

THE NORTHERN DREAM

Contributors

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Process Paper

477 Words

1. Step 1: Choosing our topic

While choosing our topic, we attempted to make a project that pertains to the annual theme while having to do with black history. After considering broader topics such as abolitionism and the Civil Rights movement, we decided to choose a lesser-known topic – The Great Migration. It relates to the annual topic of frontiers because it was a time when a great number of African Americans moved in swarms out of the South. This offered new opportunities, forms of discrimination, and cultural change for African American communities all over the nation.

2. Step 2: Research

While conducting our research, we began by doing some basic on the movement through reading and watching videos. This led us to attempting to find a minimum of 12 primary sources and 12 secondary sources. We decided to divide these sources between causes and effects. This enabled us to evaluate the historical context that resulted in the Great Migration while learning about the cultural and statistical effects of the event.

3. Step 3: Historical Argument

After completing our research, we reached this as our historical argument: *The Great Migration was a period of time in which African Americans travelled into new frontiers in the North, which brought about new opportunities, freedom from traditionally racist Southern institutions, while still provoking new tensions in many Northern cities.*

4. Step 4: Writing the Performance

At first, we struggled in writing a performance based on historical facts. This was the result of lacking historical context. As a result, we decided to split our roles in order to efficiently complete our work. One person elaborately studied every source in order to check for historical accuracy, another person took their time to write the process paper and review the rules, and a final person created the outline of the script. Following completing our roles during winter break, we decided to start to write the lines in the script. This brought more struggles given that not all of us had the same understanding of the topic (due to the way we split the roles), but we eventually were able to write a historically accurate depiction of the performance about a week before presenting our play. This gave us time to practice roughly 1-2 hours every afternoon, which enabled us to perfect our work to the best of our ability.

5. Why is this frontier important?

Our topic has historical significance for America in a multitude of ways. Firstly, it is significant because it held a major impact on the creation of new African American communities. Many of these communities were urban, industrial, and very culturally active. Furthermore, its impact expanded towards creating and spreading new economic disparities in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and Baltimore.

Primary Sources

African American Pamphlet Collection. *To the Colored Men of Voting Age in the Southern States*. [Philadelphia: Press of E.A. Wright, 190-?, 1900] Pdf. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/92838850/>.

This is a primary source document by E.A. Wright on what African Americans had to do to vote in Southern States. Through this source, we learned how African Americans had their voting rights obstructed, while also learning another reason that African Americans wanted to move North.

American Map Company. *Lynchings by states and counties in the United States, -1931: data from Research Department, Tuskegee Institute ; cleartype county outline map of the United States*. [New York, NY: American Map Company ?, 1931] Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/2006636636/>.

This primary source is a map that depicts the number of lynchings in each state between 1900 and 1931. We used this source as another example of the causes of the Great Migration, while also helping us to notice where racist violence against black people was most prevalent.

The daily worker. (Chicago, Ill.), 09 Aug. 1924. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

<<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84020097/1924-08-09/ed-1/seq-11/>>

This source is a Chicago newspaper from 1924. At the time, Chicago happened to be one of the Northern cities with a rapid growth in African Americans. This source offers us some insight on the reception of black communities in the industrial North.

Dunbar-Nelson, Alice. "People of Color in Louisiana: Part I." *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1916, pp. 361-76. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3035611>. Accessed 27 Oct. 2022.

This source by Alice Dunbar-Nelson is primarily a description of the condition of black people in Louisiana. This source portrays the conditions in the Deep South that caused many African Americans to flee. We plan to incorporate some of these conditions into our performance.

Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970, United States Census Bureau, 1970, <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/histstats-colonial-1970.pdf>. Accessed 30 Oct 2022.

This is primary federal government source. Its from the US Census Bureau and portrays the demographic changes between the 1790s and 1970s. This source provided us with statistical evidence of population and income trends between African Americans and White Americans.

Horydczak, Theodor, Approximately, photographer. *Nation's Business. Negro housing I. ca. 1920-ca. 1950*. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/2019673565/.

Through comparing and contrasting this source with other images, we learned about what one might consider as the "Northern Dream" and the improved conditions that many African Americans received by moving North.

"'Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918' published in *The Journal of Negro History* (July and October, 1919)." *Hanover.edu*, Hanover University, 2022, history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/260GMigration.html. Accessed 28 Oct. 2022.

This document is a collection of short letters from African American southerners. It provides a thorough list of reasons that Black people wanted to move out of the South. The last document also offers a perspective from a recent Philadelphia migrant, who describes his improved conditions upon moving from the South. We intend to use this document in our performance as a source of inspiration.

Nelson Page, Thomas. *The Negro: The Southerner's Problem*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.

