

Teaching the Saga of the Black Migration with Video

GOIN' TO CHICAGO

A Facilitator's Guide

Goin' to Chicago chronicles for the first time the post-War migration of millions of African Americans from the rural south to the urban north that transformed America. This guide will help teachers integrate this vital - but often neglected - chapter of U.S. history into their classes and make visible the triumphs and tribulations of an entire generation of African Americans.

Students will learn about the migration experience, its impact on the migrants themselves, the social transformation of northern and western cities, the origins of the northern civil rights movement, and the roots of current urban decay. They will situate this experience within the larger contours of U.S. history and apply their insights to problems of contemporary urban life. Exercises include essays and discussion questions, mapping, short story writing, oral histories, demographic and census research, even a city council simulation.

The migration is family history for well over half of all African American students and this study guide will enable teachers to treat the historical background of their African American students as a valuable class resource.

CONTENTS

- I. Prior to Viewing
 - A. [Goin' to \[Your Town\]](#): Tracing the Migratory Routes of Your Class's Ancestors (mapping genealogical research)
 - B. [Introduction](#) to **Goin' to Chicago**
 - C. [Unfamiliar Terms](#)
- II. [Screening Goin' to Chicago](#)
- III. After Viewing
 - A. [Writing Interior Monologues](#)
 - B. [Topic Summaries and Questions](#) for Discussion or Short Essays
- IV. Applying Insights: Follow-up Projects
 - A. [Sharecropping Family Discussion](#): Should We Move North? (dialogue writing)
 - B. [Comparative Immigrant Experiences](#) (oral histories)
 - C. [Economic Opportunity Then and Now](#) (an essay)
 - D. [The Impact of the Migration](#) (an essay)
 - E. [Mapping Your Town's Demographic Changes](#) (census research)
 - F. [Your City Council Debates Public Housing](#) (a simulation)
- V. [Bibliography](#)
- VI. [Handouts](#) #1 - 5

I. PRIOR TO VIEWING

A. Goin' to [Your Town]: Tracing the Migratory Routes of Your Class's Ancestor's (mapping, genealogical research)

Objectives:

- * To trace the migratory paths students' ancestors took to your town.
- * Learn how to map genealogical data and analyze it for pattern.

Materials Needed:

- * Copies of Handout #1: the Genealogical Chart; copies of a large * scale map (11" x 8 1/2" minimum) of the U.S; colored pencils.

Step 1: Ask students to trace the path taken by one line of their family to your town. Begin with the descendent who migrated to town and then work backward, to the extent possible, three or four generations. Identify the hardships which pushed each ancestor to leave home (e.g. racial or religious discrimination, famine, kidnapping by slave traders, lack of jobs, a scrape with the law...) and those opportunities or advantages which might have pulled him or her to the new home (e.g. jobs, family, adventure, love...). Pass out Handout #1, the genealogical charts. (Tell students it's all right if they're unable to trace their family line back more than a few generations).

Step 2: Divide students into groups of five or six. Give each group a large-scale map of the United States and colored pencils. Ask each group to transfer the information on their charts to their map, tracking from city to city all the routes taken by their ancestors prior to reaching your city or town. Next to each path traced, indicate the ancestor (e.g. Stella's father) and the year the ancestor moved (e.g. 1971). Color code the paths by racial or ethnic background.

Hang the maps on the wall. Discuss any patterns you notice as you collate the genealogical statistics, e.g. Did people of similar racial or ethnic groups tend to follow similar routes? To what extent do students think the class's origins are representative of the town as a whole?

B. Introduction to **Goin' To Chicago**

Objective: To provide students a sense of the scale and historical importance of the events chronicled in the video they are about to see.

