



Lynching: America's Missing Narrative

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This curriculum unit is recommended for
High School Social Studies, Grades 9-12

Keywords: lynching, Reconstruction, police brutality, civil rights, race, racism, Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Redeemers, slavery, terrorism, memory, legacy, justice, American identity, oppression, white supremacy, social control, social justice, colorblindness, equality

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This curriculum unit is designed to uncover one of the numerous narratives that is missing from the collective American memory. The history of lynching overall remains a memory that America does not want to acknowledge as a piece of its past and part of its identity. Due to the failure of America to acknowledge the terrorism of lynching as a form of social control against the black community after the abolishment of slavery, its effects can still be felt today through other forms of racial injustice. Black individuals have experienced police violence over time, which spiked during the Civil Rights Movement to counteract and prevent racial equality. Modern incidents regarding police violence are displayed through the disproportionate amount of black victims of police involved shootings. This mirrors the racial terrorism of lynching that ensued after the Reconstruction era to redeem white supremacy in the South. Throughout the unit students will explore the history and purpose of lynching, research lynching victims and individuals who fought against lynching, in addition to how lynching has been memorialized thus far. In the latter half of the curriculum unit students will analyze the correlation of lynching to police brutality, research victims of police involved shootings and individuals who currently fight against police brutality, as well as how these victims have been memorialized thus far.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to a maximum of 90 students in both my African American Studies and American History II courses.

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Introduction and Rationale

Throughout my own educational journey and as an educator, I have noticed five problematic issues regarding black/African American history as it is taught in primary and secondary education. The following five issues will be confronted throughout my curriculum unit:

Issue 1: Eurocentrism controls the historical narrative regarding American memory and identity.

Issue 2: Overall, black history and identity in America has been marginalized and dwindled down to American slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, and the presidency of Barrack Obama. However, this narrative does not encompass the complexity of the black experience in the United States. There are narratives that are often omitted. This is typically due to the unknown possible reactions from students, school administration, and even fear of our own biases.

Issue 3: Black history is not taught as American history, but as a separate narrative, confined to the three subcategories stated above in issue two. Often this narrative is predominately reflected during Black History Month and the same “major leaders” of the Civil Rights Movement are remembered and commemorated.

Issue 4: Educators often adopt a stance of colorblindness to ignore race in an attempt to dismantle racism. Yes, race is social construct, but it cannot be ignored. Race matters; it has real life implications and plays a significant role in shaping our experiences as Americans.

Issue 5: Current issues that black Americans face are not being connected to what happened in the past. The lack of acknowledgment regarding these correlations and neglecting to address certain memories in America’s past does a disservice to students and the future of the United States. Attempting to sanitize systems of racial control and the history of racial violence in America’s past puts students at disadvantage when attempting to understand the implications and impact of white supremacy that persists in contemporary society.

This curriculum unit begins by teaching students to think critically about history and in turn to question the conventional American narrative by exploring one of the memories seen as “stains on the American fabric,” which are typically avoided when discussing United States history in primary and secondary classrooms. Throughout the curriculum unit, the five issues listed above will be addressed through the exploration of terror lynching as form of social and racial control of African Americans after Reconstruction. Hopefully, this curriculum unit also stimulates conversations regarding race discussed outside of the educational sphere. Conversations about race, American identity, memory are important because race relations in the United States cannot continue to make progress without opening the floor for discussions that address these often difficult topics, such as lynching. Additionally, these conversations should not be done in vain; this curriculum unit is designed to ignite a call for action to demand change in race relations. This change begins with addressing lynching, America’s missing narrative.

Demographics of West Mecklenburg High School

The following information describes the demographics of West Mecklenburg High School, a Title I school, within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. Title I provides funding to public schools with the highest percentages of children from low-income families and is intended to help ensure that all children have an opportunity to obtain a high quality education.

A majority of the student body is identified as African-American, making up the largest segment of the student population. Compared to a typical school in Charlotte, West Mecklenburg High has a drastically different ethnic distribution of African American students making up 62.0% of the student population. Most Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools have only a maximum of 42.0% (and a typical school is 20.0%-30.0%) of their student population defined as African American. West Mecklenburg High is also drastically different from that of a typical school in the state of North Carolina, in which African Americans on average only make up 26.0% of the school population. The gender distribution at West Mecklenburg High closely mirrors the average school in the city of Charlotte which is 48.3% female and 51.7% male, as well as, a typical school in the state of North Carolina which is about 48.4% female and 51.6% male.

The data for students that attend West Mecklenburg High states that all 100% of students are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged. Also, 99.6% of West Mecklenburg High students participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). To qualify for the free lunch program, the income of a child's family must be under \$15,171 (below 130% of the poverty line). 99.4% of West Mecklenburg High students receive free lunch and an additional 0.2% receive reduced lunch. The qualifications for reduced lunch states that the child's family income must be below \$21,590 annual income (185% of the poverty line). West Mecklenburg's NSLP participation rate is higher than average for Charlotte (62.1%) and higher than average for North Carolina (57.2%).

Unit Goals

This curriculum unit is based on the striking resemblance of Black victims of police brutality today to the lynching of Black Americans that spiked after Reconstruction. My rationale for the creation of this unit begins with an analysis of societal issues that my demographic of students are more susceptible to face as minorities, especially for those who are African American. Looking specifically at the police involved shootings of African-American men, women, and children; I determined that the history of lynching and police brutality requires more attention in primary and secondary education classrooms, specifically for students at the high school level.

Police brutality in America has led to the deaths of numerous Black Americans. This issue can no longer be ignored, and especially requires contextualization and discussion for Mecklenburg County students as a result of the unrest that took place in Charlotte after the police-involved shooting of Keith Lamont Scott. The lack of justice and commemoration of these incidents will only continue to create a divide between police officers and the Black community. These police involved shootings familiarly resemble lynching that took place during slavery, Post-Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement.

The curriculum unit goals include:

1. Students will understand the use of lynching as a racial terrorism tactic to instill fear and suppress rights of African Americans over time.
2. Students will analyze and evaluate the narratives of African Americans who were lynched and those murdered through police brutality.
3. Students will compare and contrast the motives for these acts of vigilante justice (informal executions.)
4. Students will analyze the methods used to murder said individuals and the “public spectacle” aspect.
5. Students will examine the public response of black and white individuals after incidents of lynching and police brutality, focusing mainly on the way these events are and are not remembered or commemorated as a part of America’s historical narrative.

During this curriculum unit students will examine the endless cycle of brutalized black bodies from generation to generation (named and unnamed victims). As a country we cannot move forward until we assess how we got here. Memory, legacy, and impact shape who and what is memorialized in America. History is not just about what we remember, but what we choose to forget. America suffers from collective amnesia.

The history of the black experience in the Social Studies classroom is slavery, Martin Luther King Jr., and Barrack Obama. The official history does not look so accurate when we look at the missing narratives. By focusing on the comparisons and contrasts of lynching and police brutality the following are starter questions:

1. How do white Americans use lynching as a form of social control over black lives?
2. What is the public response to the lynching of black Americans? Are these lives memorialized?
3. Do black lives matter? When have black lives ever mattered in American history? (This is seen in the marginalization of Black Americans in textbooks promoting Eurocentric view of American memory)
4. Who is valued in America? Who is ostracized?
5. Why as a nation is there an argument regarding the possibility of removing Confederate Civil War monuments, because it “erases” history, but there is no outcry for the missing narratives regarding black lives?
6. What are police tactics used during the Civil Rights Movement to denture change? Does police brutality begin here for black Americans?
7. How does one separate corrupt police officers from those who are “good”?
8. How does one define police brutality?
9. Does it only matter if someone dies as a result of police brutality?
10. How are the victims of police brutality memorialized?
11. What are the similarities and differences regarding lynching and police brutality?
12. What is considered terrorism in America?
13. What are the consequences of forgetting the past racial violence and injustice?
14. Why are some stories given space in history books while others are omitted or mentioned only minimally?

Lynching represents the notion of black helplessness and white power (supremacy). Currently, you have American unrest about Black Lives Matter, the removal of Confederate memorials, and National Anthem protests lead by NFL athlete Colin Kaepernick. The concept of an age of colorblindness after eight years of a Black president does not exist, and racial tensions are at an all-time high resembling the Post-Reconstruction era also known as Southern redemption.

The parallels of lynching and police brutality must be acknowledged in American identity. The forgotten narrative of lynching in American memory has moved from Kodak camera postcards to cell phone cameras and video footage, which should ignite the urgency of a “Never Again” campaign. In other countries involved in mass murders carried out as a form of social control the places in which they took place make it a required learning segment in their primary and secondary curriculums from Germany’s Holocaust to the Rwandan genocide. Everyone in the country acknowledges the past and grows from it so that it never happens again. America makes the mistake of not acknowledging stains in our history, which causes the continuation of racial issues. Once the forgotten narratives are acknowledged we can then begin to move forward as a nation.

Background/Content Research

A History of Lynching in America

The practice of lynching is the murder of a person using extrajudicial (not legally authorized) action.¹ The number of lynchings in the United States increased after the American Civil War in the late 1800s. Lynchings were rampant following Reconstruction from 1890-1920, however declined after 1930. This form of racial terror was reinstated during the 1960s as a response to the Civil Rights Movement.² Racial terror lynching most frequently targeted African-American men and women in the South, with lynching also appearing in the North during the Great Migration of blacks into Northern areas. This terror lynching presented a political message – the promotion of white supremacy and the notion of black powerlessness. One of the important elements of the ritual was for lynchings to be photographed and published as postcards, which were popular souvenirs in the U.S. As well as being hanged, victims were sometimes burned alive and tortured, with body parts removed and kept as souvenirs. Lynchings were most frequent from 1890 to the 1920s, with a peak in 1892. A majority of lynchings involved large mob actions attended by hundreds and sometimes thousands of spectators.³

After the Reconstruction era most of the South was politically dominated by white conservative Democrats. Lynching enforced white supremacy and intimidated blacks by racial terrorism. The rate of lynchings in the South has been strongly associated with economic strains, although the causal nature of this link is unclear. Low cotton prices, inflation, and economic stress are associated with higher frequencies of lynching. After the American Civil War, freedmen received U.S. Constitutional rights (mainly the right to vote) and many white Southerners resisted this step towards equality. Often poor whites blamed the freedmen for their hardships, including post-war economic losses, loss of social and political privilege. During Reconstruction, black voting was suppressed by racial violence, mainly in the form of lynching.⁴

White Democrats enacted segregation through Jim Crow laws to keep black Americans in the seat of second-class citizenship. During this period that spanned the late 19th and early 20th centuries, lynchings reached a peak in the South. There is no count of recorded lynchings, which claims to be precise, and numbers vary depending on the source, the years considered, and the definition used to define an incident. The Tuskegee Institute has recorded 3,446 blacks and 1,297 whites being lynched between 1882 and 1968, with the annual peak occurring in the 1890s, at a time of economic stress in the South and political suppression of blacks.⁵ A five-year study published in 2015 by the Equal Justice Initiative found that nearly 3,959 black men, women, and children were lynched in the twelve Southern states between 1877 and 1950. Over this period Georgia's 586 lynchings led all states.⁶

Numerous postcards published during this time period included photographs taken during these acts of racial violence, capturing not only the lynchings but also the manner in which they were witnessed and viewed. On the faces of the perpetrators were expressions of eager excitement, dignity and pride, or fatigue from the extensive hours that a lynching event took to come to an end. Terror lynchings became a festivity due to the observed emphasis on posing with the body. The act of conceptualizing lynching as leisure and making these racialized executions in public sought to announce this superiority and inferiority in the most public way. The mob mentality also takes away the fact that the people involved in a lynching, in any role, were just as

normal as the people who one sees at bus stops, at church or at a grocery store. As participants and the audience members joined in a "picnic" or parade through a city or town there was also a sense of commitment and ownership of the act and event. Other participants embodied other performance roles, such as a radio announcer and as a journalist for newspaper coverage before and after the event to spread the word locally and beyond.⁷

