



VOICES OF VIRGINIA

Voices of Virginia pulls together oral histories from across decades and archives in an all-audio source companion for Virginia's high school and college students. The complete "album" contains dozens of short oral histories from eyewitnesses to key moments in American history from the Civil War to the present. Excerpts are downloadable, accessible by smartphone, and accompanied by a transcript. You'll also find brief historical context adapted from experts at *Encyclopedia Virginia* and *American Yawp*, and classroom tools like discussion questions, activities, and lesson plans that fit Virginia high school standards. By telling the larger national story with narratives from across the Commonwealth, *Voices of Virginia* grounds students in how history guides and is guided by everyday people.

Jessica Taylor, editor
with Emily Stewart

Department of History, with the University Libraries
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University

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Voices of Virginia:

An Auditory Primary Source Reader

Jessica Taylor, editor

with Emily Stewart

Freely available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/96912>

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

This compilation is aligned and organized according to the History and Social Science Standards for Virginia Public Schools (March 2015). Retrieved January 2020 from:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/history_socialscience/index.shtml

Section I: Transcripts, context, and discussion questions

Expansion (VUS.6)

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1880-1920	Collecting People	Chief Anne Richardson discusses how and why the Rappahannock tribe has moved across Virginia and around the country, and how they maintained community ties across distance.	Richardson_A_VUS6.mp3 Download Listen	2
1920	My Mommy Voted	Gladys Carter remembers how her mother voted for Democrat James Cox in the 1920 election, the first presidential election after the passage of the nineteenth amendment guaranteeing all citizens the franchise regardless of gender.	Carter_G_VUS6.mp3 Download Listen	4

Civil War and Reconstruction (VUS.7)

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1850s-1860s	No Henry	William West tells the story of how his uncle escaped slavery and found his family after the war.	West_W_VUS7.mp3 Download Listen	6
1860s	Go Up in There and Hide	Using her grandfather's ghost stories, an unidentified woman discusses the cave system in Franklin County, where during the Civil War deserters supposedly took shelter.	Unidentified_VUS7.mp3 Download Listen	8
1860s	You Better Say It Right Now	Haywood Blevins performs a happy tune on the piano and explains that it played while deserters were executed.	Blevins_H_VUS7.mp3 Download Listen	10

Industrialization and Jim Crow (VUS.8)

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1910s	Get Your Dog On	Railroad worker E.E. Johnson sings a song that helped him and other coordinate the hard work of laying down railroad tracks through the mountains of western Virginia.	Johnson_E1_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	12
1910s	You Got a Red Light	Railroad worker E.E. Johnson explains the ins and outs of bosses and doing the job right while laying railroad track.	Johnson_E2_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	14
1900s	The Hammer that Killed John Henry	Mrs. Martin remembers how the ballad of John Henry stretched from a railroad song to influence popular music across racial lines.	Martin_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	16
1910s	You Want a Job?	Journalist William Walker remembers how young black men were recruited to work in Northern cities by large corporations.	Walker_W2_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	18
1910s	Father Renamed Him	Nat Terry recalls how immigrant laborers broke a strike in the seafood industry on the Eastern Shore.	Terry_N_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	20
1920s	They Would Buy Them Chickens	Clarence Phillips remembers how Hungarian and Polish immigrants contributed to their mining community, trading with native-born residents and baking bread that Phillips grew to love.	Phillips_C1_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	21
1920s	Right in Front of the Courthouse	Homer Philpott describes his travels over county and state lines as a bootlegger during Prohibition.	Philpott_H_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	24

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1920s-1970s	Picked Up That Life Again	Archaeologist and Pamunkey Indian Dr. Ashley Spivey explains how Pamunkey culture changed and stayed the same over the course of the twentieth century.	Spivey_A_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	26
1930s	String the Height of My Mother	Jenny Wong recounts her family's many voyages between Virginia and Canton, China, and their pursuit of business success and education in the United States.	Wong_J_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	29
1920	Eagerly Sought After	Journalist and newspaper owner William Walker recounts how coverage of African-Americans in the news changed as lynchings continued across the South and the Great Migration to the North began.	Walker__W1_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	31
1930s	Can You Learn My Name	Olivia James Cherry discusses growing up in a black resettlement community during the Great Depression, and disrespect she encountered from white employers in the Hampton area.	Cherry_O_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	33
1930s	The Way We Were Supposed to Live	Alma Boone Mitchell remembers learning the rules of segregation as a black child playing, and young woman working, in Norfolk.	Mitchell_A_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	36
1930s	The Other Side of Town	Social studies teacher Celestine Diggs Porter describes how Norfolk's black communities created separate leisure activities and social networks, all without crossing into the white section of town.	Porter_C_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	39
1940s	I Got My Candy Apples	Pauline Foreman remembers skirting residential segregation on her mission to get candy apples on Halloween.	Foreman_P_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	41

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1940s-1950s	Interested in Reading	George Colden describes the long struggle to build a black library in Portsmouth, and how the library's collections changed his life.	Colden_G_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	43
1950s	Things That You Accepted	Audrey Morris describes her childhood memories of her family's relationship with black farm workers.	Morris_A_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	45
1930s	Don't be A-Hollering	Lucille Whitaker discusses how, even though life in a coal mining town was difficult, she and her friends used the company store to create social networks and have fun.	Whitaker_L1_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	47
1930s	They Would Kill One Another	Lucille Whitaker talks about the danger facing men who took sides during the struggle to unionize in Dante, Virginia-- including her father and her new husband, who sat on opposing sides of the conflict.	Whitaker_L2_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	49
1940s	Go Back to Work	Clarence Phillips recalls how unionization changed the quality of life in the coal mining community of Dante.	Phillips_C2_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	53
1940s	Call Me Brother	Lucille Whitaker describes how unionization made residents reconsider black-white relationships in her coal mining community.	Whitaker_L3_VUS8.mp3 Download Listen	56

World War I (VUS.9)

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Pagee
1917	VMI Will Be Heard From Today	General Shepherd recounts how he transitioned from a student at VMI to a seasoned Second Lieutenant in the Marines. While fighting in France and Germany, he learned to live with residents affected by World War I.	Shepherd_L_VUS9.mp3 Download Listen	57
1918	How to Cook Turnips	Dr. Dorothy Evans Stanley recalls the political and economic upheaval in Germany after World War I that altered her childhood.	Stanley_D_VUS9.mp3 Download Listen	59

The Great Depression (VUS.10)

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1930	Get Out There and Get It	EC Ball remembers working alongside his father during the Great Depression—for under a dollar a day between them.	Ball_E_VUS10.mp3 Download Listen	62
1930	Hot Rolls and Steak	Marian Miller Edmonds describes how her grandmother cooked food for her family, for struggling neighbors, and for profit during the Great Depression.	Edmonds_M_VUS10.mp3 Download Listen	64
1930s	I Did Everything	Alma Boone Mitchell reveals how government assistance and economic change shaped her childhood during the Great Depression.	Mitchell_A_VUS10.mp3 Download Listen	66
1930s	The Only President I've Ever Seen	Dookie Dean remembers the president's visit to the Shenandoah Valley and Flanders, the first car in town.	Dean_D_VUS10.mp3 Download Listen	68

World War II (VUS.11)

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1933	He'll Be Such a Flop	Dr. Dorothy Evelyn Stanley connects the growing anti-Semitism in Germany with Hitler's rise to power. While not initially targeted, Dr. Stanley was forced to leave school and eventually Germany, immigrating to America in 1937.	Stanley_D_VUS11.mp3 Download Listen	70
1941	Quite a Day	Colonel William D. Bassett, Jr. recalls watching the air battle over Pearl Harbor.	Bassett_W_VUS11.mp3 Download Listen	73
1940s	Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose	Betty Day recounts her wartime efforts as a young girl writing letters to the families of American soldiers captured by Japanese and German forces.	Day_B_VUS11.mp3 Download Listen	75
1940s	The Poor Operator	Page Henley remembers his grandmother's volunteer work with coastal defense efforts on the home front during World War II.	Henley_P_VUS11.mp3 Download Listen	77
1943	Sinking Ships	Governor Colgate Darden remembers the real threat that cutting-edge German military technology posed to the Virginia coastline at the height of the war—and how Tidewater residents reacted.	Darden_C_VUS11.mp3 Download Listen	78
1944	I Need Y'All	Thomas Mangrum of the majority-black 761st Tank Battalion recalls Patton, the Battle of the Bulge, and his mixed feelings upon returning to Virginia.	Mangrum_T_VUS11.mp3 Download Listen	80
1945	Do You Speak French?	James recalls his brother Hutch Harnsberger's experience taking Japanese classes, landing at Iwo Jima, and capturing a Japanese prisoner of war.	Harnsberger_J_VUS11.mp3 Download Listen	82

The United States since World War II (VUS.12)

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1940s	Back on Their Feet	A Mathews County Merchant Marine named Brother Hodges discusses how his crew provided aid through the Marshall Plan and made friends with locals in Eastern Europe at the end of World War II.	Hodges_B_VUS12.mp3 Download Listen	84
1950	The U.S. Populace was Behind Us	Colonel William D. Bassett describes his first military engagement as a young man sent into the Korean War. He describes how the United States sought to contain communism and emphasizes the importance of the 38th Parallel in halting Russian influence in Asia.	Bassett_W_VUS12.mp3 Download Listen	86
1960s-1990s	A Very Controversial Rifle	Colonel Henry Shelton recounts his long career in Cold War weapons development, discussing his partnerships with inventors, business leaders, think tanks, and government research institutes.	Shelton_H_VUS12.mp3 Download Listen	88
1960s-1990s	Vague and Uncertain and Unpromising	Mental health professional Walter Herman Bell shares how students at Old Dominion University dealt with the Vietnam War and social upheaval of the decade.	Bell_H_VUS12.mp3 Download Listen	90
1970s	It Hurts to Laugh Like That	Leo from Suffolk describes the day he was injured on his second tour in Vietnam.	Leo1_VUS12.mp3 Download Listen	92
1970s	Nobody There to Say Hello	Leo remembers his anticipation and then disappointment upon returning to the United States from Vietnam.	Leo2_VUS12.mp3 Download Listen	94

Social Change in the United States (VUS.13)

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1950s	Everything in Place	Nancy Morris recalls how her battle with polio led to battles with other students in her boarding school dorm.	Morris_N_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	95
1954	I Thought It Would Happen	Attorney and civil rights activist Clarence Dunnville recounts his experience as a law student watching the <i>Brown v. Board</i> arguments at the US Supreme Court.	Dunnville_C_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	97
1958	A Normal High School Situation	Dr. T. Ross Fink discusses how he served as principal of a makeshift high school during the six months without school during Massive Resistance.	Fink_T_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	99
1958	Alone as Usual	Dr. A. Rufus Tonelson describes his campaign to change people's minds about Massive Resistance and recounts the backlash against his efforts.	Tonelson_R_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	101
1960s	Just New Kids	Monacan Chief Kenneth Branham talks about his experiences making friends during the integration.	Branham_K_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	105
1960s	The Taxi Driver	Herbert Hicks recalls that upon integration, Indian children were not allowed to ride the bus, pushing parents to consider unorthodox options to get their children to school.	Hicks_H_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	107
1960s	Don't be Ashamed	Reverend Phyllis Hicks remembers how her mother helped her through the high school experience as a Monacan Indian during school desegregation.	Hicks_P_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	109

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1960s	We Wore Winter Clothes in Cape Charles	Alice B. Brown describes noticing differences between white and black students during the initial years of integration.	Brown_A_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	111
1960s	Do All the Children Bring Ice Picks to School?	Teacher Celestine Diggs Porter talks about disagreements concerning integration that arose between black and white staff members as well as between students.	Porter_C_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	113
1965	Someone Whom Had Come from Outer Space	Brenda Andrews, one of the first students to integrate Lynchburg's all-white high school, discusses her interactions with the court system, fellow black students, and the white students she met at school.	Andrews_B_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	115
1970s	The Woods Go Real Quick	Environmental activist Hal Wiggins talks about the rise of Virginia's environmental groups as a response to rapid suburbanization. He also discusses how activists like himself can influence government policy.	Wiggins_H_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	122
1963	What's for Dinner?	Women's rights activist Zelda Nordlinger remembers the exact moment when Betty Friedan's <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> changed her life.	Nordlinger_Z_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	120
1960s	Laziest Youngins	Rochellia describes the moment she decided that she would never farm like her grandparents, and why she chose to move away from Eastern Virginia.	Kindred_R_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	124
1972	Beautiful Friends	Carolyn Wilson discusses growing up in West Virginia during integration as a black and non-binary person, and moving to Roanoke for a better life.	Wilson_C_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	126
1960s	A Secret Society	Daniel Jones talks about building a community of LGBTQ residents in Roanoke.	Jones_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	128

Years	Title	Description	Audio	Page
1980s	What About You?	Mayor Linda Johnson describes her career trajectory, from attending college to ultimately serving as Suffolk's first female mayor.	Johnson_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	130
1980	Just Like Home	Chef Ida Mamasu retells her native Liberia's historic ties to the state of Virginia, and how she saved her family members from her home country's long civil war.	MaMusu_I_VUS13.mp3 Download Listen	132

Section II: Lesson Plans

#	Virginia Standards	Topic	Relevant audio files	Page
1	VUS 8	Prohibition	Right in Front of the Courthouse	135
2	VUS 13	Massive Resistance	A Normal High School Situation	137
3	VUS 8	Working on the Railroad	The Hammer that Killed John Henry Get Your Dog On You Got a Red Light	147
4	VUS 13	Integration	We Wore Winter Clothes / Do All the Children Bring Ice Picks to School?	148
5	VUS 8	Segregation	The Things You Accepted	150
6	VUS 8	The Great Migration in Virginia	You Want A Job? / Eagerly Sought After	154

Editor Biographies

Emily Stewart is a student in Virginia Tech's History MA program. She will earn her Master's degree in May, 2020. Emily completed her undergraduate studies at Virginia Tech where she majored in History. Her current research focuses on Virginia educational history in the twentieth century. Her master's thesis focuses on the relationship between standardization and segregation of Virginia public education in the early twentieth century. Throughout her studies at Virginia Tech, Emily has always been interested in oral histories. The *Voices of Virginia* project presented her with an ideal opportunity to further cultivate her interest in the field of oral and public history.

Jessica Taylor is Assistant Professor of Early American and Oral History in the History Department at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University (Virginia Tech) where she has been a faculty member since 2018. She is the Director of Public History. Jessica completed her Ph.D. in History at the University of Florida and her undergraduate and master's studies at the College of William and Mary. Her research and work focuses on the history of social change in Virginia and the American South, from the colonial period to the present day. She collaborates with preservation and historical groups across the South to collect and share oral histories. She teaches Public History and Native History classes. Dr. Taylor is the author of journal articles about historical memory in the South and her manuscript, *Certain Boundaries: Borders and Movement in the Native Chesapeake*, explores the lives of Indians and non-elites in seventeenth-century Virginia. Beyond writing, she works to provide opportunities for and be a better teacher to every kind of student. She is always looking for hands-on experiences and conversations about activism, history, archaeology, preservation, museums, and liberal arts education.

Section 1: Transcripts, context, and discussion questions



"Collecting People" in King and Queen County, 1880-1920

Standard: VUS.6

Audio: Richardson_A_VUS6.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Chief Anne Richardson discusses how and why the Rappahannock tribe has moved across Virginia and around the country, and how Native people maintained community ties across distance.

Repository: Friends of the Rappahannock

Transcript: I was born in Indian Neck in King and Queen County to Chief Captain and Gladys Nelson and I'm a fourth generation Chief in my family. And I have remained in that location my entire life. As a matrilineal tribe, we've had native women leaders for as long as we've been around and they have been revered and celebrated as leaders. Well, historically it was hereditary ascension, which would have come through the line of the woman. Right now, currently, I am the Chief, a female, and I have a male assistant Chief, which balances out the authority levels for both sexes in the community and really seems to work real well. The word Rappahannock means the people who live where the water rises and falls. From my perspective, it's really indicative of the historical continuity of the tribe. There are times that we rose into power for purposes of war or purposes of survival or for the purposes of fighting for our rights. And other times we flowed and ebbed, so to speak, as a community and just peacefully lived among ourselves. After we were removed off the river, we were escorted into New Kent County at the time, because King and Queen didn't become a county until 1691, but after that then King and Queen became a county and Indian Neck, in that general area in King and Queen, Caroline, and Essex is where our people settled and I suspect that from the village up in this area, people went in from Portobago, they went west over to Central Point in Caroline County and then Champlain in Essex County and then over to Indian Neck in King and Queen. Then people scattered north, during the Civil War, then people scattered north in the early [19]20s to get away from all the racial prejudice that was here. And so, I just feel like over time we have risen and fallen as a tribal... a group of community people. And I think it's really interesting now that, you know, in George's time he was collecting people and trying to get people back that had been scattered from the Civil War. And then during the [19]20s, we were getting people back that were migrating out in the late 1800s in the early [19]20s and tribal people migrated to certain places in cities, certain communities in cities where they lived together communally, almost like they did here. It was really interesting to see how the migration patterns have been. And then they would work and send money back to Indian Neck to pay for lobbyists and lawyers and people that were fighting for our rights as Native people here. And so, it would have been something that probably historically would have been done. They would divide up and pool their resources to fight for everybody.

Context:

The Rappahannock tribe is a state- and federally recognized Indian tribe whose tribal area is located in Indian Neck in King and Queen County. In the late twentieth century, the tribe owned 140.5 acres of land and the Rappahannock Cultural Center and had about 500 members on its tribal roll. English settlements began to expand into the Rappahannock River Valley in the 1640s. After being attacked by settlers and other hostile tribes, the Rappahannock consolidated into one fortified village in 1676. In November 1682 an order of the governor's Council laid out 3,474 acres for the Rappahannock tribe in Indian Neck, "about the town where they dwelt," but the General Assembly forced the tribal members from their homes one year later in response to increasing attacks by the Iroquois of New York.

Faced with the choice of merging with the nearby Nanzatico tribe or relocating altogether, the Rappahannock chose to move about thirty-five miles upriver, at Portobago Indian Town in present-day

Essex County. The tribe remained there until 1706, when, by order of Essex County, they were forced to leave Portobago. The Rappahannock Indians then returned to their ancestral lands, located in King and Queen County, where their descendants live today. In an effort to solidify its tribal government and fight for state recognition, the Rappahannock tribe incorporated in 1921. But, like other Virginia Indian groups, the tribe struggled to preserve its identity and culture early in the twentieth century.

In 1998 the Rappahannock tribe elected as its chief G. Anne Richardson, the first woman Chief to lead a tribe in Virginia since the 1700s. That same year, the tribe purchased 119.5 acres and established a land trust on which to build a housing development. The development's first home was built and sold in 2001. The tribe was federally recognized on January 29, 2018.

Bio: Chief Anne Richardson (1956 - Present) was born in Indian Neck in King and Queen County. She is a fourth-generation Chief of the Rappahannock Tribe.

Discussion questions:

1. Describe the role of women leaders in the Rappahannock tribe.
2. What does the word Rappahannock mean?
3. Chief Anne Richardson talks about how the meaning of Rappahannock is indicative of their historical continuity. What does she mean?
4. Why did the Rappahannock scatter north during the 1920s?
5. Compare the movement of Rappahannock families during the twentieth century with the Great Migration of African-Americans.

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Rappahannock_Tribe (CC BY NC SA)



"My Mommy Voted" in Russell County, 1920

Standard: VUS.6

Audio: Carter_G_VUS6.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Gladys Carter remembers how her mother voted for Democrat James Cox in the 1920 election, the first presidential election after the passage of the nineteenth amendment guaranteeing all citizens the franchise regardless of gender.

Repository: East Tennessee State University Archives of Appalachia

Transcript:

KS: He was a favorite of yours?

GC: Well, he was a Democrat! [Laughter] My daddy was a big Democrat.

KS: Now when you say "big Democrat" like did he go out and work for candidates?

GC: No, I mean he was strong in his beliefs. But now that ain't what made me a Democrat.

KS: Oh, what made you a Democrat?

GC: Well, because they're for the poor class of people, that's the reason I'm a Democrat! They believe in helping the poor man and the others is big fat cats. They just for the big business man. I always thought! I don't know, you might be a Republican. [Laughter]

KS: Well, of course your daddy probably thought the same way. You reckon?

GC: Well, I guess so. I know when Cox was running on the Democrat ticket. I forget who was running on the Republican ticket and I'd fight over it, I'd fight over stuff like that in a minute back when I was a child, but I know better now. And I know I said, "Hurrah for Cox. He's a fine man. I can't vote but my Mammy can!" [Laughter] But he got defeated.

KS: Did your mother vote?

GC: Yeah, my mommy voted.

KS: And where did she go to vote?

GC: Lord, I don't remember, but I guess she went to the courthouse in Lebanon.

KS: So, it would be a long trip.

GC: Yeah, it was a long ways. And they had carnivals at Cleveland and my daddy, they'd walk and go to Cleveland. And it was a long ways, too.

Context:

The suffrage movement, which sought voting rights for women, began in Virginia as early as 1870. Virginia's suffragists argued that women were intelligent, sensible, tax-paying citizens, and therefore deserved to cast ballots. The home and the world in the early years of the twentieth century were overlapping, not separate, spheres, and women had special concerns and interests that were being poorly addressed by male legislators. Virginia suffragists staunchly maintained that women, in order to be good mothers, needed to be good citizens. "Home is not contained within the four walls of an individual home," suffragists argued; instead, "home is the community."

Virginia women at last won the right to vote in August 1920, when the Nineteenth Amendment became law, and exercised that right soon after in the November elections. By early in October 1920, more than

13,000 Richmond women had registered to vote in the November presidential election—10,645 white women and 2,410 black women. Woman suffrage immediately made electoral politics more inclusive.

Bio: Gladys Carter (1906-2010) grew up in Russell County, Virginia. Her father was a logger and farmer. She married a miner in 1925 and kept up with the union politics of the United Mine Workers Association during her adulthood.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Ms. Carter's mother exercise her right to vote?
2. What political party does Ms. Carter talk about in this clip?
3. Why is Ms. Carter a Democrat?

References:

“Context” adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Woman Suffrage in Virginia](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Woman_Suffrage_in_Virginia) (CC BY NC SA)



“No Henry” in Fairfax County, 1850s-1860s

Standard: VUS.7

Audio: West_W_VUS7.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: William West tells the story of how his uncle escaped slavery after learning of an impending slave sale, and then found his family after the war.

Repository: George Mason University Special Collections

Transcript:

WW: My father learned that Major Chicheley was going to send some of them to Mississippi. So, one day he washed a grass seed sack and put it out on the grass to dry and that evening after it was dry, he went in the house and he put some clothing in it [unclear]. He put some clothing in it. And Uncle Henry had small feet and Major Chicheley would have boots made for himself. He'd have him to wear them a little to break them. He was wearing, then breaking two pair of boots for the Major. So, he'd put the boots in the sack and those clothing and then saddle the horse that night and rode away. The next day, the horse came back, but no Henry. And they never did find... he never did come back. It was supposed that he got on the Underground Railroad and made a safe getaway. Well, Uncle Henry, that didn't deter Major Chicheley in sending the other two to Mississippi. The two men and the woman to Mississippi. So anyhow, after the war was over my father knew nothing about his brothers or sister at all. So one day, a man came up here and the government had established an agricultural department, you know, hire. And they decided to... they sent a man from down near Forrest, put a man near Forrest Church in charge of it. So, he got ready to go on this new job and his wife found that he'd have to go to Connecticut to [unclear]. So, she wanted to get a girl to go with him. There was a colored family living down near Dunn Loring and they had two or three children. So they went down to contact them, see if she could get one of those girls. And got that, they were nice-looking girls and well taken care of and so forth. So she hired one of them, Cora. So they went on to Bridgeport, Connecticut. And after they'd been there for a while, Cora kind of got a little homesick. So she said to the lady that was there, "There don't seem to be any colored people around here." She knew from that, that Cora was getting a little homesick, you know. So that evening she called her pastor and she told him that she had this colored girl from Virginia working for her. She was a nice girl and she would like to keep her, but she thought she was getting homesick. The pastor said, "You bring her to church with you next Sunday." So anyhow, on the next Sunday why she carried Cora to church. After the pastor finished his sermon, he told his congregation, he said, "Now, Mrs. Mulligan has a young colored woman from Virginia working for her. She's a nice girl and she'd like to keep her, but she thinks she's getting a little homesick. I think it could be nice if some of my colored people, colored members would contact this girl and make her feel at home." So, after he said that why one colored woman came to the girl and introduced herself and Mrs. Smith, I think and invited her to come and spend an evening with her. So when Mrs. Mullin heard her invite her to come she went to her and she said, "Now, can I come too? This girl is a stranger and she doesn't know anything about the town. Can I come with her?" She said, "I'd be delighted to have you come." So anyhow, the next Thursday evening, Mrs. Mulligan and this girl went to call on this Mrs. Johnson. So after they'd been there a short while, Mrs. Mulligan told them that she would like for them to meet her neighbors in the next apartment. She called them and when they came in, they were introduced as Mr. and Mrs. West. Cora said when they introduced Mr. West she looked at him and he looked exactly like my father. And they said he talked like my father. And she became quite excited. So it was after a short while, he said to her, he said, "Mrs. Hudson," he said, "You became excited when Mrs. Johnson introduced me as West." He said, "What made you?" She said, "Because you look so much like my cousin Dan West." He said, "Your cousin Dan West?" She said, "Yes, I have a cousin Dan West in Virginia and you look exactly like him." She said, "He's not really my cousin. He married one of my cousins and we all call him Cousin Dan. But he certainly must be kin to you because he looks like you." And so then after a while, Mrs. Mulligan came and she got in the conversation. Cora continued, "This man must certainly be kin to cousin Dan West in Virginia." So then, this lady decided that she was going to write to Vienna and find out if this Dan West was any relation to this man, Henry West. So when she wrote, why, that was my father's brother, don't you see?

X: And that's how they first knew whatever happened to him?

WW: That's how they knew what happened. Yes, well...

X: Isn't that amazing.

Z: Why didn't Henry disclose himself?

WW: I don't know. You see, he ran away.

Z: So he was a little apprehensive.

WW: Yes, he never let anybody know anything about his visit.

Context:

As the North gradually abolished human bondage, enslaved men and women headed north on an underground railroad of hideaways and safe houses. Northerners and Southerners came to disagree sharply on the role of the federal government in capturing and returning these freedom seekers. While northerners appealed to their states' rights to refuse capturing runaway slaves, white southerners demanded a national commitment to slavery. Enslaved laborers meanwhile remained vitally important to the nation's economy, fueling not only the southern plantation economy but also providing raw materials for the industrial North. Differences over the fate of slavery remained at the heart of American politics, especially as the United States expanded.

Virginian planters and traders in particular made money from selling enslaved people to planters in the Deep South's relatively new states, like Mississippi and Louisiana. Historians call this "the internal slave trade."

Bio:

William Alexander West (1874-1978) attended Howard University and became a barber and elementary school teacher. He also worked for the Army War College and the Government Printing Office. In the 1940s, he helped start the Fairfax County chapter of the NAACP. According to neighbors, West's grandfather was the first black landowner in Vienna and the land remained in family hands after West's death.

Discussion questions:

1. Why might it be difficult for freed people to find their family and friends after the war?
2. What kinds of economic opportunities were available to black women like Cora after the Civil War?
3. How did formerly enslaved people make new friends in the North?
4. Why do you think that Henry West didn't reveal himself to be kin to Cora?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/13-the-sectional-crisis> (CC BY SA 4.0)



“Go Up in There and Hide” in Franklin County, 1860s

Standard: VUS.7

Audio: Unidentified_VUS.7.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Using her grandfather’s ghost stories, an unidentified woman discusses the cave system in Franklin County, where during the Civil War deserters supposedly took shelter.

Repository: Ferrum College, Digital Library of Appalachia

Transcript:

WB: Did you ever hear any ghost stories or anything like that? My grandmother used to scare me to death with them.

Interviewee: Yeah and I used to get so afraid I couldn't go to sleep.

WB: [Laughter]

Interviewee: And I was afraid. I was always afraid. But you didn't tell them that. And I guess a whole lot of them did see a lot of things too, I imagine.

WB: You remember any of the old ghost stories they used to tell?

Interviewee: Well, I... oh, Grandpa.

Interviewer 2: Yeah, I've been up there before.

Interviewee: I've been up there too. But, it's up in a mountain and on Easter Sunday most all of us young folks would go up there, you know. And my Grandpa said that's where the soldiers... now there's a big house and kitchen in those rocks and people stayed in there and cooked and eat and stayed there during the war. And I've been in two of them.

Interviewer 2: Now that's not far from where [unclear] is building his house, Cedar Mountain.

Interviewee: It's on up, you go up here... Runnet Bag.

Interviewer 2: Well it's near the, right. It's under the mountain on the parkway.

Interviewee: Runnet Bag Creek is what they call it.

WB: Yeah, sure is Runnet Bag.

Interviewee: And you go to your right.

Interviewer 2: There's lots and lots of rocks, just big rocks.

Interviewee: There's rocks. And you can walk up in those things and stand up... there's big rooms in there and people... that's where Grandpa said the soldiers stayed, go up in there and hide.

WB: But, they'd leave their outfits and go up there and hide to keep from having to go back?

Interviewee: Yeah. Up on Cedar Mountain.

Context:

The American Civil War was fought from 1861 until 1865. It began after Virginia and ten other states in the southern United States seceded from the Union following the election of Abraham Lincoln as U.S. president in 1860. Worried that Lincoln would interfere with slavery and citing states' rights as a justification, Southern leaders established the Confederate States of America with Jefferson Davis as its president and Richmond as its capital.

Virginia was a significant battleground for both Union and Confederate forces. It contained the Confederate capital, the capture of which would be an important symbolic victory for Union forces. For Confederates, Virginia was critical to defend because it was home to valuable industry, mining, and food production. At the same time, its geography—mountains in the west, and rivers that flowed west to east—made its defense somewhat easier. Some Virginia families were split between North and South because of the Civil War. Even when families didn't split apart, life at home was difficult. In fact, the distinction between the home front and the front lines was not always clear.

Discussion questions:

1. Why would Civil War soldiers stay in these rocks?
2. How did the geography of Virginia aid the defense efforts of the Confederate soldiers?
3. Why was Virginia a critical state to defend during the Civil War?
4. Why do people tell ghost stories and tall tales about the Civil War?

References:

“Context” adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/american_civil_war_and_virginia_the

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“You Better Say It Right Now” in Grayson County, 1860s

Standard: VUS.7

Audio: Blevins_H_VUS.7.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Haywood Blevins performs a happy tune on the piano, and explains that it was the song played while deserters were executed.

Repository: Ferrum College, Digital Library of Appalachia

Transcript:

HB: The first tune will be General Grant's Grand March.

[piano plays]

HB: There was a deserter. A deserter is a man that quits fighting. He don't wanna fight. He ain't gonna fight. He left the Civil War, you know and come back into the edge of North Carolina. And there was some pieces played on the band there and my grandfather taught me to play them. And they played a slow piece when they got him tied to a post.. they sent the men down here after him and brought him back and when they got him back they got a locust post set and tied him to that post. And they had twelve guns setting in the corner of an old crooked rail fence and the ol' captain ordered twelve men to go in that corner of that fence and get 'em a gun. There were six loaded guns and six empty and they played a piece on the band then and says... the ol' captain says to him... says, "Now, if you got anything to say, you better say it right now while these men play this piece here." And of course, they went to playing it and here's the way that piece went...

[piano plays]

Context:

The American Civil War was fought from 1861 until 1865. It began after Virginia and ten other states in the southern United States seceded from the Union following the election of Abraham Lincoln as U.S. president in 1860. Worried that Lincoln would interfere with slavery and citing states' rights as a justification, Southern leaders established the Confederate States of America with Jefferson Davis as its president and Richmond as its capital.

Virginia was a significant battleground for both Union and Confederate forces. It contained the Confederate capital, the capture of which would be an important symbolic victory for Union forces. For Confederates, Virginia was critical to defend because it was home to valuable industry, mining, and food production. At the same time, its geography—mountains in the west, and rivers that flowed west to east—made its defense somewhat easier. Some Virginia families were split between North and South because of the Civil War. Even when families didn't split apart, life at home was difficult. In fact, the distinction between the home front and the front lines was not always clear.

Bio:

Haywood Blevins (1906-1980) was the son of a banjo player in Galax, Virginia. He worked as a farmer, millworker, and musical instrument repairman and tuner during his lifetime. His earliest memories are of his grandfather, who told him stories of his time in a Union prison camp, and taught him how to play piano tunes he learned during the Civil War.

Discussion questions:

1. Brainstorm personal or ideological reasons that led soldiers to desert the Confederacy during the Civil War.
2. Explore other Civil War songs such as "[Lorena](#)," "[Home Sweet Home](#)," and "[Just Before the Battle, Mother](#)." How do these song lyrics represent the Civil War soldier experience?

References:

“Context” adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/american_civil_war_and_virginia_the (CC BY NC SA)



“Get Your Dog On” in Buckingham County, 1910s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Johnson_E1_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Railroad worker E.E. Johnson sings a song that helped him and other coordinate the hard work of laying down railroad tracks through the mountains of western Virginia.

Repository: Ferrum College, Digital Library of Appalachia

Transcript:

KL: Let me ask you a little bit about the railroads then. How long did you work for the C&O Railroad?

EJ: About 35 years.

KL: What kind of work did you do for them?

EJ: Cook some, cook helper some. Then I worked on the track a lot, pick and shovel.

KL: Yeah, that's what I'm most interested in, is working on the tracks.

EJ: Yeah.

KL: Now, back then, they used to line the tracks by hand, is that right?

EJ: Mm-hm. But, when I got to go out on the track as laborer, not when I first went out, after I right smart experience, the foreman, he'd take... We had twelve men, he'd take six and give me five and I'd go to one end of the section and he'd go to the other because we had nine mile of track.

KL: Now, could you explain to me the process of how they used to line tracks by hand? How did they used to do that?

EJ: [Laughter] They had these here- I know he's seen them, these kickers. Four men could line a lot of track with those kickers, they just pick it up.

KL: And they would have, as I understand it, one man lining out a song to help the men work. Is that right? Did you used to call that lining out a song? Or what did you used to call that? When the work gangs were singing?

EJ: When the work gangs were singing were singing either lining track would have to be lining track or laying rail. But I loved the part of the laying rail because you got the right kind of guy calling, not out to hurt somebody... it was pretty to me.

KL: And that would help the work go faster?

EJ: Uh huh, yes indeed.

KL: What were some of the track laying songs that you used to sing back then?

EJ: Well, when you laying rail now... there's two callers, one on one end, one on the other. And say I was on this end, I'd say, "Get your dog on and." And the guy on the other end, he'd holler, "Got my dog on and raise up, set 'em on ahead. Raise up, set 'em on a ball." And depending on what side you're gonna take it to, set in the first side or the back side, if it's going on the way to the back say, "Raise up and back side and boy, and join back, boy." And other guy on the other end he's all like, "Gotta join me, join me but uh." Just like that and so, that's the way we would do it.

Context:

Two major industries fueled the new western economy: ranching and railroads. Both developed in connection with each other and both shaped the collective American memory of the post–Civil War “Wild West.” No economic enterprise rivaled the railroads in scale, scope, or sheer impact. No other businesses had attracted such enormous sums of capital, and no other ventures ever received such lavish government subsidies (business historian Alfred Chandler called the railroads the “first modern business enterprise”). By “annihilating time and space”—by connecting the vastness of the continent—the railroads transformed the United States and made the American West.

If railroads attracted unparalleled subsidies and investments, they also created enormous labor demands. By 1880, approximately four hundred thousand men—or nearly 2.5 percent of the nation’s entire workforce—labored in the railroad industry. Much of the work was dangerous and low-paying, and companies relied heavily on immigrant labor to build tracks. The railroads boomed. In 1850, there were 9,000 miles of railroads in the United States. In 1900 there were 190,000, including several transcontinental lines.

