

## Slavery: A Tough Lesson to Learn

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### Content Objectives

#### *Problem Statement*

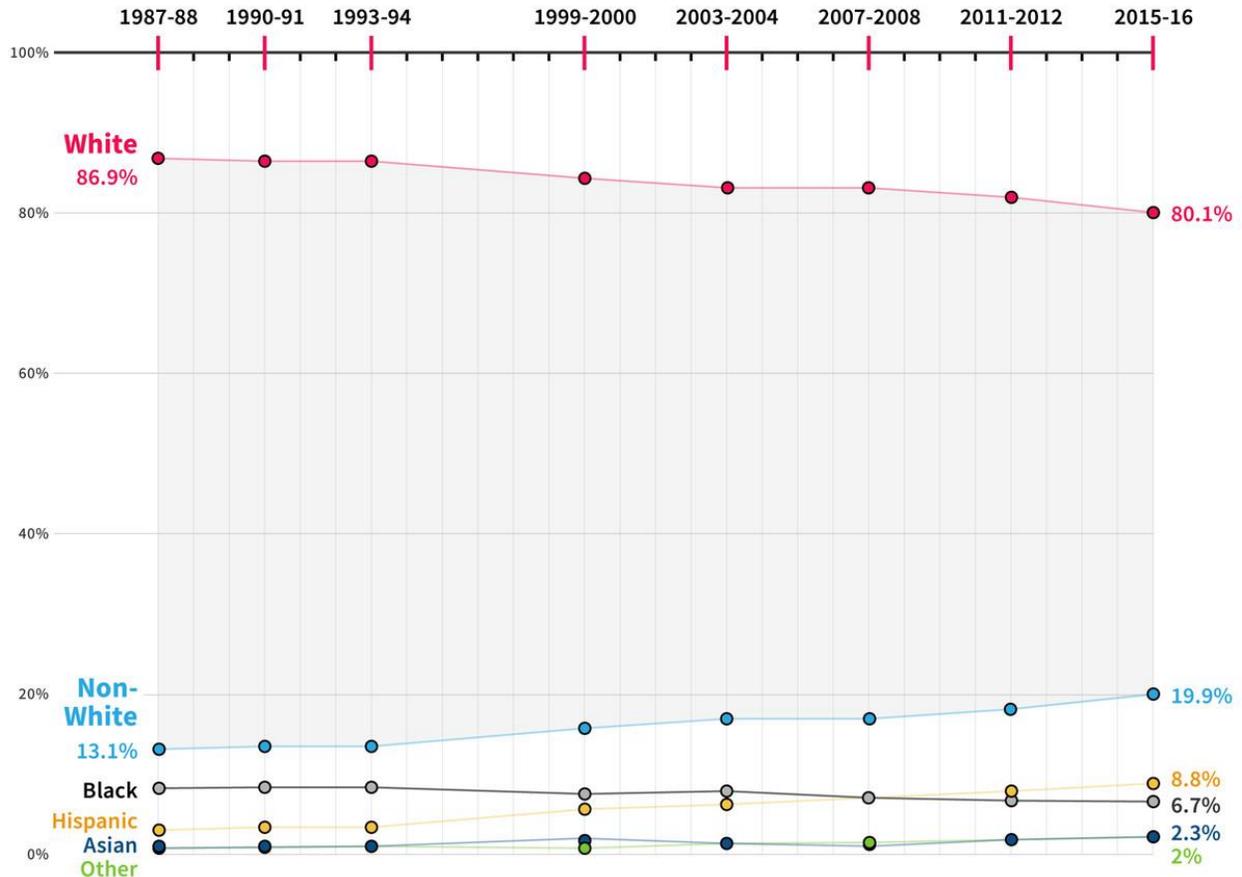
*How do you talk about slavery with children in kindergarten through twelfth grade? Slavery is a tough lesson to teach about in United States history. An in-depth look into slavery is often left out of American history books. Slavery is more than an academic concept. It is a cruel, evil, and greed-driven norm that passed through this country for centuries with no reason for remorse from slave owners and the many individuals who look the other way. The purpose of this unit is to enhance and enrich the teaching of slavery to a level of respect, pedagogical strength, and intellectual wisdom for our students and fellow educators. The lack of teachers and/ or educators of color, teachers are ill-prepared to teach the topic of slavery, making slavery an uncomfortable subject in modern-day American history.*

