

When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America Study Guide

When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America by Paula Giddings

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
To Sell My Life As Dearly As Possible.....	5
Casting of the Die.....	6
To Choose Again, Freely.....	8
Prelude to a Movement.....	9
Defending Our Name.....	10
To be a Woman Sublime.....	11
The Quest for Woman Suffrage.....	13
Cusp of a New Era.....	15
The Radical Interracialists.....	16
Toward Interracial Cooperation.....	17
A Search for Self.....	18
Enter Mary McLeod Bethune.....	19
Black Braintrusters.....	20
The Second World War and After.....	21
Dress Rehearsal for the Sixties, Coming Full Circle, Women's Movement and Black Discontent, Strong Women and Strutting Men, and Outlook.....	22
Characters.....	25
Objects/Places.....	28
Themes.....	30
Style.....	32
Quotes.....	34



Topics for Discussion.....36

Plot Summary

Throughout history, there have been Black women who played vital roles in the quest for racial and gender equality. As these women take the forefront, they deal with a lack of respect, an inner struggle to live up to their various roles, and even violence, but press onward despite the obstacles. Among these are Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell. Both women are aware that lynchings are common in the South and that there should be something done about it. Both are impacted personally when a mutual friend, Thomas Moss, is lynched for no reason other than he'd founded a successful business. Moss's final words, a message to Blacks of Memphis, Tennessee, implore them to leave the area of lawlessness and go westward.

The roles of women impact every aspect of life, long before women are given the right to vote. Ironically, it's the right to vote that prompts a clash between Black women and White women with Whites objecting to the Black vote as a way of increasing Black control and Blacks fearing no control if the vote is limited. The two races battle over voter qualifications, and there are struggles that serve as the catalyst for new reforms while others issues threaten to delay any advance at all.

While White women have gender equality at the heart of their movement and Black men deal with race equality, Black women are torn by the fact that they need both. During the Great Depression, violence escalates and lynching becomes more common. As World War II gets into full swing, the White women take roles in the defense industry, though Black women are generally relegated to the domestic roles or to the undesirable jobs. Blacks continue to move into the political and social realm, increasing their impact on their world. Those who do so in the political arena include Mary McLeod Bethune, one of the first Black women appointed to a government post. Another is the first Black woman elected to Congress, Shirley Chisholm, who is also the first Black woman to make a bid for the office of President.

From Rosa Parks, who sparked a public transportation boycott by simply refusing to give up her seat, to Daisy Bates who led the "Little Rock Nine" to insist on equal education opportunities, these women have found opportunities to make their voices heard on an array of issues. They sacrificed of themselves and created new ways to handle their homes, families and careers. As time passes, Black and White women find themselves united on more fronts, facing more of the same issues and challenges, and dealing with the same concerns.



To Sell My Life As Dearly As Possible

To Sell My Life As Dearly As Possible Summary and Analysis

Thomas Moss, one of three owners of the People's Grocery in Memphis, Tennessee, is arrested along with his partners Calvin McDowell and Henry Stewart during a riot in 1892, then taken from the jail and lynched. Prior to his death, he left a message urging "my people" to leave Memphis where there is no justice and to "go west." His death prompts Mary Church Terrell and Ida B. Wells to action. Terrell lives in Washington, D.C., is twenty-nine, married and expecting her first child when she hears that her childhood friend, Moss, has been lynched. Terrell and Fredrick Douglas approach the then U.S. President Benjamin Harrison to publicly condemn lynchings, but Harrison refuses. Meanwhile, Wells, a journalist known for her activism, urges a boycott of White-owned businesses. Her words are heard and white businessmen suffer.

Terrell and Wells have some things in common. Both women were born to men who had been slaves and both had an innate sense of right, despite prejudices against their race. In addition, neither woman allowed herself to be intimidated. But there are some differences as well. Terrell is born to a family of privilege, while Wells, at sixteen, inherits the role of caregiver for her younger siblings when their parents die. Both Terrell and Wells live in Memphis in the 1880s and probably met briefly. Wells becomes outspoken on the rights of Blacks until she's literally forced out of Memphis.

There were a number of Blacks who, like Moss, were establishing businesses and succeeding at their enterprises. This angered some Whites who felt Black businesses were taking money away from White business owners. As the bias grows, there are a growing number of accusations of rape, many completely unfounded. Wells investigates the situation and discovers a large number of Blacks that are raped, a situation largely unchanged from the days of slavery. Wells launches a widely successful campaign calling on Blacks to stand up for themselves, a call that is heard by many, including Black women.

It's noted that many Blacks of the 1880s believe that racial violence is a manifestation of poor people. It seems likely that this belief is based on the same type of prejudice that caused the racial violence - the idea that a particular type or class of person would be more prejudiced than some other class. In reality, it's probably more likely that there are equal levels of racial bias on the part of the wealthy and the poor, but that the poor are more likely to be seen in acts of violence as a result of that bias.

Casting of the Die

Casting of the Die Summary and Analysis

Isabell Williams is arguably the most important of the first generation of slaves to arrive in America because she married a man who had also been transported and gave birth to the first Black child born in America. Over the generations, the attitudes toward Black women have changed in some of the same ways as those against Whites, but there have also been some differences. One example is the tendency to judge Black women as having loose morals. Those who "provoked passion" were looked down upon. Often, Black women were branded as loose and temperamental.

Laws are made to address many situations, including whether the child born of a slave and a freed person would be slave or free. The law indicates that the child will have the same status as its mother, which prompts some masters to father children by their slave women or to have other men - sometimes male slaves - father children by slaves, thus replenishing or even expanding their labor force at no cost. This benefit outweighs the potential cost of a fine in the rare event that a fine was levied for breaking the law against such acts.

