

# DETROIT 48202

CONVERSATIONS ALONG A POSTAL ROUTE

## Teacher's Guide

“ If you want to understand Detroit in all its turbulence and spirit, you need go no farther than this film...Wendell Watkins is an Everyman whose daily pilgrimage shows how deeply each of us is connected, to the forces of history and to one another. ”

Dr. Terry Blackhawk, Founder, Insideout Literary Arts, Detroit, MI.



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a companion to the documentary film *Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route*

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# Filmmaker's Statement

My film **Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route** began with a question. What caused the city that helped shape me as a socially conscious person to fall into such devastating decline? I had left Detroit to go to college in New York City and then made a life as a high school teacher and filmmaker in the Bronx. My visits “home” stopped when my parents moved away from Detroit in the mid-1990s. When I did return to Detroit in 2009 I was stunned to see the blocks of empty houses and vacant lots, our former home boarded up, with its screen door swinging in the wind.

My initial question led to a second question: Who could help me understand what happened to Detroit? While the answer to my first question was complicated, the answer to the second was simple: Wendell Watkins, my friend since we were sophomores at Cass Technical High School. Wendell has deep ties to Detroit and its people. He has an intimate and profound understanding of place and history. At that point he'd been delivering mail in the same neighborhood for 25 years, and he is a quintessential storyteller. That Wendell agreed to collaborate on **Detroit 48202** was a gift any filmmaker would be grateful for.

I let Wendell lead me to the customers he thought had the most interesting stories to share about the history of Detroit and/or their current activism. My historical and archival research was guided by the stories Wendell and his customers shared. Interviews with scholars and journalists were used judiciously in order to foreground the voices of the mostly African-American Detroiters who live on Wendell's route.

My six-year journey with Wendell and his people revealed stories of resilience and resistance, and hope for a city that thrives for all of its residents. I hope **Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route** and this viewers' guide inspire students and teachers to explore the history of their cities and the issues of segregation, labor, gentrification, and displacement with a critical and personal lens.

Pam Sporn

November , 2019



# Overview/Suggestions for using this guide

**Detroit 48202: Conversations Along a Postal Route** tells the history of Detroit, and the changes it has gone through over the past half-century through the eyes of a letter carrier, Wendell Watkins, who had the same postal route for 30 years. Through Wendell's observations and interviews with the customers on his route, we see Detroit in its heyday as the auto capital of the world, its decimation, and its contested resurgence. These longtime residents exhibit both resilience and resistance; voices like theirs are seldom foregrounded in discussions of Detroit, which makes their participation in this film even more important.

The film has 13 chapters; this viewers' guide has 13 lessons plans that provide pre- and post-viewing suggestions for each chapter. Instructors can choose those activities that are most aligned to their class's subject area, age level, and interest. These activities are designed to be interactive and often have students working in pairs or small groups. Our goal is for students to articulate their thinking, verbally and/or in writing, rather than listen to lectures. We hope educators will have enough classroom time for their students to view the whole film in one session, but it is also possible to view the film chapter by chapter or to choose the chapters that are most relevant to your students. The activities for each chapter have a similar structure, as outlined below.

## Pre-viewing:

- Each chapter's lesson plan begins with a short discussion of the central ideas and background information contained in that chapter of the film. This is meant for the educator, although in some cases, you may choose to present this information as a reading for students, if you have time and the text is at an appropriate reading level for your students.
- Review the vocabulary for that chapter. An effective way to do this is to write the words on the board or document camera and ask students if they've ever heard the word before. Can they define it? Use it in a sentence? Then provide the definition given in the vocabulary section. Encourage students to use these words in their writing.
- Most chapters have at least one topic for class discussion or writing which is designed to activate students' schema for what they will view in that chapter.

## Post-viewing:

- Content summary - Following the viewing of each chapter are literal and inferential questions for students to answer in a class (or a partner/small group) discussion. These questions are designed to help students think about the central ideas of the chapter and to provide a content summary.

- Writing - Every chapter has at least one suggestion for a post-viewing writing activity. As a way to spark meaningful class discussion, you can have students volunteer to read their writing aloud to their classmates and then have other students respond verbally to what their classmate(s) read. This helps build community, as students begin to relate to one another as learners, readers and writers. Teachers can also collect students' writing and respond in writing to the content of what students wrote. (Depending upon how much time you have and your students' level of understanding, you may choose to turn some of the discussions into writing activities or vice versa.)
- Quote Analysis - In addition to the discussion and writing activities, described above, many sections contain an activity where students are asked to analyze and evaluate one or more statements spoken by a character in that chapter.
- Reading - The film is the primary text we want students to respond to, and the lesson plans offer multiple suggestions for how to do that. In addition, several chapters refer to supplemental readings. For Chapters 4 and 7 the readings seek to explain or expand upon complex concepts that characters discuss in that chapter. It is useful to have students annotate these readings, which helps students learn how to monitor their own comprehension of difficult ideas. (An annotation system is suggested in Chapter 1.) Chapters 2 and 11 contain links to articles that expand on ideas raised in the film.
- Graphics - Most sections contain an activity where students are asked to analyze (in discussion or in writing) important images from the film. Notice that the photos are uncropped, showing the borders as on the original archival image. You may choose to point this out and discuss the significance of using archival images.
- Extension activities/making connections to students' own lives - Many sections of this guide contain suggestions for students to do further research on topics raised in the film or on how policies (such as segregated housing or gentrification) impact their own cities. In addition, Chapters 8, 10, 12 and 13 describe activities where students can create their own postcards, handmaps and letters, reflecting ideas in the film. We value the sharing of various perspectives and responses, so we strongly encourage teachers to scan or take pictures of their students' work and email them to [share@detroit48202.com](mailto:share@detroit48202.com).
- Themes of resilience and resistance - As Wendell says in Chapter 1, the customers on his route didn't cause Detroit's decline, but they've had to survive it. As we get to know them, we find out how they are doing this, and how they are fighting to improve Detroit for all its residents. Many of the chapters include activities that ask students to explore the resilience and resistance shown by these characters.
- Further resources: A timeline of major events in Detroit's history in the past 120 years is included for your reference. There is also a list of fiction and nonfiction books, as well as articles and websites, if you wish to read more about Detroit.

# List of Characters



Wendell Watkins

Native Detroiter. Graduate of Cass Technical High School. Letter carrier in New Center neighborhood of Detroit 1986 - 2015.



Julia Putnam

Native Detroiter. Co-Founder and Principal of The James and Grace Lee Boggs School. Became a community activist as a high school student participant in Detroit Freedom Summer.



Ronald Hewitt (Cardinal Karamo Omari)

Former member of the administration of Mayor Coleman Young. Member of Shrine of the Black Madonna and long-time resident on Wendell's postal route.



Kim Moore

Native Detroiter. Long time resident on Wendell's postal route. Retired city worker. Active member of the Joseph Walker Williams Recreation Center.



Gloria Owens

Native Detroiter. Building Manager of 675 Seward on Wendell's postal route. Former banquet waitress and leader of the Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees International Union.



### General Baker

Native Detroiter. Autoworker and leader in Detroit’s militant labor movement. Co-founder of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM).



### Marian Kramer-Baker

Long time leader in Detroit’s social justice movements. Member of LRBW, DRUM, and leader of Michigan Welfare Rights Organization.



### Thomas Sugrue

Native Detroiter. Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis and History at NYU. Author of **The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit.**



### June Manning Thomas

Mary Frances Berry Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning, Centennial Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Michigan. Author of **Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit.**



### Rick Smith

Long-time resident on Wendell’s postal route. Retired roofer.



### Dawn DeRose

Long-time resident on Wendell’s postal route. Community activist who organizes against water shut-offs, illegal tax foreclosures, and evictions.



Lewis Bass

Long-time resident on Wendell's postal route.  
Retired city worker.



Curt Guyette

Investigative reporter for the Michigan Civil Liberties Union.



Tiger Lilies Class, 2014

Students at the James and Grace Lee Boggs School.



Tina Hamilton

Real estate broker.

# Vocabulary

## CHAPTER ONE

1. **speculation** – activity in which someone buys or sells something (such as stocks or pieces of property) in the hopes of making a large profit, but with the risk of a large loss
2. **disinvest** – to take money out of an area, industry or company
3. **devastation** – destroying most or much of something, causing great damage or harm to something
4. **revenue** – money that is made by or paid to a business or an organization or money that is collected for a public use by a government, through taxes
5. **domestic** – relating to the work, such as cooking and cleaning, that is done in a person's home or the person who is hired to do that work
6. **race men** – a term used by African Americans in the early 20th century to describe black men who were dedicated to black people

## CHAPTER TWO

1. **displaced** – when people are forced to leave the area where they live
2. **level** – to knock something down to the ground
3. **urban planner** - person whose job it is to develop comprehensive plans and designs for cities and towns

## CHAPTER THREE

1. **sharecropper** – a farmer (especially in the southern U.S.) who raises crops for the owner of a piece of land and is paid a portion of the money from the sale of the crops
2. **war production** – manufacturing equipment that will be used in fighting a war
3. **armaments** – military weapons that are used to fight a war
4. **refugee** – someone who has been forced to leave a country, or place they live, because of war or for religious or political reasons

## CHAPTER FOUR

1. **segregation** – the practice or policy of keeping people of different races or religions separate from each other
2. **desegregation** – the act or process of ending a law or practice that separated people of different races or religions
3. **integration** – the practice of uniting people from different races or religions in an attempt to give people equal rights
4. **federal** – relating to the central government of a nation

5. **institutional racism** - when courts, schools, private businesses or governments have policies and practices that negatively affect a certain racial group
6. **interpersonal racism** - when a person acts on their negative perceptions of a certain racial group
7. **mortgage** – a legal agreement in which a person borrows money to buy property (such as a house) and pays back the money over a period of years
8. **criteria** – something that is used as a reason for making a judgment or decision

## CHAPTER FIVE

1. **pliable** – easily controlled by other people
2. **ghetto** – a part of a city in which members of a particular group or race live, usually in poor conditions
3. **blight** – something that causes harm or damage
4. **paranoia** – an unreasonable feeling that people are trying to harm you, do not like you, etc.

## CHAPTER SIX

1. **decentralize** – to spread out something from an area of concentration
2. **downturn** – a situation in which a business or economic activity decreases or becomes worse
3. **layoff** – ending the employment of a worker or group of workers, usually for a financial reason, not because that person or group did something wrong
4. **foreman** - a person in charge of a group of workers, a particular operation, or a section of a factory

## CHAPTER SEVEN

1. **endemic** – growing in a certain place or region
2. **estrangement** – causing someone to be no longer be friendly or close to another person or group
3. **curfew** – an order or law that requires people to be indoors after a certain time at night
4. **point of production** – at work (particularly in a factory), making products for a company or business to sell

## CHAPTER NINE

1. **foreclosure** – when a homeowner loses their house to a bank or a city government, either because the homeowner did not make the mortgage payments as scheduled, or failed to pay the property taxes on the house (called a tax foreclosure)
2. **predatory lending** – the practice of banks lending money to a borrower by using deceptive, fraudulent, or discriminatory means
3. **municipal** – relating to the government of a city or town
4. **tax base** – the total income that a government (city, state, village or nation) receives from taxes paid by businesses and individuals
5. **evict** – to force someone to leave a place, usually their home

6. **repercussion** – something bad that happens as a result of an action or statement and that affects people for a long time

## CHAPTER TEN

1. **bankruptcy** – when a person, business or government is unable to pay its debts, that individual or entity files for bankruptcy. A special court creates a plan in which the debts are forgiven, or can be repaid at a different rate or with more time.

2. **municipal bond** - a special type of loan; when an individual or financial institution lends money to a city government and expects to be repaid the full amount of the loan plus interest in a specified amount of time.

3. **pension** – an amount of money that a company or the government pays to a person who is retired and no longer works; usually that money is taken out of the employee’s weekly pay during the time they were working, so that they will have an income after retirement.

4. **annuity** – an insurance policy or an investment that pays someone a fixed amount of money each year

5. **obsolete** – no longer used because something newer exists

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. **public assets** – maintaining property and facilities that belong to all the people in a given town, city, state or nation, such as: airports, bridges, waterways, electric grids, parks, schools, libraries, ports, mass transit systems, railways, roads, waste and water systems; this maintenance is paid for by the taxes that individuals and corporations pay to the government.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

1. **self-serving** - serving one’s own interests, while often disregarding the truth or the interests of others

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. **underwater home** - when the value of a house is less than the amount the homeowner owes the lender

2. **short sale** - when a homeowner sells their house for less than its value, and the bank (or mortgage company) agrees to accept less money than the seller owes on the mortgage

3. **sentimentalist** - someone who values human interaction, building relationships with people

4. **equity** – fairness or justice in the way people are treated, or the value of a piece of property (such as a house) after the amount of a mortgage has been subtracted

# Detroit Timeline



**1903**

Henry Ford opens the Ford Motor Company.



**1908**

General Motors Automobile Company founded.



**1913**

Ford Motor Company factory in Highland Park, Mich. becomes the first factory to produce cars on a conveyor belt assembly line.



**1914**

Henry Ford announces he will pay workers \$5 a day.



**1910 - 1930**

The promise of good jobs draws thousands of immigrants from Europe and the Middle East, and blacks and whites from the South to Detroit. Racist Jim Crow laws and racial violence motivates many blacks to go North. The black population rises to 120,000 by 1930 (7% of population).



**1925**

Chrysler Corporation founded.



**1930s**

Auto workers organize and win recognition of the United Auto Workers Union.



**1940s**

The auto factories change to war production during WWII, drawing even more workers from the South.

There is a housing shortage for blacks and whites during the WWII years.

Restrictive covenants, racist violence, and federal mortgage policies prevent blacks from moving into white neighborhoods.



**1942**

Blacks win the fight to occupy the Sojourner Truth Homes in northeast Detroit.

A white real estate developer constructs a 6 ft. high concrete wall between a black neighborhood and land where he wants to build houses for whites as part of a deal to get an FHA loan.

## 1941-1944

White workers at dozens of Detroit area factories conduct wildcat strikes (not authorized or supported by the UAW union leadership) against the hiring and upgrading of black workers

## 1943

Fights between black and whites youths on Belle Isle turn into a 3 day race riot. 6,000 federal troops are called in. 34 people are killed. 17 blacks are shot to death by police.

