Journey of Reconciliation, 1947

“Power concedes nothing without a demand.” ~Frederick Douglass, 1857

Overview
In 1947, long before the more familiar civil rights events of the 1960s, the movement had already been set in motion with the “Journey of Reconciliation.” In this lesson, students will discuss the concept of democracy and through this lens, analyze the unjust Jim Crow laws that dominated the South. Through discussion, readings and the examination of primary sources, students will gain an understanding of how the period immediately following World War II set the stage for numerous challenges to Jim Crow, one of which was the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation. Students will culminate this lesson by creating a historical marker that honors the Journey of Reconciliation’s riders and educates the public about this important period of history.

Grade
11

NC Essential Standards for American History II
• AH2.H.1.2- Use Historical comprehension...
• AH2.H.1.3- Use historical analysis and interpretation...
• AH2.H.1.4- Use historical research...
• AH2.H.2.1 - Analyze key political, economic, and social turning points since the end of Reconstruction in terms of causes and effects (e.g., conflicts, legislation, elections, innovations, leadership, movements, Supreme Court decisions, etc.).
• AH2.H.2.2 - Evaluate key turning points since the end of Reconstruction in terms of their lasting impact (e.g., conflicts, legislation, elections, innovations, leadership, movements, Supreme Court decisions, etc.).
• AH2.H.4.1 - Analyze the political issues and conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted (e.g., Populism, Progressivism, working conditions and labor unrest, New Deal, Wilmington Race Riots, Eugenics, Civil Rights Movement, Anti-War protests, Watergate, etc.).
• AH2.H.4.3 - Analyze the social and religious conflicts, movements and reforms that impacted the United States since Reconstruction in terms of participants, strategies, opposition, and results (e.g., Prohibition, Social Darwinism, Eugenics, civil rights, anti-war protest, etc.).
• AH2.H.4.4 - Analyze the cultural conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted (e.g., nativism, Back to Africa movement, modernism, fundamentalism, black power movement, women’s movement, counterculture, Wilmington Race Riots, etc.).
• AH2.H.5.1 - Summarize how the philosophical, ideological and/or religious views on freedom and equality contributed to the development of American political and economic systems since Reconstruction (e.g., “separate but equal”, Social Darwinism, social gospel, civil service system, suffrage, Harlem Renaissance, the Warren Court, Great Society programs, American Indian Movement, etc.).
• 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.).

Essential Questions
• Who were the Freedom Riders and why did people join the Freedom Rides?
• When prejudice and racism are supported by both custom and law, what can be done to create a more inclusive society? How do you explain why there is often so much resistance to change?
• How does nonviolent direct action expose injustice? Why was it such an effective strategy for bringing about change during the civil rights movement?
• What role did the media play in the Freedom Rides? How do media shape our understanding of the issues of our time?
• What does the story of the Freedom Riders suggest about the role of citizens in shaping democracy?

Materials
• The Journey of Reconciliation, 1947 Power Point, located in the Database of K-12 Resources
  o To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click “View” in the top menu bar of the file, and select “Full Screen Mode”
  o To request an editable PPT version of this presentation, send a request to CarolinaK12@unc.edu
• Democracy Quotes for Discussion, quotes and questions attached
• The Jim Crow Era, handout and questions attached
• Jim Crow Law Review worksheet, attached
  o Each student will need access to http://jimcrowhistory.org/geography/geography.htm
  o If there is not computer or internet access for each pair of student, teachers can alternatively print out the Jim Crow law for each state and provide hard copies to students.
  o Outlines of each southern state; samples can be found at http://www.50states.com/maps/
  o Ideally students will replicate each state outline on large chart paper or bulletin board paper; all states should be proportional to one another so that they can be displayed together as a map
• “Nonviolence versus Jim Crow.” by Bayard Rustin, attached
  o Make sure to alert students to the fact that autobiographical story contains a racial slur. The word has been left in the autobiographical narrative, as the author intended, in order to gain a better understanding of the historical period described. Let students know that the point of studying this period of history is to examine such hate out in the open so that they can learn why it is detrimental to a society, appreciate the sacrifices of those who fought against such hate, and work to be engaged community members themselves who refuse to tolerate similar aspects of hate today.
• Letters from Cpl. Rupert Trimmingham to Yank Magazine, attached (source: http://personal.ashland.edu/~jmoser1/trimmingham.htm)
• Journey of Reconciliation, reading and discussion questions attached
• Resolution of Support for State Historical Marker, attached
• Historical Monument/Marker assignment, attached
• Optional resource for teacher reference:
  o Map of the Journey of Reconciliation, attached
    ▪ Teacher Note: After students learn about the Journey of Reconciliation, teachers may want to plot each of the Journey of Reconciliation’s stops on the map of the Jim Crow south students created. This will further layer the Jim Crow laws and culture that were at play during the Journey of Reconciliation. (A map of their stops is attached.) Further, teachers who choose to use the Consortium’s lesson plan, “The 1961 Freedom Rides” may want to then add in the stops the later riders made and compare the two journeys.
  o NPR’s “Get On The Bus: The Freedom Riders of 1961:” http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5149667 (While the majority of the story is on the 1960 rides, the Journey of Reconciliation is addressed approximately 6 minutes in.)

Duration
• Two-three 60-90 minute class periods
• Time will vary based on the number of activities implemented and the amount of class time permitted for discussion.

Preparation
• To appreciate the actions of the Journey of Reconciliation participants and other civil rights activists, students must have a firm understanding of the Jim Crow Era and the laws and societal expectations that were at play. While this lesson begins with an introduction to Jim Crow, alternative/additional lessons for teaching about Jim Crow can be assessed in the Consortium’s Database of Civic Resources.

• While Jim Crow and segregation are sensitive topics to discuss with students, it is important for students to explore these historical events and understand how engaged community members fought such injustice. In order to study this history effectively and safely however, teachers must have established a safe classroom community with clear expectations of respect, tolerance, open-mindedness, and civil conversation. See the Consortium’s “Activities” section of the Database of Civic Resources for ways to ensure a classroom environment conducive to the effective exploration of controversial issues.

• Throughout the study of Jim Crow, segregation, and the civil rights movement, students will encounter racial slurs. The attached reading, “Nonviolence versus Jim Crow,” for example, contains the word “nigger.” In order to honestly communicate the harshness of this historical period, the word has been left unchanged. However, teachers must prepare students in advance that they will encounter such offensive words and concepts. They should likewise be reminded that the point of the lesson is to examine such hate out in the open so that they can learn why it is detrimental to a society, appreciate the sacrifices of those who fought against such hate, and work to be engaged community members themselves who refuse to tolerate aspects of hate today.

Procedure

Day 1

What is Democracy?

1. Project slide 2 of the accompanying Power Point and ask students to brainstorm what comes to mind when they consider the word “democracy.” (Teachers should have a student volunteer note all thoughts on a piece of chart paper up front.) As students share their thoughts, remind them that there is no right or wrong answer and encourage their continued thinking with follow-up questions when necessary. For example:
   • What images come to mind when considering this word?
   • What does democracy look like?
   • What actions do you relate to democracy?
   • Who is included in or constitutes “democracy?”
   • Who is responsible for democracy?

2. Once students have expended their initial thoughts, review the brainstormed list. If there are any aspects not yet covered, teachers may want to ask guiding questions to get students to consider missing concepts. To further the discussion, have students get into partners or small groups of 3 and assign one of the quotes from the attached “Democracy Quotes for Discussion” to each pair/group. Students should take 3-5 minutes to consider the quote and the questions provided underneath it. Next, project each quote using slides 3-5 and have the students who discussed that quote share their thoughts. Additional discussion questions to raise for each quote include:
   • “Democracy is never finished. When we believe that it is, we have, in fact, killed it.” ~Patricia Hill Collins
     o What do you think she means when she says that “Democracy is never finished?” Do you agree or disagree and why?
     o Based on this statement, do you think we have “killed” democracy? Why or why not? What evidence can you offer that democracy has been “killed?” What evidence can you counter that illustrates that democracy is alive and well?
   • “Democracy is a process, not a static condition. It is becoming rather than being. It can easily be lost, but never is fully won. Its essence is eternal struggle.” ~William H. Hastie,
     o What does he mean when he says that democracy can be “lost?” Can you think of examples of this?
3. Point out to students that democracy is often solely defined in terms of political government, be it direct democracy (carried out by the people), or republicanism (elected representatives are given the power to govern by the people, for the people.) Common principles associated with the definition of democracy are equality (equal protection before the law), freedom, and liberty (rights), typically protected by a constitution. However, we often make the mistake of viewing democracy as a “thing” (be it a government, or one particular action like voting), not to mention that many people view it as a “thing” that others are responsible for. In actuality, “democracy is a process, a way of building community and getting business done...” (Patricia Hill Collins, 2009) that we are each – as individuals (old and young) and as a collective body - responsible for. With this in mind, ask students to return to their brainstormed thoughts on democracy and evaluate whether or not their list includes this concept. If not, ask them what they might now add after considering this “active” view of democracy.