Bio:

E. E. Johnson was born in 1896 in Buckingham County, Virginia. Like many black men from Central Virginia during the early part of the twentieth century, he found employment beyond his hometown. He worked for the C&O Railroad in Beckley, West Virginia.

Discussion questions:

1. What is E.E. Johnson’s role on the railroad?
2. What purpose did these railroad lining songs serve?
3. As railroads created enormous labor demands, how did individuals like Mr. Johnson contribute to the growth of the railroad industry?

References:

“Context” adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/17-conquering-the-west>

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“You Got a Red Light” in Buckingham County, 1910s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Johnson_E2_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Railroad worker E.E. Johnson explains the ins and outs of getting along with bosses and how to do the job right while laying railroad track.

Repository: Ferrum College, Digital Library of Appalachia

Transcript:

KL: How long, would you work laying track and lining track year round? Or was this seasonal work for you?

EJ: Well no, whenever we puttin' in... Well, you know though when that's coming she's... in the fall every year that had what you call inspection Uncle Henry know all about it. And when it was gonna have a inspection... When the train, inspection train, when over your territory, if you didn't have your joints all fixed up and track well lined up, you'd get a red light.

KL: So, they'd make you go back and do some more work on it.

EJ: Mhmm yeah. Yeah no, see the boss... the boss that had a section... he'd get a ticket and... the last boss I worked for, he'd get a ticket and after taking the ticket, he'd go and buy candy and give all of us candy around. I'd take mine home to the kids, I had two kids. And so, but my boss... it's a funny thing I couldn't figure. Outta all the bosses... none of them could get the ticket. See, when he get that ticket, he'd get the ticket and a twenty-five dollar bonus.

KL: Ah so if you did a good job, that's what you got as a reward.

EJ: Yeah. Yeah and he done it so simple. I found out... he'd tell me, he'd say, "Now, we ain't gonna tamp no ties, just raise up and take your line [unclear] and run a little bit under it and snap her off." Well, then it would ride off level. But you'd take and tamp... make sense, tamp a tie real hard with a picket, both sides... that thing is too high. It don't wanna go no place, it wanna stay there. Cause I'll just tell you the truth, tell you just like the man told me... the boss told me one time, he said, supervisor came down and told him, "You got a red light up there...on one of your... around a joint, insulated joint." And so, he said, "You've got to get it up." So the boss was a little bit peeved, you know, cause he went over it. And so, he said to me, he said... He called me Uncle Elvis, he said, "Uncle Elvis," said, "Go up there and get a tamp and pick and tamp the edge out of it." And he just on and told me. I laid her on. I done what he told me. I tamped on both sides and then lock tamped it inside and he got a red light. Yeah. And so he said, "I know not to tell you to tamp the edge out of it no more." Said, "Cause I know what you're gonna do." Said, "I know you're gonna tamp it to stay." Well, the difference between him and the boss I worked for last, see, he wouldn't let us do that. He just let you run a little rock under there with a line and bar and that's all the work to it. It'll ride off when the train goes over it. But, the man, he'd just got three or four days, a couple of days to have an inspection train, he hurtin' when he tamp the track up like that.

KL: But let me find out from you, how many miles, or what length of track could you line in a day?

EJ: Oh, lord now, we would line, I'd say at least maybe ten or fifteen miles a day.

KL: What about laying track, how much track could you lay in a day?

EJ: Oh, I've known them to lay about from one mile and a half to two mile a day. That about... because you've got so much to do, spikes to pull and then the [unclear] machine take it, you had to pull them with an old claw bar and stuff like that. Then you put all these angle bars, I mean, clamps on to hold the rail to

keep it from sliding, you know, and all that stuff. A lot of work. And you couldn't just say, lay it and spike it up and leave it on until the next day, you had to, you had to do it all.

Context:

Two major industries fueled the new western economy: ranching and railroads. Both developed in connection with each other and both shaped the collective American memory of the post–Civil War “Wild West.” No economic enterprise rivaled the railroads in scale, scope, or sheer impact. No other businesses had attracted such enormous sums of capital, and no other ventures ever received such lavish government subsidies (business historian Alfred Chandler called the railroads the “first modern business enterprise”). By “annihilating time and space”—by connecting the vastness of the continent—the railroads transformed the United States and made the American West.

If railroads attracted unparalleled subsidies and investments, they also created enormous labor demands. By 1880, approximately four hundred thousand men—or nearly 2.5 percent of the nation’s entire workforce—labored in the railroad industry. Much of the work was dangerous and low-paying, and companies relied heavily on immigrant labor to build tracks. The railroads boomed. In 1850, there were 9,000 miles of railroads in the United States. In 1900 there were 190,000, including several transcontinental lines.

Bio:

E. E. Johnson was born in 1896 in Buckingham County, Virginia. Like many black men from Central Virginia during the early part of the twentieth century, he found employment beyond his hometown. He worked for the C&O Railroad in Beckley, West Virginia.

Discussion questions:

1. How does Mr. Johnson describe working on the railroad? Was his work labor intensive?
2. What was Mr. Johnson’s relationship like with his bosses? What were his job expectations, and why?

“Context” adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/17-conquering-the-west> (CC BY SA 4.0.)



“The Hammer that Killed John Henry” in Carroll County, 1900s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Martin_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Mrs. Martin remembers how the ballad of John Henry stretched from a railroad song to influence popular music across racial lines.

Repository: Library of Congress Archive of Folk Culture, Digital Library of Appalachia

Transcript:

HH: Where does that song come from, what kind is the song? Banjo tune or what?

MM: Yes. Yes, it's a real banjo tune.

HH: Is it a work song, too?

MM: Well, it's sang mostly by working-class people, but I don't know if they'd call it a work song.

HH: I mean, a railroad song. Did you ever...

MM: Oh yes, yes, yes. Many times I've passed bunches of men working on the section and hear them singing that. And they'd sing, “Here's the hammer that... this is the hammer that killed John Henry, but it can't kill me.” That's another verse in it.

HH: Is it a Negro song as you know it?

MM: Not anymore that it's a white person song. I've heard it many, if not more white men sing the song than I ever did hear a Negro sing it. John Henry is more like a Negro song.

Context:

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Discussion questions:

1. Mrs. Martin states this song was sung mostly by working-class people. Describe how this song and Mrs. Martin's reflections about the song reflect the labor conditions on the railroad.
2. Why would working-class people sing different music than middle-class or upper-class people?
3. How did Mrs. Martin hear the song? How do you think this song became a “white” song?
4. In American mythology, John Henry is a hero of the railroad age. Does the song support the idea that he is a hero?
5. How did the expansion of railroads grow and change the United States?

“Context” adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/17-conquering-the-west>
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“You Want a Job?” in Norfolk, 1910s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Walker_W2_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Journalist William Walker remembers how young black men were recruited to work in Northern cities by large corporations.

Repository: Oral History Archives at Columbia

Transcript:

WW: Well, since nothing turned up, on the day of graduation you didn't have a job, so you'd take a job.

XX: And it was good money?

WW: Yeah. So the Pullman Company was a big employer of Negroes, especially in the summertime. Thousands of Negro students worked for the Pullman Company in the summer because rail travel in those days—everybody traveled by rail. Nobody thought of going by automobile. So everywhere you went there were no airplanes, so everything was train travel. So in the summer there were a lot of new resorts that would open up, and Pullman Company had the job of hauling these people to these various resorts. Resorts like Atlantic City, there'd be nothing hardly in the winter time, but summertime they'd have maybe fifteen or twenty Pullman cars of people going in there every day. So this was extra work. They hired Negroes only as Pullman porters. That opened up thousands of jobs for Negroes all over the country in cities like Chicago, St. Louis, Atlanta, New Orleans, Kansas City, and Minneapolis. Those were places where the Negro students would always go. The fact of the matter, you didn't even have to go. Like I said, Pullman Company sent a man to the campus to recruit, so all you had to do was go and see him. He said, “All right, you want a job?” “Oh, yes.” He'd put your name down. He said, “All right, you report in Columbus, go to Columbus.” That's what we did, and when we got to Columbus, they decided there what city needed the extra men he had. So it just happens that Pittsburgh needed them that year, so they sent all of us to Pittsburgh. Some of them turned up to be [unclear] Kansas City, he was just one of them, not just men and the other fellas became lawyers. Fellas go back to school. Four or five hundred dollars summer time, and that was a lot of money in those days. You go back to school, you had it made for the rest of the year. So this was a normal practice. Cecil Newman of the Minneapolis paper, Cecil worked as a Pullman porter, in a dining car too. A lot of cars. He worked as a dining car waiter out of Minneapolis. Dining cars and Pullman cars and boats, that's when there used to be boats on the Great Lakes...Great big boats, boats with three or four hundred cabin rooms just driving between here and Cleveland and here in Detroit all up and down the lake. Those boats, trains, and resorts furnished summer employment for Negroes. First summer I was at Wilberforce [University] we worked at Bob-Lo Island, which was a resort island right at the mouth of Lake Erie, Detroit River. The company hired out of Detroit. Some fellas on the campus had worked there before, and so the man writes him, “So how many boys can you bring up this summer?” Well, he recruits how many he wants, say ten boys, so ten of us were recruited. We went to Detroit, got hired and we spent the summer on Bob-Lo Island working. Kids worked in those days to make money to go back to school.

Context:

The Great Migration refers to the relocation of hundreds of thousands of African Americans from the rural areas of the South to urban areas in the North during the years between 1915 and 1930. Although many of those who left the rural South migrated to southern urban areas, most migrants moved to cities in the North. It was the largest movement northward and into cities that had occurred among African Americans to that point in history. The United States' entrance into World War I in 1917 played an important role in this movement, as the demand for additional labor grew in war-related industries at the same time that white workers were siphoned off to serve in the armed forces. Immigration also slowed dramatically, removing another source of labor for American industry. African American labor was one of the key alternative sources sought by these industries to enable them to respond to the growing demand for war-related goods. Industrial jobs that had not been previously available to African Americans now became

accessible in greater quantity and variety. This flood of African American migrants dramatically changed the demography of many cities in both the North and South, as the percentage of African American residents exploded. Cities like New York; Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Chicago, Illinois, saw their African American populations grow by 50 percent or more during this period. This population surge placed great pressure on the municipal services and housing supply of these cities. It created growing tension between residents as they competed for places to live and for jobs, particularly after the war ended. As a consequence, the Great Migration pushed issues of race more to the forefront in the North. It also heightened these issues for the South as concern increased about the loss of workers in rural areas and the presence of growing African American populations in some of its cities.

Bio:

William Otis Walker (often abbreviated as W. O. Walker) was born in Selma, Alabama on September 19, 1896. He graduated from Wilberforce University in 1916 with a bachelor's in business, and later attended Oberlin Business College in 1918. He began reporting for the *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1919 until he started reporting and editing for the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* in Virginia in 1921. Walker moved to Washington, D.C. and managed the *Washington Tribune* until 1932, when he moved to Cleveland. He worked at the *Call & Post* and revamped and expanded the newspaper from having one employee in 1932 to being one of the most influential black newspapers in the country. From 1940 to 1947, Walker served as a Republican Cleveland City Council member and was Ohio's Director of Industrial Relations from 1963 to 1971. He passed away in 1981.

Discussion questions:

1. How did leisure time for wealthy people create jobs for William Walker and his friends?
2. How did Mr. Walker use that money?
3. Why were there jobs in these particular cities?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Great_Migration_The

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“Father Renamed Him” in Willis Wharf, 1910s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Terry_N_VUS8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Nat Terry recalls how immigrant laborers broke a strike in the seafood industry on the Eastern Shore.

Repository: Barrier Islands Center

Transcript:

NT: This boat was about half-loaded, the weather was not too bad, and they went on strike for more money. Well, the captain was a friend of my grandfather's, and he says, "Henry, I wouldn't do it." He says, "The weather's cool, the oysters will keep. If you jump on a train and go to New York, you can get you a crew of immigrants, and they'll work and we can finish loading this boat." That's what he did, went to the [Eastern] Shore, went to Exmore, caught a train, went to the board's office, and they assigned him seven or eight Pollocks. He came on back. They sent the Pollocks down on a train, and they had railway express tags on them, every one of them. They couldn't speak a word of English. He met them at Exmore, on the train, and he took them down to Willis Wharf, Mr. Johnson's store, and he bought them all boots and rain suits, foul-weather gear. At that time, on a crew, you're on a salary plus your board. It was pretty hard eating down there, you know: a lot of lard, fat meat, plenty of eggs and ham, country ham. This crew just went to work and loaded that schooner, got it in time. They stayed for maybe three months or so. And they all got sick, one at a time, pretty much. Father would take them to shore, take them up to Doc Cosby. The last one to get sick, Father renamed him. Got his papers. It was Petroski- God, I don't remember, Polish. But anyhow, he immediately named him Pete Rogers and that stuck. He was the last one to get sick. Father took him up to the house. My mother, who originally was a schoolteacher anyhow, she taught him to speak English while he was up there. He was up there four weeks maybe or something. When he was able to go back to work, he wanted to stay on. He didn't want to leave. So my father had built an oyster house, a shucking house, at Willis Wharf. He went up in the second story and he boarded off two rooms. Pete went up there and lived. To make a long story short, Pete died at Willis Wharf as a bachelor at the age of seventy-eight, I imagine, something like that. Never worked for anybody else.

Bio: Nat Terry (1915-2009) was a lifelong resident of the Eastern Shore. He ran a successful family oyster-harvesting company with his brother. Today, the company harvests forty million oysters and clams near Hog Island annually.

Discussion questions:

1. Why did Nat's family hire Polish immigrants from New York?
2. What effect do you think the arrival of the Polish immigrants had? How do you think local people received them?
3. Why do you think one of the immigrants changed his name? Why do you think he chose to stay, and why was he the only one?
4. Activity: Create a decision tree for Pete's choices, including his choices to come to New York, agree to come to the Eastern Shore, change his name, and spend the rest of his life in Virginia. Why do you think he made this series of choices? What can we learn about Pete's personality and character?

“They Would Buy Them Chickens” in Russell County, 1920s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Phillips_C1_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Clarence Phillips recalls how Hungarian and Polish immigrants contributed to their mining community, trading with native-born residents and baking bread that Phillips grew to love.

Repository: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University

Transcript:

CP: But getting back to the Hungarians and the people that come in here. None of them could speak any English, and we was little boys with our dad working in the mines here. We was little boys working on the farm trying to raise stuff to help feed the family, and my mother would sell milk and butter, we would sell chickens. We raised chickens, had cattle, and we would peddle them, what we called peddling back then. And we walked, it was close to a mile and a half through the mountain and come out at the head of Straight Hollow here, and peddle all the way down and up these hollows. And something that sticks out in my mind is some of those Hungarians, foreigners, and Polish people that lived in the head of the hollow. They was all good people. They couldn't speak a word of English but they would buy them chickens, and we were selling frying chickens, live frying chickens. We would carry them over there alive and sell them to those people.

KS: Carry them like in a sack?

CP: No, you carry them up in your arms, put two or three together and tie them and just lay them across your shoulder. We got a quarter a piece for those chickens, and we would get fifteen cents for a gallon of buttermilk.

KS: And how did they carry the buttermilk?

CP: In buckets, what they call old lard buckets.

KS: With a lid?

CP: Yes.

KS: So it didn't slosh out?

CP: See, everybody cooked with pure lard back then, and it come in tin buckets. They was big, like a four-pound bucket lard bucket and an eight-pound lard bucket, and then they have the large cans thirty- or sixty-pound lard cans, and an eight-pound lard bucket would be a gallon of milk. And we would carry it over and they would empty it out and give us our buckets and we would go back home. A pound of butter was twenty-five cents, and we'd all us boys would load up a bunch of stuff and carry it across that mountain and sell it. There's this one old lady, I wish I knew her name, lived right next to the steel bridge. She'd always buy two fryers off us every time we'd go over there, but you had to wring their necks for her. She would not take the chickens until you slaughtered them chickens for her. You had to wring their necks, but she would take them. She'd take two every time.

KS: And that was your job?

CP: Yeah, my job was to wring them necks. [Laughter]

KS: You held onto the head and whirled the body around?

CP: Yeah, they was a knack to it. Oh, you could pop them right quick.



KS: Did you get good at it?

CP: Oh, I got good that I could wring their necks off about the second round.

KS: A real talent.

CP: Yeah.

KS: Now I've seen people lay the chicken down on a stump and whack it off, chop it off, but you weren't carrying your hatchet with you.

CP: No. I wish that I could remember her name.

KS: Did you see them baking bread? I heard they had bread ovens.

CP: No, I didn't see them baking the bread, but they had the ovens there, and they had one at the mouth of the tunnel at Trammel, too, over there that they baked bread over there. I've heard my dad and mother talk about that aroma would go all over the whole hollow with that fresh bread baking. They was good a baking that bread. Of course, you know when they build this tunnel through here to get to the coal over in Dickenson County through Dante there they had a lot of people, you see, but they got most of them out of Ellis Island to dig that tunnel through there.

KS: That must have been a big job.

Context:

Between 1870 and 1920, over twenty-five million immigrants arrived in the United States. By the turn of the twentieth century, new immigrant groups such as Italians, Poles, and Eastern European Jews made up a larger percentage of arrivals than the Irish and Germans. The specific reasons that immigrants left their particular countries and the reasons they came to the United States (what historians call push and pull factors) varied. Industrial capitalism was the most important factor that drew immigrants to the United States between 1880 and 1920. Immigrant workers labored in large industrial complexes producing goods such as steel, textiles, and food products, replacing smaller and more local workshops.

Immigrants from specific countries—and even specific communities—often clustered together in ethnic neighborhoods. They formed vibrant organizations and societies, such as Italian workmen's clubs, Eastern European Jewish mutual aid societies, and Polish Catholic churches, to ease the transition to their new American home. Immigrant communities published newspapers in dozens of languages and purchased spaces to maintain their arts, languages, and traditions. And from these foundations they facilitated even more immigration: after staking out a claim to some corner of American life, they wrote home and encouraged others to follow them. Historians call this chain migration.

Bio:

Clarence Phillips (1926-2016) was born in a company house, the son of a coal miner. He became a miner at the age of seventeen and shortly after enlisted to fight in World War II. When he returned from war, he began mining again and became active in politics. His son, also named Clarence Phillips, is a district court judge.

Discussion questions:

1. Why were the Hungarians living in Dante, Virginia?
2. What did the Hungarian families contribute to the Dante community?

3. What practices did the Hungarians retain from their background, and what strategies made that possible? How did they adapt to Virginia?
4. What was Mr. Phillips's relationship like with the local Hungarian immigrants?
5. What does Mr. Phillips remember about the Hungarians baking bread?

References: "Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/18-industrial-america>

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“Right in Front of the Courthouse” in Martinsville, 1920s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Philpott_H_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Homer Philpott describes his travels over county and state lines as a bootlegger during Prohibition.

Repository: Ferrum College, Digital Library of Appalachia

Transcript:

KL: When you were growing up did your parents tell your stories about ghosts or about hunting stories? Do you know any stories about hunting?

HP: Hunting and all that, no...just was one thing and another. I've had a good time in my life and I've had a bad time in my life, too.

KL: When was the good time? When you were making liquor?

HP: Yeah, and hauling it. I hauled liquor when the President made the whole country dry. I carried it to the prosecuting attorney at Winston-Salem and they told me if I got caught, I wouldn't serve a day in jail. He'd see it I didn't serve a day in jail. And he said, If you lose your car, I'll see you'll get it back." I hauled three loads one night and I made forty-eight hundred dollars profit. I bought the liquor here in the mountain and hauled it down the mountain.

KL: Down to Winston?

HP: Yeah. Any one that wanted it at that time, I put it up right in front of the courthouse in Martinsville. I got jailed one time in Martinsville and the jail turnkey was Harry Turner's daddy. And he'd keep liquor in there, and I'd drink out of his jug just the same as he did while I was in jail.

KL: What did you get in jail for that time?

HP: Liquor. Hey, you can't get by, the road is rough and rocky when you get to making liquor, you can't get by. Then somebody will kick you, if it ain't nothing but the undercover man.

KL: Do you know people around here who still make liquor?

HP: No, they quit it altogether. They working now in the factories and all. They don't fool with no liquor no more. It's unprofitable. You make it today and lose it tomorrow.

Context:

The campaign to outlaw the sale of alcohol in Virginia was the most controversial and divisive reform of the Progressive era. Like Prohibition efforts elsewhere in the nation, the movement deeply divided the state's reformers. Many, especially those living in cities, opposed Prohibition, while those living in the countryside or in small towns generally favored it. Evangelical Christians were strong advocates of outlawing access to alcohol, while businessmen more often than not opposed such regulation on the grounds that it would retard economic development. Urban workers, poor whites, and African Americans also generally opposed Prohibition. Many of them, however, lost the right to vote on the issue after Virginia's 1902 constitution went into effect. The state's women, who did not gain access to the ballot until 1920, rarely if ever patronized saloons and typically favored Prohibition. Along with clergymen, they were some of the most active participants in the campaign against alcohol, arguing that saloons corrupted boys, led to spousal abuse, and threatened the family.

On November 1, 1916, statewide Prohibition went into effect. The Progressive movement in Virginia all but disappeared when the nation entered World War I in 1917. By then, however, the reform efforts of its members had led to a dramatic expansion of government responsibility on both the state and local level. The reforms mainly adjusted Virginia in ways that maintained existing social and racial hierarchies while promoting order, stability, healthfulness, and efficiency to foster economic progress.

Bio:

Homer Philpott (1891-1980) was a farmer who made and hauled liquor across county and state lines during Prohibition. He claims to have been shot in the face by law enforcement and had over twenty automobiles seized as consequences of his illegal operation. Homer and Julia Philpott owned their own home and remained economically independent through the Depression while raising four children together.

Discussion questions:

1. Describe Mr. Philpott's attitude toward nationwide Prohibition.
2. How does the interaction Mr. Philpott describes with the prosecuting attorney reflect some attitudes about Prohibition?
3. Why was Mr. Philpott jailed in Martinsville?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/progressive_movement

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“Picked Up That Life Again” in King William County, 1920s-1970s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Spivey_A_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Archaeologist and Pamunkey tribal member Dr. Ashley Spivey explains how Pamunkey culture changed and stayed the same over the course of the twentieth century.

Repository: Southern Foodways Alliance

Transcript:

AS: But they would use the train. There was a train station, a train that goes to the reservation that stops right across the river right here, what is a place called Lester Manor, so they would also take the train. And that's how they would either truck their produce to the 17th Street Market in Richmond. They would sell it locally within the county, they would travel with it on the train. So, it was a way for them to feed themselves and to also make a little bit of extra cash on—and whatever they wouldn't eat within their house, again, growing the same types of things: blackeyed peas, every type of melon you can imagine, potatoes, that kind of thing. If they had any left over, they would add it to the truck farming patch, so they could make money off of it.

JT: You also mentioned the venison. Did your grandfather butcher the venison himself?

AS: No. He was not a big hunter, but we have several hunters here on the reservation that – they do group hunting, typically. Like, together as a group. They would butcher it together. But they would do a group hunt, and they basically would divvy up—they would butcher, skin, butcher the deer together. And then, the head hunter, the lead hunter, used to be the chief, but then the chief would appoint somebody later on down the line when he wasn't hunting, would then quarter up the meat. And the head hunter would get the best piece, which is like the tenderloin, and then it would go down from there. Then, what was left over would go to the people, to the families who didn't have hunters. So, my grandfather not being a hunter, would get venison from the group of hunters here on the reservation. And they still do that today. I get venison every season, because my husband doesn't hunt. [Laughter] And he's a white man. So, the Indian men will come down and give us a cut from their hunt to eat.

JT: Why didn't your grandfather choose to hunt so much?

AS: Well, he is kind of at the cusp of that generation. So, he was born in 1937, and he's at the cusp of that generation where his dad, my great-grandfather, grew up totally off the land. Everything. That is how they fed themselves, that's how they made money. And it's his generation, my great-grandfather's generation, that starts to actually engage, started to engage more with jobs that were just cash earning, that did not include sustenance off the land. So, for example, he moved to Philadelphia for a while; he lived in Richmond for a while doing wage labor, but decided, actually, during the Great Depression to come back here to the reservation because they knew that they could feed themselves if they couldn't hold their jobs, which they couldn't. A lot of them lost their jobs and came back here during that time. My great-grandfather kind of re-picked up that life again, of living off the land. He was also a guide, a hunting guide; that's also how he made money. He worked for one of the old farms right next to us for over fifty years, guiding for the folks that would come down to that hunt club. And so, that's what my grandfather witnessed, but he also—and he learned a lot. He learned how to trap. He learned how to shad fish. They would net. That's how they'd catch their shad, they would net them. He learned, again, about the plant life. His grandmother was known as an herbalist, that's what they called them. She was also a midwife. So, he was able to learn these things from his grandparents and his parents, but he left at a young age. He left around thirteen to go to boarding school, a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school in Cherokee, the Eastern Band reservation in North Carolina. So, he wasn't as immersed in that lifestyle as, like, his father's generation or his grandfather's generation. By the time he came back, which, he went to the BIA boarding school, he actually ended up going to college, one of the first people from here to get a college degree. Lived in Richmond working, had his family, and then decided to come back to the reservation in

the 1970s. So, he was away for about two decades. So, that just wasn't a part of his repertoire anymore. He picked up the shad fishing, though; he picked up the gardening, did trapping. But his father was still alive at that time, too. His father didn't pass away till 2003, and he was still doing all of that. My great-grandfather was still hunting and trapping and fishing and guiding up until his nineties. So... [Laughter] He was able to learn it as a young person and then still be exposed to it when he came back in his thirties to raise his family here. So, just, deer hunting wasn't a big part of what he did, because he didn't have to, too, you know? They didn't have to do that, his generation and my mother's generation. You could go to a grocery store. But, it's a capitalist world. [Laughter] We all live in it, whether we want to or not, and I don't have time to grow my own corn. You know what I mean? If I want to make a dollar and pay my bills. It's still Pamunkey, just because—they were doing dugout canoes up until the early twentieth century, but they were using metal tools. Does that make it not a Pamunkey Indian dugout canoe? No, it's still Native. Native people didn't just die off, or their ways of life didn't just die off. Like every other culture in this world, they progressed, they integrated, they adopted, and it was still part of who they were. Because when people think of culture, they think of the physical, right? They think about, again, what you're wearing on your body. "Where's your feathers? Where're your beads?" Our culture isn't pow-wow. Our culture isn't, again, something that we wear on our bodies. It's something that we do, something that we live, or at least know about because that's the way that our grandparents lived or our great-grandparents lived and that we grew up learning about.

Context:

The Pamunkey tribe is an Indian tribe that the Commonwealth of Virginia has recognized since the seventeenth century. In 1983, while granting recognition to several other tribes, Virginia again acknowledged the Pamunkey tribe's status. In 2015, the federal government officially recognized the tribe. The tribe has a reservation located on the Pamunkey River in King William County and is one of the nation's oldest, dating back to 1646. Of the reservation's 1,200 acres, 500 are wetlands. In 2012 about eighty Pamunkey tribal members lived on the reservation, with many more residing in nearby Richmond and Newport News, as well as throughout Virginia and the United States.

Efforts to preserve and protect the Pamunkey Indian Reservation extended through the eighteenth century, when many of the tribal groups lost their land, and into the late nineteenth century, when each of the four remaining reservation tribes—the Gingaskin, Mattaponi, Nottoway, and Pamunkey—was pressured to dissolve its reservation, ending its relationship to the state, and then to divide the land among its members. The Pamunkey refused, maintaining their reservation, church, and school.

Like other Virginia Indians, the Pamunkey struggled to preserve their identity and culture early in the twentieth century. The Racial Integrity Act of 1924 and subsequent legislation banned interracial marriage in Virginia and asked for voluntary racial identifications on birth and marriage certificates. "White" was defined as having no trace of African ancestry, while all other people, including Indians, were defined as "colored." To accommodate elite Virginians who claimed Pocahontas and John Rolfe as ancestors, the law allowed for those who had "one-sixteenth or less of the blood of the American Indian and have no other non-Caucasic blood [to] be deemed to be white persons." The laws essentially erased Virginia Indians as a category of people under the law. The U.S. Supreme Court declared the Racial Integrity Act unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967).

Bio: Ashley Atkins Spivey was born in 1984 in Richmond, Virginia. She directed the Pamunkey Indian Museum and Cultural Center and the Pamunkey Indian Tribal Resource Center. She now works as an anthropologist in Richmond.

Discussion:

1. Evaluate how Pamunkey farming and hunting change over time.
2. Identify how the Pamunkeys' employment in cash-paying jobs changed over time.
3. How did the Depression affect life on the reservation?
4. How did the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school affect Dr. Spivey's grandfather's life?



5. Why are practices like gardening and hunting important to Dr. Spivey?

References:

“Context” adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Pamunkey_Tribe

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“String the Height of My Mother” in Norfolk, 1930s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Wong_J_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Jenny Wong recounts her family’s many voyages between Virginia and Canton, China, and their pursuit of business success and education in the United States.

Repository: Southern Foodways Alliance

Transcript:

SW: Okay, I’m wondering Jenny if you know, can you tell me about your father coming to Norfolk and why he came to Norfolk from Canton?

JW: Actually my father came over here when he was sixteen years old. My grandfather had a laundry business back in 1934 called Wong Hong Laundry on Bute Street in Norfolk, Virginia.

SW: So your grandfather was here before? Was he the first to come to Norfolk?

JW: Yes, uh-hm.

JW: A lot of the Chinese immigrants, back in China they wanted a better life. And for them to have a better life they decided to come to the United States. But as far as coming to Norfolk, I don’t know why. But I do know that a lot of the Chinese immigrants went to San Francisco and then I think that because there’s too many people going to San Francisco they decided to go somewhere on the East Coast and Norfolk was the place.

My father, Park Wong was born in 1911 in Canton, China. He was fatherless during most of his younger years because his father had moved to Norfolk, Virginia. And he was not able to arrange passage for his family because of strict U.S. immigration laws. My father lived in Canton until he was able to travel by himself to the United States when he was sixteen. He lived with his father, who ran a Chinese laundry in Norfolk, Virginia. He attended Ruffner Junior High School in Norfolk. He studied electronics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology but he never finished because he returned to China in 1940. My father stayed there long enough—

SW: Can I ask you a question on that? Do you know why he returned to China in 1940 after one year at MIT?

JW: Well first, my father—they didn’t have enough money to continue his education. And at that time my grandmother that was in Canton, China, she wanted my father to meet this lady in Canton. Back in those days they had matchmakers. And my grandmother liked this lady which is my mother. And so told my father about her, actually sent a picture of my mother to my father and because they did not have a ruler or some type of measuring stick to see the height of my mother, in the mail there was a picture and a piece of string the height of my mother. And so when my father saw the picture and realized that she was not taller than he was, he decided to go back to China and meet her.

SW: So they sent the string of how tall she was?

JW: In an envelope, yes, uh-huh.

SW: Do you know if that was a standard practice when people didn’t have a measuring, like did other people send string like that and measure people?

JW: I don’t know, but my grandmother did and so my father saw the picture and fell in love with my mother and so he decided to go back to China and they met one time and then the second time they were married.



SW: And in China they had three sons. Is that correct?

JW: Yes, uh-hm.

SW: And what are their names?

JW: Arthur, Edward, and David.

SW: And so how long were they there after they married before they moved to Norfolk, do you know?

JW: After my brothers were born, my father came back to the United States and because of the strict immigration law he had to wait almost ten years before he was able to get my mother, my three brothers, and his mother to the United States.

Context:

Between 1870 and 1920, over twenty-five million immigrants arrived in the United States. This migration was largely a continuation of a process begun before the Civil War, though by the turn of the twentieth century, new groups such as Italians, Poles, and Eastern European Jews made up a larger percentage of the arrivals while Irish and German numbers began to dwindle.

Although the growing U.S. economy needed large numbers of immigrant workers for its factories and mills, many Americans reacted negatively to the arrival of so many immigrants. Nativists opposed mass immigration for various reasons. Some felt that the new arrivals were unfit for American democracy, and that Irish or Italian immigrants used violence or bribery to corrupt municipal governments. Others (often earlier immigrants themselves) worried that the arrival of even more immigrants would result in fewer jobs and lower wages. Such fears combined and resulted in anti-Chinese protests on the West Coast in the 1870s. Still others worried that immigrants brought with them radical ideas such as socialism and communism.

Discussion questions:

1. What challenges did the Wong family face when immigrating to the United States?
2. How long was the Wong family separated after their father moved back to the United States?
3. Where did the majority of Chinese immigrants go during this time?
4. Why does Ms. Wong think her family chose to immigrate to Norfolk?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/18-industrial-america>

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"Eagerly Sought After" in Norfolk, 1920

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Walker_W1_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Journalist and newspaper owner William Walker recounts how coverage of African-Americans in the news changed as lynchings continued across the South and the Great Migration to the North began.

Repository: Oral History Archives at Columbia

Transcript:

XX: From your experience, what is it that makes news? What is it that people want to know?

WW: Well, it isn't any one thing. What people will want for news today may be entirely different from what they may want tomorrow, what they wanted yesterday. In the earlier days anything about Negroes was eagerly sought after because the white press printed nothing about Negroes at all no matter what paper, the *Times* or anything else. Negroes made news only through crime or something more or less related to scandal one way or the other. So anything about Negro activities was eagerly sought after by the Negro public. The migration moved thousands of Negroes. See, the migration started in 1914 with the declaration of World War I, which shut off immigration from Europe and added to America's war capabilities of producing materials for Europe. They needed more men, so the Northern mills, especially steel and metal fabrication, then began to send agents into the South to bring back Negroes. See, this started from a small recruiting to carloads of people. Those people were leaving their base, where they'd been all their lives, coming into the Northern industrial communities. The Negro papers then got news of Birmingham [Alabama] and Atlanta and Selma [Alabama] and Jackson [Mississippi] and all of those Southern communities. Whatever news we could get out of those towns, get into our papers would be eagerly read by the people who had been brought from these areas. So this was the emphasis on news. Of course, in those days lynchings were big news because lynchings were running anywhere from thirty to thirty-five, forty a year. Things of that kind. Now, the news of course has changed. Negro society news is quite in vogue. Every paper has some society news, and that's because it was never published anywhere, no Negro society item, no matter who it was, ever got into the white press. Negro sports, in those days you had the Negro baseball teams, big—and eventually baseball leagues. They never got into the white press. So we had sports to draw on. Then we had theatricals. Negroes were separated in theaters. We had separate circuits like the T.O.B.A. [Theatre Owners Booking Association] circuit, which embraced maybe thirty or forty cities in the South and in the North. Cleveland was one, Chicago, Indianapolis. All these cities had theaters and this was a circuit, another thing that was always exclusively in the Negro press. We had these areas of news, what was exclusive to us.

Context:

The Great Migration refers to the relocation of hundreds of thousands of African Americans from the rural areas of the South to urban areas in the North during the years between 1915 and 1930. Although many of those who left the rural South migrated to southern urban areas, most migrants moved to cities in the North. It was the largest movement northward and into cities that had occurred among African Americans to that point in history.

Residents of the Atlantic seaboard migrating from Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, or Maryland had several options. They could travel by boat using the ports of Savannah, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Norfolk, Virginia; or Baltimore, Maryland; to go to Philadelphia, New York, Newark, New Jersey; or Boston, Massachusetts. The chance to make more money and improve one's circumstances was a strong draw. African American workers hoped in the process to gain access to jobs in well-established companies that might stretch out into the future.



