Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance

calling all colors

Social Justice Reading

Students will read one or more of the following texts and discuss the text dependent questions in small or large groups. Through analytical reading, students will be asked to draw parallels from historical references to *segregation, racism and injustice* to present day examples of these issues. Students should also be encouraged to apply what they have learned about personal and cultural identity, and how these themes relate to each text.

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Loving for All

Richard and Mildred Loving were plaintiffs in the historic Supreme Court ruling Loving v. Virginia, which struck down race restrictions on the freedom to marry. What follows is Mildred Loving's public statement delivered on June 12, 2007, the 40th Anniversary of the decision.
Author: Mildred Loving, 2007

When my late husband, Richard, and I got married in Washington, DC in 1958, it wasn't to make a political statement or start a fight. We were in love, and we wanted to be married.

We didn't get married in Washington because we wanted to marry there. We did it there because the government wouldn't allow us to marry back home in Virginia where we grew up, where we met, where we fell in love, and where we wanted to be together and build our family. You see, I am a woman of color and Richard was white, and at that time people believed it was okay to keep us from marrying because of their ideas of who should marry whom.

When Richard and I came back to our home in Virginia, happily married, we had no intention of battling over the law. We made a commitment to each other in our love and lives, and now had the legal commitment, called marriage, to match. Isn't that what marriage is?

Not long after our wedding, we were awakened in the middle of the night in our own bedroom by deputy sheriffs and actually arrested for the "crime" of marrying the wrong kind of person. Our marriage certificate was hanging on the wall above the bed.

The state prosecuted Richard and me, and after we were found guilty, the judge declared: "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay [sic] and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix." He sentenced us to a year in prison, but offered to suspend the sentence if we left our home in Virginia for 25 years exile [sic].

We left, and got a lawyer. Richard and I had to fight, but still were not fighting for a cause. We were fighting for our love.

Though it turned out we had to fight, happily Richard and I didn't have to fight alone. Thanks to groups like the ACLU and the NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund, and so many good people around the country willing to speak up, we took our case for the freedom to marry all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. And on June 12, 1967, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that, "The freedom to marry has long been recognized as one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men," a "basic civil right."

My generation was bitterly divided over something that should have been so clear and right. The majority believed that what the judge said, that it was God's plan to keep people apart, and that government should discriminate against people in love. But I have lived long enough now to see big

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changes. The older generation's fears and prejudices have given way, and today's young people realize that if someone loves someone they have a right to marry.

Surrounded as I am now by wonderful children and grandchildren, not a day goes by that I don't think of Richard and our love, our right to marry, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the "wrong kind of person" for me to marry. I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry. Government has no business imposing some people's religious beliefs over others. Especially if it denies people's civil rights.

I am still not a political person, but I am proud that Richard's and my name is on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight seek in life. I support the freedom to marry for all. That's what Loving, and loving, are all about.

Loving For All

Text Dependent Questions

- Why did Mildred and Richard Loving get married in Washington, D.C.?
- What personal religious belief did the lower court judge use to defend his guilty verdict in the Loving case?
- Does Mildred Loving believe all people should have the freedom to marry? How do you know?
- How did the lower court judge rule in the Lovings' case?
- Cite the text to show how the Virginia court's decision differed from the Supreme Court's decision in the Loving case.

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Poster Warning Blacks in Boston: Kidnappers

The Fugitive Slave Law was passed by the U.S. Congress on September 18, 1850, as part of the Compromise of 1850 between the slave-holding interests of the South and the northern Free-Soilers. It denied a jury trial to any individual accused of escaping from slavery, gave marshals tremendous power to pursue enslaved people in free states and empowered the federal government to prosecute Northerners who protected those escaping from slavery.

This poster, originating from Boston and dated April 24, 1851, was created and disseminated by abolitionist Theodore Parker. It warns black people in Boston to beware of watchmen and police officers, who were legally allowed to act as kidnappers. It reflects the new environment created by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, one in which black people in the North now lived with an ever-present fear of kidnapping and violence.
Author: Unknown

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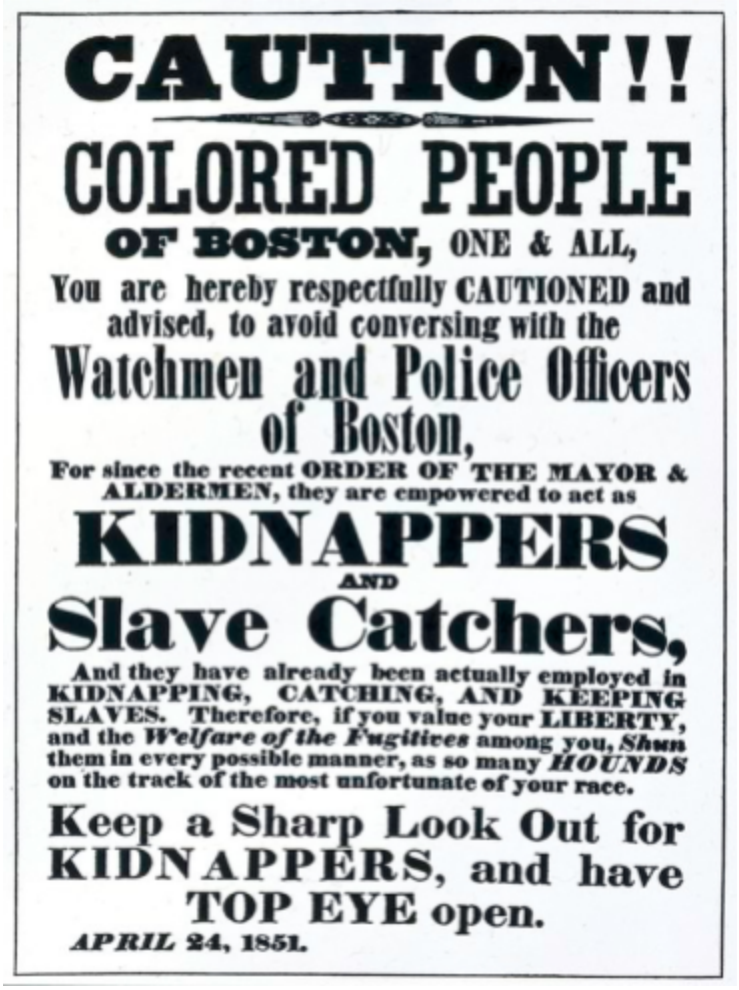