Digital Public Library of America, dp.la/primary-source-sets/the-great-migration/sources/526. Accessed 27 Oct. 2022.

This document is an excerpt from "The Negro: *The Southerner's Problems* by Thomas Nelson. As one can tell by the title, it documents the list of trials that African Americans had to deal with in the Jim Crow South. We intend to use this document as more primary source evidence in order to gain insight on why so many Southern African Americans moved North.

Rothstein, Arthur, photographer. *Negro housing. Washington, D.C.* Oct. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/2017776293/.

This document is an image of a house in an African American neighborhood in DC. From contrasting it with Southern housing, we were able to visualize the improved conditions affiliated with moving North.

University Commission On Southern Race Question. ... *A new reconstruction. May?*. 1919. Pdf.

Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.24200400/.

This document is a letter from a series of universities that petitioned for a changed view of Black people in America. It documented a list of reasons that African Americans should be treated fairly and equally and suggests the importance of fair

racial relationships. From this source, we learned about how race relations might have begun to change as African Americans began to move North and serve for the US army during World War I.

Vachon, John, photographer. *Negro housing in North Memphis, Tennessee. Some of the occupants of these houses work at powder plant in Millington. Rent of twelve dollars a month was recently raised to fourteen dollars.* Dec. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/2017811543/>.

This image is yet another example of the immense poverty that many black people dealt with in the South. From this, we were able to truly view the immense poverty in portions of the South that may have inspired this era of mass migration.

Wolcott, Marion Post, photographer. *Poor housing for Negro workers in Pompano, Florida.* Feb. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/2017806535/>.

This image is simply another example of the poverty that black people often had to deal with in the South. It enabled us to gain an insight on the oppression and poverty that black families dealt with in the South.

Woodson, Carter Godwin. *A Century of Negro Migration.* Washington, D.C., The Association for the study of negro life and history, 1918. Image. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/18017856/>.

This document details many ideas during the Great Migration. It suggests a list of ideas from various African Americans in order to free themselves from their

issues. From it, we learned the various options that many African Americans considered in order to get out of the South.

Secondary Sources

"African Americans in World War I." *Gale U.S. History Online Collection*, Gale, 2020. *Gale In*

Context: U.S. History,

[link.gale.com/apps/doc/BOONFI423954488/UHIC?u=win5026&sid=bookmark-](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BOONFI423954488/UHIC?u=win5026&sid=bookmark-UHIC&xid=49e53278)

[UHIC&xid=49e53278](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BOONFI423954488/UHIC?u=win5026&sid=bookmark-UHIC&xid=49e53278). Accessed 31 Oct. 2022.

This is a secondary source document referencing the effect of World War I on African Americans and how it caused an influx in the migration of African Americans. From this source, we learned about African Americans' role in the war, how it affected them after the Great Migration, and the global reaction on this. In addition, this source partially inspired the story of one of the characters in our performance.

Alexander, J. Trent. "The Great Migration in Comparative Perspective: Interpreting the Urban

Origins of Southern Black Migrants to Depression-Era Pittsburgh." *Social Science*

History, vol. 22, no. 3, 1998, pp. 349-76. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1171529>.

Accessed 3 Nov. 2022.

This is another secondary source that talks about the effect of migration on a specific location, and how it affected the depression-era. We used this to understand how the Great Migration affected African American communities socially and economically.

Black, Dan A., et al. "The Impact of the Great Migration on Mortality of African Americans:

Evidence from the Deep South." *The American Economic Review*, vol. 105, no. 2, 2015,

pp. 477-503. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43495390>. Accessed 3 Nov. 2022.

This secondary source document talks about the effect of the Great Migration on African American mortality. It helped us learn about the influence of improved healthcare systems in the North on the day-to-day lives of African American communities.

Collins, William J. "When the Tide Turned: Immigration and the Delay of the Great Black Migration." *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 57, no. 3, 1997, pp. 607-32. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2951192>. Accessed 3 Nov. 2022.

This article assesses the author's immigrant deterrent theory which suggests relationship between black migration from the South and European immigration from Europe. It does this by using data from various cities and jurisdictions. From this source, we learned about how late 19th and early 20th century European immigration might have delayed the economic opportunities available for black people in the North.

"Housing and Race in Chicago." *Chicago Public Library*, 30 Apr. 2003, www.chipublib.org/housing/. Accessed 29 Dec. 2022.

This is a source that talks about Chicago housing practices amid the rapid migration of African American families into the city. From it, we learned about how segregation managed to spread to Northern cities via racist housing practices.

Pedraza, Silvia. "Women and Migration: The Social Consequences of Gender." *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 17, 1991, pp. 303-25. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2083345. Accessed 4 Nov. 2022.

