

Where
the past
is present

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TEACHER RESOURCE LESSON PLAN

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN AND THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY



CREATED BY

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INTRODUCTION

This lesson helps High School United States History students, over two class periods, understand the important role the Tuskegee Airmen played in World War II, and that many of them were from the Detroit area.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Utilize various skills sets in order to complete activities related to Michigan's role in the Tuskegee Airmen
- Create a "RAFT" writing based upon these activities as a summative assessment

ERA

USHG Era 7- The Great Depression and World War II (1920-1945)

MI GLCES

- **United States History 7.2.3: Impact of WWII**

on American Life: Analyze the changes in American life brought about by U.S. participation in World War II including

- Mobilization of economic, military, and social resources
- Role of women and minorities in the war effort
- Role of the home front in supporting the war effort (e.g., rationing, work hours, taxes)
- Internment of Japanese-Americans (National Geographic Standard 10, p. 203)
- **United State History 8.3.1: Civil Rights Movement:** Analyze the key events, ideals, documents, and organizations in the struggle for civil rights by African Americans including
 - The impact of WWII and the Cold War (e.g., racial and gender integration of the military)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In spite of adversity and limited opportunities, African Americans have played a significant role in U.S. military history over the past 300 years. They were denied military leadership roles and skilled training because many believed they lacked qualifications for combat duty. Before 1940, African Americans were barred from flying for the U.S. military. Civil rights organizations and the black press exerted pressure that resulted in the formation of an African American pursuit squadron based in Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1941. They became known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

"Tuskegee Airmen" refers to all who were involved in the "Tuskegee Experience," the Army Air Corps program to train African Americans to fly and maintain combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen included pilots, navigators, bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, instructors, and all

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the personnel who kept the planes in the air. The military selected Tuskegee Institute to train pilots because of its commitment to aeronautical training. Tuskegee had the facilities, and engineering and technical instructors, as well as a climate for year round flying. The first Civilian Pilot Training Program students completed their instruction in May 1940. The Tuskegee program was then expanded and became the center for African American aviation during World War II.

The Tuskegee Airmen overcame segregation and prejudice to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups of World War II. They proved conclusively that African Americans could fly and maintain sophisticated combat aircraft. The Tuskegee Airmen's achievements, together with the men and women who supported them, paved the way for full integration of the U.S. military.

Michigan, and Detroit in particular, played an integral part in the story of the Tuskegee Airmen. Fifty-two Michigan residents graduated from the Pilot Training Program, with forty of these young men coming from the City of Detroit. This lesson will explore this connection of Detroit to the larger story of the Tuskegee Airmen and World War II.

Sources:

- "Overcoming Adversity." A Brief History. Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. , 2013. Web. 27 Dec. 2013. <<http://tuskegeeairmen.org/explore-tai/a-brief-history/>>.
- Homan, Lynn M., and Thomas Reilly. *Black Knights: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., 2001. 272-315. Print

MATERIALS USED

- Print outs of the activities
- Means of projecting to show video of Mr. Jefferson
- Information on how to do close-reading techniques.

LESSON SEQUENCE

Teachers can use all of these activities or choose some of them. If a teacher opts to do the entire lesson please do the following:

1. Print out the activities located at the end of this document.
2. Gauge students' prior knowledge of the Tuskegee Airmen in one of the following ways:
 - Class discussion
 - Give students a half-sheet of paper and have them answer survey questions that will be read out loud
 - A graffiti board where students write their knowledge on a black board
 - "10 Facts"- where you put students in groups and have them research to find at least 10 facts about the Tuskegee Airmen. Then have groups share out
3. Give students activity one and have them use the list to answer questions. Go over answers when they are done.
4. Give students activity two and have them support, extend, or challenge the claim made. Discuss answers afterwards. This can be done as a writing assignment or discussion prompt.
5. Give the students the final activity and have them get into groups and read the five texts. Have them use close-reading techniques and have them share out to their groups. Then have them synergize from the sources what it was like during this time period of World War II.
6. Have them complete the summative writing assignment to complete the lesson.