Terror lynchings occurred as a form of social control on the basis of maintaining white supremacy by promoting black inferiority and a sense of powerlessness. For example, the story of Mary Turner, a pregnant 21-year-old, was killed in 1918 after protesting the lynching of her husband, Hayes Turner, after his plantation owner boss, Hampton Smith, was killed. Smith was known to abuse his workers. The woman's husband was killed during a weeklong hunt for Smith's killer. After speaking out against his death, the mob captured her, hung her upside down from a tree and set her on fire. The woman's unborn child was cut from her stomach and stomped to death by the angry mob.⁸ Another, the lynching of Jesse Washington, known as the "Waco Horror," the 17-year-old signed a confession to raping and murdering his white boss's wife, Lucy Fryer. After pleading guilty to the crime and sentenced to death, he was dragged out of the courtroom by an angry mob. The group cut off Washington's limbs, and hung him up on a tree where he was burned alive on May, 15, 1916.⁹ These brutal deaths were not about administering popular justice, but terrorizing a community

Lynch mobs enforced the racist social order through beatings, cutting off fingers, burning down houses, and/or destroying the crops of African-Americans. Murder was a common form of lynch mob "justice," sometimes with the complicity of law-enforcement authorities who participated directly or held victims in jail until a mob formed to carry out the murder. Most lynchings terminated with a hanging but before the final act victims were sometimes tortured prior to being killed by such methods as beating, burning, stabbing, sexual mutilation and eye-gouging. Photographs of these events frequently show the perpetrators laughing and smiling. Next to hanging, the most common methods of killing were burning alive, shooting, and beating to death.¹⁰ Thus while most lynchings were by hanging, shooting, or both; many others were of a more hideous nature, including burning at the stake, maiming, dismemberment, castration, and other brutal methods of physical torture. Lynching therefore was a cruel combination of racism and sadism, which was utilized primarily to sustain the caste system in the South. Many white people believed that black people could only be controlled by fear. To them, lynching was seen as the most effective means of control.¹¹

Often victims were lynched by a small group of white vigilantes late at night. Sometimes, however, lynchings became mass spectacles with a circus atmosphere. Children often attended these public lynchings, which anti-lynching advocates saw as a form of indoctrination.¹² A large lynching might be announced beforehand in the newspaper, and there were cases in which a lynching was started early so that a newspaper reporter could make his deadline. It was common for postcards to be sold depicting lynchings, typically allowing a newspaper photographer to make some extra money. These postcards became popular enough to be an embarrassment to the government, and the postmaster officially banned them in 1908. However, the lynching postcards continued to exist through the 1930s.¹³

Many lynchings were carried out with full participation by law enforcement and government officials. Police might detain a lynching target, then release him into a situation where a lynch mob could easily, and quietly, complete their deed. Fewer than 1% of lynch mob participants were ever convicted. Trial juries in the southeastern United States were typically all white and would not vote to convict the perpetrators, and often coroner's juries never let the matter go past the inquest. In a typical 1892 example in Port Jervis, New York, a policeman tried to stop the lynching of a black man who, it was revealed after his death, had been wrongfully accused of assaulting a white woman. The mob responded by putting the noose around the officer's own neck as a way of scaring him off. At the coroner's inquest, the officer identified eight people who had participated in the lynching, including the former chief of police, but the coroner's jury found that the murder had been carried out "by person or persons unknown."¹⁴

The Fight Against Lynching

African Americans mounted resistance to lynchings in numerous ways. Intellectuals and journalists (two examples are Walter Francis White and Ida B. Wells) encouraged public education, actively protesting and lobbying against lynch mob violence and government complicity. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and related groups, organized support from white and black Americans, publicizing injustices, investigating incidents, and working for passage of federal legislation. Of fair skin and with straight hair, Walter White, assistant secretary for the NAACP, used his appearance to increase his effectiveness in conducting investigations of lynchings and race riots in the South. He could "pass" and talk to whites, but identified as Black and could talk to members of the African American community. In 1927, White would investigate 41 lynchings. African-American women's clubs raised funds and conducted petition drives, letter campaigns, meetings and demonstrations to highlight the issues and combat lynching.¹⁵

Numerous anti-lynching plays and literary works were produced. In the Great Migration, particularly from 1910 to 1940, 1.5 million African Americans left the South, primarily for destinations in northern and mid-western cities, both to gain better jobs and education and to escape the high rate of violence.¹⁶ From 1910 to 1930 particularly, more blacks migrated from counties with high numbers of lynchings.¹⁷ Beginning in 1892 with the destruction of her newspaper, the *Memphis Free Speech*, Ida B. Wells for the next forty years was the most prominent opponent of lynching in the United States.¹⁸ Throughout, the 1890s, Wells documented lynching in the United States. She showed that lynching was often used in the South as a way to control or punish black people who competed with whites, rather than being based on criminal acts by black people, as was usually claimed by whites.¹⁹ Also, in 1888 the Tuskegee Institute began to assiduously document lynchings, a practice it would continue until 1968.²⁰ "Strange Fruit" is a song performed most famously by Billie Holiday, who first sang and recorded it in 1939. Written by teacher Abel Meeropol as a poem and published in 1937, it protested American racism, particularly the lynching of African Americans. Such lynchings had reached a peak in the South at the turn of the century, but continued there and in other regions of the United States.²¹

Lynchings were so commonplace that the NAACP would hang a notice every day outside their Manhattan-based headquarters acknowledging that another Black body hung from a tree, lined a street, or lay charred somewhere in America.²² From 1882 to 1968, nearly 200 anti-lynching bills were introduced in Congress, and three passed the House.²³ Seven presidents between 1890 and 1952 petitioned Congress to pass a federal law. None succeeded in gaining passage, blocked by the Solid South - the delegation of white Southerners in the Senate. During the 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights Movement, black activists were attacked and murdered throughout the South.

African-American writers used their talents in numerous ways to publicize and protest against lynching. In 1914, Angelina Weld Grimké produced her play *Rachel* to address racial violence.²⁴ The growing networks of African-American women's club groups were instrumental in raising funds to support the NAACP public education and lobbying campaigns. They also built community organizations. In 1922, Mary Talbert headed the anti-lynching crusade to create an integrated women's movement against lynching.²⁵ It was affiliated with the NAACP, which mounted a multi-faceted campaign. For years the NAACP used petition drives, letters to newspapers, articles, posters, lobbying Congress, and marches to protest against the abuses in the South and keep the issue before the public.

Lynching and Police Brutality during the Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was a struggle for equality. African Americans in the mid-1950s attempted to late 1960s to achieve civil rights equal to those of whites, including equal opportunity in employment, housing, and education, as well as the right to vote, the right of equal access to public facilities, and the right to be free of racial discrimination. No social or political movement of the twentieth century has had as profound an effect on the legal and political institutions of the United States.²⁶ This movement sought to restore to African Americans the rights of citizenship guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which had been eroded by segregationist Jim Crow laws in the South. It fundamentally altered relations between the federal government and the states, as the federal government was forced many times to enforce its laws and protect the rights of African American citizens. The Civil Rights Movement also spurred the reemergence of the judiciary, including the Supreme Court, in its role as protector of individual liberties against majority power.²⁷

The Civil Rights Movement has been called the Second Reconstruction, in reference to the Reconstruction imposed upon the South following the Civil War. During this period, the Fourteenth Amendment (1868,) which granting equal protection of the laws and the Fifteenth Amendment (1870,) which gave the right to vote to all males regardless of race were ratified, and troops from the North occupied the South from 1865 to 1877 to enforce the abolition of slavery and ensure equality for freedmen.²⁸ However, with the end of Reconstruction in 1877, southern whites again took control of the South, passing a variety of laws that discriminated on the basis of race. These were called Jim Crow laws, or the black codes.²⁹ They segregated whites and blacks in education, housing, and the use of public and private facilities such as restaurants, trains, and rest rooms; they also denied blacks the right to vote, to move freely, and to marry whites.³⁰ Other prejudicial and discriminatory practices were committed as well, from routine denial of the right

to a fair trial to outright murder by lynching. These laws and practices were a reality of U.S. life well into the 20th century.

The Ku Klux Klan, referred often to as the KKK or The Klan, is a white supremacist movement and organization with the goal of racial segregation.³¹ It is seen as America's first true terrorist group, having a dedication to reach its goals through acts of extreme violence and torture. They generally wear masks, cardboard hats, and white sheets. The Ku Klux Klan first appeared after the civil war and, although the group has had several rise and fall cycles, has maintained its goal of hate and violence.³² They unsympathetically tortured and killed thousands of black Americans. In the 1950's the Klan re-emerged during the Civil Rights Movement. In the deep south, Klansmen put a huge amount of pressure on blacks not to vote. The Klan was violently against the Republican (Radical) party and any blacks, as well as whites, who wished to vote for it were subject to extremely violent torturing such as breaking into their houses, dragging them from their homes, and in many cases lynching and murdering, many of which were never prosecuted.³³ Because membership of the Klan was so secretive, high-ranking people were often secretly involved. The KKK often took advantage of this, teaming up with southern police departments and governments to help make their goals of segregation happen.³⁴ For example, in Birmingham, Alabama, the resisted the social changes by bombing houses of civil rights activists, so much that the town took on a new nickname: "Bombingham."³⁵ Because of their alliances, they often were given time to attack before the police would break it up.

States were left to govern their own race relations, with consequences that should be well known to students of U.S. history: debt peonage, disfranchisement, segregation, and lynching. The abrupt withdrawal of federal rights enforcement in the South by 1877 left a ripe environment for legislated hate and terror. Lynch law and police brutality were often indistinguishable. Some enforcement officers in former Confederate states condoned and even carried out summary justice.³⁶

Among the thousands of lynchings of black people, one example looms large in the country's tortured racial history and is often cited as one of the catalysts for the Civil Rights Movement. Sixty years ago, Chicago teen Emmett Till was brutally lynched by a mob of white men, allegedly for whistling at a white woman.³⁷ The 14-year-old was visiting family in Mississippi when he was kidnapped, beaten, shot, and dumped in the Tallatchie River; his body was weighed down with a 70-pound (32 kg) cotton gin fan tied around his neck with barbed wire.³⁸ His mother Mamie Till Mobley's decision to leave his casket open during his funeral, baring his swollen and mutilated face, forced the nation to confront its allowance of violent, racial vigilantism. News photographs circulated around the country, and drew intense public reaction. The visceral response to his mother's decision to have an open-casket funeral mobilized the black community throughout the U.S. The state of Mississippi tried two defendants, but they were speedily acquitted by an all-white jury.³⁹ Many of these terror lynchings were not about executing people for crimes, but instead about blacks violating the racial hierarchy. Lynching and the terror era shaped the geography, politics, economics and social characteristics of being black in America during the 20th century.

