate agents did. They were hardly in a position to keep blacks out of America's most elite schools, the way northeastern academics did. And white country people in the South often lived right alongside blacks, in similar material conditions, which both softened and sharpened racial clashes." (178)
9. Based on the experiences shared in this chapter, how would you characterize the life of a poor, rural white tenant farmer? What did poor whites have in common with blacks?

- “The landscape poor whites shared with blacks, in rough and unequal fashion, was a hardhanded world of hog killing, hookworm, and backbreaking labor, where the Great Depression came early and stayed late...” (179)
- 10. In what ways do you think the racism held by some poor whites hindered them?
  - “Karl Marx exaggerated only slightly in pointing out that poor whites had nothing to lose but their chains. But Marx couldn’t have known that the links that white supremacy and the Civil War had hammered into those chains gave white working people in Dixie a bone-deep sense of themselves as white Southerners, tied to a bloody history that usually pitted them against African Americans, even in opposition to their own interests.” (178)
- 11. How did some Christians justify white supremacy?
  - “The racial views of the Almighty were well known to the white citizens of eastern North Carolina. Most white Christians believed that white supremacy was the will of God...” (182)
  - White Southerners, with their abiding sense of place, also saw God’s blessing for the social order in the natural world around them. ‘Segregation is a fundamental law of nature...and the mockingbirds and robins lead separate and peaceful lives.’ Any challenge to white supremacy would represent ‘a violation of God’s eternal laws as fixed as the stars,’ the North Carolina superintendent of schools told an auditorium filled with African American college students when my father was a boy. If God had intended black and white people to mix as equals, most white folks figured, He would not have made them different colors.” (183)
- 12. Why did Tim’s Uncle Earl refuse to move from the “colored section” of the courthouse? What effect did this one decision have on him and his family?

### **Chapter 9 - *The Cash Register at the Pool Hall***

*Pages 197-219*

1. Why did the tone of the “Black Power crowd” disturb the “older, more traditionally minded African Americans in Oxford?” (197-198)
2. Describe the conflict between the Black Power movement and the theory of nonviolence. How did activists who condoned violence or those who accepted violence as a last measure of response justify it? In your opinion, which approach is more effective? Cite evidence from the book or from your knowledge of history to defend your answer.
  - “The assassination of Dr. King sealed the death of nonviolence, even as a tactical approach. In short, virtually nobody believed anymore, as Dr. King had, that ‘unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality.’ And in Oxford, the murder of Henry Marrow ‘made us look again at every aspect of our situation here,’ Ben Chavis explained. ‘The fact that there were no blacks working downtown. Not one in City Hall, not even a secretary. The highest-ranking black officer in the police department was a patrol officer. None in the fire department. And lots of Oxford still segregated. I mean, we just decided enough was enough.’ ” (198)
  - ““What Teel did was an act of racial violence...And what the police and courts did was to sustain this racial violence. What the white business community did, excluding blacks from employment and stigmatizing them with segregation, was a different kind of racial violence. And violence begat violence.” (202)
  - “The liberal Raleigh News and Observer condemned the ‘tossing of rocks and bottles and firebombs’ in Oxford as ‘the most fruitless form of protest imaginable,’ arguing that ‘discussion is a more promising way to racial accommodation than destruction.’ But the indisputable fact was that whites in Oxford did not even consider altering the racial caste system until rocks began to fly and buildings began to burn.” (204)
3. Describe the culture that evolved at the Soul Kitchen. (198-199)
4. According to Richard Wright, what were the three options “a black man in the Jim Crow South had...with respect to white people...” How would you characterize these options?
  - “Richard Wright once observed that a black man in the Jim Crow South had three options with respect to white people, none of them politically promising. He could adopt a docile and religious posture,

accepting his racial subordination. He could play the part of the 'respectable Negro,' superior to the poor blacks beneath him, and thereby become complicit in the racial caste system. Or the final – and frequently suicidal – option was to adopt the 'criminal attitude' of the black desperado, the 'bad nigger' who haunted the fearful imagination of the white South. This almost nihilistic figure affirmed white terrors that what lay behind black masks of servility was a boiling black rage that had few other outlets." (200)