When Democracy Failed: The Jim Crow Era

4. Next, ask students if they can think of any examples throughout history when they feel democracy fulfilled its promise – when it led to positive results or as Patricia Hill Collins said, “got business done.” What positive things have occurred throughout American history that can be directly related to democracy? Note student thoughts in a list on chart paper or the board. As students offer thoughts, ask them to expand on why they feel their example illustrates the success of democracy, or democracy at work in a positive way.

5. Next, ask students to switch their thinking and to consider when our democracy failed in some way. List these on another sheet of chart paper up front and again ask students to explain why they feel each is an example of democracy unfulfilled. Once student thought wanes, if a student mentioned or referred to Jim Crow laws or segregation in some way, circle those examples and tell students that you want to focus on this particular topic. Ask students:
   - What do you already know about the term “Jim Crow?” What is associated with “Jim Crow?” (Encourage students to offer their thoughts on how the term originated, Jim Crow laws, Jim Crow etiquette, etc.)
   - What is segregation? What do you already know about the period of segregation in America?

(*If no student mentioned anything related to Jim Crow laws or segregation in the brainstorm, add it to the list as your own example and ask students to share what they already know about it using the same questions above.)

6. Give students some introductory information regarding Jim Crow using slide 6, allowing students to ask questions and offering further explanation as needed.

Let students know that as they learn more about and discuss the Jim Crow era, they may find themselves feeling upset or angry. While Jim Crow and segregation were terrible periods of history, let students know that it is important for them to learn about these historical events and to understand how engaged community members fought such injustice. Explain that this is one of the ways we can honor those people who made a difference, as well as ensure we continue their fight for justice today in our own communities.
7. **Project slide 7** and go over some of the ridiculous expectations and etiquette that was practiced in the Jim Crow South and discuss:
   - Which expectation do you find most disturbing? Why?
   - How do you think the above behaviors came to exist and became the societal “norm”?
   - How do you think these rules and expectations affected society (black and white)?
   - If the year were 1940, how would your life be different based on these rules and expectations?
   - If you were living during the Jim Crow Era, what choices would you have as a citizen to make your displeasure with the Jim Crow way of life known? What would you be risking in dissenting?

8. **Tell students** that in addition to the societal expectations, actual laws also existed, passed and enforced throughout the South. Explain that with a partner, they will be examining some of the actual Jim Crow laws that were in existence in each state, many still active less than 60 years ago! Provide students with the attached “Jim Crow Law Review” worksheet and assign each pair of students a southern state. Instruct them to read about that state’s Jim Crow laws at [http://jimcrowhistory.org/geography/geography.htm](http://jimcrowhistory.org/geography/geography.htm) and discuss/answer the worksheet questions together. Students can click on their state on the hyperlinked map to retrieve a list of Jim Crow laws and descriptions. (If there is not computer or internet access for each pair of student, teachers can alternatively print out the Jim Crow law for each state and provide hard copies to students.)

Also, provide (or instruct students to create) an outline of their assigned state. Once students have read about and discussed their assigned state’s Jim Crow laws, students should fill in the outline of the state with words, phrases, pictures, etc. that explain the Jim Crow laws that were once present in that state. Teachers should designate bulletin board or wall space where students can piece together and hang their completed state outlines. (Teachers can project slide 8 of the PPT to give students a visual reminder of how to piece their states together.)

- **Teacher Note:** If needed, worksheet sized outlines of each state can be found at [http://www.50states.com/maps/](http://www.50states.com/maps/) Ideally teachers or students will replicate each state outline on large chart paper or bulletin board paper; all states should be proportional to one another so that they can be displayed together as a map.)

9. **Once all students** have hung their completed state outline up, allow the class to view the artistic representation of the Jim Crow south and discuss:
   - Looking at all of these unjust laws, what do you imagine it would have been like living like during this time? (While discussing this, also point out to students that this history isn’t “ancient.” There are many people still living who did experience this first hand, and we can still see the negative effects of such discrimination today.)
   - Imagine that you lived in Virginia and had a sick relative in Florida. What do you think it would have been like to make that trip as a black person? How would your travel have been impacted by Jim Crow laws? Imagine experiencing such injustice, on top of being worried about your relative – how would you feel?
   - How is it possible that we live in a democracy, yet such unjust laws were passed and enforced for so many years?
   - Why do these laws no longer exist today? What do you think happened?

   *Plessy v. Ferguson* and “Separate but Equal”
10. Explain to students that while Jim Crow laws did not go unchallenged, even though they were typically upheld within our justice system. As an example, review the Plessy v. Ferguson case with students:

- In 1890, Louisiana implemented the Separate Car Act, which required blacks and whites to sit in separate railway cars. Wanting to challenge the constitutionality of this Act, Louisiana activists devised a plan to have a black man purposefully sit in the car designated for whites.
- The group enlisted the help of Homer Plessy. Because Plessy was only 1/8th black, he could pass for white while boarding the train. Albion Tourgée, one of the lead organizers and later counsel for Homer Plessy, had the idea to have Plessy sit in the white train car and then announce his ethnicity, thereby resulting in his removal and arrest. This would have the effect of emphasizing the difficulties in determining a person’s race, which Tourgée felt should result in the law being overturned.
- On June 7, 1892 Homer Plessy followed the plan and was arrested. With their plan in motion, Tourgée and his team made their case for the unconstitutionality of the Act. The judge in the local trial, John Ferguson, ruled that there was no violation of the Constitution. Tourgée and Plessy then appealed the case to the Louisiana State Court, which upheld the lower decision. The case then went to the US Supreme Court as intended.

11. Project slide 9’s comments from Justice Henry Brown regarding the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision and ask a volunteer to read it out loud. Instruct students to silently consider this statement for a moment and then discuss:

- Based on your understanding of these quotes, how did Justice Brown rule in Plessy v. Ferguson?
- Why does Justice Brown believe that the Separate Car Act is constitutional? What evidence does he give?
- According to Justice Brown, if the “colored race” feels inferior riding in a separate car, who is responsible?
- Evaluate the decision made by Justice Henry Brown. What does Justice Brown’s decision say about democracy?
- Based on what you already know and your predictions, what did it take for our country’s justice system to finally declare “separate but equal” and other Jim Crow laws unconstitutional?

12. Ensure students understand the significance of the Plessy case:

- The basis for Plessy’s argument stemmed from the recent 13th and 14th amendments to the US Constitution, which respectively abolished slavery and applied the Bill of Rights to state governments. The Separate Car Act sought to circumvent the Equal Protection Clause in the 14th amendment by making the argument that the separation of the races didn’t make them any less equal.
- Arguing against this, Tourgée made the case that race was a poor basis for separation because there was no real way to judge it. In Plessy’s case, he was not discovered to be “black” until he announced his heritage in the train car. It was during these arguments that Tourgée is said to have coined the phrase “color-blind” to illustrate his point.
- The State of Louisiana argued that nothing in the new Constitutional amendments prohibited the “separate but equal” philosophy which underscored the Separate Car Act. They contended that equality could be met as long as the same accommodations were afforded to each race. (While equivalent accommodations may have been offered in terms of railway cars, it was certainly not the case in terms of schools, restaurants, and many other places where blacks were also “separate but equal”.) However, because this particular case related to the Constitutionality of only the Separate Car Act, the conditions in other places such as schools and cafes weren’t a factor in this decision. As long as the cars were equal, Louisiana said, there was no violation of the Constitution.
- The Supreme Court held that railway accommodations for blacks and whites were, in fact, equal and that Louisiana had not violated the 14th amendment. The court rationalized that as long as the accommodations showed no difference in quality, the mere act of separation was not unconstitutional. Furthermore, it was stated that segregation did not “stamp the colored race with a
badge of inferiority” as Tourgée had argued. According to the Supreme Court, if African-Americans felt that way, it was merely because they chose to view it as such.