In the spring of 1963, activists in Birmingham, Alabama launched one of the most influential campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement: Project C, better known as The Birmingham Campaign.⁴⁰ It would be the beginning of a series of lunch counter sit-ins, marches on City Hall and boycotts on downtown merchants to protest segregation laws in the city. Over the next couple months, the peaceful demonstrations would be met with violent attacks using high-pressure fire hoses and police dogs on men, women and children alike, which produced some of the most iconic and troubling images of the Civil Rights Movement.⁴¹ President John F. Kennedy would later say, "The events in Birmingham... have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them."⁴² It is considered one of the major turning points in the Civil Rights Movement and the "beginning of the end" of a centuries-long struggle for freedom. Desegregation would take place slowly over the next few months coupled with violent attacks from angry segregationists, including the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church that killed four young girls.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed into law, banning discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, but segregation remained the norm in many establishments.⁴³ Sit-in protests were held in cafes, restaurants and hotels, opposing discriminatory service and hiring practices. Small town all-white schools were required to integrate, and big-city schools began large-scale efforts to integrate by bus. White segregationists, angered by the Civil Rights Act, took to the streets as well, often attacking African American demonstrations across the South. Decades of police brutality, capped off by several incidents in the summer of 1964 led to a series of racially motivated riots in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Jersey City.⁴⁴ The Civil Rights Movement has been the target of numerous incidents of police brutality in its struggle for justice and racial equality, notably during the Birmingham campaign of 1963–64 and during the Selma to Montgomery marches of 1965.⁴⁵

During January and February 1965, King and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) led a series of demonstrations to the Dallas County Courthouse.⁴⁶ On February 17, protester Jimmy Lee Jackson was fatally shot by an Alabama state trooper.⁴⁷ In response, a protest march from Selma to Montgomery was scheduled for March 7. Six hundred marchers assembled in Selma on Sunday, March 7, and, led by John Lewis and other Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and SCLC activists.⁴⁸ As they began to cross the steel-arched bridge spanning the Alabama River, the marchers who gazed up could see the name of a Confederate general and reputed grand dragon of the Alabama Ku Klux Klan, Edmund Pettus, staring right back at them in big block letters emblazoned across the bridge's crossbeam.⁴⁹

Just short of the bridge, they found their way blocked by Alabama State troopers and local police who ordered them to turn around. Once Williams and Lewis reached the crest of the bridge, they saw trouble on the other side. A wall of state troopers, wearing white helmets and slapping billy clubs in their hands, stretched across Route 80 at the base of the span.⁵⁰ Behind them were deputies of county sheriff Jim Clark, some on horseback, and dozens of white spectators waving Confederate flags and giddily anticipating a showdown.⁵¹ Knowing a confrontation awaited, the marchers pressed on in a thin column down the bridge's sidewalk until they stopped about 50 feet away from the authorities. "It would be detrimental to your safety to continue this march," Major John Cloud called out from his bullhorn. "This is an unlawful assembly. You have to disperse; you are ordered to disperse. Go home or go to your church. This march will not continue."⁵²

Williams and Lewis stood their ground at the front of the line. After a few moments, the troopers, with gas masks affixed to their faces and clubs at the ready, advanced. They pushed back Lewis and Williams. Then the troopers paced quickened. They knocked the marchers to the ground. They struck them with sticks. Clouds of tear gas mixed with the screams of terrified marchers and the cheers of reveling bystanders. Deputies on horseback charged ahead and chased the gasping men, women and children back over the bridge as they swung clubs, whips and rubber tubing wrapped in barbed wire.⁵³ Although forced back, the protestors did not fight back. The Alabama police ultimately hospitalized over fifty people. This tragic example of police brutality is called “Bloody Sunday.”⁵⁴ Media coverage of the brutality sparked national outrage, and public sympathy for the movement grew rapidly as a result. Martin Luther King Jr. criticized police brutality in speeches. “You get an uprising of white violence against communities of color when white folks think they are losing their power,”⁵⁵ said Judy Richardson, a former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activist and producer of PBS’ Eyes on the Prize series.

While the term police brutality is usually applied in the context of causing physical harm, it may also involve psychological harm through the use of intimidation tactics beyond the scope of officially sanctioned police procedure. In the past, those who engaged in police brutality may have acted with the implicit approval of the local legal system, e.g. during the Civil Rights Movement era.

The Fight Against Lynching and Police Brutality during the Civil Rights Movement

After “Bloody Sunday” was televised around the world. Martin Luther King called for civil rights supporters to come to Selma for a second march. When members of Congress pressured him to restrain the march until a court could rule on whether the protesters deserved federal protection, King found himself torn between their requests for patience and demands of the movement activists pouring into Selma. King, still conflicted, led the second protest on March 9 but turned it around at the same bridge. King’s actions exacerbated the tension between SCLC and the more militant SNCC, who were pushing for more radical tactics that would move from nonviolent protest to win reforms to active opposition to racist institutions.⁵⁶

During the 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights Movement, black activists were attacked and murdered throughout the South. The 1964 murders of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner galvanized public support for passage of civil rights legislation that year and the next.⁵⁷ Organized efforts by African Americans to gain their civil rights began well before the official civil rights movement got under way. From its beginning, the NAACP and its attorneys challenged many discriminatory laws in court. The Supreme Court has historically moved to curtail federal efforts to control or mandate the behavior of the police. At the end of the 19th century, the court struck down many provisions of the Reconstruction-era Civil Rights Acts, laws intended to provide federal enforcement of the new citizenship rights of African Americans.⁵⁸

Abel Meeropol, a Jewish English teacher from New York, and was one of the few white-dominated organizations campaigning for civil rights.⁵⁹ Meeropol was inspired to write "Strange Fruit" by a photograph of the 1930 lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith in Indiana.⁶⁰ His first version was a poem called "Bitter Fruit," published in a teacher union magazine in 1937.⁶¹ An amateur composer, Meeropol also set his words to music. He played it for a New York club owner — who ultimately gave it to black singer Billie Holiday.⁶² When Holiday decided to sing "Strange Fruit," the song reached millions of people. While the lyrics never mention lynching, the metaphor is painfully clear:⁶³

Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant South,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,
And the sudden smell of burning flesh!

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.⁶⁴

The song continues to be covered by numerous artists, including Nina Simone, an American singer, songwriter, pianist, arranger, and activist in the Civil Rights Movement.⁶⁵

The Black Panther Party also formed in response to police brutality from disproportionately white police departments that were perceived as oppressing black communities.⁶⁶ The conflict between the Black Panther Party and various police departments often resulted in violence with the deaths of 34 members of the Black Panther Party and police officers.⁶⁷ The Civil Rights Movement was also targeted by the FBI who utilized a program called COINTELPRO.⁶⁸ Under this program, the FBI would use undercover agents to create violence and chaos within nationalist groups. The police would harm organizers and assassinate leaders like Mark Clark and Fred Hampton for example, who were killed in the 1969 FBI raid in Chicago.⁶⁹

Contemporary Lynchings... Police Brutality

In the modern era, individuals who engage in police brutality may do so with the tacit approval of their superiors or they may be rogue officers. In either case, they may perpetrate their actions under color of law and, more often than not, engage in a subsequent cover-up of their illegal activity.⁷⁰ In the United States, race and accusations of police brutality continue to be closely linked, and the phenomenon has sparked a string of race riots over the years. Especially notable among these incidents was the uprising caused by the arrest and beating of Rodney King on March 3, 1991, by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department.⁷¹ The atmosphere was particularly volatile because the brutality had been videotaped by a bystander and widely broadcast afterwards. When the four law enforcement officers charged with assault and other violations were acquitted, the 1992 Los Angeles Riots broke out.⁷²

Police brutality can be associated with racial profiling. Differences in race, religion, politics, or socioeconomic status often exist between police and the citizenry. Some police officers may view the population (or a particular subset thereof) as generally deserving of punishment. Portions of the population may perceive the police to be oppressors. In addition, there is a perception that victims of police brutality often belong to relatively powerless groups, such as minorities, the disabled, and the poor. A 1968 study in three large cities found that police brutality was "far from rare", and that the most likely victim was a "lower-class" man of either race.⁷³

Race was suspected to play a role in the shooting of Michael Brown in 2014. Brown was an unarmed 18-year-old African American who assaulted and was shot by Darren Wilson, a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. On Aug. 9, 2014, Officer Darren Wilson responded to a reported robbery and encountered Brown and his friend Dorian Johnson walking down the middle of the road.⁷⁴ Wilson blocked the two with his police car, after which a struggle ensued through the window. Wilson fired his gun and followed Brown after he fled.⁷⁵ When Brown stopped to face the officer, Wilson fired several shots at his front, killing him. The predominately black city erupted after the shooting. Protests surrounding the shooting generated much debate about the treatment of African-Americans by law enforcement. St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCulloch announced Nov. 24, 2014, that a grand jury had decided not to indict Wilson, and the Department of Justice cleared Wilson of civil rights violations in March 2015. Officials found evidence that Wilson shot Brown in self-defense.⁷⁶

The following are other examples of police brutality:

The night before his wedding, Sean Bell and some friends went to a strip club in Queens for his bachelor party. When they left the club around 4:15 a.m. the next morning – Bell's wedding day – they ran afoul of a group of undercover and plainclothes NYPD cops, who fired an astonishing 50 bullets into the 23-year-old's car, killing him instantly. The case led to major protests, but all three police officers charged in the case were acquitted.⁷⁷

On New Year's Day, 2009, Bay Area transit officer Johannes Mehserle detained Oscar Grant on a subway platform after reports of a fight. The unarmed 22-year-old was lying face-down on the ground when Mehserle shot and killed him, as captured on video by many bystanders. Mehserle was charged with murder, but the jury convicted him of a lesser crime, and he ended up serving less than a year for killing Grant.⁷⁸

A Minnesota officer fatally shot a man, identified as 32-year-old Philando Castile, while he was in a car with a woman and a child in Falcon Heights, a St. Paul suburb. The aftermath of the shooting was livestreamed in a widely shared Facebook video, which shows a woman in a vehicle with a man whose shirt appears to be soaked in blood telling the camera, "Police just shot my boyfriend for no apparent reason."⁷⁹ A day earlier, 37-year-old Alton Sterling was shot and killed during a confrontation with two police officers outside a Baton Rouge, La., convenience store where he was selling music and movies on discs. Cellphone video of the shooting posted online by a community activist set off angry protests.⁸⁰

Six Baltimore police officers faced charges ranging from misconduct to second-degree murder in the April 2015 death of Freddie Gray. Gray died when his neck was broken in the back of a police transport van. He had been restrained with handcuffs and leg irons, but not a seat belt. The death set off several days of rioting in Baltimore. The involuntary manslaughter trial of the first of those charged, Officer William Porter, ended in December in a hung jury. A judge acquitted two other officers in bench trials. The city of Baltimore paid Gray's family \$6.4 million as a settlement for civil claims.⁸¹

Seven key findings regarding police brutality against African Americans:⁸²

1. There is no federal database that tracks the number of people of any race killed by police.⁸³
2. Police killed at least 104 unarmed black people in 2015, nearly two per week. (See which police departments were responsible for these deaths.)⁸⁴
3. Nearly 1 in 3 black people killed by police in 2015 were identified as unarmed, though the actual number is likely higher due to underreporting.⁸⁵
4. 36% of unarmed people killed by police were black in 2015 despite black people being only 13% of the U.S. population.⁸⁶
5. Unarmed black people were killed at 5 times the rate of unarmed whites in 2015.⁸⁷
6. Only 13 of the 104 cases in 2015 where an unarmed black person was killed by police resulted in officer(s) being charged with a crime. 4 of these cases have ended in a mistrial or charges against the officer(s) being dropped and 4 cases are still awaiting trial or have a trial underway. Only 4 cases (Matthew Ajibade, Eric Harris, Paterson Brown Jr., and

William Chapman) have resulted in convictions of officers involved, with a fifth case (Walter Scott) resulting in the officer pleading guilty.⁸⁸

7. Of the 4 cases where the officer(s) involved have been convicted and sentenced, none were sentenced to serve more than 4 years in prison. Only 1 of 2 officers convicted for their involvement in Matthew Ajibade's death received jail time. He was sentenced to 1 year in jail and allowed to serve this time exclusively on weekends. The officer who killed Paterson Brown was sentenced to only 3 months in jail. Deputy Bates, who killed Eric Harris, was sentenced to 4 years in prison and Officer Cobb, who killed William Chapman, was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison. Officer Slager, who killed Walter Scott and pled guilty, has yet to be sentenced.⁸⁹

The Fight Against Police Brutality and Commemoration

Black Lives Matter (BLM) is an international activist movement, originating in the African-American community, that campaigns against violence and systemic racism towards black people. BLM regularly holds protests against police killings of black people and broader issues of racial profiling, police brutality, and racial inequality in the United States criminal justice system.⁹⁰

In 2013, the movement began with the use of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of African-American teen Trayvon Martin. Black Lives Matter became nationally recognized for its street demonstrations following the 2014 deaths of two African Americans: Michael Brown, resulting in protests and unrest in Ferguson, and Eric Garner in New York City.⁹¹ Since the Ferguson protests, participants in the movement have demonstrated against the deaths of numerous other African Americans by police actions or while in police custody. In the summer of 2015, Black Lives Matter activists became involved in the 2016 United States presidential election.⁹² The originators of the hashtag and call to action, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, expanded their project into a national network of over 30 local chapters between 2014 and 2016.⁹³ The overall Black Lives Matter movement, however, is a decentralized network and has no formal hierarchy.