## 1950

Detroit is the 4th largest city in the US, with a population of 1.8 million people.  
Black population rises to 300,000 (16.2% of the population).

Over half of workers in Detroit are in unions.

## 1950s

Auto factories begin to move out of Detroit proper. Between 1947 - 1977 Detroit loses about 175,000 factory jobs.

## 1956

Packard Motor factory closes.

## 1960

Berry Gordy founds Motown Records.  
Population: 1,670,144. Black population: 482,229 (28.9%)

## Early 1950s - early 1960s

Paradise Valley and Black Bottom neighborhoods are destroyed by “urban renewal” and the construction of Interstate-75.

Access to mortgages, the building of highways and suburbs, and racial prejudice motivate “white flight” from Detroit.

## June 23, 1963

Detroit Walk to Freedom draws 125,000 people, lead by Carl L. Franklin and Albert Cleage.  
Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers a precursor to his “I Have a Dream” speech at Cobo Hall.

## July 1967

The Detroit Rebellion, or uprising, occurs, sparked by years of racial inequality and police brutality. 17,000 police and troops are deployed, over 7,000 people are arrested, 43 people are killed, mostly by law enforcement, and 2,500 buildings are burned or damaged.



**1970**

Population: 1,511,482. Black population rises to 660,000 (44.5% of the population).



**1973**

Coleman Young, Detroit's first black mayor, is elected and serves for 20 years.



**1979**

Chrysler Corporation almost goes bankrupt. Gets \$1.5 billion loan (bailout) from federal government.

Automobile companies lay off 120,000 workers.



**2007 -2008**

Major financial crisis caused by banks and sub-prime mortgage lending. Hundreds of thousands of homeowners lost homes to foreclosure. Michigan lost hundreds of thousands of jobs.



**2008**

Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick pleads guilty to obstruction of justice and leaves office.



**2009**

U.S. Government lends (bails out) Chrysler, Ford, and GM \$80.7 billion to prevent the auto industry from going bankrupt.

Dave Bing elected Mayor.



**2010**

Population: 711,910. Black population is 589,659 (82%)



**2013**

Republican Governor Rick Snyder declares Detroit financially insolvent and appoints Kevin Orr as Emergency Manager, effectively taking power away from city government.

Kevin Orr enters Detroit into bankruptcy.



**2014**

Agreement to bring Detroit out of bankruptcy includes cuts to municipal workers' pensions and health benefits.

Mike Duggan elected Mayor. Kevin Orr resigns as Emergency Manager

# Laying Down Roots in Detroit

## CHAPTER ONE LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** *Detroit 48202* tells the history of Detroit over the past century, from its role as the auto capital of the world and “the arsenal of democracy” during World War II, to its demise and its current contested resurgence. It tells this story through the eyes of a letter carrier, who worked the same route for 30 years, and some of his long-time customers. In Chapter 1, the film explores the Great Migration that brought the families of Wendell and his customers to Detroit. (Although there was also a substantial migration of white people from the South to Detroit, this film focuses mostly on the experience of black Detroiters, as they are the majority of the customers on Wendell’s route.)

Between 1910 and 1929 and then between 1940 and 1970, 6.5 million African Americans migrated from the rural South to cities, mostly in the North and West. Railroad lines and the Greyhound Bus Line offered routes from Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, the Carolinas, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee to many cities in the North. Black-owned newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier* described the higher wages, better schools, and living conditions in the North. These papers made their way into the rural South through the black porters on the trains that traveled between North and South. And family and friends who had already moved away sent letters home encouraging others to join them.

In 1910, the African American population of Detroit was 6,000; by 1929, it was 120,000. Similarly, the black population of Chicago, New York, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Newark, Boston, Los Angeles, Oakland, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia increased dramatically through this migration. As with most big movements of people, there were factors that “pushed” African Americans out of the South and other factors that “pulled” them to the North.

Although legal enslavement had ended in 1865, a harsh system of sharecropping evolved to take its place. Under this system, rich landowners paid extremely low wages to families who worked on their land, guaranteeing that almost all black people living in the South would remain in poverty. This economic exploitation was maintained by a legal, rigid system of racial segregation that was enforced through terrorism: when black people tried to exercise their civil rights or protest against the unfairness of sharecropping, their efforts were met with the violence of the Ku Klux Klan and other racist groups.

In the North, meanwhile, the economy was growing and industry was expanding. Generally, European immigrants had been providing low-wage, unskilled labor in Northern factories, and industry owners refused to hire black workers, except as strikebreakers. But when World War I broke out in Europe in 1914, American factories needed more workers to produce goods for the war effort, and there were not enough immigrants to fill this role. Therefore, Northern industries

finally started to hire black workers in large numbers, recruiting them from the South to meet the increased demand.

In most Northern cities, black migrants from the South found employment that paid far more than sharecropping had in the South. Black men worked in auto plants, steel mills, slaughterhouses and meatpacking plants, as well as in shipbuilding and mining. Although segregation was not usually enforced through laws or terrorism in the North, it was still pervasive. In basic industry, black men were restricted to the hardest, dirtiest and most dangerous jobs. In Detroit's auto plants, for example, black men were hired mostly for work in the foundries. Black women were employed mainly as laundry workers or servants and house cleaners for white families at very low wages. Most unions prohibited black workers from joining. (Exceptions were the United Mine Workers, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the United Auto Workers.) Black workers were given few opportunities to move into more highly-paid, skilled jobs in the factories.

African Americans were not able to buy houses or rent apartments in white neighborhoods. This was done through the use of racial covenants, contracts signed by white landlords and homeowners, promising that they would not sell or rent to black people. Banks refused to give mortgages to black people seeking to live in white neighborhoods. Therefore, no matter how much money African Americans had, they were forced to live in overcrowded, all-black neighborhoods, where housing was often of poor quality and rent was very expensive. Despite these obstacles, black people built strong communities and culture in the neighborhoods where they settled. They also formed and joined organizations to fight against discrimination and for equal rights.

## PRE-VIEWING

### BEGIN BY ASKING STUDENTS

“What do you know about Detroit?” and compiling a list of their responses on the board, document camera or giant post-it paper.

### For students in Detroit, have the following whole-class discussion.

Ask: What do you think are important things to know about the history of Detroit?

- As a Detroiter, what are you most proud of about your city?
- What do you think people should know about Detroit?
- What were you taught about the history of your city in school?
- What more would you like to know?
- How would you find that information? Where do you think that information might be?
- Who would you ask in your family (or community) who knows a lot of Detroit’s history?

### WRITING

Have students choose one of the topics below and write on it for a few minutes.

Then ask volunteers to read their writing aloud.

- In your neighborhood, what role does the letter carrier play? What special or unique perspective or knowledge might the letter carrier have about the community?
- What do you think this statement means? “A letter carrier (in this case, Wendell), delivers mail and collects history.”
- Do you have an interesting story to share about something you’ve learned from your letter carrier?

### REVIEW CHAPTER 1 VOCABULARY

#### ASK THE CLASS

“Why do people move from one place to another?” Give them a few minutes to jot down their ideas and then tell them to rank them in order of importance. Put these statements on the board and ask them to rank them in the order of importance of people’s motivation to relocate, with 1 being the most important reason and 4 the least:

- People migrate from one place to another because they want better jobs.
- People migrate from one place to another because they want to live near relatives.
- People migrate from one place to another because they want excitement and adventure.
- People migrate from one place to another in order to escape violence.

*Tell students that as they watch Chapter 1, they should consider the reasons that Wendell's grandparents and his customers' families came to Detroit and what they may have brought with them when they migrated.*

## VIEW CHAPTER ONE

*If streaming film, Chapter One is from 00:00:00:00 - 00:11:43:19*

### POST-VIEWING

#### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- Why did Wendell become a mailman?
- What stands out for you about the kind of person he is?
- Is this a job that interests you? Why or why not?

#### WRITING/ QUOTE ANALYSIS

Have volunteers read their responses aloud.

Wendell says, “*Wealthy corporations buy up nice buildings, do absolutely nothing to them [maintain or fix up], hold them for speculation, and the people who want to live there, leave, so then they just board it up and hold it for speculation.*”

- What does he mean by this?
- What do we learn from this quote about an important issue/conflict facing Detroit?
- Have you or your family experienced this situation?

Wendell says, “*The people on my route didn't create this disaster, but they've had to survive it.*”

- What does this statement make you wonder/want to know more about as you continue to watch the film? Record their responses on chart paper and save it for a discussion after viewing Chapter 10.

#### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

Ask students why Ron Hewitt, Wendell's grandfather, and Julia Putnam's family left the South and came to Detroit.

## THE GREAT MIGRATION

Ask if anyone is familiar with this term and can explain it their classmates.

- Give out the poem “One-Way Ticket” by Langston Hughes. Have students read it silently; then ask for a volunteer to read it aloud (or read it aloud yourself). Identify “Dixie” if no one knows what it is. Ask students how they think the person in the poem is feeling and why; why do they think Hughes chose this title?
- Give students the handout with the following photos. Ask students to imagine what the people in them were expecting upon their arrival in the North. From their expressions, demeanor and clothing, what can you tell about their motivations, desires, values and hopes for their new life? Ask students how these photos illustrate why the film’s characters’ families came to Detroit.



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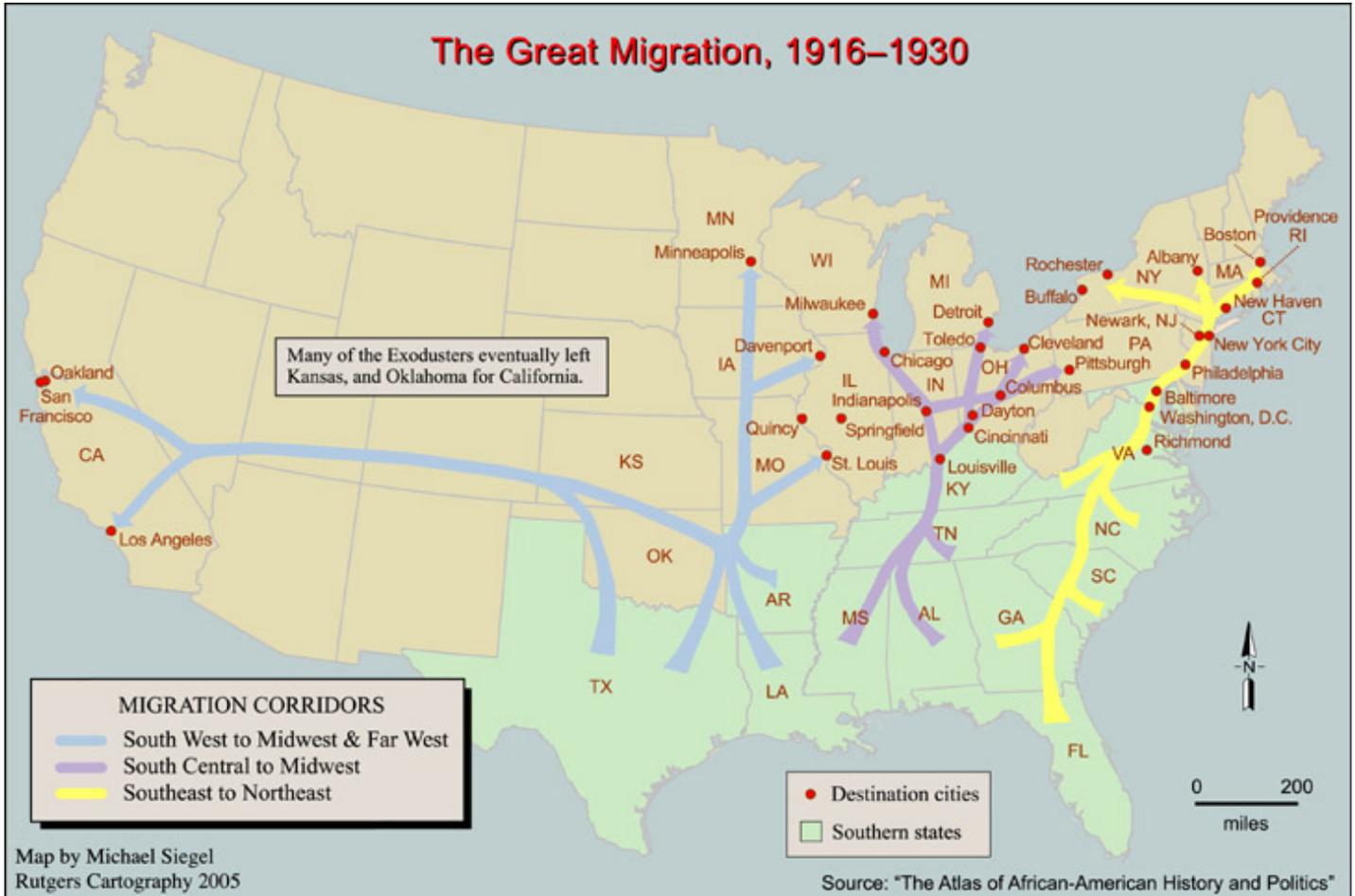
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1D. STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORIDA

- Show and/or give the handout of the Great Migration map. How do you think the railroad and bus routes helped determine where people ended up? What other reasons might people have had for choosing their destination? What did they find when they reached their destination?

 [http://www.inmotionaame.org/gallery/detail.cfm?migration=8&topic=I&id=8\\_003M&type=map](http://www.inmotionaame.org/gallery/detail.cfm?migration=8&topic=I&id=8_003M&type=map)



1E. COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

### SUPPLEMENTAL READING/EXTENSION ACTIVITY

If you think the background text for this chapter is at a suitable reading level and you have the time, have students read and annotate it. This is a possible annotation system:

- Highlight or underline ideas or phrases that you think are important. (Be prepared to explain why you think they are important.)
  - Put a ! next to anything you think is especially interesting or surprising.
  - Put a ? next to anything you find confusing.
  - Put a \* next to anything you agree with.
  - Write **no** next to anything you disagree with.
- Ask students to articulate the push-pull theory of migration.