- The impact of *Plessy v. Ferguson* shaped American views on race for the next 60 years. Seeing the decision as an approval of segregation from the Supreme Court, states used it as a justification for further legal implementation of various types of racial segregation.
- As noted by Justice Harlan, the only Supreme Court justice who disagreed with the ruling, the decision in this case effectively undid the advancements in equality which were intended by the 13th and 14th amendments. It was not until 1954, in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, that the “separate but equal” doctrine was overturned and found to be unconstitutional.

➢ **Teacher note:** For a detailed lesson on *Plessy v. Ferguson*, see the Consortium’s “*Plessy v. Ferguson & the Roots of Segregation*,” available in the Database of Civic Resources. Additional readings and activities regarding the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case can also be found at: http://www.streetlaw.org/en/landmark/cases/plessy_v_ferguson.

**Fighting to End Jim Crow – “Nonviolence verses Jim Crow”**

13. Tell students that over the next few days, they are going to be learning about what happened to the Jim Crow laws and focusing on engaged community members, many of them young people, who demanded justice by peaceful means. To close the day’s lesson, provide the attached piece by Bayard Rustin, “Nonviolence verses Jim Crow.” (Project slide 10 of the PPT so that students can see a picture of Mr. Rustin.) Tell students that this is an account by Mr. Rustin of events that actually happened to him in 1942, and that his account offers a window into what it was like to experience the Jim Crow laws they just read about. It also gives us a sense of how people stood up for themselves during this oppressive time. Students should read carefully and answer the corresponding questions.

➢ **Teacher note:** Make sure to alert students to the fact that autobiographical story contains a racial slur. The word has been left in the autobiographical narrative, as the author intended, in order to gain a better understanding of the historical period described. Let students know that the point of studying this period of history is to examine such hate out in the open so that they can learn why it is detrimental to a society, appreciate the sacrifices of those who fought against such hate, and work to be engaged community members themselves who refuse to tolerate similar aspects of hate today.

14. After students have read the story, discuss their thoughts to the questions as a class. Let students know that they will learn more about Bayard Rustin over the following days of class, since he became an American leader for social justice and civil rights.

**Day 2**

**The Turning Point – World War II (1939-1945)**

15. As a warm up, project slide 11 and ask students to observe the image silently and jot down some thoughts regarding what they see. After a few minutes of silent pondering, teachers can pose questions for students to answer in their written thoughts, such as:

- What year do you think this picture was taken? What makes you think this?
- What was this man doing while this picture was taken? Why is he carrying this sign?
- What message is the sign trying to convey?
- How does this picture connect to what we’ve learned about Jim Crow?
- What do you think this man wants?
- What does this image say about American democracy?

16. Once students have had around 5 minutes to write their preliminary thoughts, ask volunteers to share their inferences with the class. Let students know that the image was taken towards the end of World War
Il and remind students that WWII took place between 1939 -1945. (Point out to students that the piece by Bayard Rustin they read was written by him in 1942.) Further discuss:

- What do you already know about World War II? What was the war over and what was America’s involvement? (Teachers should take this time to share as much or as little of a reminder of students’ studies of World War II. Most important to highlight for the purposes of this discussion is America’s desire to spread freedom, democracy and liberation in other countries.)
- What role did African Americans played in World War II?

17. To add to the discussion, provide students with the attached letter to Yank Magazine in 1944 (Letter I.)
Tell students to

- Why does the Cpl. Trimmingham ask, “What is the Negro soldier fighting for?” What is the Cpl. upset over?
- What message is he trying to convey? What does he want?
- What words come to mind when considering this situation (African Americans risking their lives to fight for justice overseas, and being denied their own rights back at home)? How was such a paradox possible in this democracy?
- Put yourself in the shoes of an African American soldier during World War II. You’ve risked your life for your country, yet you can’t sit beside a white person on a bus. And, if all the seats get filled up, you might have to give up your seat for a white person. How do you think you would feel?
- To further the conversation, teachers may choose to read aloud the second letter by Cpl. Trimmingham (attached) and ask students if they are surprised by anything in the letter.

18. Explain to students that African Americans made numerous contributions to the war effort, serving overseas in the military and working in defense industries. However, as they listened to wartime propaganda about freedom overseas, they became more assertive in their demands for equal rights at home. (Source: http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6909/) Project the quotes on slide 12 and discuss:

- What message is Mr. Young and Mrs. Roosevelt trying to convey?
- When you typically think of the civil rights movement, what events, people, images, etc. come to mind? (It is likely that most of students comments will center around events from the 60s, focusing on people and events such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and the March on Washington, Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, etc.)
- Many people actually consider World War II to be the “turning point” for the fight for civil rights. Why do you think this is the case?

19. Share the information on slides 13-14 with students, further highlighting how America was set for change after World War II. Project slide 15 and ask students if anyone recognizes the image of the man pictured. It is unlikely that anyone will. Continue on to slide 16 and again ask students if anyone recognizes the man with the addition of a second picture of him, this one in a baseball uniform. Let students know that the man pictured is Jackie Robinson and ask students to share what they already know about him. Explain that Jackie Robinson provides an excellent embodiment of the spirit of change that was present during and right after the years of World War II. Share the following information with students regarding Jackie Robinson:

- While many of you may have heard of Jackie Robinson based on his baseball career, “from 1942 to 1944, Robinson served as a second lieutenant in the United States Army. He never saw combat, however; Robinson was arrested and court–martialed during boot camp after he refused to move to the back of a segregated bus during training. He was later acquitted of the charges and received an honorable discharge. His courage and moral objection to segregation were precursors to the impact Robinson would have in major league baseball.

After his discharge from the Army in 1944, Robinson played baseball professionally. At the time, the
sport was segregated, and African–Americans and whites played in separate leagues. Robinson began playing in the Negro Leagues, but he was soon chosen by Branch Rickey, a vice president with the Brooklyn Dodgers, to help integrate major league baseball. He joined the all–white Montreal Royals, a farm team for the Brooklyn Dodgers, in 1945. He moved to Florida in 1946 to begin spring training with the Royals, and played his first game on March 17 of that same year.

Rickey knew there would be difficult times ahead for the young athlete, and made Robinson promise not to fight back when confronted with racism. From the beginning of his career with the Dodgers, Robinson's will was tested. Even some of his new teammates objected to having an African–American on their team. People in the crowds sometimes jeered at Robinson, and he and his family received threats...” (Source: http://www.jackierobinson.org/timeline/#/timeline/jackie-timeline)

- Teachers may want to access additional information to share with students about Robinson’s incredible life as a desegregationist and civil rights leader; read more at http://www.jackierobinson.org/timeline/#/timeline/jackie-timeline

### The Journey of Reconciliation

20. Let students know that long before the perhaps more familiar civil rights events of the 60s, many of which they just noted, the movement had already been set in motion back in the 1940s. The period immediately following World War II led to numerous challenges to Jim Crow throughout the South. Returning black veterans, who had fought to “make the world safe for democracy” overseas, were particularly unwilling to accept continued second class citizenship back at home. Also, the federal government became increasingly uncomfortable with overt segregation in the South due to criticism from new African and Asian nations emerging from colonialism. (Source: http://archives.forusa.org/blogs/ruby-sinreich/chapel-hill-remembers) Tell students that they are going to be reading about one of the most important events of the 1940s regarding civil rights – the Journey of Reconciliation, also known as “The First Freedom Ride.”

21. Hand out the attached reading “The Journey of Reconciliation” and ask students if any of them have heard of this journey or know anything about it already. Give students some background information, such as:

- “The organization that pioneered non-violence in the US was the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), which gave birth to the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942. When the US Supreme Court held that state segregation laws did not apply to interstate bus travel in 1946, it was CORE that decided to test enforcement of the decision and popularize the methods of non-violence. In April 1947, CORE sent interracial teams of bus riders through the Upper South. This was the origin of the ‘First Freedom Ride.’” (Source: http://archives.forusa.org/blogs/ruby-sinreich/chapel-hill-remembers)

22. Instruct students to read the handout and answer the corresponding discussion questions, individually or in partners.