There have been many reactions to the Black Lives Matter movement. The U.S. population's perception of Black Lives Matter varies considerably by race. The phrase "All Lives Matter" sprang up as a response to the Black Lives Matter movement, but has been criticized for dismissing or misunderstanding the message of "Black Lives Matter"⁹⁴. Following the shooting of two police officers in Ferguson, the hashtag Blue Lives Matter was created by supporters of the police. Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. has accused Black Lives Matter of being anti-police.⁹⁵ "We are focusing on the issues of black incarcerated folks, formerly incarcerated folks, black folks who are documented and undocumented, who are working class who are poor, who are unemployed, who are cis-gender and trans gender and gender non-conforming,"⁹⁶ says Monica Dennis, another organizer with Black Lives Matter. Ultimately the movement promotes solidarity and racial justice in the face of state violence. "Black Lives Matter is about peace. It's about bringing people together. It's about fighting for justice. It's about solidarity and it's about unity,"⁹⁷ Dennis states. Black Lives Matter has been described as "not your grandfather's civil-rights movement,"⁹⁸ to distinguish its tactics and its philosophy from those of nineteen-sixties-style activism. Like the Occupy movement, it eschews hierarchy and centralized leadership, and its members have not

infrequently been at odds with older civil-rights leaders and with the Obama Administration—as well as with one another.⁹⁹

Black activists have organized in response to police brutality for decades, but part of the reason for the visibility of the current movement is the fact that such problems have persisted—and, from the public’s perspective, at least, have seemed to escalate—during the first African-American Presidency.¹⁰⁰ Obama’s election was seen as the culmination of years of grassroots activism that built the political power of black Americans, but the naïve dream of a post-racial nation foundered even before he was sworn into office.¹⁰¹ As Alicia Garza, an Oakland Black Lives Matter activist, put it “Conditions have shifted, so our institutions have shifted to meet those conditions. Barack Obama comes out after Trayvon is murdered and does this weird, half-ass thing where he’s, like, ‘That could’ve been my son,’ and at the same time he starts scolding young black men.”¹⁰² In short, all this would seem to suggest, until there was a black Presidency it was impossible to conceive of the limitations of one. Obama, as a young community organizer in Chicago, determined that he could bring about change more effectively through electoral politics; Garza is of a generation of activists who have surveyed the circumstances of his Presidency and drawn the opposite conclusion.¹⁰³

The victims of police brutality have been commemorated by community marches, protests, social media hashtags, and temporary memorials. Thus far, there are only a few permanent commemorations for victims of police brutality can be found in Charlotte, North Carolina in the K(NO)W Justice, K(NO)W Peace Exhibit housed at the Levine Museum of the New South. This exhibit is community-created and is centered around police-involved shootings throughout the nation and in Charlotte. Co-created with activists and law enforcement, the media, students, clergy and civic leaders, K(NO)W Justice K(NO)W Peace explores the historical roots of the distrust between police and community, tells the human stories beyond the headlines, and engages viewers in creating constructive solutions¹⁰⁴. The exhibition also captures the voices of local police, protesters, emergency personnel, faith leaders and others reflecting on their personal experiences during Charlotte’s protests.¹⁰⁵ The exhibit features photographer Alvin C. Jacobs Jr.’s powerful images of local and national protests and compelling displays curated by Dr. Tiffany Packer and students at Johnson C. Smith University.¹⁰⁶ A community-response section looks at the meaning of the Charlotte Protests—highlighting the diverse perspectives held by community stakeholders and others impacted by recent events.¹⁰⁷

A Breakthrough: Commemorating Lynch Victims

Lynching memorials and other forms of commemoration are beginning to grow. Most commemorations of lynchings have been done through markers. There are numerous markers erected for Emmett Till, however, over the past decade, Civil Rights markers have become a “low-risk outlet for racism” in Mississippi with vandals repeatedly targeting the same signs every few years, according to the *Clarion Ledger*.¹⁰⁸

More communities throughout the country are joining with EJI to participate in our Lynching Marker Project.¹⁰⁹ The project is part of EJI's effort to recognize the victims of lynching by erecting historical markers that acknowledge the horrors of racial terror lynchings.¹¹⁰ EJI believes that truthfully acknowledging this history is vital to healing and reconciliation.¹¹¹ As part of its effort to help towns, cities, and states confront and recover from tragic histories of racial violence and terrorism, EJI is joining with communities to install historical markers at the sites of lynchings. Most recently, EJI unveiled an historical marker that documents the lynchings of seven victims in Letohatchee, Alabama, and recognizes 14 documented lynchings that took place in Lowndes County.¹¹² Dozens participated in the dedication ceremony at Rehobeth Missionary Church in Letohatchee, braving the rain to pray and reflect together on the history of racial terrorism in Lowndes County.¹¹³ The dedication ceremony featured the winners of the Racial Justice High School Essay Contest, which was open to all high school students living in or attending school in Lowndes County.¹¹⁴ The first place prize of \$3000 was awarded to Central High School 10th grader Yamiri B. Mants for his essay, "Things Remain the Same."¹¹⁵ Another lynching marker will be erected next month in Abbeville, South Carolina. EJI believes in the power of "truth and reconciliation" to address oppressive histories by helping communities to honestly and soberly recognize the pain of the past.¹¹⁶ As more communities join in this effort to concretize the experience of racial terror through discourse, memorials, markers, and other acts of reconciliation, more are overcoming the shadows cast by these grievous events.

The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) plans to build a national memorial to victims of lynching in Montgomery, Alabama, which is expected to open in 2018. This memorial project relating to America's history of racial terror and lynching will become the most ambitious in the nation on this topic.¹¹⁷

The Site

EJI has purchased six acres of land atop a rise that overlooks the City of Montgomery and out to the American South, where terror lynchings were most prevalent.¹¹⁸ No prominent monument or memorial exists to commemorate the thousands of African Americans who were lynched during the era of racial terrorism in America. EJI has documented over 4000 racial terror lynchings of black men, women, and children, who were hanged, burned alive, shot, drowned, and beaten to death by white mobs between 1877 and 1950.¹¹⁹ The era of racial terror had a profound impact on the entire nation, as millions of black people fled to urban communities in the North and West as refugees from violent racism. The phenomenon of racial terror lynchings has not received much cultural recognition in contrast with the thousands of plaques, statues, and monuments that record, celebrate, and lionize the Confederacy and Confederate leaders. In the American South, there are hundreds of memorials to the defenders of slavery, and leaders who championed racial segregation and white supremacy, including many who perpetrated violent crimes against black citizens during the era of racial terror. In Montgomery alone there are 59 monuments and memorials to the Confederacy.¹²⁰

Why Build a Lynching Memorial?

In her seminal work on lynching, *On the Courthouse Lawn*, scholar Sherrilyn A. Ifill persuasively argues that there is a critical need for memorialization, an urgent need to change the landscape with regard to the history of lynching in America: "Public spaces have yet to become part of the formal reparation or racial reconciliation process for Black Americans."¹²¹ Professor Ifill, who now leads the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, champions the need for public memorials, an idea that has been expressed all over the world but not in the United States. Scholars including Martha Minow, Dean of the Harvard Law School, have long understood that continued silence about mass atrocities "compounds victimization" and tells victims and the nation as a whole that "their pain does not matter."¹²² EJI believes that there is a path to recovery and reconciliation when we tell the truth about our history in the public square.

A history of racial injustice must be acknowledged, and mass atrocities and abuse must be recognized and remembered, before a society can recover from mass violence. Public commemoration plays a significant role in prompting community-wide reconciliation. EJI director Bryan Stevenson has argued that "our nation's history of racial injustice casts a shadow across the American landscape."¹²³ This shadow cannot be lifted until we shine the light of truth on the destructive violence that shaped our nation, traumatized people of color, and compromised our commitment to the rule of law and to equal justice."¹²⁴ We all must engage this history more honestly, and a memorial creates that opportunity.

The Memorial

EJI has partnered with MASS Design Group, where director Michael Murphy and a team of visionary architects design buildings that promote healing: hospitals, clinics, schools, and, memorials.¹²⁵ MASS created a stunning space for reflection and truth-telling in the archives at the Kigali Genocide Memorial in Rwanda, a country that, like Germany and South Africa, found it necessary to build memorials to reflect on the atrocities of their past. As Murphy observes, “We have yet to do this in the United States.”¹²⁶

EJI and MASS have worked together to design a classical structure for the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, consisting of 800 columns - one for each county where EJI documented racial terror lynchings.¹²⁷ When visitors enter the memorial, the ground drops and perception shifts as visitors realize that the columns that appeared to be holding up the structure are actually monuments suspended from above, which evoke the lynchings that took place in the public square.¹²⁸ Over 4000 names of lynching victims will be inscribed on these monuments.¹²⁹ The memorial is more than a static monument. Just outside the main memorial structure will be a field of identical columns, one for each county where a lynching has been documented.¹³⁰ EJI will be inviting each of these counties to retrieve their county's monument and place it back in the county where the terror lynchings took place.¹³¹ This National Memorial for Peace and Justice hopes to have component pieces all over the United States where racial terror lynchings have been documented.¹³² Over time, the national memorial will serve as a report on which parts of the country have confronted the truth of this terror and which have not.¹³³

Instructional Implementation

Lesson 1: American Memory – Introduction to Terror Lynchings

To begin the conversation of race, race relations, and racism in the classroom. One must first address the concept of American memory. In lesson one, students will be able to analyze the Eurocentric perception of American history and discuss the ways in which the black experience fits into the American narrative of the past.

Do Now/Warm-up: Students will be given quotes from two different perspectives on American memory and how history should be taught in schools.

A syndrome that W.E.B Du Bois noted in 1935 is more powerful than ever: in his essay, “The Propaganda of History”, Du Bois says:

“One is astonished in the study of history at the recurrence of the idea that evil must be forgotten, distorted, skimmed over. We must not remember that Daniel Webster got drunk and only remember that he was a splendid constitutional lawyer. We must forget that George Washington was a slave owner, or that Thomas Jefferson had mulatto children, or that Alexander Hamilton had Negro blood, and simply remember the things we regard as creditable and inspiring. The difficulty, of course, with this philosophy is that history loses its value as an incentive and example; it paints perfect men and noble nations, but it does not tell the truth.”¹³⁴

W.E.B. Du Bois’ quote is to be juxtapose with Woodrow Wilson’s quote:

“We must avoid introducing what is called scientific history in the schools, for it is a history of doubt, criticism, examination of evidence. It tends to confuse young people... What we need to study in school is the united effort, the common thought, of bodies of men; of the men who make public opinion, that is of the uncritical and conservative rather than of the educated classes.”

Students will close read the quotes and annotate them using the following criteria:

1. The author is trying to tell or convince me of...?
2. Which words or images do you think are the most important? (Circle them)
3. Underline statements or images that support the authors claim.
4. Write a sentence explaining the authors message.

After reading the quotes and completing the close reading task, teacher and students will engage in a dialogue discussing the purpose of history and what the American narrative of the past should be based on the two quotes provided above. Some responses that might come out of this

beginning activity are: the “winners” write history, America does not like to remember negative parts of its past, etc.