CAUTION!!

COLORED PEOPLE

OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,

You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and advised, to avoid conversing with the

Watchmen and Police Officers of Boston,

For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR & ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as

KIDNAPPERS

AND

Slave Catchers,

And they have already been actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY, and the *Welfare of the Fugitives* among you, *Shun* them in every possible manner, as so many *HOUNDS* on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.

Keep a Sharp Look Out for KIDNAPPERS, and have TOP EYE open.

APRIL 24, 1851.

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Poster Warning Blacks in Boston: Kidnappers

Text Dependent Questions

- According to the poster, who was responsible for giving the watchmen and police officers the power to act as kidnappers?
- What words does Parker use to describe both African Americans and policemen?
- Analyze the language used in the poster. Why do you think he chooses the language that he does? What purpose does this language serve?
- Consider the current state of relations between the black community and the law enforcement community. What parallels can you draw between this poster and our current reality? (Consider such things as the Black Lives Matter movement, police racial profiling and violence, police shootings, etc.)

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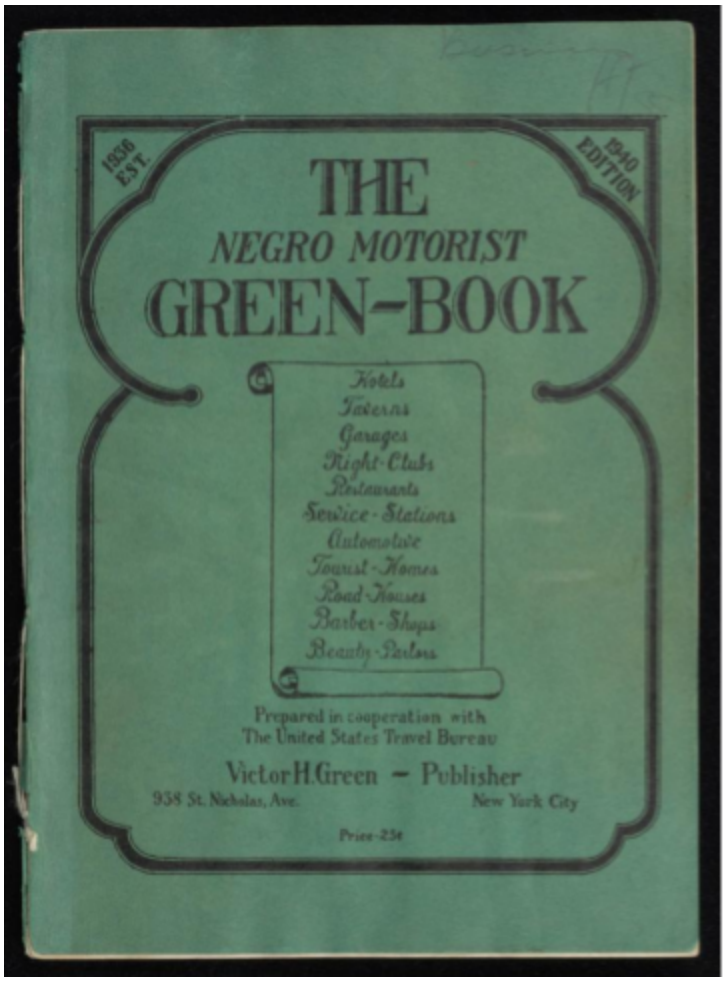
The Negro Motorist Green Book[4]



These images are from The Negro Motorist Green Book 1940 edition. The Green Book, published from 1936 – 1964, served as a guide for African Americans traveling around the country during the Jim Crow segregation era.

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THE NEGRO MOTORIST GREEN BOOK

ESTABLISHED 1936
WILLIAM H. GREEN
EDITOR
JOHN C. DILLARD
CIRCULATION MGR.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of "The Green Book" is to give the Motorist and Tourist a Guide not only of the Hotels and Tourist Homes in all of the large cities, but other classifications that will be found useful wherever he may be. Also facts and information that the Negro Motorist can use and depend upon.

There are thousands of places that the public doesn't know about and aren't listed. Perhaps you might know of some? If so send in their names and addresses and the kind of business, so that we might pass it along to the rest of your fellow Motorists.

You will find it handy on your travels, whether at home or in some other state, and is up to date. Each year we are compiling new lists as some of these places move, or go out of business and new business places are started giving added employment to members of our race.

When you are traveling mention "The Green Book" so as to let these people know just how you found out about their place of business. If they haven't heard about This Guide, tell them to get in touch with us.

If this Guide is useful, let us know, if not tell us also, as we appreciate your criticisms.

If any errors are found, kindly notify the publishers so that they can be corrected in the next issue.

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