5. When Tyson says that "...as the movement grew, the divisions grew, too, many of them along generational lines..." describe the divisions to which he is referring. (200)
  - "The incongruous result, of course, was that white city officials tried to negotiate an end to the rioting and the arson with people who could not have done anything to stop it." (201)
6. At several points in this chapter, it is noted that civil rights activists felt they needed to place "economic pressure" on whites. Why do you think they felt this would bring about change? Do you agree or disagree that this tactic is effective? Explain.
  - "But if he did not endorse or organize violence, Chavis was more than willing to use the violence committed by others as negotiating leverage. The heart of Chavis's political strategy was economic pressure against the most wealthy and powerful whites. Though he did not counsel firebombing, he rationalized black violence against white property by placing it in the context from which it had emerged." (201)
  - "'It was like we had a cash register up there at the pool hall;; one of the arsonists recalled years later, 'just ringing up how much money we done cost these white people. We knew if we cost'em enough...money they was gon' start doing something.'" (204)
7. "Eleven o'clock on Sunday morning continued to be, as Dr. King liked to point out, the most segregated hour in American life." (207) Why is this ironic? Are there other places in which segregation still exists today, even though no longer imposed by law? Why do you think this is?
8. Tyson notes that he has "often pondered whether or not my father and his handful of allies could have done more to preserve the ties between blacks and whites." (208) In your opinion, based on what you have read, could Vernon Tyson and the few others who thought like him have made more of an impact on bridging the racial divide in Oxford? Explain. If you could go back in time and give Vernon Tyson advice or other ideas, what would you say?
  - But that fear that he'd expressed in his diary in 1962-'I hope it is not too late'- turned out to be prophetic. And in the late 1960s, when Black Power hit them from one side and the white backlash hit them from the other, white liberals like my father were left with few options." (208)
  - "Mayor Currin and City Manager Tom Ragland announced on the day of the march that six basketball goals would be built on city property. That's just how clueless local white authorities were—they thought that black people might stop complaining if the town simply built enough basketball courts." (211-212)
  - Explain why it was pointless for the higher officials to try and calm down the rioters. Why did they continue to try?
9. What various strategies did Oxford officials use to try to stop the rioting and ease Oxford tensions? Why were these strategies ineffective? If you were the Mayor of Oxford in 1970, what would you have done differently?
  - "Mayor Currin and City Manager Tom Ragland announced on the day of the march that six basketball goals would be built on city property. That's just how clueless local white authorities were—they thought that black people might stop complaining if the town simply built enough basketball courts." (211-212)
10. Why did Chavis and Oxford organizers plan a fifty-mile march to Raleigh? (211)
11. The civil rights era is marked throughout by many marches and protests. What is the purpose of these tactics?
12. What did the mule hauling Dr. King's coffin, as well as the suggested coffin of Henry Marrow, symbolize? (212)
  - In your opinion, was the march to Raleigh a success? Why or why not? "The governor's refusal to acknowledge the protest reignited the anger of black incendiaries in Oxford who felt that his political

posture showed that he and the white-dominated state apparatus stood with the murderers of Henry Marrow.” (219)

