

THE GREAT MIGRATION

(REVISION 6)

PRE-SHOW Tech – Projector/Screen or Smart Board, USB, PowerPoint Clicker

SLIDE #1: STORYLIVING WELCOME SLIDE

(This slide should be on before students/teachers file into the room)

**CHARACTER 1: LILLIE REESE BARROW BROOKS (speak with southern accent)
(Enter with coat and hat on)**

OOhhhh weee! I'm so excited. I finally made it to Detroit. I heard so many good things about this city.

SLIDE #2: GREAT MIGRATION TRAVEL SCENE

I been travelin' all the way from Alabama to Detroit with 8 kids and a new husband in tow. That's right...8 kids. It ain't been easy, but it is going to be worth it.

Good morning/afternoon! How ya'll doing? What's your name? You sure are pretty/handsome, etc. Ya'll sure dress different. Pardon my manners! My name is Lillie Reese Barrow Brooks. I was born in Alabama in 1884...19 years after slavery was officially over.

Wait a minute...what year is it now? (Audience response) 2019? 2019??? (Urgently) I thought ya'll dress differently. (Anxiously) I got to get back to my family in 1926! I must have slipped through a wormhole, and now I'm in the future. I gotta find my way back through that wormhole! (Pinwheel turns). Wait a minute. Let me ask ya'll something. Can Black folks live anywhere they want in 2019? Really!!!! Well, can Black kids and White kids go to school together? Well, I never! Things sure have changed. Maybe that's why I'm here to let ya'll know how much things and changed, and just how good ya'll got it. Well, since I'm here I might as well share some history with ya'll...not just my history, but your history too.

(Teacher mode) So, if it is 2019 today and slavery ended in 1865, how long has slavery been over? (Audience response) That's right **154 years!** I was just checking. Okay, so do ya'll live in Detroit? Well, what are some good things to do in the city of Detroit in 2019? (Audience responses) That sounds good! Like I said...things sure have changed.

Anyway, I'm half Cherokee Indian and like my first husband, Munroe Barrow, the father of my eight children, both our parents were former slaves. My poor Munroe took ill in 1916 and lawd have mercy...he died.

Anyway, I got remarried in 1920 to Pat Brooks, a Chambers County construction worker, and a faithful, Baptist, religious person...like myself. Now, Mr. Brooks is a good man and he takes real good care of our family.

My parent's biggest dream was to be free. I'm so glad they lived to see freedom, because slavery was the worst thing you could ever imagine. You see during slavery my parents weren't considered people...they were considered property, and the master could treat them anyway he wanted to. They could even be sold away from their family and friends at any time, and there was absolutely nothing they could do about it because slaves had no rights.

I grew up being free, but in a lot of ways life after slavery was nearly as bad as it was before. All through my growing up years my family and I worked as sharecroppers. Do any of ya'll know what sharecropping is? Well I am gonna explain how it was.

SLIDE #3: PHOTOS OF SHARECROPPERS

During slavery, the master owned the land and the slaves were forced to work the land for the master. My mother and father worked hard in those fields without ever getting paid and they were treated very badly...worse than the animals. They tilled, and planted and harvested the crops for the master. They worked whether they were sick or tired in the hot southern sun for most of their lives...not because they wanted to but because they had to...they had no choice.

The master sold his crops and made a whole lot of money from all the work my parents and the other slaves were doing.

After slavery ended, my parents were thrilled to be free. They thought they would finally be able to work for themselves... but then they got to thinking... Where would they go? They didn't have any family to stay with. They had never been off the master's plantation. What would they do?

The master knew my parents had nowhere to go, so he decided to offer them to stay on the plantation as paid workers. My parents decided to stay because it seemed like their best option. I mean after all, **they thought** they would be able to raise a family on their own.

However, when the crops came in the master didn't pay us anything...talkin' 'bout we owed him rent for the house, rent for the land we used to grow the crops, and owed money for the seeds we planted. The master said we had to stay until we paid him back. So my family stayed on the plantation to pay our 'debts' to the master. Sharecropping was an awful lot like slavery.