23. Once students have completed the reading and questions, discuss their thoughts and responses as a class. Throughout the discussion, teachers should pose additional questions and share other relevant information:

- What was the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)?
  - The organization that pioneered non-violence in the US was the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), which gave birth to the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942. CORE was founded in Chicago in 1941 by James L. Farmer, Jr., George Houser, James R. Robinson, and Bernice Fisher. Bayard Rustin, while not a father of the organization, was, Farmer and Houser later said, "an uncle to CORE" and supported it greatly. Just like FOR, CORE sought to apply the principles of nonviolence as a tactic against segregation. The group's inspiration was Krishnalal Shridharani's book War Without Violence (1939, Harcourt Brace), which outlined Gandhi's step-by-step procedures for organizing people and mounting a nonviolent campaign. (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress_of_Racial_Equality)
• What areas of life were segregated during this time (the 1940s) based on the reading, as well as what you learned when examining Jim Crow laws? Of all of these segregated aspects of life, which do you think would have been most difficult to deal with and why?
  o Share with students that while segregation in any venue would have been difficult, author Derek Charles Catsam in Freedom’s Main Line contended that there was no greater injustice than that in public transportation: “Even though segregated education would prove to be the central focus for driving out Jim Crow, black schools and universities were often sources of racial pride. Jim Crow at lunch counters often resulted in the emergence of black business establishments. White insurers and bankers refused to provide policies or loans, so black insurance companies and banks stepped into the breach. Black churches were, then as now, a source of pride, spirituality, and organization. Jim Crow was always onerous, to be sure; all the same, the black community was not a mere collection of supplicants kowtowing to white authority. But there were always the buses to remind them of their station. And the streetcars. And the trains. For it was one thing to develop an insurance agency or a real estate company or a sandwich shop or even a university that could produce a professional class. It was another thing to challenge Jim Crow transportation. At the local and municipal levels, local whites controlled the highways and byways, the contracts and laws governing public transportation. Further, all-black interstate railroads or bus companies were a practical impossibility for a range of reasons.”
• Why was the Morgan v. Virginia case important?
  o Students might be interested to know that Morgan first represented herself and later in the process, was represented by NAACP.
  o One of the interesting things regarding the Morgan case is that the lawyers used an 1877 Supreme Court decision which ruled that it was illegal for a state to forbid segregation to convince the judge that it was likewise illegal for a state to require it. The United States Supreme Court agreed: “As no state law can reach beyond its own border nor bar transportation of passengers across its boundaries, diverse seating requirements for the races in interstate journeys result. As there is no federal act dealing with the separation of races in interstate transportation, we must decide the validity of this Virginia statute on the challenge that it interferes with commerce, as a matter of balance between the exercise of the local police power and the need for national uniformity in the regulations for interstate travel. It seems clear to us that seating arrangements for the different races in interstate motor travel require a single, uniform rule to promote and protect national travel. Consequently, we hold the Virginia statute in controversy invalid.”
• Even though America’s highest court (the US Supreme Court) had ruled that segregation on interstate buses was unconstitutional, why did nothing change at the time?
  o There was a disconnect between the branches of government, as well as a lack of communication. While it was not illegal to require segregation on interstate buses, law enforcement was not aware and citizens continued to follow the same seating arrangements they always had on buses and trains. An even greater disconnect was evident when CORE members were arrested for trying to integrate seating areas on interstate buses – they weren’t breaking any laws, according to the highest Court in the US!
• What were the goals of the Journey of Reconciliation?
  o CORE hoped to test whether the Supreme Court decision would be upheld or disregarded, as well as to educate people regarding the decision. Also, CORE viewed the Journey as a study in human behavior. They wanted to find out how people would react and whether “an unpopular court decision could be enforced using the spirit of aggressive goodwill or, more accurately, nonviolent direct action.”
• Define what is meant by non-violent direct action. Why do you think the Journey of Reconciliation employed non-violent direct action to achieve their goals?
• When employing non-violent direct action, the riders for the Journey of Reconciliation were trained that they could not even fight back when attacked by others. What would be difficult about this? How
would you describe the character of the riders given that they were able to maintain their commitment to peaceful protest?

- What were the 16 men risking by participating in the Journey of Reconciliation? What does it say about their characters that they were willing to take such a risk? Do you think you would have done the same? Why or why not?

- In Chapel Hill, why were the four riders arrested? What do you think of the sentence they eventually received? Why do you think three of the four men actually surrendered and served their time on the chain gang in Roxboro, NC?
  
  o Discuss with students that as an organization, FOR decided that the four men would serve their time on the prison road gang since they believed that by having the men carry out the ridiculous sentence, it would create publicity and also that they would be “calling North Carolina’s bluff.” “It is highly doubtful,” a CORE official wrote to Andrew Johnson, one of the riders arrested, that North Carolina “could afford the national publicity of the four of you returning, one from India, another from the Mid West, one from their own state, and another from New York to serve time because they believed that Negroes should have the same rights in interstate traveling as whites.” CORE officials also hoped that the governor would provide a pardon. Regardless, CORE felt that it was “essential to our case that the four be ready to serve their time” and ultimately, prove a point. “On March 20, Bayard Rustin and Igal Roodenko held a press conference at New York’s Penn Station to announce that they were heading south to begin their sentence the next day. The FOR press release stated that Felmet and Johnson would also surrender to authorities, although Johnson...[decided] that he would not do so.” Andrew Johnson was trying to finish his college degree, and his participation in the Journey of Reconciliation has already left him behind in his studies. He felt he had already done his part and did not plan to spend a month on a chain gang only to fall farther behind in school. The three men ended up serving 22 days on a Roxboro, NC chain gang! “CORE leadership made arrangements for Rustin and the others to make speeches at a New York CORE meeting upon their release in late April. CORE and the Fellowship realized the importance of publicizing their actions and making visible the victims of the Jim Crow system. If the three men were going to serve their time, civil rights leaders knew the symbolic power of channeling their victimization into a public relations bonanza. The experience on the road crew was unpleasant, arduous, and degrading for all three men. Rustin left the most complete record of the three, as he wrote an article detailing his experiences for the New York Post that also appeared in the Baltimore Afro-American, “Twenty-Two Days on a Chain Gang,” which FOR later published as a pamphlet.”(Source: Catsam, Derek Charles. Freedom’s Main Line : The Journey of Reconciliation and the Freedom Rides. Lexington, KY, USA: University Press of Kentucky, 2008)

- Even though nothing seemed to change immediately after the Journey of Reconciliation, why was it important? What did it accomplish?
  
  o “In the immediate aftermath of the Journey, it was unclear just what the trip had accomplished. Jim Crow still prevailed throughout the South in most facets of daily life, and transportation, even on interstate conveyances, was no different. Blacks across the region did not follow the lead of the Journey of Reconciliation and sit wherever they chose, even in the Upper South or on the bus routes that the Fellowship had putatively integrated. In his biography of Bayard Rustin, Jervis Anderson asserts that the Journey “achieved no significant breakthroughs” and that instead “the Journey’s achievement was mostly psychological or symbolic, signifying the possibility of future nonviolent mass action in the South.” While this is undoubtedly true, Anderson underestimates the importance of the Journey, which became a direct model for more overt and well-publicized actions in the future. Rustin, Houser, Peck, and many of the others would provide inspiration, advice, support, and leadership in later efforts. Accepting an award in New York on April 11, 1948, Rustin said that he and his comrades had undertaken the Journey “not only to devise techniques for eliminating Jim Crow in travel but also as a training ground for similar peaceful projects for employment and in the armed services.” 81 The Journey stands as evidence of an already active Civil Rights Movement, more than merely a precursor of what would happen in the wake of
Brown. The Journey in fact represents a small part of a general post– World War II upsurge in popular protest and direct action. The culmination of this upsurge would be the events of the 1960s, but not until the courts had addressed the status of segregation laws on the highways, byways, and railroads of the United States.” (Source: Catsam, Derek Charles. Freedom's Main Line: The Journey of Reconciliation and the Freedom Rides. Lexington, KY, USA: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.)

Create a Historical Marker for Chapel Hill

24. After discussing the reading and sharing additional information regarding the Journey of Reconciliation, ask students to discuss their feelings regarding the significance and importance of the Journey, then and now:
   • Why was the Journey of Reconciliation important? Why is it important to each of us today? Why should we devote time to study the events and the people involved, even though this took place over 60 years ago?
   • What are some ways that we can ensure people are educated about these events? How can we make sure the Journey of Reconciliation and the people involved are not forgotten? What are the various ways our communities memorialize events and people we deem important?

25. Tell students that in 2008, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP petitioned the Chapel Hill Town Council to support their effort to have a historical marker placed at the location of the former bus station in Chapel Hill that was visited by Bayard Rustin and others during the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation. Pass out the attached “Resolution of Support for State Historical Marker” and read it out loud as a class. Discuss:
   • What is the purpose of this resolution?
   • Why do you think the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP, the Chapel Hill Town Council, and other community members felt a marker was important?