## **Chapter 10 - Perry Mason in the Shoeshine Parlor**

*Pages 220-246*

1. Why were Oxford’s black veterans burning various warehouses and buildings in Oxford? What was effective about this strategy? What was ineffective?
  - “They could get an all-white jury and let ’em off, they could sure enough do that if they wanted to,” one of the black men said years later, “but we were going to sure enough let ’em know that we won’t gonna take that shit.” (220)
2. What was the impact of the fires on the small town of Oxford and its residents?
  - “What would come of all this destruction and anger and fear? I did not know enough history to understand what was happening, and it would be many years before I did, but Oxford would burn in my memory for the rest of my life.” (222)
3. According to Judge Martin, he “ ‘harbored no prejudice’ against African Americans... ‘I was raised in a mainly black county,’ he was quoted as saying. ‘I ate with them and played with them. We had an instinctive love for the Negro race. Why, my secretary is black. That should show you how I feel about them.’ ” (229) In your opinion, do his comments prove his acceptance of black people? Why or why not? In what ways are Judge Martin’s attitudes towards black people representative of many white attitudes towards blacks?
4. “Teel was the white champion,” said a white woman born of an old and prestigious local family. “It was the fear of integration – it was not so much that you identified with Teel but that his skin was white. It was like you had to bank together.” (230) Given this attitude among some members of the white community, how might an all white jury affect the outcome of the trial?
5. In what ways did the defense play on tense racial attitudes to support its side?
  - “For a defiant young black man to put his hands on a white man in court could not help but make white jurors uneasy, but the judge did not intervene.” (234)
6. Why were several witnesses afraid to testify? (234)
7. In your opinion, what was the most important point made by the prosecution? The defense?
8. What inconsistencies were evident in the defense’s argument?
9. What does the verdict in Henry Marrow’s murder trial say about racial issues in the 1970s?
  - “ ‘If you turn these men loose,’ Ferguson told the jury, ‘you may as well hang a wreath on the courthouse door on your way out, because justice is dead in Granville County.’ ” (241)
  - “ ‘This is one of the most serious cases ever to be tried in this state,’ Burgwyn noted, opening his brief summation. ‘The outcome will affect events in this community, the entire state of North Carolina, and across the nation.’ The murder of Henry Marrow was ‘a useless, senseless death,’ he said, but it occurred ‘at a moment of great upheaval on the subject of race. We cannot tell the world that we have one system of justice for Negroes and another for whites,’ Burgwyn advised the jury.” (242)
10. The court reporter recalled a baby’s cries echoing through the courtroom at a break in the prosecution’s closing argument, and how it made her think “how none of this was their fault, none of it. All of this was our fault, not theirs. It was all our fault.” (242-243) What do you think she meant by this?
11. Imagine that you are sitting in the courtroom when the verdict comes back “not guilty”. How do you imagine you would feel? What would you think? How would you respond?
12. Do you agree with the News and Observer’s classification of Teel’s trial as a “sham and a mockery of justice”? Why or why not? In what other ways would you describe the trial? (245)
  - “Years later, referring to the popular television attorney of the time, whose cases always ended with a dramatic courtroom twist, Burgwyn said, ‘It was just a Perry Mason kind of thing.’ ” (225)
  - “Jimmy Chavis had held Henry Marrow’s head in his lap on the way to the hospital. ‘That court,’ Chavis told me years later, ‘that court won’t nothing but a shoeshine parlor.’ ” (246)

13. Is there anything that could have been done to ensure a fair trial for Henry Marrow? Explain.
14. In your opinion, what was the greatest injustice throughout the preparation for and during Henry Marrow's murder trial?

### **Chapter 11 - *We All Have Our Own Stories***

*Page 247-287*

2. What does Tyson mean when he says, "But truth and falsehood keep house on both sides of the color line, and we all have our own stories to tell?" (247)
3. Why did some blacks, particularly citizens who did not participate in the movement, "sometimes dismiss the movement with a wave of the hand"? (247)
  - "Having missed the freedom train in the 1960s and 1970s, the bystanders now told the story that the train had never come, that freedom had been an easy walk, or that the tracks had been laid by a federal grant." (248)
4. Why might African American citizens have chosen not to participate in the movement? If you were a middle class African American living in Oxford in 1970, what did you have to lose by participating in civil rights protests? What did you have to gain by participating? Imagine that you were an Oxford resident during this time. Do you think you would have participated or avoided participating in the civil rights movements? Explain.
5. Discuss and evaluate the role of the federal government during the freedom movement. What steps did the government take to ensure the rights of African American citizens? Do you feel the government did enough? Why or why not? In your opinion, what (if anything) should the federal government have done differently?
  - *Brown v. BOE*, 1954
  - Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Voting Rights Act of 1965
  - "The role of the federal government in the black freedom struggle *was* considerable – and yet added up to less than half truth, offered at least in part to defend the storytellers against the fact that many of them were freed by a movement they had been afraid to support." (248)
6. According to Tyson, why did African Americans sometimes react to the inequality they were experiencing with violence?
  - "And so sometimes it was necessary to escape from an endless and pointless conversation with white paternalism by striking hard and sometimes violently against the architecture of their oppression-Oxford's tobacco warehouses being only the local example." (249)
7. What role does memory play in shaping our history?
8. Describe the flawed memories and conceptions of the freedom struggle that exist. Why do you think such misunderstandings have developed over time?
  - "The struggle was far more violent, perilous, and critical than America is willing to remember. Those who tell themselves that white people of goodwill voluntarily handed over first-class citizenship to their fellow citizens of color find comfort in selective memory and wishful thinking. And those who believe that the federal government rode over the hill like the cavalry and rescued the poor black folks from white 'rednecks' have forgotten or never knew what happened in the civil-rights era South." (249)
9. Describe the role of the Granville County Steering Committee for Black Progress. (249-252)
10. Beyond the injustice experienced in the court system, in what ways did blacks experience inequality in Oxford? (250)
11. In what ways did the black community in Oxford work to ensure participation and support of the boycott among all African Americans? What impact did the boycott have on Oxford?
12. Tyson explains, "The social changes wrought by the black freedom movement came about by a complex mixture of violence and nonviolence, economic coercion and moral appeal." (252) Cite examples from the movement in Oxford that fall into each of these three categories. Cite examples from the movement across the entire South that fall into each of these categories.
13. Why did the Tyson family move to Wilmington, NC?