While many aspects of daily life is dictated by law, there are instances in which Blacks were influential. Phyllis Wheatley conferred with George Washington during the Revolutionary War, and Blacks were conscripted into the Continental Army. As the 1800s progress, the laws governing slavery are revised so masters are required by law to provide better care for their slaves. This prompts the idea of an "extended family" life between slave and master which does, in theory, mean slaves are treated better. However, the laws also require all-out obedience on the part of slaves, and this has a negative psychological effect on slaves. In addition, there is an all-out response to disobedience. The White women in this new social setting are elevated to an impossibly high status, and Black women serve as mistresses and whores to the needs of frustrated husbands. This means that Black women are faced with the necessity of mounting an even more stringent and stressful resistance. Black mothers are harsh with their daughters, preparing them for their harsher lives. Maria Stewart criticizes the Blacks for not doing enough to end slavery but admits that Blacks are held to their positions of no authority by Whites. It's to fight this situation that a number of organizations are founded to provide education, financial aid and business opportunities for Blacks.

An interesting fact in the laws regulating interracial relationships is that Blacks are generally held responsible if the law is disobeyed, and this is even true in the case of Black women who are forced into sexual encounters by their masters.



Many Black women are forced into unwanted pregnancies, often at the hands of their masters or at their master's behest. Some find ways to avoid or terminate these unwanted pregnancies though they could be punished for this. It's noted that if all Black women in slavery had united on this point, slavery would have ceased. This may or may not be the case because many slaves were brought from Africa, but it does seem that the number of children born into slavery is a significant number of the total slaves held in America by the time of the Civil War.



To Choose Again, Freely

To Choose Again, Freely Summary and Analysis

While Black women in slavery are often treated as harshly as men, though they do have an advantage over their male counterparts. The women are sometimes in positions of authority in the household or at least have dominion over their own households while men had no authority anywhere. After the Civil War, men rebel not only against the White authority but against the Black women in their lives as well. The women, meanwhile, have had limited aspirations - often to be the favored mistress of a white man who could provide clothing and other nice things. Black women are often a major part of the family's income, and their inability to remain at home to oversee the household hurts their efforts to create stable family environments. As activists such as Sojourner Truth speak out for women's rights, including those of Black women, these Black women begin to take more control. Those with lovers demand marriage Rose Williams had been unable to avoid her master's demands and had a "mate" named Rufus. When Williams is freed, she declines a man at all saying that it will be left to someone else to carry out God's command to replenish the earth.

It's noted that there are a great number of budding organizations seeking opportunities for Blacks in the years after the Civil War, and that many of those refuse women as their leaders. This is despite the fact that women are among the most active in the reconstruction, education and socialization of the newly-freed Blacks. And so women who have been given their freedom by federal law are now fighting others of their own race to create a niche for themselves. This isn't specific to the race, and it's noted by other writers that there are instances in which the Black women even have to fight the White women for the right to be active for a cause.

Prelude to a Movement

Prelude to a Movement Summary and Analysis

As Blacks leave the farms behind, particular areas become flooded with newly-freed Blacks who are sometimes ill equipped to care for families. Ghettos become common. As Black women are forced into the workplace, the status of the Black woman goes down while the status of the White woman rises. The Blacks begin searching for and finding ways of improving life—increased educational opportunities are among the answers. However, many Black women find themselves unable to find a job to utilize their newly-completed educations. As the Black communities become over populated, drugs emerge as a problem while prostitution and crime escalate. Blacks who had held some measure of political and social power find that power evaporated in a very short time.

The prejudice against Black women continues to focus back centuries to the African roots and the idea of the savage African who had no morals and no education. As time passes, the Black woman is expected to remain true to that idea while their white counterparts are expected to be virtuous and pure, above reproach. Neither meets the expectations and both are frustrated because of it. It's noted that some come to believe that the Black woman is not necessarily more immoral, but that their actions are ingrained - probably from centuries of slavery. An interesting point is that this belief is held not only of the poor Blacks living in the ghetto situations, but of those making impacts on the business, political and social scene as well.

Defending Our Name

Defending Our Name Summary and Analysis

Black women find they need to defend themselves, though there are limited forums for doing so. Fannie Barrier Williams is one of few Black women who belongs to the Chicago Women's Club, and when Williams is invited as a speaker at the World Columbian Exposition of 1893, she gets right to the point, saying that Black women are victimized and that it's up to all women to protect this group. Her implication is that the abusers, White men, could be controlled by White women. Ida B. Wells, along with Frederick Douglass and Ferdinand Barnett, produce a pamphlet addressing the omission of Blacks from the Exposition.

As Wells travels in Europe, it's obvious she is touting the need for anti-lynching laws in America. Another American activist, Frances Willard, is in Europe at the same time. Wells cites Willard's statements that Blacks "multiply like the locusts of Egypt," prompts a sudden rush of public opinion. As the media storm erupts around the two women, Wells gains notoriety and Britain creates a support network - including funding - for Wells' cause.

—

It's again noted that Black women are sometimes the last to come to their own defense, but the public sentiment that erupts around Wells and Willard prompts the creation of several influential groups that provide an opportunity and outlet for those who were waiting for an opportunity. An interesting point is made about this outpouring of public opinion. Wells makes her accusations regarding Willard's lack of interest in anti-lynching campaigns and then almost seems to step back to wait. The outcry is immediate and fierce, proving Wells' point better than anything she could have said herself.