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EVALUATION

Students will receive two grades:

1. A participation grade for engaging in the prior knowledge portion and completion of the three activities.
2. Students will also receive an assessment grade for completion of the RAFT summation writing assignment.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Arrange a field trip or offer extra credit to visit the Detroit Historical Museum. Have them visit the Arsenal of Democracy exhibit to learn more about this topic. Information about the museum and how to get there can be found at: <http://detroithistorical.org>.
- Have students visit the Tuskegee Museum located at 6325 West Jefferson Avenue in Detroit or visit the site: <http://www.tuskegeearmernationalmuseum.org>.
- An outstanding online activity on the Tuskegee Airmen is found at the Air Force web page at: <http://www.airforce.com/games-and-extras/tuskegee-airmen/>.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Broadnax, Samuel L. *Blue Skies, Black Wings: African American Pioneers of Aviation*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2007.

Bucholtz, Chris and Jim Laurier. *332nd Fighter Group – Tuskegee Airmen*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2007.

Caver, Joseph, Jerome Ennels, and Daniel Haulman. *The Tuskegee Airmen: An Illustrated History, 1939–1949*. Montgomery, Alabama: New South Books, 2011.

Francis, Charles E. and Adolph Caso. *The Tuskegee Airmen: The Men Who Changed a Nation*. Boston: Branden Books, 1997.

Gubert, Betty Kaplan, Miriam Sawyer and Caroline

M. Fannine. *Distinguished African Americans in Aviation and Space Science*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002.

Hill, Ezra M. Sr. *The Black Red Tail Angels: A Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*. Columbus, Ohio: SMF Haven of Hope, 2006.

Holway, John B. *Red Tail, Black Wings: The Men of America's Black Air Force*. Las Cruces, New Mexico: Yuca Tree Press, 1997.

Haulman, Daniel L. *Eleven Myths About the Tuskegee Airmen*. Montgomery, Alabama: New South Books, 2012.

Homan, Lynn M. and Thomas Reilly. *Black Knights: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing, 2001.

McKissack, Patricia C. and Fredrick L. *Red Tail Angels: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. New York: Walker Books for Young Readers, 1996.

Moye, J. Todd. *Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press (USA), 2010.

Ross, Robert A. *Lonely Eagles: The Story of America's Black Air Force in World War II*. Los Angeles: Tuskegee Airmen Inc., Los Angeles Chapter, 1980.

Sandler, Stanley. *Segregated Skies: All-Black Combat Squadrons of WWII*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.

Tucker, Phillip Thomas. *Father of the Tuskegee Airmen, John C. Robinson*. Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2012.

For more information about the
Detroit Historical Society,
or to schedule a field trip to the
Detroit Historical Museum or
Dossin Great Lakes Museum,
visit detroithistorical.org

PRIMARY SOURCE LIST



DESCRIPTION: List of Tuskegee Pilot Graduates from Michigan, including their class number, graduation date, rank at Tuskegee, serial number and hometown.

SOURCE: Homan, Lynn M., and Thomas Reilly. *Black Knights: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., 2001. 272-315. Print

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/kufuzpa>



DESCRIPTION: Michigan map that shows the location of Tuskegee Pilot Graduates from Michigan. 40 are from Detroit.

SOURCE: Salciccioli, Anthony A. "Michigan Tuskegee Airmen." *Michigan Tuskegee Airmen*. pinmaps.net , 29 Dec. 2013. Web. 29 Dec. 2013. <[http://www.pinmaps.net/mymaps/#Michigan Tuskegee Airmen](http://www.pinmaps.net/mymaps/#Michigan_Tuskegee_Airmen)>.

URL: <http://www.pinmaps.net/PrintMap.aspx?MapId=29078&Version=Map>



DESCRIPTION: Interview with Detroit-born, Mr. Alexander Jefferson describing his experience as a Tuskegee Airman in World War II.

SOURCE: Jefferson, Alexander. Web. Mar. 2012.