14. Describe the experiences of white and black students during integration at Roland-Grise Junior High School.
  - "In a riot, it was always 'salt and pepper,' and you either ran or fought; nobody stopped to check your political credentials." (259)
  - "...I realized that we were in the middle of a social revolution gone sour." (262)
15. Explain Tyson's meaning when he says that his father was "mired up to his ankles in white paternalism."
  - "As a white liberal, my father's unconscious white supremacy tempted him to feel that he knew what was best for the black freedom struggle." (266)
16. Why did Vernon Tyson go to visit Ben Chavis at the Church of the Black Madonna? Describe their meeting and its outcome.
17. Tyson states, "We are all the captives of our origins, especially when we do not fully know and understand them." (265) In the paragraphs that follow, what "paradoxes and predicaments" does Tyson note from history that illustrate this?
18. How did those who participated in the slave trade "justify" it? (266) How do such historical injustices still affect us today?
19. Describe the events that took place in Wilmington on February 6, 1971. (268-270)
20. When referring to the trial of the "Wilmington Ten," why does Tyson say that "it became clear, whatever the facts of the case, that the prosecution had flung down and danced upon the U.S. Constitution?" (269)
21. "Sometimes murder does its best work in memory, after the fact...Terror lives on, continuing to serve its purpose long after the violence that gave rise to its ends." (270) How does this statement by Glenda Gilmore apply to the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898?
22. Why did Tim Tyson leave home?
  - "Like many people in the mid-1970s, my young friends and I were trying to escape from history. We loved Dr. King and the black-and-white film footage we'd seen of the movement in the streets of the civil rights-era South. We loved the idealism of the young people who'd gone to Mississippi and died some of them, to change America. But that was not our generation. The dreams of the civil rights movement and the New Left that inspired us, even though we'd been too young to go to Selma or Chicago, had soured into agonies of assassination, defeat, and delusion. Taught to believe in leaders, we came to believe that anybody with a fighting chance to alter the reactionary trajectory of American political history ended up assassinated. Trained to revere democracy, we saw the American presidency disintegrate on television in an electronic haze of lie." (279)
23. Tyson refers to a loss of "a kind of faith that I wondered if I would ever find again." Interpret what he means.
  - "My own scrawled indictment against the world had begun, though it did not end, with the words 'Daddy and Roger and 'em shot 'em a *nigger*.' Some people's worlds are organized around a wartime trauma, a lucky break, a crucial mentor, or a lost love affair. As the years pass, they come to see the whole world through that particular lens of loss or luck. In my case, what was lost was a kind of faith that I wondered if I would ever find again." (286)

## **Chapter 12 - Go Back to the Last Place Where You Knew Who You Were**

*Pages 288-310*

1. "If, in moving through your life, you find yourself lost." Said Bernice Johnson Reagon, the guiding spirit of the SNCC Freedom Singers and now Sweet Honey in the Rock, "go back to the last place where you knew who you were, and what you were doing, and start from there." (288) In what way does Tyson take this advice?
2. Why was Tyson anxious regarding visiting Robert Teel? Describe their meeting.
3. How did Teel characterize the killing of Henry Marrow?
  - "The killing of Henry Marrow, it became clear, was the crucial point at which his life had fallen apart, and Teel saw himself as the principal victim in the matter." (290)