Guided Practice: The teacher will begin by posing a question to the class about American memory: How is the black American experience told in history/social studies classes? Some student responses might be along the lines of slavery, the Civil Rights Movement, “important” black historical figures during Black History Month, Barack Obama, etc. Next, the teacher will show an image of a lynching that has the lynched bodies cropped out (there are numerous images that can be found by Googling “cropped lynching photo.” The teacher will ask the students to:

1. Describe what they see.
2. What event might be occurring?
3. How could this image fit in to the narrative about African Americans?

Then, go show students the same photo, but included the lynched bodies. Ask the students the same three questions and see how the responses change.

Teacher Input: Next, the teacher will lead into an introduction for the history of lynching in the United States. Students will take notes as the teacher defines lynching, the types of lynchings, and what caused these lynchings to occur. Google Slides pdf is within [Appendix 2](#).

Independent Practice: Students will view the “Origins of Lynching” the teacher will show the following video 10-minute video, which can be found in Google Slides pdf within [Appendix 2](#). Students will create a cause-and-effect map to better understand the reason behind terror lynching that spiked after the Reconstruction era. Students will pair up with a neighbor to discuss the differences and similarities they put in their lynching cause-and-effect map. Provide students with a leading question: How do white Americans use lynching as a form of social control over black lives?

Closure: Students will view the minute video created by Bryan Stevenson. This brief video discusses lynching in America as a memory that has been dismissed in the national narrative, therefore it continues to haunt our nation in different forms. The closure will be an exit ticket for students to answer the following question in one sentence: How does the missing narrative of lynching effect American society today?

Lesson 2: Anti-lynching Movement and Memorializing Lynching

Do Now/Warm-up: Students will close read a passage about Ida B. Wells (one of the main lynching protesters) and will answer the corresponding questions. [Appendix 2](#)

Teacher Input: The teacher will discuss the misconceptions about lynching beginning with a quote from Jonathans Holloway in *An Outrage*:

“It’s important to talk about it in a couple of different ways: the popular imagination of lynching and actual lynchings. In the popular imagination of lynching –and I’m talking here in 19th century popular imagination, and for much of the 20th century popular imagination – acts of lynching, whether you viewed them as justifiable or terrible, were often thought of as being the results of attempts to corral black male rapists. Ida B. Wells, the great journalist, African-American woman, started doing her own research into lynching, and discovered that’s actually not the case at all. In fact, in fewer than one-third of the allegations of behavior were related to rape. A person would be lynched for being out of line in terms of where they belonged in a social, political and cultural space. Is it about rape? Actually, not even often allegations of rape. It’s about many other forms of social control. To talk about lynching in its full, nasty complexity, it will tell us not just about a history of a violent ac, but tell us about who we are as a people.”¹³⁵

Students will close read the quotes and annotate them using the following criteria:

1. The author is trying to tell or convince me of...?
2. Which words or images do you think are the most important? (Circle them)
3. Underline statements or images that support the authors claim.
4. Write a sentence explaining the authors message.

The teacher will use student responses to create a class T-chart on the board.

T-chart exemplar:

White Southerner Popular Imagination of Lynching African Americans	Realities of Lynching African Americans

The following T-chart is filled with possible student answers/responses:

Popular Imagination of Lynching African Americans	Realities of Lynching African Americans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Punishment of black rapists who seek white women ➤ Only black adult males were lynched ➤ Always occurred in the South ➤ All lynchings used a noose to hang the victim from a tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Black victims of lynching could be for any reason, usually to assert white supremacy involving cultural space, social, or political control ➤ Black men, women, and children were lynched ➤ Lynchings were more common in the South, but they occurred in all regions of the United States ➤ Lynching comes in numerous forms: hanging by the noose, burning, dismemberment, shooting, etc.

Next, students will be provided with the following research done by Ida B. Wells in 1900. This research is part of the “Lynch Law in America” speech she gave in Chicago.¹³⁶ Wells provides information for the lynchings per state and the charges associated with the lynchings that took place. Wells research is composed of a total of 241 lynchings. Students will take notes of the following information to better understand the high traffic lynching areas and the false popular imagination of crimes committed to cause these lynchings.

The work done by Ida B. Wells helped the NAACP and their secretary at the time, Walter F. White, to investigate further and get a proposed lynching bill on table. Although, the bill never passed, this research proves that white Southerners created a popular imagination of lynching to justify the heinous acts, however this does not correlate with the realities of why black Americans were lynched, which were mainly implications of Jim Crow society.

Lynchings per state¹³⁷:

Alabama	22	Louisiana	29	S. Carolina	5
Arkansas	25	Maryland	1	Tennessee	28
California	3	Arizona Terr.	3	Texas	15
Florida	11	Mississippi	16	Virginia	7
Georgia	17	Montana	4	W. Virginia	5
Idaho	8	New York	1	Wyoming	9
Illinois	1	N. Carolina	5	Missouri	6
Kansas	3	N. Dakota	1	Oklahoma	2
Kentucky	9	Ohio	3		

Charges:¹³⁸

Rape	46	Attempted rape	11
Murder	58	Suspected robbery	4
Rioting	3	Larceny	1
Race prejudice	6	Self-defense	1
No cause given	4	Insulting women	2
Incendiarism	6	Desperadoes	6
Robbery	6	Fraud	1
Assault and battery	1	Attempted murder	2
No offense stated, boy and girl			2

Guided Practice: Students will complete the following research questions to determine the ways awareness of lynching was made by Ida B. Wells, Walter F. White and the NAACP, entertainers like Billie Holiday, and the more recent work in the online scholarship entitled *Without Sanctuary*. Assignment in [Appendix 2](#).

Independent Practice: Students will view the 2017 lynching documentary, *An Outrage: A Film About Lynching in the American South*, is directed, edited, and produced by Hannah Ayers and Lance Warren, co-directors of Field Studio. They make films at the intersection of history and social justice, focusing on race, incarceration, and family. The runtime of this short film is 34 minutes. As students view the documentary they will be required to take notes on the stories that the descendants tell about their family member who was a victim of terror lynching. The notes on the victim should include their name, the area they are from, and the reason for their lynching.

Synopsis of *An Outrage*: For decades following the Civil War, racial terror reigned over the United States, mainly in the American South, murdering thousands of black Americans and uprooting many others to escape the racial violence. This documentary explores why white Southerners using lynching as an extralegal and systematic form of social control. The short film shows that pain was first endured by brutalized black bodies, and then by the black communities it devastated and displaced. These communities now face a different kind of violence: silence and erasure. Victims of lynchings were forgotten in a graveyard overgrown with weeds planted by their tormentors. The filmmakers created *An Outrage* to not only promote remembrance, but also to illustrate how this recent history of injustice engenders further injustice today. Through the voices of scholars and activists in communities across the South, as well as through descendants of the victims themselves, this documentary serves to educate viewers and call them to action. *An Outrage* takes viewers to the very communities where these heinous terror lynchings occurred, offering a painful look back at the lives lost to lynching and a critical look forward.¹³⁹

Closure: Students will view the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) proposed National Lynching Memorial on their website. Then, students will write and reflect by answering corresponding questions. The link to video and the questions can be found in [Appendix 2](#). The Equal Justice Initiative Lynching memorial, scheduled to open in Montgomery, Alabama, in 2018. Establishing the memorial has involved years of planning, fund-raising and construction. Meant to be highly symbolic and to evoke an emotional response with visitors, the memorial will be the first of its kind in the United States.

Lesson 3: The Lynching of Emmett Till

Do Now/Warm-up: Create a [PollEverywhere \(PollEv\)](#) with the following question to open up the conversation: Is the subtle (covert) racism by denial and trivializing more common today or just as dangerous as the blatant racism (overt) that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s?

Teacher Input: The teacher will explain that at the end of the 19th century, the passionate voice of African American journalist Ida B. Wells emerged in protest against these violent lynchings. Wells wrote stirring articles in the black and white press exposing the crime of lynching against African Americans. In one article, she cited the excuses given for lynching and eerily foreshadowed the murder of Emmett Till:

Boys of fourteen years have been lynched by white representatives of American civilization. In fact, for all kinds of offenses--and, for no offenses--from murders to misdemeanors, men and women are put to death without judge or jury; so that, although the political excuse was no longer necessary, the wholesale murder of human beings went on just the same. A new name was given to the killings and a new excuse was invented for so doing. Again the aid of the "unwritten law" is invoked, and again it comes to the rescue. During the last ten years a new statute has been added to the "unwritten law."¹⁴⁰ This statute proclaims that for certain crimes or alleged crimes no negro shall be allowed a trial; that no white woman shall be compelled to charge an assault under oath or to submit any such charge to the investigation of a court of law.

Also make sure students understand some key differences between the two eras if they did not mention them in their postings. They include the following points:

1. By Emmett Till's time, actual lynching of African Americans had greatly diminished, but terror at the threat of being murdered for violating codes of acceptable behavior still remained.
2. There was a much stronger reaction in the mainstream Northern press to brutality against African Americans in the early 1950s than in the late 19th century.
3. More African Americans were educated and involved in the nascent Civil Rights movement by the early 1950s, helping to chip away at segregationist policies in federal courts and also putting pressure on the federal government to make changes in discriminatory practices.

Guided Practice: Students will view the documentary, [The Murder of Emmett Till](#) (DVD) 60 minutes, Source: PBS Video. Students will complete the [viewing questions](#) for context and connections to lynchings of the past.

Synopsis: In August of 1955, a 14 year-old black boy from Chicago, unschooled in the racial customs of the south, traveled to Money, Mississippi to visit relatives. With adolescent bravado, he whistled at a white woman. Three nights later, Emmett Till was abducted, beaten, and shot through the head. His body later surfaced in the muddy waters of the Tallahatchie River. National outrage and organizing were sparked in 1955 when his mother held an open-casket funeral to show the world her mangled son. The murder of Emmett Till shook America, and opened a window on the deep social divisions of the 1950s. The case, which ended in the acquittal of Till's two known assailants, became an international spectacle. When tens of thousands of Americans rallied against injustice, the Till case proved to be an early spark for the American civil rights movement. Some who lived the story of the Till case are still alive. The Murder of Emmett Till, a one-hour film anchored by interviews with Till's mother and others who witnessed the story, aired on PBS's American Experience in January 2003.

Independent Practice: After viewing the documentary, students will answer the following questions in a paragraph:

1. Why was what Emmett "did" considered so bad in the South?
2. How can the justice system allow such a trial to take place?
3. Explain how Emmett's murder is considered to be the spark that began the Civil Rights movement?
4. As we review this documentary, has much really changed?
5. What happened to Carolyn Bryant? Did she ever express remorse?
6. Do school children learn of the significance of Emmett's death in starting a movement against the unfair treatment of blacks? Or has his death become like many, many others become a forgotten memory?

Closure: Not many people had this personal memory of the Emmett Till case. Yet, it is part of the collective history of the United States and world. Ask students to answer the following exit ticket questions: What would be a good way to publicly acknowledge the case? How would we choose to remember this case in a way that served to educate the public?

Lesson 4: Comparing Lynching and Police Brutality

Do Now: Create a [PollEverywhere \(PollEv\)](#) with the following question to open up the conversation: Has much changed for black Americans since the end of Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement? Students should elaborate on response, their answer should expand past a simple yes or no answer, hence they should provide examples to support their claim.

Teacher Input: Students will annotate and summarize the lyrics to rapper J. Cole's "Be Free."

Synopsis: "Be Free" is Cole's response to the police shooting of an unarmed African-American teenager, Michael Brown, in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Missouri. The shooting has sparked widespread discussion over police authority and racial profiling as well as protests around the country, including rallies in Detroit, Nashville, New York and Chicago, among other places. Cole recorded the piano ballad, with lyrics like "All we wanna do is break the chains off/ All we wanna do is be free" – and samples of a news report about the police shooting – after identifying with Brown's story. The feeling that comes across in "Be Free": palpable grief. Beyond channeling the rage of the moment, beyond highlighting the chilling interview excerpts describing the scene, this is a song that aches deeply, that reaches into a much longer-standing despair. It's in J. Cole's voice. It's in the way he sings. It's in the way this isn't a rap song but rather a sort of raw nerve freestyle born of deep frustration and sadness. This is a song about Michael Brown, but it's also a cry for, in Cole's words, "every young black man murdered in America."¹⁴¹ Michael Brown's death drew national attention, but the problem it represents is not new, nor will it go away when the armored vehicles roll out of Ferguson, and that's what this song is about, too.