I feel the discussion of slavery is not just a problem for white teachers but a complex issue also for Black teachers, too. Being a teacher of color, teaching in an urban setting, for one, it is the fact of the matter that not many teachers look like me in the overall teaching profession, second, you do not want to come off as the militant Black or Brown teacher in the school. You feel isolated and maybe a little inferior because no one really wants to talk about slavery in school. When you look at the current public educational system, most black and brown students are taught by a white teacher. Why does this matter, well you do not have an integrated model for fair representation in a school environment. *About 77 percent of public school teachers today are white females. Despite the attention given to the need to recruit more teachers of color, little progress has been made in diversifying the profession. Overall, the percentage of White teachers has declined slightly from 84 percent in 1999-2000. Are we still perpetuating a slavery environment? Why is this lack of diversity in 2020, okay?* When I teach my students about integration, they look around to a learning community that lacks diversity except for some classrooms being taught by a white teacher. We still have lots of work to do. Regardless of your color as an educator of tomorrow's youth and young minds, a toolkit for teaching slavery and discrimination must be put in place. Slavery is a topic many feels should be left in the past with little learning and minimal discussion. I realize slavery is a heavy and sensitive topic to teach, let us go for it. The United States and American history are everyone's scholarly collective stories of our past, to reflect and study upon and to gain more knowledge, no matter how dark it may be,

to engage and enhance a brighter future. As an American educator, we fall short when textbooks or literature fail to include the contributions slavery has had in the construction of our global world. So, if your teacher does not look like you, how can they relate to you or if demographically your school location is not your local .

### The vast majority of American public school teachers are still white

Nationally, less than 7 percent of teachers are black, a share that's actually fallen over the past 30 years. The total share of teachers of color, though, has gone up — from about 13 to 20 percent.



Source: U.S. Department of Education; Federal data does not exist in years in between those indicated by dots

Graphic: Sam Park/Chalkbeat

### Why teach Slavery?

Slavery is an important part of history. Slavery and its capitalist foundation for the development of the United States of America's problematic economy still reign today. When I think of a capitalist society, I think of slavery. Slavery is the symbol of red blood in the American flag. The same blood, sweat, and tears of African slaves are used for hard labor to earn, not even a single dime. Generations of false hope and crushed dreams of freedom. I cannot do anything but feel

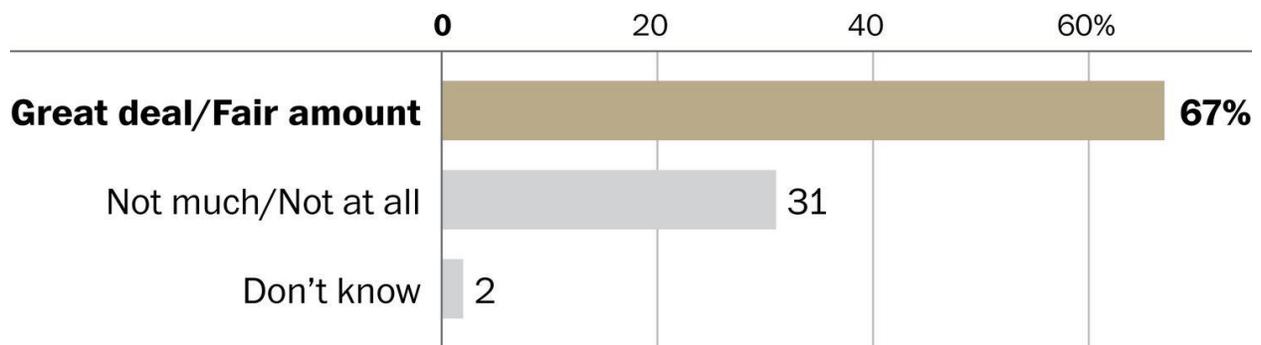
the need to break the generational curse caused by our money-driven society in which we live today, to look the other way because of our painful past. The democracy in which this country was founded today, lays on the backs of slaves. Slaves who were ways too often, get no shout outs in the history books where they should have loud presents, to the economic development of this nation we call the United States of America. An increase of hate groups, the increase of the Black and Brown jail population, and child homelessness, just to name a few problems plaguing our society. We have a lot of work to do, to change the hearts and minds of our political and economic leaders.