To be a Woman Sublime

To be a Woman Sublime Summary and Analysis

Most women's clubs are formed when women are excluded from some place or event. Fannie Barrier Williams notes that the success of White women in the area of creating activists' clubs inspires Black women to do the same. In some ways, the groups are similar. For example, both see families as "microorganisms" and a vital part of society. However, White women are generally moving ahead in their causes more quickly than the Black women. It is generally accepted that Black women are bound by their ties to the race as a whole. In 1899, living conditions for Blacks has so greatly deteriorated that someone suggests that the entire race could be killed off.

Mary Church Terrell realizes that Black women typically hold a job outside the home and that they have little time or energy left for their own families. Terrell encourages the various Black women's clubs to establish nurseries and kindergartens to address this situation. Anna Julia Cooper points out that Black women who work are generally limited to teaching in Black schools or domestic service. Because teaching is preferable, an education is vital. It's noted by educator Jeanne Noble that there are people willing to work to overcome the obstacles of providing higher education for Black women simply because there are so many Black children in need of education. Meanwhile, a forward-thinking activist named Nannie Helen Burroughs believes Black women must undergo training to be the best domestic help available. Burroughs cites the fact that Black women have lost several traditional roles to others - including foreign women - and that training is the only way to combat this trend.

In 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People holds a founding conference and both Terrell and Ida B. Wells attend. The women who are members of this and other clubs are typically driven, talented career women who work as educators and business people. The majority of them have no children. Many, including Terrell and Ida B. Wells Barnett, don't marry young. At one point, Wells-Barnett makes the decision to retire from her public duties but comes out of retirement just five months later in response to a lynching. It's noted that these and some other women have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to work while many have no choice in the matter and provide vital income for their families.

Black women come to criticize the attitudes of Black men as well as White. Black women assert that they want men to "believe in them." Some note that Black girls have among them their "trifling" few, but this is not typical of all though it is what men expect of all. It's also noted that men tend to disbelieve in a woman's intelligence, thereby excluding them from higher education and political roles based on gender alone. Despite these and other divisions between Black men and women, the two groups come together when there's a need to work on specific issues related to their race.

—

It's noted that in the 1830s, Black mothers were expected to teach their children the ultimate in manners and that some believe that this will, in time, eliminate the negative impression some have of the Black community as a whole. As the century draws to a close, it's noted that Black mothers are teaching their children these same lessons but this time the goal is to help their children endure the negative image of Blacks that will certainly impact them.

Some fundraisers are aimed at Washington as the place with readily-available resources, but Black women's clubs are sometimes not in favor of this funding source because of the control the lawmakers seek to maintain over Black women. It's noted that some may not be in favor of interracial relationships but fight against laws to that effect.



The Quest for Woman Suffrage

The Quest for Woman Suffrage Summary and Analysis

While there are White women who are active in the suffrage movement, there are also those who believe that women don't have to vote in order to enact change and that allowing women to vote is an insult to the men who already vote in the best interests of the family. There are some Black men who don't support equal voting laws, including Kelly Miller, founder of the NAACP, who also believes that the men vote in the best interests of the family making the female vote moot. He notes that there could be an "argument made" for allowing the vote to "unfortunate women" who have no man. Nannie Helen Burroughs points out that Black women who have the right to vote would address the lack of laws regarding the protection of Black women. By the end of World War I, Black women are no longer timid on these points and are willing to openly confront opposition - including White women.

As White suffragists begin to unite, Blacks and foreigners begin to fear that this is an effort to increase White power, specifically by those who fear "dominion" by Blacks and foreigners. Suggestions for voter qualifications include education but others argue that character, rather than education, should be the measure. While there are some - including activist Susan B. Anthony - who believe granting women the vote will change the face of politics overnight, others have a more realistic belief.

While efforts continue to segregate the suffragists' cause, some women refuse. Ida B. Wells-Barnett and other members of her organization are planning to participate in a suffragists' march. Wells-Barnett is told the Black women will march at the rear, effectively segregating the march. When the event begins, she's not with her group and a short distance into the march, she slips from the crowd of spectators and into a group of Whites. There's nothing to do at that point and Well-Barnett is lauded for her determination. As some groups work on the issue, many Black women make paths of their own.

—

It's pointed out that some Black men are willing to sell their votes as an argument against granting voting rights to women - including Black women. It seems to be argued here that allowing Black women the vote - a vote that could be sold - is inviting further corruption of the system. The Black women fight this attitude by pointing out that the Black men who are selling votes are not doing so because of corruption on their parts but because they seek any means to help feed their starving families. It's noted that, as a rule, Black women have been more vocal about the rights of the race than have men.

It's interesting that the Black women see the potential of exacting change by having the vote. For example, they believe they can protect their jobs if they, as a major labor force, have the right to vote. Black women also realize the need to encourage

participation. Toward that end, they raise specific issues of concern to the race and set those concerns within a national context to effectively garner activity among the race as a whole.



Cusp of a New Era

Cusp of a New Era Summary and Analysis

Throughout the country in the post-World War I era, Black women are spearheading projects to improve educational opportunities, health care availability and social protection. While these efforts continue, some are forced to find a balance between the needs of the race and the demands of the Whites who financially support the causes. Black women begin to express themselves, and artists arrive more prominently on the scene in areas of music, opera and literature. Black women also gain more control over their personal lives, waiting longer to marry and having fewer children.

The war and climate take a toll with cotton crops failing across the South and Black women battling for equal pay in the defense industry as well as those working in restaurants, in the fields and in domestic situations. In Pine Bluff, Arkansas, women who have no financial need to work are refusing to work in the fields. Without a sufficient labor force, there are efforts to force the women to work but these attempts fail. Blacks rush by the thousands from the depressed economy of the South in search of better pay. This migration means that Black women are, for the first time, earning competitive wages, though the Black women typically take over jobs vacated by other women who leave in favor of better jobs, leaving the Black women working the least desirable jobs. When thousands of men return from the war, the women are pushed completely out of the workforce. The medical and legal fields are open to Black women because of the requirement for higher education, though there are limited numbers of women who can afford the education.