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCgeZHH1zU8>

Shot Down in WWII - Tuskegee Airman Alexander Jefferson



DESCRIPTION: Newspaper article reporting on Executive Order 9981 that provided, "equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed forces without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin."

SOURCE: "By Executive Order--President Truman Wipes Out Segregation in Armed Forces." *Chicago Defender*, July 31, 1948.

Copyprint from microfilm. Serial and Government Publications Division. (9-2) Courtesy of the *Chicago Daily Defender*, Chicago, Illinois.

URL: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/archive/09/0902001r.jpg>

PRIMARY SOURCE LIST



DESCRIPTION: Armorerers of the 332nd Fighter Group carry .50 caliber ammunition belts at Selfridge Field, Michigan. The wartime training of ground and support personnel became a vital part of the Tuskegee airmen operations.

SOURCE: Hardesty, Von. *Black Wings*. 2008. Photograph. National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

URL: <http://airandspace.si.edu/explore-and-learn/topics/blackwings/index.cfm>



DESCRIPTION: Pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group train for overseas deployment at Selfridge Field, Michigan, late in 1943

SOURCE: Hardesty, Von. *Black Wings*. 2008. Photograph. National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

URL: <http://airandspace.si.edu/explore-and-learn/topics/blackwings/index.cfm>



DESCRIPTION: Chrysler Plant manufacturing engines for tanks in February in 1942. A photo indicative of the Detroit being the Arsenal of Democracy

SOURCE: Henrickson, Wilma. *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points*. 1991. Art. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, MI.

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/m6owzc2> (Pages 397-400)



DESCRIPTION: A photo of Coleman Young as a Tuskegee Airman in 1945. Young went on to become mayor of Detroit from 1974-1994.

SOURCE: Harp, Andrea S. "Coleman A. Young: Social and Political Powerbroker." *A Life Remembered: Coleman Alexander Young*. Wayne State University, 17 Apr. 2001. Web. 30 Dec. 2013. <<http://www.is.wayne.edu/MNISSANI/ELEPHANT/Young.htm>>.

URL: <http://www.is.wayne.edu/MNISSANI/ELEPHANT/Young.htm>

ACTIVITY 1

Using the formula: $\frac{\text{is}}{\text{of}} = \frac{\%}{100}$ or $\frac{\text{part}}{\text{whole}} = \frac{\%}{100}$

and the list of Michigan Tuskegee Airmen, determine the percentage of the following (There were 932 total pilot graduates of the Tuskegee Program):

- Tuskegee Pilot Graduates that were from Detroit: _____
- Percentage that were from Michigan: _____
- Percentage of graduates by the year (Dealing with a total of 51, not 932)
1943 _____ 1944 _____
1945 _____ 1946 _____

Now answer the questions:

- What about Michigan and Detroit may have caused this high number of Airmen?
- How does the % changes by year correlate to what was happening in World War II?

Watch a video clip of an interview of Mr. Alexander Jefferson, one of Michigan's Tuskegee Airmen. This link is located at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCgeZHH1zU8>. Answer the following questions:

- Based on Mr. Jefferson's interview, what are your thoughts about the character of the Tuskegee Airmen?
- How do you feel your generation would handle going to war like these young men did?

ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF TUSKEGEE PILOT GRADUATES FROM MICHIGAN

Following each name is their class number, graduation date, rank held at Tuskegee, serial number, and hometown.