Why Slavery is important to me as an American?

Slavery has its place in history for both whites and blacks to learn more about in the United States of America. It is not a Black and white people issue. People of all ethnic and religious backgrounds need to understand the depth of the institution, we call slavery. Slavery is history, period, the bad, and the ugly for all know. I need for people to know the economical and demographical background of slavery. If I do not know my past, I do not know my future. I feel racism, bigotry, prejudices, chauvinistic, and stereotypes all present their ugly faces due to an individual's lack of knowledge about slavery. Slavery of the mind has not evolved much for many Americans in my eyes.

## Two-thirds say the legacy of slavery affects society today

Q: In your opinion, how much, if at all, do you think the legacy of slavery affects American society today?



Source: July 1-7, 2019, Washington Post-SSRS poll of 1,025 adults with a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

EMILY GUSKIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

How to teach Slavery in a culturally diverse classroom?

Diversity in education is what everyone claims they want in most human settings but what are we willing to lose, to get it. Slavery is one of those discussions that we must have as a people, to grow as a nation with love and respect for others, regardless of skin color, religion, or even language. A child should not be taught to hate another because they are different. This is easier said than done. Generational racism has and is still progressive in most ethnic communities. Parents come home from a hard day of work, only to vent to their family, about how certain people of an ethnic group, annoyed them to frustration. This can be innocent at first but year after year of exposure at a young age and ongoing levels of criticism and complaints about various ethnic groups, before you know it, turns into hate and stereotypes of that culture. This is why the K-12 classroom platform is important to stop the institutional racism that oppresses our country due to the lack of knowledge about slavery.

### Teaching Strategies

A coherent teaching plan for those objectives. The section will detail, in narrative form, the learning strategies that best match the subject matter you are introducing.

### Classroom Activities

Three or more detailed examples of actual teaching methods or lesson plans. Lesson plans ought to reference to the *teaching strategies* mentioned above and be usable by teachers across the district and country. Your lesson plans should specify these materials, give a timeline for completion, state the objectives, the District, state, and national curriculum standards addressed, provide an evaluation tool, and give a step-by-step guide to completion



**CC.1.2.4.L Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.**

**CC.1.3.4.E Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose and refer to the structural elements of each when writing or speaking about a text.**

Eloise Greenfield was born May 17, 1929, **Eloise Little** in Parmele, North Carolina. Eloise Greenfield was brought up in Washington, D.C., during the Great Depression of the 1920s. She was the second oldest of five children. Eloise Greenfield was a timid and academically strong child, she loved music and took piano lessons. Greenfield experienced racism first-hand in the segregated United States of America especially when she would visit her grandparents in North Carolina and Virginia. She graduated from Cardozo Senior High School in 1946 and attended Miner Teachers College also known as Howard University School of Education until 1949 in Washington, D.C. She attended Howard University in hopes of becoming an educator. In her third year, however, she found that she was too shy to be a teacher and left the university.