—

It's noted that the Blacks do not return to the South after World War I draws to a conclusion though a less determined race might have done so. While the job situation is desperate, there are changes in favor of the Blacks with a lowered infant mortality and more husbands and wives who remain married than their White counterparts. Those who study social issues attribute many of the problems to financial distress. It's now evident to activists that social equality is necessary for the continued improvement and success of the race as a whole.

The Radical Interracialists

The Radical Interracialists Summary and Analysis

By 1919, there's an increased spirit of defiance among Blacks as a whole. Zora Neal Hurston, a student at Howard University, is angered when the school's White president apologizes for having a book advocating social equality in the school's library. The concept of the New Negro is introduced as new social goals emerge.

There is increased hostility between Black and White suffragists. When the right to vote is granted, Black women rush out in droves to register. The movement meets with opposition that is noted to be the same as efforts to disenfranchise Black men. Black women begin entering efforts to address the race issue as opposed to former efforts related to the women's issue. It's noted that this lesson probably eliminates the idea that women's issues are more important than race.

During one particular conflict, the minutes of the meeting involving that conflict make no mention of the issue. It's noted that ignoring those with conflicting ideas is a common occurrence among the women's clubs. Though it's not specifically stated, this seems a different tactic from that taken by the efforts made by men.



Toward Interracial Cooperation

Toward Interracial Cooperation Summary and Analysis

By the 1920s, some White women realize the need to join Black women to achieve some specific goals. It's noted that this is not an effort at integration on the part of the Whites but that the Blacks believe there is a need for a higher level of equality. The Council for Interracial Cooperation is formed by men, but women aren't initially invited to participate with the apparent fear that Black women and White women couldn't work together. When the Black women host the White women, there's an initial shock as White women realize the Black women aren't deferring to them on the basis of race. At a meeting of the group in 1920 in Memphis, Tennessee, Charlotte Hawkins Brown says that the time of Black women's appreciation to Southern White women is past and insinuating that White women who are "crushing me beneath your feet" will not be accepted by "the dear Lord." Her speech moves the audience to a song of fellowship, but political talk creates an almost immediate air of unrest.

In 1922, lynching again comes to the forefront of interest and the Anti-Lynching Crusaders is formed with an ultimate goal of one million women members and one million dollars. They don't reach that goal but make a "credible showing."

—

There are moments of progress almost always offset by problems. In some cases, there seems to be a focus on a particular point that gains support and creates a unification that crosses race and gender boundaries. When that cause is taken from the forefront and some other, less unifying cause comes to the forefront of talks, some of the progress made seems to be lost. This is typical of human attitudes, the tendency to withdraw support for one cause when opposition arises on other causes.

A Search for Self

A Search for Self Summary and Analysis

As the quest for equality continues, there's a need for a definition of the word. Social reforms include gender equality and the right to birth control, which, unfortunately, turns into a campaign to keep the unintelligent from procreating. Members of the Daughters of the Confederacy plan to erect a monument to the "Black mammies" of the South, a proposal that garners anger from the Blacks who are trying to rise above the stereotype. There's suddenly an increased emphasis on beauty and men come to respect the ideals of virtue and innocence.

There is a rush of beauty products and a woman named Madame C.J. Walker emerges on the scene with a hair thickening product. Her enterprise grows to employ five thousand Black women selling her products, working in a laboratory environment and mixing the products. It's noted that the improved appearance of the women who use Walker's products opens the doors to some job opportunities.

Zora Neal Hurston writes several novels, including *THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD*, a story that neither romanticizes nor condemns the Black community; it is unique in that respect. Meanwhile, Amy Jacques Garvey criticizes Black men who say that change is imminent but do nothing to hasten that change. It's noted that men's attitudes are changing, but arguably more slowly than the Black women are demanding change. As women who don't work are considered of less value than their working counterparts, there's an increased emphasis on working.

—

With the increased emphasis on beauty, the market is flooded with products for Black women, many that include lightening the skin. This tendency toward a model of "beauty" is typical of all ages and changes with all eras.



Enter Mary McLeod Bethune

Enter Mary McLeod Bethune Summary and Analysis

Mary McLeod Bethune dedicates her life to the advancement of her race. She believes in her abilities and at one point starts a school in Daytona, Florida, with only \$1.50 in her pocket and her will to succeed. Though she initially believes her goal in life to be mission work in Africa, she comes to realize that she's needed in the United States. There are stories of the trials Black women face as the Great Depression looms on the horizon and unemployment rises. There is a "slave market" in which Black women gather each morning and White women - often of a class that could not otherwise afford to hire domestic help - take the lowest bids for a day's work. The Black women are forced to bid against each other and are often exploited sexually or not paid at all. Bethune is among a group of activists who realize the potential power held by the Black professional women.

As violence increases, there's a new demand for anti-lynching laws. It's noted by Charlotte Hawkins Brown that the Southern White women have the power to push for racial equality more so than any other single group. Some who fight for the causes, including Bethune, admit to being diplomatic in their quest for a particular goal. Bethune is heavily involved in several groups and focuses on race, women, education, and youth.

As the financial impact of the impending Great Depression looms, violence increases. While it's unfortunate, it's also typical of poor economic times and situations. Studies later prove the tendency of those who face economic disaster to lash out in frustration. Violence against Blacks during this period includes lynching, which had decreased in more prosperous times.

