

Reader Response Journal

Name: _____

Date: _____

Room: _____

Gallery Walk: FREE SPACE

What I Already Know About Slavery	Where Did I Learn This Information? (book, parents, movie, etc)

The Skin I'm in is Not A Weapon


Unit by the Claremont Comets, part of the 2021 cohort of *The 1619 Project*

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Thoughts or Questions I Have

<p>Listen to Excerpt 1...</p>	<p>My thoughts:</p>
<p>Listen to Excerpt 2...</p>	<p>My thoughts:</p>
<p>The President during that time was Abraham Lincoln. He invited a group of Black men to the White House to discuss a proposition, or a proposal for them.</p> 	<p>What do you think he wanted them to do?</p>
<p>That August day, as the men arrived at the White House, they were greeted by the towering Lincoln and a man named James Mitchell, who eight days before had been given the title of a newly created position called the commissioner of emigration. This was to be his first assignment. After exchanging a few niceties, Lincoln got right to it. He informed his guests that he had gotten Congress to appropriate funds to ship black people, once freed, to another country.</p>	<p>What did he propose the men should do?</p> <p>How do you think the men reacted?</p>

“Why should they leave this country? This is, perhaps, the first question for proper consideration,” Lincoln told them. “You and we are different races. . . . Your race suffers very greatly, many of them, by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word, we suffer on each side.”

.. “Although many men engaged on either side do not care for you one way or the other . . . without the institution of slavery and the colored race as a basis, the war could not have an existence,” the president told them. “It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated.

<p>‘This is our home, and this our country. Beneath its sod lie the bones of our fathers. . . . Here we were born, and here we will die.’</p>	<p>Based on this quote, who do you think is speaking?</p> <p>What do you think happened after the meeting at the White House?</p>
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How do you think free Black people were feeling after the war?	
What do you think they wanted to accomplish?	
How do you think white people like Abraham Lincoln felt after the war?	
What do you think they wanted?	

Why would free Black people want their rights? Why was that important to them? (think about the specific rights from the excerpt and from your chart on the previous page)

[Britannica Kids: Jim Crow Online Resource](#)

Jim Crow laws were an official effort to keep **African Americans** separate from whites in the southern United States for many years. The laws were in place from the late 1870s until the **civil rights movement** began in the 1950s.

The name Jim Crow comes from a once popular stage performance that began in 1828. This type of show, called a minstrel show, involved lively entertainment that encouraged a negative view of Blacks. The term Jim Crow became an unfavorable name for Blacks as well as a term for their **segregation**, or separation, from whites.

Beginning in the late 1870s, Southern **state** lawmakers passed laws that required whites and Blacks to attend separate schools and to sit in different areas on public **transportation**. The laws extended to parks, cemeteries, **theaters**, and restaurants. Blacks and whites had to use different drinking fountains, waiting rooms, housing, and shops. The laws kept Black and white people from relating to one another as equals. The laws limited freedom and opportunity for **African American** people.

Each state had its own set of Jim Crow laws. Segregation spread beyond the South to other states in the country as well. Signs were used to show where “people of color” were not allowed to go. In addition to African American people, Jim Crow law limited many racial and ethnic groups in the United States who were not seen as white.

In 1954 the U.S. **Supreme Court** decided in the case of **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka** that segregation in public schools was **unconstitutional**, or against the country’s set of rules. This decision was the beginning of the end for Jim Crow law. The legal argument to end racial segregation was extended to other public areas. Soon Jim Crow law was removed completely.

What was the purpose of the Jim Crow laws?	
Are separate facilities for Black people and white people fair? Explain your thinking.	
What groups of people enforced the laws?	

Directions: As you read, note the responses between Sgt Woodard, who is Black, and the white Chief of Police and other officers, who are also white. Underline anything Sgt Woodard said or did and circle anything the white officers/bus driver say or do.

Sgt Woodard's Story

A passage from ["The Idea of America" by Nikole Hannah-Jones](#)

Feb. 12, 1946: Isaac Woodard, a decorated 26-year-old Army sergeant, is severely beaten by white police officers while taking a bus to meet his wife. He is still wearing his uniform. Accused of drinking with other soldiers on the bus, Woodard is arrested on a charge of drunk and disorderly conduct and denied medical assistance. The attack leaves him permanently blind.

Keep an eye on the restrooms. They've always come for us through them. 'Cuz who doesn't ever have to use one? Straight peeps and trans peeps, black peeps and white peeps, we all have to go sometime. And back in the day, if the Colored Only signs didn't work or weren't enough, or still had black folks having the audacity to put on a uniform and go fight in a war — let's call this one World War II — they found other ways to come for us. Feb. 12, 1946, 17 years to the day before I was born — and when I was born, know those Colored Only signs were still up all over the South — a South I would live in until I was 7 years old — Sgt. Isaac Woodard, in full uniform, boarded a bus in Georgia, heading home to his wife in Winnsboro, S.C. Ninety-eight miles away from the town in which I was raised, Sergeant Woodard asked the driver if there was time to use the restroom. This was near Augusta, S.C., where the driver said, "Hell no." And then there was an argument. And the driver conceding with a "Go ahead then, but hurry back." Keep an eye on the history of black veterans in America. On the thousands that were attacked, assaulted, killed. Because they were black. Because they were in uniform. Because they had the audacity to believe that leaving this country to fight for it would indeed make it a better place for them to return to. Keep an eye on a white Southern bus driver conceding to a black man. At a later stop, Sergeant Woodard was ordered off the bus by the local chief of police, Lynwood Shull, and another officer. Lynwood beat him blind. Two months later, Woodard's family moved him from the V.A. hospital in Columbia, S.C., to New York City. At trial, Shull admitted to blinding Woodard. After 30 minutes of deliberation, an all-white jury acquitted him. Keep an eye on the long, bleak legacy of police brutality against black men. It happened in America. It happened when many of us were living. It happened again and again. And as Woodard himself said, "Negro veterans that fought in this war ... don't realize that the real battle has just begun in America." It happened on a Greyhound bus. To a man who was just trying to get himself home.

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What do you notice? What are you thinking?	
How are Black people feeling at this time?	
How do white people feel at this time?	

FREE SPACE FOR REFLECTION

"My 12-year-old son, Tamir Rice, was killed by police. I'm not allowed to be normal."

Reflections/Questions:	
Do you think Tamir's skin at 12 years old was viewed as dangerous? Or were the police justified in their thinking?	
Additional Thoughts:	

FREE SPACE FOR REFLECTION

"Trayvon Martin Case Provokes Justice and Race Debate"

Reflections/Questions:	
Do you think skin color played a part in the deaths of Tamir and Trayvon? Explain your thinking.	
Additional Thoughts:	

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After learning about all of these events in history: Slavery in 1776, the meeting with President Lincoln and the formation of Jim Crow laws in the South, Sgt Woodard 1946, Tamir Rice, and Trayvon Martin to name a few, What do you notice?

How can we deal with these issues?

PROJECT BRAINSTORMING

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