

Bound for Glory: The Migration of African-Americans to a New Life

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Introduction

Who are the people of the Great Migration? They are my ancestors and possibly yours, namely the African-American great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers who fled the South in the early 1900s shortly after slavery in a panicked search for safety, opportunity, employment, and education. It is the story of many families who were part of a mass exodus which left northbound train stations swollen with the desperation of those looking for a better life. How does one arrive at the conclusion that it is time to flee and start anew in a place never visited or even seen? Based on the promises of relatives, labor agents, and stories, blacks departed the South in droves toward a “promise land” of the Northeast, Midwest, and the West Coast.

Yet through this process, families were split, people were killed, and the Southern whites who depended on these tired brown hands to work their fields and serve in their homes suffered from their absence. In what ways did they express their worry, struggles, fears, hopefulness, and bravery? As reflected in the various works of famous black artists, these feelings were poured into artwork, poetry, and music in order to act as a living chronicle of the struggles African-Americans experienced during the cruelty and injustices thrown upon them in a post-Civil War era.

In my curriculum unit, I am interested in looking at the artwork collection of Jacob Lawrence’s “Migration” series, comparing his work with Romare Bearden’s own experience of the Great Migration. I will utilize the insightfulness of Isabel Wilkerson’s *The Warmth of Other Suns* as well as Richard Wright’s autobiographical account, *Black Boy*, as primary resources for the authentic stories of southerners who chose to leave and relocate to various cultural beacons admitting these fleeing pilgrims throughout the United States. I will also incorporate the poetry of Langston Hughes and the haiku of Richard Wright, which reflected the acquisition of new beginnings as well as the disappointments endured during this time period. My students will also be exposed to the musical genre of the blues which is a perfect vehicle of sorrow, loss, struggle and love. With all of these mediums combined, this culmination will truly allow one to feel the plight of blacks during the Great Migration.

Rationale

For three generations I was proud to admit that my mother's side of the family was born and bred in the North-Elizabeth, New Jersey to be exact. We said "cawfee" instead of coffee and were proud of it! However, as many families did over the last decade, my husband and I decided to go south for better job opportunities, more affordable housing, and seek out a more quiet and safe place to raise our children. Not long before I left New Jersey, my maternal grandmother (whom I was raised with) passed away. After getting settled in our new home, we received a death certificate stating her place of birth which ironically was Stanly County, North Carolina. This area is located an hour away from where I currently reside.

The news of my southern-born grandmother totally floored me. I felt that I had come full circle in life and that there was possibly a deeper connection to the choices we make summoned from previous generations; a sort of "coming home," so to speak. I realized how many things I did not know about my family's history. I had more questions than ever before and I decided to go to the Stanly County Hall of Records in Albemarle, North Carolina, to acquire the answers I needed to get an understanding of why they were in North Carolina. There I searched for my grandmother's birth certificate in order to gain more information on her family history.

I found that she was born in the small neighboring town of Baden. She was delivered by a midwife, which was the way in which many African-Americans were born. My grandmother had two older siblings who were also born in Baden, a few years before she arrived in the world. I learned that my great-grandmother was a domestic worker born in South Carolina (with no city specified) and my great-grandfather was a laborer originally from a small town in Hatchechubbee, Alabama.

After more digging and talking with other relatives I uncovered that they were sharecroppers in the south and later moved to New Jersey after the birth of my grandmother, their third child. I yearned to find the reasoning behind the decisions they made to join the many other African-Americans on their journey during the Great Migration. Were they treated unfairly by a dishonest landowner? Were they threatened and stifled by the Jim Crow laws that dictated the life they must lead? Were they suffering from the miniscule amount of opportunities for people of color in the South?

As a result of the mounting curiosities I had, I chose this seminar in order to assist me in filling in the blanks of the personal stories of my own family. In addition to my own personal connection, I want a chance to also assist my students in learning about the struggles of the people during this time period. My students often ask: What happened to the newly freed slaves after the Civil War was won by the Union? Where did they go? Were they granted the equal rights of the ruling white class that they so fiercely denied? As adults, we are aware of the true tales of these times, yet students don't readily

understand the amount of time it took for African-Americans to gain the foothold in society as equal citizens.

When examining the artwork of Bearden and Lawrence, I hope to show my students the various usages of color, shape, and size in their pieces and how each is significant to these artists. I will use collage with my students in order for them to understand the great complexities of their style of painting by having them create their own collages. We will also look at the artists' lives and how they were personally impacted by the Great Migration era and discuss whether their experiences influenced their work.