Black Braintrusts

Black Braintrusts Summary and Analysis

Franklin D. Roosevelt, elected President in 1932, is not a proponent of Black rights. The relief acts put in place after the Great Depression are not equal. In 1934, Eleanor Roosevelt becomes active in the issue prompting change among those in power to enact it. Blacks support FDR's second term and Roosevelt begins appointing Blacks to specific roles in the government, including Cabinet divisions. These appointments are called "Black Braintrusts" or "the Black Cabinet," and Mary McLeod Bethune is among the appointments. As the first woman appointed to such a position, Bethune refuses to allow others to ignore the significance of the appointment.

Bethune and others believe there are advantages to remaining segregated including the fact that Blacks can more readily oversee the needs of Blacks than Whites who believe themselves sympathetic. It's noted that one of her faults is that she's sometimes willing to be separate even if the equality is missing. There are emerging efforts to put Blacks into position of authority in other aspects of government, but this meets with opposition from Whites. Bethune and others soon put whatever limited influence is at hand to work, encouraging other appointments and putting Blacks in charge of various projects whenever possible.

It's noted that FDR's objective in making the appointments of Blacks has nothing to do with integration but is his way of creating a "separate but equal" role. This attitude will come under fire in later years but is a step in the right direction.

It's noted that those in positions of authority encounter problems and use the connections available to work through them. For example, Bethune learns that a housing project in Daytona, Florida, has been stalled in red tape. She picks up the phone, calls Eleanor Roosevelt who calls the head of the housing authority and the project is soon back on track. Bethune also faces situations with an incredible sense of aplomb and subtly. When a man addresses her as "auntie," she asks which of her brothers is his father.



The Second World War and After

The Second World War and After Summary and Analysis

A study reveals that working married women are forced to work because their husbands do not make enough to support the family. Unions are formed. Both Black and White women participate in successful strikes. As World War II looms, opportunities in the defense industries provide more money and better conditions for many working women, though not often for Black women or even Black men. Roosevelt's commitment to equal rights wanes and Blacks are unemployed in record numbers. Much of the opposition to Black employment in the defense industry is from White women who fear their domestic help will leave in favor of the factory jobs.

There's a general lessening of interest in Black organizations and it seems the new generation of members take social rather than activists' roles. Black women are especially torn as men of their race displaying a tendency to depend on the woman to fulfill the traditional role at home regardless of any job they hold. There is a decline in family attitudes, probably prompted at least partly by the inability of the women of the race to fulfill these demands and to define themselves as individuals. As a new generation emerges, there is no doubt that they will demand to be part of the racial movement rather than part of the feminist movement alone.

—

It's noted that it seems impossible in the 1940s that segregation will continue, yet it does. There are "token" integrations and the time and place seems right for full-fledged integration, but there's nothing to spur it on, so it doesn't happen.

Another important aspect of life as World War II comes to a close is the increase in consumerism. It's noted that the chief role of a woman is to buy more of the appliances and other items offered for the home. There's a general shift among White female college students from a desire for a career to a desire for a home and family. Meanwhile, Black women in professional roles continues to rise, though not exponentially.



Dress Rehearsal for the Sixties, Coming Full Circle, Women's Movement and Black Discontent, Strong Women and Strutting Men, and Outlook

Dress Rehearsal for the Sixties, Coming Full Circle, Women's Movement and Black Discontent, Strong Women and Strutting Men, and Outlook Summary and Analysis

In "Dress Rehearsal for the Sixties," the Supreme Court has demanded integration but provided no timeline for compliance. Two are killed in Belzoni, Mississippi, including fourteen-year-old Emmet Till, accused of whistling at a White woman. And on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a White man, an action very similar to a teen's recent refusal to move to the back of a bus that had resulted in the teen's arrest. Parks is also arrested. She works for E.D. Nixon, president of the Montgomery branch of the NAACP, and Nixon calls on Clifford Durr to defend Parks who has been charged with disobeying the segregation ordinance - an ordinance that the Supreme Court has ruled against. Parks' husband fears for her, but she is determined to stand her ground. Martin Luther King, Jr. emerges on the scene as a prominent, if reluctant, leader. A bus boycott ensues, gaining national attention. The Supreme Court upholds Parks' defense but the racial equality movement comes to a sudden standstill after that decision.

Then in Little Rock, Arkansas, the "Little Rock Nine," led by Daisy Bates, become the first Black students to attend a White school. The reaction is immediate and vicious and it takes military presence to quell the violence.

In "Coming Full Circle," students become involved in the question of racial equality, and young women are impacted by watching their own parents' activism and independence. The Freedom Riders are formed and violence becomes almost commonplace, but the dedication of the activists remains. Impressions in rural areas are different because the younger generation has seen their parents resist exploitation in different ways, sometimes simply by leaving the situation in search of something better. The search for freedom will be sufficient to unite the young people of the urban areas and those of the rural areas. There are a quarter of a million people who gather for a march on Washington D.C. with Martin Luther King, but the momentum seems fruitless when four little girls are killed in a Birmingham bombing. As Fannie Lou Hamer testifies that she was beaten brutally for wanting to register to vote, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson is under pressure to pacify the Blacks without giving any real concessions.



In the "Women's Movement and Black Discontent," the women's movement grows, spurred by a proposed U.S. House bill to prohibit sexual discrimination, a proposal that gets some support, but women are immediately aware that they have to keep the ball rolling. In 1965, Malcolm X is assassinated and the following year the National Organization for Women is established, seeking a coalition with prominent Black women. NOW would have some initial problems based on differences of opinion and the makeup of the leadership.