Eloise Greenfield began work in the civil service industry at the U.S. Patent Office. Long-time friend Robert J. Greenfield and Eloise Little were married in 1950. Eloise Greenfield began writing poetry and songs in the 1950s while holding down her job at the Patent Office, finally, in 1962 her first book of poems was published in the *Hartford Times* after many years of writing and submitting poetry and stories to the newspaper. In 1971, Eloise Greenfield joined the District of Columbia Black Writers Workshop, she began to write books for children. Eloise Greenfield has authored and published more than 40 children's books, including picture books, novels, poetry, and biographies. Unnerved by the depiction of people of color in the mainstream media, Eloise Greenfield has tried to focus her literary work on realistic but positive portrayals of African-American communities, families, and friendships in her writing. In 1978, one of her best-known books, *Honey I Love*, is a collection of poems for people of all ages concerning the daily lives and loving relationships of children and families. One of her most famous poems was included in this collection, Harriet Tubman poem. In the book, *Childtimes: A Three-Generation Memoir* (1979) which is her semi-autobiographical take on her life. Eloise Greenfield describes her happy childhood in a neighborhood with strong positive people of color. At the beginning of the book, Greenfield states her interest in the biography:

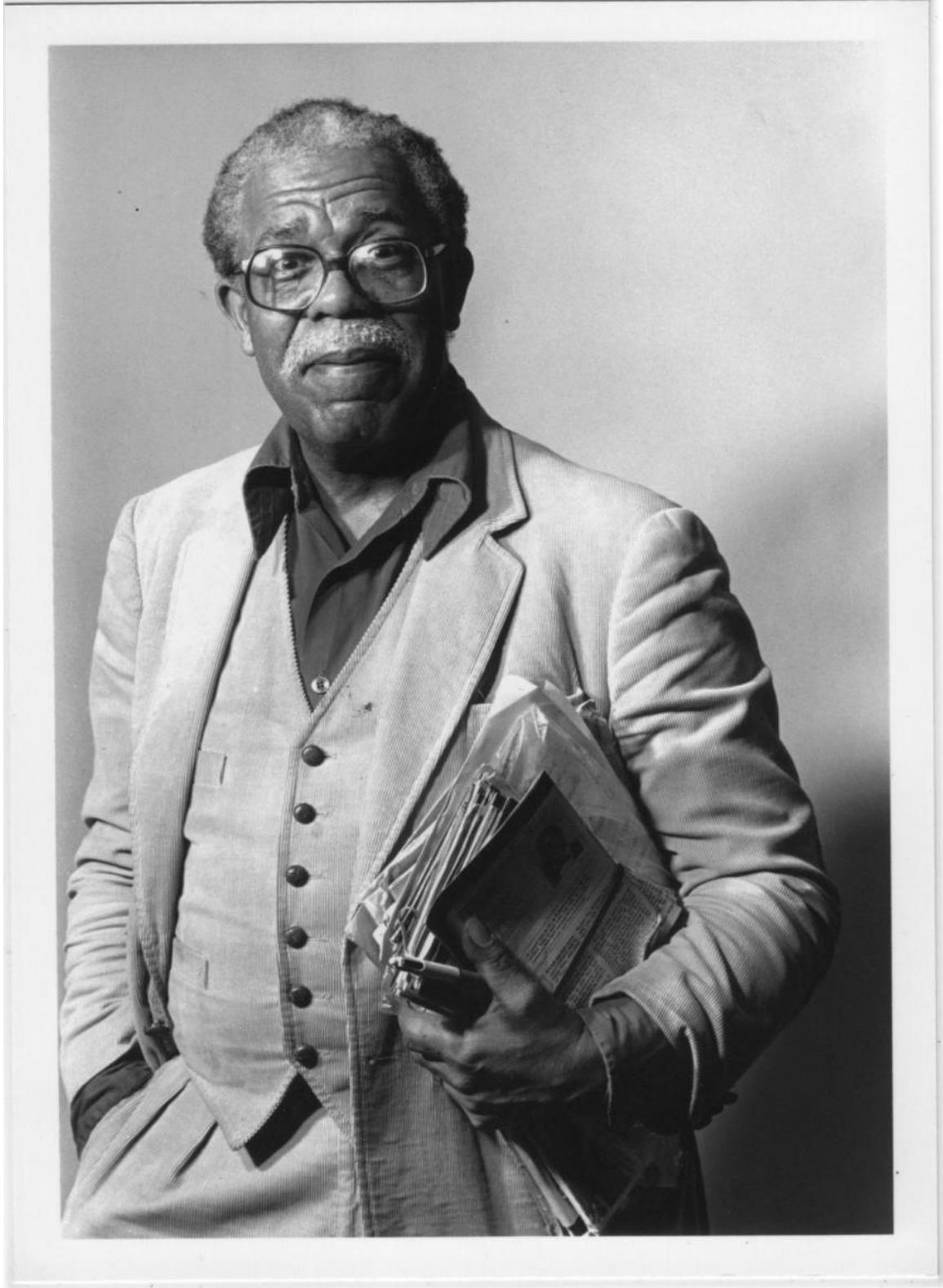
People are a part of their time. They are affected, during the time that they live by the things that happen in their world. Big things and small things. A war, an invention such as radio or television, a birthday party, a kiss. All of these help to shape the present and the future. If we could know more about our ancestors, about the experiences they had when they were children, and after they had grown up, too, we would know much more about what has shaped us and our world.