   ➢ **Teacher note:** For more information on the marker and the process of getting the marker approved, see: https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent/uuid:2226074e-8cba-4d6a-a73d-586bf99a6c4a

26. Tell students that you want them to imagine that they have been hired to design the historical monument/marker that honors the Journey of Reconciliation and educates the public about this important period of history. (Let students know that in actuality, the state of North Carolina also approved the request, and a marker was installed in 2008. Tell students you’ll show them the actual marker after they’ve designed their own.) Hand out the attached assignment sheet and go over the details with students. Let them know that they can create anything within the realm of a monument or a marker (i.e. a statue, a mural, a plaque, etc.) Let them know that their final monument/marker will be installed at the site of the Chapel Hill bus station where several of the Journey’s riders were arrested and attacked. (The station used to be located at North Columbia and Rosemary Streets in downtown Chapel Hill.) The assignment sheet doesn’t offer any parameters in terms of the size of the sketch – teachers should determine whether they want this done on regular art paper, or whether they want students to work on a larger scale (i.e. poster paper or poster board.) If time permits, allow students to begin brainstorming in class.

   ➢ **Teacher Note:** Before students return to class, teachers may want to plot each of the Journey of Reconciliation’s stops on the map of the Jim Crow south students created. This will further layer the Jim Crow laws and culture that were at play during the Journey of Reconciliation. (A map of their stops is attached.) Further, teachers who choose to use the Consortium’s lesson plan, “The 1961 Freedom Rides” may want to then add in the stops the later riders made and compare the two journeys.

**Day 3**

“Crazy for this Democracy”
27. Partner students up and pass out the attached worksheet which includes an excerpt from Zora Neale Hurston’s “Crazy for this Democracy” and related discussion questions. Instruct students to take approximately 15 minutes to read the essay excerpt then discuss the questions that follow. Once students have completed their partner work, have them report their thoughts back to the entire class and further discuss:

- In what ways is Hurston being an active participant in democracy?
- Why is such dissent, critique and/or commentary, even when pointing out the flaws in democracy, crucial to having an effective democracy?
- How does this passage relate to the Journey of Reconciliation?
- This was written two years before the Journey took place. How do you imagine Hurston would have felt when the Journey occurred in 1947? What would she have had to say about it?

28. Discuss with students how Hurston was rightfully highlighting the contradiction Americans supposed commitment to democracy when black Americans were so restricted. In doing so, Hurston was engaging in the democratic process by speaking out against injustice.

Sharing Journey of Reconciliation Monuments/Markers

29. Next, allow students to share their monuments/markers. Have students post their work around the room and allow the class to spend approximately 10+ minutes of class doing a “gallery walk,” during which they rotate among all of the monument/mural sketches and observe them. Teachers may want to number each sketch and instruct students to carry paper and pencil with them, writing down “What they liked and learned” for each (or an assigned number) of sketches. This can be followed with a class debrief in which students offer feedback to one another. Optionally, the class could also vote on which sketch they feel best honors the Journey of Reconciliation, and/or which does the best job educating the public.

30. Once students have shared and discussed their own ideas for the historical marker/monument, show the class the actual marker that was created using slide 17. Discuss:

- Have you noticed these types of markers when you’ve traveled around North Carolina? Where?
- Why do you think our state places these markers?
- Is this marker enough to memorialize the Journey of Reconciliation? If not, what else would you like to see?

> More information can be found about the NC Highway Historical Marker Program at http://www.ncmarkers.com/Home.aspx

> 31. Remind students that the Journey of Reconciliation and the Riders’ dangerous passage through the Jim Crow South “represented only one part of an extended journey for justice that stretched back to the dawn of American history and beyond. But once that passage was completed, there was renewed hope that the nation would eventually find its way to a true and inclusive democracy. For the brave activists who led the way, and for those of us who can only marvel at their courage and determination, this link to a brighter future was a great victory. Yet, as we shall see, it came with the sobering reminder that, in the words of Frederick Douglas, ‘power concedes nothing without demand.’”

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANexperience/fREEDOMriders/assets/pdf/DEmocracy-in-action-tEACHERS-Guide.pdf (source link not available anymore, however, the quote can be found here using google books)

32. As a culminating discussion or written response activity, project the quote by Judge Learned Hand on slide 18 and ask students to comment on:

- What message is Judge Learned Hand trying to convey?
- How does this message connect to what we have learned in studying the Journey of Reconciliation?
- Do you agree with this message and why?
• How might this message apply to our society today?
Democracy Quotes for Discussion

“Democracy is never finished. When we believe that it is, we have, in fact, killed it.” ~Patricia Hill Collins

Discuss this quote and be prepared to report to the class regarding:

• What message is the quote trying to convey?
• How does the view represented in the quote differ from how we typically think about democracy?
• What would you add to our class brainstorm of democracy after considering this quote?

“Democracy is a process, not a static condition. It is becoming rather than being. It can easily be lost, but never is fully won. Its essence is eternal struggle.”
~ William H. Hastie

Discuss this quote and be prepared to report to the class regarding:

• What message is the quote trying to convey?
• How does the view represented in the quote differ from how we typically think about democracy?
• What would you add to our class brainstorm of democracy after considering this quote?

“Our democracy is not a product but a continual process. It is preserved not by monuments but deeds. Sometimes it needs refining; sometimes it needs amending; sometimes it needs defending. Always, it needs improving.”
~Lee H. Hamilton

Discuss this quote and be prepared to report to the class regarding:

• What message is the quote trying to convey?
• How does the view represented in the quote differ from how we typically think about democracy?
• What would you add to our class brainstorm of democracy after considering this quote?
Jim Crow Law Review
http://jimcrowhistory.org/geography/geography.htm

Name: _______________________________________

Your assigned state: _______________________________________________________

• What types of things are made illegal under the Jim Crow laws in this state?

• How do you think these laws affected the day-to-day life of people living in this state?

• Which law do you think is most unfair from this state? Why?

• How would you personally be affected by these laws if they were legal today?

• What additional questions do you have regarding the Jim Crow era?
Recently I was planning to go from Louisville to Nashville by bus. I bought my ticket, boarded the bus, and, instead of going to the back, sat down in the second seat. The driver saw me, got up, and came toward me.

"Hey, you. You’re supposed to sit in the back seat."

"Why?"

"Because that's the law. Niggers ride in back."

I said, "My friend, I believe that is an unjust law. If I were to sit in back I would be condoning injustice."

Angry, but not knowing what to do, he got out and went into the station. He soon came out again, got into his seat, and started off.

This routine was gone through at each stop, but each time nothing came of it. Finally the driver, in desperation, must have phoned ahead, for about thirteen miles north of Nashville I heard sirens approaching. The bus came to an abrupt stop, and a police car and two motorcycles drew up beside us with a flourish. Four policemen got into the bus, consulted shortly with the driver, and came to my seat.

"Get up, you ———— nigger!"

"Why?" I asked.

"Get up, you black———!"

"I believe that I have a right to sit here," I said quietly. "If I sit in the back of the bus I am depriving that child—" I pointed to a little white child of five or six—"of the knowledge that there is injustice here, which I believe it is his right to know. It is my sincere conviction that the power of love in the world is the greatest power existing. If you have a greater power, my friend, you may move me."

How much they understood of what I was trying to tell them I do not know. By this time they were impatient and angry. As I would not move, they began to beat me about the head and shoulders, and I shortly found myself knocked to the floor. Then they dragged me out of the bus and continued to kick and beat me.

Knowing that if I tried to get up or protect myself in the first heat of their anger they would construe it as an attempt to resist and beat me down again, I forced myself to be still and wait for their kicks, one after another. Then I stood up, spreading out my arms parallel to the ground, and said, "There is no need to beat me. I am not resisting you."

At this, three white men, obviously Southerners by their speech, got out of the bus and remonstrated with the police. Indeed, as one of the policemen raised his club to strike me, one of them, a little fellow, caught hold of it and said, "Don't you do that!" A second policeman raised his club to strike the little man, and I stepped between them, facing the man, and said, "Thank you, but there is no need to do that. I do not wish to fight. I am protected well."

An elderly gentleman, well dressed and also a Southerner, asked the police where they were taking me.

They said, "Nashville."
"Don't worry, son," he said to me. "I'll be there to see that you get justice."

I was put into the back seat of the police car, between two policemen. Two others sat in front. During the thirteen-mile ride to town they called me every conceivable name and said anything they could think of to incite me to violence. I found that I was shaking with nervous strain, and to give myself something to do, I took out a piece of paper and a pencil, and began to write from memory a chapter from one of Paul's letters.

When I had written a few sentences, the man on my right said, 'What're you writing?' and snatched the paper from my hand. He read it, then crumpled it into a ball and pushed it in my face. The man on the other side gave me a kick.