In "Strong Women and Strutting Men," President Johnson takes steps to make equality for Blacks more than a theory. He commissions a study that states that Black family issues began under the slavery regime and have continued to impact the homes of Black Americans. There's a "storm of protest" to the statement that Black men have been dominated and that all males - from roosters to generals - have a tendency to strut. The study seems to be saying that Black men, refused their ability to "strut," have become the weakest link in the Black family situation. There's disagreement with some saying that the Black women as the matriarch of the family is a myth. The fact of low wages earned by Black women is used to drive home that point. It's also pointed out that the report focuses on a relatively small portion of the Black community and is therefore not representative of the whole.

Shirley Chisholm is the first Black woman elected to Congress and remains in office until 1983 - seven terms. She's from New York and readily admits that her presidential campaign had too little money and too little organization to succeed. What's interesting is that Chisholm expects an outpouring of support from women's groups but gets only limited support with some women being "cool" toward her effort. Chisholm also notes that there's limited support from other organizations and believes there to be a general disappointment that the first quest by a Black for a significant political office is not being launched by a man. She calls a later failure to be elected to office a result of her gender rather than her race. The Equal Rights Amendment is introduced but garners immediate opposition from labor movements. As more Black women are head of a household, there's a new trend that these are the poorest of the poor - another point in favor of equal wages. As was the case with suffrage, there are more Black women in favor of women's rights than White women.

"Outlook" provides some final points, including the fact that it was Black women who initiated the social reforms that should have been brought by White governments to address the need for education in Black communities. Those efforts play a major role in the Civil Rights movement to follow. It was Black women who, caught in the issues of both race and gender prejudice, are bound to work at both causes. While Black women come across as the strong catalysts for equality, they have struggled to reconcile their roles as activists with their traditional roles as mother and wife. Despite the racial advances, the Black family continues to face problems that arise largely from inequality. Wages are among those problems with a continuing disparity of income between Black families and their White counterparts in families where both parents work. Unemployment rates continue to be higher for Blacks, and Black teens give birth at a higher rate than any other group in the entire world.



As time passes, there grows a tendency for women to unite on specific issues regardless of race. As more White women have entered the workplace, they struggle with the same issues of identity that have plagued Black women for decades. These women find they have more in common as more women become career oriented, earn as much or more than their husbands, and deal with the desire to be career woman, wife and mother.

It's not only Black women who are suffering from increased divorce rates. Black men who are single or divorced tend to earn less than their married counterparts. Single men tend to have more trouble developing and keeping family and social networks functioning than do their female counterparts.

—

It's noted that there's a common thread among the majority of the activists in that they want fairness for all. Jean Smith tells of her own life. She sometimes took money from her family in order to buy lunches for classmates who couldn't afford them. She says she took action, as her mother and as she'd seen in others, quietly, and that she did so because to do nothing in the face of inequality was wrong.

As the ideals of the urban Blacks spill out into the rural areas, some rural Blacks find themselves confronted with information they'd never known, including - sometime in the 1950s - the right to vote. Some rural Blacks hadn't known of their rights on this front and are immediately taken with the idea that they have a voice, so much so that they risk the loss of job and even threats on their lives to take advantage of that right.

It's important to realize that Black women are facing double discrimination because they are women and because they are Black. Despite this, there are many who find a way to complete college and post-graduate degrees and succeed in their fields. The effort to explain how some can accomplish this while trying to explain the general inequality faced by the Black race becomes a nightmare for those who want to categorize the situation.

It's noted that gains made by Black women in the employment field has been impacted more by strides toward gender equality than by racial equality. While the reader can make of that statement what s/he will, it seems that the disparity between men and women remains a greater problem than between the races. However, the author warns against entering into the "timework arguments of race-versus-sex," because both play a role.



Characters

Mary McLeod Bethune

A Black activist, Bethune is one of those who believes that temperance increases support but is also willing to do what she believes is right despite the odds against her. When Bethune desires to go to Africa as a missionary, she realizes she is actually needed in the United States and, armed with one dollar and fifty cents and a strong belief in her own abilities, she sets out to start a girls' school in Daytona, Florida. She does so, selling cakes and pies and then going to philanthropists for support. By age sixty-one, she is heavily involved in several organizations and focuses on "her four passions: race, women, education, and youth." Bethune is credited with bringing those four issues to the forefront of the national political arena with FDR's campaign. Bethune is cited as having the ability to meet opposition and bring it to her way of thinking. She also has a sassy sense of humor that may have made an impression on many. It's noted that when she is called "auntie" by a man after her appointment by FDR, she looks the man over carefully and then asks which of her brothers is his father. Bethune has an interesting attitude regarding integration in that she feels separate but equal to be adequate and, in some ways, preferable. It's noted that she does sometimes allow the separation without the equality, which is seen by others as a fault.

Mary Church Terrell

A woman who is also moved greatly by the lynching of Thomas Moss and his business partners, Terrell is born to an influential father and is never quite happy in the role her father wants for her as a gentle lady of the house. Terrell is an activist who puts a great deal of time and energy into various projects. She has an interest in many aspects of equality but seems to do so with an eye toward reality. For example, it's Terrell who notes that every Black woman is judged based on the lowest of the race. Terrell comes to realize that Black women are overworked, typically holding a job outside the home, which makes it impossible for them to adequately oversee their own families. Realizing that children would suffer long-term effects from the situation, Terrell has the foresight to encourage establishing nurseries and kindergartens wherever the clubs can find the resources to do so. Terrell is among those who call for Congressional intervention into the wage issues facing the Black woman.