Eloise Greenfield still lives in Washington, D.C. to this day.

Harriet Tubman By Eloise Greenfield

Harriet Tubman didn't take no stuff  
Wasn't scared of nothing neither  
Didn't come in this world to be no slave  
And wasn't going to stay one either

“Farewell!” she sang to her friends one night  
She was mighty sad to leave ‘em  
But she ran away that dark, hot night  
Ran looking for her freedom  
She ran to the woods and she ran through the woods  
With the slave catchers right behind her  
And she kept on going till she got to the North  
Where those mean men couldn’t find her.  
Nineteen times she went back South  
To get three hundred others  
She ran for her freedom nineteen times  
To save Black sisters and brothers  
Harriet Tubman didn’t take no stuff  
Wasn’t scared of nothing neither  
Didn’t come in this world to be no slave  
And didn’t stay one either  
And didn’t stay one either



**CC.1.2.4.L Read and comprehend literary nonfiction and informational text on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.**

**CC.1.3.4.E Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose and refer to the structural elements of each when writing or speaking about a text.**

Dudley Randall was an American poet and publisher. Dudley Randall was born in Washington, D.C. Dudley Randall was responsible for starting the career for many well-known poets by publishing their poetry through his company called Broadside Press in 1965. His family moved to Detroit in 1920. At the age of 13, Dudley Randall published his first poem, a sonnet, that appeared in the Detroit Press in 1927. The sonnet won the first place and a prize of one dollar on the "Young Poets Page." Early inspiration and support from Randall's father exposing him and his brothers to hear prominent African American writers and artists speak, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Walter Francis White, James Weldon Johnson, and others. These men were very important figures during that time period and even today.

After graduating from high school, Dudley Randall worked at Ford Motors. Dudley Randall also worked as a clerk for the postal service from 1938 to 1943. He also served in the military during the Second World War. He was working at the post-service while attending Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1949. Dudley Randall completed his master's degree in Library Science at the University of Michigan in 1951.

In the 1960s, Randall became engaged in the Black Arts Movement. Randall published "Ballad of Birmingham," a poem in about to the horrific church bombing in Alabama, in 1963. In 1965, he established Broadside Press, which published many prominent African American poets. Broadside Press's first book was Poem Counterpoem (1966), a collaboration between Randall and Margeret Esse Danner. In 1978, Black Enterprise magazine called him "the father of the black poetry movement of the 1960s."