The lyrics and meaning are listed below ([click this link for the worksheet used for this activity](#)):

And I'm in denial (1)
And it don't take no x-ray to see right through my smile (2)
I know, I be on the go
And there ain't no drink out there that can numb my soul (3)
Oh no
All we wanna do is take the chains off
All we wanna do is break the chains off (4)
All we wanna do is be free (5)
All we wanna do is be free
All we wanna do is take the chains off
All we wanna do is break the chains off
All we wanna do is be free
All we wanna do is be free
Can you tell me why
Every time I step outside I see my niggas die (6)

I'm lettin' you know
That there ain't no gun they make that can kill my soul (7)
Oh no
All we wanna do is take the chains off
All we wanna do is break the chains off
All we wanna do is be free
All we wanna do is be free
All we wanna do is take the chains off
All we wanna do is break the chains off
All we wanna do is be free
All we wanna do is be free

So now it was like the officer is pulling him inside the car and he's trying to pull away. At no time the officer said that he was going to do anything until he pulled out his weapon. His weapon was drawn and he said, "I'll shoot you" or, "I'm going to shoot" and in the same moment, the first shot went off. We looked down and he was shot and there was blood coming from him. Then we took off running. (8)

Are we all alone, fighting on our own (9)
Please give me a chance, I don't wanna dance (10)
Somethings got me down, I will stand my ground (11)
Don't just stand around, don't just stand around (12)

As we took off running I ducked and hid for my life, because I was fearing for my life. I hid behind the first car I saw. My friend, he kept running, and he told me to keep running because he feared for me too. So as he was running the officer was trying to get out of the car, and once he got out the car he pursued my friend but his weapon was drawn. Now he didn't see any weapon drawn at him or anything like that, us going for no weapon. His weapon was already drawn when he got out the car. He shot again, and once my friend felt that shot, he turned around and put his hands in the air, and started to get down, but the officer still approached with his weapon drawn and he fired 7 more shots and my friend died (13)

All we wanna do is take the chains off
All we wanna do is break the chains off
All we wanna do is be free
All we wanna do is be free
All we wanna do is take the chains off
All we wanna do is break the chains off
All we wanna do is be free
All we wanna do is be free

Explained Lyrics

1. J. Cole cannot believe the extent to which the moral behavior of police has plummeted.
2. While J. Cole is a celebrity that has to keep up appearances, he is grieved by the plight of African-Americans who are so often victimized by police brutality and gun violence.
3. J. Cole feels as though he cannot rest easy as the police abuse their power.
4. To break and take off chains is a figurative matter. J. Cole believes that African-Americans have faced particular hardships under the reign of a violent police state.
5. J. Cole believes that freedom includes the ability to be black without being shot or harassed for no reason.
6. J. Cole mourns the fact that so many African-Americans are being killed by cops.
7. J. Cole demonstrates exemplary resilience in the face of these injustices when he says “there ain’t no gun they make that can kill my soul.”
8. Dorian Johnson, an eyewitness of the murder of Michael Brown by police, tells the tale from his firsthand perspective. J. Cole uses this account to expose how reckless policemen who wield guns can be.
9. J. Cole asks whether society has isolated African-Americans deliberately.
10. By “dance,” J. Cole means “dodge the reign of terror inflicted by police.”
11. “Stand you ground” is a phrase that has gained popularity in the aftermath of so much gun violence committed by police. It means “don’t back down when faced with injustice.”
12. J. Cole calls people to action. He doesn’t want them to comply with injustice.
13. This audio track is a sample of an eyewitness account of Dorian Johnson, who recalls the behavior of the police officer who killed Michael Brown, a young man who came to be known far and wide as a victim of police gun violence.

Guided Practice: Students will close read an article, [Policing the Police](#), that parallels lynching to the police brutality that occurred during the Civil Rights Movement and the contemporary cases of police brutality.

In this article, *A Civil Rights Story*, is almost precisely a year ago Freddie Gray died of injuries sustained while in the custody of Baltimore police. His death was one among several recent cases where African Americans have been killed by police officers, and have prompted serious discussions about policing around the country. Historian Sarah Siff details how the problem of "policing the police" stretches back decades and is rooted in the structure of American politics itself. Our system of federalism has created a tension between rights guaranteed by the Constitution and police authority that resides at the state and local levels. Sorting out those tensions remains an unfinished part of the Civil Rights Movement.

Independent Practice: Students will work individually with assistance from their notes and the following statistic websites ([Police Killings of Black Men Are the Modern-Day Lynchings: UN](#), [The Raw Videos That Have Sparked Outrage Over Police Treatment of Blacks](#), [Mapping Police Violence](#), [Mapping Police Violence Unarmed](#), [Lynching in America](#), and [Fatal Force](#)) to complete a graphic organizer, which should be done on a separate sheet of paper with the following headings:

Facts about Lynching	Shared Facts	Facts About Police Violence
	(Do not complete yet)	

Students will now complete the Shared Facts with a partner. The completion of the graphic organizer will show the similarities and differences regarding lynching and police brutality.

Facts about Lynching	Shared Facts	Facts About Police Violence

Closure: Students will pull a name from two different bins; One name is of a terror lynching victim and the other will be the name of a police brutality victim. The student will receive these names for the culminating activity in Lesson 7. Students will list three predictions of the similarities and difference they might encounter during their research of the two victims.

Lesson 5: Research Day 1

Each student will research a different lynch victim and will create a profile based on their life leading to their death by terror lynching, emphasizing the supposed reason and the detail for the murder of this individual. This memoir should also include the effects on the family of the victim (if this can be found) and memorials dedicated to the victim (if any.)

Lesson 6: Research Day 2

Each student will research a different police brutality victim and will create a profile based on their life leading to their death by police force, emphasizing the reason for the murder of this individual and the detail of the murder. This memoir should also include the effects on the family of the victim, the outcome of the case, and any memorials dedicated to the victim. This also can include individuals that were murdered (lynched) by civilians in the claim of self-defense.

Lesson 7: Student Memorial Creation (Culminating Activity)

- Name of Memorial: Black Holocaust – A Memoir of Lynching and Police Brutality Victims
- Location: 100 Building Hallway Lockers – students do not utilize the lockers in the school. This particular building is the most common area for student, staff, and parent traffic (the main office is located in this building.)
- Development/Creation: The hall will be covered with black paper acting as a blank canvas for students to add their memoirs of the terror lynching victims and those whose lives were taken by police brutality. The lynch victim's memoirs will be hanging on string (to resemble the noose hangings) and the police brutality victim's memoirs will be shaped in bullets all coming from the same gun that says "WHEN LYNCHING IS LEGAL" on the barrel.
- Grading: Students will be grade based on the completion of their two memoirs, also comparing and contrasting them in a paragraph, their overall participation in the construction of the memorial.

Appendix 1: Implementation Teaching Standards

Connection to North Carolina Essential Standards

This curriculum unit can be used for African-American Studies and American History II. African American Studies is an elective for social studies and American History II is a core course to graduate high school in the state of North Carolina. Below I will provide a description of each course as it is laid out in the North Carolina Essential Standards as well as the standards addressed in the curriculum unit.

African-American Studies

The North Carolina Essential Standards defines African American Studies as a Social Studies elective course and offers this synopsis of the course:

African American Studies is a conceptually driven course that introduces students to the exploration of the rich and diverse history and culture of African Americans. The goal of this course is to broaden the knowledge and understandings of students interested in learning about the histories, cultures and economic, geographic and political realities of African Americans. This course should provide students with an opportunity to engage with the social, economic and political activities of African Americans in a way that allows them to make deep connections across the content. The historical content of this course should be taught with relevance to contemporary and current issues in order to ensure a deeper understanding for students.

The standards are organized around five strands: history, geography and environmental literacy, economics and financial literacy, civics and government and culture. The strands should not be taught in isolation, but woven together in an integrated study that helps students understand the world in which we live. Additionally, the course includes two types of essential standards – one that identifies the skills that students should master during the course of the year and another that identifies the knowledge and understandings. The skills should be taught within the context of African American Studies, applying the knowledge and understandings of the course.

The following essential standards are used in this curriculum unit:

AAS.H.1.1 Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives.

AAS.H.1.2 Analyze competing historical narratives and debates among historians.

AAS.H.1.3 Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

AAS.H.1.4 Analyze how historical context shape and continue to shape people's perspectives.

AAS.H.2.1 Analyze how key turning points in history have affected the lives of African Americans.

AAS.H.2.3 Explain how various forms of resistance by individuals and groups have influenced change in the lives of African Americans.

AAS.G.1.1 Analyze the physical and human characteristics of various places and regions to understand the connection to African American identities and cultures.

AAS.G.1.2 Explain the reasons for and effects of forced and voluntary migration on societies, individuals and groups throughout African American history.

AAS.G.1.4 Explain how region has impacted political perspectives, economic decisions and cultural practices of African American communities.

AAS.G.2.1 Use geographic data in order to understand economic, political, cultural and social patterns within African American communities.

AAS.G.2.2 Use maps, charts, graphs, photographs, geographic data and available technology tools to make inferences about African American life.

AAS.C&G.1.1 Analyze African American politics in terms of the quest for self-governance, social separatism, contests for power, and electoral and global alliances.

AAS.C&G.1.2 Analyze the relationship between African-Americans and other groups in terms of conflict and cooperation in the pursuit of individual freedoms and civil rights.

AAS.C&G.1.3 Analyze political, constitutional and legal decisions and de facto practices to understand their impact on the lives of African Americans.

AAS.C&G.1.4 Explain how various philosophies and ideologies have played a role in the African American struggle for social, political and legal equality.

AAS.C&G.1.5 Analyze civic participation of African Americans in terms of leadership and strategic planning at various levels.

AAS.C.1.1 Analyze the impact of assimilation, stereotypes, and oppression on the lives of African Americans.

AAS.C.1.4 Analyze the various cultural practices that have shaped the individual and collective identity of African Americans over time to understand shared and differing experiences.

American History II

The North Carolina Essential Standards defines American History II as a core (graduation required) Social Studies course and offers this synopsis of the course:

American History Course II will guide students from the late nineteenth century time period through the early 21st century. Students will examine the political, economic, social and cultural development of the United States from the end of the Reconstruction era to present times. The essential standards of American History Course II will trace the change in the ethnic composition of American society; the movement toward equal rights for racial minorities and women; and the role of the United States as a major world power. An emphasis is placed on the expanding role of the federal government and federal courts as well as the continuing tension between the individual and the state. The desired outcome of this course is for students to develop an understanding of the cause-and-effect relationship between past and present events, recognize patterns of interactions, and understand the impact of events on in the United States in an interconnected world.

The essential standards of this course have been designed to provide a framework for studying political, social, economic, and cultural issues, and for analyzing the impact these issues have had on American society over time. Students will continue to build upon previous studies of American History, the fundamental concepts in civics and government, economics, culture and geography taught in grades kindergarten through eight and use skills of historical analysis as they examine American history. This course goes beyond memorization of isolated facts to the development of higher level thinking skills, encouraging students to make historical assessments and evaluations. For example, students will study key turning points that helped shape the United States. Examples of specific turning points as well as other critical content will be provided in an Instructional Toolkit of support material that will be developed to help guide teachers with greater explanation of content possibilities, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, instructional activities, formative assessments, additional resources and professional development.