- If students have done the supplemental reading, you can use a Venn diagram to have them compare and contrast (in writing or discussion), the way the poem and reading describe the same ideas.
  - Which kind of writing contains more facts? More details?
  - Which writing expresses more emotion?
  - Why might a writer choose to explain a concept through poetry?

## RESEARCH PROJECT(S)

- Oral History: Interview a parent or grandparent (or another older person in your neighborhood). Use the following questions as a guide:
  - How long have you lived in your city?
  - Why did you (or your ancestors/relatives) move to this city?
  - Where did you move from?
  - How did you get to your city? On a U.S. or world map, trace the route this person used to get to your city.
  - Was the life you found in this new place what you expected to find? How was it similar or different from your expectations?
  - Were you satisfied with life in your new city? What, if anything, did you miss about the place you came from?
  - Can you share a story about an important moment in your journey or early time in this city?

Each student can present their findings to the rest of the class in an oral presentation, and/or they can type up their findings to be published in a class book.

- For further research into the Great Migration, explore the Schomburg Center’s digital exhibit *In Motion: African American Migration Experience*:



<http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/landing.cfm?migration=8>  
<http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/landing.cfm?migration=9>

# HANDOUT – WHY DO PEOPLE MOVE?

## Images from the Great Migration



1A. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION



1B. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION



1C. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION



1D. STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORIDA

## ONE-WAY TICKET

by Langston Hughes

I pick up my life  
And take it with me  
And I put it down in  
Chicago, Detroit  
Buffalo, Scranton  
Any place that is  
North and East-  
And not Dixie.

I pick up my life  
And take it on the train  
To Los Angeles, Bakersfield.  
Seattle, Oakland, Salt Lake.

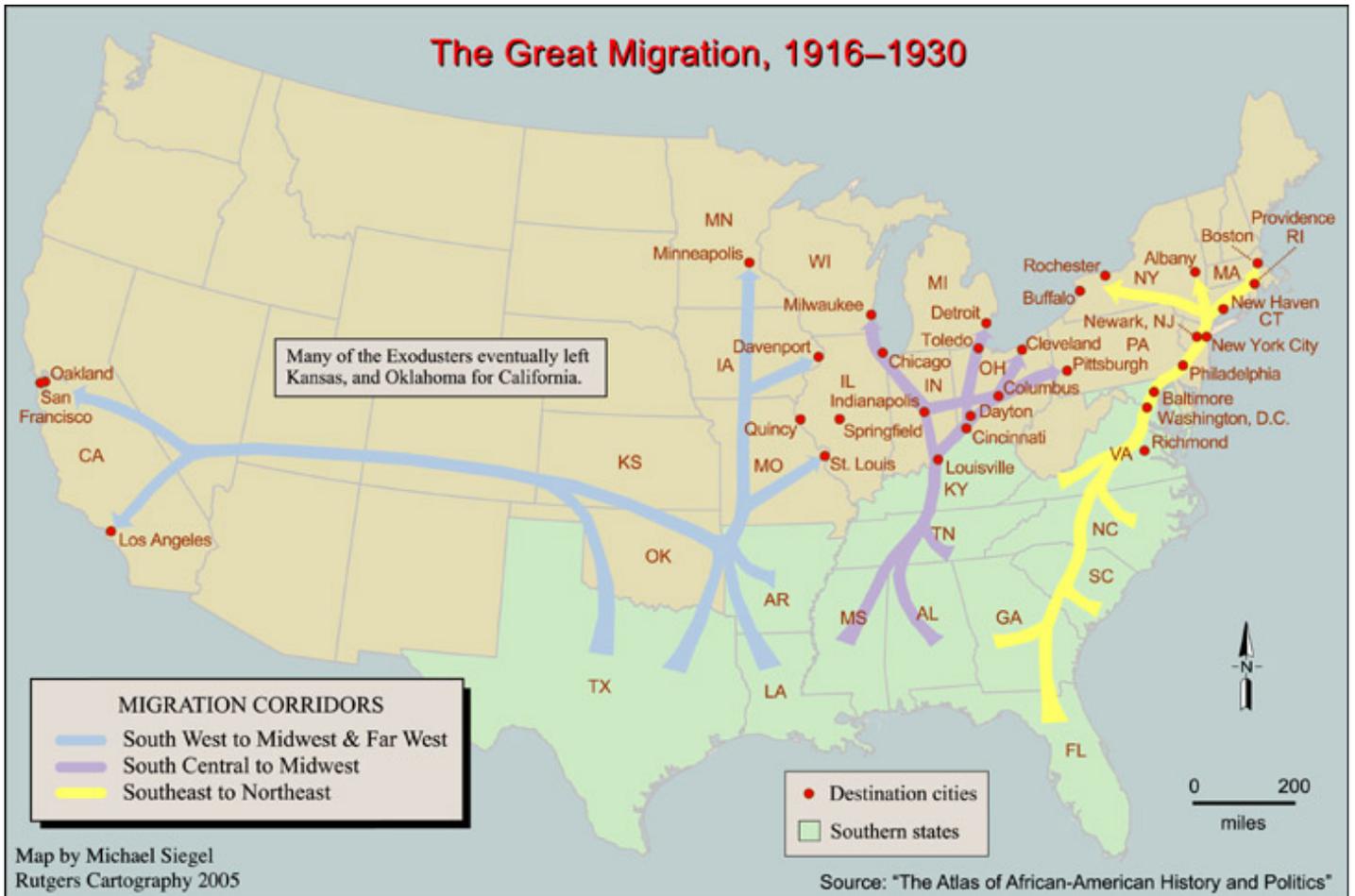
Any place that is  
North and West-  
And not South.

I am fed up  
With Jim Crow laws,  
People who are cruel  
And afraid.  
Who lynch and run,  
Who are scared of me  
And me of them.

I pick up my life  
And take it away  
On a one-way ticket-  
Gone up North,  
Gone out West,  
Gone!

# HANDOUT – PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

## Map of The Great Migration, 1916 - 1930



1E. COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

# Paradise Valley

## CHAPTER TWO LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** During the 1920s, Detroit’s black population almost tripled to 120,000. Most of the city’s black residents lived on Detroit’s near east side in neighborhoods called Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. These were adjacent communities that were open to black residents as they moved up from the South, looking for work in the auto industry. (Most of the neighborhoods in the rest of the city were off limits to black people. Hastings Street was the main thoroughfare running north-south through Black Bottom; it became well-known as a center of more than 300 black-owned businesses, including stores, restaurants and social institutions. Many prominent blues musicians, bands and jazz artists performed in the night clubs and bars in the entertainment district.

In the early 1960s, both of these neighborhoods were razed as part of what was called “urban renewal,” and expressways (such as I-75, which is called the Chrysler Freeway in Detroit) going from the city to the suburbs were built in their place. Many of the residents of these communities were relocated to public housing projects, and many others moved to a neighborhood on the west side of the city at 12th Street and Clairmount. This section of the film looks at the vibrant black communities that once existed there and explores why these communities were destroyed.

## PRE-VIEWING

### WRITING

- What makes a neighborhood feel like home?
- What is it about the community where you live (or one where you used to live) that makes it feel like home to you?
- Has your neighborhood changed in the time you have lived there?
- How do you feel about these changes?

### DISCUSSION

Ask volunteers to read their responses aloud. Facilitate a class discussion about what causes changes in a community.

### REVIEW CHAPTER 2 VOCABULARY

## VIEW CHAPTER TWO

*If streaming the film, Chapter Two is from 00:11:43:20 - 00:17:13:03.*

## POST-VIEWING

### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- What made Paradise Valley feel like home to Ms. Owens?
- What was the Hastings Street neighborhood like when she was young?
- Project the following photos from the film. Ask students: What do you see in these pictures that are examples of the resilience of the residents when Ms. Owens was growing up?



2A. CROWD IN DETROIT CELEBRATES VICTORY BY BOXER JOE LOUIS. BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY - DETROIT NEWS RECORDS



2B. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION



2C. WALTER REUTHER LIBRARY



2D. WALTER REUTHER LIBRARY

- Why does Paradise Valley no longer exist?

## QUOTE ANALYSIS

Wendell says, **“** 1,900 families were forced to move when I-75 was built. Many of them went to the West Side by 12th and Clairmount. **”**

- Ask students how they think families can be forced to move.

## WRITING

Greg Hicks says, **“** They leveled Black Bottom and built expressways... if you think a group of people is not worth anything, then it's easy to run an expressway through their community and destroy it. **”**

- Who is included in the “they” who leveled Black Bottom? Why do you think “they” destroyed that community?
  - How is this connected to racism?
  - Who are the “planners” Mr. Hicks refers to? How does their work relate to government policy?
  - What questions do you have about the way decisions are made in a city about what happens to and in communities?
- Again, ask volunteers to read their responses aloud, and ask other students to respond to their classmates' ideas.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Have students read and annotate this article to learn more about how the building of interstate highways in Detroit and other cities deliberately created and enforced racial segregation.



<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/feb/21/roads-nowhere-infrastructure-american-inequality>

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY/MAKING CONNECTIONS TO YOUR OWN LIFE

Display a map of your city that shows the highways, and ask students to identify them by name or route number (interstates or US routes).

- Have them find out when these roads were built – a simple google search should provide the answers.
- Have them speculate about what existed in those places before the highways were built.
- Building highways after World War II was part of a policy called *urban renewal*. Research this policy and the impact it had on your city.

## POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

This part of the film describes people being displaced from their neighborhoods by governmental policy in the 1950s and 60s.

- How does this relate to changes in your city today?
- Research how people in your neighborhood or city feel about these changes.
- Are people taking any actions against displacement?

# HANDOUT – PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

## Images from Paradise Valley



2A. CROWD IN DETROIT CELEBRATES VICTORY BY BOXER JOE LOUIS. BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY - DETROIT NEWS RECORDS



2B. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION



2C. WALTER REUTHER LIBRARY



2D. WALTER REUTHER LIBRARY

# Auto Industry and WWII Production

## CHAPTER THREE LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** World War II opened new opportunities for black people, both men and women, in basic industry. Fighting the war required the labor of millions of people. About 12 million Americans joined the armed forces – more than twice as many as had served in World War I. The war industries demanded still more. Between 1941 and 1945, some 15 million Americans moved away from their rural homes to seek jobs in shipyards, munitions factories, airplane factories, and other war-related shops. Even more people found war jobs close to home.

This desperate need for workers led to expanding opportunities for African Americans, women and the disabled, who had all been excluded from well-paying jobs before the war. With so many men (and some women) now in the armed forces, employers had to pay higher wages and offer jobs to people they had refused to hire in the past in order to keep their businesses running. And civil rights campaigns and labor activists worked hard to pressure government agencies and manufacturers with defense contracts to end racial discrimination in their hiring practices. Thousands of black people moved to cities in a second wave of the Great Migration, where finally, they were given skilled jobs earning good wages, although still not equal to what white workers earned.

The armed forces continued their past policies of segregation. The army accepted black soldiers, but segregated them in all-black units under the command of white officers. At the beginning of the war, the Marine Corps and Air Corps (later called the Air Force) barred blacks completely, while the Navy accepted them only as kitchen workers or laborers. Eventually, the U.S. government allowed black men to become pilots, and six hundred black pilots were trained at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. They flew hundreds of bombing missions in Africa and Europe. But black Americans who served in the military often received a hostile reception during their training, particularly in the South. Frequently, German prisoners of war who were brought to the U.S. were treated better than black members of the armed forces.

Because of continued discrimination in the armed forces and in the larger society, African Americans launched a “Double V” campaign – for victory against racism at home and victory against the fascist Axis Powers abroad. By the end of the war in 1945, black Americans and their white allies had set the stage for the emergence of the modern civil rights movement.

In Detroit, auto production stopped as all the plants were converted to making war armaments. Detroit factories were open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and businesses that served the industrial workforce were bustling all over the city.

“READING” A PHOTOGRAPH

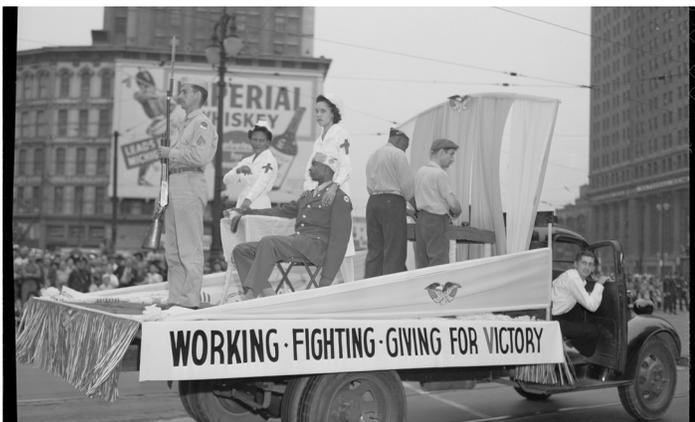
- Divide the class into groups of three and give Ch. 3 Handout 1 to each group.
- Assign each group to study one of the photos on this page, listing in writing what they see and including as many details as possible. (Depending on the number of students in your class, each photo is likely to be studied by more than one group.)
- Give out or project each picture (one at a time) and have each group(s) that examined it say what they think it might mean for the city of Detroit: who the person(s) is, what the situation is, etc. Discuss as a whole class.
- All of these pictures are related to World War II. Students may figure that out, and they will have varying ideas about what each represents. Tell them the part of the film they are about to see will explore the history illustrated by these photos.



3A. SCREENSHOT FROM “LOST LANDSCAPES OF DETROIT,” PRELINGER ARCHIVES



3B. SCREENSHOT FROM “IN THE SERVICE OF AMERICA: LIBERATION BOMBER PRODUCTION,” NATIONAL ARCHIVE



3C. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION



3D. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION

REVIEW CHAPTER 3 VOCABULARY



# VIEW CHAPTER THREE

If streaming the film, Chapter Three is from 00;17;13;04 - 00;22;03;09.

## POST-VIEWING

### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- What brought General Baker’s family and Marian Kramer to Detroit?

### QUOTE ANALYSIS/CLASS DISCUSSION

Tom Sugrue says, “ Because there were so many jobs and a shortage of workers, during the Second World War many auto companies and defense manufacturers opened jobs to African Americans for the first time. Some of that opening came with a fight. Civil rights organizations put pressure on the auto companies to open these unionized, well-paying jobs with good benefits to African Americans. ”

- Why do you think this is true?