Booker Taliaferro Washington was born into slavery, in Virginia in 1856. After the Civil War, his family moved to Malden, West Virginia. He was nine years old when slavery was abolished. Booker T. Washington work at the salt mines. He taught himself how to read in the salt mines using the numbers on the salt barrels. A Webster's Speller was given to him by his mother. Booker T. Washington taught himself the alphabet and sight words. He attended school at night

at the Hampton Normal & Agricultural Institute which was a segregated school for Blacks in Virginia. He would walk 200 miles to attend school. Booker T. Washington graduated top of his class with honors because he was an exceptional student.

Booker T. Washington showed lots of potentials as a great leader. He was recommended to become the first president of the newly formed Tuskegee Institute in 1881.

Tuskegee Institute was a school for Black students located in Tuskegee, Alabama. Washington Found an abandoned plantation for the school on the southside of town. His students were carpenters and architects of the 100-acre spread which would be home to classrooms, dormitories, a chapel, and a curriculum that included everything from agriculture to brick-making.

Booker T. Washington's ideology about Blacks in America would later clash with another great mind, W.E.B. Dubois. W.E.B. Dubois believed Booker T. Washington was not doing enough towards Black progress in America. Washington felt that learning a trade would elevate the Black culture, to be useful to white society in America.

On November 14, 1915, Booker T. Washington died. Booker T. Washington was buried on the campus of Tuskegee University.



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William Edward Burghardt DuBois was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts in 1868.

W.E.B. DuBois's parents were born free. DuBois was raised by his mother because his father left the household when he was a year old.

DuBois's mother was a proud lover of education. She worked hard for W.E.B. DuBois to get a good education. DuBois went to school with white children. In the town where DuBois grew up, little racism occurred against people of color. W.E.B. was well accepted by the most influential families in his hometown because he was a gifted scholar.

W.E.B. DuBois did not experience true racism until he attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, which was in the South. As soon as he arrived, the racial injustice toward people of color began to hit home. W.E.B. saw first hand how Blacks were treated unfairly in America. It was his mission to try and change the way of life for Blacks in an unjust society.

W.E.B. DuBois received a scholarship to Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While attending Harvard University W.E.B. DuBois did experience some form of racism. He pushed through the hate and graduated with honors. In 1895, W.E.B. DuBois was the first Black man to graduate from Harvard University with a Ph.D. in Social Science. In 1896, he published his first book, which was his doctoral dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade*. The University of Pennsylvania offered DuBois a teaching position. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* was published where he wrote about the life of Blacks in the city of Philadelphia. DuBois also accepted a position as a professor at Atlanta University.

“*The Souls of Black Folks*” was written in 1903 by W.E.B. DuBois. It was his most famous writing. In the book, DuBois covered various issues surrounding race including his conflict with Booker T. Washington. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois were leaders in the Black community. Booker T. Washington felt Blacks should use their hand, get domesticated jobs, and start businesses to service all people. W.E.B. DuBois wanted Blacks to get a good education, demand equal rights and only the brightest Blacks the “talented tenth” could lead the black population forward. The two men never agree on the progression of Black people in America. The NAACP(National Association Advancement of Colored People) was founded in 1910 by W.E.B. DuBois, Ida B. Wells, Moorefield Storey, and Mary White Ovington. *The Crisis* was the journal for the NAACP that he edited for 24 years.

W.E.B. DuBois in 1961 left the United States to work in Ghana, West Africa where he lived the remainder of his life. W.E.B. Dubois died August 27, 1968, the night before *The March on Washington* at the age of 95, still fighting for equal rights for Blacks.