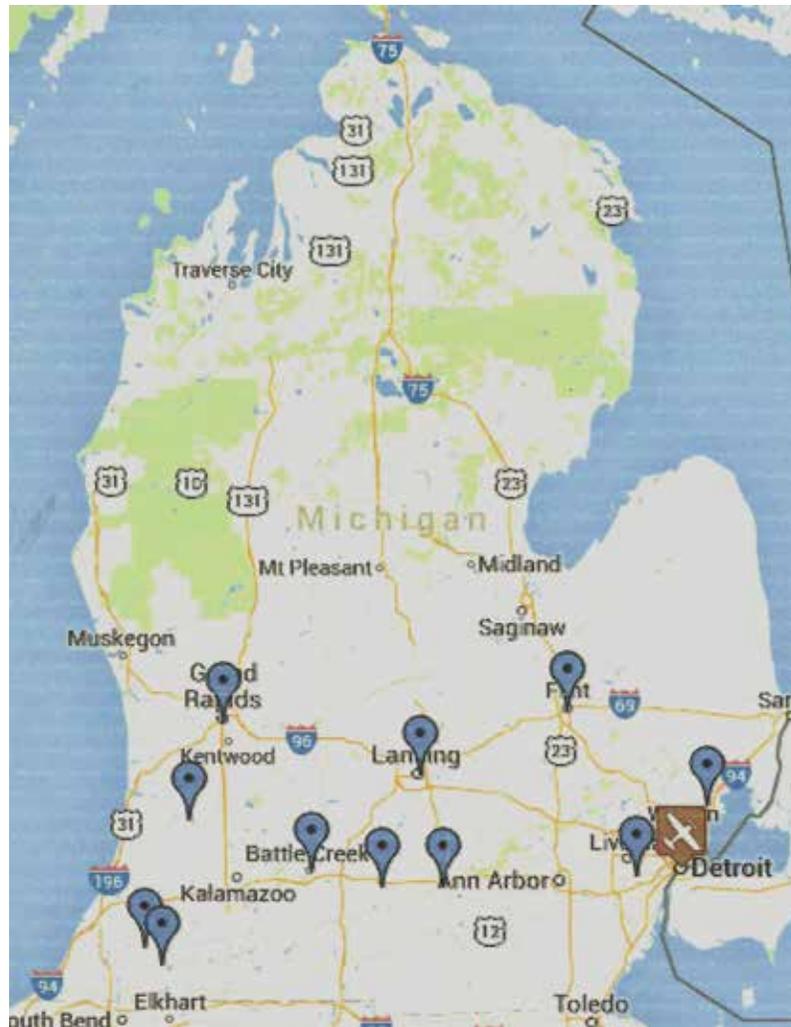
Note: This list does not include the names of all individuals who participated in the Tuskegee Airmen pilot training program or support operations. Individuals who have documented proof that they participated in the Tuskegee Airmen experience are also called "Documented Original Tuskegee Airmen (DOTA)."