### “READING” A PHOTO ACTIVITY

Give students Ch. 3 Handout 2.

- How do you think the following photos illustrate the meaning of Sugrue’s statement?



3E. PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE HENRY FORD.

### HATE STRIKES COST THREE MILLION HOURS

Labor Department Data Shows Loss To Nation In Walkouts

DETROIT, Mich.—Strikes in this area to prevent employment and upgrading of Negro workers have cost the war effort nearly three million man hours, the U. S. Department of Labor revealed this week.

In a report supplied at the request of the NAACP, the Department of Labor stated that between a three-month period of March 1 through May 31, 1943 man days of work in U. S. war plants had been lost to the enemy because of racial bigotry. The Department of Labor lists protests against the upgrading of Negro workers as the chief reason for these strikes.

Other reasons recorded are: hiring of colored workers and demand for separate sanitary facilities; placing of Negroes in production departments; hiring of Negro plant guards; and refusal to work with Negro toolmakers.

The War Production Board estimates that an additional one million man-hours were lost by the Detroit riot.

In another stoppage during the same period at the Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding company in Mobile, 23,487 man days or 563,208 man hours were lost in a strike and riot.

**Chicago Defender**  
 Founded May 6, 1905, by ROBERT S. ABBOTT, ILL.  
 VOL. XXXIX, No. 15, JULY 31, 1943  
 Published by The ROBERT S. ABBOTT PUBLISHING COMPANY (Incorporated)  
 Chicago, 3435 Ind. Ave. Tel. Cal. 8656  
 LONDON, 28 Green St. Leicester Sq.

3F. THE CHICAGO DEFENDER, JULY 31, 1943



3G. PHOTO FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OVI COLLECTION

## **WRITING**

- What impact do you think the wartime industries had on life in Detroit?
- What tensions in the city do you think might have been heightened by the dramatic increase in Detroit's population?
- Have volunteers read their responses aloud.

## **CLASS DISCUSSION/MAKING CONNECTIONS TO YOUR OWN LIFE**

- Can you think of any current national or international events that are impacting your city right now? Describe the events and how they are affecting the place where you live.

## **CLASS DISCUSSION/POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION**

In this part of the film, we see people taking action against employment discrimination.

- Have you or anyone you know (or know of) participated in campaigns against racial or gender discrimination in employment? Describe them.

## HANDOUT – PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

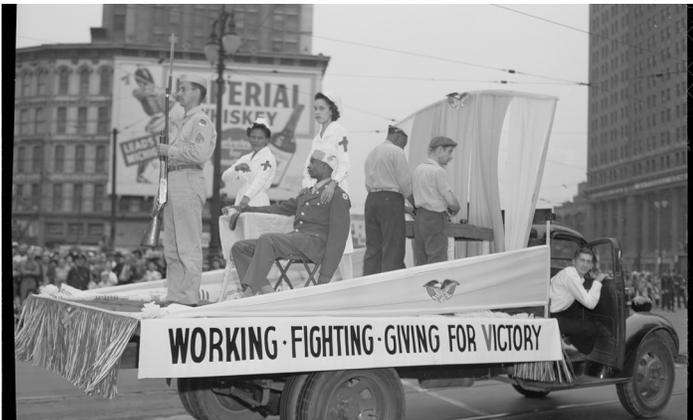
### Images of Detroit Industry During WWII



3A. SCREENSHOT FROM "LOST LANDSCAPES OF DETROIT," PRELINGER ARCHIVES



3B. SCREENSHOT FROM "IN THE SERVICE OF AMERICA: LIBERATION BOMBER PRODUCTION," NATIONAL ARCHIVE



3C. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION



3D. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION

# HANDOUT – PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

## Race Relations in Detroit Industry During WWII



3E. PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE HENRY FORD.



3G. PHOTO FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION

### HATE STRIKES COST THREE MILLION HOURS

Labor Department Data Shows Loss To Nation In Walkouts

DETROIT, Mich.—Strikes in this area to prevent employment and upgrading of Negro workers have cost the war effort nearly three million man hours, the U. S. Department of Labor revealed this week.

In a report supplied at the request of the NAACP, the Department of Labor stated that between a three-month period of March 1 through May 31, 101,953 man days of work in U. S. war plants had been lost to the enemy because of racial hatred. The Department of Labor lists protests against the upgrading of Negro workers as the chief reason for these strikes.

Other reasons recorded are: hiring of colored workers and demand for separate sanitary facilities; placing of Negroes in production department; hiring of Negro plant guards; and refusal to work with Negro toolmakers.

The War Production Board estimates that an additional one million man-hours were lost by the Detroit area.

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3F. THE CHICAGO DEFENDER, JULY 31, 1943

# Housing: Segregated or Fair?

## CHAPTER FOUR LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** Beginning in the 1930s, federal housing policy largely caused, and explicitly maintained, residential segregation through the creation of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), which were established during the Great Depression. The FHA's goal was to stimulate the economy by greatly expanding Americans' access to homeownership. Prior to the establishment of the FHA, a homebuyer had to make a down payment of approximately 50% of the cost of the home and pay back a mortgage in only 10 years at a high interest rate. By insuring home mortgages, the FHA (and the HOLC) allowed homebuyers to make lower down payments and gave them many more years to pay back a mortgage, at lower interest rates. This policy had the intended effect of dramatically increasing the number of Americans who were able to afford to own their own homes.

But this only applied to white Americans. FHA policy specifically denied this access to African Americans and other people of color. The FHA used a system of maps created by the HOLC that identified which neighborhoods were considered worthy of providing mortgages. On the maps, all-white neighborhoods were rated "A" and colored green. In these neighborhoods, banks readily provided mortgages. Neighborhoods that were mostly black were rated "D" and colored red. It was almost impossible to get a mortgage in these neighborhoods. This led to the term redlining. Another requirement of the FHA system was that mortgages would not be provided if the sale of a home would change the racial makeup of a neighborhood.

In addition, the FHA required that any property whose mortgage it insured had to have a restrictive covenant. This was a clause in the property deed forbidding the sale (or rental) of that house to anyone other than white, Christian people. As a result of federal policy, millions of white families were able to buy houses and accumulate the wealth that homeownership provides. In contrast, the discrimination built into these policies denied black families the same opportunity to build wealth and systematically kept neighborhoods segregated. (Use this link for a description of housing discrimination in the San Francisco area and examples of a *restrictive covenant*.)



<https://belonging.berkeley.edu/rootsraceplace/raciallyrestrictivecovenants>

FHA policy both fueled and reflected individual white people's racism: some whites used violence to thwart black families' attempts to move into certain neighborhoods, while many white people simply moved out of a neighborhood when black people started moving in.

Although this policy officially ended with the Fair Housing Act of 1968, the damage had been done, and the historical impact has been long term persistent segregation and economic inequality. In Detroit, the film shows how black residents, along with some white allies, fought to move into a new public housing development on the East Side, and how they won this struggle.

## PRE-VIEWING

- Have students view the very end of Chapter 3 again [00:21;47], or put this quote on the board:

Tom Sugrue says,

“ As African Americans began to move into the city, they found themselves confined in densely-packed, older neighborhoods, with older and rundown housing stock. ”

- Ask students what they think this means:
  - Who confined African Americans to this kind of housing, and why did it happen?
  - What do you think African Americans might have done in response to being confined to overcrowded, segregated neighborhoods?
- Help students define these words:
  1. **segregation** – the act of separating people based on their race, religion, gender or ethnicity
  2. **desegregation** – eliminating (or getting rid of) the laws or customs that kept people separated based on their race, religion, gender or ethnicity
  3. **integration** – the practice of bringing together people of different races (or religions, genders or ethnicities), who had previously been kept apart
  4. **institutional racism** - when courts, schools, private businesses or governments have policies and practices that negatively affect a certain racial group (also known as systemic or structural racism)
  5. **interpersonal racism** - when a person acts on their negative perceptions of a certain racial group

### CLASS DISCUSSION

- Think about the neighborhood you live in: would you consider it segregated or integrated? What evidence do you have for your opinion?
- Why do you think neighborhoods in the U.S. are segregated?
- Do you think neighborhood segregation is caused more by institutional or interpersonal racism? What evidence do you have for your answer?

### REVIEW THE REST OF CHAPTER 4 VOCABULARY.



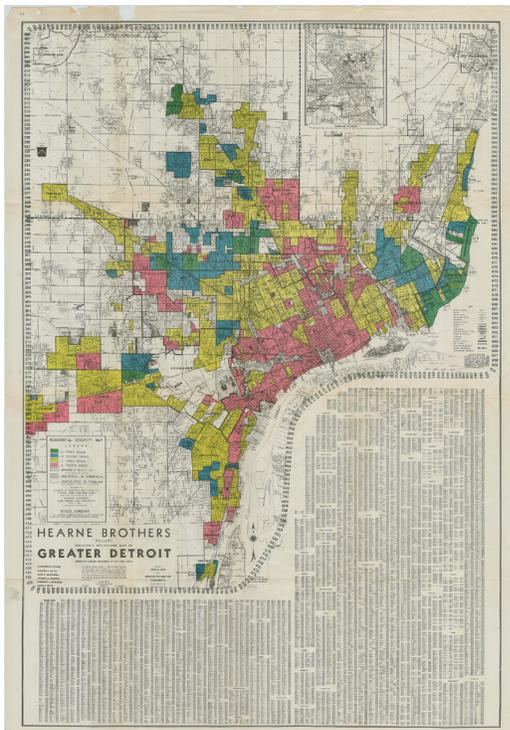
## VIEW CHAPTER FOUR

*If streaming the film, Chapter Four is from 00:22;03;10 - 00:29;19;02..*

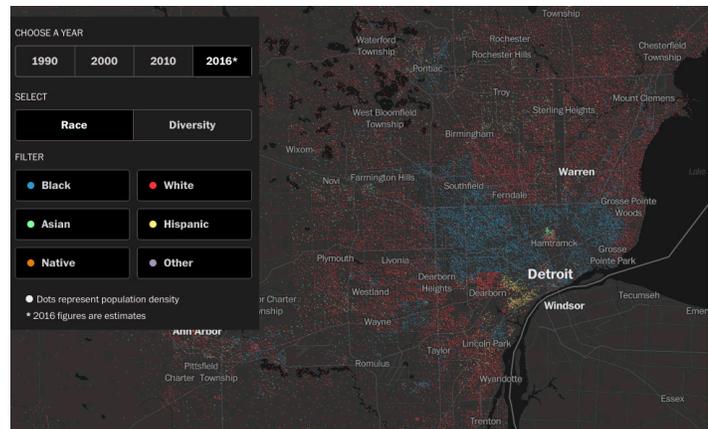
## POST-VIEWING

### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- Why do you think Ms. Owens’s family wanted to move to the Sojourner Truth Houses?
  - Would you have moved there if you knew you would face violent opposition?
  - How did black people win the right to move into these homes?
  - Why is there a 6-foot wall in the neighborhood that Wendell visits?
- Have students read and annotate the text *The History of Housing Segregation in the 20th Century* (Ch. 4 Handout 1).
  - Have students work in pairs to answer the questions and fill in the chart on the worksheet *Buying a House* (Ch. 4 Handout 2). Discuss their responses as a whole class.
  - Project the images of the 1934 redlining map of Detroit and the map containing 2016 Census Bureau data.
    - Discussion: How does the redlining that occurred during the 1930s relate to present-day racial segregation in the Detroit region?



4A. IMAGE FROM NATIONAL ARCHIVES



4B. MAP FROM “AMERICA IS MORE DIVERSE THAN EVER - BUT STILL SEGREGATED,” WASHINGTON POST, MAY 2, 2018.

## WRITING

- Based on what you've seen in the film and the information in the reading, do you think housing segregation is more the result of institutional or interpersonal racism? Include evidence for your position from the film, these maps and the reading.
- A template for an argumentative essay is included as an optional supplement, as some students prefer a structured outline when they are writing a formal essay.

Or,

- Write a letter to your City Council member proposing a way to end residential segregation in your city.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES/MAKING CONNECTIONS TO YOUR OWN LIFE

1. Have students explore how their city was redlined by using this website:



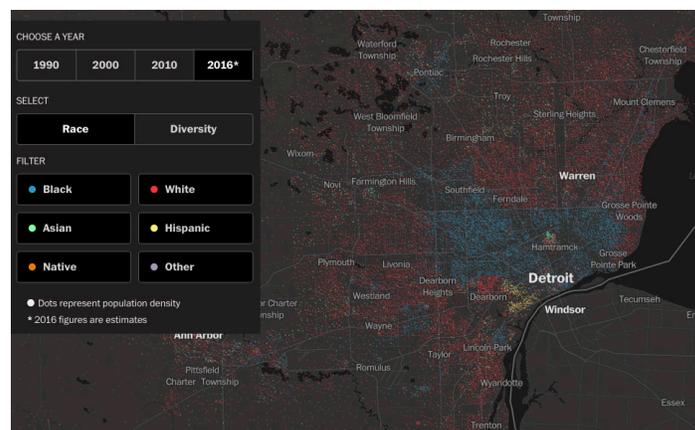
<https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=4/36.70/-96.94&opacity=0.8>

\*In advance of this activity, it would be helpful for the educator to become familiar with the information for your city. You can view your city as a whole and also click on a particular neighborhood to see the HOLC's rating by letter grade and color, as well as a written description of that neighborhood from 1935-1940, including its ethnic and racial composition.

Citation: Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly, et al., "Mapping Inequality," American Panorama, ed



2. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/national/segregation-us-cities/>



- Use the information on these interactive maps to make connections between the history of redlining and the persistence of residential segregation.
3. For an in-depth look at housing segregation in Chicago, you can explore this map:



<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

### How Government Policy Created and Maintained Residential Segregation

\*In this text, we use the pronoun *he* to describe home buyers and sellers because throughout much of the 20th century, only men could obtain mortgages.

As we saw in the film, when black families tried to move into the Sojourner Truth Houses, they had to confront violence by white people who didn't want to share a community with black people. That happened in many places across the country, but it is only part of the history of housing segregation. As Tom Sugrue says, "The federal government was instrumental in creating and maintaining residential segregation."