This document introduces the role of woman during the Great migration. It allowed us to look at the migration in a new perspective, especially given that African American women had even more troubles in the South (and even in the North) compared to their male counterparts.

"Red Summer." *National WWI Museum and Memorial*, 2022, www.theworldwar.org/learn/about-wwi/red-summer. Accessed 30 Dec. 2022.

This source addresses the Red Summer. This was a period of racial violence against black people in cities experiencing an influx of black migrants in 1919. From this, we learned how black migration was often met with opposition by white communities in Northern and Midwestern cities.

Taylor, Quintard. "The Great Migration: The Afro-American Communities of Seattle and Portland during the 1940s." *Arizona and the West*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1981, pp. 109-26. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40169136>. Accessed 3 Nov. 2022.

This secondary source talks about the specific effects of the Great Migration in Portland and Seattle and how it affected the cities' white and black communities. From it, we were able to contrast the influence that location had on African American communities while migrating North.

Tolnay, Stewart E. "The African American 'Great Migration' and Beyond." *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 29, 2003, pp. 209-32. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30036966>. Accessed 31 Oct. 2022.

This secondary source reviews the causes, effects, and analysis of the Great Migration and how sociologists view it today. It explains internal migration and

residential mobility and how the Great Migration affected this for African Americans.

Trotter, Joe William. "The Great Migration." *OAH Magazine of History*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2002, pp. 31-33. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25163561. Accessed 31 Oct. 2022.

This document analyzes the increase of black population in Northern states during the 1920s. The document also compares the wage gap of blacks in Northern states and those in Southern states. Furthermore, this document also taught us more about the roles of women in the migration.

White, Katherine J. Curtis. "Women in the Great Migration: Economic Activity of Black and White Southern-Born Female Migrants in 1920, 1940, and 1970." *Social Science History*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2005, pp. 413-55. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40267882>. Accessed 31 Oct. 2022.

This secondary source compares and contrasts the effect of moving North for white and black women. Through it, we learned about the how white women benefitted more from moving North than black women. This demonstrated how race only added to the issues of gender inequality during this time.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House, 2010.

This book is a narration of the lives of 3 black migrants who migrated to the North for different reasons, and received different levels of success. The author used the stories of Ida Mae Gladney, George Starling, and Robert Foster in order to convey the causes and effects of the migration for many African Americans of the time. Although our performance will not be based on real stories, its ability to

interweave different perspectives was a major source of inspiration for our performance's format.

Other Sources (Used in performance)

“Black Cafe in Texas.” Restaurant-Ing Through History,

<https://victualling.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/cafeintexas.jpg>. Accessed 11 Jan. 2023.

Classical, Tunes. “Jazz Music | 1920s and 1930s Golden Years | Billie Holiday, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington and Many More.” YouTube, 22 Dec. 2020,

www.youtube.com/watch?v=KE7Kg-yxY1c.

“CITY AMBIANCE: Busy Restaurant / Diner - 10 HOURS Ambient Sounds.” YouTube, 2 July

2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=xY0GEpbWreY.

Library of Congress. “Apartment in New York Tenement House.” Getty Images, Corbis

Historical, <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/apartment-in-new-york-tenement-house-news-photo/640482747?adppopup=true>. Accessed 11 Jan. 2023.

mycompasstv. “Old Rotary Phone Ringing 📞 Free Sound Effect SFX.” YouTube, 13 Jan. 2019,

www.youtube.com/watch?v=p530Stpz11U.

“Telegram Building (1900-1963); Interior, Office of J. Ross Robertson Subject.” Toronto Public

Library, <https://digitalarchive.tpl.ca/objects/338578/telegram-building-19001963-interior-office-of-j>. Accessed 11 Jan. 2023.

“Two Empty Rocking Chairs. Two Wooden Rocking Chairs on a Front Porch on a Warm

Summer Evening.” Adobe Stock, [https://stock.adobe.com/images/two-empty-rocking-chairs-two-wooden-rocking-chairs-on-a-front-porch-on-a-warm-summer-](https://stock.adobe.com/images/two-empty-rocking-chairs-two-wooden-rocking-chairs-on-a-front-porch-on-a-warm-summer-evening/161178725)

[evening/161178725](https://stock.adobe.com/images/two-empty-rocking-chairs-two-wooden-rocking-chairs-on-a-front-porch-on-a-warm-summer-evening/161178725). Accessed 11 Jan. 2023.

Underwood Archives. "Office Interior." Fine Art America, 30 June 2015,

<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/office-interior-underwood-archives.html>. Accessed

11 Jan. 2023.