1. Barksdale, James M. 46-A-SE 3/23/1946 Flt. Officer T149986, Detroit
2. Brown, James W. 44-I-I-TE 10/16/1944 2nd Lt. 0838166, Detroit
3. Bryant, Joseph C., Jr. 45-E-TE 8/4/1945 Flt. Officer T70232, Dowagiac
4. Cabule, Ernest M., Jr. 45-A-5E 3/11/1945 2nd Lt. 0841256, Detroit
5. Chandler, Robert C. 44-B-SE 2/8/1944 2nd Lt. 0821908, Allegan
6. Coleman, James 44-H-SE 9/8/1944 2nd Lt. 0838026, Detroit
7. Coleman, William C., Jr. 44-D-TE 4/15/1944 2nd Lt. 0828036, Detroit
8. Craig, Charles E. 44-K-SE 2/1/1945 Flt. Officer T688702, Detroit
9. Curtis, John W. 45-B-SE 4/15/1945 2nd Lt. 0842581, Detroit
10. Davis, Donald F. 45-F-SE 9/8/1945 Flt. Officer T140090, Detroit
11. Derricotte, Eugene A. 46-B-TE 5/14/1946 Unknown Unknown, Detroit
12. Dickerson, Tamenund J. 44-I-SE 11/20/1944 Flt. Officer T67144, Detroit
13. Flake, Thomas M. 44-J-TE 12/28/1944 Flt. Officer T67980, Detroit
14. Ford, Harry E., Jr. 45-E-TE 8/4/1945 Flt. Officer T70233, Detroit
15. Fuller, William A., Jr. 45-E-SE 8/4/1945 Flt. Officer T70223, Detroit
16. Gay, Thomas L. 44-B-SE 2/8/1944 2nd Lt. 0821911, Detroit
17. Goldsby, Charles S. 45-A-TE 3/11/1945 Flt. Officer T68764, Detroit
18. Goodall, Ollie O., Jr. 44-K-TE 2/1/1945 Flt. Officer T68713, Detroit
19. Greer, James W. 44-J-SE 12/28/1944 Flt. Officer T67969, Detroit
20. Harris, Bernard 44-I-TE 11/20/1944 2nd Lt. 0839095, Detroit
21. Hill, Charles A., Jr. 44-F-SE 6/27/1944 2nd Lt. 0835325, Detroit
22. Holloway, Lorenzo W. 45-G-SE 10/16/1945 2nd Lt. 02082600, Detroit
23. Houston, Heber C. 43-D-SE 4/29/1943 2nd Lt. 0801170, Detroit
24. Jefferson, Alexander 44-A-SE 1/7/1944 2nd Lt. 0819461, Detroit
25. Jefferson, Lawrence B. 43-H-SE 8/30/1943 2nd Lt. 0811282, Grand Rapids
26. Jenkins, Silas M. 44-I-1-TE 10/16/1944 2nd Lt. 0838168, Lansing
27. Keith, Laurel E. 44-F-TE 6/27/1944 2nd Lt. 0835319, Cassopolis
28. Lacy, Hezekiah 43-F-SE 6/30/1943 2nd Lt. 0807100, River Rouge
29. Mason, Ralph W. 45-F-SE 9/8/1945 2nd Lt. 0843239, Detroit
30. Miller, Oliver O. 43-E-SE 5/28/1943 2nd Lt. 0804557, Battle Creek
31. Mitchell, Vincent I. 44-D-SE 4/15/1944 Flt. Officer T62811, Mt. Clemens
32. Moffett, Wilbur 45-A-SE 3/11/1945 Flt. Officer T68757, Detroit
33. Morgan, Dempsey W. 43-E-SE 5/28/1943 2nd Lt. 0804558, Detroit
34. Nalle, Russell C., Jr. 44-H-TE 9/8/1944 Flt. Officer T66150, Detroit
35. O'Neil, Robert 44-A-SE 1/7/1944 2nd Lt. 0819463, Detroit
36. Porter, Calvin V. 45-F-TE 9/8/1945 2nd Lt. 02075556, Detroit
37. Rowe, Claude A. 46-C-TE 6/28/1946 2nd Lt. 02102115, Detroit
38. Simeon, Albert B., Jr. 45-D-SE 6/27/1945 Flt. Officer T70105, Detroit
39. Stiger, Roosevelt 44-C-SE 3/12/1944 2nd Lt. 0824842, Jackson
40. Tucker, Paul 45-B-SE 4/15/1945 Flt. Officer T69749, Detroit
41. Turner, Allen H. 44-I-1-SE 10/16/1944 2nd Lt. 0838165, Flint
42. Valentine, Cleophus W. 45-A-TE 3/11/1945 2nd Lt. 0841276, Detroit
43. Walker, Charles E. 44-A-TE 1/7/1944 2nd Lt. 0819451, Jackson
44. Weatherford, Fuchard 45-G-TE 10/16/1945 Flt. Officer, T70557, Albion
45. Wheeler, Jimmie D. 44-D-SE 4/15/1944 2nd Lt. 0828059, Detroit
46. Wheeler, William M. 44-C-SE 3/12/1944 2nd Lt. 0824843, Detroit
47. White, Cohen M. 44-B-SE 2/8/1944 2nd Lt. 0821922, Detroit
48. White, Harold L. 44-G-SE 8/4/1944 2nd Lt. 0835416, Detroit
49. Whittaker, Peter H. 44-C-SE 3/12/1944 2nd Lt. 0824845, Detroit
50. Wiggins, Leonard W. 45-E-SE 8/4/1945 Flt. Officer T70228, Detroit
51. Williamson, Willie A. 44-J-SE 12/28/1944 Flt. Officer T67976, Detroit

ACTIVITY 2

Use the map below to support, extend, or challenge the following claim:

Michigan's contribution to the Tuskegee Program was merely an effect of the Great Migration and forces of urbanization and industrialism.