The following essential standards are used in the curriculum unit:

AH2.H.1.3 Use Historical Analysis and Interpretation to: 1. Identify issues and problems of the past. 2. Consider multiple perspectives of various peoples of the past. 3. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causation. 4. Evaluate competing historical narratives and debates among historians. 5. Evaluate the influence of the past on contemporary issues.

AH2.H.1.4 Use Historical Research to: 1. Formulate historical questions. 2. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources. 3. Support interpretations with historical evidence. 4. Construct analytical essays using historical evidence to support arguments.

AH2.H.2.1 Analyze key political, economic, and social turning points since the end of Reconstruction in terms of causes and effects (e.g., conflicts, legislation, elections, innovations, leadership, movements, Supreme Court decisions, etc.).

AH2.H.2.2 Evaluate key turning points since the end of Reconstruction in terms of their lasting impact (e.g., conflicts, legislation, elections, innovations, leadership, movements, Supreme Court decisions, etc.).

AH2.H.3.2 Explain how environmental, cultural and economic factors influenced the patterns of migration and settlement within the United States since the end of Reconstruction (e.g., gold rush, destruction of the buffalo, reservations, ethnic neighborhoods, etc.).

AH2.H.3.3 Explain the roles of various racial and ethnic groups in settlement and expansion since Reconstruction and the consequences for those groups (e.g., American Indians, African Americans, Chinese, Irish, Hispanics and Latino Americans, Asian Americans, etc.).

AH2.H.3.4 Analyze voluntary and involuntary immigration trends since Reconstruction in terms of causes, regions of origin and destination, cultural contributions, and public and governmental response (e.g., new immigrants, ports of entry, ethnic neighborhoods, settlement houses, immigration restrictions, etc.).

AH2.H.4.1 Analyze the political issues and conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted (e.g., Populism, Progressivism, working conditions and labor unrest, New Deal, Wilmington Race Riots, Eugenics, Civil Rights Movement, Anti-War protests, Watergate, etc.).

AH2.H.4.3 Analyze the social and religious conflicts, movements and reforms that impacted the United States since Reconstruction in terms of participants, strategies, opposition, and results (e.g., Prohibition, Social Darwinism, Eugenics, civil rights, anti-war protest, etc.).

AH2.H.5.1 Summarize how the philosophical, ideological and/or religious views on freedom and equality contributed to the development of American political and economic systems since Reconstruction (e.g., “separate but equal”, Social Darwinism, social gospel, civil service system, suffrage, Harlem Renaissance, the Warren Court, Great Society programs, American Indian Movement, etc.).

AH2.H.5.2 Explain how judicial, legislative and executive actions have affected the distribution of power between levels of government since Reconstruction (e.g., New Deal, Great Society, Civil Rights, etc.).

AH2.H.8.3 Evaluate the extent to which a variety of groups and individuals have had opportunity to attain their perception of the “American Dream” since Reconstruction (e.g., immigrants, Flappers, Rosie the Riveter, GIs, blue collar worker, white collar worker, etc.).

AH2.H.8.4 Analyze multiple perceptions of the “American Dream” in times of prosperity and crisis since Reconstruction (e.g., Great Depression, Dust Bowl, New Deal, oil crisis, savings and loan crisis, dot.com bubble, mortgage foreclosure crisis, etc.).

Appendix 2: Additional Teaching Materials

Lesson 1:

Teacher Input: [Notes and Videos for the Origins of Lynching and the Bryan Stevenson Closure Activity](#)

Lesson 2:

Do Now/Warm-up: [Reading on Ida B. Wells](#)

Guided Practice: [Research Lynching](#)

Independent Practice: “An Outrage” Documentary (runtime: 30 minutes) [link to view the documentary](#)

Closure: [National Lynching Memorial Proposal Questions](#)

Notes

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Annotated List of Additional Student and Teacher Resources

This "[History of Lynching](#)" site is excerpted from Tolnay's book cited below and contains statistics and background information on the history of lynching.

The [Library of Congress](#) provides several links to background on the life of Ida B. Wells and her article, "Lynch Law in Georgia" (1899) exposing the myths and realities of lynching.

The [Kansas Humanities Council](#) has produced a biographical website of Ida B. Wells, which includes links to some of her major pamphlets.

[The Origins of Lynching Culture](#) in the United States

In this video, professor Paula Giddings discusses the history and origins of lynching.

[Equal Justice Initiative lesson plans](#) This series of thirteen lessons provides a comprehensive roadmap for teaching the history of lynching in the United States.

[Fatal Force](#) This database, housed and updated by The Washington Post, utilizes news, public records and other media sources to track every fatal shooting in the United States by a police officer in the line of duty from 2015 to the present.

[History of Lynchings](#) This NAACP article briefly describes the history of lynching in the United States.

[Lynching in America](#), an Equal Justice Initiative's report presents research on and documentation of terror lynchings in the twelve most active lynching states in America.

[Lynching: Our National Crime](#) This transcript documents Ida B. Well's speech to the National Negro Conference in New York City in 1909.

An Outrage [VIEWER'S GUIDE](#) Teaching Tolerance tolerance.org

[Mapping Police Violence](#) This website uses an interactive map and infographics to display data about racialized police brutality and violence.

[Mapping Police Violence Unarmed](#) This website compiles the disproportionalities of police brutality and police murders of unarmed African Americans .

[The Strange Story of the Man Behind 'Strange Fruit'](#) A public radio clip and its accompanying article explore the writer behind Billie Holiday's protest song about lynching, "Strange Fruit."

[Terror Lynching in America](#) A stop-motion video by the Equal Justice Initiative explains the history of terror lynching in the United States.

[Walter White: Reporting the Crime](#) This video from The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow presents the experiences of Walter White, chief investigator of lynching crimes for the NAACP.

[The Raw Videos That Have Sparked Outrage Over Police Treatment of Blacks](#) From footage showing the death of Eric Garner in 2014 to the recent clip which captured the beating of Richard Hubbard III, raw video has thoroughly shaken American policing. Grainy images of questionable police behavior, spread through social media, have led to nationwide protests, federal investigations and changes in policy and attitudes on race.

[Monroe Work Today](#) This website includes an outline of the work of scholarly activist Monroe Nathan Work, his compilation of lynching reports, eight other Civil Rights activists, and an interactive map of white supremacy mob violence.

[The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow | Ida B. Wells: A Lifetime of Activism](#) The video follows the life of Ida B. Wells as she grows from school teacher to founding member of the NAACP.

[Policing the Police](#) In this article, A Civil Rights Story, is almost precisely a year ago Freddie Gray died of injuries sustained while in the custody of Baltimore police. His death was one among several recent cases where African Americans have been killed by police officers, and have prompted serious discussions about policing around the country. Historian Sarah Siff details how the problem of "policing the police" stretches back decades and is rooted in the structure of American politics itself. Our system of federalism has created a tension between rights guaranteed by the Constitution and police authority that resides at the state and local levels. Sorting out those tensions remains an unfinished part of the civil rights movement.

[The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow: Interactive Maps](#) A series of interactive maps from PBS detailing information about Jim Crow laws, historically black colleges and universities, African-American migration, lynching and race riots.

[Black Lives Matter: 11 Racist Police Killings with No Justice Served](#) This article explains the pattern of lethal racial profiling. For far too long, African-Americans in this country have had to worry about whether police will kill their loved ones on the slightest pretext without facing any meaningful punishment. Racist violence is a deep-rooted part of this country's history, and it's going to take substantial nationwide reform of the policing and court systems to change this awful reality. Here are 11 of the most heartbreaking examples of black men, women and children killed by police in the last 15 years. Their stories are different in many ways, but none of them deserved to die the way they did – and we could fill many more pages with others like them.

[The Long-Lasting Legacy of The Great Migration](#) Smithsonian.com's article provides a comprehensive overview of the African-American exodus North during the 20th century, the Great Migration.

[Police Killings of Black Men Are the Modern-Day Lynchings: UN](#) Police killings of Black people in the United States are reminiscent of lynchings and the government must do far more to protect them, a United Nations working group says in a report that will be debated at the U.N. Human Rights Council. The hard-hitting criticism—drawing a comparison between modern

police behavior and mob killings of Black people in the 19th and 20th centuries—comes at a time of renewed racial tension in the United States.

[From Ferguson to Baton Rouge](#) There is no federal database that tracks the number of people of any race killed by police. Some individuals and groups have compiled their own databases, such as [The Root](#) and [HipHopandPolitics.com](#), using information from media and law enforcement reports. Here is a look at some of the cases involving black men and women who died following police encounters. These cases range from 1999 to 2017.

Annotated Bibliography

Ayers, Hannah and Lance Warren. *An Outrage: A Documentary Film About Lynching in the American South*. 2017.

An Outrage is a documentary film about lynching in the American South. Filmed on-location at lynching sites in six states and bolstered by the memories and perspectives of descendants, community activists, and scholars, this unusual historical documentary seeks to educate even as it serves as a hub for action to remember and reflect upon a long-hidden past.

“Black Lives Matter Platform,” <https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/>, 2017.

Black Lives Matter created this platform to articulate and support the ambitions and work of Black people. They also seek to intervene in the current political climate and assert a clear vision, particularly for those who claim to be their allies, of the world they want to help them create. They reject false solutions and believe they can achieve a complete transformation of the current systems, which place profit over people and make it impossible for many of them to breathe. While this platform is focused on domestic policies, they express that patriarchy, exploitative capitalism, militarism, and white supremacy know no borders. They stand in solidarity with their international family against the ravages of global capitalism and anti-Black racism, human-made climate change, war, and exploitation. They also stand with descendants of African people all over the world in an ongoing call and struggle for reparations for the historic and continuing harms of colonialism and slavery. Lastly, they also recognize and honor the rights and struggle of our Indigenous family for land and self-determination.

Berry, Mary Frances. *And Justice for All: The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the Continuing Struggle for Freedom in America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

This is the story of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, through its extraordinary fifty years at the heart of the civil rights movement and the struggle for justice in America. Berry writes that the commission, rather than producing reports that would gather dust on the shelves, began to hold hearings even as it was under attack from Southern segregationists. She writes how the commission’s hearings and reports helped the nonviolent protest movement prick the conscience of the nation then on the road to dismantling segregation, beginning with the battles in Montgomery and Little Rock, the sit-ins and freedom rides, the March on Washington.

Blair, Elizabeth. “The Strange Story of the Man Behind ‘Strange Fruit.’” *NPR*, September 5, 2012. <https://www.npr.org/2012/09/05/158933012/the-strange-story-of-the-man-behind-strange-fruit>.

This article explains the history behind one of Billie Holiday's most iconic songs is "Strange Fruit," a haunting protest against the inhumanity of racism. It explains that the man who wrote the song was inspired by a photograph of a lynching. The man behind "Strange Fruit" is New York City's Abel Meeropol.

Davis, Angela Y. *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.

A powerful study of the women's liberation movement in the U.S., from abolitionist days to the present, that demonstrates how it has always been hampered by the racist and classist biases of its leaders. From the widely revered and legendary political activist and scholar Angela Davis.

Day, Elizabeth. "#BlackLivesMatter: the birth of a new civil rights movement." *The Guardian*, July 19, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/19/blacklivesmatter-birth-civil-rights-movement>.

This article is about how a new generation of tech-savvy activists made violence against African Americans into global headline news. Black America is in a state of protest. The 21st-century civil rights movement, exemplified by the action taken by Alicia Garza and those like her, is democratic in its aims and agile in its responses. It is fueled by grief and fury, by righteous rage against injustice and institutionalized racism and by frustration at the endemic brutality of the state against those it deems unworthy.

Duster, Alfreda. *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) was one of the foremost crusaders against black oppression. This engaging memoir tells of her private life as mother of a growing family as well as her public activities as teacher, lecturer, and journalist in her fight against attitudes and laws oppressing blacks.

Equal Justice Initiative, [*"Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror"*](#).