Here's how that happened:

- Almost no one has enough money to buy a house for cash. Therefore, most people need to borrow money from a bank. If someone wants to buy a house, he gives the seller of the house a small amount of money, known as a *down payment*, and borrows the rest of the money from a bank. That loan is called a *mortgage*. The buyer pays the bank back in monthly installments plus a certain amount in *interest*: an extra amount of money that allows the bank to make a profit from lending him the money to buy the house.
- Before the 1930s, a buyer had to make a very large down payment to the seller, and could borrow the rest of the money from a bank (if the bank agreed to lend it), but the buyer had to pay it all back in only 10 years at a high interest rate. Very few people earned enough to save that much money, so not many people could afford to buy their own home.
- In 1934, Congress created the Federal Housing Administration. The FHA insured mortgages provided by banks. This means that people who wanted to buy a home were permitted to make a smaller down payment (only about 10%) and had more years to pay back the loan. Banks were willing to provide mortgages at a lower interest rate because even if the buyer stopped paying the monthly mortgage, the FHA would compensate the bank.
- The home seller benefitted from this arrangement because he would be able to sell his house more easily. A home buyer benefitted because he was able to buy a house with less money for a down payment and at a lower interest rate. And this arrangement also helped the U.S. economy to grow because it encouraged a lot more building, buying and selling of houses.
- But right from the start of the FHA, racism was built into the system. (This is called *institutional or systemic racism*.) The FHA used a system of maps created by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (another federal agency) that identified which neighborhoods were considered worthy of providing mortgages. On the maps, all-white neighborhoods were rated "A" and colored green. In these neighborhoods, banks readily provided mortgages. Neighborhoods that were mostly black were rated "D" and colored red. It was almost impossible to get a mortgage in these neighborhoods. This led to

the term *redlining*. Another requirement of the FHA system was that mortgages would not be provided if the sale of a home would change the racial makeup of a neighborhood.

- In addition, the FHA required that any property whose mortgage it insured had to have a restrictive covenant. A *restrictive covenant* was a clause in the property deed forbidding the sale (or rental) of that house to anyone other than white people. In many places, restrictive covenants also prohibited homeowners from selling or renting their property to Jews, Italians, Greeks and Latinos.
- As a result of the FHA's policy, millions of white people were able to buy homes and acquire the family wealth that home ownership provides. In contrast, the discrimination built into these policies denied black families these benefits and systematically kept neighborhoods segregated. Although the Fair Housing Act of 1968 officially ended this policy, the historical impact has been long-term economic inequality.
- The combination of federal housing policy, highway construction to newly-built suburbs, and many white people's resistance to integration fueled what is known as *white flight*.
- When black people did manage to buy homes in neighborhoods that weren't all black, many white homeowners often moved out of the neighborhood. This is called *white flight*. This interpersonal racism, combined with federal housing policy and redlining, ensured that banks and businesses would not invest in communities where black people lived.

Adapted from "The Case for Reparations" by Ta-Nehisi Coates in *The Atlantic*, June 2014.

## WORKSHEET – BUYING A HOUSE

1. What is a mortgage?
2. What is a down payment?
3. What is interest?

	<b>Buying a House Before 1934 (before the FHA existed)</b>	<b>Buying a House After 1934</b>
4. How large a down payment is needed?		
5. How long does the buyer have to pay back the mortgage?		
6. Compare the interest rate.		

7. Why do you think the federal government established the FHA?
8. How did the FHA's policies discriminate against African Americans?

## WRITING ACTIVITY – WRITING AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

**Question** Is housing segregation more the result of interpersonal or institutional racism?

*Interpersonal Racism*

*Institutional Racism*

**Question** Is housing segregation more the result of interpersonal or institutional racism?

### Introduction Paragraph

*Why is this question important?*

*Describe the different ways people can answer this question.*

**1st position:**

**2nd position:**

**Thesis statement:**

## Paragraph 2: Your Argument

*Explain your argument.*

### Paragraph 3: The Counter Argument

*What is the other position?*

*Why is your position stronger?*

## Conclusion

*Summarize your main points.*

*To make your essay even more interesting, relate your argument to what is going on today.*

\*When using direct quotations from the text, remember to I.C.E (Introduce, Cite, and Explain).

<b>Introduce the quotation</b>
<b>Cite and write quotation</b>
<b>Explain how the quotation supports your argument</b>

## **INTRODUCE**

Introduce a quotation by providing background information that the reader will need in order to understand what is being said. You can also use a short introductory phrase such as one of the following:

- According to the reading “The History of Housing Segregation in the 20th Century...”
- As the reading explains, “...”
- It was impossible for black families to buy houses in predominantly white neighborhoods. The reading describes how, “...”

## **CITE**

Copy the sentence or portion of the sentence you want to use as a quotation. Show the source of the quotation in parentheses.

## **EXPLAIN**

How does the quote connect back to your argument?

# Auto: Boom and Bust

## CHAPTER FIVE & SIX LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** When WWII ended in 1945, the auto plants returned to manufacturing cars. Jobs were plentiful through the 1950s, to meet increasing consumer demand in the growing U.S. economy. Immediately after the war ended, several million workers in industrial unions went on strike, demanding higher wages and better benefits and working conditions. This ended the no-strike pledge that had existed during the war. The United Automobile Workers' Union (UAW) was one of the leaders of this strike wave, with 225,000 of its members striking in November 1945. Through the militancy of organized labor, the UAW (and many other unions) was able to negotiate contracts that provided industrial workers with middle-class wages and benefits. In 1947, Congress sought to limit the power of workers by passing the Taft-Hartley Act (overriding President Truman's veto), which is still in effect today. The decline in union membership and influence is one of the factors driving the current and growing economic inequality in the U.S.

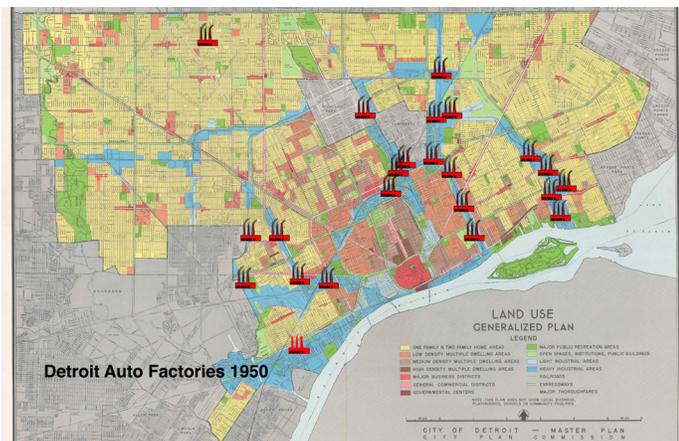
Beginning in the 1960s, the auto companies sought to limit the power of the UAW by decentralizing. They built plants outside the city of Detroit, first in the suburbs, then in southern states that outlawed unions (so called right-to-work states), and finally in countries where wages are drastically lower, i.e., Mexico. In addition, U.S. automakers faced increasing competition from foreign car companies. This led to massive layoffs in the auto industry and a decreasing tax base in the city as corporations left, causing a decline in city services. And the region's history of rigid segregation led to rising frustration among Detroit's black residents.

## PRE-VIEWING

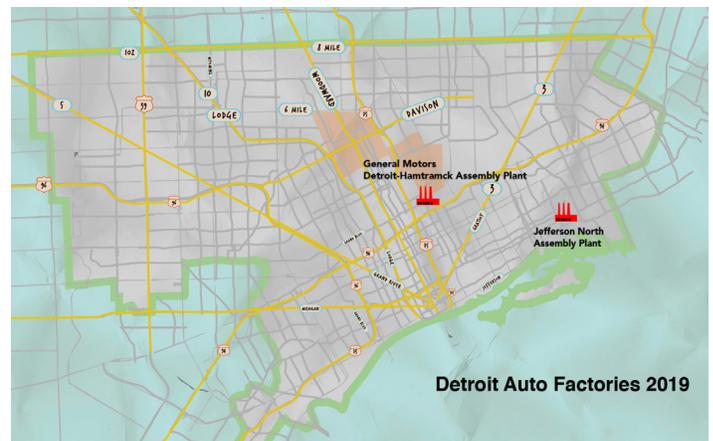
- Review the vocabulary for these chapters. Pay special attention to the word *decentralize* and help students define it by looking at its root (central): *to scatter or spread something widely from an area of concentration.*

## CLASS DISCUSSION

- Find an image of a Motown 45 record and project it for the class.
- Ask students where the name Motown Records comes from. Elicit that Detroit was known as the Motor City because it was the center of the automobile industry in the United States.
- Project these maps showing the number of auto plants in Detroit in 1950 and 2019. Give students a few minutes to study the images and have them write one or two questions they think could be answered from the information presented on the maps. Have volunteers ask their questions of the whole class and have other students answer. Then ask students to write at least one question they have that can not be answered from the information on the maps, and compile a list of these wondering questions.



5A. MAP FROM DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY. FACTORY LOCATIONS ADDED BY GRITO PRODUCTIONS.



5B. MAP BY WORK DEPARTMENT. FACTORY LOCATIONS ADDED BY GRITO PRODUCTIONS.

## SAY

“As you watch this section of the film, think about what impact the decrease in the number of auto plants and auto jobs had on Detroit and on individual families.”



## VIEW CHAPTER FIVE & SIX

*If streaming film, Chapters Five and Six are from 00:29;19;03 - 00:39;21;17.*

CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

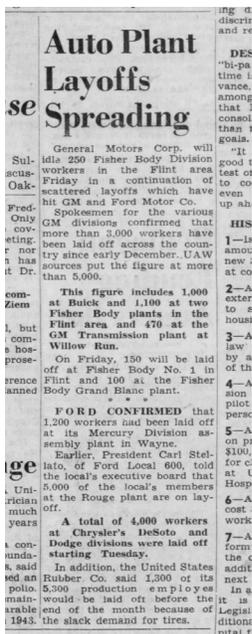
- Ron Hewitt describes getting fired from one auto factory in the morning and getting hired at another auto plant that same day. What does this tell us about Detroit and the auto industry in the 1950s?
- What did Ron Hewitt mean when he said that the DeSoto factory would rather hire black people who came from the South because they were more *pliable*? Why would factory owners prefer workers who they *perceived* as more pliable??
- Ask students if any of their wondering questions were answered in these chapters.

WRITING

- Rick Smith tells Wendell the story of how he and his friend Frankie took action to desegregate a roller rink.
- How do these actions show resistance?
- What impact do you think racial barriers have on a city's ability to thrive?
- Do you know (or know of) anyone who took actions similar to Rick and his friends? Explain what they did.
- Have you ever done anything like that? Would you?

CLASS DISCUSSION

- Project these images and ask: Why do you think the filmmaker included these images in this section of the film?



5D. IMAGE FROM PRELINGER ARCHIVES.

5C. IMAGE FROM DETROIT FREE PRESS, JAN. 10, 1958.

- Explain what General Baker means when he says,

“ Whenever you had a downturn in auto production, everyone was thrown in the streets. ”

- Do you know anyone who has been laid off?
- What impact did it have on them and their family?
- What impact do you think massive layoffs had on the city of Detroit?

- General Baker also says,

“ My dad had worked in auto all this time; his plant moved to Kentucky and he lost his job. ”

- Why do you think big companies leave one place and move to another?
- Do you know any companies that have done this?
- One of the reasons Tom Sugrue gives for auto companies moving factories out of Detroit was to weaken the power of the auto workers’ union (the UAW). How would moving factories out of Detroit weaken the union? Why would auto companies want to do that?
- How does Wendell feel when he visits the house where he lived as a child? What do you think happened to the house?
- How does Dawn DeRose feel about deteriorating conditions in her neighborhood (what she refers to as *blight*)? Why does she stay there instead of moving?
- What does Dawn mean when she says,

“ We’ll be in trouble if we don’t take the time. ”

- Share, or project, the images on Chapter 5 Handout of Dawn DeRose’s activism.
  - What do these pictures show us about her determination to improve conditions in Detroit?

## WRITING

- Do you think there is a connection between the factories moving out of Detroit, the state of Wendell’s childhood home, and the conditions Dawn describes in her area? Explain your answer.

## WRITING/MAKING CONNECTIONS TO YOUR OWN LIFE

- Are there conditions in your community that are evidence of economic or racial inequality, compared with other neighborhoods in your city?
- What actions could you take to address these conditions?

# HANDOUT – PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

## Dawn DeRose's Activism



5E. IMAGE COURTESY OF KATE LEVY.



5F. © GRITO PRODUCTIONS.



5G. © GRITO PRODUCTIONS.



5H. © GRITO PRODUCTIONS

# 1967 Rebellion and DRUM

## CHAPTER SEVEN LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** The rebellions that swept through American cities in the 1960s were caused by the continuation of the systemic racism that had been in place for centuries. While by the mid 1960s some progress toward equality had been made by the Civil Rights Movement, discrimination was still rampant in housing, education, employment, and the criminal justice system. The Civil Rights Movement and the war in Vietnam, as well as the revolutionary fervor that was brewing around the world, had a huge impact on masses of people across the U.S., as they joined together to organize against injustice and oppression.

In Detroit, when the police raided an after-hours drinking club in July 1967, people's pent-up anger at decades of police brutality and harassment boiled over, and they began to actively rebel. Similar uprisings occurred in many cities throughout the second half of the decade. President Johnson appointed a commission to study this urban unrest; called the Kerner Commission, it issued a scathing indictment of the institutional discrimination and oppression of black communities. It concluded, "Our nation is moving toward two societies - one black, one white - separate and unequal."

REVIEW CHAPTER 7 VOCABULARY

QUOTE ANALYSIS

Put this quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. on the board or document camera:

*“A riot is the language of the unheard.”*

- Ask students what they think this means and if they agree, or disagree.

GRAPHIC: “READING A PHOTO”

Project and/or give out these 4 photos from Chapter 7.

- What do you see in these photos that shows resistance?
- What do you think people might be resisting against?
- What do these pictures make you wonder?



7A. PHOTO FROM WALTER REUTHER LIBRARY, WSU



7B. IMAGE FROM WALTER REUTHER LIBRARY



7C. IMAGE FROM DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY, BURTON HISTORICAL COLLECTION.