I will also share the poetry of Eloise Greenfield, Langston Hughes, as well as the Haiku of Richard Wright in order to illustrate an image with words of their feelings and personal ties to the Migration. We will analyze the poems and compare them to other authors in order to discover similarities and differences of their interpretations of what took place during this time period. We will also look at lyrics to popular blues songs of this era and listen to the music in order to match a sound to the words they sing of these times. In conjunction, I hope to create a vivid and detailed picture of the events which occurred to thousands of families during this mass exodus from the south. I anticipate that the unit will take two to three weeks of instruction for completion.

Background (School)

I teach in a self-contained fifth grade class of 25 students at Clear Creek Elementary, which is located in one of the largest urban school districts in the country, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Our school has over 700 students, where pre-kindergarten through fifth grade is taught. Approximately 55% of the student population receives free or reduced lunch. There are two students who have Individualized Education Plans and receive special education services, one student who receives English as a Second Language services, one student who has a 504 plan, and one student who is a catalyst for the Talent Development program.

Clear Creek Elementary has a history which can be traced back over 100 years and historically serviced the needs of children from farming families who could not attend school all year around.¹ Much of the Clear Creek community resides in the town of Mint Hill, which is a suburb of Charlotte as well as the city of Charlotte itself. The school population consists of 45.2% White, 33.8% African-American, 15.8% Latino, 1.4% Asian, and 3.6% are classified as other.

¹<http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/clearcreekES/Pages/AboutOurSchool.aspx>

Background (Unit)

What is the Great Migration?

“Man, them white folks sure is mean.”... That’s how come so many black folks leaving the South.”... “And man, they sure hate for you to leave.”... “Yeah. They wanna keep you here and work you to death.”²

This quote from Richard Wright’s autobiography, *Black Boy*, depicts the feelings which many African-Americans harbored in the early 1900s about the tense and perplexing relationship that existed between whites and blacks. The poor conditions, daily danger they faced, and lack of opportunities left many with the only option of going north, west and Midwest for a better quality of life. Approximately six million blacks fled the South to search for new beginnings for themselves and their families between 1900s and 1960s,³ which “resulted in one of the biggest population shifts in the history of the United States.”⁴

These migrants arrived at cities such as St. Louis, Detroit, Los Angeles, Harlem, and Chicago. They usually came with the clothes on their backs, food for the journey, and the most precious possessions that were able to be carried in a suitcase with more hope in their hearts than money in their pockets. The travelers would stay with family members who previously arrived and usually sent letters describing the wonderful times they were having in these bustling cities. Although the overcrowded conditions and the fast-paced city life they were unused to intimidated them, they knew that there was no turning back and were determined to make their new lives work.

Who is Jacob Lawrence?

Jacob Lawrence is one of the most influential artists of our time, who found it crucial to tell important stories chronicling the stories of African-American experiences throughout U.S. History. One of his most influential works was his Great Migration series, which he created between 1940 and 1941 at the age of twenty-two. In this collection, Lawrence painted 60 works with the assistance of his wife, Gwendolyn Knight. What is so unique about this series is that he did not create it in separate pieces. “Instead, he sketched and planned all of the paintings together. Then, he applied paint to all of the paintings at

²Wright, Richard. *Black Boy*. (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2006), 80.

³Sioux, Tracee. *African American Migration*. (New York: Power Kids Press, 2004), 17.

⁴Lawrence, Jacob, et al. (*The Great Migration: An American Story*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1993.)

once, one color at a time.”⁵ This method of layering and creating each frame simultaneously gave the collection a more cohesive effect and allowed the events of the Great Migration to play out as a dynamic and connected story.

Who is Romare Bearden?

Romare Bearden, born in our very own Mecklenburg County, was another acclaimed artist of African descent of the 21st century. One who experienced the Great Migration first hand, Bearden’s parents left Charlotte, North Carolina to follow the wave of the newly made northerners who migrated to the bustling black artistic haven of New York City, Harlem. Bearden had a unique childhood experience, as he could easily find famous musicians or poets of the day such as Langston Hughes or Duke Ellington, sitting in his living room when he returned home from school.⁶ With his mother, a newspaper editor and political activist, and his father, a sanitation worker, they became part of the Harlem elite.