Bio:

William Otis Walker (often abbreviated as W. O. Walker) was born in Selma, Alabama on September 19, 1896. He graduated from Wilberforce University in 1916 with a bachelor's in business, and later attended Oberlin Business College in 1918. He began reporting for the *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1919 until he started reporting and editing for the *Norfolk Journal and Guide* in Virginia in 1921. Walker moved to Washington, D.C. and managed the *Washington Tribune* until 1932, when he moved to Cleveland. He worked at the *Call & Post* and revamped and expanded the newspaper from having one employee in 1932 to being one of the most influential black newspapers in the country. From 1940 to 1947, Walker served as a Republican Cleveland City Council member and was Ohio's Director of Industrial Relations from 1963 to 1971. He passed away in 1981.

Discussion questions:

1. When does Mr. Walker say the Great Migration started?
2. What started the Great Migration?
3. Describe the types of job opportunities African American's found in the North.
4. Why did Northern newspapers start including news from Southern communities?
5. Identify areas of news published by the African American press.

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Great_Migration_The

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“Can You Learn My Name?” in Hampton, 1930s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Cherry_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Olivia James Cherry discusses growing up in a black resettlement community called Aberdeen Gardens during the Great Depression, and the trouble and disrespect she encountered from white employers in the Hampton area.

Repository: Behind the Veil, the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

Transcript:

OC: So we couldn't have that. So, we experienced segregation in school, among our people, as well as the whites. So, in about six months, they were able to open the school in Aberdeen, and what they did, they bussed children from other neighborhoods. We were able to open our school. But in the meantime, walking home from school, the school buses would pass by us, and can you believe, the white kids would spit out the window at us and call us "nigger" and everything. Anyway, we all came back, because we knew the schedule they would come by and we were out of their way. The public bus going to Newport News was really closest to or going to Hampton, the buses ran like every hour, and the last bus was eleven o'clock, and we knew buses ran in other neighborhoods longer than that. So that was a form of segregation. Going to the store to be waited on, we were always waited on last. When I grew up and went away, in the summers I would go to Richmond to visit some of my stepfather's people, and they would let me take the bus there and they would come Labor Day and pick me up. Taking the bus, we had to sit on the back of the bus. Riding the bus around the city we always had to sit on the back. So taking the bus and stopping at some little station, maybe we had to go to the bathroom, you had to go to some real dinky, nasty, dirty, bathroom in the back, or you just didn't go and you tried to hold your water. You know, that can be hard, even for a child. When I went to high school, I wanted a part-time job, so I could have an allowance, not supplement, because my stepfather had passed. He died when I was fifteen years old. So our income was really low then. We were not poor, but we were making ends meet. But I wanted my own money. I just went here and there and I could not get a job because I was black—because I am black. So the colored [unclear] around the corner did give me job there. I had a very good job, and that worked out fine. But basically I did domestic work because that's all I could get.

My name is Olivia, which I feel is a very pretty name. My mother thought that way. That's why she gave it to me. And I had trouble with my name. One white lady said, "Oh, that's what I was going to name my daughter." But her daughter's name was Mary. I mean, how do you jump from Olivia to Mary? I would be upstairs cleaning the bathroom, and she said, "Susie." They loved to call me Susie. "Susie." So I didn't answer. I was a spunky kid then. I was like thirteen or fourteen, and I didn't answer. Finally, she come to the steps and said, "Olivia, you hear me calling you?" I said, "Now I hear you. Now you said, 'Olivia.' That's my name." She asked me, "Why did your mother name you Olivia?" I said, "Because she looked at me and said, 'I have a very pretty baby, I'm going to give her a pretty name.'" That was not true, but that was my smart answer to her. I could have told her the truth. My mother's name is Lucille and so many people said, "Why didn't you name her Lucille, name her after you?" Because I looked so much like her. She said, "No, that's too common a name. I want her to have an odd name, but a nice name." So she gave me Olivia. Prior to that we were living in Aberdeen, there were farms around us—potato farm. We would go. They would dig up the potatoes and we children in the summer would have to put them in baskets, to go to market. We also worked on a raspberry farm picking raspberries, which I really didn't like, because it was back-breaking. But going back to the potato farm, I had two girlfriends, close girlfriends, and another one, about seven or eight of us looking for work. This man said, "Oh, yes, I'll dig the potatoes out, and you can put them in a basket." So I said, "How much?" I was always the spokesman, always the leader. I said, "How much?" He said, "Ten cents a basket." That was 1939 or '40, like that, so that was good money then. So we said, "Okay." So we did this and we had to go at five o'clock in the morning, because it was hot, like it's been a few days ago for twenty-five days. It was very hot, and we would be out in the field picking up those potatoes. I'm talking fast, because I don't know how



much time you want to have, and I have so much to say. So we went out, we're picking potatoes, and he'd pay us, and we come home. We'd be so happy. One day we went and we picked the potatoes, worked diligently, and the man gave us five cents a basket. I said, "Wait a minute. You told us ten cents a basket." He said, "Yes, I know what I told you," he said. There were so many of us, I guess, and we worked so fast. So he said, "I'm just going to give you five cents." I said, "Okay." The girls were fussing. Well, I said, "Okay, that's fine." I said, "We'll see you tomorrow morning." He looked at me. So when we left his farm, they said, "Olivia, what are you talking about?" I said, "Don't worry, we're going back tomorrow and we're going to get even." They said, "What we going to do?" I said, "We're going to put the straw and stuff in the basket, fill it up with that and put potatoes on top so you can't see it, and we get our money and leave." So they said, "Oh." Some said, "I'm scared." "Don't be scared, just be with me." So we went on and that's what we did. He paid us and we come out of his farm and we got on the road just laughing and joking, and wouldn't even walk that way for a long time, because we figured he'd be looking for us.

XX: Was he white or black?

OC: White. White farmer. Then there was this white man and his girlfriend. They had a raspberry farm. They wanted us to pick the raspberries. Here we were, out looking for work. So here we are picking the raspberries, and here goes my name again. The man said, "Hey, Susie. Susie. You missed some on your row." I knew he was calling me, because this was my row, but I just kept on working. He said, "Susie, don't you hear me talking to you?" I said, "I told you before, my name is Olivia. Olivia. Can you say that?" He said, "Don't be so 'd' smart." I went back and picked what he said I missed. It wasn't that I was working badly, I just overlooked it. Well, another day he did the same thing. "Susie, I want you to work down this end, and I want you to work with them." I just kept on working. He said, "Do you hear me telling you?" I said, "Do you know my name? Can you learn my name?" He said, "All right, whatever it is. I want you working down there." So one day we went through this name again, and he said, "Get the 'h' off my property. I don't want you working for me at all." I said, "Fine, because I don't want to work for you, but you have to pay me for the work I have done." I already computed the amount, and he told his girlfriend, "Pay her. Let's get rid of her." I don't remember figures now, but it wasn't the correct amount. I said, "No, this is not right. You owe me such-and-such cents." "Pay her. Give her anything so we can get rid of her." So she paid me, and I stepped out on the highway, and that highway, you may not know it, not being from around here, is Mercury Boulevard, in Hampton now. That's where it was. Anyway, I stepped out on the highway, and I said, "Come on, you all, you don't want to work for him. He doesn't know how to treat you." They was standing there working and scared. He said, "Get away from here. Get away from my property." I said, "Wait a minute. I'm on the highway. My mother and father paid taxes for this highway. This is not your highway." I said, "You leave me alone." And I went home and told my mother. She said, "Oh, Lord. They're going to kill my daughter. I know they're going to kill my daughter." I went on the bus. I was doing domestic work the next day in the area, and take the bus, and the lady I worked for wanted you to come to the back door.

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Bio:

Olivia James Cherry (1926-?) was born in Hampton, and during the Depression lived in a planned resettlement community for African-Americans called Aberdeen Gardens. As an adult, she attended business school, moved to New York City, and in 1950 integrated the accounts department at Macy’s Department Store. She worked for the Council of Churches and ultimately retired as a typist for Norfolk Social Services.

Discussion questions:

1. Explain the significance of Olivia's name in regards to her employment story. Why do you think it was important for Olivia to be called by the correct name?
2. Compare the two employment stories Ms. Cherry discusses. Identify the ways in which discrimination is present in both stories.
3. What strategies did Olivia use to address her employers’ unfair practice?
4. How does segregation affect Olivia’s everyday life when she runs errands and travels?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/20-the-progressive-era>

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“The Way We Were Supposed to Live” in Norfolk, 1930s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Mitchell_A_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Alma Boone Mitchell remembers learning the rules of segregation as a black child playing, and young woman working, in Norfolk.

Repository: Behind the Veil, the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

Transcript:

MH: Did you ever feel like you were treated as a second-class citizen?

AM: Did I? Did I? No, because you know what? I always thought this was the way we were supposed to live, growing up, that nobody never said nothing about, but I just always thought that the white people supposed to have—what they were doing, what they were supposed to do. It never crossed my mind it was wrong, that we were working for nothing, because they ain't never tell us.

MH: Did you come to realize that later, that you were being treated differently?

AM: Very late when I realized that it was wrong.

MH: Do you remember some of the signs and symbols of the Jim Crow era, like the signs of restrooms?

AM: Yes. Black—I mean, white only up front. But you know, you only see it if you was on a car. So I reckon if you in a situation if you automatically go where your people are, where you're supposed to go. So you don't pay too much attention to a whole lot of those signs, unless it consisting of you—black only, colored.

MH: Do you think that having Church Street as a business district kept you out of a lot of the situations where you'd have to encounter those signs and those kinds of things?

AM: Yes, I think so, because Church Street was black. You didn't have to read those signs.

MH: Because they weren't there?

AM: Right, because they weren't there. But if some place else, you probably—like this restaurant, black or white.

MH: Now, the restaurant you worked at, were the employees black?

AM: No, I think they were Greek or something.

MH: Just you? You worked for them? You were there.

AM: No, had a cook there, and one more person, I think, but had all white waitresses. She was always cracking all these jokes about me, and I didn't have sense enough to know that she was talking about me and my race.

MH: She would make fun of you?

AM: Yes.

MH: What did you do at the restaurant?

AM: Oh, I washed dishes.

MH: Did your parents teach you how to behave in front of white people when you were growing up?

AM: Yes. They always said, "Shhh. We don't talk about that." We found out we ain't supposed to ask that many questions. We know they were different. We know he was a boss—Daddy's boss. All those questions, a whole lot of them, which was a no-no, in the first place, we didn't do it.

MH: When did you start treating white people as kind of a boss person?

AM: Because Daddy was treating him as a boss, then I followed what my father was doing.

MH: If it was a child, were they treated like a boss, too? Would you call them "Mister" or "Miss" something or other?

AM: Yes, yes. They were supposed to have a whole lot of respect.

MH: But you didn't come into contact with many whites?

AM: No. Oh, yes I did. When I was small, I was on a pecan tree and I would have to bust this little white girl's pecans. They didn't want me playing, but we were sitting in this tree. They didn't want me playing with her, so I was busting her pecans. She just started crying for nothing, and the people called her on in the house. I didn't nothing to her, I was just trying to be a friend.

MH: They made her go inside?

AM: Yes.

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Bio:



Alma Boone Mitchell (1933 - ?) was born in Southampton County, Virginia, to a family of sharecroppers. She went to school until the sixth grade. Mitchell married at the age of fifteen and moved to Norfolk to live with her husband's family in 1949. She had several children before beginning work at a restaurant in 1964.

Discussion:

1. What types of segregated spaces does Ms. Mitchell remember from the Jim Crow era?
2. How does Ms. Mitchell describe her interactions with white individuals during this time period?
3. What did Ms. Mitchell's parents teach her about segregation? Why?
4. Compare Ms. Mitchell's experience with segregation while working and while using public facilities. How are these experiences alike? Are they related?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/20-the-progressive-era>

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“The Other Side of Town” in Norfolk, 1930s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Porter_C_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Social studies teacher Celestine Diggs Porter describes how Norfolk’s black communities created separate leisure activities and social networks, all without crossing into the white section of town.

Repository: Behind the Veil, the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

Transcript:

Porter: Well, the school I went to was right up the corner, J.C. Price School. All of the black children—Negroes we called them then—they had to come to that particular school at that particular time, because all the schools were separate. There was no going across town. Everybody went on one side of town that was black. Church Street divided the town. During the age of separate and unequal, we developed, all of us developed, a society totally our own, and I don't think that we had any seriously bad attitudes about living together as black people. We did everything, and we didn't think about it. It was a way of life. You knew that you didn't live on the other side of town. You knew that you had to sit on the back of the bus. You knew that you had your own churches, your own school, your own everything. Everything was yours. For social life, it was your house and friends' house and family's house and clubs, and this is where we met, at everybody's house. If you belonged to a club, it was your time one time; another time, another time—you know, each person. There were no places to go, so you went home. And as a result, people developed home and home society, and that was the way of life in our society when it was separate. Now, that happened throughout the country, not just here in Virginia and not just, say, in one place or another. It was typical of the United States. I can remember in 1938 I went to the National Council of Social Studies meeting. At that time, you couldn't stay in no hotel, so the secretary always had a place for the colored members to come. It was in Houston. They put me to a nice preacher's house. I met the preacher. And then at Fort Worth, Dallas, we went to a nice principal's house and met him. And then where did we go? I went to Atlanta, and they sent us to a nice businessman's house. They found places for us to go because we couldn't stay at the hotels, and it turned out real nicely. We met other people and we made good friends. But we were used to this.

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Bio:

Celestine Diggs Porter (1911-2012) was born in Mathews County, Virginia. She began teaching social studies in 1935, and rose to become the first African-American social studies coordinator in Norfolk. She also supervised social studies students at Old Dominion University.

Discussion questions:

1. Identify the different spaces Ms. Porter describes as being segregated when she was growing up.
2. In the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court ruled that "separate but equal" did not violate the 14th amendment. Therefore, this case upheld the "Jim Crow" laws of the era. Why do you think Ms. Porter refers to this era as "separate and unequal?"
3. What strategies did black citizens employ to create a community, and to stay connected with people outside of the community?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/20-the-progressive-era>

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“I Got My Candy Apples” in Cape Charles, 1940s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Foreman_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Pauline Foreman remembers skirting residential segregation on her mission to get candy apples on Halloween.

Repository: Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restorative Initiative

Transcript:

PF: Like I said, we would might have four blocks to go downtown. And downtown was so segregated, you know, certain parts... stores you could go to, certain ones you couldn't. Oh, that was crazy. And so, the main thing about the town set up was during Halloween, because there was only one white lady's house I liked to go to because you had candy apples. So I would just go there and go home. I was fine. [Laughter] The other kids wanted to go over here and go and I said, "Night night. I'm going home. I got my candy apples. I'm fine."

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Bio:

Pauline “Poochie” Foreman was born in 1949 and attended the all-black segregated Rosenwald School in Cape Charles until 1963. She moved to live with her brother Philadelphia for work after graduating high school. Her job with the railroad, from which she retired, moved her back to Cape Charles.

Discussion questions:

1. Describe how Ms. Foreman talks about segregation downtown.
2. Why did Ms. Foreman like to go to the one white lady's house on Halloween?



References: "Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/20-the-progressive-era> (CC BY SA 4.0)

“Interested in Reading” in Portsmouth, 1940s- 1950s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Colden_G_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: George Colden describes the long struggle to build a black library in Portsmouth, and how the library’s collections changed his life.

Repository: The African American Historical Society of Portsmouth

Transcript:

GC: I knew Reverend Burchett. And he was the one that got up there... I think it was about 1927 and he said to the people we should have a library for black children so to speak, because they called us Negro children then. But what happened was, even though he made the suggestion in 1927 it wasn't until 1945 when we finally got it. But during that process, they got together to push this thing. Not only Reverend Burchett, but Ms. Cornelia Reid. She was the wife of one of the prominent doctors in town and she did quite a bit to get that going. And ultimately, there was a library at the Episcopal Church in the parish hall. He was not satisfied with it being there. So a lot of them got together and they kept on pushing it until finally they had somebody go to the City Council and the City Council told them, "If you can find the land and pay for the land, we'll build it." So, they got together and they had this campaign and what would happen would be, they would get as many one dollars from each person as they could in the community and the whole of Portsmouth, so to speak. And in no time at all, they had raised, I think it was \$1,800. So they were able to buy the lot from Reverend Scott and then the city said, "Well, you bought the lots like we told you and we will build the library." They built it in [19]45. It was complete in [19]45. So, I was about eight years old and there were many, many books. I think at one point, they had about three thousand or so books there. I was inspired by that because I think that was where I really started becoming interested in reading. It initiated my interest in knowing that there was a lot to be learned just from reading. I used to be interested in drawing comics. I thought one day I would be an illustrator for some type of comic, so I used to like that section and the section that dealt with art. I remember going there and getting books on cars. I used to love to draw cars, thinking one day I was going to go somewhere and get a job designing cars. But over the years, it became a place to go and do research on different things, you know, especially since I see Norcom [High School], George Peabody [High School] and Chester Street schools, they were all right around the block from the library. So, a lot of kids were enticed into working more, going to the library more in conjunction to what they were doing at Norcom and the other places. They did not consolidate the library, until when, about 1960, something like that. So, up until that time, I think that was all we had anyway.

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Bio:

George Colden grew up in Portsmouth a few blocks away from the library. He attended college at Virginia State University, obtained a graduate degree, and became a teacher of the hearing impaired.

Discussion questions:

1. Identify the Portsmouth citizens who organized for the "colored library." What other roles did they play in the community?
2. Why do you think the African-American community did not already have a library? Why did they want one?
3. What role did the library play in George Colden's life?

References: "Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/20-the-progressive-era> (CC BY SA 4.0)

“Things That You Accepted” in Greene County, 1950s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Morris_A_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Audrey Morris describes her childhood memories of her family’s relationship with black farm workers.

Repository: Greene County Historical Society

Transcript:

AM: I remember we had this black lady. Her name was Hazletine. Derrett. I think it was Derette but we called it Derrett. And this was back before we integrated. And that was another thing, you know, growing up when we did, I remembered when we rode buses and the black people sat in the back. I mean, there was just things that you accepted. But we had this black lady that always came to help us during butchering time. And when it came time to eat, her plate was sat at a table away from ours. And she ate alone at this... it was in the same room, in the kitchen. But she sat there and ate her meal by herself at this little table because it just wasn't proper for her to sit at the table with us. I think about that so often. There again I was a kid and we just accepted what... whatever was expected at that time. But, of course, thank goodness, it's a lot different now.

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Segregation was built on a fiction—that there could be a white South socially and culturally distinct from African Americans. Its legal basis rested on the constitutional fallacy of “separate but equal.” Southern whites erected a bulwark of white supremacy that would last for nearly sixty years. Segregation and disenfranchisement in the South rejected black citizenship and relegated black social and cultural life to segregated spaces. African Americans lived divided lives, acting the part whites demanded of them in public, while maintaining their own world apart from whites. This segregated world provided a measure of independence for the region’s growing black middle class, yet at the cost of poisoning the relationship between black and white. Segregation and disenfranchisement created entrenched structures of racism that completed the total rejection of the promises of Reconstruction.

Bio: Audrey Powell Morris was born in 1939 as one of ten children. She is a lifelong resident of Greene County. She worked for Greene County Schools.

Discussion questions:

1. Why didn't the Hazletine sit at the table with the Morris family?
2. Identify the places Audrey Morris remembers being segregated.
3. Compare how Mrs. Morris understood segregation at the time and how she understands it today.



References: "Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/20-the-progressive-era> (CC BY SA 4.0)

“Don’t be A-Hollering” in Russell County, 1930s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Whitaker_L1_VUS8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Lucille Whitaker discusses how, even though life in a coal mining town was difficult, she and her friends used the company store to create social networks and have fun.

Repository: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University

Transcript:

LW: Well, Mommy got sick and Marie was the baby. And Mommy got sick and she pulled me out of school. And no, Helen was the baby, not Marie. Helen was a baby. And she pulled me out of school. And she was pregnant with Frances. And so, I never did finish my school out or nothing like that. Then I went to work in the company store, you know, when I come of age, when I come eighteen years old, I went to work in the company store.

KS: And what were you doing there?

LW: Well, I worked at the vegetable stand and I worked at the confectionary stand. Just wherever...Mr. Matthews put us, you know, wherever he put us that's where we worked at.

KS: What was his first name? Was that Fred?

LW: No, it was Fred Matthews' daddy. But I can't remember his... I've got a picture somewhere with him. Yeah, well, I've got a picture of him and the clerks standing on that sidewalk where the company store was. I've got a picture of it. But, it's like this, you know, just in a paper. I'll have to look it up and get it to you. Give you that picture, because it's real good of Mr. Matthews. That... And then I worked there at the store for a long time.

KS: Now, were you selling the produce?

LW: Yeah. Well, I took care of the vegetables, put the vegetables up and everything. But now when they moved me into the confectionary stand, that was where the candy... and they sold beer at that time. You had to be eighteen years old before you could sell it. [Laughter] And they'd come in the store and they'd buy cartons of beer. But they had to take it out to drink it... out of the store.

KS: Was it glass bottles?

LW: Yeah, glass bottles of beer. They'd buy their beer there, the miners would when they'd get... on Saturday... Friday and Saturday was your biggest, biggest days. Everybody'd go to the company store, everybody'd dress... they didn't wear pants like we do now and everything. Everybody put on their very best and went to the store and everything. And then, it was a huge store. It had a dry goods to it. It had a confectionary stand to it. And it had the grocery department and then they had the butcher shop on the... down on the lower end. You had to go outside and then go into a little door to go into the butcher shop and get your meat and stuff. Then it also had a drug store. Mr. Hall was the druggist for a number of years there at the store. And when we went to school together, a bunch of us always went to the drug store and they had a bar set up. And we'd get on the bar stools in the drug store, we'd buy our Coke or ice cream, whatever we wanted, and sit around and talk... carry on. And if we got loud, Mr. Hall would call us down. He'd say, "Y'all better hush." [Laughter] "Be quiet, don't be a-hollering or anything like that." And we know to do what he told us or he'd put us out of the store. [Laughter] He'd run us off.

KS: Of course, everybody knew everybody.

**Context:**

Early in the 1900s, Virginia was entering a new phase in its economic life. "New South" civic and economic boosterism sought to adapt the South to the modern age of mechanization and mass production. That adaptation accounted for the greatest growth in employment as Virginians rushed to fill the white- and blue-collar jobs associated with industrialization. This was especially true in urban centers like Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg, as well as the southwestern region adjacent to the North Carolina border. Some of these jobs, like the railroad, mining, and maritime trades, had long histories in the state.

Coal mining, part of the story of energy production and consumption, is a prime example of Virginians shaping and altering their environment in a direct and ecologically significant way. Although the size of the mining industry in Virginia peaked early in the century, new techniques for acquiring coal, new means for organizing the human labor to do so, and new understanding of the environmental consequences of these activities have grown considerably over the last hundred years. Strip mining (or open-cut mining), in which companies performed machine-intensive surface stripping practices to access coal rather than mining in shafts underground, became more common after World War II (1939–1945). While the process made coal more easily available, it accelerated old forest growth removal, aided species extinction, and damaged watersheds by depositing overburden (the earth removed from the surface) into streambeds and river valleys.

Bio:

Margaret Lucille Whitaker (1925-2007) was born in Straight Hollow. Her father was a coal miner. She married her husband Harry after he returned home from World War II in 1946. He was a miner, a railroad worker, and a pastor who stopped work in the mines after he was diagnosed with black lung. As an adult, Lucille became active in the union called the United Mine Workers Association, and helped Harry hold the picket line during strikes.

Discussion questions:

1. Where did Ms. Whitaker work when she turned eighteen years old?
2. Describe the different items the company store sold. What other kinds of services are provided by the company inside and outside of the store?
3. How does Ms. Whitaker describe the community of a company town?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Labor_in_Virginia_During_the_Twentieth_Century and

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Modern_Environmental_History_of_Virginia

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"They Would Kill One Another" in Russell County, 1930s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Whitaker_L2_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Lucille Whitaker talks about the danger facing men who took sides during the struggle to unionize in Dante, Virginia—including her father and her new husband, who sat on opposing sides of the conflict.

Repository: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University

Transcript:

KS: By the time he came to the mines, there was already a union established.

LW: Yeah, the union had got in here. But the union hadn't been here no more than maybe a year or two when Harry went in the mines.

KS: Do you remember all of the attempts to organize?

LW: Oh, yeah. They'd march up and down this road here, you know, at six o'clock of the morning, all the workers and everything.

KS: Now, was that when they were following the trucks that were going to the mines?

LW: To the mines, tried to block them from going into the mines. Tried to get the union in here. Tried to keep them from hauling, getting coal and stuff.

KS: Now the men who were marching had no jobs at this point, right?

LW: Well, they had jobs, they had jobs, but if the company picked these men out, they lost their jobs. The company would run them off. 'Cause my Uncle Pearl Trent was in that group. Dan Casteel, Thurmon's daddy-in-law was in that group, he got run off. Bob Miller. Just a big bunch of them got run off and everything. But my daddy never was a union man. He was a company man. He was a company man.

KS: Company man? He didn't believe in the union?

LW: He didn't believe in the union. He didn't want the union in. My daddy didn't want the union in.
[Laughter]

KS: Did he think it would be bad or anything?

LW: Well, the company didn't want the union and if you was a company man, you didn't go along with the union, you didn't join the union or nothing if you was a company man. And my daddy was a company man.

KS: So, he kept on working?

LW: He worked all the time. His work went right on.

KS: Were you afraid for his safety?

LW: Oh, yeah, honey. They would kill one another!

KS: Did people get shot at?



LW: Well, I'll tell you what happened. Eck Bailey, he drove the company truck hauling the men to the mines up here, Number Two mines. Before Harry, they had union but they didn't have it very long. But Harry had to join the union. He had to join the union before he could work.

KS: But back when you're talking about was when your daddy was still working and they were trying to organize the mines. You said Eck Bailey drove the truck?

LW: Eck Bailey drove the miners to the Number Two mines for them to work. Well Bob Miller, they cut him off from the mines because he wanted a union in here and everything. And one day, Eck Bailey come up the road with these miners and at what we call Horseshoe Curve up here, this big ole curve that comes around up here at the top of Pigeon Hill. We call it Horseshoe Curve. It had rained and the creek was up and Bob Miller got up on the top of the hill and shot right down in the truck of those men. But now the laws didn't catch him, they didn't catch Bob. They didn't know who done it. Nobody would tell them nothing.

KS: Did it hit anybody?

LW: No, it didn't hit nobody but it scared Eck Bailey to death and he put the truck over in the creek, and the creek was up and like to have drowned all the miners. [Laughter] Some of them got skinned up, but none of them no broken bones or anything like that. He just put the truck over into the creek and just dumped them all out into the creek. And so Bob Miller, he knowed that if they caught him... but he left from here. He left from here and never did come back, and they fired a lot of the men. If you was in a company house and renting off the company and they caught you or anything, or seen you or anything, they'd come to your house, the company officials would and tell you, "You get out, you get out right now." And they run several of the men off. My mommy's brother, Uncle Pearl Trent, he got run off and Dan Casteel, that's Thurmon's wife's daddy, he got run off. But Dan didn't never come back here. He went to West Virginia to work. A lot of them left from here and went to Kentucky and West Virginia but they went where they was union work. They didn't go to the scabs. They went where they was union work and everything and finally they organized this place. John L. Lewis was in this area. He'd come in this area when they was trying to organize. I was just a small girl. But me and Mommy would sit on the porch every morning at six o'clock and watch them come up the road, march up the road up through here and everything. And they'd march plumb up in the head of the hollow and come back down and everything. They would say things about the union. "We need union and all this, we're tired of the company, we're tired of the company scrip." Now you see, the company paid in scrip. You didn't spend that scrip money nowhere but in the company store. You couldn't take it to St. Paul or Bristol or anywhere. And they paid in scrip and then when they got the union in here, John L. Lewis made them do away with the scrip and start paying the miners with silver dollars. So they started paying off in silver dollars.

KS: But now they were still taking out like rent, doctor bill, funeral and all that?

LW: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah, yeah. They'd still take stuff out like that. I believe I've got a statement that belonged to Mr. Johnson, it's Jim's granddaddy over here. Cut it off and I'll go get it. For baseball equipment that they had to buy and you had to pay for it.

KS: We're looking at a pay sheet for William Johnson. November 15, 1938 and it shows his earnings. He had worked for twenty-one hours at eighty cents an hour. He made sixteen dollars and eighty cents and then they'd take.... dues sixty cents, two dollars for insurance, twenty-five cents for the employee association dues which is the company union. This is before the union came in, of course, and then there's an item that says heat and that's for your coal. A dollar fifty a ton which is, I guess he just got one ton. This was November and credit checks. He must have taken an advance of three dollars and then they charged him seventeen cents tax, so by the time they took out eight dollars and seventy eight cents his pay was only eight dollars and two cents.

LW: That's all he got.

KS: Now was payday every two weeks?

LW: Every two weeks you got paid.

KS: Okay. So he got eight dollars and two cents to last him for the next two weeks.

KS: So, you were still living at home?

LW: 'Cause Harry had to join the union and Daddy got mad 'cause Harry joined the union. He didn't want him to, but they told him, said, "If you don't join the union, you're not going to be able to work."

KS: How did Harry feel about that?

LW: Well, Harry was for the union because he knowed he would get more money. He would get more money and more benefits you know when he retired. Of course they took out so much every month, I mean every two weeks, out of your paycheck for your pension, and then the company would have to match that, what they took out of the paycheck. The company would have to match it and then you had to pay so much for doctor and so much for the hospital.

KS: Right. All that still came out.

LW: All that still came out.

KS: But do you remember at the point at which... Well, of course you weren't married to Harry at that point but I'm just wondering how much the wages actually went up at first when the union first came in?

LW: When the union first came in it went up a right smart bit, but I don't know unless I've got one of their paycheck their statements. I'm going to see if I've got Harry's or maybe I've got one of Tom's.

KS: Well how did your daddy feel about it when it finally came in? Was he real dissatisfied?

LW: He was dissatisfied. He tried to discourage the men to join the union and they told them that if they didn't join the union, they couldn't work, So Daddy had to accept it. He had to accept the union. But Daddy was an assistant foreman up till he quit work. He never was a union man but he was against the union. But he had to work with the union men anyway.

KS: Right, so he never really got used to it.

LW: No, huh-uh, no.

Context:

Early in the 1900s, Virginia was entering a new phase in its economic life. "New South" civic and economic boosterism sought to adapt the South to the modern age of mechanization and mass production. That adaptation accounted for the greatest growth in employment as Virginians rushed to fill the white- and blue-collar jobs associated with industrialization. This was especially true in urban centers like Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg, as well as the southwestern region adjacent to the North Carolina border. Some of these jobs, like the railroad, mining, and maritime trades, had long histories in the state.

Coal mining, part of the story of energy production and consumption, is a prime example of Virginians shaping and altering their environment in a direct and ecologically significant way. Although the size of the mining industry in Virginia peaked early in the century, new techniques for acquiring coal, new means for organizing the human labor to do so, and new understanding of the environmental consequences of these activities have grown considerably over the last hundred years. Strip mining (or open-cut mining), in which companies performed machine-intensive surface stripping practices to access coal rather than mining in shafts underground, became more common after World War II (1939–1945). While the process made coal more easily available, it accelerated old forest growth removal, aided species extinction, and



damaged watersheds by depositing overburden (the earth removed from the surface) into streambeds and river valleys. Beyond mid-century and then accelerating in the 1990s, mining companies increasingly practiced mountaintop removal (MTR), a more environmentally insidious form of surface mining whereby companies use massive machinery and toxic explosives to destroy the tops of mountains to provide access to the coal underneath. The mountains of eastern Kentucky and West Virginia continue to bear the brunt of MTR, though its practice is part of a longer historical trajectory of which the coalfields of southern Virginia's Appalachia have long been a part.

Bio:

Margaret Lucille Whitaker (1925-2007) was born in Straight Hollow. Her father was a coal miner. She married her husband Harry after he returned home from World War II in 1946. He was a miner, a railroad worker, and a pastor who stopped work in the mines after he was diagnosed with black lung. As an adult, Lucille became active in the union called the United Mine Workers Association, and helped Harry hold the picket line during strikes.

Discussion questions:

1. Describe the attempts to organize as a union discussed in this story.
2. Why did miners feel their safety was threatened if they decided to join a union?
3. Why is it significant to Ms. Whitaker that payment in scrip was replaced by payment with silver dollars?
4. Recreate the pay sheet for William Johnson. How much was subtracted from his pay every two weeks?
5. Why do you think Ms. Whitaker's dad was against the union?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Labor_in_Virginia_During_the_Twentieth_Century and
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Modern_Environmental_History_of_Virginia

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“Go Back to Work” in Russell County, 1940s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Phillips_C2_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Clarence Phillips recalls how unionization changed the quality of life in the coal mining community of Dante.

Repository: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University

Transcript:

CP: And my dad, but to get back to him working in the mines, he would work... about the only time us children would see him would be on the weekends. He would go in before daylight in the morning and he would come out after night, after we had gone to bed.

KS: What did he work five days a week?

CP: He worked five and six days a week. My dad come to work for Clinchfield, Pittston and I can see him right to this day leaving every morning to go be on the picket line, conditions were so bad with the coal companies at that time. See, they dominated your whole life from start to go. As the old saying, they dominated it from the time of birth till the time of death. See, Clinchfield Coal Company had everything. It had the company store which set out just the other side of us here and they had their mortician shop on the side and their mortician was the store manager and they sold caskets and they had the hospital down here. They took out like fifty cents a month for a doctor bill and seventy-five cents for hospital bill.

KS: That would cover everything if you got sick?

CP: Oh yeah, except all but the medicine. You had to buy your medicine. When they first come in here, you had to come to the company store and buy your groceries at the company store. You had to supplement you livelihood by raising crops. I saw all of this up here, up Straight Hollow here and up this hollow, half of them hillsides you see now that have got trees on them was cleared, and them people subsidized themselves by raising crops, and they had cows, there were cows all over this hollow here. We had a fellow here, that was Wiley Compton, that was meat cutter for Clinchfield and he decided to get out so he goes up to Trammel Gap and puts him up a store, and all these people knew him here, and they would walk from Straight Hollow and these hollows up the mountain here through the woods to his store, and they would buy some of the things that they could buy a lot cheaper from him. They would bring it back close to home and hide it. And after night they would go back and get their stuff and bring it in the house because if they found out that they went and bought something off of him they would lose their job. Oh yeah, and then sometime in the [19]30s that they started to try and organize Dante here, conditions got so bad here in the coal mines that they started to organize. Because they had to do everything secret. Even the children didn't see that.

KS: So, your dad would kind of have to slip off to go to a meeting?

CP: Yeah, and they would have to meet like down at Hamlin here. They had a house where they would meet and all those people were sworn to secrecy. If they signed these union cards they didn't have a job the next day. They would set their stuff out in the road.

KS: You were out of a house?

CP: Oh yeah.

KS: It was a company house?

CP: Even though you paid rent on that house they set you out. He lost his job.



KS: Did they put you all out of your house?

CP: No, they didn't put us out. And my dad came and was on the picket line here, and Lee Long was the president of the Clinchfield Coal Company at that time. Well, Lee knew Dad real well and so they had a union vote and they lost and what they done, they didn't hire any of the men back that voted for the United Mine Workers. So my dad goes to Walkenva Coal Company down at Walkenva which is about two mile below Trammel, and went to work for it. It was owned by Dr. L.C. McNeer, the Clinchfield Coal Company doctor.

KS: But it wasn't a Clinchfield mine?

CP: No, he owned the coal. The McNeers still own that coal.

KS: They would hire people who wanted to join the union? He didn't have a problem with it?

CP: No, they was Union, so my dad went there and went to work and I know that we was raising crops down on the creek there over from Trammel, up above Trammel there.

KS: Were you all still in the company house at this time?

CP: Still in the company house.

KS: They let you stay there?