Thomas Moss

A man who is hanged in Memphis, Tennessee. Moss is a successful businessman, and it is reportedly that success that prompted the lynching of Moss and his business partners, Calvin McDowell and Henry Stewart, owners of the People's Grocery. Mass, shortly before being hanged, left a message for "my people," urging that they "go west"



because there is obviously no justice in Memphis. (Selling Myself As Dearly As Possible)

Ida B. Wells

A journalist who is among the most influential of all writers and one of the few Black woman to write about violence against Blacks in the 1800s. Wells argued that Blacks have a responsibility to stand up for themselves.

Fannie Barrier Williams

One of the first Black members of the Chicago Women's Club, Williams is selected as one of the few Black speakers at the World Columbian Exposition of 1893. Her speech is direct and urges White women to stand up for Black women who continue to be victimized. "Defending Our Name"

Ferdinand Barnett

An attorney and publisher of THE CONSERVATOR, the first newspaper in Chicago by and for Blacks, Barnett is also the husband of activist Ida B. Wells. "Defending Our Name"

Charlotte Hawkins Brown

Born to a family of nineteen, Brown and her siblings move with their mother after their father abandons them. Brown had little opportunity for education because of the family's strained circumstances. Brown is working as a nanny and is walking along a particular street, pushing a baby carriage and reading Vergil when she's noticed by an educator of the day. Their ensuing conversation results in an offer to attend college and Brown becomes a famous activist.

Madam C.J. Walker

Named Sarah Breedlove at birth, Walker is an orphan who marries at age fourteen and is soon widowed. She works in domestic situations until she discovers a recipe for thickening hair. She establishes a lab, creates a number of products and employs thousands in her business enterprise.

Zora Neal Hurston

A student at Howard University who becomes angry when the school's White president apologizes to Congress for having a book deemed inappropriate in the school's library.



Hurston says that if the Congressional funding were withheld, the students would at least be free to study as is right. Hurston becomes a famed author who writes novels about Black life that are very realistic.

Rosa Parks

The woman who ignites a boycott of the public bus system in Mississippi when she refuses to give up her seat to a White man. Parks is arrested and charged with disobeying the segregation ordinance which had by then been struck down by the Supreme Court. Her case became a test for the rules in integration which had yet to be put into effective practice.



Objects/Places

The People's Grocery

The store owned by Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell and Henry Stewart in Memphis, Tennessee, prior to Moss's murder in 1982.

The World Columbian Exposition

Where Fannie Barrier Williams speaks out about the abuse of Black women and the need for White women to stand against the ongoing crimes.

THE CONSERVATOR

The newspaper owned by Ferdinand Barnett and the first Black newspaper in Chicago.

Howard University

An important Black university of the early 1900s.

The New Negro

A concept for the changing social attitudes of the Blacks of the early 1900s.

Daytona, Florida

Where Bethune begins a school for Black girls with a starting investment of one dollar and fifty cents.

Belzoni, Mississippi

Where Emmet Till is lynched after being accused of whistling at a White woman.

NOW

The National Organization for Women, which is formed in 1966 and seeks a coalition with a number of prominent Black women of the era.

New York

Home of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to Congress.

Birmingham, Alabama

Where four Black girls are killed in a racial bombing.

Themes

Determination

There is a level of determination evident among the Black women of the decades following the Civil War that surpasses that of all other groups. This determination is seen in an array of efforts. When Mary McLeod Bethune believes that her calling is to start a girls' school in Daytona, Florida, she sets out to make the project a reality with a total of one dollar and fifty cents in her building fund. Bethune calls out for support from philanthropists but doesn't wait for others to donate the necessary money to make her dream a reality. Bethune holds bake sales and does a great deal of the fund raising herself. This is seen in the lives and actions of others as well. When Fannie Lou Hamer learns that Black women have the right to vote, she rushes to register. She is beaten brutally but doesn't give up her right to register or to cast her vote. This determination is exhibited by women such as Rosa Parks and Daisy Bates who each takes steps that they believe to be right despite the fact that their actions are neither popular nor particularly safe.

The Roles of Black Women

The roles of Black women changes over the decades in different ways than other groups. Long before the White women struggle to reconcile their roles as career women and caregivers for their own families, Black women do so. Soon after the Civil War, Black women give up their roles as stay-at-home moms because their husbands are largely unable to earn enough money to make ends meet. They work often as domestic help or in the fields; the only option other than menial labor is to seek out higher education. This requires sacrifice as well. As time passes, there are many who choose careers and lives involved in various social issues rather than taking on the responsibility of husbands and children. As the Black women struggle to find a balance between their lives as a major breadwinner for the family and caregiver, some realize that the children will suffer the long-term consequences of the situation; as a result, kindergartens and nurseries are founded in many cities in an effort to provide aid for these struggling families.

Escaping Stereotypes

Stereotypes have remained a problem for Black women throughout the history of the United States and other western nations. These have included the ideal of the "mammy" who ruled the plantation with an iron fist and who was loved and protected by the master and mistress so that the Blacks owed allegiance to their masters. During the 1900s, that same kind of stereotype exists with the use of this icon - the Black mammy - as the typical Black woman. It's noted that the activist Mary McLeod Bethune is called "auntie" by a man and responds by looking the man over and asking which of her



brothers is the young man's father. Another stereotype, that of the loose Black woman who incites violence and literally invites violence, including rape, is used as a reason not to punish the accused rapists. Meanwhile, it's assumed that all Black men are waiting for the opportunity to rape White women and are punished at every accusation, proven or not. This is true to the point that a fourteen-year-old Black boy is lynched after being accused of whistling at a White woman.