Have students read the paragraph below or paraphrase it yourself:

Today, when we think urban we often think black. But according to author Nicholas Lemann, as recently as 1940, 77% of African Americans still lived in the South - 49% in the rural South. Between 1910 and 1970, six and a half million black Americans moved out of the South in two great waves, five million of them after 1940. The mechanization of agriculture, especially cotton picking, along with discrimination drove African Americans off the land and out of the South. At the same time, the post-WWII economic boom created millions of jobs in northern and western manufacturing centers like New York, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Gary, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Seattle

and Chicago. By 1970, when the migration ended, black America was only half Southern and less than a quarter rural; 'urban' had become a contemporary euphemism for 'black.' The black migration was one of the largest and most rapid mass internal movements of people in history...In sheer numbers it outranks the migration of any other ethnic group - Italians or Irish or Jews or Poles - to this country. (Lemann, p. 6)

C.Unfamiliar Terms

Goin' to Chicago traces some grand themes of 20th century U.S. history and includes concepts and terms which might be new to students. Review the terms below prior to viewing **Goin' to Chicago** to get the most out of the film. The summaries in Section III can be used to pursue topics in greater detail after viewing.

Jim Crow
Disenfranchisement
Segregation
Sharecropping
Debt peonage
Mechanization
Kitchenette
Restrictive covenant
Speculator
Block-busting
Deindustrialization
Reverse migration

II. SCREENING GOIN' TO CHICAGO

Goin' to Chicago is 70 minutes long. But because it breaks into roughly three parts, consider screening it over two or three class periods. Please note that timecodes are relative to picture start and may vary on your player.

Ask students as they view the film to take note of some of the many characters who appear, the situations they faced, and the decisions they had to make since they will write about them after the screening. (See activity III A.)

ACT I

PICTURE START = 00:00

LAST SCENE = 19:30 Viethel Wills: I was expecting the Milky Way...some Las Vegas we ain't heard about.

Section explores the life of sharecropping in the segregated South and the migration North after World War II.

ACT II

FIRST SCENE = 19:30 Facsimile newsreel: Chicago, hog butcher to the world...

LAST SCENE = 55:30 Clory Bryant: No housing project should be..for people to live until they die.

Section describes how African Americans built a life for themselves in Chicago in the late '40s and '50s, the fair housing movement, and the origins of segregated public housing projects.

ACT III

FIRST SCENE = 55:30 Maxwell Street Market: A band plays Downhome Blues.

END = 71:00

Section jumps forward to the deindustrialization, job losses and urban decay of the last 20 years.

III. AFTER VIEWING

A. Writing Interior Monologues Objective:

* To allow students an opportunity to reflect upon what they just saw.

Materials Needed:

* Handout #2: Characters and Situations

After the film, as a class discussion, ask students to recall some characters from the film and the situations they faced (prompt them with examples from Handout #2; don't expect students to remember characters' names). Then ask each student to choose a character from the film who faced a crisis or difficult situation and write an interior monologue from his or her point of view. What feelings are going on in the character's head at that particular moment in the film? What difficulties and challenges await this person? Is he or she hopeful, scared, frustrated, excited, angry, determined? What should he or she do? Make certain students write in the first person.

Give students 15 minutes or so to write. Then encourage volunteers to read their monologue to the class. Note and discuss common themes which emerge: Was it worth it? Where did he or she find hope and support? What was lost and what was gained?

(Possible follow-up activity: Have students expand their monologue into a short story on the migration featuring their character. You might have students first read a selection from *Up South* (see bibliography) as a prompt.

B. Topic Summaries and Questions for Discussion or Short Essays

The interpretive summaries below elaborate upon the different chapters of the film and the themes which emerge from each. Use them to review the film with students, help place events in historical context, and pursue topics in greater detail through classroom discussion and / or writing assignments rooted in the questions at the end of each summary.

1. JIM CROW AND WHITE SUPREMACY

In the years following 1890, white Southerners deprived African Americans of the rights won during the Civil War and Reconstruction. In state after state they passed laws which denied black people the ordinary legal rights taken for granted by white American citizens, including the right to vote. Rigid segregation laws dictated where black people could live, work, go to school, worship, even be buried. The Supreme Court upheld segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. This elaborate system of segregation and oppression was called Jim Crow. Anyone who defied Jim Crow risked the sheriff - or the terror of a lynch mob. According to an NAACP study, there were 3436 lynchings between 1889 and 1922. Jim Crow laws were not dismantled until the victories of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s.

QUESTION: How did white landholders, merchants and businessman stand to benefit from Jim Crow? What about white sharecroppers and working people?

QUESTION: In 1954 in Brown vs. Board of Education, the Supreme Court finally declared segregated education a violation of the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Why would this be so?