A moment later I happened to catch the eye of the young policeman in the front seat. He looked away quickly, and I took renewed courage from the realization that he could not meet my eyes because he was aware of the injustice being done. I began to write again, and after a moment I leaned forward and touched him on the shoulder. "My friend," I said, "how do you spell 'difference'"

He spelled it for me—incorrectly—and I wrote it correctly and went on.

When we reached Nashville, a number of policemen were lined up on both sides of the hallway down which I had to pass on my way to the captain's office. They tossed me from one to another like a volleyball. By the time I reached the office, the lining of my best coat was torn, and I was considerably rumpled. I straightened myself as best I could and went in. They had my bag, and went through it and my papers, finding much of interest, especially in the Christian Century and Fellowship.

Finally the captain said, "Come here, nigger." .

I walked directly to him. 'What can I do for you?' I asked.

"Nigger," he said menacingly, "you're supposed to be scared when you come in here!"

"I am fortified by truth, justice, and Christ," I said. "There's no need for me to fear."

He was flabbergasted and, for a time, completely at a loss for words. Finally he said to another officer, "I believe the nigger's crazy!"

They sent me into another room and went into consultation. The wait was long, but after an hour and a half they came for me and I was taken for another ride, across town. At the courthouse, I was taken down the hall to the office of the assistant district attorney, Mr. Ben West. As I got to the door I heard a voice, "Say, you colored fellow, hey! " I looked around and saw the elderly gentleman who had been on the bus.

"I'm here to see that you get justice," he said.

The assistant district attorney questioned me about my life, the Christian Century, pacifism, and the war for half an hour. Then he asked the police to tell their side of what had happened. They did, stretching the truth a good deal in spots and including several lies for seasoning. Mr. West then asked me to tell my side.

"Gladly," I said, "and I want you," turning to the young policeman who had sat in the front seat, "to follow what I say and stop me if I deviate from the truth in the least."
Holding his eyes with mine, I told the story exactly as it had happened, stopping often to say, "Is that right?" or "Isn't that what happened?" to the young policeman. During the whole time he never once interrupted me, and when I was through I said, "Did I tell the truth just as it happened?" and he said, "Well...."

Then Mr. West dismissed me, and I was sent to wait alone in a dark room. After an hour, Mr. West came in and said, very kindly, "You may go, Mister Rustin."

I left the courthouse, believing all the more strongly in the nonviolent approach. I am certain that I was addressed as "Mister" (as no Negro is ever addressed in the South), that I was assisted by those three men, and that the elderly gentleman interested himself in my predicament because I had, without fear, faced the four policemen and said, "There is no need to beat me. I offer you no resistance."

Source:
Reprinted in Bayard Rustin, Time on Two Crosses: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin, edited by Devon W. Carbado and Donald Weise (Cleis Press, 2003), 2-5.
http://exploreahistory.com/odocument.php?docId=1-4-183

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Answer the following questions on notebook paper:

1. How did you feel as you were reading Rustin’s account? What part of the story most affected you (surprised you, angered you, frustrated you, etc.)?

2. Where did the bus driver expect Bayard Rustin to sit and why?

3. What motivated Rustin to defy the law?

4. How did Rustin respond to the driver and to the police?

5. Why do you think the “elderly gentleman” chose to assist Rustin?

6. Why might other observers have chosen to stay out of what was taking place?

7. What does this story reveal about Rustin’s character? What does it illustrate about the philosophy of nonviolence?

8. Can you imagine responding to a beating as Rustin did, without fighting back? What do you think this would feel like? How might it affect your opponent?

9. In what ways did Rustin exhibit the characteristics of an active, engaged citizen?
I. LETTER FROM CPL. RUPERT TRIMMINGHAM TO YANK MAGAZINE (1944)

Dear Yank,

Here is a question that each Negro soldier is asking. What is the Negro soldier fighting for? On whose team are we playing? Myself and eight other soldiers were on our way from Camp Claiborne, La., to the hospital here at Fort Huachuca. We had to lay over until the next day for our train. On the next day we could not purchase a cup of coffee at any of the lunchrooms around there. As you know, Old Man Jim Crow rules. The only place where we could be served was at the lunchroom at the railroad station but, of course we had to go into the kitchen. But that’s not all; 11:30 a.m. about a two dozen German prisoners of war, with two American guards, came into the station. They entered the lunchroom, sat at the tables, had their meals served, talked, smoked, in fact had quite a swell time. I stood on the outside looking on, and I could not help but ask myself these questions: Are these men sworn enemies of this country? Are they not taught to hate and destroy all democratic governments? Are we not American soldiers, sworn to fight for and die if need be for this country? Then why are they treated better than we are? Why are we pushed around like cattle? If we are fighting for the same thing, if we are to die for our country, then why does the Government allow such things to go on? Some of the boys are saying that you will not print this letter. I’m saying that you will.

-Cpl. Rupert Trimingham

Fort Huachuca, Ariz.
Dear Yank,

Allow me to thank you for publishing my letter. Although there was some doubt about its being published, yet somehow I felt that Yank was too great a paper not to.... Each day brings three, four or five letters to me in answer to my letter. I just returned from furlough and found 25 letters awaiting me. To date I’ve received 287 letters, and, strange as it may seem, 183 are from white men and women in the armed service. Another strange feature about these letters is that most of these people are from the Deep South. They are all proud of the fact that they are of the South but ashamed to learn that there are so many of their own people who by their actions and manner toward the Negro are playing Hitler’s game. Nevertheless, it gives me new hope to realize that there are doubtless thousands of whites who are willing to fight this Frankenstein that so many white people are keeping alive. All that the Negro is asking for is to be given half a chance and he will soon demonstrate his worth to his country. Should these white people who realize that the Negro is a man who is loyal—one who would gladly give his life for this our wonderful country—would stand up, join with us and help us to prove to their white friends that we are worthy, I’m sure that we would bury race hate and unfair treatment. Thanks again.

-Cpl. Rupert Trimmingham
Fort Huachuca, Ariz.
The Journey of Reconciliation

Segregation in transportation
There was perhaps no public indignity for blacks as great as Jim Crow segregation. Segregation in transportation began as early as 1888, when the first “Jim Crow train car” for blacks made its way into law in Mississippi. Soon after, the rest of the South and some border states followed suit. Both intrastate (within a state) and interstate (state-to-state) buses and trains were segregated, as were the facilities serving travelers, such as terminals, waiting rooms, and restaurants. Thus, if you were black and worked far from home, or lived far away from family, your options were restricted. You rode the bus, moving to the back, standing when told, and waiting for the next bus when necessary. You took your meals in a separate dining car or terminal eating area if one was provided, or waited to eat until you got to your destination if there were no “colored only” facilities provided. And all the while, you were expected to bite your tongue.

Over the years many individuals tested the limits and challenged Jim Crow on various modes of transportation, intrastate and interstate. Sometimes organized protests would occur. But the status quo prevailed - until, in the aftermath of World War II, the stage was set for change.

Morgan v. Virginia – 1946
Irene Morgan, a twenty-seven-year-old defense plant worker, was still feeling weak when she stepped onto a Greyhound bus in Gloucester County, Virginia bound for Baltimore on July 16, 1944. Recovering from a recent miscarriage and anxious to see her husband who was working in Baltimore, Morgan boarded the crowded bus in the sweltering Virginia heat. She stood for several miles, sat on the lap of a black female passenger for a handful more, and finally took a seat three rows from the back of the bus (but in front of white passengers) in Saluda, Virginia. The bus driver insisted she get up, as the local and state Jim Crow laws mandated segregated seating. After she refused, the driver summoned the police to arrest her. Morgan fought back, kicking, shouting, and tearing up the arrest warrant. She was forcibly removed, tried, convicted, and fined ten dollars.

Irene Morgan appealed her case, but the appellate court of Virginia upheld the conviction. She and her lawyers then appealed her conviction on constitutional grounds all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1946, the justices agreed to hear the case. Irene Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia was argued by Thurgood Marshall, the chief counsel of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and later himself an Associate Supreme Court Justice. William H. Hastie was co-counsel.

The case resulted in a landmark ruling in 1946, which struck down state laws requiring segregation in situations involving interstate transportation. Marshall used an innovative strategy to argue the case. Instead of relying upon the Equal Protection clause of the 14th Amendment, Marshall argued successfully that segregation on interstate travel violated the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. (The court did not rule that segregated transportation within the state (intrastate) was unconstitutional, however.)