7D. IMAGE FROM NATIONAL ARCHIVES.



## VIEW CHAPTER SEVEN

If streaming film, Chapter Seven is from 00:39:21:18 - 00:48:57:15.

### POST-VIEWING

#### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- What is a *blind pig*?
  - Why do you think blind pigs existed around Detroit in the 1960s?
  - Elicit (or provide) the distinction between the terms *immediate cause* and *underlying cause*.
  - According to General Baker and Tom Sugrue, what caused the Detroit Rebellion of 1967? What was the immediate cause of this rebellion? What was the underlying cause?
  - How did the police and armed forces respond?
- Have students read and annotate the excerpt from the article “The 1968 Kerner Commission Got it Right, But Nobody Listened” from *Smithsonian Magazine*. Then, working in pairs, have them answer these questions:
    - What argument is the writer making? Underline any sentences that help you answer this question.
    - What do you think the writer means by “nobody listened?”
  - Have them share their responses in a whole-class discussion.

#### QUOTE ANALYSIS

Marian Baker says, “Everything that had oppressed the community, people hit. Those stores and businesses they had respect for, even if they were white, they wrote ‘soul brother and sister’ on it. People worked to protect one another.”

- How could a business oppress the community?
- In what ways could people protect one another?
- How does that show resilience?

#### WRITING

Some people have called the rebellions of the 1960s race riots. Both the article about the Kerner Commission Report and the quote by Marian Kramer contradict that assumption.

- What evidence do the film and the article provide to support their position? Which position do you agree with? Why?

## QUOTE ANALYSIS

Play the excerpt [00:46:31;00 - 00:47:18;00] where General Baker describes how after curfew, you couldn't get to the store or the hospital; the only place they would let you get to was an auto plant if you were employed there.

He says, “ The analysis we made of that was the only place that black people had any value in this society was at the point of production . . . so we turned all our work towards organizing in these factories, because that was where we had strength, and it seemed to be the only place where they needed us. ”

It is unlikely that students will know the definition for *point of production*, but ask students if they can figure out its meaning. Then provide the following definition: “*at work, making products for big corporations to sell.*” Do you agree, or disagree, with General Baker?

## CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- What was DRUM? Why did it form, and what were its goals? How does DRUM illustrate both resilience and resistance?
- Wendell reflects on how the time he grew up in was a period of excitement and upheaval. Why do you think he was attracted to an organization that was fighting injustice?

## CLASS DISCUSSION/CONNECTIONS TO YOUR OWN LIFE

- Do you know of any organizations in your community or city that are fighting for justice or equality? What actions do they take? Would you consider joining such an organization?

## WRITING/EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Research any rebellions in your city during the 1960s.

- What caused the rebellion? What were the outcomes? What impact did it have on your city? Create a Venn diagram showing how that rebellion was similar to and different from the one in Detroit.

## HANDOUT – PHOTOS & GRAPHICS

### Images from 1967 Rebellion



7A. PHOTO FROM WALTER REUTHER LIBRARY, WSU



7B. IMAGE FROM WALTER REUTHER LIBRARY



7C. IMAGE FROM DETROIT PUBLIC LIBRARY, BURTON HISTORICAL COLLECTION.



7D. IMAGE FROM NATIONAL ARCHIVES.

## READING – THE 1968 KERNER COMMISSION GOT IT RIGHT, BUT NOBODY LISTENED (EXCERPT)

Pent-up frustrations boiled over in many poor African-American neighborhoods during the mid-to late-1960s, setting off riots that rampaged out of control from block to block. Burning, battering and ransacking property, raging crowds created chaos in which some neighborhood residents and law enforcement operatives endured shockingly random injuries or deaths. Many Americans blamed the riots on outside agitators or young black men, who represented the largest and most visible group of rioters. But, in March 1968, the Kerner Commission turned those assumptions upside-down, declaring white racism—not black anger—turned the key that unlocked urban American turmoil.

Bad policing practices, a flawed justice system, unscrupulous consumer credit practices, poor or inadequate housing, high unemployment, voter suppression, and other culturally embedded forms of racial discrimination all converged to propel violent upheaval on the streets of African-American neighborhoods in American cities, north and south, east and west. And as black unrest arose, inadequately trained police officers and National Guard troops entered affected neighborhoods, often worsening the violence.

“White society,” the presidentially appointed panel reported, “is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.” The nation, the Kerner Commission warned, was so divided that the United States was poised to fracture into two radically unequal societies—one black, one white.

The riots represented a different kind of political activism, says William S. Pretzer, the National Museum of African American History and Culture’s senior curator. “Commonly sparked by repressive and violent police actions, urban uprisings were political acts of self-defense and racial liberation on a mass, public scale. Legislative successes at the federal level with the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts were not reflected in the daily lives of African-Americans facing police misconduct, economic inequality, segregated housing, and inferior education.” Black racial violence was not unique in 1960s American culture, Pretzer says: White Southerners set a precedent by viciously attacking Freedom Riders and other civil rights protesters.

In 1969, about one-third of blacks lived below the poverty line. By 2016, that number had dropped to 22 percent as a significant number of African-Americans moved into the middle class with a boost from 1960s legislation, but the percentage of blacks living in poverty is still more than twice as high as the percentage of whites. Blacks now have a louder voice in government, and yet, poverty and disenfranchisement remain. There have been only scattered efforts over the last 50 years to end America’s racial divide or to address the racial component of poverty in the United States.

Read more:



<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/1968-kerner-commission-got-it-right-nobody-listened-180968318/#f6prTK8XHfVAQM10.99>

Excerpted from “The 1968 Kerner Commission Got it Right, But Nobody Listened,”  
*Smithsonian Magazine* by Alice L. George, March 2018.

# Wendell Builds a Family

## CHAPTER EIGHT LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** In this chapter, Wendell discusses his personal life: how he met and married a woman named Audrey, how they raised their children in Detroit, and the importance of having their kids grow up in a close-knit community, surrounded by the many families on their block with children.



### VIEW CHAPTER EIGHT

*If Streaming film, Chapter Eight is from 00:48:57:16 - 00:51:00:28.*

## POST-VIEWING

### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- How does Wendell describe his kids' childhood experiences growing up in Detroit?
- How are those experiences similar and different from your own?
- Why do you think the filmmaker chose to include scenes where Wendell speaks about his family and raising his children in Detroit?

### WRITING

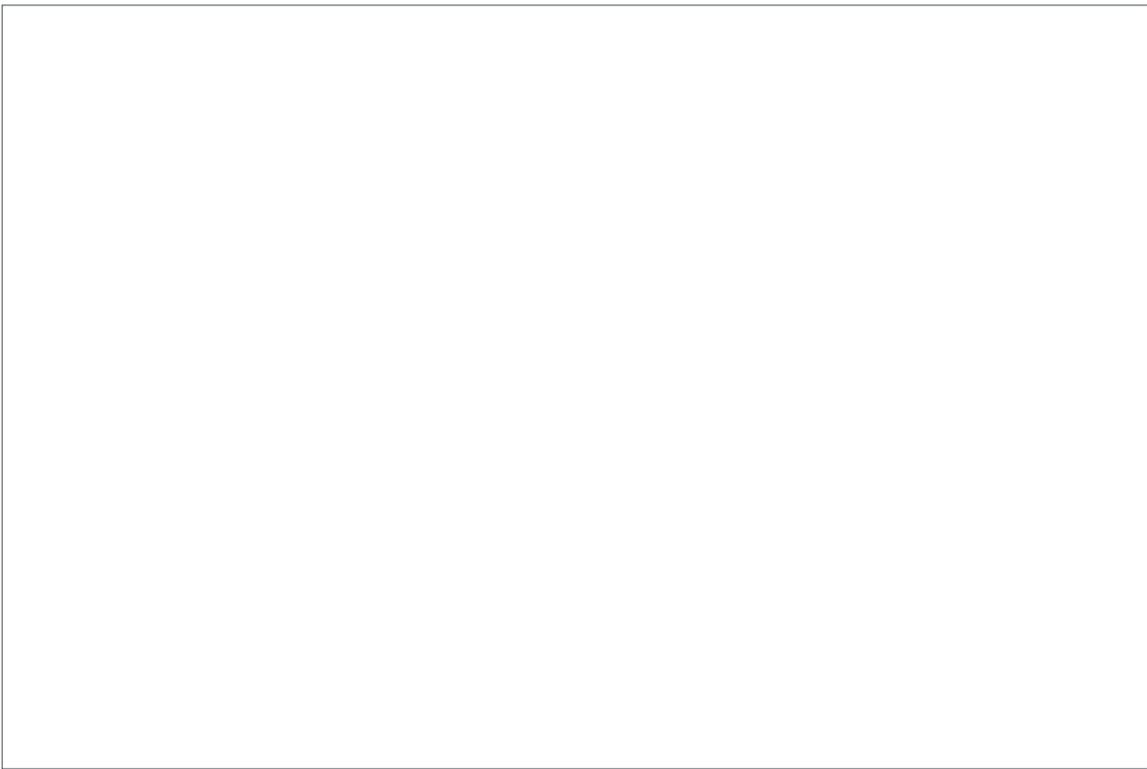
Give each student a “postcard,” (Ch. 8 Handout) for them to complete, following these instructions (which are printed on the card):

- On the front side, sketch an image or a scene from this chapter that resonates with you. Or, choose something that Wendell said in this chapter that you found especially meaningful and write it on the postcard.
  - On the back of the card, write a note to Wendell, explaining why that image or statement resonated with you. How does it connect with your own life or experience?
- If possible, display them on a classroom wall. We also encourage you to take photos of them and email them to the film's website: [share@detroit48202.com](mailto:share@detroit48202.com), where we can share them with other students and educators. It is possible that Wendell will respond to some of them.

## HANDOUT – POSTCARD WRITING ACTIVITY

### WRITING

- On one side of a postcard, sketch an image or a scene from Chapter Eight that resonates with you. Or, choose something that Wendell said in this chapter that you found especially meaningful.
- On the other side of the postcard, write a note to Wendell, explaining why that image or quote resonated with you: how does it connect with your own life or experience?



POSTCARD FRONT



POSTCARD BACK

# Robots and Disinvestment

## CHAPTER NINE LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** In the 1970s and 1980s, unemployment in Detroit rose drastically as the auto companies continued to shut down plants, automate (meaning bring in lots of robots) the plants that remained, and laid off thousands of workers. This had a devastating impact on Detroit: as the auto plants left the city, they stopped paying municipal taxes, which meant the city was starved of revenue and therefore cut services for its residents. In addition, the financial crisis in the first decade of the Twenty-first century hit Detroit especially hard. Banks and mortgage companies engaged in predatory lending, deliberately issuing loans in predominantly African American and Latino neighborhoods using deceptive and fraudulent means. (One example is providing loans with ballooning payments that the borrowers would be unable to afford.) Wayne County had one of the highest tax foreclosure rates in the nation. Tens of thousands of black Detroiters lost their homes, and therefore, the wealth that home ownership provides. As residents were forced out of their homes, the city was left with thousands of vacant properties, further hastening Detroit's decline.

## PRE-VIEWING

### REVIEW CHAPTER 9 VOCABULARY

#### CLASS DISCUSSION

Would you rather own or rent a home? Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

- Can you think of any jobs or tasks that are now done by machines that used to be done by people? How were people affected by this change?



### VIEW CHAPTER NINE

*If streaming film, Chapter Nine is from 00:51:00:29 - 00:57:33:27*

## POST-VIEWING

#### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- When robots were introduced into auto plants during the 1970s, what impact did it have on autoworkers? On the city of Detroit?
- What happened to the homes of tens of thousands of Detroit residents during the financial crisis of 2007-8?
- Wondering question: Why do you think it was so hard for Wendell to get a mortgage?

#### WRITING/ QUOTE ANALYSIS

Divide students into groups of 3. Give one of the following quotes to each group. (You are likely to have more than one group of students examining each quote.) Have each group discuss and analyze their quote and respond in writing, answering these questions:

- What do you think this quote means?
- Do you agree, or disagree, with the speaker?
- Why or why not?
  
- "They created all this robotics and automation. They took jobs away before they had any idea what to do with the people that did the jobs . . . Those were our throwaways." - Rick Smith
  
- "The mortgage crisis and the financial crisis hit Detroit particularly hard because minority communities were targeted for predatory loans. . . They [the banks] were essentially stealing their houses. Poor people got devastated, especially African Americans because when they lose their homes, they lose their wealth." - Curt Guyette

- “Detroit lost most of its tax base in terms of industry. When the industry is gone, you can soak the people who are left for property taxes as much as you want, but it’s not gonna make up for that. There’s no way in hell you’re gonna have services without taxes... The ultra-rich don’t pay hardly any taxes... And unless people force them to, they’re not going to [pay taxes].” – Wendell

- Have each group share their responses to these questions with the rest of the class.

## CLASS DISCUSSION

Show the map of foreclosures in Detroit, 2002 - 2017 that appears at 55:42:19 - 55:48:29 in the film.

- What effect do you think the foreclosures on 160,000 properties had on the city of Detroit?
- Does anyone benefit when people are evicted from their homes? Who, and in what way?

## CLASS DISCUSSION

Generate/elicite from students a list of services that a city provides to its residents. (Examples include, but are not limited to: sanitation, public libraries, parks, schools, streetlights, police and fire protection, street maintenance/pothole repair, etc.) Ask how cities get the money to provide those services - by collecting taxes from residents and businesses.