2. SHARECROPPING AS A FORM OF PEONAGE

Jim Crow ensured that most black Southerners had few opportunities other than the fields. Sharecropping - a form of tenant farming - emerged after slavery and was a dominant economic institution in the South until after World War II. In **Goin' to Chicago**, Clory Bryant calls sharecropping a form of slavery. Indeed, sharecropping enabled the South to maintain the economic power relations of plantation cotton production after the legal form of slavery was abolished. Here's how it worked:

Debt was as central to sharecropping as cotton. Each sharecropping family rented a plot of land from the planter, or landlord, and was loaned a monthly stipend called the furnish to buy food and other necessary items (usually at the plantation commissary, or store) until the crop came in. The landlord also loaned the sharecropper seed money - often at high interest rates - for the cotton seed, tools, fuel, fertilizer and feed (banks wouldn't lend to sharecroppers). The cotton was picked by hand in October and November (schools would shut until after the harvest) and taken to the gin where the cotton was separated from its seed, weighed by the landlord, packed into bales, and sold. Around Christmas, the sharecropper would go to the plantation office for the settle. There the manager would first deduct fees and debts - including interest on the furnish and seed money - and then pay the sharecropper his share. In **Goin' to Chicago**, Dr. Martin says he and his parents worked for a whole year and cleared \$300. Dr. Martin was lucky. After all the deductions taken by the landlord (often calculated fraudulently), many sharecroppers discovered at the settle that they owed the landlord money. Falling ever deeper into debt, they were compelled to pledge the next year's crop as payment. Thus a system of debt peonage replaced slavery, ensuring a cheap supply of labor to grow cotton and other crops while condemning African Americans to grinding poverty. Some sharecroppers were white, but the great majority were black.

QUESTION: In the film, Clory Bryant called sharecropping "a form of slavery." Do you agree?

QUESTION: You would think that if it were nearly impossible to make money, sharecroppers would leave. Describe the traps which tied sharecroppers to the land. What other reasons might a sharecropper have had for staying in the South?

3. THE IMPACT OF THE MECHANIZED COTTON PICKER

The mechanical cotton picker had a profound impact on sharecropping and life in the South. Nicholas Lemman's history, *The Promised Land*, describes how on October 2, 1944 a crowd of 3,000 people gathered on Howell Hopson's plantation outside of Clarksdale, Mississippi to witness the first public demonstration of the mechanical cotton picker. In an hour a good field hand could pick 20 pounds of cotton; Hopson's mechanical picker picked 1,000 pounds. Hopson calculated that a bale of cotton (500 pounds) cost him \$39.41 to pick by hand, and \$5.26 by machine. In *Goin' to Chicago*, MaeBertha Carter says once the cotton pickers came in she was told to leave the farm. The planters' insatiable demand for cheap labor - fed first by slavery and then by sharecropping - had finally come to an end. The sharecropping system had become obsolete. (Lemann, p. 17-21)

QUESTION: Can you think of other times when the introduction of a new technology suddenly displaced massive numbers of Americans? How might the negative impact of these economic changes be softened and people helped to make a transition to a new job?

4. THE DECISION TO MOVE

The decision to move to a strange city is never an easy one. Although segregation, lack of economic opportunity, poor schools, and the daily humiliations of Jim Crow were strong incentives to leave the South, personal considerations complicated the decision. Many African Americans found a deep sense of security in their families, friends, and communities. Moving, especially to a large, unfamiliar and distant city, would mean breaking those bonds. How will you survive? Does one family member move first, get settled, and then bring the others? Will you make find new friends? Many African Americans remained in the South like Unita Blackwell in **Goin' to Chicago** who in the 1960s became a leader in the civil rights movement.

QUESTION: What would be your biggest concerns if you had to move to a strange city today?

QUESTION: How did the black migration resemble and differ from earlier European immigrations to the U.S?

5. PATTERNS OF MIGRATION

The 20 year period between 1940 and 1960 saw a dramatic shift in the black population. While the nation's 12 largest cities lost 3.5 million white people between 1950 and 1960, they gained 4.5 million non-whites (mostly African Americans). Many of the migrants from the Mississippi Delta headed north to Chicago. That's where the highways and railroads ran. They could hop on the bus or drive or hitchhike or take the train directly north. At one point 2,200 black people were arriving in Chicago every week. Between 1940 and 1960, the black population of Chicago increased almost 300%, from 278,000 to 813,000.