Bearden used many artistic styles, but was most famous for his work with collage. He took various photographs and magazine clippings and enlarged them, which gave various dimensions to his art. He felt a need to capture the resilience of African-Americans in these works, as well as relive his childhood memories through collage. Many images which he held dear, such as trains, women, and music are highlighted throughout many of his pieces over time.

Who is Langston Hughes?

Langston Hughes was a legendary poet, author, playwright, and mentor to other aspiring artists. He celebrated the beauty of black people and portrayed the good, bad, and the ugly of the African-American experience. Despite a rocky relationship with his mother, constantly moving in search of work and his father who loathed his own people, Hughes was able to persevere and become successful despite the many hardships he faced in his ever-evolving career as a poet. He felt his writing should depict the lives of the everyday black man and woman who felt the highs and the lows of life, putting a spotlight on the reality of their struggles. Ironically, Hughes lived the majority of his life and career in poverty.⁷

⁵ Collard III, Sneed B. *Jacob Lawrence: A Painter’s Story*. (New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010), 25.

⁶ Greenberg, Jan. *Romare Bearden: Collage of Memories*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2003), 24.

⁷ Osofsky, Audrey. *Free to Dream: The Making of a Poet: Langston Hughes*. (New York: Lothrop, Lee and Sheperd Books, 1996), 94.

Who is Richard Wright?

Richard Wright is a world-renowned author who felt the painful sting of poverty and Jim Crow laws, growing up in the harsh realities of the South, via Mississippi and traveling the channels of the Great Migration by arriving in Chicago as well as New York City. He is the author of the critically acclaimed book, *Native Son*, whose primary character Bigger Thomas, mistakenly murders a white woman and receives the death penalty as a result of his unfortunate accident. This was unheard of in the 1940s and in turn, this book crossed color lines and “within one month, the book soared on best-seller lists across the country.”⁸ He also wrote a book based solely on the accounts and experiences of blacks during the Great Migration entitled, *12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States*.

Critics struggled with the outspokenness of Wright’s character and found himself a subject of inquiry and constant investigation of the FBI, who viewed him and his communist party ties, dangerous to the United States. Despite his efforts to improve and convey the plight of blacks in America, he felt his own country did not treat him with the love and respect with which France received him. He, in turn, decided to move his family to Paris in order to taste the freedoms not allowed in the country of his birth. Wright later fell ill and died of a heart attack. His works continues to be revisited, read, and celebrated decades later.

Who is Eloise Greenfield?

Eloise Greenfield is an African-American author who has written countless poetry, fiction, and non-fiction works over the decades. Her family moved from their native Parmele, North Carolina to Washington, D.C. in order to begin their lives again.

Who is Bessie Smith?

Bessie Smith was born at the close of the 19th century in Chattanooga, Tennessee. During her career, Smith was mentored by the famous Blues artist Ma Rainey. Smith experienced hardship and sadness in her personal life. She was best known for her “rich, powerful, and clear voice.” throughout her career as a Blues vocalist.⁹ She was later killed in a tragic automobile accident.

Who is Billie Holiday?

⁸ Westin, Robert. *Richard Wright: Author of Native Son and Black Boy*. (Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2002), 9.

⁹ <http://www.biography.com/people/bessie-smith-9486520>

Billie Holiday was born on April 7, 1915 into a troubled family life¹⁰. With an absent father and a struggling mother, Holiday lived with various people throughout her childhood. Later moving to New York with her mother, she began her music career singing along to tunes by Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong. Holiday later became famous performing with Count Basie and others until going solo. Struggling with drug and alcohol abuse, Billie Holiday died an early death at the age of forty-four. Two songs she was most famous for were “God Bless the Child” and Strange Fruit.”

Activities

Activity 1

This unit will follow the Civil War Unit taught in class previously, which will give the students a chronological layout of events which happened in America after the freeing of the slaves. We will discuss the Jim Crow laws of Segregation between whites and blacks. Then, I will read aloud the book *The Great Migration: Journey to the North* by Eloise Greenfield. We will discuss the illustrations in the book and discuss this art form called collage which will be explored in following lessons. The students will complete a free write in their writing journals/daybooks and share with the class. I will also write in my journal in order to model my writing and thinking about the subject of the Great Migration.