Food for thought in exploring this claim: 40 Airmen were from Detroit, 2 were from Jackson and each other town contributed one. None came from north of Flint. Why do think this was?

ACTIVITY 3

Read these five excerpts and use annotation strategies to determine the story of the Tuskegee Airmen: Use close-reading techniques and highlighting. If you are unfamiliar with this please watch this quick video at: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/student-annotated-reading-strategy>.

- **EXECUTIVE ORDER 9981**

Establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity In the Armed Forces.

WHEREAS it is essential that there be maintained in the armed services of the United States the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense:

NOW THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States, and as Commander in Chief of the armed services, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.
2. There shall be created in the National Military Establishment an advisory committee to be known as the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, which shall be composed of seven members to be designated by the President.
3. The Committee is authorized on behalf of the President to examine into the rules, procedures and practices of the Armed Services in order to determine in what respect such rules, procedures and practices may be altered or improved with a view to carrying out the policy of this order. The Committee shall confer and advise the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force, and shall make such recommendations to the President and to said Secretaries as in the judgment of the Committee will effectuate the policy hereof.
4. All executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government are authorized and directed to cooperate with the Committee in its work, and to furnish the Committee such information or the services of such persons as the Committee may require in the performance of its duties.
5. When requested by the Committee to do so, persons in the armed services or in any of the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government shall testify before the Committee and shall make available for use of the Committee such documents and other information as the Committee may require.
6. The Committee shall continue to exist until such time as the President shall terminate its existence by Executive order.

Harry Truman, The White House
July 26, 1948

ACTIVITY 3 - CONTINUED

- **EXCERPT FROM BOOK “BLACK KNIGHTS”**

Hardesty, Von. *Black Knights: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*. 2008. Art. Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.

Some black aviators, however, trained in the war years in a context of frustration and delay, never seeing active service in a combat zone. This was the melancholy fate of the 477th Bombardment Group. The all-black unit was formally activated on January 15, 1944. It was then assigned for training at the spacious Selfridge Field in Michigan. This posting proved to be short-lived. In May, the group found itself reassigned to the smaller Godman Field in Kentucky. The reasons for the abrupt move related to fears of racial upheaval (Detroit had been the scene of a race riot in 1943). The Army Air Forces had trained the requisite number of black bomber pilots for the 477th, but there remained a severe shortage of navigators and bombardiers. The air unit remained poorly staffed during the final months of the war. In the spring of 1945, when the Army ordered the 477th Bombardment Group to Freeman Field in Indiana, racial tensions flared when members of the air unit protested the segregation of the officers club. The so-called Freeman Field riot showcased the inequities and tensions associated with the War Department's effort to maintain a separate black air arm.

- **EXCERPT FROM PAGES 397-400 FROM THE BOOK “DETROIT PERSPECTIVES: CROSSROADS AND TURNING POINTS”**

Henrickson, Wilma. *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points*. 1991. Art. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, MI.

World War II brought Detroit the distinction of being called the, “arsenal of democracy”, a phrase that was easily and often corrupted to, “arsehole” by tired people waiting in lines everywhere- at bus stops, at grocery stores, at newsstands for the first chance at the “home for rent” or even “home for rent” ads.

It was a city of absolutely full employment, with all the discomforts that supposedly good state can bring. The last to be hired were being hired. Qualified blacks were suddenly discovered, with the diplomas and certificates they had held all along. A black R.N. appeared as night supervisor at one of the better hospitals. She would have preferred days, she said, but it had contact with the public, to whom her presence might give offense. Home care for the elderly or children was all but impossible to obtain on any terms. Wartime child care programs were discouragingly slow to develop and often inadequate when they arrived. Grandma was still the best choice- if she wasn't working at the bomber plant at Willow Run.