QUESTION: African Americans from different parts of the south often headed to northern cities other than Chicago. Look at a map. To what cities might the migrants from the Carolinas, Alabama, and Texas usually go?

QUESTION: Think of the Conestoga wagons and the myths of the 19th century western expansion as depicted in westerns you've seen and their centrality to American culture. What might explain the absence of the black migration from movies, myths and stories, even your own U.S. history textbook?

QUESTION: In the film, Son Thomas sings his classic song, Highway 61 Blues. The lyrics go:

*Y'know 61 Highway...the loneliest road I know,
Y'know 61 Highway...the loneliest road I know,
It runs from Chicago
Down to the Gulf of Mexico.*

Why do you think Highway 61 was the loneliest road? What does the music tell you? Why do you think it was called the blues? Can you think of other songs about highways or people leaving home?

6. POSTWAR AFRICAN AMERICAN URBAN LIFE

The characters in **Goin' to Chicago** recall their amazement upon arriving in Chicago. Clory Bryant said, I thought I had reached the Promised Land. Koko Taylor remembers exclaiming, Good God, almighty, this must be heaven, or...Paris.

Chicago had two big attractions for African Americans after World War II. The first was jobs. From 1940 to 1965 the U.S. economy boomed, particularly manufacturing. Timuel Black explains that Chicago was a great manufacturing center and a railroad hub. Northern employers paid African Americans higher wages and schools were better. According to Koko Taylor, even a maid could make \$5 day, and that's a long way from \$3 a week.

The second attraction was a thriving black community on the Southside, often called Bronzeville, home to black doctors, dentists, teachers, and lawyers, black businesses, insurance companies and churches, nightclubs and theaters, shoe stores, dress stores and department stores, and two black newspapers, The Chicago Defender and the Chicago Bee. Organizations like the Urban League assisted with housing and otherwise helped newcomers adjust to a strange and different city. And of course in the North, African Americans could vote and even run for office

QUESTION: Read Carl Sandburg's poem Chicago (it can be found in most American poetry anthologies). Compare it to Margaret Walker's Chicago (from Margaret Walker, **This is My Century, New and Collected Poems** (University of Georgia Press, 1987). How is the attitude expressed in both poems towards Chicago similar? How is it different? Why?

QUESTION: Comment on the irony that the racism which segregated most African Americans, including the middle class, behind ghetto walls resulted in the rise of large and vibrant black communities like Harlem and Bronzeville.

7. THE TRANSFORMATION OF SEGREGATED NORTHERN NEIGHBORHOODS

The influx of the new migrants put great pressures on the overcrowded South Side of Chicago and other northern and western ghettos, swelling them to the bursting point. But banks often refused black people mortgages and white people commonly refused to sell them homes. Clauses in home deeds called restrictive covenants prohibited home sales to non-whites. (The Supreme Court declared restrictive covenants unenforceable in court in Shelley v. Kraemer in 1948 but the custom persisted until civil rights laws of the 1960s outlawed private discrimination.) Unscrupulous landlords got rich subdividing apartments into poorly maintained one-room units called kitchenettes which they rented at inflated prices to black people trapped in the ghetto.

Soon sleazy real estate agents known as panic peddlers began moving black families called blockbusters into white neighborhoods while warning the whites they better move out before it's too late. Fearful white homeowners sold their homes at rock bottom prices to the speculators who promptly cut them up into tiny kitchenettes or resold them at a quick profit to black families. In no time a neighborhood could change from white to black. Chicago's Lawndale district, for example, changed from 13% black in 1950 to 91% black in 1960.

QUESTION: Despite antidiscrimination laws now on the books, most U.S. neighborhoods remain as segregated as ever. What obstacles to residential integration remain today?

8. THE ORIGINS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE NORTH

The migrants left the South with great expectations, some of which remained unfulfilled. While many succeeded in building a life for themselves, poor housing, unfair employment practices and social inequities persisted, creating an increased sense of frustration. The growing black communities placed new pressures on public officials to respond to the demands of African Americans. Civil rights was now no longer just a Southern issue. Before the civil rights movement exploded in the South, for example, a fair housing movement led by organizations like the Congress for Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) fought to integrate northern neighborhoods in the late 1940s and 1950s. Whites, facing competition for jobs, housing, and political power for the first time since the end of World War I, resisted their efforts, often violently.