Activity 2

I will begin the class read aloud a chapter book from the *Dear America* series entitled *Color Me Dark: The Diary of Nellie Lee Love, The Great Migration North-Chicago, Illinois, 1919*. This will be done at a separate time of the Literacy Block and will

Activity 3

Students will read excerpts from *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of the Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson and follow the stories of the three main characters in the book. We will create a map of the U.S. and map the journeys the African-Americans traveled in order to escape the oppressive practices of the South. They will then write an argumentative essay in which they will be a relative who has gone to the North and is persuading their relatives or the Southern landowners who are trying to persuade the black southerners to stay.

¹⁰ <http://www.biography.com/people/billie-holiday-9341902?page=1,2>

Activity 4

The teacher will read aloud the book *Langston Hughes: American Poet* by Alice Walker. We will discuss the life of Hughes and the hardships he dealt with during his life. Then we will look at his poetry and analyze his most popular poems as well as those that highlight the idea of the Great Migration such as “West Texas”, “The South”, “Bound No’th Blues”, “One-Way Ticket”, and “Share-Croppers”. (“Mother to Son” and “Harlem” will be analyzed as a whole class.) I will break the class into five cooperative learning groups. Each group will get a poem and they will have to identify the setting of the poem, as well as the main idea. They will then have to discuss as a group how they think their poem relates to the Great Migration. The students and I will free write in our day books.

Activity 5

The teacher will read aloud the book *Richard Wright and the Library Card* by William Miller, which is based on a true event in Wright’s life. We will discuss the frustrations of Wright and other blacks who wanted education and could not receive it due to the color of their skin. We will then read some excerpts of Wright’s biography *Black Boy* and his Haiku poems. The students will then create their own Haiku poem of an incident or memory of their own childhood using the guidelines of five, seven, and five syllables.

Activity 6

The teacher will read aloud excerpts from the biography of Jacob Lawrence entitled *Jacob Lawrence: A Painters Story*. We will discuss and identify the parallels that Lawrence has with the Great Migration and make connections to the Eloise Greenfield book’s illustrations. Then we will look at his Great Migration series and record themes we see in his paintings. We will also discuss the events which happened during this journey by analyzing the pictures.

Activity 7

The teacher will read the book entitled *Romare Bearden: Collage of Memories*. We will discuss how Bearden was a resident of Charlotte, North Carolina, and the work that is housed in our resident museum, The Bechtler Museum of Art. We will also analyze Bearden’s artwork and look at his pieces specifically created about the Great Migration. We will record reoccurring themes that we see in his work and try to analyze these symbols.

Activity 8

The students will view an art piece from Jacob Lawrence and an art piece from Romare Bearden. They will then complete a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the two

paintings. We will then share our work with the class. The students will complete and quick write and share their writing with the class.

Activity 9

Students will create their own collage about their feelings and impressions of their readings of the Great Migration. Students will listen to various Blues songs of the era while they create their work in order to assist them in channeling the emotion of this ordeal that African-Americans endured during this movement. They will sketch their picture first and then add color to the sketch. Then they will layer the collage with materials such as newspaper, photographs, and magazines in order to create the effect that Bearden and Lawrence created in their works. This will most likely be collaboration with the Art teacher.

Activity 10

We will analyze the lyrics and structure of two popular Blues songs: “Downhearted Blues” by Bessie Smith and “Good Morning Heartache” by Billie Holiday. The students will be provided with the lyrics of both songs and will make a list of the themes found in the lyrics. They will then discuss the mood of the pieces. We will then make a general statement about this genre of music. Then, we will brainstorm a list of events that could happen to a kid that would make a good Blues song. I will share a sad story with the class and we will create a Blues song together. Then, the students will create their own Blues song using their own sad experience as the basis of the lyrics.

Activity 11

Students will write poetry in response to the way they feel when they listen to the music of the Blues. Before the read aloud, the teacher will give the students background knowledge on Billie Holiday and a brief biographical sketch of her life. The teacher will read aloud the book entitled *God Bless the Child* by Billie Holiday and Arthur Herzog Jr. with illustrations by Jerry Pinkney. This is a perfect correlation between blues and the Great Migration. The students will listen to the enclosed CD and look at the illustrations of Southern life and the Great Migration north to a more prosperous life. The students will free write what they feel as they listen to this song and others by Billie Holiday.

Activity 12

I will read aloud the picture book, *Bessie Smith and the Night Riders* by Sue Stauffacher. We will discuss how the book is based on an actual event that took place in Concord, North Carolina in July of 1927. After reading the book, we will hear some of the songs mentioned in the book such as “Whoa, Tillie, Take Your Time”, “Lady Luck Blues” and “You Don’t Understand.” After listening to the songs, the students will create a quick write journal entry on why they thought Bessie Smith was or was not brave to stand up to the Klu Klux Klan, also known as the “Night Riders.”

