Remembering Jim Crow: Student Exercises

Critical Thinking

The following questions are based on Part 2 of the documentary. Teachers may choose to use the audio or transcript. *Listen to Part 2* (19:29)

1. Describe one circumstance where the "color line" was strictly enforced in the Jim Crow South and one circumstance where it was not enforced. What do you think accounts for this inconsistency?

2. If you were an African American citizen living under Jim Crow, would you look to the police for protection? Why or why not?

3. What did W.E.B. DuBois mean when he said that African Americans lived "behind the veil"? How did living behind the veil protect and nurture Black communities?

4. Why was World War II a turning point in the history of both Jim Crow and the civil rights movement in America?

5. The action taken by Otis Pinkert was one episode of African American resistance to Jim Crow. How do you think actions like Pinkert's contributed to the broader civil rights struggle of the 1950s and '60s?

The following questions are based on Part 3 of the documentary. Teachers may choose to use the audio or transcript. *Listen to Part 3* (19:29)

1. What evidence does Mary Laveaux use to support her claim that black people in her community were "poor, but happy" under Jim Crow?

2. What lesson did Henry Dauterive learn in his family's kitchen when he was seven years old? Why do you think rules like the one he learned existed under Jim Crow?

3. How did Henry Dauterive's views of Jim Crow change when he went to college? How permanent were these changes?

4. What does anthropologist Kate Ellis mean when she says that many of the older white people she interviewed "recognized the injustice of Jim Crow but feel no particular remorse"? How do the comments of Deanne and Smitty Landry reflect this attitude?

5. How do Kate Ellis's interviews with older African Americans tell a different story than do her interviews with older white people? Whose observations do you consider more reliable? Why?