QUESTION: Why in the immediate post-War period were African Americans in the urban North more likely than their Southern counterparts to stand up and fight against the entrenched white power structure?

QUESTION: In the film, Timuel Black said he returned from World War II with "a new vision of what the world ought to look like." Why would returning black vets tend to advocate more militantly for civil rights?

9. THE BIRTH OF THE PROJECTS

To alleviate the growing population pressures, Chicago - and other northern cities - began to build some public housing. The original plans called for integrated projects to be built on vacant land scattered across Chicago. But whites violently resisted integration. Black families moving into white neighborhoods were commonly greeted with rocks and firebombs. When the new Fernwood Park Homes project, designated to be 8% black, opened in a white neighborhood in 1947, 5,000 whites rioted for two weeks. Caving in to white fears, Chicago - and other cities - soon decided to build up rather than out, constructing massive, hi-rise housing projects within the South Side ghetto, including Cabrini Green and the Robert Taylor Homes (28 identical 16-story buildings, the largest public housing project in the country), ensuring the projects would be segregated.

Clory Bryant remembers that when she first moved into the Cabrini Green projects, it was home to school teachers, policemen and secretaries and she kept the door open at night. But new Housing Authority income ceilings soon forced out anyone who made more than a minimal income and within a few years the projects became known as warehouses for those without jobs and education.

QUESTION: Why didn't Chicago and other municipalities scatter public low-cost housing throughout the city? How did the projects end up as warehouses for the poor?

QUESTION: What, if anything, should government do to provide adequate low-cost housing today?

10. DEINDUSTRIALIZATION AND URBAN DECAY

Thanks to the strength of labor unions and a growing economy, manufacturing jobs enabled semi-skilled workers without much education to make decent wages in the post-War economy. But in a cruel irony, just as African Americans finally inched open the doors of opportunity, many Northern mills, stockyards, and factories began to move to the South, to the Third World, or shut down altogether. Between 1965 and 1990, Chicago lost more than half its manufacturing jobs. Many white Chicagoans left the city, and after the passage of the 1960s civil rights laws made it easier to find housing, many middle class African Americans did too. Today, opportunities for under-educated urban workers are limited mostly to low-wage service and health jobs, such as restaurant worker, clerk, custodian, maid, nurse's aid, and the fastest growing job of all, security guard.

QUESTION: Why did Chicago's loss of manufacturing jobs so disproportionately hurt African Americans? What kind of economic opportunities are there for young people in the inner city today?

QUESTION: Do you think the young people at the end of the film who wanted to leave Chicago will do better elsewhere?

11. THE CONTINUING BOND WITH THE SOUTH

Visits to the South - like the Greenville Travel Club's trip in **Goin' to Chicago** - still play a part in African American life. Many African American kids go down home during summer vacation and stay with relatives. Large family reunions are common. The relationships between many urban dwelling African Americans and their relatives who stayed behind remain strong. For many migrants, the move North was a mixed blessing. The North offered new opportunities but also new problems. Today, an increasing number of African Americans are returning to the South in a reverse migration.

QUESTION: The story of the Greenville Travel Club's annual reunion runs as a thread throughout **Goin' to Chicago**. Why do you think the filmmaker attached so much importance to this event? To what extent do you think black urban life is still influenced by its southern rural roots?

QUESTION: How did their rural southern roots help and hinder African Americans make the transition to an urban, industrialized world?

IV. APPLYING INSIGHTS: FOLLOW-UP PROJECTS

A. Sharecropping Family Discussion: "Should We or Shouldn't We Move North?" (dialogue writing)

Objectives:

- * To explore the decision to move.

Materials Needed:

- * Handout #3, Mississippi Delta Sharecropper Profile.

Distribute handout #3 and ask students to transport themselves back in time and compose a dialogue between a troubled sharecropping couple as they debate whether to stay in Mississippi or head North.

B. Comparative Immigrant Experiences (oral histories)

Objectives:

- * Explore how the African American migration resembles and differs from other migrations.
- * Learn how to interview primary sources.