Activity 13

I will read aloud the picture book, *A Blue So Blue* by Jean-Francois Dumont. While listening to Blues music, the students will draw a picture using only various shades of blue. They will then write a quick write about the feelings they felt when they read the book and listened to the music. The students will share their pictures and writing with the class. We will then create “cloud” with words that come to our minds about Blues music.

Activity 14

Our culminating activity will be to have an art and writing display for other fifth graders to view as an art gallery. The students will choose their best poetry, writing, and art samples and read them to the audience similar to a poetry slam. All work will be placed around the classroom to be viewed. We will have Blues music playing in the background.

Strategies

Integrating Various Subjects through Social Studies

Integrating various subjects allows the time constraints we encounter as teachers to be maximized by using as many subjects areas weaved together to create an enhanced curriculum which captures the interests of the students. According to Lindquist and Selwyn, “an integrated curriculum is at the heart of a teaching approach that places social studies at the center of the curriculum...Discrete skills related to the various subjects and disciplines are still taught, but there is a consistent thread of content that keeps the learning focused.”¹¹

Cooperative Learning Groups

Cooperative Learning Groups is a skill that not only helps students to process concepts and complete activities with peer help and guidance but allows the development of social skills, along with cooperation, team building, and leadership skills. Students can benefit from being exposed to the various ideas and thought processes of peers in order to assist in developing their own thought processes. I will use this strategy in my unit during the debate activity, in which the students will convene together to discuss issues that affect the side they are arguing for. They will need to discuss and choose the important issues that they will sway the opposing side to agree with their point of view.

Usage of Historical Fiction Books

¹¹Lindquist, Tarry, and Douglas Selwyn. *Social Studies at the Center: Integrating Kids, Content, and Literacy*. (Chicago: Heinemann, 2000.)

The usage of historical fiction books to teach Social Studies bring the elements of fiction, and narrative into the context of a real historical occurrence. In my unit, I will use powerful historical fiction books so that my students can create a story context in their minds using what they already know about characters, setting, and story in order to create new ideas in a historical context of learning of various cultures, places, and events in time. The story is more accessible as they are able to connect and relate to the characters in the books, yet learn about the climate and the way of life during the particular era in history.

Many historical concepts can be quite complex and abstract to young learners. It is important to use all learning styles in order to make the concepts understood and internalized. This strategy addresses the kinesthetic learners as well as creating a real life scenario in which the students will be able to make concrete connections to the concept. I use this strategy in the unit in which the students will get an opportunity to act out from the point of view of a new arrival from the south. They will then write journal entries to write their feelings during the process.

Usage of Pictures, Graphs, and Diagrams

Pictures, graphs, and diagrams are essential to students who may process information in other ways besides verbal and auditory. This strategy makes learning more concrete and also assists the English Language Learners in making connections to the difficult concepts and vocabulary they may encounter in their daily interaction with unknown or complex vocabulary. I will use this strategy in my unit by showing various artworks by the renowned African-American artists Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence who depicted the Great Migration in different interpretations which were based on their personal experiences of this time period.

Summarizing and Note-Taking

It is important for students to learn the strategy of summarizing and note taking. Students need to know how to synthesize and process information in a meaningful way. They need to learn how to take a large amount of text and filter through it in order to find the information that meets their needs. The students also need to be able to take the information and concisely list only the pertinent information into a summary. I will use this strategy in my unit during the final culminating research activity. The students will choose a specific topic or aspect of the Great Migration they would like to focus on. They will then begin to gather their resources and materials they will need for their project. After they have the materials, I will guide them through the process of how to take notes and select important information and facts and to discard the frivolous information. I will also do mini-lessons based on how to take the information they gather and summarize it into a cohesive paper.

Journal Writing in Daybooks

I will use this strategy throughout my unit in order to have my students respond to various prompts and ideas we discuss in class in their Daybooks. Daybooks are a great way to promote the writing process. The students are able to delve deeper into a subject of study by exploring feelings and thoughts through the lens of a character or their own personal connections to the text in writing.