CP: They let us stay there and so Lee Long came along. I can remember it well as if it was yesterday, because you would hear them talk about what a hard time they were having. Lee Long stopped and said—he called my dad Rufe, he didn't call him Rufus. He said, "Rufe, you go over in the morning and get your checks and go back to work," and I remember Dad saying to him, he said "Lee, you all fired me. You all don't want me, I'm for the union." He said, "Rufe, we fired the best man that we had. You go over in the morning and go back to work." Well, Dad was only getting about two or three days a week at Walkenva, so the next morning he comes over and picks up his check. He didn't have to have an examination to go to work in the mines, you just go over and pick your checks up and they put your name on the board and you go on to work. And that's how he come back and he lived to work for them until he retired.

KS: So he lived long enough to see the union come in?

CP: Oh yeah, he was one of the members whenever it come in and they signed it.

KS: I think it was 1945.

CP: So their lifestyles changed altogether and their livelihood changed, you know. They could afford more things. They started buying some cars. You would see the employees start buying cars. My oldest brother was in the mines, he had been about three months in the mines and they come from down St. Paul to our house and talked to him all day trying to sell him a car for 527 dollars, new car, new Ford car. Now that's how times were back then. Of course the union was in then and they were making a little money and they, these car people were wanting that.

Context:

Early in the 1900s, Virginia was entering a new phase in its economic life. "New South" civic and economic boosterism sought to adapt the South to the modern age of mechanization and mass production. That adaptation accounted for the greatest growth in employment as Virginians rushed to fill the white- and blue-collar jobs associated with industrialization. This was especially true in urban centers like Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg, as well as the southwestern region adjacent to the North Carolina border. Some of these jobs, like the railroad, mining, and maritime trades, had long histories in the state.

Right-to-work laws were essentially voluntary union membership laws, but the choice of the label is an ironic one. "Right to work" was originally a socialist slogan associated with trade unionism, coined early in the 1800s. Opponents of compulsory union membership appear to have chosen the phrase "right to work" because it reflected what they hoped to portray as a fight between traditional American individualism and the growing power of organized labor. Those opposing the proposed legislation came from the state's mining districts, where the United Mine Workers exercised significant influence and power, and Norfolk, a stronghold of unions in the shipbuilding trades. On January 21, 1947, Governor Tuck signed the right-to-work bill into law. Virginia's right-to-work law initially faced several real-world limitations. In areas with strong rural representation or with weak unions, organized labor faced increasing hostility from public officials.

Bio:

Clarence Phillips (1926-2016) was born in a company house, the son of a coal miner. He became a miner at the age of seventeen and shortly after, enlisted to fight in World War II. When he returned from war, he began mining again and became active in politics. His son, also named Clarence Phillips, is a district court judge.

Discussion questions:

1. According to Mr. Phillips, how did coal companies dominate their employee's lives?
2. Why did people sneak their groceries around at night when they bought them from Wiley Compton?
3. What would happen if employees signed union cards?
4. How did the employee's lifestyle change after the union organized in their town?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Labor_in_Virginia_During_the_Twentieth_Century (CC BY NC SA)



“Call Me Brother” in Russell County, 1940s

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Whitaker_L3_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Lucille Whitaker describes how unionization made residents reconsider black-white relationships in her coal mining community.

Repository: Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University

Transcript:

LW: And I know Artemis Foster, I never will forget him. He was a colored man and he worked up here at the tipple. Mommy lived up there where Paul Cline lived and Mommy was going to milk the cow. Artemis was coming up the road, walking up the road to go to the tipple and he said, "Mrs. Milhorn, where's Mr. Charlie at?" And Mommy said, "He's in the house." He said, "Well, how does he feel about the union?" And she said, "Well, he's raising all kinds of hell." [Laughter] And it tickled Artemis Foster to death when Mommy told him that and of course Mommy just died a-laughing when she told him that. And he said, "Well, wait 'till I see him. I'm going to tell him he's going to have to join the union and he's going to have to call me brother." [Laughter] So, Mommy went in the house and Daddy come in the kitchen when she was straining the milk and putting the milk away and everything. She said, "Charlie, you ought to come outside." She said Artemis was out there and she said... you know, I hadn't ought to say this on the tape, but I'm going to say it on tape. But anyhow, she told him, "Artemis said you would have to call him brother." And he said, "It would be a snowball in the middle of July before I'll call him brother."

Context:

Although they faced near total segregation in the workplace, Virginia's African Americans also made a place for themselves at labor's table. They often showed a far greater interest in organizing than whites, and their efforts resulted in all-black union locals representing workers in a handful of trades such as railroading, shipbuilding, and tobacco processing. Built by both white and black union organizers, these locals sometimes acted as "B units," black locals associated with all-white locals in similar trades. Others were organized by the workers themselves, in an attempt to wrest what little they could from a system designed to work against them. Labor leaders knew the debilitating effects of a racially divided society on the development of a biracial, working-class consciousness, but reality forced them to give in to the power of Jim Crow at almost every turn.

Bio: Margaret Lucille Whitaker (1925-2007) was born in Straight Hollow. Her father was a coal miner. She married her husband Harry after he returned home from World War II in 1946. He was a miner, a railroad worker, and a pastor who stopped work in the mines after he was diagnosed with black lung. As an adult, Lucille became active in the union called the United Mine Workers Association, and helped Harry hold the picket line during strikes.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did unionization change the relationship between black and white workers?
2. What are some reasons that Lucille's father would not call Mr. Foster his brother?

References:

“Context” adapted from:

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Labor_in_Virginia_During_the_Twentieth_Century

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VMI Will Be Heard From Today

Standard: VUS9

Audio: Shepherd_L_VUS.9.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: General Lemuel Shepherd remembers his transition from college at Virginia Military Institute to fighting in France during World War I.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

So we all said, “Yes, sir!” And we held up our right hands and were sworn in as Second Lieutenants on the 15th of April, just ten days after war had been declared, and returned to VMI Second Lieutenants in the Marine Corps. We hadn’t been back in school over two weeks before we received orders to report for duty. Active duty, Parris Island. So we were graduated on the third of May.

I always recall that date because that was the date that Stonewall Jackson, who was a great hero at VMI where he taught and had always been a hero of mine, won the battle—he began the Battle of Chancellorsville where he defeated the Union forces and before the battle he said to several VMI men on his staff, “VMI will be heard from today.” And I sort of have taken that as a motto throughout life.

Well it turned out very well, we had six or eight of us, all VMI boys, and we all ended up in the same battalion. After a tour at Verdun we were sent up back of Catigny to lead the First Division who had just gone into action there. It was about that time that the Germans broke through the Chemin des Dames, and General Pershing offered what American troops he had to help stop the debacle. We started marching, we marched till midnight and then they said, “Well, take a rest.” And so we slept for an hour, didn’t take off our packs, and then early the next morning started out and marched until 4 o’clock that afternoon. It was hot. We were still wearing overcoats and the roads were dusty. The French were—poor French peasants were falling back, were going to the rear. The baby carriages, the donkey carts, they were a pathetic sight. We were marching to the front, they were going to the rear. And so we camped at a place called [unclear] Farm, and the next morning we were ordered up to the lines. And my company took position around a farmhouse called the Mayor’s Farm, where we formed a defensive position, told to hold at all costs. And the next morning the Germans attacked, we repulsed the attack, I was wounded in that operation, not seriously. And we held there for three or four days.

Well, it turned out later on that the mayor’s farm was the closest point to Paris reached by German troops in that offensive, which has always been a matter of interest to me. Then several days later we withdrew from that position and began our attacks on Belleau. Here again I was wounded, this time more seriously, and was evacuated to the hospital in Paris where I spent the next three months recuperating. Then I returned to my regiment where there was fighting prior to the Battle of Saint Mihiel which I participated in.

And after that, one of the worst battles of the war was at Dormans Ridge in Champagne where I carried on during the battle. And after we were withdrawn from the lines in reserve, a German shell hit—burst close by and I was wounded again and ended the war in the hospital at Beaune. I wanted to return my regiment. And so I did and joined ‘em on the Rhine on the first of January, and spent the next nine months on the Rhine. Matter of fact, we were not permitted to fraternize with the Germans. Now we were billeted with the Germans. I was billeted in this dwelling. Matter of fact, the family ran a bakery. And they were very nice to me and the young man of the household had been with the German army fighting in Russia. And I used to say, “Good morgan” and “Machen the fire,” “Bring us the wasser.” That was the extent of my German. But the family was very, very nice and I remember when I subsequently was ordered to Brigade Headquarters they gave me a May Day party when I left.

And some years later I came back there and met the same family again and they were most ... most friendly. No, I did not notice any antipathy. If they didn’t do something, and I remember our battalion once



they got out and singing too many songs on the streets, he got out there and told 'em they could lock 'em all up, put 'em to work sweeping the streets, which that was the standard punishment, if they disobeyed the so-called burgermeister. Why, they put 'em to work sweeping the streets. But there was no antipathy that I noticed.

Context:

In May 1915 a German submarine sank the British passenger liner Lusitania, killing nearly 1,200 people, including 128 Americans. Popular opinion in America, which had long been isolationist, now supported war against Germany. In January 1917, Germany declared that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare, sinking any ship nearing Britain. Wilson broke off relations with Germany but still hesitated to seek a declaration of war. In March 1917 the British released an intercepted German cable to Mexico promising an alliance if Mexico attacked the United States. The so-called Zimmermann Telegram fueled American public support for war, and on April 2, 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany "because the world must be made safe for democracy.

American troops entered the fighting in October 1917 and by the summer of 1918 were on the offensive against Germany. Throughout U.S. involvement in Europe, Wilson worked to guarantee that the war would be fought for some purpose other than territorial gain. In January 1917 he gave a speech titled "Peace Without Victory" that outlined peace terms, proposing the two sides negotiate as equals rather than as victor and vanquished. In January 1918 Wilson delivered another speech articulating his "Fourteen Points," which set conditions for a just and lasting peace. Among his proposals was the League of Nations, an idea originally proposed by the British but most vocally and forcefully advocated by Wilson.

Bio: General Lemuel C. Shepherd (1896 – 1990) was born in Norfolk, Virginia. In 1913, he attended Virginia Military Institute. Shortly after the United States joined the First World War, Shepherd joined the United States Marine Corps as a Second Lieutenant and was sent to France. After the war Shepherd saw action in China during the early part of the Chinese Civil War. During the Second World War he saw action in the Pacific Theater. During the Korean War Shepherd became the Commandant of the Marine Corps, after which he was made Chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board. He retired from military service in 1960.

Discussion questions:

1. How did General Shepherd react to news that the "war was on"?
2. Why was obtaining a commission important to General Shepherd and his friends?
3. In a couple of sentences, summarize how General Shepherd interacted with and described the German people.
4. Why was General Shepherd stationed in France?
5. Identify why President Wilson declared war on Germany.

References:

Context adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Wilson_Woodrow_1856-1924 (CC BY NC SA)

"How To Cook Turnips: 200 Ways" in Germany, 1918

Standard: VUS9

Audio: Stanley_D_VUS.9.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Dr. Dorothy Evans Stanley recalls the political and economic upheaval in Germany after World War I that altered her childhood and ultimately led to her settlement in the United States.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

JS: This is James Sweeney, the university archivist of Old Dominion University, interviewing Dr. Dorothy Evelyn Stanley, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Foreign Languages at Old Dominion University. First question that I wanted to ask you Dr. Stanley was, could you tell me about your background in Europe, that is, where you were born, and what your early career aspirations were?

DS: Well, I was born in Germany, in Nuremberg, Germany, and my early education took place in Germany, France and England. Early career background I can't say because I studied after I graduated from what would be the equivalent of high school and then married. So, I really didn't have an early career.

JS: Could you tell me about your life in Alsace-Lorraine before World War I?

DS: Well, you see, when we left the Alsace-Lorraine, I was a little bit over five years old, so I can't tell very much about the life there except I went to kindergarten there. And I remember very well that when the war broke out, World War I, that there were very divided factions in the kindergarten. Suddenly children were not allowed to play with other children because one was French and the other was German. And I remember the hostility of neighbors towards us who had been our friends because suddenly we were Germans and the others were French. But up to that time, and this is about just all the childish impressions that I could have.

JS: Was your being reared, even for such a short time, in Alsace-Lorraine a key to your linguistic ability?

DS: Well, my family has various backgrounds of English and French and, of course, German as my native language and as it is in Europe, we traveled very extensively spending the summer in Italy or in Spain or in France. I was exposed at a very young age to so many different languages which happens to most Europeans. And I have a great knack for languages and learn them very quickly, so, this is definitely, maybe, the beginning of it.

JS: Could you tell me about your experiences during World War I?

DS: Well, I don't remember again too much except that we did move to Munich, where I saw the revolution really in 1918 after the Emperor had to abdicate after Germany lost the war. And I remember that there were very heated discussions everywhere, what was going to happen after the Emperor would've been gone and what kind of system we would have. I also remember a hunger situation; we had absolutely nothing to eat. My mother had a cookbook called, "How to Cook Turnips: 200 Different Ways" and we had them for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And I can't even stand the smell of turnips now because I think I've had all the turnips for the rest of my life. But I remember that we received packages from America. We received packages through the Quakers, but the situation of eating was absolutely terrible. And if you say during World War I, I can't tell you too much about that but right after the end of World War I, of course, then Germany [unclear] into the inflation in 1921. Everybody lost everything and there was a great turmoil in Germany which I well remember. I also remember that we had an uncle, a brother of my grandfather's, who lived in America, who sent us five dollars, a five-dollar bill during the inflation. And my brother put it in the bank and I bought a whole beautiful, new bicycle with those five dollars. This is what the inflation had come to. And after the inflation was over and the Mark was stabilized again, my brother had five dollars and I had a brand new bike.



JS: During this trying time in post-war Munich, did your experiences then condition your outlook on life?

DS: Yes, very much so. I mean, this was perhaps the second time after we left the Alsace-Lorraine, it was the first time in Munich. That was perhaps the second time that I came eye-to-eye with brute force and I have been very much aware of dictatorships and anything that does not allow you to live freely. And I am very conscious of dangers when I see them lurk anywhere on the horizon.

JS: You have already mentioned the inflation, 'course that was one of the primary problems of the Weimar Republic. Can you recall any other memories of life under the Weimar Republic?

DS: I think the Weimar Republic as far as the general citizenry of Germany's concerned has had a very short life. Also had very little chance to really become anything because there was so much turmoil that something that seemed a rather weak regime was not something that impressed anybody, that it could cure the loss of jobs, the great number of unemployed people and the starvation and the loss of property and all this. It faced too many problems and as far as Germany's history was concerned, it was a weak link. It never really get a chance to do anything. People talked about the Weimar Republic and I was a teenager then, but it was not anything that anybody had great faith in.

Context:

In May 1915 a German submarine sank the British passenger liner Lusitania, killing nearly 1,200 people, including 128 Americans. Popular opinion in America, which had long been isolationist, now supported war against Germany. In January 1917, Germany declared that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare, sinking any ship nearing Britain. Wilson broke off relations with Germany but still hesitated to seek a declaration of war. In March 1917 the British released an intercepted German cable to Mexico promising an alliance if Mexico attacked the United States. The so-called Zimmermann Telegram fueled American public support for war, and on April 2, 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany "because the world must be made safe for democracy."

American troops entered the fighting in October 1917 and by the summer of 1918 were on the offensive against Germany. Throughout U.S. involvement in Europe, Wilson worked to guarantee that the war would be fought for some purpose other than territorial gain. In January 1917 he gave a speech titled "Peace Without Victory" that outlined peace terms, proposing the two sides negotiate as equals rather than as victor and vanquished. In January 1918 Wilson delivered another speech articulating his "Fourteen Points," which set conditions for a just and lasting peace. Among his proposals was the League of Nations, an idea originally proposed by the British but most vocally and forcefully advocated by Wilson.

After the war ended on November 11, 1918, Wilson represented the United States in the Paris peace talks and, in so doing, became the first president to travel to Europe while in office. Wilson convinced the other major powers, including Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, to approve the League of Nations, but the final Treaty of Versailles was harsher than Wilson had planned and further alienated Germany.

Bio:

Dr. Dorothy Evelyn Stanley (1910 - 2000) was born in Nuremberg, Germany. She received her undergraduate degree in the United Kingdom and pursued a graduate degree in Germany, but the rise of the Nazis forced her to leave university, because she had a distant Jewish relative. Soon thereafter she immigrated to the United States where she attained her Master's degree in education with a concentration in German. During the Second World War, Stanley served as assistant head of the Monitoring Section of the Overseas Radio Division for the Department of State. After the war she worked as a translator for a New York bank, and taught languages at the College of William and Mary and Old Dominion University.

Discussion questions:

1. How does Dr. Stanley describe the economic situation in Germany after WWI?
2. How did nationalism in the Alsace-Lorraine region affect Dr. Stanley's childhood?

3. What were some of her connections to the United States after World War I ended?
4. Analyze the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Germany.
5. Although Dr. Stanley does not explicitly describe Germany's isolation after WWI in the interview, what are some of the clues she gives that indicate turmoil in Germany?

References:

Context adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Wilson_Woodrow_1856-1924 (CC BY NC SA)



“Get Out There and Get It” in Grayson County, 1930

Standard: VUS10

Audio: Ball_E_VUS.10.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: EC Ball remembers working alongside his father during the Great Depression—for under a dollar a day between them.

Repository: Ferrum College, Digital Archives of Appalachia

Transcript:

EB: And, I used to work on the farm, back when I was a young man. Was married a long time after. And I mean, we worked, too. There wasn't no big "i's" and little "you's" around my house, it was just, "Get out there and get it, buddy. That's the only way you'll eat around here." And I cradled wheat. I cradled oats and rye and I mowed with the mowing scythe, got up hay with a pitchfork. Used to shuck it up and had hay poles, run two of them under there and I'd get under one end and my daddy under the other and we'd carry the shucks in... put them in the barn or in a stack. Corn, planted... back then, they'd put out ten acres. By the time you'd get through hoeing, the first time, it'd be time to start in the bottom the second time. We'd hoe corn about all summer. And harvest... I worked for a gentleman that lived right down below us, that's where I got my spending money, what little I had. He'd pay a dollar a day and you'd work ten hours. You'd hoe corn or pitch hay or cut wheat or oats or whatever and you worked for ten hours, until you...you didn't play, you'd take about an hour out for dinner and go in and eat, lay down in the shade and rest a little while. He'd say, "Well boys, we better hit her again, we ain't gonna get done here." So we'd go back to work. But, he was a good man, good man to work for and he always had the money to pay you and money back then was... I don't know it's different from what it is now. You could go to the store with a dollar and buy you a pair of overalls and a shirt and now it takes about fifteen or twenty to get a pair of overalls and a shirt. Money would go a lot more then, a lot farther than it does now. I remember the first day's work I ever done away from home, I was just a boy, about, I guess eleven or twelve, maybe, and a gentleman come and asked my daddy if he'd come hoe corn for him. Said, "I can pay you fifty cents a day." That was back in the Depression days now and he... my daddy said, "Yeah, I'd be glad to. Need the money." Well, my daddy pointed at me and said, "He can hoe as much corn as I can." Said, "Would you give him a job?" And he said, "Yeah, bring him on." Said, "I can't pay you full wages. I'll give you half, twenty-five cents." I said, "Well, okay." So I went on and I worked like a groundhog digging him a hole all day. That evening he come around paying everybody off and he come to me and he said, "Well, son I've been a-watching you today." Said, "You hoed as much corn as anybody you've done a good job." Said, "I'm not gonna cheat ya, I'm gonna pay you fifty cents." [Laughter] He gave me two quarters and I lost one of them before I got home so I must have got that dishonest. But, it was rough back in my young days. I mean, we didn't have much. We enjoyed living and most everybody grew everything that they had to eat except coffee and sugar. And they'd go to the store and get that. But, we had our own meat, our own milk, and our own butter, our own bread, and we'd grow a crop of wheat every year and a crop of corn every year and everything else that go with it. So we didn't have much to buy except clothes and we didn't have too many fancy clothes, I'll tell you that. We had a pair of overalls and a chambray shirt, why, you's lucky. Of course, we had a little better outfit for Sunday, if we needed to go to Sunday school or church or somewhere. Why, they'd scrub up our ears a little and put on a little better but it wasn't the life of Riley, by no means. But, I don't know what people got as long as well then as they do now. They had a lot more in common. I mean, there wasn't no rich people around, very few. And they stuck out like a sore thumb. Nobody thought much of them. So I guess we had a pretty good life, up to the present time anyway.

Context:

The Great Depression of the 1930s was the most serious economic crisis in American history. Virginia had a delayed reaction to the Great Depression. The nature of its economy—the balance between

agriculture, industry, and commerce, a diverse farming sector not dependent on one crop, the high rate of subsistence-level farming, and the support of federal money in the Washington and Norfolk areas—immunized the state from the immediate effects of the crisis. Most available statistics indicate that, compared to conditions in 1929, Virginia was relatively better off than most other states during the depression, with industrial productivity and employment rising rapidly in the last half of the decade. Nevertheless, the state was hardly "Depression-proof." Unemployment began to rise more rapidly in 1931, farm prices plummeted, the state government cut spending to maintain a balanced budget, and relief rolls rose sharply.

On Virginia's farms, it was a time for rigid economizing. Practically no agricultural machinery was purchased, and deterioration in buildings and equipment was widespread. Clarence Holt of Albemarle County recalled: "Money for necessities was scarce—for luxuries nonexistent ... Dresses were made from chicken feed bags; more under garments carried the trademark of 4X flour than of any department store." There was some discontent in rural areas, notably among the young, who often left home, but there were no riots, protests, or even a significant increase in crime. Indeed, many people were coming back to the farms, where they hoped to find greater security than in the cities. In this interview, E.C. Ball, from Grayson County, Virginia, talks about working on a farm during the Great Depression as a young boy.

Bio:

Estil Cortez Ball (1913-1978) was a songwriter and folk musician from Grayson County, Virginia. He performed with the Friendly Gospel Singers from the 1950s to the 1970s. He released three albums of country gospel music during his lifetime.

Discussion questions:

1. Identify one reason why Virginia experienced a delayed reaction to the Great Depression in comparison to the rest of the nation.
2. Summarize the ways in which the Great Depression started to impact Virginians in 1931.
3. Why do you think E.C. Ball agreed to work for a quarter a day?
4. Why did the Ball family buy so few items from the store?
5. How can you connect the story E.C. Ball tells us to the economic hardships of the Great Depression in Virginia?

References:

"Context" adapted from: https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Great_Depression_in_Virginia (CC BY NC SA)



“Hot Rolls and Steak” in Norfolk, 1930

Standard: VUS10

Audio: Edmonds_M_VUS.10.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Marian Miller Edmonds describes how her grandmother cooked food for her family, for struggling neighbors, and for profit during the Great Depression.

Repository: Behind the Veil, the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

Transcript:

ME: Well, my grandmother was born in Essex County, which is near Richmond. When she was young, her mother took her and her sister to Baltimore, and they lived there. When she was twelve years old, she came to Norfolk with a white family as playmate, or nursemaid, or whatever, to these children. She lived with them, and believe it or not, Main Street at that time—I don't know whether you've heard of Main Street—but anyhow, Main Street was where the elite lived. This was in 1800-something—1880, 1882, something like that. And that's where the elite lived, in that section down there. So she came down there to live with them. She met my grandfather because he was delivering groceries down there to this particular home. But that's how she got to Norfolk. Now, his family moved from Princess Anne County up here. I don't really know too much about his background as far as that is concerned, because Papa didn't really talk that much. He just was Papa. He went to work in the morning, he came home in the afternoon. On Wednesdays the market closed for half a day, and he liked fish, and that day we had hot rolls and fish and corn. Oh, we had corn cakes. My grandmother could cook. My grandmother could cook! I tell you. We had chicken on Sunday. We didn't have chicken every day like we do here. I'm so tired of chicken, I don't know what to do. [Laughter] But we had chicken on Sunday. Very good, very devout church people. They were Methodist. They had what they called class on Sunday mornings, and he would go to class on Sunday morning and then when he came home we would have breakfast, which consisted of hot rolls and steak maybe, since he was down at the market. And steak. But the one thing that I remember, we never ate without a scripture reading and prayer before breakfast. My grandfather lost his sight to glaucoma, I guess, my last year in school. He continued the practice, but he had memorized so much of the Bible that he could just recite whatever came into his mind at that time for breakfast. The one thing that I do remember of the two of them, they were always giving to someone who was less fortunate than they. They even took two or three people in that I remember, when they had nowhere to go and kept them. So we kept in touch with those people. They're dead now, but as long as we possibly could. Even during the Depression, even though times were tight, we never went hungry. There always was something to give to someone else. Then at that time, to stretch the money, my grandmother began to make pies and to sell them over at a factory. It was called Finklestein, where clothing was made. We'd go out there with these pies and sell them, my cousin and I, along with my aunt. We'd peel apples in the afternoon and slice the apples and peel more apples and slice up more apples, and get up in the morning and help them bake the pies before we went to school. It was just living, that's all. I thought it was heaven, really, where I lived. I laugh with my children, now. I said, "You know, I didn't even know I lived in the ghetto until I was about forty years old." They told me I was in the ghetto, but it was all right with me. I knew everybody on the block. I could name them. The school was on the corner, J.C. Price School. That was on the corner of Church Street. And when the circus would come into town, we would get out of school and stand by this big fence and watch the parade go down Church Street. Who could ask for anything else? It was all right.

Context:

The Great Depression of the 1930s was the most serious economic crisis in American history. Virginia had a delayed reaction to the Great Depression. The nature of its economy—the balance between agriculture, industry, and commerce, a diverse farming sector not dependent on one crop, the high rate of subsistence-level farming, and the support of federal money in the Washington and Norfolk areas—

immunized the state from the immediate effects of the crisis. Most available statistics indicate that, compared to conditions in 1929, Virginia was relatively better off than most other states during the depression, with industrial productivity and employment rising rapidly in the last half of the decade. Nevertheless, the state was hardly "Depression-proof." Unemployment began to rise more rapidly in 1931, farm prices plummeted, the state government cut spending to maintain a balanced budget, and relief rolls rose sharply.

Specifically, Norfolk fired teachers, imposed salary cuts, and closed city kindergartens, and Richmond, where hunger marches had occurred, was spending \$4,000 a week for relief. While growing up in Norfolk, Marion Miller Edmonds remembers the ways her family made ends meet during the Great Depression.

Bio:

Marian Miller Edmonds (1921 - ?) was born in Norfolk, Virginia. She attended college at Hampton University. After graduation she began work in several different schools around Virginia as a librarian. Edmonds had two children.

Discussion questions:

1. Identify the basic needs Marion Miller Edmonds remembers her family always providing during the Great Depression.
2. How did Ms. Miller's extended family help supply these basic needs?
3. Compare the ways that Marion Miller Edmonds' family made ends meet during the Great Depression to the ways that E.C. Ball remembers his family making ends meet.

References:

"Context" adapted from: https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Great_Depression_in_Virginia (CC BY NC SA)



“I Did Everything” in Norfolk, 1930s

Standard: VUS10

Audio: Mitchell_A_VUS.10.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Alma Boone Mitchell reveals how government assistance and economic change shaped her childhood during the Great Depression.

Repository: Behind the Veil, the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

Transcript:

MH: You were growing up during the Depression.

AM: Yes.

MH: What was that like?

AM: We had stamps, some kind of stamps. We got meat and sugar, shoes, and stuff like that. We went to a little grocery store. My daddy would send us to a grocery store to get molasses and cornbread—I mean, meal and flour and lard and sugar. But the rest of the stuff, he raised it on the farm.

MH: What crops were you all working on that time? Was it cotton?

AM: Cotton, peanuts, corn, soybeans.

MH: Did you have to pick cotton?

AM: I picked cotton, shucked peas, plant peas, pulled corn, chopped, did everything.

MH: So with the peanuts, would you all have to pull the [unclear]?

AM: My daddy would plow them up and we would take the pitchfork and shake them. It was three processes you had to go through. You'd shake them and pile them up, then you'd go back and pile them up and then you'd carry them around and put them on a shock.

MH: So you had to work. Did your other siblings, your brothers and sisters, all have to work?

AM: Yes, all had to work.

MH: Did any of them get to go to school for a long period of time?

AM: No. No.

Context:

The Great Depression of the 1930s was the most serious economic crisis in American history. Virginia had a delayed reaction to the Great Depression. The nature of its economy—the balance between agriculture, industry, and commerce, a diverse farming sector not dependent on one crop, the high rate of subsistence-level farming, and the support of federal money in the Washington and Norfolk areas—immunized the state from the immediate effects of the crisis. Most available statistics indicate that, compared to conditions in 1929, Virginia was relatively better off than most other states during the depression, with industrial productivity and employment rising rapidly in the last half of the decade. Nevertheless, the state was hardly "Depression-proof." Unemployment began to rise more rapidly in 1931, farm prices plummeted, the state government cut spending to maintain a balanced budget, and relief rolls rose sharply. Specifically, Norfolk fired teachers, imposed salary cuts, and closed city

kindergartens, and Richmond, where hunger marches had occurred, was spending \$4,000 a week for relief.

Bio:

Alma Boone Mitchell (1933 - ?) was born in Southampton County, Virginia, to a family of sharecroppers. She went to school until the sixth grade. Mitchell married at the age of fifteen and moved to Norfolk to live with her husband's family in 1949. She had several children before beginning work at a restaurant in 1964.

Discussion questions:

1. Analyze the different ways Ms. Mitchell discusses food in comparison to Marion Miller Edmonds.
2. Describe the ways Alma Boone Mitchell helped her family during the Great Depression.
3. Why do you think Alma and her siblings did not go to school for long periods of time?

References:

"Context" adapted from: https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Great_Depression_in_Virginia (CC BY NC SA)



“The Only President I’ve Ever Seen” in Stanardsville, 1930s

Standard: VUS10

Audio: Dean_D_VUS.10.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Dookie Dean remembers the president’s visit to the Shenandoah Valley and Flanders, the first car in town.

Repository: Greene County Historical Society

Transcript:

ED: That was about the biggest thing that happened, when Roosevelt come in for the park, dedicated the national park. That was the biggest thing that happened that I know of. I remember that real well. As well as I remember, he was riding in a Packard automobile with the top down. He was on the back seat. Of course, except for the driver, no one was in there with him. Cars in front of him and cars behind him. I think he’s... I believe he was dedicating a big camp that’s out this way. That’s the only President I’ve ever seen. But a large crowd he had in town. Boy, the streets were lined to see him. Had a big banner over the street up here, "Welcome to Stanardsville, Mr. President" across the street.

Yeah, the first car in the county was owned by Dr. Davis and my father, Kemper Deane. The name of it was Flanders, it was the name of the car. And most people were afraid of it. I talked to a lot of people back at that time, they said... they told me they would run and hide from it, get away from it. And, of course, at that time there was a lot of teams on the road. Teams were scared of it, but teams had the right of way. If my dad was driving a car, he talked with the team he had to stop. You had to let the team by.

Context:

The mass production and consumption of automobiles, household appliances, film, and radio fueled a new economy and new standards of living. The joy of buying infected a growing number of Americans in the early twentieth century as the rise of mail-order catalogs, mass-circulation magazines, and national branding further stoked consumer desire. The automobile industry also fostered the new culture of consumption by promoting the use of credit. By 1927, more than 60 percent of American automobiles were sold on credit, and installment purchasing was made available for nearly every other large consumer purchase. Spurred by access to easy credit, consumer expenditures for household appliances, for example, grew by more than 120 percent between 1919 and 1929. Henry Ford’s assembly line, which advanced production strategies practiced within countless industries, brought automobiles within the reach of middle-income Americans and further drove the spirit of consumerism. By 1925, Ford’s factories were turning out a Model-T every ten seconds. The number of registered cars ballooned from just over nine million in 1920 to nearly twenty-seven million by the decade’s end. Americans owned more cars than Great Britain, Germany, France, and Italy combined. In the late 1920s, 80 percent of the world’s cars drove on American roads.

As the automobile became more popular and more reliable, more people traveled more frequently and attempted greater distances. Women increasingly drove themselves to their own activities as well as those of their children. Vacationing Americans sped to Florida to escape northern winters. In order to serve and capture the growing number of drivers, Americans erected gas stations, diners, motels, and billboards along the roadside. Automobiles themselves became objects of entertainment: nearly one hundred thousand people gathered to watch drivers compete for the \$50,000 prize of the Indianapolis 500.

Bio:

Elmer “Dookie” Deane (1924-2012) served in the US Army after World War II and worked for Centel Telephone Company.

Discussion questions:

1. What does Mr. Deane remember about President Roosevelt's car?
2. Why did people line the streets when President Roosevelt drove through the town?
3. Why do you think people were initially scared of cars? Why do you think the car had a name?
4. What was the transition from horses to automobiles like in Appalachia?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/22-the-twenties> (CC BY SA 4.0)



“He’ll Be Such a Flop” in Germany, 1933

Standard: VUS11

Audio: Stanley_D_VUS.11.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Dr. Dorothy Evelyn Stanley connects the growing anti-Semitism in Germany with Hitler’s rise to power. While not initially targeted, Dr. Stanley was forced to leave school and eventually Germany, immigrating to America in 1937.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

DS: Well this—the first thing I remember, 'course Hitler came to power in January 1933 as Chancellor of Germany, and the first thing I remember was that people discussed the possibility of him being elected and people who were really intelligent and who were leading citizens of Germany said, "As long as he's in the opposition, he is going to make trouble. Let's put him in power and see that in four weeks, nobody will ever talk about him again. He'll be such a flop and so let's vote for him." And people who were very opposed to him voted for him because they wanted to see him gone. And, of course, you know this kind of argument didn't hold water because once he was in power that was it. But the thing that I most vividly remember was the 1st of April, 1933, when in every single town they smashed, during the night, windows of Jewish stores and put big signs of the Jewish star and swastikas across and beat up people. We walked through the town where I lived in Stuttgart to where I had married and it was just a nightmare. And I felt that if this kind of thing can happen in a civilized nation, in a nation that had produced Bach and Beethoven, Schiller and Goethe, that anything could happen.

JS: This was the first instance that you saw the true meaning of Nazism or did you feel that when he was in the opposition that this would happen?

DS: Well, this had, of course, a few things that pointed in that direction. It didn't just suddenly come. Anti-Semitism prevailed to a great degree in German schools even before Hitler came to power. But it was instigated by little groups, little storm-trooping groups or youth organizations that banded up and did that kind of thing, similar to the Bund that I found when I came here in this country. And it just needed the necessary brutal force support for these people to go haywire.

JS: Why did you have to leave the University of Heidelberg?

DS: Because the Germans went all the way back on Jewish background and it turned out that one of my great-grandparents was Jewish and that made me one-sixteenth Jewish. And that was the reason I was expelled from the university after I had finished everything else and all my records were neatly stacked on the desk and destroyed at the same time, every single bursar's receipt, everything. There was no trace of it. Later on, I found out that the law was one-eighth and they really had no right to do that to me, legally. But I had no leg to stand on because there was nothing that could ever be proven because nothing was there, academically speaking. We have tried and other people have tried, but there just is nothing to be done about it.

JS: Could you elaborate upon your experiences in Germany in the 1930s prior to coming to the United States?

DS: Well, there were, of course, all kinds of experiences. As far as I'm personally concerned, I still turn off the TV when this era is mentioned in any movie or show because I have really made a deliberate and conscious effort to eliminate everything from my memory that had any personal bearing on this period

because it was just too terrible. And it's over forty years back and I just hope I never come in contact with it again.

JS: When did you come then to the United States?

DS: I arrived in the United States in December 1937 on a very cold winter night and I arrived at the pier in New York. Often people ask me, "What was the first thing you did in the United States?" and I say, "I played the accordion." And people think that is a very flippant answer but that's really the first thing I did in the United States because I brought with me a Hohner accordion, and people brought these and Leica cameras in order to sell them here and get some money. And I really had no intentions. I had this little accordion and I still have it. And the customs official told me it would cost too much duty unless I could play it and he made me play it right there at the pier and I did. So, the very first thing I ever did in the United States was to play the accordion.