Materials Needed:

- * Handout #4: Possible Interview Questions

Taking oral histories might seem like a cliché lesson by now, but in this case we are hoping to highlight the differences and similarities between African Americans who moved North, traditional European immigrants, and new immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Step 1: Divide the class into groups of two or three and have each group interview an elder who immigrated here from a foreign country or an African American elder who moved here from the South. At least 25% of the class should be assigned to African Americans, particularly if your school is predominantly white (in Southern schools, find African American elders with close family who migrated North). Mix students racially or assign them a racial or ethnic group other than their own to research. Students should not be allowed to interview their own family members. If students can't find an immigrant (e.g. an Italian who arrived here early in the century), they should locate the child of an immigrant who can speak knowledgeably about his or her parent's experience.

Students should take detailed notes or tape the interview. Possible areas of inquiry are suggested on Handout #4

Step 2: Have the students transcribe the interview or, better, adapt it into a narrative: The Story of a First Generation [your town, e.g. Chicagoan]. Groups should read their reports to the class. During discussion, highlight comparisons between the different migration experiences, especially with respect to the availability of support networks and other aids and obstacles to success (e.g. discrimination, jobs, education, etc.).

Step 3: After reading and discussing the various histories, ask students to write a paper examining the similarities and differences between the African American Post-War migrant experience and the immigrant experience of one other ethnic group.

C. Economic Opportunity Then and Now (an essay)

Objectives:

- * To examine the changing economy for today's inner-city youth.
- * To explore the shifting patterns of racism.
- * To consider whether ghetto culture empowers, disables, or both.

Have students write an analytical essay comparing the options available to African American youth living in Chicago in the 1950s with the opportunities open to young residents of the inner city today. What has changed - for better and for worse? Be specific. Take into account employment opportunities, education, housing, discrimination, and the social and cultural environment. Which are the most critical factors?

D. The Impact of the Migration (an essay)

Objectives: To use critical thinking skills to analyze the long- term consequences of the migration.

Ask students to write a two-part analytical essay: How did the migrants themselves change as a result of their move north, and how did their move north leave its mark on the nation? Be certain to discuss culture, the economy, and politics.

E. Mapping Your Towns Demographic Changes (census research)

Objectives:

- * Introduce students to demographic research and the U.S. Census.
- * Learn how to analyze, collate, and map statistical data.

Materials needed:

- * Census tract maps of your city or region and your city or county's Census of Population and Housing for 1970 and 1990 (both usually available in your public library, planning department, or registrar of voters; data also available from the Census on CD ROM and on the World Wide Web at <http://www.USCensus/gov.html>).
- * Colored pencils; transparencies (if available); overhead projector.

Step 1: Census tract research is challenging but can be very exciting. Tell students they are going to make color-coded maps which will provide a snapshot of the demographic changes in their own community between 1970 and 1990. Pass out copies of local census tract maps to students. Explain what a census and a census tract is. If possible, introduce students to a copy of the 1990 Census. Explain how to use the critical Table Finding Guide to track down desired demographic

information in the Census. (Note: two recommended computer programs for demographic research are Atlas GIS for Macs and MapInfo for PCs.)

Step 2: Pair students up and assign each pair their own census category to research and map. They must research the assigned data for both 1970 and 1990 and then find a way to translate the data onto their census tract map. A number of categories are listed below but many others are possible, even information like means of transportation to work. Check the Census first.

- * Population by White, Black, American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic Origin (choose significant categories for your area).

- * By Per Capita Family Income.

- * By Percentage of Families Below the Poverty Level.

- * By selected occupational categories (possibilities include the following):

- 1: Executive, administrative and managerial; professional specialty.

- 2: Protective services; services; private household services.

- 3: Construction

- 4: Manufacturing

- 5: Wholesale and retail trade

- 6: Finance, insurance and real estate.

- * Educational Attainment: By percentage with bachelor degrees or higher.

- * Value of owner-occupied housing.