Jobs in Detroit were tied with the needs of war. For men they were a substitute for, or an adjunct to, military service. If you were here at all, it was because somebody higher up thought you should be.

As the war years went on, most Detroiters were loyal, patriotic- and bone-tired. They showed their customary lack of curiosity about those whom- rightly or wrongly- they characterized as “kooks”. They joked about WAVES and WACS, questioning their motives. They honored, the fighting men, however, and endowed them with glamor.

ACTIVITY 3 - CONTINUED

One night at Orchestra Hall (then the Paradise Music Hall), at a meeting of the Wayne County Council of the AFL-CIO, a group that had a considerable importance of its own, the chairman paused as a young man in uniform- a Tuskegee airman home on leave- ran onstage from the wings. "This young man is one of ours, a union brother- he will be back with us and he will go far. Watch him, and remember- Brother Coleman Young!" The crowd leaped to its feet, cheering the unknown young man.

- **EXCERPT FROM A BIOGRAPHY OF COLEMAN YOUNG, DETROIT'S MOST FAMOUS TUSKEGEE AIRMAN WHO SERVED AS MAYOR FROM 1974-1994.**

Harp, Andrea S. *Coleman A. Young: Social and Political Powerbroker.*

Coleman Young's teen years took place during the era of Roosevelt's New Deal of the 30's. It was also the time that blacks began to demonstrate a limited political power through the ministers of larger black churches in the city. Henry Ford used the black church as a screening device for black employees. He also financed and supported blacks in the Republican Party. This type of politics was called "clientage politics" in which the ministers acted as brokers for the black community. By the time Franklin Roosevelt was elected in 1932, Republican influence among blacks was on the wane and Democrats were winning over the black community. It was also the first time blacks were able to get jobs in the national administration through the government jobs created by Roosevelt's programs. Coleman learned that government could be a positive force as well as an employer. Upon graduation from high school, Coleman entered an electrician's apprentice school at Ford Motor Company-only to find the same racism that he had experienced in high school. He completed the program first in his class but was passed over for the only electrician's position in favor of a white foreman's son. This experience heightened his awareness to racism and made him make a conscious decision "not to get mad but get smart--to understand power (Rich 57)." He was able to direct his anger, not at the whites around him but at the employment and economic policy makers who contributed to racial conflict. Very insightful on his part! Recognizing the true enemy enabled him to avoid violent confrontations with his white coworkers. Coleman chose to watch and learn from whites and to decipher the unscrupulous from the supportive. He was later hired in on the assembly line at Ford's and became involved in underground union activities. In 1940, Coleman became executive secretary of the Michigan Division of the National Negro Conference. He worked closely with the United Auto Workers of America (Ford) organizing committee. As a result of his activities, he had several run-ins with the company over policies and was subsequently fired after an altercation with a company security employee. Coleman was later hired at the Post Office but continued to organize autoworkers before joining the Army in 1942 where he was commissioned second lieutenant and served as a navigator in the prestigious Tuskegee Airmen unit. While in the service, Coleman demonstrated against the exclusion of blacks from segregated officer's clubs and was arrested along with 100 other airmen, among them the late Thurgood Marshall. Young spent three days in jail for his part in the demonstration. A short time later, the clubs were opened to black officers. It was only through a secret strategy used by Young through a courier that the story was leaked to the black press and drew attention to the plight of the arrested black airmen. Though he had already established himself as a militant in the labor movement, Coleman Young had arrived as a social and civil rights activist.

ACTIVITY 3 - CONTINUED

- **EXCERPT FROM BOOK “BLACK KNIGHTS”**

Hardesty, Von. *Black Knights: The Story of the Tuskegee Airmen*. 2008. Art. Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.