Usage of Technology

I will use technology in my unit in order to display images as well as be a vehicle for interactive activities my students will utilize. I will also have the students create their own power point choosing three of their favorite pictures and an explanation of why they chose them. The power point should also include an original poem or a song written by the student based on their reaction to the African-American experience. The Usage of technology is crucial for students to become 21st Century learners and to be able to navigate the ever-changing society and its demands.

Usage of Garner's Multiple Intelligences

Throughout my unit, I will incorporate poetry, music, and art for my students to interact with as well as create on their own. This will be a way for students to tap into the variety of other disciplines and art forms which exist in the world. Students will have the opportunity to use choice in order to determine which vehicles they want to use in order to best interact with the historical time period.

Works Cited/Bibliography for Teachers

Bearden, Romare, Carla M. Hanzal, and Ruth Fine. *Romare Bearden: Southern Recollections*. Charlotte, N.C.: Mint Museum, 2011.

A collection of artwork over the decades of his career, Bearden shows his love for Charlotte, despite the poor conditions the South offered blacks during the early 1900's. Bearden was a product of the Great Migration and shows his impressions of the various places he lived and the strong feelings and impressions he internalized in each home.

Candaele, Kerry. *Bound for Glory: From the Great Migration to the Harlem Renaissance, 1910-1930*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1996.

Collard III, Sneed B.. *Jacob Lawrence: A Painter's Story*. New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010.

Cooper, Michael L.. *Bound for the Promised Land: The Great Black Migration*. New York: Lodestar Books, 1995.

Greenberg, Jan, and Romare Bearden. *Romare Bearden: Collage of Memories*. New

York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2003.

This book is a collection of Romare Bearden's work and a biography of his life that explains the works and their significance during his career. A very kid-friendly book, *Collage of Memories* is a great story of Bearden and his work.

Greenfield, Eloise, and Jan Spivey Gilchrist. *The Great Migration: Journey to the North*. New York: Amistad, 2011.

This is a collection of poems written from the author's experiences being a part of the Great Migration. She shares her family's perspective running from the south to Washington D.C. for a better life. With collage and other artwork, the words and pictures tell a story of many through this book.

Hughes, Langston. *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Vintage Classics Ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

This is a collection of Hughes' most famous poetry throughout his career in one book.

Lawrence, Jacob, Walter Dean Myers, Darla Decker, Elisabeth Foxley Leach, George Nicholson, Gwendolyn Knight, Harriet Bee, Michael Hentges, Tim McDonough, Helen Santini, John B. Murphy, Tom Starace, Osa Brown, Elizabeth Hutton Turner, Jessica Altholz, David Gale, Marc Sapir, John Vitale, and Lucille Schneider. *The Great Migration: An American Story*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1993.

This book shares the Migration series collection of art he created in response to the phenomenon known as the Great Migration. Lawrence and his family were swept to Philadelphia and Harlem in search of the very things all blacks were searching for at this time: opportunity.

Lindquist, Tarry, and Douglas Selwyn. *Social Studies at the Center: Integrating Kids, Content, and Literacy*. Chicago: Heinemann, 2000.

This resource assists teachers with introducing exciting classroom activities using Social Studies as the vehicle to learn about the world simultaneously with other subjects.

Osofsky, Audrey. *Free to Dream: The Making of a Poet : Langston Hughes*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1996.

Sioux, Tracee. *African American Migration*. New York: Power Kids Press, 2004.

Westen, Robin. *Richard Wright: Author of Native Son and Black Boy*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2002.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. New York: Vintage Books, 2011.

This book is an amazing resource on the Great Migration. Wilkerson manages to take non-fiction, historical accounts and turn them into a beautifully flowing narrative which gives you the feeling that a story is being told in its most eloquent form.

Wright, Richard, Yoshinobu Hakutani, and Robert L. Tener. *Haiku: This Other World*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998.

I found this collection a pleasant surprise in the ways of poetry. Wright composed thousands of poems when he moved to Paris and later, compiled hundreds into this compilation. In these works, he wrote about his surroundings in the South as well as his life and career.

Wright, Richard. *Black Boy: (American Hunger) : A Record of Childhood and Youth*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2006.

This book is an autobiographical account of Richard Wright as he grew up in the South, in which this twisted love-hate relationship with his birthplace began. This novel chronicles the highs of his novel's success and finding the love of his life to his lows of being in constant hunger and hardship moving from place to place with a broken family.