While the ruling represented a defeat for segregation in written law, it unfortunately did not have an immediate impact. The Supreme Court’s decision was not enforced, so nothing changed. Public transportation systems continued to segregate their passengers throughout the South.

The Journey of Reconciliation
In early 1947, a group of people decided to draw attention to the fact that segregation on interstate buses was still being enforced, even though the Supreme Court had declared it unconstitutional in the Morgan case. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which had formed a few years prior in 1942, announced plans to send
eight white and eight black men into the South to ride on interstate buses together. Organized by CORE members George Houser and Bayard Rustin, the Journey of Reconciliation was to be a two week pilgrimage through Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky. The activists would divide themselves between Greyhound and Trailways bus lines and ride in interracial pairs sitting in the white-area of the bus. Other activists disguised as disinterested observers would sit in the racial sections that applied to them. The Journey would show whether an unpopular court decision could be enforced using *nonviolent direct action* - regardless of what occurred, the activists were trained to remain peaceful, even if they were attacked. Organizers also included an educational component in their plans. At each stop along the Journey, activists would give talks in churches to members of black, and occasionally white, communities. They would explain what they were doing and why, teaching listeners about the Morgan case and recounting their experiences.

Although Walter White of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) was against this kind of direct action, he volunteered the service of its southern attorneys during the campaign. Thurgood Marshall, head of the NAACP’s legal department, was strongly against the Journey of Reconciliation and warned that a "disobedience movement on the part of Negroes and their white allies, if employed in the South, would result in wholesale slaughter with no good achieved."


The Journey of Reconciliation began on April 9, 1947 as the men boarded two Washington, DC buses, one a Trailways and one a Greyhound. They traveled uneventfully through Virginia. However, things changed on April 11, 1947 as several riders boarded buses departing Petersburg, VA for Raleigh, NC. That morning, after sitting in a prohibited section of a Trailways bus, black rider Conrad Lynn became the first from the group to be arrested for violating local Jim Crow laws.

**North Carolina & the Journey**

While additional arrests were made later that day on a Trailways bus departing Durham for Chapel Hill, it was the following day, April 12, that violence ensued in Chapel Hill, NC. As the Pittsburgh Courier wrote in an article describing the event:

“This sleepy little Piedmont village, regarded far and wide as the citadel of democracy in the South, seat of the University of North Carolina, became a scene of sudden mob violence here late Sunday afternoon as taxicab drivers and young hoodlums assaulted an interracial group of young lecturers in the Chapel Hill bus station.”

That Sunday afternoon in Chapel Hill, CORE riders Andrew Johnson (black) and Joseph Felmet (white) had taken a seat in the front of a Trailways bus and remained there after the driver asked them to move. When they refused, calmly explaining why, the driver crossed the street to the police station and had Johnson and Felmet arrested. During this time, a number of taxi drivers began to gather to witness the arrests of the protesters. Bayard Rustin and Igla Roodenko, also stationed on the bus, then moved from their seats in the back of the bus to take their spots. They, too, were arrested and brought to the police station.

When James Peck, the white editor of the Workers Defense League News Bulletin and an avowed pacifist, left the bus to post bail for his four colleagues, one of the taxi drivers smashed him in the head with his fist,
accusing Peck of “coming down here to stir up the niggers.” Peck did not retaliate, which seemed to confuse his assailant. Peck then posted bond for his arrested colleagues.

Igal Roodenko, soon after the confrontation, recounted some of the events that had transpired inside the bus as he and Rustin moved up to take the seats vacated when Johnson and Felmet were arrested. Upon the initial arrest, the bus driver had tried to gather anyone who could back up what he had done, presumably so that he would have witnesses if the cases came to trial. But instead of overwhelming support, the driver encountered some hostility. A Northern woman said, “You don’t want my name and address: I’m a damn Yankee and I think this is an outrage.” Another young white woman was curious about the actions of the two men. She told Roodenko that she was a Southerner (from Asheville) and that she thought that Jim Crow was wrong, “but she felt we were pushing things a little too fast.” The two men used this as an opportunity to teach. Rustin asked her what the moral difference was between a premeditated action and a spontaneous one. Another girl sitting in front of them, according to Roodenko, “suddenly said— and with considerable emphasis— ‘None whatsoever.’” It seems clear that part of the plan was to help Southerners reach conclusions about the moral righteousness of the civil rights cause for themselves. Finally, the girl who had spoken up so emphatically told Roodenko, “I think you are doing a brave and wonderful thing.” She gave him her name and address so that they could contact her if they needed her support if the case went to trial.

The Chapel Hill case revealed both the best and the worst faces of white Southerners. While several on the bus were supportive, the white gang outside did not disperse after Peck disappeared into the police station to post bail. If anything, they gained in strength of numbers and intensity. One observer had been heard to say, “They’ll never get a bus out of here tonight.” The four group members were released on bail into the custody of Reverend Charles M. Jones, the minister of the Presbyterian Church located across from the UNC-Chapel Hill campus. Jones had a reputation in Chapel Hill as being “liberal minded” and “on the cutting edge of racial and social issues.” But, to some whites in the community, his willingness to host the interracial group of agitators while they stayed in Chapel Hill was a final sign of betrayal.

The mob followed the riders to Reverend Jones’s home, where the cab drivers and their associates grabbed rocks and sticks outside of Jones’s house. Then, for reasons unknown, one of the taxi drivers stood before the crowd and convinced them to disperse. A few moments later, Jones received the first of what would prove to be many threatening phone calls and letters. An anonymous caller threatened, “Get those damn niggers out of town or we’ll burn your house down. We’ll be around to see that they go.” This threat, coupled with the events that had transpired throughout the day, convinced Jones that it would be best to get the riders out of town and on to their next destination. Jones made some calls to students at the university and was able to convince a few to muster up cars to drive the group to their next intended destination. The students and a local officer accompanied the riders out of the county and toward Greensboro.

Chapel Hill marked the emotional pinnacle of the Journey of Reconciliation, but there were still ten days remaining on the trip. By the end of the Journey, the protesters had conducted over 24 “tests” and endured 12 arrests and dangerous mob violence.

About a month after the Journey had finished, the four protesters arrested in Chapel Hill had to return for a trial on May 20, 1947. Rustin and Roodenko, represented by NAACP lawyers, appeared before Chapel Hill Recorder’s Court Judge Henry Whitfield. The District Attorney, T. J. Phipps, gave an impassioned argument to Judge Whitfield that “our nigras wanted Jim Crow,” and it was the outside agitators coming in that were the cause of all the trouble. Judge Whitfield agreed and sentenced Rustin to paying court costs, on the grounds that Rustin was “A poor misled nigra from the North” and therefore less responsible than the white agitators accompanying him who should know better. Then Judge Whitfield turned his attention to Roodenko: “I presume you’re Jewish, Mr. Rodenky. Well it’s about time you Jews from New York learned you can’t come down here bringing your nigras with you to upset the customs of the South.” With that, Judge Whitfield sentenced Roodenko to 30 days on a chain gang.
Next, Judge Whitfield considered the cases of the other black/white pair of riders who had been arrested, Johnson and Felmet. The Judge made his view of the “customs of the South” even clearer. He sentenced Johnson (black) to a $50 fine. Felmet, who the Judge felt had betrayed his race, was sentenced to 6 months on a chain gang. The District Attorney, somewhat embarrassed by the Judge’s sentence, had to point out that one month was the maximum allowed by the law.

The riders appealed to the Superior Court in Hillsborough in March 1948, but the case was rejected by the Court’s Judge Morris, who sentenced all four riders to one month on the chain gang. The NAACP lawyers appealed the case to the N.C. Supreme Court. However, in January 1949 the NC Supreme Court also upheld the lower courts’ decisions and the chain gang sentence stood. Because of money problems, lost evidence (the interstate ticket could not be found), NAACP legal priorities, and differences about how to best build the Movement, the N.C. Supreme Court decision was not appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Bayard Rustin, James Felmut, and Igal Roodenko surrendered at the Hillsborough Court House on March 21, 1949 and were transported directly to the Roxboro Chain Gang. With good behavior, they served 22 days.

**What did the Journey accomplish?**

In the immediate aftermath of the Journey, it was unclear what the trip had accomplished. Jim Crow still prevailed throughout the South and segregation did not change. Blacks across the South did not follow the lead of the Journey of Reconciliation and sit wherever they chose on buses. However, the Journey of Reconciliation was crucial in that it set the stage and provided a model for more overt and well-publicized actions in the future. Activists such as Rustin, Houser, Peck, and others would provide inspiration, advice, support, and leadership in later efforts.