Style

Perspective

The book is written in third person with an omniscient point of view, the only option available to the author because of the span of time, people and events involved. The perspective remains omniscient and third person but focuses occasionally on particular people at different times. The time spans more than a century meaning the people change. An important aspect of the perspective is that there are obviously opinions presented by the author that are important to her. It's important to remember this point to maintain perspective. It's also important to remember this is an opinion as to the most important issues and that the particular issues facing specific groups may have differed. It's also important to remember that this book is copyrighted 1984. The information provided in "Outlook," the final chapter of the book, is based on information from that date. There are some sweeping generalities that are presented as fact at the time but may no longer be true. It's left to the reader to determine the significance of the perspective related to the facts presented and to weigh the possibility that the author has presented all fairly.

Tone

The story is written in a fairly straightforward manner but is sometimes presented in a convoluted manner that makes it difficult to follow the details of the idea being presented. The book is set in America during the years following the Civil War until the 1970s. The passage of time means that there are some basic differences in how the people talk and address members of the racial groups. The words "Black," "White," "Negro" and "Colored" are used throughout the book. For the purpose of continuity, only the words "Black" and "White" are used in this guide except in the case of direct quotes. It should be noted that the tone is generally hopeful and determined, but that there are many points of hopelessness in which it seems the steps taken toward equality are never going to be enough. Because of the passage of time, there are other words and phrases that may be sufficiently outdated that some readers have trouble with them. Most readers will be able to work through these passages with sufficient understanding.

Structure

There are many people, places and events discussed throughout the book and these are addressed in the language and setting of their times. The stories are presented in a series of issues, each is presented to its conclusion. This means that the book skips from one period to another based solely on the issues involved. There is a general timeline that ranges from the post-Civil War era to the 1970s. The book is divided into three sections, which are further divided into chapters. There is a total of twenty chapters, each titled with a Roman numeral and a title describing what can be expected

in that section. The larger sections are called "Inventing Themselves," "A World War and After: The New Negro Woman," and "The Unfinished Revolution." The chapters begin with "To Sell My Life as Dearly as Possible" and end with "Outlook." The book includes source notes, a bibliography and index.



Quotes

"They well knew, as Wells stated publicly, that while Black men were being accused of ravishing White women, 'The rape of helpless Negro girls, which began in slavery days, still continues without reproof from church, state, or press.'" To Sell My Life as Dearly as Possible, Page 31

"In the world of the slave mother, there was little room for compassion, because there was no room for weakness." "Casting of the Die," Page 45

"When in the course of its deliberations it became clear that the specific needs of workingwomen were not being addressed, Black women challenged the proceedings. One delegate from Newport, Rhode Island, explained that she 'was much disappointed that in all your deliberations, speeches and resolutions, which were excellent so far as the men are concerned, the poor women's interests were not mentioned, or referred to.'" "To Choose Freely," Page 69

"To British liberals, Wells' assertion that liberal American Whites condoned lynching was just as disturbing as the fact of the lynching itself." "Defending Our Name," Page 90

"White antisuffragists harped on the theme of true womanhood in its many variations. Entering the political arena could sully their virtuous aprons." - "The Quest for Woman Suffrage," Page 120

"By 1919 its membership reached 100,000, and its loathsome activities spread throughout the country from Maine to California. The huge increase in the Black population north of the Mason-Dixon line became so much grist for the Klan's mill." - "Cusp of a New Ear," Page 145

"In the 1920s an activist coterie of Southern women began to understand what many of their peers in other parts of the country had not: the need to ally with Black women activists on issues of common concern." "A New Era: Toward Interracial Cooperation," Page 171

"Because the downgrading of Black women workers coincided more and more with the unemployment of their men, increasing numbers of these women became by necessity the sole support for themselves and their families." "Enter Mary McLeod Bethune," Page 205

"Because the downgrading of Black women workers coincided more and more with the unemployment of their men, increasing numbers of these women became by necessity the sole support for themselves and their families." "Enter Mary McLeod Bethune," Page 205



"Bethune was also undaunted by physical danger, and even stood down the Ku Klux Klan's attempted interference with Black voter registration in Florida." "Black Braintruster," Page 227

"Although frustrated by their own situation, Black women were sensitive to the ego needs of men." "A Second World War and After," Page 251

"Even though she may have a professional job the Negro man expects her to be a buffer for him - to work eight hours a day and come home and keep house. I am sure the Negro woman feels incapable of doing this adequately." - "A Second World War and After," page 251

"The Negro revolt is properly dated from the moment Mrs. Rosa Parks said 'No' to the bus driver's demand that she get up and let a White man have her seat,' wrote the late Black journalist Louis Lomax." - "Dress Rehearsal for the Sixties," Page 261

"As leader of the integration effort, Bates was constantly faced with the decision whether to continue or desist. After all, her own life was only one of those threatened, and many supporters had questioned her determination to go on in the fact of such peril." - "Dress Rehearsal for the Sixties," Page 270



Topics for Discussion

Describe how the role of Black women in the family changes over the decades following the Civil War through the mid to late 1900s.

Who is Ida B. Wells? Mary Church Terrell? How are the two connected? How do their paths cross? How do their roles as activists differ?

Who is Madam C.J. Walker? What is her claim to fame during her lifetime? What is the need she meets for women of her day? Is this an opportunity limited to only that time frame? Support your answer with examples.

Who is Mary McLeod Bethune? What is her role toward increasing rights for women and Blacks? What kind of person is she?

How do time periods impact the lives of Black women? How do the lives of Black women correlate to those of other groups, such as White women and Black men of these time periods?

Compare the roles of Black women to those of White women. The period around World War II when so many women are working, Black women are sometimes forced to auction their domestic services. How does this compare to the days of slavery?

Who is Rosa Parks? Daisy Bates? How do their actions spark advances in the Civil Rights movement?