<http://www.biography.com/people/bessie-smith-9486520>

<http://www.biography.com/people/billie-holiday-9341902?page=1,2>

Reading List for Students

Adoff, Arnold. *Roots and Blues: A Celebration*. New York: Clarion Books, 2011. This book is a soulful collection of poems based on the genre of Blues including powerful illustrations.

Dumont, Jean, and Michel Bourque. *A Blue So Blue*. New York: Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 2005.

Greenberg, Jan, and Romare Bearden. *Romare Bearden: Collage of Memories*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2003.

This book is a collection of Romare Bearden's work and a biography of his life that explains the works and their significance during his career. A very kid-friendly book, Collage of Memories is a great story of Bearden and his work.

Greenfield, Eloise, and Jan Spivey Gilchrist. *The Great Migration: Journey to the North*. New York: Amistad, 2011.

This is a collection of poems written from the author's experiences being a part of the Great Migration. She shares her family's perspective running from the south to Washington D.C. for a better life. With collage and other artwork, the words and pictures tell a story of many through this book.

Holiday, Billie, Arthur Herzog, and Jerry Pinkney. *God Bless the Child*. New York: HarperCollins/Amistad, 2004.

This is a collection of illustrations by Jerry Pinkney which are set to the lyrics of Billie Holiday's famous Blues song, "God Bless the Child". The illustrations depict various scenes from southern living and the journey north to new beginnings.

Hughes, Langston. *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Vintage Classics Ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

This is a collection of Hughes' most famous poetry throughout his career in one book.

Lawrence, Jacob, Walter Dean Myers, Darla Decker, Elisabeth Foxley Leach, George Nicholson, Gwendolyn Knight, Harriet Bee, Michael Hentges, Tim McDonough, Helen Santini, John B. Murphy, Tom Starace, Osa Brown, Elizabeth Hutton Turner, Jessica Altholz, David Gale, Marc Sapir, John Vitale, and Lucille Schneider. *The Great Migration: An American Story*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1993.

McKissack, Patricia C.. *Dear America -- Color Me Dark: The Diary of Nellie Lee Love, The Great Migration North*. New York: Scholastic, 2000.

This story is a fictional recounting of a girl and her family relocating to Chicago, Illinois during the Great Migration. It is written in journal entries in the main character, Nellie Lee Love's diary.

Miller, William. *Richard Wright and the Library Card*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1997.

This book is a fictional account of a true event in Wright's life. Wright was a very intelligent young man who was self-taught throughout his life. Although he had opportunities to attend formal schooling, it was never consistent due to him constantly moving around with his family. When Wright wanted to check out books from the library he was interested in reading, he knew this was impossible based on the Jim Crow laws which did not allow blacks to check out books at the public library. In turn, Wright borrowed a library card from a white co-worker and wrote a note asking the librarian to give books to Wright for a white man.

Myers, Walter Dean, and Nina Laden. *The Blues of Flats Brown*. New York: Holiday House, 2000.

This story is about a blues loving dog named Flats, who was owned by a cruel and mean owner named A.J., Grubbs. Grubbs wanted Flats and another dog named Caleb to be fighting dogs. However, Flats just wanted to do what he did best: play the blues. They run off to various places in order to escape Grubbs' mean ways but he finds them at every turn.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Blues Journey*. New York: Holiday House, 2003.

This is collection of verses written in the style of music affectionately called blues. In these poetic lyrics, stories of Jim Crow laws, lynching, and broken hearts are shared in these lines.

Stauffacher, Sue. *Bessie Smith and the Night Riders*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2006.

This book is based on a true event which occurred during Bessie' career set in Concord, North Carolina. This tale tells the attempts of the Klu Klux Klan, also known as "Night Riders" to sabotage Smith's performance and perhaps harm those performing as well as attending the concert. A story of bravery, Smith chases the Klan away and continues to give one of her renowned performances minutes after the incident.

Walker, Alice, and Catherine Deeter. *Langston Hughes: American Poet*. New York: Amistad, 2002.

This is a kid-friendly biographical account of the life and career of Langston Hughes. The illustrations capture the style of the time and the true emotion in Hughes' eyes. A great read for the students. Please pre-read the book because there is a reference to some racially derogatory words.

Wright, Richard, Yoshinobu Hakutani, and Robert L. Tener. *Haiku: This Other World*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1998.

I found this collection a pleasant surprise in the ways of poetry. Wright composed thousands of poems when he moved to Paris and later, compiled hundreds into this compilation. In these works, he wrote about his surroundings in the South as well as his life and career.