The Journey of Reconciliation achieved a great deal of publicity and was the start of a long campaign of direct action by CORE. In 1948, the Council Against Intolerance in America gave George Houser and Bayard Rustin the “Thomas Jefferson Award for the Advancement of Democracy” for their attempts to bring an end to segregation in interstate travel. Accepting the award, Rustin said that he and his comrades had undertaken the Journey “not only to devise techniques for eliminating Jim Crow in travel but also as a training ground for similar peaceful projects for employment and in the armed services.”

Bayard Rustin later wrote about his experience on the chain gang in North Carolina in “22 Days on a Chain Gang,” which was serialized in the New York Post and the Baltimore Afro-American newspapers. His writing led to a legislative investigation of the treatment of prisoners in N.C. Prison Camps.

Overall, the Journey represents a small part of a general post– World War II upsurge in popular protest and direct action. These events would directly inspire Ms. Rosa Parks in 1955, and the Freedom Riders of 1960-61. As George Houser later wrote: “We in the non-violent movement of the 1940s certainly thought that we were initiating something of importance in American life. Of course, we weren't able to put it in perspective then. But we were filled with vim and vigor, and we hoped that a mass movement could develop, even if we did not think that we were going to produce it. In retrospect, I would say we were precursors. The things we did in the 1940s were the same things that ushered the civil rights revolution.”

*The passages comprising this reading were taken directly from the following sources:*
http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAjor.htm (source link not working)
Discussion Questions - The Journey of Reconciliation

1. Why was the Morgan v. Virginia case important?

2. Even though America’s highest court (the US Supreme Court) had ruled that segregation on interstate buses was unconstitutional, why did nothing change at the time?

3. What were the goals of the Journey of Reconciliation?

4. Define what is meant by non-violent direct action. Why do you think the Journey of Reconciliation employed non-violent direct action to achieve their goals?

5. When employing non-violent direct action, the riders for the Journey of Reconciliation were trained that they could not even fight back when attacked by others. What would be difficult about this? How would you describe the character of the riders given that they were able to maintain their commitment to peaceful protest?

6. What were the 16 men risking by participating in the Journey of Reconciliation? What does it say about their characters that they were willing to take such a risk? Do you think you would have done the same? Why or why not?

7. In Chapel Hill, why were four riders arrested? What do you think of the sentence they eventually received? Why do you think three of the four men actually surrendered and served their time on the chain gang in Roxboro, NC?

8. Even though nothing seemed to change immediately after the Journey of Reconciliation, why was it important? What did it accomplish?
RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR A STATE HISTORICAL MARKER IN CHAPEL HILL
HONORING THE 1947 JOURNEY OF RECONCILIATION, THE “FIRST FREEDOM RIDE”

WHEREAS, The Chapel Hill Town Council enthusiastically supports the application of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro NAACP and the Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist for a state historical marker honoring the Journey of Reconciliation, the “First Freedom Ride.” This First Freedom Ride was one of the most important civil rights protests in North Carolina prior to 1960; and

WHEREAS, When the Freedom Riders tried to leave Chapel Hill on a Trailways bus on April 13, they were beaten by white cab drivers, arrested, their lives threatened, and they were forced to flee in the night to Greensboro. Black and white residents of Chapel Hill, particularly UNC students and Rev. Charles Jones, a Presbyterian minister long active in civil rights and a founder of the interracial Community Church of Chapel Hill in 1953, came to the aid of the Freedom Riders. Chapel Hill was the only stop on the Journey of Reconciliation where the Freedom Riders received such significant white support. This demonstration of white anti-racism was a proud moment for racial justice in Chapel Hill and a sign of things to come; and

WHEREAS, The publicity resulting from the beatings and arrests encountered by the Freedom Riders in Chapel Hill elevated the Journey of Reconciliation and the little known Gandhian tactic of non-violence to state and national media prominence and public debate. The First Freedom Ride encouraged justice-loving African Americans and white allies, particularly in Chapel Hill, to increase their efforts to challenge segregation. In this way, the events in Chapel Hill and the Journey of Reconciliation as a whole, helped pave the way for the civil rights movement of the 1960s that ended Jim Crow segregation; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Chapel Hill is dedicated to achieving civil rights, justice, and racial reconciliation. An important part of that commitment involves preserving local black history. Demonstrating the Town’s commitment to racial justice through historical markers and monuments is an essential part of reaching these goals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that we therefore urge the North Carolina Historical Marker Advisory Committee to recommend acceptance of the Freedom Rider historical marker at its next meeting.
ASSIGNMENT:

A Historical Monument or Marker
for the Journey of Reconciliation – Chapel Hill, NC

You have been hired to design a historical monument/marker that honors the Journey of Reconciliation and educates the public about this important period of history. The monument/marker will be located at the site of the Chapel Hill bus station where several of the Journey’s riders were arrested and attacked. Assume that people who visit your monument/see the marker do not know anything about the Journey of Reconciliation.

1. Brainstorm ideas for your marker or monument and consider:
   • What is most important for people to know about the Journey of Reconciliation? Why are you honoring this event and the people involved?
   • How will you design a monument or marker to educate the public on the Journey, as well as the spirit of the activists who participated?
   • How will your monument/marker encompass and illustrate some of the themes (freedom, justice, peaceful resistance & non-violent direct action, courage, self-determination, perseverance, etc.) of the Journey?

2. You may use any creative medium you choose to design your monument. The monument can be literal or abstract, simple or complex. Examples may include (but are NOT limited to):
   • art work
   • mural(s)
   • statues
   • plaques, written descriptions, quotes from residents, or other text displayed in some way
   • structures or buildings
   • symbolic or abstract shapes
   • inclusion of music or voice over’s (i.e. you push a button and narration plays)
   • performance art that takes place live at the monument on a particular schedule,
   • a television screen that plays a particular performance clip or narration
   • PICTURE YOUR OWN CREATIVE IDEAS HERE!

3. Once you have thought through your idea, you will create a detailed sketch of your monument/marker that shows what it will look like when finished and installed in its final location. Your sketch can contain labels, in which you point to certain aspects of the drawing and use text to describe additional details that may not be clear in the visual.

4. You must also turn in a paragraph in which you provide an overview of your monument/marker, describe what it represents, as well as explain why it is important to memorialize the Journey of Reconciliation. You will share your work on the due date.

DUE DATE: ________________________________
Excerpt from “Crazy for this Democracy”  
By Zora Neale Hurston, 1945

They tell me this democracy form of government is a wonderful thing. It has freedom, equality, justice, in short, everything! Since 1937 nobody has talked about anything else...The radio, the newspapers, and the columnists inside the newspapers, have said how lovely it was. And this talk and praise-giving has got me in the notion to try some of the stuff. All I want to do is to get hold of a sample of the thing, and I declare, I sure will try it. I don’t know for myself, but I have been told that it is really wonderful.

...I accept this idea of Democracy. I am all for trying it out. It must be a good thing if everybody praises it like that. If our government has been willing to go to war and to sacrifice billions of dollars and millions of men for the idea, I think that I ought to give the thing a trial.

The only thing that keeps me from pitching headlong into the thing is the presence of numerous Jim Crow laws on the statute books of the nation. I am crazy about the idea of this Democracy. I want to see how it feels. Therefore, I am all for the repeal of every Jim Crow law in the nation here and now. Not in another generation or so. The Hurstons have already been waiting eighty years for that. I want it here and now.

Source: Negro Digest, 1945

Discuss the following questions with your partner then summarize your answers on notebook paper:

1. What strikes you most about this excerpt, or, what do you find most interesting and why?

2. How would you describe the tone of this piece?

3. What message is Hurston trying to convey? How does her tone contribute to her intended message?

4. What contradictions are being highlighted by Hurston?

5. How do you think Hurston feels about democracy? What evidence in the passage makes you think this?

6. Based upon her message and what you know about Zora Neale Hurston, how would you characterize her and why?

7. If you were to give this passage another title, what would you call it and why?

8. Considering the time period this was written, how is Hurston “doing” democracy by writing this essay?

Map of the Journey of Reconciliation for Teacher Reference

After students learn about the Journey of Reconciliation, teachers may want to plot each of the Journey of Reconciliation’s stops on the map of the Jim Crow south students created. This will further layer the Jim Crow
laws and culture that were at play during the Journey of Reconciliation. (A map of their stops is attached.) Further, teachers who choose to use the Consortium’s lesson plan, “The 1961 Freedom Rides” may want to then add in the stops the later riders made and compare the two journeys.