The Census provides statistics for each category by census tract. Tell students to go to the public library or local planning commission to use the Census (unless you have the CD-ROM or an the internet connection). The real challenge for students will be how to slice and dice the data and color-code it on their census tract maps so it makes sense. For example, take the Population by white category. The Census provides absolute numbers of white residents in each census tract. Students will first have to translate these numbers into percentages of total inhabitants and then decide which percentage groupings yield a meaningful picture of the town, e.g. color green: tracts with 0-20% white population; color blue: tracts with 21-40% white population; and so on. Each group of students should produce two maps, one for 1970 data and one for 1990 data. If possible, have students trace their maps onto transparencies rather than paper.

(Note: large cities contain too many census tracts to assign the whole city; break the city into regions. Your local planning commission may even have Census data collated by neighborhood). Similarly, there are not enough tracts in a small town for a useful exercise; in that case, assign the larger region.)

Step 3: Hang the completed, color-coded maps around the room. Give students time to examine the maps and note how neighborhoods have changed over the 20 year period. It's exciting for students as they suddenly begin to discern trends and patterns, particularly if the data's been

mapped onto transparencies which can be layered to make comparisons easier. Have each student group present their maps to the class (use an overhead projector if possible) and discuss their findings.

F. Your City Council Debates Public Housing (a simulation)

Objectives:

- * To explore a community's response to proposed public housing.
- * To examine how competing special interests influence public policy.

Materials Needed:

- * Handout #5: the Proposed Bond Issue

(Note that this is an elaborate simulation, most appropriate for classes doing a unit on urban problems or researching their own community).

It is 1960 and your town has decided it needs more public housing (note that public housing is not being built today; all financial figures are in 1995 dollars). One of the City Council members has offered a resolution quoted in Handout #5.

The City Council is holding a hearing to take testimony about the proposed housing, debate the resolution, consider amendments, and, finally, hold a vote. Giving testimony are five people with an interest in the project:

- * A real estate developer planning a private, upper middle class housing development nearby the proposed project.
- * A prospective tenant: A 28 year-old waitress with three kids making \$22,000 a year currently living with her parents because she can't afford to rent her own place on her wages.
- * The president of the local Chamber of Commerce representing the town's businesses.
- * A community activist representing an organization advocating rent control and tenants rights.
- * Chair of the local Homeowners' Association.

Assign these roles to five students. Describe their roles and ask them to prepare three minutes of persuasive testimony about the proposed legislation. Their testimony should argue persuasively for or against one or more of the following points of contention from the point of view of their character's immediate self-interest:

- * Support or oppose the number of units (100) of low-cost apartments to be built.
- * Support the location of the development or propose alternative addresses.
- * Support building the hi-rise or suggest alternatives, including a low-rise housing development, or scattering the housing on a number of small sites throughout the city.
- * Support the conditions for accepting tenants or suggest alternative screens, such as changing the income ceilings, instituting additional tenant screening procedures (e.g. denying tenancy to people with arrest records), setting aside a specific number of units for people of different races to ensure integration, and so on.

The other students should play City Council members. One student can be assigned the role of City Council President. The other Council members, when recognized by the President, should question those testifying and make comments. After all the testimony is given, Council members should debate the proposal, offer amendments based on the testimony, and, finally, take a vote on the motions (following Roberts Rules).

(Note: Feel free to adjust the size of the proposed housing development up or down so it is large-scale yet reasonable for your town or city. Select an address in a poor, industrial, or isolated section of your town - or alternatively, in a wealthy section. It will be helpful if you hang a large map of your town or city to which students can refer during the hearing)

Students should be familiar with Roberts Rules of Order. Students should also be able to define the following terms:

Public housing

Bond issue

Market-rate rent

Real estate developer

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adero, Malaika, ed. **Up South: Stories, Studies and letters of This Century's Black Migrations** (New Press, 1993)

Drake, St. Clair and Henry Cayton, Black Metropolis: **A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City** (Harper & Row, 1962)

Hirsch, Arnold R., **Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960** (Cambridge University Press, 1983)

Lemann, Nicholas, **The Promised Land** (Alfred A. Knopf, 1991)

Moody, Anne, **Coming of Age in Mississippi** (Dial Press, 1964)

Philpott, Thomas Lee, **The Slum and the Ghetto: Neighborhood Deterioration and Middle-Class Reform** (Oxford University Press, 1978)

Spear, Allan, **Black Chicago: The Making of a Northern Ghetto** (University of Chicago Press, 1967)