JS: Could you describe your first reactions to life in the United States and to the American people?

DS: Well, my first reaction was that I was very much relieved that I was in a free country and that I was here, where in safety as well as my family, and so there was a great feeling of gratitude about it and my reaction to life in the United States was, everything was just beautiful.

Context:

Across the globe in Europe, the continent's major powers were still struggling with the aftereffects of World War I when the global economic crisis spiraled much of the continent into chaos. Germany's Weimar Republic collapsed with the economy, and out of the ashes emerged Adolf Hitler's National Socialists—the Nazis. Championing German racial supremacy, fascist government, and military expansionism, Hitler rose to power and, after aborted attempts to take power in Germany, became chancellor in 1933 and the Nazis conquered German institutions. Democratic traditions were smashed. Leftist groups were purged. Hitler repudiated the punitive damages and strict military limitations of the Treaty of Versailles. He rebuilt the German military and navy. He reoccupied regions lost during the war and remilitarized the Rhineland, along the border with France. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, Hitler and Benito Mussolini—the fascist Italian leader who had risen to power in the 1920s—intervened for the Spanish fascists, toppling the communist Spanish Republican Party. Britain and France stood by warily and began to rebuild their militaries, anxious in the face of a renewed Germany but still unwilling to draw Europe into another bloody war.

Bio:

Dr. Dorothy Evelyn Stanley (1910 - 2000) was born in Nuremberg, Germany. She received her undergraduate degree in the United Kingdom and pursued a graduate degree in Germany, but the rise of the Nazis forced her to leave university, because she had a distant Jewish relative. Soon thereafter she immigrated to the United States where she attained her Master's degree in education with a concentration in German. During the Second World War, Stanley served as assistant head of the Monitoring Section of the Overseas Radio Division for the Department of State. After the war she worked as a translator for a New York bank, and taught languages at the College of William and Mary and Old Dominion University.

Discussion questions:

1. Summarize how Dr. Stanley describes Hitler first coming to power in Germany.
2. How did anti-Semitism in Germany aid Hitler's rise to power?
3. Identify the different groups of people Dr. Stanley mentions when talking concentration camps.
4. What does Dr. Stanley describe as a mistaken idea in regards to the concentration camps in Germany during World War II?



References:

Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/24-world-war-ii> (CC BY SA 4.0)

“Quite a Day” in Pearl Harbor, 1941

Standard: VUS11

Audio: Bassett_W_VUS.11.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Colonel William D. Bassett, Jr. recalls viewing the air battle over Pearl Harbor.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

JT: Col. Bassett has been in the Marines for twenty-nine years and has seen active duty in both Korea and Vietnam. This interview was recorded for Old Dominion University by Joel Trammel on November 29, 1978.

WB: My dad was a thirty-year Marine; he came in in 1917 and retired in 1949. He and I were on active duty in the Marine Corps together for about five months. I was commissioned in the Marine Corps in June of [19]49; Dad retired in November of [19]49, so I kind of grew up all around the world. As a matter of fact, I had my first three years in China as a baby, went over there at the age of nine months. My mother followed Dad out there, and he was assigned to China right after my birth. And then we went from there to Cap-Haitien, Haiti, and that was for another three years, 1930 to [19]33, and from there back up to the United States. Dad was at Quantico, Virginia at that time. Spent a year in Newport, Rhode Island when I was around twelve years old, and then went out to California. A year out there in San Diego, and then following that, we were transferred in September of [19]41 out to Honolulu, Hawaii.

JT: You got there just in time for some interesting action then, didn't you?

WB: Right. I was fourteen then. And I'll never forget the day, of course, three months after we arrived, December the seventh of [19]41 when the Japanese struck. That was quite a day, of course. My dad was home at that time and got him up and he went out aboard the ship --he was stationed on the Tennessee at the time and I was able to watch from the rooftops the battle at Pearl Harbor from a distance, there in Honolulu City. Matter of fact, while I was standing on the rooftop, a Japanese Zero shot down a P-40 right over our area we were in; it crashed into the punchbowl.

JT: I was going to ask you if you had any damage in your area, maybe your home or your building, or in that particular area.

WB: No, we were actually about eight or nine miles from Pearl Harbor itself, but the air battle, what little air battle there was did come, some of it, over our area. As I say, I saw that one incident. Other than that, it was just--you could see the planes diving in and out and the antiaircraft shooting at them over Pearl Harbor, and it was all the smoke and all that type of thing.

Bio: William D. Bassett, Jr. (1927-1997) was born in California. He attended the U.S. Naval Academy and served in both Korea and Vietnam.

Context:

Although the United States joined the war in 1941, two years after Europe exploded into conflict in 1939, the path to the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the surprise attack that threw the United States headlong into war, began much earlier. For the Empire of Japan, the war had begun a decade before Pearl Harbor.

On the morning of December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Japanese military planners hoped to destroy enough battleships and aircraft carriers to cripple American naval power for years. Twenty-four hundred Americans were killed in the attack.



American isolationism fell at Pearl Harbor. Japan also assaulted Hong Kong, the Philippines, and American holdings throughout the Pacific, but it was the attack on Hawaii that threw the United States into a global conflict. Franklin Roosevelt called December 7 “a date which will live in infamy” and called for a declaration of war, which Congress answered within hours. Within a week of Pearl Harbor the United States had declared war on the entire Axis, turning two previously separate conflicts into a true world war.

Discussion questions:

1. How does Colonel Bassett, Jr. describe the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?
2. Describe the significance of the Pearl Harbor attack in relationship to the United States involvement in World War II.
3. How did the United States respond to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

References:

Context adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/24-world-war-ii> (CC BY SA 4.0)

“Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose” in Richmond, 1940s

Standard: VUS11

Audio: Day_B_VUS.11.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Betty Day recounts her wartime efforts as a young girl writing letters to the families of American soldiers captured by Japanese and German forces.

Repository: Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida Digital Collections

Transcript: And we lived in Richmond for a while, during World War II. That's why I have such vivid memories of it. And I have a sister that's eight years old than I am, so she was very much—all of her boyfriends, all of her girlfriends' boyfriends were in the war. I became much in—and remember a great deal about it, particularly living in the city. I remember the first time going downtown and seeing a Japanese suicide submarine. They had it on display between Miller & Rhoads and Thalhimers, the two most famous department stores in the world. [Laughter] That little sub, I can still see it now today. In school, we were very much involved in it. Of course, my mother had an extra bedroom and she would let the servicemen from the U.S.O.—they would send them out—spend the night. Of course, I fell in love with each one of 'em. I thought each one of 'em was the most handsome man I'd ever seen in my life. So, a lot of that was going on. And I remember the rationing books. I remember losing our rationing books. My mother would send me to pick up maybe some bread or something of that sort, and coming home. I don't know what I—but anyhow, someone turned them in and we got them back. That was the nicest thing. But I can remember that day; I was so frightened that I had lost those rationing books. And I remember the day that the gas went off of rationing. Dad had gotten—and this sounds—but he would sometimes take an old tire and put it over his other tires and that would wear for a while. You could drive on it. Anyhow, he had gotten enough tickets, or rationing coupons, to get tires and we went to Florida to visit my aunt and uncle. When we got back to Virginia, we drove up and bought some gasoline without rationing books. It was the first time we ever had bought without rationing books. Kind of some good memories.

In those days, shortwave radio: now, you wouldn't get it all, but you would get Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose. We could listen to them on shortwave. I would write down—they would give you—Axis Sally in particular would give you the names of the soldiers they'd captured that day and their serial number and their home address. And those that I could write down, I would write to the parents and tell them. And sometimes that was the first they knew about it, because it takes a little while for the War Department to get news to them. It happened to us. My cousin and I decided to go to the movies on a Saturday night. That night, his brother, who was on D-Day, his plane had been shot down, he was saved. He had been taken a German prisoner. People were doing the same thing that I had been doing, and his mother got these phone calls and then got these letters long before she got word that he had been taken as a prisoner.

Context:

During World War II, many Virginian women served in the military, some even sacrificing their lives. They also took leadership roles on the home front, filling manufacturing and office jobs, offering their homes up to traveling soldiers, working with charitable and social organizations benefiting American men and women abroad, and volunteering along the coast to enemy aircraft.

Bio: Betty Wrenn Day was born in 1930 in Richmond and grew up in Mathews County, Virginia. She is a writer and has been the food editor for the *Gloucester-Mathews Gazette-Journal* since 1979.

Discussion questions:

1. Compare life during wartime and life during peacetime.
2. Why do you think the submarine was on display at the department store?
3. What are some of the ways that citizens in Richmond “did their part?”



References:

“Context” by Jessica Taylor. CC BY NC SA 4.0

“The Poor Operator” in Lancaster County, 1940s

Standard: VUS11

Audio: Henley_P_VUS.11.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Page Henley remembers his grandmother’s volunteer work with coastal defense efforts on the home front during World War II.

Repository: Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida Digital Collections

Transcript:

M: You said it very casually, but your grandmother helped found two different societies as well as help run a magazine?

RH: Yep.

M: Wow. [Laughter]

RH: She was a busy lady. She also, during World War I, was in charge of the Red Cross program in the county, which they rolled the bandages, did all that sort of thing to support the military troops. She did the same thing in World War II. She was also an airplane observer. You may not have ever heard about them. But in the early days of the war, everybody was convinced either German or Japanese planes would rapidly go to bomb Washington or Norfolk or somewhere. And so, in this part of Virginia, volunteers would go up every day up on buildings, roofs of buildings, and observe airplanes. A plane flying between Norfolk and Washington would come right over this area. So, there were a lot of airplanes back and forth. And they were mainly ladies, and they'd get up and they'd get their binoculars and they'd look at this plane and they tried to figure out what kind of plane it was. They could never really agree. Then, they'd have to get down off the roof, go make a phone call to some number, and that required a hand-cranked telephone and getting an operator. But the operator never answered in time, my grandmother felt. So, she would always berate the poor operator and tell her that the Germans were bombing Washington while she was doing her nails or something. But yeah, that was the kind of world they lived in. They had an emergency landing field that was built here in the county, and later served as a training area for the glider pilots that landed in Normandy and the Invasion of France. But yeah, people turned out, very patriotic. Sadly, she lost her only son in World War II, was killed in action. He was my uncle. Just because they were rural it didn't slow them down from supporting the war effort.

Context:

During World War II, many Virginian women served in the military, some even sacrificing their lives. They also took leadership roles on the home front, filling manufacturing and office jobs, offering their homes up to traveling soldiers, working with charitable and social organizations benefiting American men and women abroad, and volunteering along the coast to enemy aircraft.

Discussion questions:

1. Why do you think Page’s grandmother volunteered during both world wars?
2. How was Lancaster County important for defense during the war?

References:

“Context” by Jessica Taylor. CC BY NC SA 4.0.



“Sinking Ships” in Virginia Beach, 1943

Standard: VUS11

Audio: Darden_C_VUS.11.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Governor Colgate Darden remembers the real threat that cutting-edge German military technology posed to the Virginia coastline at the height of the war—and how Tidewater residents reacted.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

JS: In World War II, of course the war overshadowed your administration as governor, that Virginians did not seem to realize the dangers to which they were personally exposed. Could you elaborate on that point?

CD: Yes, well, I didn't mean that the Virginians couldn't particularly. I don't think the United States as a whole realized how terrible a threat they were facing in Hitler's bid for a world empire. It came far closer to succeeding than people generally realize. Now, our people here, as I remember the talk with Charlie Hartig, our people here I thought did not realize the danger of a disruption of life by German submarines that were sinking ships off Virginia Beach and right in the entrance of the harbor here where at times people could stand on the beach and see the ships sink. I didn't believe that they realized the danger of the Germans using some of their advanced submarines to shell Norfolk city. I happened to know about them because we heard about them on a Naval committee. The Germans had some heavy submarines with large guns on the deck that they could pull the tarpaulin off and turn loose and put shells at some distance, ten or fifteen miles. I never thought they could invade us here, but I felt that if they could shell the city or stick one of the Naval installations and set fire, that they could create a good deal of disorder and fright. And that's what I meant when I said that I didn't think our people down here realized the danger. Now the people who were engaged in civil defense did, because we met down there once a week or once every two weeks. I'd drive down there in the afternoon from Richmond and we'd have a meeting either here or over in Hampton and Newport News or Portsmouth. And we would discuss our affairs. They were alert. They knew the danger that we were confronted with, but the great mass of our people did not, and some of them were right restive under the blackout. They didn't think they ought to be blacked out, didn't think it amounted to a damn, and they thought we were thoughtless and careless in insisting on it.

Bio/Context:

Colgate W. Darden was a member of the House of Representatives (1933–1937, 1939–1941), governor of Virginia (1942–1946), and president of the University of Virginia (1947–1959). Inaugurated on January 21, 1942, weeks after the United States had entered World War II, Darden set an example of sacrifice by reducing the costs of the ceremony, dispensing with the traditional military parade and nineteen-gun salute to conserve ammunition, and placing the governor's automobile in the garage and walking or taking public transportation whenever possible. He replaced the state and regional defense councils with a new Office of Civilian Defense directly under his supervision and transferred responsibility for aircraft spotting, fire watches, and blackouts to city and county officials. A companion office of Civilian Mobilization, relying primarily on women, operated dozens of service projects that included rationing, salvage, victory gardens, child-care facilities, carpooling, nursing, and recreation programs for servicemen. About 400,000 Virginians volunteered for civilian defense service during the war, their only compensation being a service ribbon. Darden also created the Virginia Reserve Militia to assist localities with security problems. Known as the minutemen, the unit did little during the war, but its existence allayed public fears about an enemy attack.

Discussion questions:

1. Describe the threat Virginians faced from Germany during WWII.

2. According to Mr. Darden, why did many Virginians resist blackouts during WWII?
3. What was the significance of the Office of Civilian Defense in Virginia?

References:

“Bio/Context” adapted from: https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Darden_Colgate_W_1897-1981 (CC BY NC SA)



“I Need Y’all” in the Battle of the Bulge, 1944

Standard: VUS11

Audio: Mangrum_T_VUS.11.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Thomas Mangrum of the majority-black 761st Tank Battalion recalls Patton, the Battle of the Bulge, and his mixed feelings upon returning to Virginia.

Repository: Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida Digital Collections

Transcript:

TM: I graduated from high school one day and went in the army. I was seventeen years old and the army sent me to crypto school, radio school, radar school, and communication school. I took basic training in Fort Hood, Texas. And after my training and my education in cryptocommunication, I was shipped over to England and then I was transferred to the 761st Tank Battalion. I was in England when Patton came over and said that: “I need y’all niggers.” He apologized for saying it and said he needed more colored soldiers and said he heard that we were the best. So, we got new tanks and everything and new clothes. We went to fight, went to the Battle of the Bulge, and we was in combat for 183 days. Combat, 183 days. And then they didn’t send us in combat till the last minute because they didn’t want, back in the States, to have blacks in combat. They didn’t want to necessarily have blacks in the combat. So, this white tank battalion got wiped out, and then they came and got us and we was in combat for 183 days, nonstop, nonstop whatsoever. And we supported the infantry, we supported the white infantry. There were four of ‘em, four white infantry, we support them. We went off to Berlin and we stayed on the outside of Berlin for about two weeks. Patton, he wouldn’t let us go in until the last minute and then he sent us in.

You go and fight for this country and when I got off the ship to come back, the first thing that I saw, the signs that say, white and colored, colored over here and white over there. That tore me up.

AM: Because you had just did all this fighting for this country and you still had to –

TM: Fighting for this country and come back here and –

AM: Have to deal with that.

TM: Had to deal with that and I had to – both of my legs had broke. A German shattered my – I had a big van with all my electronic equipment. So, I came back and I still had the cast on. So I got into Newport News and I couldn’t sit down in the seat because of my leg. My leg had to be out, not underneath. So, the bus driver told me to move to the back. He told me to get out of the front and go to the back. I refused to do it, so he pulled up to the police station and the policeman came out. It happened that Captain Piche knew my father. And he called out and he said, “What’s your name?” And I said – he did have respect for me; he addressed me as sergeant. So, I said, “Thomas Mangrum.” So, he said, “What’s your daddy’s name?” I said, “Wait a minute.” He said, “I know who that is, that’s your daddy.” So, he said, “Come on. Get in the car, with me.” So, he carried me home and said, “Listen, you’re in the South now, and I don’t want you giving me no trouble.”

Context:

More than one million African Americans fought in the war. Most blacks served in segregated, noncombat units led by white officers. Some gains were made, however. The number of black officers increased from five in 1940 to over seven thousand in 1945. The all-black pilot squadrons, known as the Tuskegee Airmen, completed more than 1,500 missions, escorted heavy bombers into Germany, and earned several hundred merits and medals. Many bomber crews specifically requested the Red Tail Angels as escorts. And near the end of the war, the army and navy began integrating some of their units and facilities, before the U.S. government finally ordered the full integration of its armed forces in 1948.

While black Americans served in the armed forces (though they were segregated), on the home front they became riveters and welders, rationed food and gasoline, and bought victory bonds. But many black Americans saw the war as an opportunity not only to serve their country but to improve it. The Pittsburgh Courier, a leading black newspaper, spearheaded the Double V campaign. It called on African Americans to fight two wars: the war against Nazism and fascism abroad and the war against racial inequality at home. To achieve victory, to achieve “real democracy,” the Courier encouraged its readers to enlist in the armed forces, volunteer on the home front, and fight against racial segregation and discrimination.

During the war, membership in the NAACP jumped tenfold, from fifty thousand to five hundred thousand. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was formed in 1942 and spearheaded the method of nonviolent direct action to achieve desegregation. Between 1940 and 1950, some 1.5 million southern blacks, the largest number of any decade since the beginning of the Great Migration, also indirectly demonstrated their opposition to racism and violence by migrating out of the Jim Crow South to the North. But transitions were not easy. Racial tensions erupted in 1943 in a series of riots in cities such as Mobile, Beaumont, and Harlem. The bloodiest race riot occurred in Detroit and resulted in the death of twenty-five blacks and nine whites. Still, the war ignited in African Americans an urgency for equality that they would carry with them into the subsequent years.²⁴

The majority-black 761st Tank Battalion took as their mascot a black panther and decided on their motto, “Come Out Fighting.” The unit fought for 183 consecutive days during the Battle of the Bulge, the largest and bloodiest single conflict for US troops with ninety thousand casualties. The engagement was the last German offensive during World War II.

Bio: Thomas Mangrum, Sr. was born in 1926 in Mathews County, Virginia. He served in both World War II and Korea, and went to Hampton University for a degree in electrical engineering. Facing employment discrimination, he operated a TV repair shop out of his vehicle and garage. Once he was hired by a government contractor, he worked as an engineer and technician for over thirty years and became a lab director.

Discussion questions:

1. Why was Mangrum’s battalion called into the Battle of the Bulge?
2. Why didn’t Mangrum sit down on the bus?
3. Compare Mangrum’s experiences in Europe and post-war America. How does he see things differently when he gets home? Why?
4. Patton is widely reported to have said to the 761st Tank Battalion: “Men, you're the first Negro tankers to ever fight in the American Army. I would never have asked for you if you weren't good. I have nothing but the best in my Army. I don't care what color you are as long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sonsofbitches. Everyone has their eyes on you and is expecting great things from you. Most of all your race is looking forward to your success. Don't let them down and damn you, don't let me down! They say it is patriotic to die for your country. Well, let's see how many patriots we can make out of those German sonsofbitches.” How does Thomas Mangrum’s account differ? Why might his account be different?

References:

Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/24-world-war-ii> (CC BY SA 4.0)



“Do You Speak French?” in Japan, 1945

Standard: VUS11

Audio: Harnsberger_J_VUS11.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: James recalls his brother Hutch Harnsberger’s experience taking Japanese classes, landing at Iwo Jima, and capturing a Japanese prisoner of war.

Repository: Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida Digital Collections

Transcript:

JH: My younger brother, Hutch, when Pearl Harbor happened and they put the Japanese Nisei in the desert under guard, people in the war department suddenly woke up one morning and said, "How in the hell are we gonna listen to the Japanese radio broadcasts? They've been all our interpreters." Nisei, by the way, are Japanese who are born in this country. They had Japanese parents, but they're citizens, but they were put into concentration camps along with their parents. So, some smart guy in the passport office said, "Well, I see where there's some students from China and Japan coming back to go to school in this country. I'll bet you they can learn Japanese faster than we can." They were right. So, we were both interviewed by the FBI, wanted to know if we'd like to go to Japanese language school in Boulder, Colorado. I said, "Thank you, but I've been accepted to medical school and I think I'll stay with medicine," and my brothers took him up on it. So, he married his girlfriend from William and Mary and they went to Boulder. In eighteen months, he learned eighteen years' worth of Japanese. This is one of these immersion things where you couldn't ask for the salt and pepper, you had to ask in Japanese. Anyway, he came out a Japanese interpreter. But he'd had no battle training of any kind. He had a .45 on his hip, which he'd shot twice at a shooting range. He married his girlfriend at a nice military crosswords and all that. They had a two weeks honeymoon, and three days later he was told to report to the port on a troop ship on a convoy. In those days, you didn't ask, "Where are we going?" That was a no-no. You don't even think it. Loose lips sink ships. It was the motto in those days. So, nobody knew where they were going. They did know they were in the Pacific Ocean. Three weeks later, they landed on Iwo Jima. Hutch landed with the third wave of the Fifth Marines on Iwo Jima. Iwo Jima is a volcano, like so many Pacific Islands, and the sand is black. This is true of many of the South Pacific islands, the sand is black. Ground up lava. His description of the landing, there're all these shells exploding, mortars, and so forth. This gigantic, black cloud is over the – and in a way, this is helpful because they could unload the landing ships without the Japanese seeing them. Of course, the Japanese were lobbing mortar shells and machine gun bullets into this helter-skelter. He wandered for about four hours and every marine he saw, he asked, "Where's headquarters?" Everybody shook their head; nobody knows anything. Total confusion. Finally, at about five o'clock in the afternoon, he breaks clear of this cloud and he's walking west. A west wind had come in and cleared it up. About this time, this marine captain came to him and said, "What's the matter, lieutenant? Can't you find your unit?" He says, "Well, I'm supposed to report to headquarters." He said, "Headquarters, hell, they won't be here for two weeks." But he says, "I'll tell you, this is five o'clock. It's gonna be dark in about two hours. We better get a foxhole deep enough for the two of us to cover our heads." One thing you do not do is to walk around after dark. Anything that moves is the enemy and gets shot. They don't challenge or anything, they just get shot. So, they dug this foxhole for the two of them and put a tarp over it, and this marine captain had come over the side with an eighty pound knapsack, a rifle, ammunition, all of this, and somehow managed to bring a beat up, old, guitar. So, they had their K-rations and they got through. He pulls out this old guitar, he starts strumming, and they start singing all the songs we sang in World War II. "I'll Be Home for Christmas." Boy, did we sing that one. He came through that. The marines came to him one morning and said, "This guy wants to surrender, but he's afraid to put his head up for it to get shot off." And he was probably right. So, Hutch went, talked to him and he says, "No, you're my prisoner and I guarantee your safety. But take all your clothes off except your skivvies and come with your hands up back of your head. And for heaven's sake, don't bring any weapons of any kind. Put your hand back of your head, come out, and I'll guarantee your safety." He

came out, and they found him a pair of coveralls to put on. They walked back to the headquarters about three miles. They were sitting at a table, having coffee, and this Japanese prisoner says, "You know something, lieutenant? Your Japanese is pretty bad. Do you speak French?" Hutch says, "No, but I speak Chinese." Well, he didn't speak Chinese. Anyhow, they kept talking in Japanese. Finally, Hutch asked him the sixty-four dollar questions. "What was your duty station on the island?" This guy says, "I was head of the code department." As far as intelligence is concerned, this guy is pure gold.

Context:

To dislodge Japan's hold over the Pacific, the U.S. military began island hopping: attacking island after island, bypassing the strongest but seizing those capable of holding airfields to continue pushing Japan out of the region. Combat was vicious. At Guadalcanal American soldiers saw Japanese soldiers launch suicidal charges rather than surrender. Many Japanese soldiers refused to be taken prisoner or to take prisoners themselves. Such tactics, coupled with American racial prejudice, turned the Pacific Theater into a more brutal and barbarous conflict than the European Theater.

Japanese defenders fought tenaciously. Few battles were as one-sided as the Battle of the Philippine Sea, or what the Americans called the Japanese counterattack, the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot. Japanese soldiers bled the Americans in their advance across the Pacific. At Iwo Jima, an eight-square-mile island of volcanic rock, seventeen thousand Japanese soldiers held the island against seventy thousand Marines for over a month. At the cost of nearly their entire force, they inflicted almost thirty thousand casualties before the island was lost.

Discussion questions:

1. What does the word "Nisei" mean?
2. What was the military organization like on the Japanese islands?
3. Why did so few Japanese survive Iwo Jima? What was unique about fighting in Japan?

References:

Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/24-world-war-ii> (CC BY SA 4.0)



“Back on Their Feet” in Poland

Standard: VUS12

Audio: Hodges_B_VUS.12.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: A Mathews County Merchant Marine named Brother Hodges discusses how his crew provided aid through the Marshall Plan and made friends with locals in Eastern Europe at the end of World War II.

Repository: Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida Digital Collections

Transcript:

BH: Yeah, the crews on most ships were good people. They all had a common purpose in being seamen. Even though there were soldiers doing the fighting, they didn't have the material unless the Liberty ship brought it to them. Well, a deckhand is good work. It's clean work: you do a lot of chipping, you do a lot of painting, splicing ropes, washing clothes. [Laughter] Anything you need to do on a ship. There's no laundry to check in. We were buying cigarettes for ninety cents a carton in those days, in [19]44, and it was well worth those ninety cents because you could always trade it in Europe for something much more valuable, like a pistol or a clock or a cameo pin. There were many, many things you could exchange it for. I sailed until the end of [19]46. I didn't like Russia, the guards on every street, all of the people would beg, wraps around their feet, handmade brooms sweeping streets. People with guns everywhere. When we went through the Dardanelles, which was Constantinople in those days, going into the Black Sea, all of the magazines, cameras, everything had to be confiscated by the Russians and locked up for the entire period we were in Russia. They didn't want any magazines to be seen over there. They didn't want us taking any pictures. We were loaded with small narrow track trains... this was after the war, of course. We were helping them get back on their feet with the type of material we had on our ship. And it was a Liberty ship. It took us thirty days from the United States to get to Odessa, Russia. We stayed there about thirty days.

I was on one Victory ship that we loaded. We went to Canada from Norfolk, Virginia and loaded Canada – this was after the war now, part of the Marshall Plan. Went to Montreal, Canada, a very interesting trip. They loaded horses, cows, chickens, goats, anything and everything that could be used in Europe to get those people back on their feet. We had men and ladies on board that we called cowboys because they took care of everything. But we still had the regular seamen on board that did all the work on the ship. We ended up going through the Kiel Canal and to the sea that took us into Danzig, Poland, it was in those days. [The city, which was heavily damaged during the war, is now known by its Polish name, Gdansk.] We finally got into Danzig, Poland and unloaded, and they were happy as they could be because they had all this fresh meat, cows, chickens, and sheep, goats, whatever. The interaction with the people was very good. They came aboard and unloaded the ships for us. They brought their little piece of bread, hard bread and a little cheese and vino, and they made us a lunch. Sometimes, we'd give them something out of our mess hall that'd really get them excited, but they were good hard workers and they was glad to see us because some of these materials benefited the longshoreman, the people who was unloading the ship. And we were always treated with respect and dignity, and when we went ashore to the bars or whatever sort of entertainment you liked to do.

Context:

In 1947 President Truman selected native Virginia George C. Marshall to be his secretary of state. The Cold War was beginning and Marshall shaped the new United States policy of "containing" the Soviet Union. On June 5, 1947, he announced plans for what came to be known as the Marshall Plan: a postwar European economic recovery plan that spent billions of American dollars on the economies of Western Europe, saving them from economic depression and communist takeover. As U.S. secretary of state, Marshall also laid the groundwork for the Berlin Airlift, the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the establishment of the German Federal Republic (West Germany).

Bio: Horace "Brother" Hodges (1926-2017) was born in Mathews County, Virginia. He worked as a deckhand on a ferry boat in Portsmouth, and joined the Merchant Marines at age seventeen before finishing high school. After World War II, he served in the US Army during the Korean War and worked for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company in Norfolk until retirement.

Discussion questions:

1. Why was Brother Hodges sent to Europe?
2. What kind of materials did he bring with him? How would they help rebuild Europe?
3. How would you explain Brother's experience in Russia? Why did they take his magazines away? What explains the sorry state of Russia that Brother witnessed?
4. Describe the relationship between the Merchant Marines and the Europeans they were helping.

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Marshall_George_C_1880-1959 (CC BY NC SA)



“The US Populace was Behind Us” in Korea, 1950

Standard: VUS12

Audio: Bassett_W_VUS.12.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Colonel William D. Bassett describes his first military engagement as a young man sent into the Korean War. He describes how the United States sought to contain communism and emphasizes the importance of the 38th Parallel in halting Russian influence in Asia.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

WB: My first duty assignment was at Camp Pendleton, California. I went back out there since I claimed to be a Californian. I was raised mostly in that area and born in California. But, really, my career started with the Korean War. As soon as I got there we were preparing for it.

JT: That would have been...what...1950?

WB: 1950, right. Well, I didn't mention one thing. After Annapolis, I did go to Quantico to what we call our marine basic school for a year, where all marine lieutenants go.

JT: This is near Washington?

WB: That is near Washington. Quantico, Virginia. Right, south of Washington. And then from there, we went out to—really started my career out of the school phase so to speak, at Camp Pendleton. I was there very shortly, just the summer of 1950, and then that fall, in December, I was off to the Korean War. Which was my first combat engagement.

JT: They say that anyone who is a graduate of a military academy really needs a war or two to really get involved in what they have studied, so you got into it right away.

WB: Right, too soon. Almost too soon. [Laughter]

JT: Almost too soon. [Laughter] And were you in Korea?

WB: Yes, I was there from late [19]50 through [19]51. And at that time I was a rifle platoon commander up there on the front lines and I saw active combat against the North Koreans. The Tenth North Korean division, as a matter of fact. We were engaged with them for quite some time in the central part of Korea.

JT: I haven't served in Korea. I've heard that it has been compared to Vietnam by a number of people. Could you perhaps give me a personal observation as to the usefulness of our fighting there? Was it a useful battle? And also would you compare it to Vietnam? Is there any comparison that you can see or a parallel there?

WB: Yes, I think it is. Of course I'm of the opinion that we should really, our nation the free world, should stop the encroachment of communism. I think we've fairly well effectively done this. Korea was the first test of the United States in this regard and as they divided up Korea after World War II, I think that the US was off guard like we were and not realizing the Potsdam agreements and what was being done by Russia to divide up the world, to grab what it wanted to grab. So, the fact that we went into Korea, it was really more or less defenseless. The marines were one of the first units in there, of course, the army with us shortly thereafter. And we were able to throw them back up to the 38th parallel. It was the first time we showed the communist world that we didn't want them to go any further, and we understood what they were going to do and the results of their post-World War II "land grab." So, I think it was effective. Very fortunately the US populace was behind us then, and we had a different atmosphere to the support and the fighting man himself. At Vietnam, really we were doing the same thing, but the circumstances were vastly different. And, of course, that point could be argued, but I think we really lost the Vietnam War, as

far as I am concerned. But again it showed that we had some resolve. And it may have slowed down things—at least there haven't been too many pushes by the communist world since then.

Context:

In November 1947, the UN passed a resolution that a united government in Korea should be created, but the Soviet Union refused to cooperate. Only the south held elections. The Republic of Korea (ROK), South Korea, was created three months after the election. A month later, communists in the north established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Both claimed to stand for a unified Korean peninsula. The UN recognized the ROK, but incessant armed conflict broke out between North and South.

In the spring of 1950, Stalin hesitantly endorsed North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's plan to liberate the South by force, a plan heavily influenced by Mao's recent victory in China. While he did not desire a military confrontation with the United States, Stalin thought correctly that he could encourage his Chinese comrades to support North Korea if the war turned against the DPRK. The North Koreans launched a successful surprise attack and Seoul, the capital of South Korea, fell to the communists on June 28. The UN passed resolutions demanding that North Korea cease hostilities and withdraw its armed forces to the thirty-eighth parallel and calling on member states to provide the ROK military assistance to repulse the northern attack.

That July, UN forces mobilized under American general Douglas MacArthur. Troops landed at Inchon, a port city about thirty miles from Seoul, and took the city on September 28. They moved on North Korea. On October 1, ROK/UN forces crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, and on October 26 they reached the Yalu River, the traditional Korea-China border. They were met by three hundred thousand Chinese troops who broke the advance and rolled up the offensive. On November 30, ROK/UN forces began a fevered retreat. They returned across the thirty-eighth parallel and abandoned Seoul on January 4, 1951. The United Nations forces regrouped, but the war entered into a stalemate. General MacArthur, growing impatient and wanting to eliminate the communist threats, requested authorization to use nuclear weapons against North Korea and China. Denied, MacArthur publicly denounced Truman. Truman, unwilling to threaten World War III and refusing to tolerate MacArthur's public insubordination, dismissed the general in April. On June 23, 1951, the Soviet ambassador to the UN suggested a cease-fire, which the U.S. immediately accepted. Peace talks continued for two years.

Discussion questions:

1. Does Colonel Bassett describe the United States involvement in Korea as successful or unsuccessful? What reasons does he give?
2. How does Colonel Bassett's story reflect the American policy of containment of communism in the 1950s?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/25-the-cold-war> (CC BY SA 4.0)



“A Very Controversial Rifle” in Arlington, 1960s-1990s

Standard: VUS12

Audio: Shelton_VUS.12.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Colonel Henry Shelton recounts his long career in Cold War weapons development, discussing his partnerships with inventors, business leaders, think tanks, and government research institutes.

Repository: Greene County Historical Society

Transcript:

HS: In addition to that, I was very much involved in the introduction of the current M-16 rifle system into the army, when I was a battalion commander in combat in Vietnam and came back. And at that time it was a very controversial rifle and there was a lot of problems associated with it. And I was one of the few that testified in Congress about how we operate it in the field. Based on that, I guess I was assigned to research and development and I was in charge of the small arms development for the United States Army for a while. And during that course of time, I wound up on the Department of Defense special committee that was responsible for making all the technical fixes on the M-16 rifle, at which time I worked with Eugene Stoner who was the inventor of the rifle, with senior executives in Winchester, Remington, arms manufacturers around the country, a lot of contacts there. I later became the Chief of Research and Development for all combat material in the United States Army in the division that I ran at the Pentagon. And from that job I was sent back to troops again and I commanded the last brigade, full brigade of troops, five thousand troops that were draftees. And after that, they were fillers for the new volunteer army and that was quite a transition and quite a challenge along the line. I was pulled out of the brigade to do a cost effectiveness analysis to support the introduction of the, what's known now as the Bradley fighting vehicle. That's the combat infantry fighting vehicle, replacing the vehicles we had in the Korean days. It's the one that's out there and it's had a wonderful experience and reputation and performance since we went into the Middle East. I was the guy who came up with the recommendation to arm that vehicle with a .25 millimeter self-propelled gun, which has been acclaimed as being one of the best that's ever been fielded. I came back to the Chief of Research in Development after that assignment and I became the Executive Officer for the Chief of Research and Development. I ran the office for the three-star who is responsible for all research and development in the Army. And in that job I was recommended for and came out on the list for promotion to Brigadier and was pulled off for political purposes, I believe. It wasn't anything I didn't do. And the Chief of the Army, at that point in time, was very concerned about the implementation and fielding of some of the so-called smart weapons. These weapons are guided into the target by some means, such as a laser. And he was worried about how easy those weapons might be countered. And I was given the job to come up with determining one ability on all of these so-called smart weapons, including the ones that you see in the news today that, where these airplanes go over unmanned and can knock out a target the size of this door behind you. It was quite a challenge and that was my last duty assignment. I decided I didn't want to be an old colonel and settled down and talk about my service. And I'd go, I'd get out and I then joined one of the so-called "think-tanks" in Washington, known as Systems Planning Corporation. And we did a lot of research in support of advanced systems for the Department of Defense. And I personally worked with the DARPA, Defense Advanced Projects Research Agency in supporting some of their work. And during that time, one of my classmates from the Army War College, along with myself, had been in the R and D business, the research and development side of the Army. And we'd seen a lot of big industries spend millions of dollars trying to protect products that come into the Army or into the Department of Defense, most of the time not understanding what the problem was and would wind up having to reengineer this kind of thing. And we would have to go back and redo it all. So, this classmate of mine decided that he would organize this company that would do strategic planning for these big industries, figure out exactly what they were capable of doing, research the requirements for the Department of Defense and then come up with a solution.