On March 24, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. led the Red Tail escorts to support a 15th Air Force mission to attack the Daimler-Benz factory in Berlin. This particular outing became a daunting one, consisting of a 1,600-mile roundtrip mission. The Luftwaffe—even at this late stage of the war—offered spirited resistance, along with highly effective anti-aircraft batteries. German air defense also included the introduction of a new weapon: the Messerschmitt Me-262 jet fighter. The advanced German jet fighter demonstrated a new level of performance, being capable of speeds 100 mph faster than Allied fighters. The black airmen performed in an exemplary fashion on the raid on the Daimler-Benz facility. They faced a group of enemy interceptors that included the Fw-190 and the newly deployed Me-262s. Roscoe C. Brown, Charles Brantly, and Earl Lane each downed one Me-262 jet (prior to this time Allied pilots had downed only two jets). As a consequence of this mission the 332nd received a Distinguished Unit Citation.

April 1 became a momentous day for the 332nd, just as the war was drawing to a close. Tuskegee airmen provided escort the 47th Bomber Wing in a mission to bomb the railroad marshalling yards in Polten, Austria. When they were returning home, the black pilots spotted four enemy Fw-190s fighters below the bomber formation. They dove on the enemy aircraft only to realize that they had been drawn into a trap. Suddenly other Luftwaffe aircraft appeared and pressed an attack on the unwary Americans. In the dogfight that followed no fewer than twelve enemy fighters were shot down and three Red Tails were lost. The melee demonstrated the skill of the 332nd in air combat.

That same month the war in Europe was drawing to a close. The 332nd FG, in fact, scored the last four enemy aircraft in the Mediterranean Theater of combat. The tally for the war had been an impressive one: 111 enemy aircraft downed in air combat, and another 150 on the ground. The 332nd had lost a total of 66 pilots for all causes, in the States and in the war zone. Some thirty-two black airmen had been shot down and captured.

RAFT WRITING- SUMMATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

R- Role (Newspaper Reporter in 1948)

A- Audience (The American people)

F- Format (Newspaper report)

T- Topic (Synopsis of the Tuskegee Airmen, with an emphasis on Michigan's contribution)

Today is July 27, 1948, the day after Executive Order 9981, desegregating the military, went into effect. You are a reporter for the "Stars and Stripes," the U.S. military newspaper during World War II. Your editor has given you an assignment to write an article about the Tuskegee Airmen, with an emphasis on Michigan's role in this group. Your article should contain a synopsis of the Tuskegee Airmen from their inception in 1943 to yesterday's Executive Order.

Your article should include the following:

1. An interesting title.
2. Where the Michigan Tuskegee Airmen came from and the state's contribution to the effort.
3. Examples of difficulties the Tuskegee Airmen faced, as well as average Detroiters.
4. Examples of exemplary acts of heroism and individuals who performed valiantly.
5. What transpired at Selfridge and the subsequent problems when the soldiers were moved to Indiana and Kentucky.
6. Why these airmen deserve to be treated with respect and their legacy they will have in United States history.

RAFT Rubric

Assignment Traits	Novice (0)	Basic (3)	Advanced (5)
Accuracy —Is the information synthesized correctly and supported by text/research?	The information provided is not supported by the text/ research.		The information is correct and is supported by text/ research.
Perspective —Did the writer adapt the writing to reflect the role chosen? Did the voice sound like the role chosen?	Writer did not reflect on the role chosen and voice sounded as student's voice.	Overall, the writer's voice reflected role chosen, but was inconsistent through writing.	Writer's voice was reflective of role chosen and voice was consistent throughout writing.
Focus —Did the writer follow his/her chosen format? Did he/she provide examples and details?	Format was not followed. No examples or details were provided.	Either format was consistently followed, or examples and details provided, but not both.	Both, format was consistently followed and quality examples and details were provided.
Mechanics —Did the writer proof their work? Were there any punctuation, spelling, or grammar errors?	More than three mechanical errors were found.	Three or less mechanical errors were found.	No mechanical errors were found.
TOTAL			

Adapted from Strayer, B. & Strayer, T. (2007). *Strategies for differentiating in the content areas*. New York, NY: Scholastic.