- “Teel issued what he considered the summary assessment of what had happened back on May 11, 1970: ‘That nigger committed suicide, wanting to come in my store and four-letter-word my daughter-in-law.’ That was the moment I became a historian.” (293)
- 4. Why is it ironic that Teel commented “how much easier life would be if he had been a black man?” (291)
- 5. Why did Teel finally agree to tell Tyson what happened on May 11, 1970?
- 6. What does Tyson find when he goes to the Oxford library and *Ledger* office for back issues of the *Oxford Public Ledger*? Similarly, what does he find when going to the courthouse to review the records of the arrests and trial? Why do you think the information was missing? How might this same scenario have applied to other historical happenings, and how does such affect our understanding of history?
  - “It baffles me that people think that obliterating the past will save them from its consequences, as if throwing away the empty cake plate would help you lost weight.” (295-296)
  - “For a white boy, it seemed, it was easier to cross the color line than to penetrate the white veil of silence.” (296)
- 7. Why does Tyson guess that Billy Watkins’s supporters may have something to do with the disappearances of the *Oxford Public Ledgers*? (296)
- 8. Characterize Watkins’ views on race.
  - “It wasn’t as bad as I probably thought it was, he told me. Black people and white people had always gotten along in Granville County. ‘A black man was my hunting partner,’ he said. ‘He kept the dogs and fed them, and I bought the feed. Relations were always good here. A black man keeps my horses now I’ve got horses, and was raised on a farm, and we had some blacks out there who stayed on our farm for fifty years and more.’” (297)
  - “Like many white people, most of what he thought he knew about race he’d learned from African Americans who had worked for his family, and most of it was ludicrous... ‘You know,’ he said as I turned to leave, ‘a black girl worked in my office during that whole trial.’” (297)
- 9. Summarize Tim’s experience at the police station and afterwards. Why do you think the officers are adamant that he not write about the Marrow incident? How might responses such as this affect the history that we are taught?
- 10. Describe what happened in 1992 when Tyson and his friend Herman went to see Percy Sledge perform. Though this experience was painful and embarrassing, why does Tyson feel it should not be forgotten?
  - “The land that had produced Hitler seemed safer for a mixed-race American family than the nation that had lifted up Martin Luther King Jr..” (306)
  - “What occurred to me then and still strikes me now is how much of the painful past we have yet to confront, even when we love one another and think that we know one another. So much of what agonizes and divides us remains unacknowledged. Even more of it simply fades into oblivion. There it should stay, many people seem to think-why dredge this stuff up? Why linger on the past, which we cannot change? We must move toward a brighter future and leave all that horror behind. It’s true that we must make a new world. But we can’t make it out of whole cloth. We have to weave the future from the fabric of the past, from the patterns of aspiration and belonging-and broken dreams and anguished rejections-that have made us. What the advocates of our dangerous and deepening social amnesia don’t understand is how deeply the past holds the future in its grip-even, and perhaps especially, when it remains unacknowledged. We are runaway slaves from our own past, and only by turning to face the hounds can we find our freedom beyond them.” (307)

### Epilogue

Pages 311-322

1. How can you challenge yourselves “to confront the deeper truths of American history?” (312)
2. Describe what occurred when Tyson and his students visited Destrehan in Louisiana. Why were Tyson and the students frustrated? How does Destrehan compare to other Southern tourist spots?
3. Tyson describes his book by saying it “...is really a story of the blues and a story of the gospel. Both the blues and the gospel started as Southern things but speak to the whole human dilemma. The blues are about looking a painful history straight in the eye; the gospel is about coming together as a community of

faith in order to rise beyond that anguish.” (316) How do you recommend communities go about “looking a painful history straight in the eye”? In your opinion, what will it take for us to “come together” and “rise beyond”?

4. According to Tyson, what does it take for unjust social orders to fall?
  - “Unjust social orders do not fall merely by appeals to the consciences of the oppressor, though such appeals may be an important element; history teaches us that they fall because a large enough number of people organize a movement powerful enough to push them down. Rarely do such revolutions emerge in a neat and morally pristine process.” (317)
  - “More often, what grabbed white America’s attention was the chaos in those streets and the threat of race war.” (318)
5. What does Tyson describe as the most popular memory of Dr. King and the civil rights movement? In what way is the memory flawed?
  - “The problem is why we cherish that kind of story: because we want to transcend our history without actually confronting it. We cannot address the place we find ourselves because we will not acknowledge the road that brought us here. Our failure to confront the historical truth about how African Americans finally won their freedom presents a major obstacle to genuine racial reconciliation.” (318)
6. Tyson notes that our future depends upon “an honest confrontation with our own history.” (319) In your opinion, what does this entail? How do we confront our history, black and white, honestly? How do we bridge the “enduring chasm of race?”
  - “That history reveals that the blood that has signed every one of our names. The sacrifice has already been made, in the bottoms of slave ships, in the portals of Ellis Island, in the tobacco fields of North Carolina and the sweatshops of New York City. The question remains whether or not we can transfigure our broken pasts into a future filled with common possibility.” (319-320)
  - “That history is not distant. Many of those who marched with Dr. King in Alabama and started the movement in Oxford were the grandchildren of slaves. The boy who told me “Daddy and Roger and ‘em shot ‘em a nigger: is barely middle-aged. And the enduring chasm of race is still with us, in some ways wider than ever.” (320)
7. What evidence does Tyson note that “white supremacy remains lethal?” (321)
8. Why do you think that it “remains easier for our leaders to apologize for the past than to address its lingering impact in our society?” In what way can we encourage our leaders to change these ineffective habits?