Travis, Dempsey, **Autobiography of Black Chicago** (Urban Research Institute, 1971)

Walker, Margaret, **Jubilee** (Houghton Mifflin, 1966)

Wright, Richard, **Black Boy** (Harer Perennial, 1993)

_____, **Native Son** (Harper & Row, 1966)

_____, **12 Million Black Voices** (Viking Press, 1941)

Handout #1: Genealogical Chart

Ancestor who first settled in present area

Relation:

Racial or ethnic background:

Year of arrival:

Migrated from:

Reason for migrating

Push factors:

Pull factors:

Prior Generation ancestor

Relation:

Racial or ethnic background:

Migrated to:

Year moved:

Migrated from:

Reasons for migrating

Push factors:

Pull factors:

Prior Generation ancestor

Relation:

Racial or ethnic background:

Migrated to:

Year moved:

Migrated from:

Reasons for migrating

Push factors:

Pull factors:

Prior Generation ancestor

Relation:

Racial or ethnic background:

Migrated to:

Year moved:

Migrated from:

Reasons for migrating

Push factors:

Pull factors:

Handout #2: Characters and Situations

Mildred Fleming - As a child, in the kitchen cooking beans for her family's dinner - again - after returning from school without having eaten all day...

MaeBertha Carter or Cliff Duwell or Koko Taylor - Working in the fields chopping cotton as kids...

Lev Wills - Upon being told he'd have to go around to the back to order hamburgers...

Koko Taylor - Heading North on the Greyhound at age 18 with her new husband and no money, just a box of Ritz crackers...

John Henry Davis - Hitchiking to Chicago with \$2 in his pocket...

Unita Blackwell - Watching many of her friends and family leave the Delta but deciding to stay behind...

Koko Taylor - Getting off the Greyhound upon arriving in Chicago for the first time...

John Wiley - About to start his last day on the job after 25 years heading off to work in the Sears Roebuck mail room from 7:30 until 3:00 and then to an 8-hour shift in the Post Office...

Timuel Black - Upon returning home to Chicago after fighting against Hitler in World War II...

Christine Houston - Standing in her kitchen three days after moving into a white neighborhood when a rock crashes through her window followed by a shotgun blast...

Alvin Robertson - At age 52, with 30 years in the steel mill, when told the company will shut the mill down...

Handout #3: Mississippi Delta Sharecropper Profile

Percy and Ruby, both twenty-five years old, are a black sharecropping couple living outside Greenville, Mississippi in 1948. They're married with three kids. Tomorrow's an important day: it's the settle where they will finally be given their share of the crop for the year's work. But they're worried. With all the interest charges, they didn't even clear their debt last year. Furthermore, there's talk that the plantation owner is going to buy one of those new mechanical cotton pickers. Percy and Ruby are very anxious about their future. They're wondering whether they should stay in Greenville where they've lived their entire lives and continue to pick cotton in the hope they'll be able to get far enough ahead to buy their own plot of land, or head north and take their chances in Chicago as their cousin Henry did last year. After putting the kids to bed Percy and Ruby sit down to consider their options, reflecting upon the advantages and disadvantages of each choice...

Handout #4: Possible Interview Questions

- * Why did you (or your parent) decide to leave home and move here? What pushed you away from your home? What pulled you here? Was it a difficult decision?
 - * Why did you choose the community to move to that you did? How did you get there? What did you bring with you? How much money did you have?
 - * What kind of hopes and expectations did you have? Did they come true?
 - * How did you feel the day you arrived? Where did you sleep your first few nights? How did you deal with the anxiety?
 - * What type of neighborhood did you first settle in? Why?
 - * What kind of support network did you find here? Friends or relatives from home? A church or synagogue? An ethnic bank, lending institution, or burial society? Social services?
 - * Was it hard to find a job? What kind of jobs did you first get? How did you find them? What other opportunities opened to you over the years?
-

Handout #5: Proposed Bond Issue

"Resolved: Our Town shall float a \$10 million bond to construct a 12-floor building containing 100 units of below-market rate 5-room apartments. Said building shall be located at [choose a local address]. Each unit in said building shall be reserved for tenants with family incomes less than \$20,000. Once a family's income rises above \$30,000, the family shall vacate the premises."