Context:

The history of the M16 demonstrates how proxy war, technology, and industry came together to produce more efficient Cold War-era weaponry. During the early years of the Vietnam War, American soldiers found that their M14 rifles could not compete with the Russian AK-47 used by the pro-Communist North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. In response, the U.S. Department of Defense turned to industry leaders like Colt and Armilite to design a light and reliable weapon with devastating wounding power.

At the same time, the Department of Defense tested weaponry in the field against Communist forces in Vietnam. The organization responsible for these experiments was the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA). Founded after the Russians launched Sputnik in the 1950s, its purpose is to research and develop new technologies and to use them to help the United States win the Cold War. With the help of universities, military researchers, and private-sector manufacturers, DARPA helped develop new rockets, torpedoes, and personal computers. In the early 1960s, DARPA bought and issued a thousand AR-15s, the predecessor to the M16 available to civilians today, to US troops in Vietnam. Impressed with its "lethality," Colt modified the AR-15 and the rifle became the M16. It went into production in 1964, and is the longest-serving rifle in United States history.

Bio: Henry Shelton served for twenty-eight years in the military and retired in 1979. He served as a professor of Military Science at Ohio State, taught Tactics and Nuclear Weapons Employment at the USA infantry school, and conducted research as a member of the Army General Staff. He has been decorated for his service fifteen times.

Discussion questions:

1. In a few sentences, summarize the various roles Mr. Shelton held during his career in the military.
2. What did Mr. Shelton do after he stopped doing research for the Army?
3. Identify the technology Mr. Shelton helping introduce in the Army during the Vietnam War.
4. Identify the technology Mr. Shelton helping introduce in the Army during the Korean War.
5. How does Mr. Shelton describe 'smart technologies?'
6. Why was there demand for Mr. Shelton's research into small arms?
7. What can we determine about the relationship between private manufacturers and contractors and the federal government during this period?

References:

"Context" adapted from Jessica Taylor



“Vague and Uncertain and Unpromising” in Norfolk, 1960s

Standard: VUS12

Audio: Bell_H_VUS.12.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Mental health professional Walter Herman Bell shares how students at Old Dominion University dealt with the Vietnam War and social upheaval of the decade.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

JS: I was wondering what changes in the students and their counseling needs you observed during the mid-1960s when the Vietnam War was on and there was general unrest in the country.

WB: I think I met some of the spirit that was often manifested in soldiers who were at the front: "What's the use of thinking about the future? There's no future assured me." Of course, there never is any future really assured you, but the future was relatively vague and uncertain and unpromising. So, I don't think the students were any less sincere but they were puzzled and rightly so. It was a puzzling situation. We don't yet know what was the value of Vietnam, let's say, and that's what was puzzling. When you put your life up to defend something, you want to be sure that it's a good cause. To be threatened with having to put your life on the line for no very good cause, in your mind--whether it was or not, I won't judge, but that was their attitude. "Was it worth it?" And what to do as a consequence? How were they to do something different so they didn't have to go through that, was always present with them. Yet I think a great many people were doing some pretty sound thinking. I wasn't particularly shocked at any change. I'm never much shocked at what people do because you can expect almost anything from any of us sometime. And you just have to be prepared for shocks. This discouragement was, to me, rather painful; I didn't like to see it.

Context:

The Vietnam War had deep roots in the Cold War world. Vietnam had been colonized by France and seized by Japan during World War II. The nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh had been backed by the United States during his anti-Japanese insurgency and, following Japan's surrender in 1945, Viet Minh nationalists, quoting the American Declaration of Independence, created the independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Yet France moved to reassert authority over its former colony in Indochina, and the United States sacrificed Vietnamese self-determination for France's colonial imperatives. Ho Chi Minh turned to the Soviet Union for assistance in waging war against the French colonizers in a protracted war.

After French troops were defeated at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, U.S. officials helped broker a temporary settlement that partitioned Vietnam in two, with a Soviet/Chinese-backed state in the north and an American-backed state in the south. To stifle communist expansion southward, the United States would send arms, offer military advisors, prop up corrupt politicians, stop elections, and, eventually, send over five hundred thousand troops, of whom nearly sixty thousand would be lost before the communists finally reunified the country.

Bio: Walter Herman Bell (1900 – 1982) was born in Clark County, Virginia. He joined the Army after graduating high school, but was quickly discharged after the end of the First World War. He graduated from Randolph-Macon College in 1922. Bell then attended Johns Hopkins University and taught at Hampden-Sydney College. During the Second World War Bell became an American Red Cross Field Director and after the war he continued that work by becoming head of the Norfolk Regional Consultations Service, Director the Guidance for the Portsmouth school system, and Assistant Professor of Counseling at the College of William and Mary.

Discussion questions:

1. What is Mr. Bell referring to when he states, "We don't yet know what was the value of Vietnam, let's say, and that's what was puzzling"?
2. Why did the United States aid South Vietnam?
3. Why do you think Americans protested and questioned the Vietnam War at home?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/25-the-cold-war> (CC BY SA 4.0)



“It Hurts to Laugh Like That” in Vietnam, 1970s

Standard: VUS12

Audio: Leo1_VUS12.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Leo from Suffolk describes the day he was injured on his second tour in Vietnam.

Repository: Suffolk Speaks, Suffolk Public Library

Transcript:

L: Now, remember he was eighteen years old. I was well into my thirties and this is my second tour in Vietnam. So, I'm quite experienced and I had troubles with the truck because it was not sand-bagged properly. But you have to do what you have to do, you don't have everything at hand, immediately. But we had to do this run. So, decision was made. I suggested, let's take our flak jackets off, fold 'em up and sit on them. Well, he decided... the order is "wear your flak jacket." Why, he's following orders. And as we went about our way, he's telling me his story. The young lad was well-spoken and I enjoyed listening to him, as he was very motivated as a marine. And then all hell broke loose. We went over a land mine and I guess, the best words can describe it, it ruined my whole day. I immediately realized what had happened. Within seconds, I am forcing my eyes to stay open as I am being, literally, blown through the roof of the truck, because you've got to know what's surrounding you immediately. And I had no time to give any thought to him. And I hit the ground and I knew I was in serious trouble because I had been sitting on a mine. We ran over it and I thought about him immediately. And the next thing I know, we're surrounded by marines protecting us. Make no mistake, my experience in the Marine Corps in my twenty-some years, they will not leave you. I saw the bottoms of their feet encircling us in a prone position. We were not attacked. What simply was a command detonated mine and the nearest place we could see was a tree line, where quite possibly the VC [Viet Cong] had ignited the bomb, watching us as we slightly pulled off the road to allow a city bus to go by. So, I'm lying there struggling to stay awake so I won't be unconscious if we need something. And the next thing I know, I think he was a corpsman or a gunnery sergeant, either one, he lifted my right arm up and I'm looking up as he lifts it up and I'm thinking, "That's not good. It's got big holes in it." And I asked him, I said, "Hey, how bad is it?" He looked at me and smiled. He said, "Just a scratch." And no matter how serious it is, I was dummy enough to start laughing. God, it hurts to laugh like that. And the next thing, I said, "Where's my driver?" He looked at me and he just shook his head and I realized what he was saying.

Context:

The Vietnam War had deep roots in the Cold War world. Vietnam had been colonized by France and seized by Japan during World War II. The nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh had been backed by the United States during his anti-Japanese insurgency and, following Japan's surrender in 1945, Viet Minh nationalists, quoting the American Declaration of Independence, created the independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Yet France moved to reassert authority over its former colony in Indochina, and the United States sacrificed Vietnamese self-determination for France's colonial imperatives. Ho Chi Minh turned to the Soviet Union for assistance in waging war against the French colonizers in a protracted war.

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Discussion questions:

1. What kind of equipment did the Viet Cong use? What strategies did they engage to use it against US troops?
2. What defensive measures and equipment did the US troops use against the Viet Cong? Evaluate their effectiveness.
3. How did Leo's fellow Marines support him after the attack?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/25-the-cold-war>

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“Nobody There to Say Hello” in Suffolk, 1970s

Standard: VUS12

Audio: Leo2_VUS12.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Leo remembers his anticipation and then disappointment upon returning to the United States from Vietnam.

Repository: Suffolk Speaks, Suffolk Public Library

Transcript:

L: We thought it was home. We landed and we were thrilled to death. We were going to see America, land of the free, home of the brave and we felt we were part of that gang. We had a navy officer climb on board the bus that took us from the aircraft to the wards. And he gave us instructions that your wallets or IDs should be hidden. Put them in your belt or wherever you thought they would be safe. And then, we'll take you into your beds and your wards. I'm thinking, "Gee, never had to worry about that in combat. You were just as safe as could be." Well, then I found out it was other things that we should be concerned about because I realized there was nobody there to say hello. It was silence. There must have been several hundred of us disembarked in a matter of an hour. There was nobody to see us. Nobody said thank you.

Context:

American forces under General William Westmoreland were tasked with defending South Vietnam against the insurgent VC and the regular North Vietnamese Army (NVA). But no matter how many troops the Americans sent or how many bombs they dropped, they could not win. This was a different kind of war. Progress was not measured by cities won or territory taken but by body counts and kill ratios. Although American officials like Westmoreland and secretary of defense Robert McNamara claimed a communist defeat was on the horizon, by 1968 half a million American troops were stationed in Vietnam, nearly twenty thousand had been killed, and the war was still no closer to being won. Protests, which would provide the backdrop for the American counterculture, erupted across the country.

Discussion questions:

1. What did Leo expect when he landed in the United States? Why did he expect that?
2. Why were the commanding officers concerned about the troops' safety?
3. Why was no one there when Leo landed?
4. Compare Leo's experience to Colonel Bassett's experience in the Korean War. How was public sentiment different? Why?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/27-the-sixties>

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“Everything in Place” in Greene County, 1950s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Morris_N_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Nancy Morris recalls how her battle with polio led to battles with other students in her boarding school dorm.

Repository: Greene County Historical Society

Transcript:

NM: So, I went to Blue Ridge School and the first two weeks were horrible. Like any boarding school, the first two weeks were filled with homesickness, you know, never wanting to be there, all those kinds of things. But there were some interesting things that happened to me there. Never having been in a situation where you had communal showers, other than gym, P.E. we called it then. We had to shower together. And I didn't want to shower with the other girls because I was bashful and I'd also had polio at age thirteen. And so, I had a deep scar down my back and I was embarrassed and ashamed by that at fifteen years old. And so, I would get up in the morning at 6:00. The other girls got up at 7:00, so I got up at 6:00 to take my shower by myself. And they got wise to it and one morning I went in and I stripped off, got in the shower and the whole dormitory came in and watched me shower. So that took care of it. But those kind of things happened in boarding schools all the time, so it's not something just privileged to me. But it made a big effect on me, I'll tell ya. But Blue Ridge was a wonderful place for me, it really was. The people that you lived with became like your sisters and brothers. And one of the jokes that was pulled on me one time was that when I went to Blue Ridge, I was still wearing a brace from having had polio. And I was up there and it would take me forever to get that thing on. It was like a huge corset. It had all these metal stays in it and you had to lace it up and strap it in and all that. And the attic had no windows at all. So, we were up there one night and we'd gone to bed and gone to sleep. And suddenly one of my roommates woke me up and said, "Get up, get up, we're late!" So, I got up as quick as I could and got that brace on, struggling as hard as I could to get everything in place. It took me a long time to get dressed. And I started down the steps, and the house-mom stepped out of the door and said, "What are you doing, young lady?" I said, "I'm going to school." She said, "Not at two o'clock in the morning. Go to bed." So they'd played a joke on me and I went back and undressed. I was mad as fire at them. I could have stomped them, I was so mad at them. It was a lot of trouble to get in that brace. But, those kinds of things went on all the time.

Context:

During the first half of the twentieth century, polio terrorized families across the United States. Afflicting primarily children, the virus affects the spinal cord and can cause paralysis. At the height of the epidemic around 35,000 people were permanently disabled every year by polio, with effects ranging from difficulty walking to breathing through an “iron lung” machine. Polio hit hardest during the 1940s and 1950s. One of the most famous and catastrophic outbreaks occurred in Wytheville, Virginia in 1950; seventeen people in the small town ultimately died that summer. During epidemics like Wytheville's, fearful parents kept their children inside, and concerned community members canceled church services and baseball games. In 1955, Jonas Salk unveiled the first polio vaccine, which subsequent scientists worked to perfect. Due to childhood vaccination and further research into this and other viruses, polio was eradicated from the Western Hemisphere in 1993.

Discussion questions:

1. At what age did Ms. Morris have polio?

- 
2. What physical mark of polio did Ms. Morris bear?
 3. Why did Ms. Morris wake up earlier than the other girls during the week?
 4. What did Ms. Morris have to wear from having polio?
 5. Describe how technologies, like the polio vaccination, altered children's lives.

References:

Context by Jessica Taylor, with facts from "Polio Elimination in the United States,"
<https://www.cdc.gov/polio/what-is-polio/polio-us.html>

“I Thought It Would Happen” in Appomattox County, 1954

Standard: VUS13

Audio: [Dunnville_C_VUS13.mp3](#) [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Attorney and civil rights activist Clarence Dunnville recounts his experience as a law student watching the *Brown v. Board* arguments at the US Supreme Court.

Repository: Clarence Dunnville, interview for the American Civil War Museum at Appomattox

Transcript:

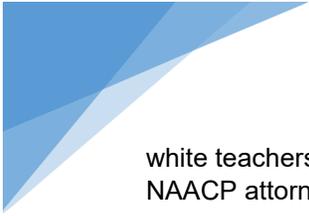
CD: *Brown* didn't just come. It was a stair step type fight. Where the early cases and they made one little notch happen and then they would build something else. And then they could argue that in the first case they already decided, and they would go onto the third case. But there were maybe twenty cases that were built on each other, which finally resulted in *Brown*. So when *Brown* came down, I was a college student. When I was there watching it, I was in college. And I think the thing I will always remember, it was December and I went with a college professor to watch the case. We had tickets from Thurgood Marshall, and I'd never seen anything like that. If you look at the Supreme Court, you know the huge steps going up, those marble steps and the street down below. When I arrived, there were people lined up all the way down those steps and going into the street. And the steps, as you know, are very broad. So, there were people there in sleeping bags, many. Do you know, I think there might have been thousands of people, thousands I think who were in the line to the Supreme Court door, all the way down to the street and around. And then those of them in sleeping bags, who'd been there all night. This is December. And I looked up and I saw the sign, "Equal Justice Under Law."

MG: Were you surprised afterwards when you heard about the unanimous verdict based on what you had seen?

CD: Well, there were... it was a long time between the time, you see, I don't think the decision was until May or June, the following year. I didn't see how the decision couldn't be unanimous. I mean, I was a young person. But I really didn't. So, I would say as a young person I wasn't surprised. I thought it would happen. But I was optimistic. I recall the argument started with Spottswood Robinson, he led off the argument. And he would have this factual very steady... He didn't speak loudly or wave his hands or, it was just a, "I'm telling you" kind of thing. And he would just sort of lecture in the court, in the sense that he just laid it out to them. And he got some very tough questions, from Justice Frankfurter I think and some of the others. He answered all of them. But just in a kind of lecture type way. Like, "I'm telling you what it was." And then, behind him immediately was Thurgood Marshall. And Thurgood was a tall, very impressive kind of guy, handsome guy. And Thurgood was much different from Spottswood. Spottswood led off and sort of lectured to them like you were a young person. But Thurgood was a guy who sort of waved his hands and he spoke with a kind of loud voice. In Roanoke, one of the greatest leaders of Civil Rights was born there, grew up there, Oliver Hill. And I knew that he was involved with Thurgood Marshall and all cases that were in the courts then that were seeking to chip away at segregation.

Context:

Oliver W. Hill was an African American attorney and civil rights activist. As the lead attorney for the Virginia State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Hill and his colleagues filed more legal challenges to segregation than any other lawyers in the South and successfully undermined segregation and discrimination in all walks of southern life. Born in Richmond, Hill earned his law degree in 1933 at Howard University, where he met Thurgood Marshall, a future NAACP lawyer and U.S. Supreme Court associate justice. In coordination with Marshall, then special counsel for the NAACP, Hill argued on behalf of black teachers in Norfolk who received less pay than



white teachers for equal work. After winning a federal appeals court ruling in 1940, Hill became an NAACP attorney in Virginia.

In the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Hill was an outspoken advocate of desegregation and a persistent and outspoken opponent of the General Assembly's so-called Massive Resistance program. He met with the governor, testified before committees of the General Assembly, and spoke publicly at community meetings and on the television and radio, consistently championing the Supreme Court's decision and encouraging Virginians to abandon segregation. As he told the Gray Commission, a group appointed by the governor to recommend a response to *Brown*, on November 15, 1954, "Gentlemen, face the dawn and not the setting sun. A new day is being born." Hill believed political activism went hand in hand with the legal assault on segregation, and ran repeatedly for political office as a way to encourage African Americans to register and vote. In 1948, Hill became the first African American elected to the Richmond city council since 1894. He retired from the law in 1998 and died at his home in Richmond in 2007.

Bio:

Clarence Dunnville was born in 1933 in Roanoke, Virginia. He attended Morgan State University, where Thurgood Marshall arranged for him to see the opening arguments for *Brown v. Board of Education*. After graduating from law school in 1957, he practiced law in New York State. He was appointed an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York by Robert F. Kennedy in 1961. Dunnville was also active in the Civil Rights Movement, traveling to Mississippi as a volunteer attorney in 1967. He returned to Roanoke to work at Oliver Hill's law firm in 1990.

Discussion questions:

1. Describe how other court cases built upon *Brown v. Board of Education*.
2. How does Mr. Dunnville describe Thurgood Marshall and Spottswood Robinson?
3. How did Civil Rights leaders, like Thurgood Marshall and Oliver Hill, 'chip away' at segregation in the courtroom?

References:

"Context" adapted from https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Hill_Oliver_W_1907-2007

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"A Normal High School Situation" in Norfolk, 1958

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Fink_T_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Dr. T. Ross Fink discusses how he served as principal of a makeshift high school during Massive Resistance.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

JS: Now I would like to get into your experience in 1958 when the Massive Resistance laws were in operation. You were appointed by the faculty to head a committee to provide for continuation of the children's schooling while their partners filled their teaching posts at the college. I would like to ask you about the school and where it was located, what kind of teaching techniques were used, and what limitations you felt you were having and how successful the program was.

TF: At the time of the Massive Resistance and the closing of the schools, we did establish a private school in two abandoned homes on 49th street just north of where the Hughes Library is located. The school was open to all the children of high school age who were children of faculty members and staff members. The classes were arranged around the hours at which college instructors of the various subjects were free. The usual high school courses were taught and they were taught by college faculty. We said we had the highest number of degrees by any faculty, but not one of them would be certified by the state since they did not hold a teaching certificate. Needless to say the children did very well and they were all accepted in February when the schools reopened. No one lost any credits and all the conditions seemed to be met when they returned to their public high schools. I was principal of the school. We held faculty meetings to go over schedules, we had a PTA. We used some of the people from the Phys. Ed. department to have a little intramural program of game playing and that sort of thing, trying to emulate all the activities that students would have in a normal high school situation.

JS: Did the students regret having to go back to their regular schools?

TF: No, I think they had a real loyalty to their own schools, but they were grateful that they hadn't lost a semester and have to finish it up in summer school, but we had a little problem along about that same time with our student teaching program. Since public schools did not open in Norfolk, we had to... I had made arrangements earlier in the summer with the superintendents of the other school districts and asked if they would take the Norfolk student teachers. It meant a great sacrifice to some of them because the students had to travel longer distances to go out to Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, and Portsmouth than they would have had they been able to stay in Norfolk that semester. The other systems were very glad to cooperate at this time and they took all of our students so no one lost any time.

Context:

Massive Resistance was a policy adopted in 1956 by Virginia's state government to block the desegregation of public schools mandated by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1954 ruling in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. At the midpoint of the twentieth century, Virginia maintained a legally sanctioned racial caste system. Its premise was that African Americans, slightly more than a fifth of the state's population, were inferior to all whites. No legal ties of kinship could exist between white and black Virginians, and all public activities were regulated by strict racial segregation laws. In the crucial area of public education, segregation was especially disadvantageous to black students.

Massive Resistance and its aftermath left a deep and lasting negative imprint on Virginia's system of public education and race relations in the second half of the twentieth century. By delaying effective desegregation until late in the 1960s, during which a decade and a half of extensive, racially segregated



suburban development had occurred, it permitted the perpetuation of mostly segregated schools in the state's major metropolitan areas. In several rural counties, it provided time for substantial numbers of white students to withdraw to private, usually all-white, academies. The commitment to integrated public schooling was delayed and, in many cases, undercut. One positive outgrowth of the mobilization of parents against the school closings was the inclusion in the 1971 revision of the Constitution of Virginia of one of the strongest provisions on public education of any of the fifty states.

Bio: Dr. T. Ross Fink was the Chairman of the Department of Education from 1954-1962 and the first Dean of the School of Education from 1963-1964. From 1964-1970, he served as Chair of the Department of Elementary Education at Old Dominion University.

Discussion questions:

1. How does Dr. Fink describe education during Massive Resistance?
2. Why did Dr. Fink and his colleagues establish a private school?

References

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Massive_Resistance
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"Alone as Usual" in Norfolk, 1958

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Tonelson_R_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Dr. A. Rufus Tonelson describes his campaign to change people's minds about Massive Resistance, and recounts the backlash against his efforts.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Transcript:

JS: What role did you play in efforts to have the schools reopened during the Massive Resistance crisis of 1958?

AT: Again, I guess I could write a book here. This was the most trying time because of the governor's edict, Maury was one of the three high schools to be closed in Norfolk, in that the federal court had decreed that we were to take, in the case of Maury, one lone black youngster along with our 2500 to 2600 whites. However, we were closed from September until February. I visited any number of PTA groups, civic clubs and the like and spoke out. I tried to point out the terrible price that our youngsters were paying in that the high school was closed. At times I was threatened. I was called all kinds of names, but I just had to persist with this, and I assure you I'm no knight in shining white armor. The whole program of Massive Resistance to me was just a stupid one in that it denied our young people the privilege of going to our high school to receive an education.

I was allowed in the building during the time of the closing and it was not unusual for me to receive harassing phone calls or threatening phone calls. I remember one that I repeated to a friend and it made its rounds throughout the city of Norfolk and it is true. One day I was seated in the office, alone as usual. It was raining so hard outside you could hardly see two inches from your nose. The phone rang and this rather abrupt voice told me that I had better get out of the building. When I proceeded to ask why, I was told that the building was going to be burned within the next hour. I remarked, had he looked to see how it was raining outside, and with that I hung up. This was one of the light moments that occurred during this particular time. As I say there were others, but it was a most terrible time, especially for parents who had their children in the high school.

There were certainly a strong faction of segregationists who felt it was the proper thing to do to close the previously all white high schools rather than let any blacks into the school. However most of this took part in rhetoric and the like. I am only thankful to the people of Norfolk who were able to take this in stride without any violence. Certainly we wrote to our Congressmen, to our senators, to our representatives in Richmond, to the governor. We did not get very far in doing this. I encouraged parents to do this. They would say, "Well, we did it and it hasn't helped. Now you tell us to keep on doing it." They were rather bitter, but at no time was there any violence for which we can certainly all be thankful. Our city council at this time certainly supported a segregated school system, but fortunately they came to their senses so the schools were eventually opened.

Context:

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Bio: Dr. A. Rufus Tonelson (1911 – 2006) was born in New York City and his family moved to Norfolk, Virginia four years later. He began attending William and Mary in 1930. He served in the United States Army during World War II. In 1955 he became principal of Maury High School, during the Massive Resistance crisis. He joined Old Dominion's College of Education in 1966 and served as Dean until 1971 when he became Assistant to the President for School and Community Relations.

Discussion questions:

1. What position did Dr. Tonelson take during Massive Resistance? Why?
2. How does Dr. Tonelson describe the impact of Massive Resistance in Virginia?
3. In what ways did Dr. Tonelson encourage individuals to advocate against Massive Resistance?
4. Hypothesize to what extent Massive Resistance adversely affected students in Virginia.

References

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Massive_Resistance
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“Hi Fred!” in Gloucester County, 1950s-1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Carter_F_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: This clip is a combination of two interviews describing a single encounter from two different perspectives. During the Civil Rights Movement, Frederick Carter staged a sit-in at the lunch counter of Morgan’s Drugstore, where Harvey Morgan was the pharmacist. These two men describe the moment differently.

Repository: Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida Digital Collections

Transcripts:

Harvey Morgan:

Well, we were one of the few lunch counters in town. Gloucester was so different then. We had two drugstores, each one had a fountain. We called it a fountain. I don’t think the other one had booths. We had booths and tables. It was like a restaurant.

The African-American community was staging sit-ins and all sorts of civil disobedience because of our so-called Jim Crow law that we had. There was, in fact, the law that whites and blacks had to be served separately and in other words, they had to have separate water fountains and separate toilets. It was just crazy, but it was what I grew up with. I hardly questioned it until a few years after the laws were changed. Just, you don’t question things that you take for granted. Anyway, I knew Fred. I watched him grow up and I knew his family. But one day, he and three other students at the Gloucester Training School, which was the black high school, decided they would stage a sit-in at Morgan’s Drugstore, at our lunch counter. We had two booths and several tables and stools. Well, they came in and sat down in one of the booths, and the fountain manager didn’t know what to do. She kept looking over to the prescription department for some guidance, wanted me to see what was happening. I don’t when it was, [19]63- I was probably thirty-three, something like that.

He tells the story. I still don’t remember it, but he said, the manager looked over to see what to do, and I looked up and saw him over there and I said, “Hi, Fred!” [Laughter] She figured, it must be okay, so she went ahead and served them.

The black community has always been important to us and my family and my business. So, we’ve tried to treat people fairly.

Frederick Carter:

Dr. Morgan was Harvey’s father, and Harvey and his brother worked there along with their wives. You go there—cause I went there one May Day, 1962 or—no 1959, cause I graduated in 1961. And I went with my cousins, pretty little girls and May Day they would have a big celebration at school and everybody would take a half day off and the girls were in their cheerleader outfits. And I had a nice car. My father bought us the nicest car in school. Better than the teachers’ cars. And we drove them up to [Gloucester] Courthouse. [The pharmacy is located in a town called Gloucester Courthouse, Virginia.] We were going to go and sit in at Harvey Morgan’s drugstore. So we walk in, Helen Hodges, Marvin Green, Brenda Carey, and myself and we sat at the counter. And the lady behind the counter looked over. I claimed it was Harvey—it might have been his brother but he was running for office so I say it was Harvey. And Harvey just looked over at them and nodded, said, “Go ahead and serve them.” So we were served. Gray’s Drugstore was across the street. You couldn’t get anything out of there. I mean, that was strictly segregated, you couldn’t have anything to eat or anything like that. So they were the competition. But Dr. Turner’s people and all the black folks that we could influence went to Morgan’s drugstore because they were decent people. And they did this long before they had to do it.

**Context:**

In the 1960s, a new student movement arose whose members wanted swifter changes in the segregated South. Confrontational protests, marches, boycotts, and sit-ins accelerated.

The tone of the modern U.S. civil rights movement changed at a North Carolina department store in 1960, when four African American students participated in a sit-in at a whites-only lunch counter. The 1960 Greensboro sit-ins were typical. Activists sat at segregated lunch counters in an act of defiance, refusing to leave until being served and willing to be ridiculed, attacked, and arrested if they were not. This tactic drew resistance but forced the desegregation of Woolworth's department stores. It prompted copycat demonstrations across the South. The protests offered evidence that student-led direct action could enact social change and established the civil rights movement's direction in the forthcoming years.

The following year, civil rights advocates attempted a bolder variation of a sit-in when they participated in the Freedom Rides. Activists organized interstate bus rides following a Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation on public buses and trains.

Bios:

Harvey Morgan was born in 1930 in Gloucester Courthouse on the Middle Peninsula. The son of community pharmacist Happy Morgan, Harvey returned from a stint in the Navy and began his career as a pharmacist in the family drugstore. In 1979 he was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, and served the district until he retired in 2011.

Frederick Carter III (1944-2017) attended the all-black Gloucester Training school during the sit-in he orchestrated. Part of a politically active family, Frederick Carter became the first black deputy sheriff in Gloucester County, a pastor, and an airplane pilot. He also went into his father's business as a funeral director, lobbying the legislature for changes to laws governing funeral services.

1. Why did Fred Carter decide to do a sit-in at Harvey's drugstore? How did he choose the drugstore and May Day?
2. How does Harvey Morgan describe his earlier decisions to enforce segregation at the lunch counter?
3. What events might have influenced Fred Carter's decision?
4. How are Harvey and Fred's accounts different? What do you think really happened?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/27-the-sixties> (CC BY SA 4.0)

“Just New Kids” in Amherst County, 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Branham_K_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Monacan Associate Chief Kenneth Branham talks about his experiences making friends during the integration.

Repository: Amherst Glebe Arts Response

Transcript:

KB: Even though it was mostly Monacans, most of the education about the Monacan people, I think came from our own parents. And that was limited because of the racism here in Amherst County. My grandmother told me one time that if the wrong person, people heard us talking about being Indians we might not even have a place to live the following day. So, education from our parents was very limited on being Indian. They taught us how to survive, that and how to be decent people, and have respect for other people no matter what the circumstances are a lot of the time. And that is a hard lesson to learn sometimes when you are not being treated well yourself. There were people in our tribe that had a yearning for education but because of the school system here we weren't allowed in the public schools. Once you finished up seventh grade you went to work basically and most of the jobs here were very low paying, working in the apple orchards. Both my parents worked in the apple orchards. My grandparents worked in the apple orchards. It was either that or you worked in the timber business before the apple orchards took effect. Very low-paying jobs. Housing was very low. Ninety-nine percent of them had no running water.

The first couple of weeks we went at the beginning of the year and that was a good thing. So we were just new kids and we made friends pretty quickly. But after a while you know certain kids pulling away and not playing. I remember asking one. His statement was his mom and dad told him we weren't the kind of people that needed to... he needed to be playing with. So that was my first real contact with racism because my mom and dad, they did a good job of protecting us from these outside type things like that. And you don't forget something like that, when someone you think was your friend stopped playing with you because of something like that, something you can't help. And so, that first year of school was very very stressful and a lot of the older kids actually quit school because they couldn't handle the racism.

Context:

The segregation of public schools went beyond issues of black and white. Members of Virginia's Indian tribes were also largely excluded from public education. While many tribes established mission schools early in the twentieth century, these schools often only went up to the seventh grade. Meanwhile, many Indian children, whose help was needed at home or in the fields, never made it past elementary school. Public high school was available only to Indians who were willing to attend blacks-only schools, and most refused. They did this in an effort to maintain their cultural identity in the face of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which had deemed almost all Indians, for legal purposes, to be black. A number of the Powhatan tribes sent their children to the Bacone School in Oklahoma and to other such facilities, where they could complete high school and go on to earn the equivalent of a community college degree. Public schools were not opened to Virginia Indians until 1963.

Bio: Kenneth Branham was born in the 1950s and raised in Amherst County. He has served for decades intermittently as Chief of the Monacan Indian Nation. He oversaw the return of Monacan land from the Episcopal Diocese of Western Virginia and led the efforts for federal recognition, which became official in 2018.



Discussion questions:

1. Compare Mr. Branham's parents and Mrs. Hicks's parents. How did they talk about being Indian differently? How did they help their children confront racism differently?
2. Why did the white students at the school change their behavior towards Kenneth? How did that affect Kenneth?
3. Why did education matter so much to the Monacans? What did they hope to get from finishing high school instead of just seventh grade?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Desegregation_in_Public_Schools (CC BY NC SA)

“The Taxi Driver” in Amherst County, 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Hicks_H_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Herbert Hicks recalls that upon integration, Indian children were not allowed to ride the bus, pushing parents to consider unorthodox options to get their children to school.

Repository: Amherst Glebe Arts Response

Transcript:

HH: Those two girls had to ride a taxi to school, because the school bus wouldn't pick them up, even after school. The school bus driver wouldn't pick them up. So, they went in a taxi from down here on Kenmore Road to Amherst every day.

X: And who paid for the taxi?

HH: The family did.

X: The family did.

HH: The family did. And, these girls were young. I don't know how old you'd say they were, but I was in the Marine Corps at that particular time, and I wasn't married to my wife. But anyway, on one particular day, the taxi driver was late picking them up at school. So these two little girls were able to leave the schoolyard and walk from the school up into Amherst because they knew where the taxi stand was. They were allowed by those teachers and administrators in that school to walk off those school grounds. Now, the family had a phone. No one bothered to call the family and say, "Hey, the taxi driver hasn't picked these two girls up." So they walked up to the taxi stand and they was sitting there waiting on the taxi driver. And the taxi driver said when he picked those two kids up, that they'd been crying so much their face was all dirty and stuff. He brought them home. He was crying.

Context:

The segregation of public schools went beyond issues of black and white. Members of Virginia's Indian tribes were also largely excluded from public education. While many tribes established mission schools early in the twentieth century, these schools often only went up to the seventh grade. Meanwhile, many Indian children, whose help was needed at home or in the fields, never made it past elementary school. Public high school was available only to Indians who were willing to attend blacks-only schools, and most refused. They did this in an effort to maintain their cultural identity in the face of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which had deemed almost all Indians, for legal purposes, to be black. A number of the Powhatan tribes sent their children to the Bacone School in Oklahoma and to other such facilities, where they could complete high school and go on to earn the equivalent of a community college degree. Public schools were not opened to Virginia Indians until 1963.

Bio: Herbert Hicks was born in 1942 in Amherst County. He left to join the Marine Corps in 1961 and served for over two decades. He started a second career as a PGA golf professional and is now a Monacan tribal elder.

Discussion questions:

1. How did the girls' family address unfair treatment by the school bus driver?
2. Public education was legally available to Indian children in Virginia after 1963. What kinds of obstacles stood in the way of Monacan children attending public school?



References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Desegregation_in_Public_Schools (CC BY NC SA)

“Don’t be Ashamed” in Amherst County, 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Hicks_P_VUS.13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Reverend Phyllis Hicks remembers how her mother helped her through the high school experience as a Monacan Indian during school desegregation.