Booker T and W.E.B. by Dudley Randell

“It seems to me,” said Booker T.,  
“It shows a might lot of cheek  
To study chemistry and Greek  
When Mister Charlie needs a hand  
To hoe the cotton on his land,  
And when Miss Ann looks for a cook,  
Why stick your nose inside a book?”  
“I don’t agree,” said W. E. B.  
“If I should have the drive to seek  
Knowledge of Chemistry or Greek,  
I’ll do it. Charles and Miss can look  
Another place for hand or cook.  
Some men rejoice in skill of hand,  
And some in cultivating land,  
But there are others who maintain  
The right to cultivate the brain.”  
“It seems to me”, said Booker T.,

“That all you folks have missed the boat  
Who shout about the right to vote,  
And spend vain days and sleepless nights  
In uproar over civil rights.  
Just keep your mouths shut, do not grouse,  
But work, and save, and buy a house.”  
“I don’t agree,” said W.E.B.,  
“For what can property avail  
if dignity and justice fail?  
Unless you help to make the laws,  
They’ll steal your house with trumped-up clause.  
A rope’s a tight, a fire as hot,  
No matter how much cash you’ve got.  
Speak soft, and try your little plan,  
But as for me, I’ll be a man or woman.”  
“It seems to me,” said Booker T, —  
I don’t agree,”  
Said W. E. B.



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Langston Hughes was one of the greatest American writers. In an excerpt from *The Big Sea* his autobiography, Langston Hughes talks about his vision and inspiration for the poem, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”. I had been into dinner early that afternoon on the train. Now it was just sunset, and we crossed the Mississippi, slowly, over a long bridge. I looked out the window of the Pullman at the great muddy river flowing down toward the heart of the South, and I began to think what that river, the old Mississippi, had meant to Negroes in the past-how to be sold down the river was the worst fate that could overtake a slave in times of bondage. Then I remembered reading how Abraham Lincoln had made a trip down the Mississippi on a raft to New Orleans,

and how he had seen slavery at its worst and had decided within himself that it should be removed from American life. Then I began to think about other rivers in our past—the Congo, and the Niger, and the Nile in Africa— and thought came to me: “I’ve known rivers,” and I put it down on the back of an envelope I had in my pocket, and within the space of ten or fifteen minutes, as the train gathered speed in the dusk, I had written this poem, which I called “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”.

Langston Hughes was an American writer. Hughes was a leader in the Harlem Renaissance. Much of his talent was overshadowed by his race during the time he was alive. Langston Hughes was overlooked due to being Black in America.

I, Too, Sing America by Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I’ll be at the table

When company comes.

Nobody’ll dare

Say to me,

“Eat in the kitchen,”

Then.

Besides,

They’ll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

I’ve known rivers: by Langston Hughes

I’ve known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

During the Civil War, President Lincoln issued a proclamation in 1863 - the Emancipation Proclamation. That proclamation stated that all slaves not under Union control were freed! This sounds nice, but in fact, the Emancipation Proclamation did not free a single slave. It did not free slaves in the border states. It did not free slaves in any Union controlled areas in the South. Nor did any states in the South recognize this proclamation as a law that pertained to them. The Confederate States of America had seceded from the Union and had elected their own president, Jefferson Davis. They ignored the Emancipation Proclamation, as Lincoln knew they would.

The Proclamation was not written to free slaves but rather to create unrest among slaves in the South. Once slavery was made an issue in the war, England and France would no longer pump monies into the South to help their cause, as Lincoln predicted. Other countries might wish to see the United States weakened and divided, but Lincoln did not. That proclamation was written to help the North win the Civil War, and it did.

Two years later, in Jan of 1865, when it became apparent that the North would win the Civil War, Lincoln put a new proclamation in front of the Senate. This proclamation freed all slaves. After many arguments and debates over States Rights, it was put into law, and added to the U.S. Constitution as the 13th Amendment. That Amendment ended 246 years of human misery, from the first slaves arrival in the American colonies in 1619 until the 13th Amendment in 1865. The fight for African-American equality was not over, but this was a huge step!

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

— Declaration of Independence, 1776