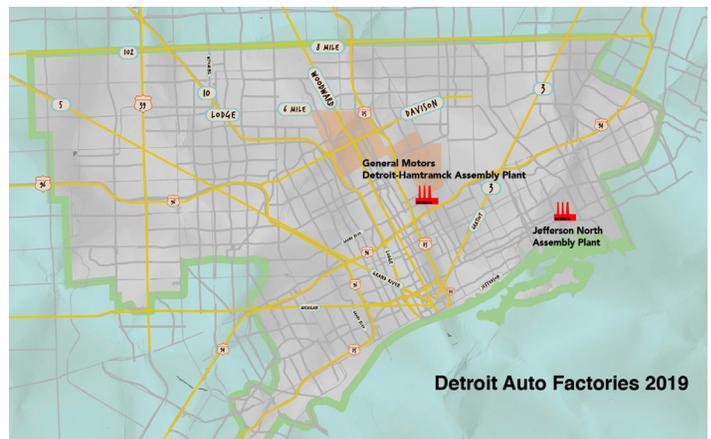
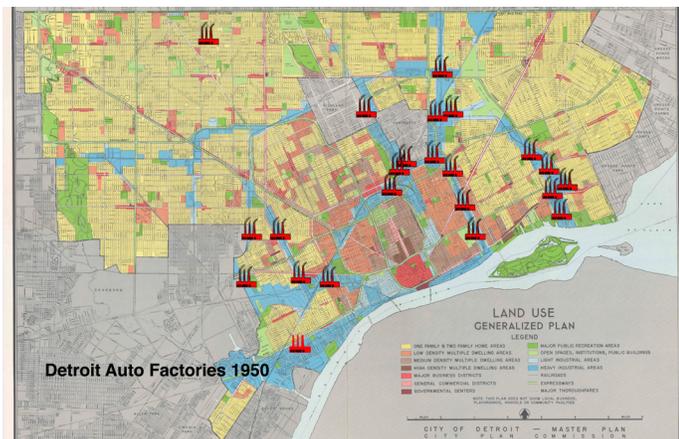
## SHOWING RESISTANCE

Display/give out the quote by Wendell on what happens when a city loses its industry (above).

Ask students:

- How can you pressure (or force, as Wendell says) rich people to pay higher taxes?
  - What impact would that have on a city or town?
- Project these maps (from Ch. 5) again and display this quote by June Manning Thomas:
 

“That had repercussions for the neighborhoods because a lot of the people who worked in those plants lived nearby. Eventually, so many people left that there was no tax base.”
  - Ask students how the maps relate to this statement.



5A. MAP FROM DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY. FACTORY LOCATIONS ADDED BY GRITO PRODUCTIONS.

5B. MAP BY WORK DEPARTMENT. FACTORY LOCATIONS ADDED BY GRITO PRODUCTIONS

## CLASS DISCUSSION

Do you think the auto companies have a responsibility to help maintain services for the people who remain in the city of Detroit? Why or why not?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Explore the data in



“An Interactive View of the Housing Boom and Bust.”

<https://apps.urban.org/features/mortgages-by-race/#>

produced by The Urban Institute, about your city (or a city of your choice).

- Compare the mortgages given to various racial groups between 2001 and 2017.
- What connections can you make between the information on this map, the mortgage fraud of the early 2000s, and the legacy of redlining?
- For an in-depth look at housing segregation in Detroit and its legacy through the present, explore this Racial Dot Map from



[Detroitography.com](http://Detroitography.com)

# Municipal Bankruptcy

## CHAPTER TEN LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** By 2010, the city of Detroit was in deep financial distress: the tax base had been decreasing for decades because most of the auto industry had left the city. This loss in tax revenues was exacerbated by the collapse of the housing market in 2007, when so many Detroiters lost their homes, further eroding the tax base. In addition, during the first years of the 21st century, Michigan's state government cut the revenue it was supposed to share with Detroit by several billion dollars. As a result, Detroit didn't have the money to provide services to many neighborhoods, fund its pension plan, or pay the debts it owed to bondholders and investors. So in 2013 the city filed for bankruptcy in federal bankruptcy court, as a way to relieve its debt burden.

One of the most serious consequences of this action was that the court allowed the city to reduce the pension payments retired city workers would receive. A pension is the money that an employer holds back from a worker's weekly salary or wages, to be paid to that employee in monthly installments after retirement so that the employee has an income in old age. Typically, the employer also contributed to the pension, so that the monthly pension payments were a combination of funds contributed by both employee and employer. Therefore, a pension is not a bonus or a gift; it is a deferred part of an employee's earnings and is contractually agreed to by an employer. The bankruptcy court ruled that the city could renege on its obligations to fully pay those pensions. And despite language in Michigan's state constitution that *guarantees* pension payments, the state government refused to make up the difference that the city didn't pay. Ultimately, Detroit's municipal retirees had their pensions reduced by 4.5%.

In addition, the court ruled that some types of individual pension annuity accounts had been overfunded by the city and that therefore, the city could force some of the retirees to pay back benefits they had already received.

Also, some of the creditors (bondholders) lost money on their investments in Detroit's bonds. In order to raise the money it needs to upgrade and maintain infrastructure and provide services, city governments often sell bonds. A bond is a loan; an investor (an individual or a financial institution) buys the bond and hopes to make a profit when the government entity repays the loan plus interest. However, there is a risk for the investor: if the municipality declares bankruptcy (meaning it can't pay back the loans), the investors risk losing the money they used to buy the bonds. This seldom happens, but was part of the "grand bargain" the bankruptcy court imposed on Detroit.

## PRE-VIEWING

### REVIEW CHAPTER 10 VOCABULARY

#### CLASS DISCUSSION

What does it mean to “declare bankruptcy”? Why would a person do this? Why would a company? Why would a city?

- If a city declared bankruptcy, what do you think the consequences be? How might that affect the people who lived there?



### VIEW CHAPTER TEN

*If streaming the film, Chapter Ten is from 00:57:33:28 - 01:03:28:02.*

## POST-VIEWING

### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- What is a *pension*? Do you know anyone who has one?
- Why did Lewis Bass and Kim Moore have their pensions reduced a result of Detroit’s bankruptcy?
- Wendell believes that Detroit’s bankruptcy and the pension reduction for its retirees is connected to racism. Explain what he means by this. Do you agree, or disagree? Why or why not?
- Refer back to the student questions you recorded on chart paper after viewing Chapter 1, where

Wendell says,

“ Wealthy corporations buy up nice buildings, do absolutely nothing to them [maintain or fix up], hold them for speculation, and the people who want to live there, leave, so then they just board it up and hold it for speculation. ”

- Ask the class if any of these questions have been answered.

### WRITING/QUOTE ANALYSIS

Divide students into groups of 3. Give one of the following quotes to each group. (You are likely to have more than one group of students examining each quote.) Have each group discuss and analyze their quote and respond in writing, answering these questions:

- What do you think this quote means?
- Do you agree, or disagree, with the speaker?
- Why or why not?

- "If you're not needed to work, you become obsolete to them." Marian Kramer
- "The worst anger I feel about this whole situation of Detroit going down is that it's the audacity of these guys that have taken all they could out of the city and then turning around and giving people the impression that it's their fault." Wendell
- "He [General Baker] was teaching us that we don't live in a bankrupt city; we live in a city attacked by a bankrupt system." Reverend Ed Rowe - speaker at General Baker's memorial.

- Have each group share their responses to these questions with the rest of the class.

## CLASS DISCUSSION/MAKING CONNECTIONS TO YOUR OWN LIFE

Suppose your city declared bankruptcy, and you were the bankruptcy judge. What decisions would you make?

- Would you cut services?
- Would you cut pensions?
- Would you refuse to pay the bondholders?
- Who would you decide should be paid off first - investors/banks or retirees?
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about how you would resolve this situation. You can show students an example of a letter to the editor to illustrate the format, length and style.

## SHOWING RESISTANCE

General Baker says,

“ Now our battle is political, not economic. . .  
We got to battle the government and make it serve us. ”

- In groups of 2 or 3, list some ways people could make the government serve them, rather than corporations. If you know (or know of) anyone who has tried to do this, describe who and what they do.

## WRITING

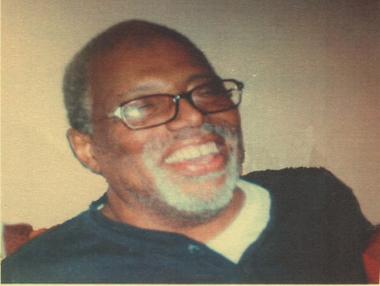
From what you have seen in this film, how does General Baker's life illustrate resilience and resistance?

## WRITING

Give the students Handout Ten, containing the program from General Baker's memorial. Ask students why they think the quote at the top: "And the beat goes on" was included. Then have them write a note of condolence/appreciation to Marian Kramer, his widow, expressing what

they have learned about his life and what his legacy might be. You can have them share their notes with their classmates and/or display them in your classroom. We also encourage you to scan and send them to [share@detroit48202.com](mailto:share@detroit48202.com).

"And the beat goes on"  
*General Gordon Baker, Jr.*  
September 6, 1941 – May 18, 2014



It is difficult to find words to express how thankful we are for your expressions of love to our family during this truly difficult time.

We are very grateful for the friendship and the love we share.

Warm regards.

"Remember Dare to Fight, Dare to Win! The Fight Continues!"

*The Baker Family*

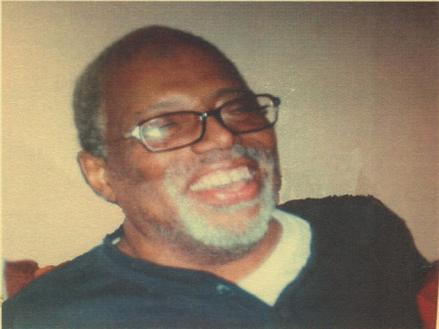
10A. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE BAKER FAMILY.

## HANDOUT – PROGRAM ACTIVITY

### WRITING

- Write a note of condolence/appreciation to Marian Kramer, General Baker's widow, expressing what you have learned about his life and what you think his legacy might be.

"And the beat goes on"  
*General Gordon Baker, Jr.*  
September 6, 1941 – May 18, 2014



It is difficult to find words to express how thankful we are for your expressions of love to our family during this truly difficult time.

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"Remember Dare to Fight, Dare to Win! The Fight Continues!"

*The Baker Family*

10A. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE BAKER FAMILY.

# Whose Detroit?

## CHAPTER ELEVEN LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** Currently, several years after Detroit has come out of bankruptcy, it is said to be “coming back.” This section of the film explores what “coming back” means from the perspective of the thousands of black working-class Detroiters who never left the city. Rich business owners are seen revitalizing downtown Detroit, after purchasing buildings (many of them vacant or in disrepair) and public assets for very little money. They are then able to reap huge profits from these investments. Many Detroiters feel that not as much revitalization and investment is happening in their neighborhoods, which are still suffering from poverty and lack of services. People moving into newly developed areas tend to be white and more affluent. Many long-time black Detroiters express feelings of not being welcome there.

For more information on issues currently facing Detroiters, read the article “If Democrats Want to Win in 2020, They Have to Give Detroit a Reason to Vote” <https://www.thenation.com/article/democratic-debates-detroit-2020/> from *The Nation* magazine.

## PRE-VIEWING

### REVIEW CHAPTER 11 VOCABULARY

#### CLASS DISCUSSION

Do you know of any situations where wealthy people have moved into a neighborhood or a city that used to have working class or poor residents? Where did this happen? What happens as a result of these changes? Generate a list.



### VIEW CHAPTER ELEVEN

*If streaming the film, Chapter Eleven is from 01:03:28:03 - 01:07:50:03.*

## POST-VIEWING

#### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- What part(s) of Detroit have been revitalized?
- What do people mean when they refer to the “new Detroit?”
- How does Wendell feel about the “new Detroit?”

#### CLASS DISCUSSION/QUOTE ANALYSIS

Give the Ch. 11 Handout with the following quotes to each pair of students. Have each pair analyze one of these quotes by Curt Guyette, an investigative reporter:

- “Dan Gilbert, a billionaire, is buying up property like it’s a garage sale, paying pennies on the dollar. . . and he is being hailed as a hero for helping revive the downtown. . . You have the downtown district where taxes captured in downtown Detroit stay downtown and don’t make it out to the neighborhoods, which continue to die.”
  - “At the time when Detroit was going through bankruptcy, this deal was put in place that would provide more than \$280 million in public financing to help a billionaire, the Illitch Family, build a hockey rink. They gave 39 city-owned parcels of land that were valued at \$3 million sold to the Illitches for \$1. Billionaires are being given public assets to do things that will only enrich them further.”
- Discuss students’ thoughts about the meaning of these statements. Ask them who they think made the decisions about how to revitalize Detroit. Which parts of the city do the students think should receive investment?

## SHOWING RESILIENCE

In this section, Wendell says that thousands of black people never left Detroit; in past sections he says that the people on his route have struggled against all odds to survive Detroit's woes, that they worked hard to maintain their homes and neighborhoods.

- What actions do you think they took to face the odds?
- How does that illustrate resilience?

## SHOWING RESISTANCE

- What advice would you give to Detroit's longtime residents about how to get city government and/or businesses to invest in their neighborhoods? What actions could they take?

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY/MAKING CONNECTIONS TO YOUR OWN LIFE

Research organizations in your city that are working to revitalize and/or maintain struggling neighborhoods. If possible, contact and interview someone in one of those organizations about what how they came up with a plan and what actions they are taking.

## CLASS DISCUSSION

Cue the film to 01:08:05 and ask students to study the image of the closed-down school covered with graffiti (saying "wahooligans"). Have students brainstorm what could be done with that building.

- How could that renovation be paid for? Who could do the renovation work?



11A. STILL FROM DETROIT 48202:  
CONVERSATIONS ALONG A POSTAL ROUTE

## HANDOUT – QUOTE ANALYSIS

- With a partner, analyze one of these quotes by Curt Guyette, an investigative reporter:
  - “Dan Gilbert, a billionaire, is buying up property like it’s a garage sale, paying pennies on the dollar. . . and he is being hailed as a hero for helping revive the downtown. . . You have the downtown district where taxes captured in downtown Detroit stay downtown and don’t make it out to the neighborhoods, which continue to die.”
  - “At the time when Detroit was going through bankruptcy, this deal was put in place that would provide more than \$280 million in public financing to help a billionaire, the Ilitch Family, build a hockey rink. They gave 39 city-owned parcels of land that were valued at \$3 million sold to the Ilitches for \$1. Billionaires are being given public assets to do things that will only enrich them further.”
- Ideas to consider:
  - What does the statement mean?
  - Who do you think made the decisions about how to revitalize Detroit?
  - Which parts of the city do you think should receive investment?

\* When Curt Guyette says taxes are captured in downtown Detroit, he is referring to a public financing method called *tax increment financing*. With tax increment financing a city diverts property taxes to a certain area of the city.