Repository: Amherst Glebe Arts Response

Transcript:

PH: Because, when you went to school, people was always calling you names and different things like that. When I first started riding the school bus, I stood up for two days before anybody would let me sit down. This one guy, he was a high schooler, an eleventh grader or something, he gave me a seat to sit down. Then, after he gave me a seat, well, after that, everybody else would give me a seat. Jimmy Wilkerson was his name. He lived right up the road here. I don’t know where he’s at now. At school, I’d have different ones that wanted to talk to me. Then I had the ones who would say, “Oh, she’s a Brown.” We weren’t good enough to go over there and things like that. That’s okay. I hung in there as long as I could. My mom helped me a lot when I was coming up to try to understand about how people thought about the Monacan people, and how people treated us. My mom used to be an inspiration because she would always say, “Phyllis, don’t be ashamed of who you are. Just because so and so said this or so-and-so said that. Don’t ever be ashamed of who you are. Be proud of who you are!” And I guess that’s one think that stuck with me in the situation we were in. I think she tried to help me to understand what was going on. And she went through it worse than I did. She always inspired me. She always encouraged me to do the right thing, and always come, whenever I needed any help or anything like that I always come to her and talked to her. We had a good relationship. I said that if I could leave this world and have half the faith my Momma had I could say I had a great journey. When those things happened, I’d get upset about ‘em so I’d go home and she’d try to talk to me. And she said, “God loves you and I love you and you’re going to be just fine. And if other people’s not taking enough time to get to know you, well, that’s their loss, not yours.” That’s why I say she was an inspiration to me to keep me going through those years. Those times when things come up like that.

When I left school here and I got home my job was to go home and to cook some pinto beans, or cook some cabbage, or cook some corn, you know, different stuff like that to have for your supper. I went home many a time and burned up the beans before Momma could get home because I was looking at “American Bandstand” on the TV. I was busy with “American Bandstand” and next thing you know I had burned up a pot of beans. [Laughter] And of course my Momma would get on me for that. ‘Cause my mom and dad, they worked in the apple orchard and some nights they didn’t get home before 8:30, nine o’clock from working in the shed with apples, grating apples and different things like that. So you had to learn how to cook and clean and do all that. I enjoyed it. Like I said, I enjoyed being with my own people, the Monacan people. I enjoyed that, been knowing the families all my life. That was a great thing, just to have them there. I know going here was more rewarding than going back to that high school, the way they treated you then.

Context:

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, most Monacan Indians were living on a settlement near Bear Mountain in Amherst County. Sometime around 1868, a small log cabin was built and used as a community church. In 1908, the Episcopal minister Arthur P. Gray Jr. established Saint Paul’s Mission and the Bear Mountain Indian Mission School. The school enrolled students through the seventh grade until the advent of public school desegregation in 1964.



Like other Virginia Indians, the Monacans struggled to preserve their identity and culture early in the twentieth century. The Racial Integrity Act of 1924 and subsequent legislation banned interracial marriage in Virginia and asked for voluntary racial identifications on birth and marriage certificates. "White" was defined as having no trace of African ancestry, while all other people, including Indians, were defined as "colored." To accommodate elite Virginians who claimed Pocahontas and John Rolfe as ancestors, the law allowed for those who had "one-sixteenth or less of the blood of the American Indian and have no other non-Caucasic blood [to] be deemed to be white persons." The laws essentially erased Virginia Indians as a category of people.

Bio:

Phyllis Hicks (1947-2015) grew up in Amherst County during segregation. She was a lay minister and priest, led efforts to establish the Monacan Ancestral Museum, and helped secure federal recognition for the Monacan tribe.

Discussion questions:

1. Compare Kenneth Branham's family's thoughts about being Monacan and Phyllis Hicks's mother's advice to her daughter. How were their goals and concerns different?
2. Compare Phyllis's experience to Brenda Andrews's experience as a black girl integrating Lynchburg schools. How were they alike? How were they different?
3. How do you think Phyllis's parents "had it worse" than her as children growing up in Amherst County?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Monacan_Indian_Nation#start_entry (CC BY NC SA)

“We Wore Winter Clothes in Cape Charles,” 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Brown_A_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Alice B. Brown describes noticing differences between white and black students during the initial years of integration.

Repository: Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restorative Initiative

Transcript:

AB: And I can remember her sitting up at night making me a dress to wear to school the next morning [Laughter] and then I did the same thing for my daughters but they never went over there. They never went there.

EC: Oh they didn't.

AB: No.

EC: That's right, you'd moved to—

AB: My daughters never went there. Our daughters went to Cape Charles. Now when we first integrated I was at the middle school. And that was a fine transition... from black to integration. We were all black, Northampton Middle School. And the whites came into our school because I remember the superintendent came and asked me would I like to go to... would I think about going to the high school, and I'd rather stay at the middle school. I go, "No. I'd rather stay here." Where I am.

EC: Yeah.

AB: They had their way of doing things, and we had our way of doing. But, especially the dress. Dressing, we always would dress up to go to school.

EC: Right, okay.

AB: We always would... that was one thing we would really do, because we thought that kids needed this. You know, this is part of education. And they used to tell us a lot of the time that we taught them how to dress. Because instead of wearing summer clothes in the wintertime we wore winter clothes, and they were having these little flimsy dresses on and whatnot. But it was nice, it was really nice. I would say that we, I, got along beautifully. I got along beautifully and made friends.

Context:

Virginia's public schools had been segregated racially since their inception in 1870. So, too, were the state's public colleges and universities. The principal black civil rights organization in the first half of the twentieth century was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which sought the desegregation of public education from its inception. The NAACP's legal team in the 1930s began to challenge these inequalities in education. One early victory occurred in Norfolk in 1940, when the courts agreed that the city had to pay black and white teachers equitably. NAACP lawyers in Virginia continued to employ this strategy of challenging inequalities in numerous other school districts, and the pace of litigation accelerated after the close of World War II (1939–1945).

Early in the 1950s, the Virginia state NAACP joined the national organization (based in New York City) in a legal attack on the constitutionality of segregation itself. The lawsuit *Davis et al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia*, filed in 1951 joined four similar NAACP suits filed in other locations around the country before the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled on the combined cases in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The *Brown* decision held that school segregation was unconstitutional, but the



decision did not explain how quickly nor in what manner desegregation was to be achieved. Desegregation began in Virginia on February 2, 1959, after a nearly three-year battle in the federal courts that had started in the spring of 1956. During this legal struggle the federal courts overturned many of Virginia's antidesegregation laws and eventually ordered the admittance of small numbers of African American students into formerly all-white schools in several locations around the state.

Discussion questions:

1. How does Alice B. Brown describe integration?
2. Identify the importance of the "dress" of teachers and students in the school.

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia
https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Desegregation_in_Public_Schools (CC BY NC SA)

"Do All the Children Bring Ice Picks to School?" in Norfolk, 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Porter_C_VUS.13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Teacher Celestine Diggs Porter talks about the challenges of integration that arose between black and white staff members as well as students.

Repository: Behind the Veil, the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University

Transcript:

Porter: First of all, the integration, we weren't ready for that in education. We weren't ready for it, and it came. And then the controversy that developed after the [19]54 decision was extremely catastrophic. Yes. Well, it was all over the country, but Norfolk was where we were. The whites, which we called "the establishment," they had been so accustomed to their schools on the other side. We were accustomed to our schools on the other side. Then to have to do this from the Supreme Court, which means they would have to do it at some point in time. Now, they took most of their time doing away with the Supreme Court's decision with all deliberate speed. Theirs was, how long can we take to postpone this thing? And they continued to postpone it. And as they continued to postpone it, attitudes built up. What we are going to do, how we are going to do it, what shall we do, how will we do it? Then when it was cracked down and you had to do it, it became very discouraging. But we managed. I had gone down to the central office as supervisor for social studies in the city of Norfolk when they transferred and changed all the teachers. One of the teachers that had taught me, I didn't want her to leave Booker T. Washington High School. She didn't have that much longer to stay there. But everybody just, in an effort to do this thing, they just transferred everybody, moving them from one place to the other. But they made one serious mistake, which I will have to hold them responsible for. They made students do the integration. They should have had teachers first, and they didn't do that. At every one of those white schools, at every one of the black schools, if they were going to send white children to the black school, they should have had a white teacher sent there. If they were going to send black children into the white schools, they should have had some black teachers there. Now, the first people that should have been integrated should have been teachers and administration first. But they didn't do that. They moved the children. Now, you understand what that would mean. Young people didn't have no business being moved first to have borne the brunt of the segregation process, and it did something to the youngsters. It did something to them. It made them hate. It gave them a sense of, "Nobody's here for me." Most of the students that had moved from the white school, from the black schools into the white situation, we as teachers had been there to nurture them, to help them along, to recognize their difficulties, to work with them. When they moved into the white situation, teachers didn't know them, they didn't know the teachers. They were afraid of them; teachers were afraid of them. I'll never forget, one young woman came here to my house. She integrated Booker T. She brought her husband here with her, and the first thing he wanted to know, "Do all of the children bring ice picks to school?" Now, their idea was that all blacks would knock somebody's head off with an ice pick. I said, "Where did you get that from, that everybody had an ice pick or a switchblade? For goodness sake, what do you think we've been doing all this now? What that?" Well, she was red in the face. I said, "Come on, you meet me at Booker T. We'll see about it." When she got to Booker T., the children accepted her. You know what I mean, they went right on along with them. I spoke with my teachers and I told them that this was a young woman to integrate the system, integrate the social studies department. She did all right. Then I transferred her to Ruthville. She went over there and she taught ninth grade history, world cultures. The children were so proud of her. They liked her so. She learned so well from them. She came to me as I observed her. She said, "Miss Porter, I want to say to you, I was just wrong. I'm enjoying myself here at Ruthville teaching the ninth grade."

KT: You said that it was kind of noncompliance with the [19]54 decision in this area for a long time.



CP: That's right.

KT: At what point did they just have to comply with the ruling?

CP: [19]72. By [19]72, they had to come up, they had to get it up with. The pressure was on by [19]72. See, it had begun in [19]54, and that was just the beginning. They gradually was putting one or two people here, you know, like that. But they had to make the whole thing in [19]72.

Context:

Virginia's public schools had been segregated racially since their inception in 1870. So, too, were the state's public colleges and universities. The principal black civil rights organization in the first half of the twentieth century was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which sought the desegregation of public education from its inception. The NAACP's legal team in the 1930s began to challenge these inequalities in education. One early victory occurred in Norfolk in 1940, when the courts agreed that the city had to pay black and white teachers equitably. NAACP lawyers in Virginia continued to employ this strategy of challenging inequalities in numerous other school districts, and the pace of litigation accelerated after the close of World War II (1939–1945).

Early in the 1950s, the Virginia state NAACP joined the national organization (based in New York City) in a legal attack on the constitutionality of segregation itself. The lawsuit *Davis et al. v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia*, filed in 1951 joined four similar NAACP suits filed in other locations around the country before the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled on the combined cases in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The *Brown* decision held that school segregation was unconstitutional, but the decision did not explain how quickly nor in what manner desegregation was to be achieved.

Desegregation began in Virginia on February 2, 1959, after a nearly three-year battle in the federal courts that had started in the spring of 1956. During this legal struggle the federal courts overturned many of Virginia's antidesegregation laws and eventually ordered the admittance of small numbers of African American students into formerly all-white schools in several locations around the state.

Bio: Celestine Diggs Porter (1911-2012) was born in Mathews County, Virginia. She began teaching social studies in 1935, and rose to become the first African-American social studies coordinator in Norfolk. She also supervised social studies students at Old Dominion University.

Discussion questions:

1. Ms. Porter discusses public school desegregation from a teacher's perspective. How does this story compare/contrast to the story of Ms. Andrews?
2. According to Ms. Porter, what factors caused school desegregation to take so long?
3. Analyze the longer history of public school desegregation in Virginia. How does Ms. Porter's story relate to the 1954 *Brown v. Board* decision and integration?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Desegregation_in_Public_Schools (CC BY NC SA)

"Someone Whom Had Come from Outer Space" in Lynchburg, 1965

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Andrews_B_VUS.13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Brenda Andrews, one of the first students to integrate Lynchburg's all-white high school, discusses her interactions with the court system, fellow black students, and the white students she met at school.

Repository: Desegregation of Virginia Education DOVE Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, Old Dominion University Perry Library

Transcript:

SY: Where did you go to school and during what time period? When did you graduate?

BA: I graduated from the Lynchburg schools in 1965. I was in the public school system throughout that time period.

SY: All right, so what's your story? What events are most vivid in your memory?

BA: Well, I was one of the children to desegregate the public schools of Lynchburg. And in Lynchburg, I guess as in all cities across the state and probably the South, there were quite a few students who started the process. But when the elimination came down, there were not as many. For example, Norfolk, they ended up with seventeen African American students who desegregated, started out 150 or whatever. In Lynchburg I'm not sure how many young people initially became involved in that process of desegregating the schools, but when it came to going to court and to actually moving forward with the process there were four of us who stuck it out. Most of the other children in Lynchburg who initially applied to transfer to E.C. Glass High School, which was the white high school at that time, and Dunbar High School was the African American high school. But most of the children were pulled out of the legal process because their parents feared for their jobs. So the four of us left, our parents were pretty independent of the white establishment. Cece [Cecilia] Jackson, her father was a dentist. Lynda Woodruff, her parents had jobs that allowed her, them not to be threatened by her movement forward. Owen Cardwell was an insurance man and my mother was a domestic worker. And so she was in the position where she could have been fired from her job, but she received the support from the family that she had been working for, for a number of years. And so there was no threat of her losing her job there. I have a memory that does not allow me to go back to how many court cases or how many court appearances we made in trying to tell our story of why we wanted to transfer, what we expected to happen if we transferred. But eventually there was a court ruling that we four would be admitted to desegregate E.C. Glass High School. Well, the Lynchburg school board was then ordered locally to admit only two of the four, to admit Lynda and Owen and not to admit CeCe and me for that fall term. And the two of them did go to school on that September day. The two of us, CeCe and I went back to court. We started school at Dunbar that semester but we went back to court to resurrect the case and to force literally the city Lynchburg and the Lynchburg school board to comply with the federal law order to admit four, not two. And they did. Looking back as an adult looking back to that time period, I think it was a very courageous act of two little girls who were told, "You are not fit to go to this school, you're not smart enough." Here you are, honor roll students taking college prep classes, all four of us had always been active in extracurricular activities, we all were good students, never been in trouble a day of our lives. And yet CeCe and I were unfit to attend the school. But we went back to court and then there was another round, another series of testimonies as to why we wanted to this. But eventually we did, we were admitted into E.C. Glass High School the following semester. And we were there that year and I believe the next year also, just the four of us out of over two thousand students. Around our junior year, I believe there was another influx of maybe ten or eleven black students. But because the school was so large and because there was so many students we hardly saw each other. CeCe and I were mainly put in the same



classes and Owen and Lynda were in the same classes. They had lunch period one and we had lunch period two so we hardly, I saw CeCe but I never saw Owen or Lynda, except Owen and I walked to school every morning because we lived in the same neighborhood. And so for two and a half or three years we walked every morning. And as we were walking the school bus carrying the white students from other communities would pass by us. So from every morning there were jeers out of the window and this went on up until we graduated for the most part. But I think I have two very memorable experiences over the years have not faded. One of them was the very first day that I walked into my biology class and in the biology class there were tables, and two students each sat at a table for lab purposes. And I sat next to a girl because that was the only available seat in the classroom and she immediately jumped up and ran. I mean, literally charged to the back of the room as if someone whom had come from outer space had sat there. That was my first experience of a person totally disavowing my humanity. Interestingly, when we graduated in 1965, she and I had names, last names that placed us close to each other. And so on graduation day we were actually sitting side by side. Little bit of a sign of the times that had changed during that time period. But the other very vivid memory is very much the same. It was in the cafeteria where we had lunch, which was always a horrible experience because it was always the matter of CeCe and I trying to find a table to sit at because nobody wanted to sit with us. And so normally we wouldn't have a problem but this particular day there were no tables where we could sit without people jumping up and running around the cafeteria. So we chose a table where there was a couple of boys that I kind of thought were okay people. And we sat down, and this boy got up, the one I thought was an okay person, and with the most disgust that he could imagine and he said, "It's bad enough we have to go to school with niggers, now we have to eat with them." And he took his tray and just left the table with utter disgust like it was the most unbelievable thing he could do, that we could do to sit at his table.

Context:

Virginia's public schools had been segregated racially since their inception in 1870. So, too, were the state's public colleges and universities. The principal black civil rights organization in the first half of the twentieth century was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which sought the desegregation of public education from its inception. The NAACP's legal team in the 1930s began to challenge these inequalities in education. One early victory occurred in Norfolk in 1940, when the courts agreed that the city had to pay black and white teachers equitably. NAACP lawyers in Virginia continued to employ this strategy of challenging inequalities in numerous other school districts, and the pace of litigation accelerated after the close of World War II (1939–1945).

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Bio: Brenda Hughes Andrews grew up in Lynchburg in the 1950s and 1960s. As a civil rights activist, she took a bus from Lynchburg to attend the March on Washington in 1963, a year after she helped integrate Lynchburg's high schools. She later became a publisher for an African-American newspaper called the *New Journal & Guide*.

Discussion questions:

1. Identify the process of school desegregation in Lynchburg public schools as Ms. Andrews describes it.

2. How did the African American parents' economic status influence their decision to send their child to integrate the school?
3. What two memories does Ms. Andrews describe in regards to school integration? What were social relations like at the high school?
4. How does Ms. Andrews' story relate to the larger climate of Massive Resistance and the *Brown v. Board* decision in Virginia?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Desegregation_in_Public_Schools (CC BY NC SA)



“Blend in With Everybody Else” in Rocky Gap, 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Hunt_T_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: The Charleton sisters, Tyna Hunt and Lynn French, remember the first days of integration in the small mountain town of Rocky Gap, and how the social lives of African-Americans was affected by their school closing.

Repository: Mountain Home Center

Transcript:

TH: My very first day of school, before school started, we were all sitting at this little table, myself and some of the other students, and we were laughing and talking. Then the teacher said, “Okay, it’s time to start. I’m gonna call roll.” So she called “Randy,” and Randy stood up or raised his hand. “Lynn,” and Lynn raised her hand. She said, “Tyna,” and I raised my hand. And she looked at me, then she looked at the paper and she said, “You’re Tyna Charleton?” I said, “Yes.” And she said, “Oh my God, you’re colored.” And every kid at that table moved. So that was my first day experience... It was just the fact that the kids were sitting there talking, at first. I went through it all through twelfth grade. So it wasn’t as bad at the end as it was in the beginning, but it was a difficult transition.

LF: They lost all of their individuality, that’s what I’m talking about, like their own cheerleading team, their own football, their own basketball, their dance groups—what do you call acting? Drama classes and all that, ‘cause they just sort of blended in. Of course they couldn’t have their own self, they had to blend in with everybody else.

TH: When I was here, they had a boys’ basketball team. That was it. They had cheerleading, but you were chosen as a cheerleader according to who you knew and how you looked, and I didn’t fit either.

Context:

Virginia’s public schools had been segregated racially since their inception in 1870. So, too, were the state’s public colleges and universities. The principal black civil rights organization in the first half of the twentieth century was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which sought the desegregation of public education from its inception. The NAACP’s legal team in the 1930s began to challenge these inequalities in education. One early victory occurred in Norfolk in 1940, when the courts agreed that the city had to pay black and white teachers equitably. NAACP lawyers in Virginia continued to employ this strategy of challenging inequalities in numerous other school districts, and the pace of litigation accelerated after the close of World War II (1939–1945).

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Discussion questions:

1. How did integration positively and negatively affect the Charleton sisters’ high school experience?

2. What do you think Ms. Hunt meant about not fitting in according to who she knew and how she looked?
3. Rocky Gap is rural compared to Norfolk, Lynchburg, or Richmond. How do you think coming from a smaller community might affect how the Charleton sisters experienced integration? What is some evidence of your assessment in this clip?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Desegregation_in_Public_Schools (CC BY NC SA)



“What’s for Dinner?” in Richmond, 1963

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Nordlinger_Z_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Women’s rights activist Zelda Nordlinger remembers the exact moment when Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* changed her life.

Repository: VCU Libraries Digital Collections

Transcript:

ZN: I remember very clearly the snap that went on in the head the day that it had happened. I was happy in my marriage the second time. I had just had two children. They were only like seventeen months apart. And then I had two, the two older children at the same time who were getting ready to be in their teens. So you can imagine I had two toddlers and two pre-teens and I was practically going out of my mind trying to balance the needs of those four children. And we went to the library about once a week, the children and I. We would all get books and bring them home, and I picked up a book that I had thought looked a little interesting. It was by Betty Friedan.

BB: This must’ve been about 1963?

ZN: Yes. I came home, sat down, and I started reading, and the children were bothering me, and I read, and the children would interrupt the reading and you know how that goes. So finally I had spent most of the day trying to get through the book, and I was just about finished when my husband came home from work. And as usual he came home, he kissed me and he said, "Hi hon, what’s for dinner?" Well, after reading Betty Friedan and my husband walking in the door and saying, "Hi hon, what’s for dinner?" I just exploded, and he could never understand why this was going on. It was the most unusual event he had ever experienced in his whole life, but I had read Betty Friedan’s book and that what was what did it. The way that I was treated as a child being female, being inferior, all of it came together at that moment.

BB: How did you act on this new awareness?

ZN: Oh, the new awareness. Well, after about a week of simmering, I called the YWCA and asked them if they knew of anybody that was interested in the women’s movement or the feminist movement. "No," they said, "no." I said, "Well, I wonder if you all down there would agree to let me have a meeting room and let me host a meeting of the people who might be interested in forming a feminist group." And they said it would be all right. So, I posted the notice, and a week later five of us got together at the YWCA. And that was the beginning of the feminist group here in Richmond.

BB: Did you call that a consciousness-raising group?

ZN: Yes.

BB: And was that the intent of it at that point to...?

ZN: More or less. We really didn’t have any specific plans or direction. We wanted to meet each other, explore possibilities, to see. Most of the women were working women, and they had definitely experienced all kinds of discrimination in those days. And then, of course, some of us had joined NOW [National Organization for Women]. Some of us hadn’t, so, you know, that was the very beginning of what we considered the feminist movement in Richmond.

Context:

The feminist movement grew in the 1960s. Women were active in both the civil rights movement and the labor movement, but their increasing awareness of gender inequality did not find a receptive audience among male leaders in those movements. In the 1960s, then, many of these women began to form a

movement of their own. Soon the country experienced a groundswell of feminist consciousness. The end of the decade was marked by the Women's Strike for Equality, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of women's right to vote. Sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW), the 1970 protest focused on employment discrimination, political equality, abortion, free childcare, and equality in marriage.

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* hit bookshelves in 1963. Friedan had been active in the union movement and was by this time a mother in the new suburban landscape of postwar America. In her book, Friedan labeled the "problem that has no name," and in doing so helped many white middle-class American women come to see their dissatisfaction as housewives not as something "wrong with [their] marriage, or [themselves]," but instead as a social problem experienced by millions of American women. Friedan observed that there was a "discrepancy between the reality of our lives as women and the image to which we were trying to conform, the image I call the feminine mystique." No longer would women allow society to blame the "problem that has no name" on a loss of femininity, too much education, or too much female independence and equality with men.

Bio: Zelda Kingoff Nordlinger (1932-2008) was born in South Carolina and moved to Richmond in 1947. She co-founded the Richmond chapter of the National Organization of Women in the 1960s and worked as a freelance writer. Her achievements included organizing a 1970 strike coordinated with National Women's Strike for Equality, and the passage of legislation that protected rape victims during trial.

Discussion questions:

1. Describe what led to Ms. Nordlinger's 'snap in the head' moment.
2. How did Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* influence Ms. Nordlinger's new awareness?
3. What was the 'new awareness' gained by white middle-class American women after reading *The Feminine Mystique*?
4. After her 'week of simmering,' how did Ms. Nordlinger take action?

References:

"Context" adapted from The American Yawp <http://www.americanyawp.com/text/27-the-sixties> (CC BY SA)



“The Woods Go Real Quick” in Fairfax County, 1970s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Wiggins_H_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Environmental activist Hal Wiggins talks about how the environmental movement borrowed energy and tactics from other social movements. He also discusses how activists like himself can influence government policy.

Repository: Friends of the Rappahannock

Transcript:

W: We didn't really have the environmental laws at that time, the Clean Water Act or NEPA or any of the anti-pollution laws. Just watching the rate of development... I remember as a kid seeing streams full of mud, you know, streams being destroyed, wetlands, the loss of our environment. We had a forest behind our house that was clear cut for development that... the rate of change, the suburbanization of Northern Virginia in the 1960s was quite a phenomenon, watched the woods go real quick. I remember that. George Mason University used to be George Mason College and the last big tract of woods was behind George Mason and when I was a kid, I used to go back there and camp and build shelters and spend several nights at a time. But now it's the Patriot Center. Yeah, Fairfax was kind of the limits of civilization. You went beyond that, it was just the country. There was nothing, just nothing beyond Route 50 in Fairfax. But that all changed and I began to see that change as I got a little older. There was several planned rallies in Washington, D.C. As a teenager, I remember going to a couple of those. There was one that happened in 1970 that resulted in D.C. being closed down for three days. Fifty thousand kids camped at West Potomac Park protesting the Vietnam War. Mainly it was the Vietnam War that was driving a lot of the change. But, of course, with that came the environmental movement, rights between the sexes, the women's movement. Social change was happening so fast that you couldn't go anywhere without seeing some form of protest or idea that maybe it's time for a change. Yeah, I remember as a kid driving to St. Louis and seeing smog that was so bad that when the sun shone through it, it created this sulfuris yellow color. I remember that. It's unthinkable to see a city here in this country like that, like you have to go to New Delhi or Beijing, one of those places to really see what it was like here before we had the anti-pollution laws come into effect in the late [19]60s and early [19]70s. It's interesting, back in the 1950s, a project came to this region, called the Salem Church Dam. And I have the original document. The agency that I worked for for almost twenty-five years was in task to build a dam on the Rappahannock River that would have flooded twenty-four miles of river upstream, a mega, mega project. The Salem Church Dam picked up a lot of steam over the [19]60s and almost got built, but it was defunded. Okay, in 1974 there was a citizens group here, the Rappahannock Defense Council that fought the Salem Church Dam project. But at that time there really were no environmental laws that would make a federal agency like the Corps of Engineers study the environmental effects of building a dam on the Rappahannock. The document that I have rarely mentions the environment. In fact, there's a letter from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science that said, "Hey, it'd be a good idea if we keep fresh water in the upper reaches and help oysters." That's how our thinking was back then before we really began to apply the science to understand our actions and what our actions have on the environment on projects of that scale. It's interesting: the Rappahannock Defense Council, in the 1970s, many of the members helped create the Friends of the Rappahannock that came about in the 1980s. There's a direct link with the same people that gave birth to this organization as a watchdog for the Rappahannock. In my lifetime, I've seen this change from agencies like the Corps of Engineers destroying the environment, building dams, building sea walls without much thought process put into studying the effects it would have on the environment. Put agencies at task to remove dams, to restore the environment. Our values as a people nationally have changed. Nationally, the political will of the people gave birth to these environmental laws and put agencies like the Corps of Engineers at task to assess its undertakings on the environment.

Context: Virginia's modern history has been shaped by and has in turn shaped its nonhuman natural environment. In one way, nature has been a historical actor changing Virginia: the state's climate, geology, waterways, fisheries, wildlife population, flora and fauna, and soil content have provided the conditions for economic, cultural, and recreational possibilities across the state. In another way, Virginians have acted to change land-use patterns, increase waste flows into rivers and other habitats, and intensify demands for energy, putting increased pressure on the environment during the twentieth century. By century's end, new transportation and energy-producing technologies, more scientific knowledge about interrelated ecosystems, and an accompanying shift in values about environmental features led Virginians to perceive their environments in ways differing significantly from their nineteenth-century predecessors. Moreover, the state's modern history serves as a representative example of the complex intermingling between culture and nature in America's environmental history.

While trends in the expansion of industrial development and suburbanization continued throughout the century, the last third, the 1970s through 2000, saw Virginia follow national patterns of environmental action. Citizens organized to respond to industrial pollution, chemical pesticide and fertilizer spills, and losses in biodiversity and habitat acreage incurred by earlier activity. The increasing political attention to problems caused earlier in the century offers a final example of Virginians reflecting and shaping cultural beliefs about nature. The creation of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970 represents attention to environmental issues at the national level. Within Virginia, numerous agencies followed the EPA's lead, while many nongovernmental organizations focused on local causes, from the Chesapeake Bay to the Piedmont to the mountains of southwestern Virginia.

1. Make a list of the other movements that came out of protesting the Vietnam War.
2. Describe the Salem Church Dam project. What river would it effect? Why wasn't the dam built?
3. How has the Corps of Engineers relationship with the environment changed?
4. What kind of positive changes does Mr. Wiggins see as a result of the environmental movement?
5. Describe the relationship between environmental activists and suburbanization in Northern Virginia.

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Modern Environmental History of Virginia](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Modern_Environmental_History_of_Virginia)

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“Laziest Youngins” in Suffolk, 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Kindred_R_VUS.13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Rochellia describes the moment she decided that she would never farm like her grandparents, and why she chose to move away from Eastern Virginia.

Repository: Suffolk Speaks, Suffolk Public Library

Transcript:

R: My grandfather [unclear] worked for Mr. Pulley off Loomis Road and every year they used to have a big fair in Suffolk. [unclear] there was a big fair. And in order to go to the fair, we had to earn money. Our grandparents didn't have any extra money to give us to go to the fair. So, my grandfather said, "If y'all want to go to the fair," my brother and I, that we could work for Mr. Pulley and pick some cotton. So we agreed. We got out there, Mr. Pulley lived on Loomis Road. It was the worst job in the world. I mean, the cotton rods, or whatever they were would scratch the tip of your fingers. Your back was just bent. Just imagine, I was probably about five years old. And so, just walking a whole row at five years old then, you could jump back up. But imagine just doing that for rows after rows after rows. You're not jumping up after a while. [Laughter]

X: Yeah.

R: But it was a long hot day. I remember when we took a break for lunch... We sat under this huge tree in Mr. Pulley's yard and we ate the lunch my grandmother had prepared for us. And we went right back to work. By the end of the day, my grandfather was yelling at my brother and I, telling us we were the laziest youngins he had ever seen in his life. [Laughter] By that time, we were exhausted. We were like really tired from being in the sun, the pulling of the cotton, the fingers bleeding, we were exhausted. So, and my grandfather worked like a champ. He went up and down those rows like it was nothing. He just... and by the time we got to my grandmother's house, he was telling my grandmother, "Laziest youngins." And we didn't care, because we knew we were never going to do this again. I think Al earned ten cents and I earned a whole nickel. But we went to the fair.

X: Oh my gosh, wow.

R: So, we did get to go to the fair.

X: So did you ever try it again?

R: No, that was my first and my last time. I knew from that experience I did not like farming, even though my grandparents had a very small farm. And my grandfather he had chickens and he used to have all kinds of beans and onions and corn and stuff and I just knew I hated farming.

Context:

The Great Migration fueled an important shift in the demographic center and the role of African Americans in the United States. This shift to northern cities continued beyond 1930, with a larger surge in the years after World War II (1939–1945). As a result, by 1970 African Americans had transformed from a rural and southern population to an urban and northern one. In addition, they adopted a more aggressive stance toward racial discrimination, which fueled growing civil rights activism. As participants in this movement, Virginians relocated to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, and other cities mainly on the Atlantic seaboard. They helped transform these cities and, eventually, the way the nation thought about race and equality.

Bio:

Rochellia was born and raised in Suffolk in the 1960s. As a young adult, she moved to New York City for work. She continued to spend her summers with her grandparents in Suffolk before ultimately retiring there herself.

Discussion questions:

1. Why is this experience important in deciding the trajectory of Rochellia's life?
2. Compare the "push" and "pull" factors that caused Rochellia to move north with William Walker's experience fifty years earlier. How were their experiences different? What did each hope to find in Northern cities?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Great_Migration_The
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“Beautiful Friends” in Roanoke, 1972

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Wilson_C_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Carolyn discusses growing up in West Virginia during integration as a black and non-binary person, and moving to Roanoke for a better life.

Repository: Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project, Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library

Transcript:

CW: I've always been Ms. Carolyn. From five all the way up to sixty-seven [years old], I've always been, I always knew the way I was. I'm just me. I don't try to... I don't try to be a woman and I don't try to be a man. I'm just trying to be a human being, you know, just me. And most the people call me "she" and I accept that and at work they call me "he," you know, naturally, but that's how I present myself, either one it doesn't matter to me. Well, I'm from West Virginia, a little town called Gary, West Virginia. I have one brother and three sisters and they accept me as I am. My mother accepted me as I was, she's passed. My father, he gave me a hard time, but he's passed too so I think at the end he accepted me as me and that's that, you know. They accept me as I am and I'm proud. My sister told me, "As long as you respect me, I'll respect you." So, I said, "That's a deal." People talked about me. They called me "sissy" and stuff like that which it didn't... it wasn't major to me, you know, it wasn't a major thing to me. I had a sister that was very mean. And she would take up for me. [Laughter] You did not mess with me because she would get you. [Laughter] The school I did go to was Gary district and that was the black school I went to. And then, they integrated in [19]60-something, [19]67, something like that. So we went to the all-white school. I was one of the only black people that went to that school, but it was predominantly white people. And I had no problem with it, no, I had no problem with it and I don't think anybody there, any of the black students, had any problems. I was just shocked to come here and hear about riots and stuff. I was going, "What? We didn't have that in West Virginia. Yeah, we didn't." And I came here in Roanoke in [19]72, April 15 of [19]72. When I first got here, I got off the bus with one suitcase and I asked somebody where was the "Y" [YMCA]. He said, "About two blocks up." And I looked down at the ground and I said, "Want to, I'm not going to be at the 'Y.'" So, I was green. I mean, green, I was real green. I didn't know what a block was. I didn't know none of that stuff. So, I asked somebody else, they said, "Just straight up the street. Go straight up the street and you'll see it." And I walked straight up the street and there it was. Well, I never knew the word "gay" until I really came here to Roanoke, really basically. In West Virginia, they would prefer "sissy" or "punk" or something like that. I never heard the word "gay," "queer," none of that stuff until I came here to Roanoke. And I stayed at the "Y" for about 6 months. I made beautiful friends, they took care of me. They took care of me and everything. And then from there, just, my life just bloomed. I became me.

Context:

In the 1960s no lesbian, gay man, bisexual, transgender, or queer person gave a thought to their sites and actions being historic. They were struggling for their basic rights, explicitly denied them by their government and the larger society around them. A community of people, identical to other American citizens except for the objects of their affections or their gender identity, was united by its shared oppression and came together in the 1960s and the 1970s not to "fit in" but to build their own community for themselves within the enveloping context of American society. Absorbed in asserting and demanding recognition not merely of their existence but of their rights as citizens under the law and the constitution, LGBTQ people created, and continue to create, communities across the nation to provide for their needs, provide support when needed, and more recently to celebrate their shared past and historic sites. Also unique to LGBTQ communities is the predominance for much of the twentieth century of bars and taverns as significant sites for which community members feel affection and pride. Because of the difficulty in finding and meeting others like themselves, as well as because of society's restriction of places for

LGBTQ persons to freely associate, bars across the country became sites of first acquaintance. It was often at these bars that community organizations started, held fundraisers, held meetings and special events, and connected with LGBTQ publics. In the 1960s, it was at social spaces such as bars that some of the most egregiously violent encounters between LGBTQ people and American society's enforcers occurred. The now iconic Stonewall riots of June 1969 were preceded by similar occurrences at Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966 and the Black Cat Tavern riot in Los Angeles in 1967. Carolyn discusses growing up black and non-binary in West Virginia during integration, and the move to Roanoke for a better life. [Context from National Park Service]

Bio: Carolyn Sue Wilson (1951-) grew up in segregated West Virginia, and in Roanoke worked many jobs including in assisted living, department stores, and bars. Carolyn was crowned the first black Miss Gay Roanoke in 1975 and had a long career as an entertainer.