***Author’s Note***  
***Pages 323-325***

1. Tyson left a copy of his master’s thesis in the Oxford library, and explains that someone has since torn out the pages that describe the killing of Henry Marrow. Why did he not replace the pages?
  - “Those missing pages make my central point more clearly, in some respects, than their contents ever could have. Our hidden history of race has yet to be fully told, and we persist in hiding from much of what we know.” (324)
2. “Love and work have taught me that Eudora Welty was right that people are mostly layers of violence and tenderness wrapped like bulbs, and it is difficult to say what makes them onions or hyacinths.” (325) What message is the author trying to convey?
3. How do the last words of the Author’s Note, “There’s time enough, but none to spare,” make you feel? What do you think Tyson’s purpose was in ending with these words in particular?
4. After completing this book:
  - If you were able to speak to Tim Tyson, the author, what questions would you ask him and why?
  - If you could speak to any one character in the book, who would you want to talk to and why? What would you want to say to them, or ask?
  - What is your favorite quote and why?

- “In our family at least, if you didn’t take a stand at all, you weren’t much of a man or much of a preacher; the ‘race question’ was the acid test of integrity. (64) Throughout the book, in what ways did the Tyson’s “take a stand?”
- Tyson refers to a loss of “a kind of faith that I wondered if I would ever find again.” Upon completing the book, reconsider this statement. Do you think Tyson found that faith once more? Why or why not?

## Historical Connections for Further Exploration

### Chapter 1

- Use of “N” word
- The murder of Emmet Teel
- *Brown v. BOE*

### Chapter 2

- Controversy over Confederate monuments, the Confederate flag; buildings, roads, etc. being named after people connected with white supremacy
- MLK’s concept of “thingification”
- WEB DuBois
- Current school segregation

### Chapter 3

- KKK (history of)
- Simeon Oxendine
- Medgar Evers
- Daisy Bates
- Thurgood Marshal
- Reverend Glen Smiley, Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond
- Civil Rights Act
- Voting Rights Act

### Chapter 4

- Quaker views on slavery and race
- NAACP
- Charlotte Hawkins Brown
- Marian Anderson
- MLK’s views on war and Vietnam
- The Greensboro Sit-ins-February 1, 1960
- The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)
- Sit-ins and boycotts
- King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
- Eugene “Bull” Connor
- Colonel “Stone” Johnson and the Civil Rights Guards
- President John Kennedy’s responses to civil rights
- Assassination of Medgar Evers
- Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech
- Bombing of Birmingham’s Sixteenth Street Baptist Church
- Assassination of President Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Dr. Samuel Proctor and the NC Agricultural and Technical College

### Chapter 5

- Freedom Summer, 1964
- Philip Randolph
- African American contributions to WWII and Vietnam
- Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
- Golden Frinks, SCLC
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
- Governor Terry Sanford

### Chapter 6

- John Hope Franklin
- Nat Turners Rebellion

- Emmett Till
- Stokely Carmichael
- Robert F. Kennedy
- Eugene McCarthy
- Black Cultural Association
- Black Panther Party and the “Ten Point Program”

#### Chapter 7

- “Black Power” movement
- The FBI’s COINTELPRO program
- Floyd McKissick (CORE)
- Sharecropping

#### Chapter 8

- Frederick Douglas
- Myles Horton
- Anne and Carl Braden
- Virginia Durr
- Lillian Smith
- House Un-American Activities
- The “Red-Strings”
- The Little Rock 9

#### Chapter 9

- Kent State, May 4
- Augusta, Georgia, May 12
- Jackson State, May 16

#### Chapter 11

- United Church of Christ’s Commission for Racial Justice
- Rights of White People (ROWP)
- Wilmington Ten
- Scottsboro trials of the 1930s
- Ben Chavis, NAACP
- Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan, Million Man March
- Malxolm X
- The Greensboro Massacre, 1979 (Communist Workers Party and KKK)
- The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898
- Fusion movement