The report explores the ways in which lynching profoundly impacted race relations in this country and shaped the contemporary geographic, political, social, and economic conditions of African Americans. Most importantly, lynching reinforced a narrative of racial difference and a legacy of racial inequality that is readily apparent in our criminal justice system today. Mass incarceration, racially biased capital punishment, excessive sentencing, disproportionate sentencing of racial minorities, and police abuse of people of color reveal problems in American society that were shaped by the terror era. No prominent public memorial or monument commemorates the thousands of African Americans who were lynched in America. *Lynching in America* argues that is a powerful statement about our failure to value the black lives lost in this brutal campaign of racial violence. Research on mass violence, trauma, and transitional justice underscores the urgent need to engage in public conversations about racial history that begin a process of truth and reconciliation in this country. EJI's multi-year investigation into lynching in twelve Southern states during the period between Reconstruction and World War II. EJI researchers documented 4075 racial terror lynchings of African Americans in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia between 1877 and 1950 – at least 800 more lynchings of black people in these states than previously reported in the most comprehensive work done on lynching to date.

Equal Justice Initiative, "EJI's Lynching Marker Project Grows", September 12, 2016 <https://eji.org/news/eji-lynching-marker-project-grows>.

This webpage shows the reasoning behind and the current status of the Equal Justice Initiative Lynching Marker Project. The project is part of EJI's effort to recognize the victims of lynching by erecting historical markers that acknowledge the horrors of racial terror lynchings.

Equal Justice Initiative, "The National Memorial for Peace and Justice," <https://eji.org/national-lynching-memorial>.

This webpage explains how The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) plans to build a national memorial to victims of lynching in Montgomery, Alabama, which is expected to open in 2018. This memorial project relating to America's history of racial terror and lynching will become the most ambitious in the nation on this topic.

Funke, Daniel and Tina Susman, "From Ferguson to Baton Rouge: Deaths of black men and women at the hands of police," *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-police-deaths-20160707-snap-htmlstory.html?sm=au=iVV5jqsD4Fs50Zrj>.

Looks at some cases involving black men and women who died following police encounters.

Goluboff, Risa L. *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

In this groundbreaking book, Risa L. Goluboff offers a provocative new account of the history of American civil rights law. The Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* has long dominated that history. Since 1954, generations of judges, lawyers, and ordinary people have viewed civil rights as a project of breaking down formal legal barriers to integration, especially in the context of public education. Goluboff recovers a world before *Brown*, a world in which civil rights was legally, conceptually, and constitutionally up for grabs. The petitions of black agricultural workers in the American South and industrial workers across the nation called for a civil rights law that would redress economic as well as legal inequalities. Lawyers in the new Civil Rights Section of the Department of Justice and in the NAACP took the workers' cases and viewed them as crucial to attacking Jim Crow. By the time NAACP lawyers set out on the path to *Brown* they had eliminated workers' economic concerns from their litigation agenda. When the lawyers succeeded in *Brown*, they simultaneously marginalized the host of other harms, economic inequality chief among them, that afflicted the majority of African Americans in the midtwentieth century. By uncovering the lost challenges workers and their lawyers launched against Jim Crow in the 1940s, Goluboff shows how *Brown* only partially fulfilled the promise of civil rights.

Holiday, Billie. (written by Abel Meeropol,) "Strange Fruit." *Encyclopedia of Great Popular Song Recordings*.

"Strange Fruit" is a song performed most famously by Billie Holiday, who first sang and recorded it in 1939. Written by a white, Jewish high school teacher from the Bronx and a member of the Communist Party, Abel Meeropol wrote it as a protest poem, exposing American racism,

particularly the lynching of African Americans. Such lynchings had occurred chiefly in the South but also in other regions of the United States. Meeropol set it to music and with his wife and the singer Laura Duncan, performed it as a protest song in New York venues, including at Madison Square Garden. In 1978 Holiday's version of the song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. It was also included in the list of Songs of the Century, by the Recording Industry of America and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Levine Museum of the New South Exhibits.

<http://www.museumofthenewsouth.org/exhibits/know-justice-know-peace>.

This webpage gives a synopsis of K(NO)W Justice K(NO)W Peace, which is a community-created exhibit about police-involved shootings throughout the nation and in Charlotte. Co-created with activists and law enforcement, the media, students, clergy and civic leaders, K(NO)W Justice K(NO)W Peace explores the historical roots of the distrust between police and community, tells the human stories beyond the headlines, and engages viewers in creating constructive solutions. The exhibition also captures the voices of local police, protesters, emergency personnel, faith leaders and others reflecting on their personal experiences during Charlotte's protests. The exhibit features photographer Alvin C. Jacobs Jr.'s powerful images of local and national protests and compelling displays curated by Dr. Tiffany Packer and students at Johnson C. Smith University. A community-response section looks at the meaning of the Charlotte Protests—highlighting the diverse perspectives held by community stakeholders and others impacted by recent events.

Nodjmbadem, Katie. "The Long, Painful History of Police Brutality in the U.S."

Smithsonian.com, July 27, 2017. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/long-painful-history-police-brutality-in-the-us-180964098/>.

This article explains the evolution of modern policing, focusing on aggressive dispersion tactics, such as police dogs and fire hoses, against individuals in peaceful protests and sit-ins were the most widely publicized examples of police brutality in that era. But it was the pervasive violent policing in communities of color that built distrust at a local, everyday level.

"Mapping Police Violence."

https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/unarmed/?_sm_au_=iVVSjqsD4Fs50Zrj.

Website with statics about the disproportions in police violence and murders of black Americans. Moyers, Bill. "Legacy of Lynching." PBS. August 28, 2017.

Please be advised that there are graphic still photos of lynchings in the slideshow. While these photos are germane to the subject matter, some viewers may find these images disturbing.

Moehringer, J.R. "An Obsessive Quest to Make People See." *Los Angeles Times*, August 27, 2000. <http://articles.latimes.com/2000/aug/27/news/mn-11152>.

This article was written after antique collector James Allen discovered scores of lynching photos, black Americans were grateful and confused. Was his motive compassion or something else?

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "Thirty Years of Lynching in the U.S. 1889–1918." New York: Arno Press, 1969.

This shows the lynching statistics collected by the NAACP from 1889-1918.

Newkirk, Vann R. "How 'The Blood of Emmett Till' Still Stains America Today." *The Atlantic*, February 16, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/02/how-the-blood-of-emmett-till-still-stains-america-today/516891/>.

A new history of the most famous lynching in the country provides context on how racism continues to work in the present. His mutilated corpse became one of the first mass-media images of the violence of Jim Crow, and the trial of his killers became a pageant illuminating the tyranny of white supremacy. And through protests across the country, Emmett Till's broken body became a powerful symbol of the civil-rights movement.

Pfeifer, Michael J. *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874–1947*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004.

The history of lynching's transformation from collective, popular violence to state-sanctioned, sanitized execution in this first national, cross-regional study of lynching and criminal justice. Michael J. Pfeifer investigates the pervasive and persistent commitment to "rough justice" that characterized rural and working-class areas of most of the United States in the late nineteenth century. Defining "rough justice" as the harsh, informal, and often communal punishment of perceived criminal behavior, Pfeifer examines the influence of race, gender, and class on understandings of criminal justice and shows how they varied across regions. He argues that lynching only ended when rough justice enthusiasts compromised with middle-class advocates of due process by revamping the death penalty into an efficient, technocratic, and highly racialized mechanism of retributive justice.

Robertson, Campbell. "History of Lynching in the South Documents Nearly 4,000 Names." *The New York Times*, Feb 10, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/10/us/history-of-lynchings-in-the-south-documents-nearly-4000-names.html>

This article discusses the 700 new additions of lynch victims to the previous list that has been compiled by activists and historians. The article also discusses the that lynching was not used a form of justice, but to terrorize the black community.

Sisario, Ben. "A Song Born When Pain is Still Fresh: J. Cole Releases an Impassioned Song About Michael Brown, 'Be Free'". *The New York Times*, August 15, 2014. <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/16/arts/music/j-coles-be-free-spreads-around-the-world-in-hours.html>

This article discusses the song created by J. Cole to commemorate the murder of Michael Brown.

G. Flint Taylor, "How the FBI Conspired to Destroy the Black Panther Party," *In These Times*, December 4, 2013, http://inthesetimes.com/article/15949/how_the_fbi_conspired_to_destroy_the_black_panther_party.

This article explains that the FBI had, in fact, played a central role in the assassinations and destruction of the Black Panther Party, and Hanrahan's initial lies were only the top layer of what proved to be a massive cover-up.

Teaching Tolerance, *An Outrage Viewers Guide Grades 9-12*.

This film viewing guide, created by Teaching Tolerance, confronts the history of racial terror also means recognizing its reach into today's criminal justice system. Mass incarceration, mandatory minimum sentencing and the death penalty became legal, state-sanctioned proxies for systems of racial control, including lynching, with judges and juries disproportionately sentencing people of color to death. The documentary discusses the horrors and history of lynching, therefore, do not exist in a distant or detached past. *An Outrage* highlights community change makers giving voice to victims and families white supremacists tried to silence through acts of racial terror. The film encourages viewers to look back at a history students may not see in their textbooks; it also encourages taking steps forward toward a better future.

Tolnay, Stewart E. and E. M. Beck. "Racial Violence and Black Migration in the American South, 1910 to 1930". *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Feb., 1992), 103-116.

This article explains how the authors test a model of reciprocal causation between racial violence and black net out-migration from southern counties during the era of the Great Migration. Using county-level data for ten southern states, including a new inventory of southern lynchings, we find support for the model during two decades, 1910-1920 and 1920-1930. Out-migration of blacks was heaviest from counties where more lynchings had occurred and, in turn, counties that witnessed relatively more out-migration of blacks experienced fewer lynchings of blacks. We conclude that mob violence was an important social force driving blacks from certain areas of the South. Southern whites in some communities may also have responded to black out-migration and the loss of cheap labor by improving living conditions for co-resident blacks - by reducing the risk of victimization by white mobs, for example.

Townes, Emilie M. "And Still We Struggle to Be Continued." *The Future of the Race*. Yale University: 2017.

This article explains the concept of certain narratives getting buried or "renamed" in the long and troubling history of race and politics. We do not hear very often, and certainly not in the national campaigns of either party, the word "race" or "racism." In one party, they know little of what it means to have genuine diversity, and in the other, they have weighed the cost of naming the obvious and decided to let image speak rather than call forth the dangers and violence as well as the joys and triumphs we find in the history of darker-skinned peoples in this country.

Tyson, Timothy B. *The Blood of Emmett Till*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2017.

This recent monograph discusses the impact of the lynching of Emmett Till. In 1955, white men in the Mississippi Delta lynched a fourteen-year-old from Chicago named Emmett Till. His murder was part of a wave of white terrorism in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court decision that declared public school segregation unconstitutional. Only weeks later, Rosa Parks thought about young Emmett as she refused to move to the back of a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Five years later, Black students who called themselves “the Emmett Till generation” launched sit-in campaigns that turned the struggle for civil rights into a mass movement. Till’s lynching became the most notorious hate crime in American history.

Pettus, Emily Wagster. “Emmett Till historical marker vandalized in Mississippi” *Chicago Tribune*, June 26, 2017, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/midwest/ct-emmett-till-historical-marker-vandalized-20170626-story.html>.

This article discusses the numerous times and ways the Emmett Till historical markers have been vandalized in Mississippi.

Ware, Susan. “Ida B. Wells Speaks Out Against Lynching.” ed. *Modern American Women: a Documentary History*.

A collection of primary source documents for the American women's history course, 'Modern American Women: A Documentary History' focuses on events and developments involving women from 1890 to the present. New material includes documents on anti-lynching activism and Indian relocation.

Wells, Ida B. “Lynch Law in America,” 1900.
<http://www.blackpast.org/1900-ida-b-wells-lynch-law-america>.

This is a collection of statistics on lynching (state by state) and the causes. This research is done by activist and anti-lynching crusader by Ida B. Wells in 1900.