See this article from The Detroit Free Press for an example of *tax increment financing*.  
<https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2017/09/06/little-caesars-arena-detroit-cost/616890001/>

# The Boggs School

## CHAPTER TWELVE LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** The James and Grace Lee Boggs School opened in 2013 on the East Side of Detroit. It is based on the philosophy of place-based education (PBE). From the school’s website: “PBE immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, using these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. PBE emphasizes learning through participation in service projects for the school and local community.” The school is named for James and Grace Lee Boggs, activists, educators, and writers. Julia Putnam, a native of Detroit, is one of the school’s founders and its principal. To learn more about the school, visit its website: <http://www.boggschool.org> and/or watch this video: [The James and Grace Lee Boggs School.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLRWa8-Hlek&feature=youtu.be) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLRWa8-Hlek&feature=youtu.be>

## PRE-VIEWING

### CLASS DISCUSSION

If you could design a school, what would it be like? How would it be similar to, and different from, the school you currently attend?



## VIEW CHAPTER TWELVE

If streaming the film, Chapter Twelve is from 01:07:50:04 - 01:14:46:23.

## POST-VIEWING

### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- Why did Julia Putnam and her friends start a new school?
- Cue and pause the film at 01:09:19 and ask students: What does this image tell you about how the Boggs school is incorporating history into teaching and learning?



12A. STILL FROM DETROIT 48202

- What evidence do you see that the school is trying to include the whole community in its teaching and learning?
- Why do you think Ms. Putnam was interested in her students doing a community mapping project with Wendell?
- What do you think the children learned from their tour of Wendell's postal route?

### CLASS DISCUSSION/QUOTE ANALYSIS

In pairs, have each half of the class analyze one of these quotes by the principal of the Boggs School. Students should be prepared to share with their classmates what they think each quote means and whether they agree with the speaker and why.

- “In Detroit, which is still in crisis in so many ways, it just makes all the sense in the world to use the talents and energies of young people as the solution.”
- The reason Detroit looks the way it does “is the fault of people\* who made decisions decades before - bad decisions that were self-serving.” Which people? What decisions did they make and why did they make them? (\*You can refer back to Greg Hicks’s comments in Chapter 2.)

## WRITING ON RESILIENCE AND RESISTANCE

- How does the work of the Boggs School show resilience? How does it show resistance?
- Julia Putnam says, “To do these kinds of histories is healing work. . . It’s not just history. It’s healing to tell children ‘This is not you.’” What does she mean by this? Do you agree that the children of Detroit need healing? From what? How does healing build resilience?
- Why do you think the students’ t-shirts say “solutionaries”?
- How does the idea of “healing through history” connect to Wendell’s comment in Chapter 10 that he’s angry about “the audacity of these guys that have taken all they could out of the city and then turned around and gave people the impression that it’s their fault?”

## MAKING CONNECTIONS TO YOUR OWN LIFE/POSSIBILITIES FOR ACTION

Adapt Alex B. Hill’s Hand Map activity to the city or community your students live in. See Chapter 12 Handout: Community Hand Maps Activity.

- To see samples of “hand maps” of Detroit, visit [Detroitography.com](http://Detroitography.com). And please share your students’ hand maps by sending them to [share@detroit48202.com](mailto:share@detroit48202.com).

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Research James and Grace Lee Boggs. Why do you think this school is named after them?

## HANDOUT – COMMUNITY HAND MAP

*Read Alex B. Hill's description of the Hand Map activity he has done with communities in Detroit. Adapt the activity to the city/community your students live in.*

### **Detroit Hand maps**

By Alex B. Hill ([Detroitography.com](http://Detroitography.com))

In recent years a number of Detroit design and mapping groups have been started. The news media has been publishing maps as regular elements of their articles, and population loss + blight have led to multiple surveys of Detroit's properties.

The major missing piece has been maps from Detroit residents. Not everyone has access to data tools, reliable Internet service (or extra income), or geographic information system (GIS) capabilities.

Everyone has paper and something to write with so why not collect maps from people in a way that is accessible? I started asking people to draw a map of their Detroit using their hand at community events, churches, workshops, and everywhere in between.

The hand map allows individuals to imagine the city on their own hand for geographic reference as well as the grounding that their personal experience is relevant and important. All hand maps are valid the same way that all people and their stories are valid.

By featuring hand drawn maps, the project gives a new geographic portrait of Detroit created by those who have lived through rebellion and renaissance, decline and development, bus delays and bankruptcy.

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### **ACTIVITY**

Maps are more than data and geography, they are significant visual tools for sharing information and they also represent the person making the map.

Map who you are, map where you've been, write a story, paint a picture, map what is invisible to most, map your favorite walking route, -- map your memories of Detroit.



COURTESY OF DETROITOGRAPHY.COM

## STEPS

1. Find a piece of paper and something to write with
2. Spread your fingers as wide apart as you can. Point your thumb to the right and trace your hand on the piece of paper
3. Your fingers become the major roads of Detroit:
  - Thumb = East Jefferson Ave
  - Pointer finger = Gratiot Ave
  - Middle finger = Woodward Ave
  - Ring finger = Grand River Ave
  - Pinky finger = Michigan Ave
  - Imaginary sixth finger = Fort Street
  - Around the palm = Grand Boulevard
4. Use the map as a geographic reference to tell your story of Detroit, places where you've lived or worked, where you like to go, memories of homes, relatives, and neighbors -- what is your Detroit story?
5. Feel free to get creative, use colors, symbols, drawings, and more!

# Wendell's House

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN LESSON PLAN

**Central ideas/Background information:** The housing crisis of 2007-8 caused the value of several million homes around the country to plummet or to be considered “underwater,” meaning that they were worth less than what the homeowner owed on the mortgage. In the past decade, housing prices have recovered in many places, but Detroit is an exception to that recovery. According to the film, 50,000 homes in Detroit were underwater in 2017, and six of the 15 zip codes in the U.S. with the most underwater homes were in Detroit. This continues to have devastating consequences for the residents of those neighborhoods.

When a homeowner sells a house in a short sale, the bank (or mortgage company) agrees to accept less money than the homeowner owes. The benefit for the homeowner/seller is that they don't have to pay the bank the difference between the price they sell the house for and what they owe on the mortgage. However, the homeowner loses all the equity in the house, as well as the financial security that homeownership is supposed to provide.

## PRE-VIEWING

### REVIEW CHAPTER 13 VOCABULARY

#### CLASS DISCUSSION

How important is it for you to live near family? Can you imagine yourself moving to a place far from where you grew up? For what reasons would you move away? Is this something you look forward to?



### VIEW CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*If streaming the film, Chapter Thirteen begins at 01:14:46;24.*

## POST-VIEWING

#### CONTENT SUMMARY/CLASS DISCUSSION

- How does Wendell feel about retiring?
- Do you agree that being a letter carrier is a good job for a sentimentalist?
- Why do you think Wendell was so depressed when he first heard he would have to sell his home as a “short sale”?

#### CLASS DISCUSSION/QUOTE ANALYSIS

Cue the film to 01:15:24 to the map of Detroit showing the zip codes with underwater homes.

Ask students:

- Why do you think Detroit still has so many underwater homes? What can/should the city government do to address this problem?
- Should state government play a role in helping these homeowners?
- What about the corporations who moved out of the city?
- The developers who are buying downtown land and property cheaply - do they have a responsibility to help homeowners in these neighborhoods, even if the properties they've purchased are not located in those areas?

#### WRITING

If you were in charge of city planning for Detroit, how would respond to the questions above?

- Write an essay explaining your recommendations for how Detroit should be re-developed so that all the people who live there benefit from the development.

## WRITING ON RESILIENCE AND RESISTANCE

The film features Wendell Watkins and eight other Detroiters:

- Wendell Watkins
- Julia Putnam
- Ronald Hewitt
- Kim Moore
- Gloria Owens
- General Baker
- Marian Kramer-Baker
- Rick Smith
- Dawn DeRose

- Which one(s) do you think showed resilience? Which showed resistance? Explain how they showed either or both of those qualities. (To help students remember the characters, give out the List of Characters, which contains a photo and short description of each.)

**Or,**

- Write a letter to a character in the film who showed resilience or resistance, telling that person what you learned from him/her and why you admire them. We encourage you send these letters to [share@detroit48202.com](mailto:share@detroit48202.com) where we can share them with other educators and students.

# Resources

## BOOKS

### Non-Fiction

Babson, Steve. *Working Detroit: the Making of a Union Town*, Wayne State University Press, 1986.

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## **Fiction**

- Harris, Bill. *Booker T & Them: a Blues*, Wayne State University Press, 2012.
- Harris, Bill. *I Got to Keep Moving: Stories*, Wayne State University Press, 2018.
- Hernandez, Lolita. *Autopsy of an Engine and Other Stories from the Cadillac Plant*, Coffee House Press, 2004.
- Morisseau, Dominique. *Detroit Project: Three Plays*, Theatre Communications Group, Incorporated, 2018.
- Verdelle, A. J. *The Good Negress*, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1995.

## **Poetry**

- Lindberg, Kathryne V., et al. *Bobweaving Detroit: The Selected Poems of Murray Jackson*, Wayne State University Press, 2004.
- Randall, Dudley. *Cities Burning*, Broadside Press, 1968.
- Levine, Philip. *The Last Shift*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2018.

## Articles and Reports

*Mapping the Water Crisis: the Dismantling of African-American Neighborhoods in Detroit.* We the People of Detroit Community Research Collective, 2016.

Nichols, John. “If Democrats Want to Win in 2020, They Have to Give Detroit a Reason to Vote.” *The Nation*, 30 July 2019, <https://www.thenation.com/article/democratic-debates-detroit-2020/>.

*Roots, Race, & Place: A History of Racially Exclusionary Housing in the San Francisco Bay Area*, Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society, University of California, Berkeley, 2019, <https://haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/rootsraceplace/tracesofthepasttoday>.

Williams, Aaron, and Armand Emamdjome. “America Is More Diverse than Ever — but Still Segregated.” *The Washington Post*, 10 May 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/national/segregation-us-cities/>.

## Websites

*Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America*, Digital Scholarship Lab, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>.

“*Undesign the Redline.*” *Designing the WE*, <http://www.designingthewe.com/undesign-the-redline>. This interactive exhibit, workshop series and curriculum explores the history of structural racism and classism, how these designs compounded each other from 1938 Redlining maps until today, and how WE can come together to undesign these systems with intentionality.

*DETROITography*, <https://detroitography.com>

Detroit Cartography/Geography = DETROITography – we are all about maps and geography of Detroit. We like to write about maps that other people make about the City as well as create our own maps of Detroit.

*Anti-Eviction Mapping Project*, <https://www.anti-evictionmap.com>

The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is a data-visualization, data analysis, and storytelling collective documenting the dispossession and resistance upon gentrifying landscapes. Primarily working in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and New York City.

## Organizations and Museums

### **Detroit Action Equity Lab** <https://sites.google.com/view/detroitequity/home>

The Detroit Equity Action Lab (DEAL) is an innovative hub for community-driven research, programming and media — raises the profile of racial justice issues, connects community experts to build collective power and amplifies the voices of Detroiters.

### **Detroit Historical Society – Detroit 67: Perspectives Exhibit** <https://detroithistorical.org/detroit-historical-museum/exhibitions/special-exhibitions/detroit-67-perspectives>

The Detroit Historical Society convened diverse groups and communities around the effects of a historic crisis with its Detroit 67: Looking Back to Move Forward project. The Detroit 67: Perspectives exhibition allows visitors to better understand the events of July 1967, what led up to them, where we are today and how to connect to efforts moving Detroit forward.

### **InsideOut Literary Arts** <https://insideoutdetroit.org/>

As Detroit’s largest and oldest literary non-profit, InsideOut now serves more than 100 classrooms and community sites annually. Our professional writers continue to help students experiment with words and learn that each unique voice matters – <https://detroitblackfoodsecurity.org/> that there is power in “bringing the inside out.”

### **Allied Media Projects** <https://alliedmedia.org/>

Allied Media Projects (AMP) cultivates media for liberation. Our media includes all the ways we communicate with the world. Our liberation is an ongoing process of personal, collective, and systemic transformation. We are a network of people and projects, rooted in Detroit and connected to hundreds of other places across the globe

### **We The People of Detroit** <https://www.wethepeopleofdetroit.com/>

In 2008, We The People of Detroit (WPD) was founded in response to Emergency Management over the city of Detroit and Detroit Public Schools. As a community-based grassroots organization, WPD aims to inform, educate, and empower Detroit residents on imperative issues surrounding civil rights, land, water, education, and the democratic process.

### **The Detroit People’s Platform** <http://detroitpeoplesplatform.org/>

DPP works for REAL Community Benefit Agreements, advocates and organizes for truly affordable housing and public transit that responds to the needs of Detroiters.

### **The James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership**

<http://boggscenter.org/>

The mission of The Boggs Center is to nurture the transformational leadership capacities of individuals and organizations committed to creating productive, sustainable, ecologically responsible, and just communities.

**The People’s Water Board Coalition** <https://www.peopleswaterboard.org/>

The People’s Water Board advocates for access, protection, and conservation of water. We believe water is a human right and all people should have access to clean and affordable water.

**Detroit Black Food Security Network** <https://www.dbcfsn.org/>

DBCFSN works to build self-reliance, food security and justice in Detroit’s Black community by influencing public policy, engaging in urban agriculture, promoting healthy eating, encouraging cooperative buying and directing youth towards careers in food-related fields.

**The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History** <https://www.thewright.org/>

The Wright Museum houses over 35,000 artifacts and archival materials and is home to the Blanche Coggin Underground Railroad Collection, Harriet Tubman Museum Collection, Coleman A. Young Collection and the Sheffield Collection, a repository of documents of the labor movement in Detroit.

**City of Detroit’s Planning and Development Department**

<https://detroitmi.gov/departments/planning-and-development-department>

The mission of the City of Detroit’s Planning and Development Department is to build a city secure in its future, grounded in its roots and hopeful in its present state. The vision that supports this mission is a healthy and beautiful Detroit, built on inclusionary growth, economic opportunity and an atmosphere of trust.

# Credits & Acknowledgments

## WRITER

Anita Caref

## CO-WRITER

Pam Sporn

## DESIGNER

Carolina Guillen

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