Discussion questions:

1. Compare Carolyn's perception of integration in West Virginia and what Roanoke residents said about integration in Virginia. Identify some factors that might make integration different in Gary and Roanoke.
2. Compare Carolyn's reception as an LGBTQ person in Roanoke and Gary.
3. Carolyn says, "I became me" upon finding friends at the Roanoke YMCA. What does that mean? What factors contributed to Carolyn's social transformation?

References:

"Context" adapted from the National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm>



“Secret Society” in Roanoke, 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Jones_D_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Daniel Jones talks about building a community of LGBTQ residents in Roanoke.

Repository: Southwest Virginia LGBTQ+ History Project, Virginia Room, Roanoke Public Library

Transcript:

DJ: One instance I can recall very... in particular, me and a friend went out to this really nice restaurant and were sitting off kind of in a corner, and we'd ordered and whatnot. It was a very nice place. There was a long table down in front of us with people. This is the [19]70s. And somebody there apparently picked up on what, and started making some comments or something, and we just kind of ignored it. And then, they kept on, they kept on doing it. This is the power of being invisible. The head waiter walked over to us and apologized for what was being said, going on and proceeded to go over. And the ringleader of this group and standing behind his chair. He'd just stand there. The waiter was gay. Just stand there. He said, "What do you want?" He said, "Nothing, nothing." Just stood there. And it stopped, just completely stopped. He just intimidated them to the point where they were afraid to say anything. He had the power because he was head... he could have ordered them out. He had power. They didn't know why. And that was part of the invisibility thing. People look back at that time, who didn't live through it and they think it was all dark and it was all bad and was all hiding in the shadows. Well, it wasn't. We put up with a whole lot and a lot went on and there was a lot we had to deal with that we didn't like. But during that whole thing, we were laughing our butts off, and having a ball. Right underneath, a whole lot went on underneath the public's notice, underneath the straight society's notice. You changed pronouns from time to time. People went by pseudonyms of some sort, one sort or another. It was kind of like being a part of a secret society. Like, I suggested one time to a person you can go anywhere in the country and there was a lodge, just like the Elks or the Moose [adult social clubs] or any of the others. There was a lodge, anywhere you wanted to go, there was a community there. You might have to hunt for them, but they were there. There was a fairly good-sized group of people who even gathered at my apartment in the evenings, after you'd been in a campaign, you'd been working at this... you'd been working at that and everything, and everybody was tired and just it's a group of people and it was mixed. You had straight and you had people kind of gathering at my apartment. And that was fun and you'd talk and socialize and whatnot up until late and then you'd have to drag yourself out of bed the next morning to go to work. But that was fun. I enjoyed that a lot. And the Trade Winds, it was a nice little bar. [The Trade Winds opened in 1953 as a restaurant and bar, and became the first gathering place for gay and lesbian patrons in Roanoke, Virginia.] It was down in the basement. It wasn't very large but quite often it was packed. It was mixed, men and women, which was nice. We sat together, we partied together. There was no age differentiation. You might go in and sit down at a table and the person at one end might be seventy or more. The person at the other end might be eighteen. You might be good friends. You might party together. There wasn't that ageist business. Looking back, there were no blacks. Blacks were not allowed, did not come in. I don't recall ever seeing anybody black. I don't know if it was... I need to ask somebody about it. I don't know if it was a policy of the Trade Winds or not. But, in the [19]60s, it was just the point where things were changing. So, they just simply may not have been welcome and very well might not have been. I didn't even think about it at the time. Later, I found that very distasteful. All the bars later were mixed.

Context:

In the 1960s no lesbian, gay man, bisexual, transgender, or queer person gave a thought to their sites and actions being historic. They were struggling for their basic rights, explicitly denied them by their government and the larger society around them. A community of people, identical to other American citizens except for the objects of their affections or their gender identity, was united by its shared

oppression and came together in the 1960s and the 1970s not to “fit in” but to build their own community for themselves within the enveloping context of American society. Absorbed in asserting and demanding recognition not merely of their existence but of their rights as citizens under the law and the constitution, LGBTQ people created, and continue to create, communities across the nation to provide for their needs, provide support when needed, and more recently to celebrate their shared past and historic sites. Also unique to LGBTQ communities is the predominance for much of the twentieth century of bars and taverns as significant sites for which community members feel affection and pride. Because of the difficulty in finding and meeting others like themselves, as well as because of society’s restriction of places for LGBTQ persons to freely associate, bars across the country became sites of first acquaintance. It was often at these bars that community organizations started, held fundraisers, held meetings and special events, and connected with LGBTQ publics. In the 1960s, it was at social spaces such as bars that some of the most egregiously violent encounters between LGBTQ people and American society’s enforcers occurred. The now iconic Stonewall riots of June 1969 were preceded by similar occurrences at Compton’s Cafeteria in San Francisco in 1966 and the Black Cat Tavern riot in Los Angeles in 1967. [Context from National Park Service]

Bio: Daniel Jones grew up in Roanoke during the 1940s, the son of working-class parents. He attended Roanoke College and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for graduate school. He began working at the Roanoke Public Library in 1963 and was active in regional Democratic Party politics.

Discussion questions:

1. How did Mr. Jones meet other LGBTQ people in Roanoke?
2. What were some of the benefits of getting to know other LGBTQ people in the community?
3. Why were black people not allowed in the Trade Winds? What might be the disadvantages of segregation for potential black patrons?

References:

“Context” adapted from the National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/lgbtqthemestudy.htm>



“What About You?” in Suffolk, 1980s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Johnson_L_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Mayor Linda Johnson describes her career trajectory, from attending college to ultimately serving as Suffolk’s first female mayor.

Repository: Suffolk Speaks, Suffolk Public Library

Transcript:

X: So, what led you to pursue public service in Suffolk?

MJ: That’s actually kind of funny. I did not have any intentions in being in any type of public service. I had majored in journalism. I wanted to work with a TV station, or with radio, whatever, mainly TV, that was in the [19]70s, women were not being hired. And so, I ended up teaching school, actually, at the John F. Kennedy High School. And then, I left there and had my son. Then from there, I decided I wanted to do something that allowed me the freedom to be home, as well as to have a career and I ended up selling real estate. So, it’s again, no thoughts of doing what I’m doing today. And the lady that was in the borough district seat at that time retired and she said she wasn’t running. So, a group of, actually all men, asked me to have breakfast a few times with them to find a candidate to run and they kept asking different people to run and everyone kept saying no. And we kept going to breakfast, actually at Bunnies, the little place right over there on [unclear] road. And they even asked my husband, to which he said no. And so, but one particular morning, one of them said, “Well, what about you, would you do it?” And jokingly, my answer was “If I don’t have to come eat breakfast anymore at 7:30.” [Laughter] So, I tell people all the time, I do believe that life works the way it’s supposed to work and that it really wasn’t totally my choice, it was just where I was at the time and I guess God just put me there for a spot.

Context:

Although the pace was often slow, women sought elected office more often after the mid-twentieth century. In June 1948, when the town of Clintwood in Southwest Virginia elected an all-female town government, the news made the *Washington Post*. In 1953, Kathryn H. Stone, of Arlington County, won election to the House of Delegates—the first women elected to the General Assembly since the 1930s. Following her victory, numerous women of both parties sought election to public office. In 1970, however, there was only one female legislator in the General Assembly.

In 1979, Eva F. Scott, of Amelia County, became the first woman to win election to the Senate of Virginia. By early in the 1990s there were three women among the forty members of the Senate and twelve among the one hundred members of the House of Delegates. In 1961, Hazel K. Barger, of Roanoke, was the Republican candidate for lieutenant governor, the first woman in Virginia nominated by a major party for statewide office. In statewide elections before Adèle Clark’s death in 1983 at the age of one hundred, she saw nine women elected to the House of Delegates and two to the Senate. Edythe C. Harrison, of Norfolk, was the Democratic Party nominee for the United States Senate in 1984. Neither Barger nor Harrison won, but in 1985 Delegate Mary Sue Terry, of Henry County, did win election as attorney general of Virginia. The first and only woman elected to statewide office, Terry won again in 1989, but failed in her bid for the governorship in 1993.

Women continued to break new ground in the political arena. In 1989 Elizabeth Bermingham Lacy became the first woman elected to the Supreme Court of Virginia. Mary Margaret Whipple, of Arlington County, became the first woman to hold a party leadership position in the Senate when she became chair of the Democratic caucus in 2000. The number of women legislators in most states was still relatively small in 2005, but in Virginia they included eight of forty state senators and fourteen of one hundred members in the House of Delegates. In 1992, Leslie Byrne was elected to the United States Congress—

the first woman elected to Congress from Virginia, seventy-two years after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Bio: Linda Johnson was born in the 1950s, and moved to Suffolk as a child. She began her real estate career in 1986, and first pursued public service in 2000 upon winning election to the city council. She became the first female mayor in 2006, and the first directly-elected mayor in 2009. She has since won re-election twice.

Discussion questions:

1. Why did Mayor Johnson seek political office? Who decided that it would be a good idea?
2. What factors did she consider when she chose to pursue a career in real estate?

References:

"Context" adapted from Encyclopedia Virginia

[https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Woman Suffrage in Virginia](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Woman_Suffrage_in_Virginia) (CC BY NC SA)



"Just Like Home" in Richmond, 1980

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Mamasu_I_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Chef Ida MaMusu retells her native Liberia's historic ties to the state of Virginia, and how she saved her family members from her home country's long civil war.

Repository: Southern Foodways Alliance

Transcript:

SW: Can you talk a little bit about where you grew up and how you got to Richmond?

IM: I grew up in Monrovia, Liberia in West Africa, and I would say under the—what word do I want to—under the guidance of my grandmother. She was a chef and an entrepreneur herself and I learned everything that I know today from her. And that's how I started. I came to the United States in 1980 by way of a civil war in Liberia and I have been here since 1980. And I moved to Richmond, Virginia in 1986 and I've been here since.

SW: What is your grandmother's name?

IM: Ida after me. Ida Williams is her name, was her name. Her name was Ehtres. She was part of the free slaves that left in the 1900s and she was half Cherokee and half African. And she came—her family actually originated from Reston, Virginia.

SW: Chef MaMusu, I'm wondering if you could for people who are—there's an inextricable link between Virginia and Liberia and I'm wondering could you explain that for people who aren't familiar with that tie?

IM: Uh-hm; well, Liberia was founded in the 1800s by free slaves that came mostly out of North and South Carolina, Virginia, New York, and I think Mississippi. And most of the slaves left from the Virginia area and in the 1800s. According to history, about sixty thousand or so left during that era of the 1800s all the way into the 1900s. And largely they founded this place that was originally called the Green Coast, and then it was later on colonized and the capital city was named after America's President James Monroe. And Liberia was actually formed naming free slaves, liberty, meaning free. And right now Liberia is still colonized by the United States. We use the same United States dollars, form of government, and basically way of life in Liberia. So Virginia is one of the closest states in the United States when it comes to Liberia because the first President of Liberia was born in Petersburg, Virginia and the founder of Liberia, Lott Cary was also born in Charles City, Virginia. So the ties with Virginia and Liberia are very close.

SW: So you came to the states in 1980 and can you talk about what led you, where you came? Did you come by yourself?

IM: Yes; I came—the war broke in 1980 in my country and I was fortunate to get out. Unfortunately, I was fortunate to get out before the rest of my family. And I was the only one at that time in my family that was able to get out. My children was still stuck in the war, my parents, my sisters. I mean, everybody was still there and I was the only one that was able to get out. And I believe that God had really pulled me out because I had the strength to help get the others out. So I was able to get my children out, some of my other family members including my parents, out of the war. And I didn't start actually working for myself. I was working in hotels just trying to make ends meet in the Marriott Hotels and other places.

SW: Was that here in Richmond?

IM: Yeah; no, it started in New York in the French hotel because I speak French so I was working at the hotel in New York City. I had a friend that lived in Richmond and I came to visit her one weekend and just

loved it. And one of the reasons why I decided to stay in Richmond, it reminded me of Liberia a lot because there are a lot of places in Richmond that looks just like Liberia, like—example, we have Broad Street in Liberia; we have Broad Street here. And Cary Street. And it was just so much—things that were so familiar to me from the South because Liberia is kind of built like the South. And the people were very friendly just like home. It just felt so—it just felt so real for me.

Context:

Since its inception as a project of the American Colonization Society in 1822, Liberian and United States people and politics have been inextricably linked. During the Cold War, repressive Liberian leaders received military and financial aid in exchange for protecting US interests in Africa. However, once the Cold War ended in 1989, aid to Liberia came to an abrupt halt. When civil war (1989-2003) broke out and resulted in the rise of dictator Charles Taylor, United States officials did little to broker peace.

Discussion questions:

1. Why did Ms. MaMusu immigrate to the United States?
2. Describe the historical connection Virginia has to Liberia.
3. How does Ida MaMusu talk about her time in the United States?
4. What made her decide to move to Richmond?

References:

Context by Jessica Taylor. CC BY NC SA.

Section 2: Lesson Plans



LESSON PLAN 1: Prohibition

“Right in Front of the Courthouse” to The Great Gatsby

Standard: VUS8

Audio: Philpott_H_VUS8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Homer Philpott describes his travels over county and state lines as a bootlegger during Prohibition.

Essential Question: What was occurring in American society during the time period that F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* takes place?

Objectives: Students will be able to analyze an oral history from the 1920’s and identify the key historical factors (e.g., cars, Prohibition, corruption) the speaker is describing. Students will be able to connect the oral history to the historical context of *The Great Gatsby*. Students will understand important historical and cultural elements of the 1920s.

Activity:

1. Class will begin with an introduction to the author F. Scott Fitzgerald. This will include providing biographical information and mentioning his greatest works. This will allow for the lesson to segue into providing the historical background of his life and *The Great Gatsby*.
2. The teacher will begin by saying, “Now we are going to listen to and examine an oral history given by someone who lived during the time of F. Scott Fitzgerald.”
3. The teacher will play the oral history recording “‘Right in Front of the Courthouse’ in Martinsville, 1920s.”
4. After listening to it once, the teacher will hand out copies of the transcript so the students can follow along when it is played a second time. This will help students who struggle with hearing or understanding the accent of the speaker. It will also be beneficial for them to have a hard copy when trying to decipher the meaning.
5. Once it has been played twice, the teacher will break students up into groups. The group size will vary depending on how large the class is. Ideally, the groups will have four students. The teacher will ask the group to have one student be the scribe and write their responses on the other side of the index card.
6. Each group will receive an index card, and each card will have a question written on from the following list of questions:
 - a. Why do you think the speaker was making and hauling liquor?
 - b. What do you think the speaker means when he says, “The President made the country dry”? Who is the President?
 - c. Why does the speaker say that hauling liquor was a good time in his life?
 - d. Why do you think the prosecuting attorney said that the speaker wouldn’t serve a day in jail?
 - e. Why do you think hauling liquor went from being profitable to unprofitable?

7. The teacher will encourage students to use contextual clues, textual evidence, and background knowledge to try and answer the questions.
8. After giving students four to five minutes with the questions, the teacher will bring the class back together to discuss their answers. The teacher will record their responses on the board.
9. After the answers are shared, the teacher will introduce the Eighteenth Amendment and Prohibition by having students watch the following video: “U.S. Prohibition (1920-33)” by Simple History <https://youtu.be/uU9GMJ8a5w>.
10. The teacher will then explain that Prohibition plays a significant role in the plot and characters of *The Great Gatsby*. The teacher will instruct students to mark passages, as they read that involve or detail Prohibition for later discussion.



LESSON PLAN 2: Massive Resistance

“‘A Normal High School Situation’ in Norfolk, 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Fink_T_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Dr. T. Ross Fink discusses how he served as principal of a makeshift high school during the six months without school during Massive Resistance.

Repository: Old Dominion University Libraries Special Collections and University Archives

Essential Question: How did Virginia respond to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision?

Objective: Students will be able to describe Massive Resistance in Virginia in response to the *Brown v. Board* ruling.

This activity is a SCIM-C for the oral history to practice inquiry skills. Split the students into groups and give each group a set of articles, pictures, oral histories, or other documents that reflect responses from across the country to the decision. Include a map of the US. After students analyze these sources, they can place the responses to *Brown v. Board* from on different areas of the map and then present to the class the context of these conflicts.

Teacher Script: “Now we will fill out a SCIM-C chart so that we can analyze an oral history from someone who had an experience that involved Massive Resistance. We will be listening to a man who was principal of a makeshift school in Virginia during the period of Massive Resistance. While we listen, feel free to make notes in the “Summarizing” section before you write in complete sentences. We will go over the rest of the chart after we listen.”

Pass out SCIM-C charts (included on the next page). The first chart will be for the oral history.

“Now you might see that I have passed out a packet. For now, only use the *first* chart. We will use the rest of the packet next.”

Play clip at: <https://soundcloud.com/vt-stories/massive-resistance?in=vt-stories/sets/voices-of-virginia>

“Now that you have listened to the clip, go ahead and review your notes and summarize what you just listened to. When you are ready, discuss the rest of the chart with a partner. In ten minutes, we will come back together as a class and go over this chart.”

-Walk around the class to monitor progress on the SCIM-C chart. Look at what each pair is working on and ask questions about each stage. Look at the clock and see if students need more time.

“We will now move on to reviewing SCIM-C. Now, starting with the Summarizing box, What are some things that we learned?” Repeat for each box.

-Ask students and write their responses on the board. Use model student response to make sure that every question is answered.

-After the chart is completed, make sure to further explain the context of the activity.

“Now that we have gone through this source, know that tomorrow we will be doing group work. You will be working in groups of three to analyze sources related to *Brown v. Board* reactions in the rest of the country.”

-Transition to an exit where they will summarize the *Brown v. Board* ruling and Massive Resistance.

Worksheet found below.

Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

Aftermath of *Brown v. Board*

Guiding Question: How did the United States respond to *Brown v. Board*?

1. We will listen to an oral history related to Massive Resistance in Virginia. We will focus on the *first* chart only for now.
 - a. As we listen, take some notes in the Summarizing section of the SCIM-C. After we are done listening, you will be able to write complete sentences.
 - b. With a partner, discuss and fill out the rest of the chart.
 - c. We will go over this chart as a class.

2. During the next class, you will be assigned to groups of three and to another area of the United States. You will be given three sources that will delve into the reactions that your assigned area had to *Brown v. Board*.
 - a. Use the SCIM-C model for each source.
 - b. Make sure to fill out the “Corroborating” section and include information from the clip that we listened to at yesterday. Leave room in this box.
 - c. With your group, present what you found from your SCIM-C model to the class.
 - d. With a magnet, attach your sources to the US map.
 - e. As you listen to other groups, take notes in the Corroborating section.

Source:
Summarizing: What facts, events, or perspectives are clear? Is this a primary source or a secondary source?
Contextualizing: When and where was this source made? Why was this created? What is the greater context of what was going on?
Inferring: What can we infer from the source, or what does the source suggest? What can we interpret about the text?
Monitoring: What else do we need in order to answer our guided question? What else do we need to define? In what way is this useful? Any additional questions?



Source:
Summarizing: What facts, events, or perspectives are clear? Is this a primary source or a secondary source?
Contextualizing: When and where was this source made? Why was this created? What is the greater context of what was going on?
Inferring: What can we infer from the source, or what does the source suggest? What can we interpret about the text?
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Source:

Summarizing: What facts, events, or perspectives are clear? Is this a primary source or a secondary source?

Contextualizing: When and where was this source made? Why was this created? What is the greater context of what was going on?

Inferring: What can we infer from the source, or what does the source suggest? What can we interpret about the text?

Monitoring: What else do we need in order to answer our guided question? What else do we need to define? In what way is this useful? Any additional questions?



Source:
Summarizing: What facts, events, or perspectives are clear? Is this a primary source or a secondary source?
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Inferring: What can we infer from the source, or what does the source suggest? What can we interpret about the text?
Monitoring: What else do we need in order to answer our guided question? What else do we need to define? In what way is this useful? Any additional questions?



Corroborating: Compare and contrast sources. What do you see? Why might these similarities and differences exist? Do we need more information?



Model Student

Source: “A Normal High School Situation” Makeshift High School Principal Dr. T. Ross Fink

Summarizing: What facts, events, or perspectives are clear? Is this a primary source or a secondary source?

- Continuation of students schooling
- Lost class of 1959
- School in two abandoned homes, children of faculty and staff at the college, professors were teachers but no certifications from state, times of classes based on their flexibility, were able to go back to school in February without losing any credits
- Speaker was principal, PTA, intramural, tried to emulate a high school
- Students liked old schools, but grateful that they didn’t have to go to summer school
- Norfolk, student teachers had to go elsewhere

The speaker was the principal of a makeshift school during Massive Resistance. He describes a school that was created out of two homes and was taught by college professors. The school tried to create an environment that was as close to a high school environment as possible. The other schools reopened in February, but the students were grateful that they didn’t have to make up lost time during summer school. This is a primary source, as it is a first-hand account from someone who experienced the event.

Contextualizing: When and where was this source made? Why was this created? What is the greater context of what was going on?

If we look on the website, this oral history, along with others, was compiled in 2020. They were created to document history. During the time that the oral history is referring to, 1959, the *Brown v. Board* ruling had taken place five years prior. This ruling declared that segregation in schools was unconstitutional. This was a big change for a lot of Americans, and many people were opposed to it. Some of those people were in Virginia, where Massive Resistance caused schools to be shut down.

Inferring: What can we infer from the source, or what does the source suggest? What can we interpret about the text?

One big thing I can infer from this text is that the students, teachers, and families probably had no idea when schools would reopen. I can imagine that many students would not have the opportunity to go to a makeshift school like this and might have had to take summer classes, as this school was only open to the children of professors and faculty. Especially since students did not know when schools would open back up, I am sure that there were some who might have thought that they would never be able to go back to school.

It also sounds like creating a temporary school like this must have been pretty quick and rushed. This specific area was lucky because there was a university with professors, and they were able to find buildings. I can infer that there were other areas that did not have these advantages.

Monitoring: What else do we need in order to answer our guided question? What else do we need to define? In what way is this useful? Any additional questions? (How did Virginia respond to *Brown v. Board*? How did the United States respond to *Brown v. Board*?)

Were there other schools like this throughout Virginia? Were any leaders of the Massive Resistance against these schools? What did the average citizen think about the *Brown v. Board* ruling and Massive Resistance?

This helps us answer our guided question because it tells us how some citizens responded to the Massive Resistance in Virginia following the *Brown v. Board* ruling. I would like to know more perspectives from Virginians to see what citizens thought. I would also like to see perspectives from other people in the country to be able to compare and contrast how these perspectives were different or similar in other areas of the country.

LESSON PLAN 3: Working on the Railroad

Standard: VUS8

“The Hammer that Killed John Henry’ in Carroll County, 1900s”

Audio: Martin_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Mrs. Martin remembers how the ballad of John Henry stretched from a railroad song to influence popular music across racial lines.

“You Got a Red Light’ in Buckingham County, 1910s”

Audio: Johnson_E2_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Railroad worker E.E. Johnson explains the ins and outs of getting along with bosses and how to do the job right while laying railroad track.

“Get Your Dog On” in Buckingham County, 1910s

Audio: Johnson_E1_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Railroad worker E.E. Johnson sings a song that helped him and other coordinate the hard work of laying down railroad tracks through the mountains of western Virginia.

Activity:

Based on insights gained from oral histories, texts, and images of working conditions of railroad workers, students will craft a one- to two- paragraph narrative. Students will write from the perspective of a railroad worker and describe his or her everyday life and working conditions and how he or she feels about it. This will be the introduction to a creative writing unit; this activity will be used to make a connection between English and history material while still teaching required English skills.

1. Students will listen to the three audio clips and read the transcripts together in class.
2. Students will work in pairs to write a brief explanative description of what is occurring in each clip.
3. Class will come together for a brief discussion on findings.
4. Individually, students will then craft a paragraph describing life as a railroad worker, taking various details from the materials. Students will also be encouraged to be as creative as possible with their narratives.

Example Student Product:

I turn my eyes from the harsh light glinting off the boss’s pocket watch to my dirty fingernails. I’m exhausted, but I gotta do good ‘cause the boss is watchin’ and I don’t want a red light. We’ve been at it since dawn and I don’t think the boss’ll let us be done soon, but I’m not gonna complain; I’m just gonna shut up, do my work, and take my pay. That’s all I’m gonna do. But damn if it isn’t hot out.

LESSON PLAN 4: Integration

Standard: VUS13

"Do All the Children Bring Ice Picks to School?" in Norfolk, 1960s

Audio: Porter_C_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Teacher Celestine Diggs Porter talks about the challenges of integration that arose between black and white staff members as well as students.

"We Wore Winter Clothes in Cape Charles," 1960s

Standard: VUS13

Audio: Brown_A_VUS13.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Alice B. Brown describes noticing differences between white and black students during the initial years of integration.

Essential Question: How did the experiences of integration during the 1950s differ depending on location?

Objectives: Students will be able to identify differences in the integration process in different locations. Students will be able to identify potential factors that could produce different experiences during integration. Students will examine the process of integration through different perspectives.

Teacher Directions:

Prior to conducting this activity, the class should discuss the *Brown v. Board of Education* 1952 and 1954 cases. This will lay the groundwork that will allow students to better understand what is being discussed in the oral histories. Going forward, you could use this activity to transition from education to the greater integration of society and the ongoing civil rights movement; then you could transition into the Vietnam War and its controversial nature.

- a) Distribute worksheet (below).
- b) Prior to answering questions, have students listen to the oral histories on their own with headphones or listen as a class using the teacher's computer and speakers. Listen to one oral history and then answer the questions on that history before moving to the next one.
- c) Allow time for students to answer questions on the worksheet and compare their answers for one oral history to their answers for the other.

Come together as a group and discuss the differences that the students were able to identify and the reasons behind them. Draw attention to the importance of location in regards to the integration experience.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Oral History Comparison: Integration Experiences

Listen to each oral history, answer the questions that follow, and then compare your answers between the two.

Title: “Do All the Children Bring Ice Picks to School?”	Title: “We Wore Winter Clothes”
Who is speaking in this interview? What was her perspective during integration?	Who is speaking in this interview? What is her perspective?
When and where does this story take place? What was the context like?	When and where does this story take place? What was the context like?
What was the experience of integration like for the interviewee? Was it a tough process or not? Why or why not?	What was the experience of integration like for the interviewee? Was it a tough process or not? Why or why not?
How might location have affected the integration experience in this case? What is the area like?	How might location have affected the integration experience in this case? What is the area like?

LESSON PLAN 5: Segregation

Standard: VUS8, 9.4 Reading

“Things That You Accepted” in Greene County, 1950s

Audio: Morris_A_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Audrey Morris describes her childhood memories of her family’s relationship with black farm workers.

Essential Questions: Should children be acknowledged as reliable sources of information?

Do children have enough understanding of current events to contribute their opinions to serious matters? Should adults consider the point of view and opinions of younger generations when making important decisions?

Objectives: During this unit, students will compare a fictional passage in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and a historical recollection of the time period in Virginia. Students will identify the impact of Jim Crow prejudice and discrimination on children. They will apply evidence from the text to justify their analyses.

Activity/Lesson Plan:

1. Hook: Students will watch a video clip from the film *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) as a quick reminder of what happened the night before what occurs in the below passage:
 - a. <https://youtu.be/oaVuVu5KXuE>
2. Students will read a passage (attached below) from chapter 16 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee.
 - a. Students will be prompted to do popcorn reading; one student begins reading a portion of the passage, and when the student feels comfortable stopping, he or she will call on another classmate to continue. This process will repeat until the passage is finished.
3. Students will get into pairs and, using their laptops, go to the SoundCloud website to listen to Voices of Virginia “Things That You Accepted” in Greene County, 1950s:
 - a. <https://soundcloud.com/vt-stories/things-that-you-accepted-in?in=vt-stories/sets/voices-of-virginia>
4. After listening to the brief recording together, each pair will answer questions provided on a handout (to be printed out and handed to the pairs. Handout is included below). To support their answers, students should provide textual evidence within the passage or evidence found within the brief clip from Voices of Virginia.



Answer the below questions with a partner. You need to provide textual evidence from the passage or from the brief clip from *Voices of Virginia* to support your answers.

1. Harper Lee's novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, was published in 1960, and "Things That You Accepted" refers to historical events in the 1950s. What are similarities between these time periods? What is occurring in American society during this decade?

2. What is the main difference between the speaker's choices in the *Voices of Virginia* recording as compared to the children (Dill, Jem, and Scout) in Harper Lee's novel?

3. Do you think the opinions of the adults in Dill's, Jem's, and Scout's lives influenced the children's general thinking and choices? If so, who influenced them and how?

4. Why do you think children are often forced to accept matters?

Harper Lee

Everybody's appetite was delicate this morning, except Jem's: he ate his way through three eggs. Atticus watched in frank admiration; Aunt Alexandra sipped coffee and radiated waves of disapproval. Children who slipped out at night were a disgrace to the family. Atticus said he was right glad his disgraces had come along, but Aunt said, "Nonsense, Mr. Underwood was there all the time." "You know, it's a funny thing about Braxton," said Atticus. "He despises Negroes, won't have one near him." Local opinion held Mr. Underwood to be an intense, profane little man, whose father in a fey fit of humor christened Braxton Bragg, a name Mr. Underwood had done his best to live down. Atticus said naming people after Confederate generals made slow steady drinkers.

Calpurnia was serving Aunt Alexandra more coffee, and she shook her head at what I thought was a pleading winning look. "You're still too little," she said. "I'll tell you when you ain't." I said it might help my stomach. "All right," she said, and got a cup from the sideboard. She poured one tablespoonful of coffee into it and filled the cup to the brim with milk. I thanked her by sticking out my tongue at it, and looked up to catch Aunt's warning frown. But she was frowning at Atticus. She waited until Calpurnia was in the kitchen, then she said, "Don't talk like that in front of them."

"Talk like what in front of whom?" he asked.

"Like that in front of Calpurnia. You said Braxton Underwood despises Negroes right in front of her."

"Well, I'm sure Cal knows it. Everybody in Maycomb knows it."

I was beginning to notice a subtle change in my father these days, that came out when he talked with Aunt Alexandra. It was a quiet digging in, never outright irritation. There was a faint starchiness in his voice when he said, "Anything fit to say at the table's fit to say in front of Calpurnia. She knows what she means to this family."

"I don't think it's a good habit, Atticus. It encourages them. You know how they talk among themselves. Everything that happens in this town's out to the Quarters before sundown."

My father put down his knife. "I don't know of any law that says they can't talk. Maybe if we didn't give them so much to talk about they'd be quiet. Why don't you drink your coffee, Scout?"

I was playing in it with the spoon. "I thought Mr. Cunningham was a friend of ours. You told me a long time ago he was."

"He still is."

"But last night he wanted to hurt you."

Atticus placed his fork beside his knife and pushed his plate aside. Mr. Cunningham's basically a good man, he said, "he just has his blind spots along with the rest of us."

Jem spoke. "Don't call that a blind spot. He'da killed you last night when he first went there."

"He might have hurt me a little," Atticus conceded, "but son, you'll understand folks a little better when you're older. A mob's always made up of people, no matter what. Mr. Cunningham was part of a mob last

night, but he was still a man. Every mob in every little Southern town is always made up of people you know — doesn't say much for them, does it?" "I'll say not," said Jem.

"So it took an eight-year-old child to bring 'em to their senses, didn't it?" said Atticus. "That proves something — that a gang of wild animals can - be stopped, simply because they're still human. Hmp, maybe we need a police force of children . . . you children last night made Walter Cunningham stand in my shoes for a minute. That was enough."

Well, I hoped Jem would understand folks a little better when he was older; I wouldn't. "First day Walter comes back to school'll be his last," I affirmed.

"You will not touch him," Atticus said flatly. "I don't want either of you bearing a grudge about this thing, no matter what happens."

"You see, don't you," said Aunt Alexandra, "what comes of things like this. Don't say I haven't told you."

LESSON PLAN 6: The Great Migration in Virginia

Standard: VUS8

“You Want a Job?” in Norfolk, 1910s

Audio: Walker_W2_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Journalist William Walker remembers how young black men were recruited to work in Northern cities by large corporations.

"Eagerly Sought After" in Norfolk, 1920

Audio: Walker_W1_VUS.8.mp3 [Download](#) [Listen](#)

Summary: Journalist and newspaper owner William Walker recounts how coverage of African-Americans in the news changed as lynchings continued across the South and the Great Migration to the North began.

Essential Questions: How was life different for African Americans in the North versus the South during the early 1900s? How did these differences change the lives of African Americans in Virginia?

Objectives: Students will be able to analyze the influences that specific ideas and beliefs had on a period of history and specify how events might have been different in the absence of those ideas and beliefs. They will explain how and why events may be interpreted differently depending on the perspective of the participants, witnesses, reporters, and historians. Students will use historical evidence to determine, support, and coherently express a position about important political values, such as freedom, democracy, equality, or justice. They will analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, or nations.

Standards: The student will apply social science skills to understand how the nation grew and changed from the end of Reconstruction through the early twentieth century by analyzing the factors that transformed the American economy from agrarian to industrial and explaining how major inventions transformed life in the United States, including the emergence of leisure activities, and by analyzing the impact of prejudice and discrimination, including “Jim Crow” laws, the responses of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, and the practice of eugenics in Virginia.

NCSS Themes: People, Places, and Environments

Overview: After *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the institutionalization of Jim Crow laws in the South, many African Americans migrated to the North in hopes of a better life. After reading and viewing related videos/films on the Great Migration website, students will create a chart comparing the lives of African Americans still residing in the South during this period with those who participated in the Great Migration. Students should make sure that the materials used show the positive as well as negative experiences of African American people during this migration.



Activity – The Great Migration in Virginia

Day One:

1. The class will listen to the following oral history segments together and will be informed that they can use these oral histories as evidence.
2. Give one-half of the class the challenge of convincing everyone that the benefits of this migration outweighed the difficulties experienced. Challenge the other half of the class to convince the class that the opposite was true. To really make this effective, create smaller groups (subgroups) within each half of the class. Then, divide the following areas among each subgroup as they relate to African American life during this period:
 - f. Health
 - g. Safety/welfare
 - h. Education
 - i. Housing
 - j. Employment
 - k. Family life
 - l. Religion

Have each group assign each member one of the following roles:

1. The spokesperson for the presentation.
2. The subgroup leader, who is responsible for making sure that everyone is on task and included in the discussion.
3. The group correspondent, who makes sure that everyone in the group has the arguments and supporting evidence from the other groups. At the same time, he or she also must make sure that the other groups have theirs. Students must also make sure that you have this information.
4. If there is a fourth member of the group, this person is responsible for acquiring and returning all materials. Otherwise, ask someone in the group to help with this role as well.

Provide the initial resources for the students to get started (Great Migration website, <http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/landing.cfm?migration=8>) and let them know that you expect them to find other resources on their own or as a part of their subgroup.

Day Two: Have the entire team meet to pull all components together and decide who will present to the whole class.

1. Allow students time to practice for the presentation.
2. Have the groups collectively present their arguments.



VOICES OF VIRGINIA

Voices of Virginia pulls together oral histories from across decades and archives in an all-audio source companion for Virginia's high school and college students. The complete "album" contains dozens of short oral histories from eyewitnesses to key moments in American history from the Civil War to the present. Excerpts are downloadable, accessible by smartphone, and accompanied by a transcript. You'll also find brief historical context adapted from experts at Encyclopedia Virginia and American Yawp, and classroom tools like discussion questions, activities, and lesson plans that fit Virginia high school standards. By telling the larger national story with narratives from across the Commonwealth, Voices of Virginia grounds students in how history guides and is guided by everyday people.

Jessica Taylor, editor
with Emily Stewart

Department of History, with the University Libraries
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University

Audio and additional resources:
<http://hdl.handle.net/10919/96912>
<https://soundcloud.com/vt-stories/sets/voices-of-virginia>



An Auditory Primary Source Reader