(Shift) But let me tell you when I heard about some of the jobs people could get up north I got so excited!

SLIDE #4: FORD MODEL-T PLANT (HIGHLAND PARK, MI)

Have ya'll heard of Mr. Henry Ford or Ford automobiles? I heard that Henry Ford is paying \$5 a day to workers that are building his Ford Model-T car in Highland Park, MI...that's a lot of money in 1926. They

even say Mr. Ford hires black folks, so I'm hoping my husband and maybe my older boys can get a job in Mr. Ford's factory. No doubt, working in the auto factory is hard work but I heard they have an invention called an assembly line. Who wants to help me show everyone how it was to work in an auto factory? I need some volunteers.

GAME: Gather students to create a faux assembly line

- **Select a few students to be the 'cars' while placing children on either side of them doing faux roles (install wheels, install side mirrors, place the window)**
- **The children acting as cars will roll along the 'assembly line',**
- **While the kids on either side 'install' things on the 'cars'.**
- **Once the last child has been down the assembly line, clap and thank them.**

Well, our assembly might have been a little awkward but with practice we'll get the hang of it. Thank you to our auto workers for helping me out with that. Let's give them a hand!

Now, Mr. Brooks and I decided the South was no place to raise our family so we decided to move to Detroit. And let me tell you we aren't the only ones. Did you know 6 million black folks like me and my family are moving up north of the Mason Dixon Line? I bet you know what the Mason Dixon Line is, right? No... Hold on!

SLIDE #5: MASON DIXON LINE

See before the Civil War, the Mason Dixon Line ran along with the Ohio River and separated the slave states of the south from the free-soil states of the north. The states south of the Mason-Dixon Line are still a very dangerous place for black folks even in 1926. So, my family and I traveled with a number of black folks from Alabama to Detroit. It was a GREAT MIGRATION of folks moving up north for jobs and opportunities. And you know what? We were so excited for what Detroit had to offer!

SLIDE #6: SLIDE OF THE BLACKBOTTOM NEIGHBORHOOD

Well, here we are in my new neighborhood. I am so proud of our new home in Detroit! We live at 2700 Catherine Street. Our neighborhood is called Black Bottom, named for the dark rich soil. See this is the section of the city where black folks are allowed to live...1926 is nothing like 2017. Our house was old and less expensive, but a lot of the area is run-down and some of the houses ain't fit to be lived in, but my family... we make do with our living arrangements. Even with 8 children in a small house...we're just happy to be together and safe!

SLIDE #7: PARADISE VALLEY – MUSIC SCENE

What you might not know is that our neighborhood, Black Bottom, was right beside another black neighborhood called, Paradise Valley. Now, Paradise Valley is a hoppin' place for its famous music scene. All the best musicians come through and play here. I hear that Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington were there last week! Oh the soulful blues tunes we gonna hear!

Well even though life in Detroit is much better than in the south, racism didn't disappear as soon as we crossed the Mason Dixon Line. As I mentioned before, black people are only allowed to live in certain neighborhoods.

SLIDE #7A: OSSAIN SWEET

One year before we moved to Detroit, Dr. Ossian Sweet, a black physician, bought a house in a "all-white" neighborhood. An angry white mob who didn't think he should live there, because of the color of his skin, attacked his home. Dr. Sweet and his friend protected the house, and a white man lost his life.

However, In May 1926, a jury of twelve white men decided that in Michigan black men had a right to defend their home from enraged mobs. This is more justice than a black family would have ever gotten in the South so I can say we felt kind of safe moving to Detroit.

SLIDE #8: JOE LOUIS

Ohhhhhhh!! I have a son that's gonna be famous. Let's see if you can guess what his name might be? My son Joe had a job at the Ford Plant, but he got fired and had me so worried! I was so afraid he was going to get involved in gang-life. I wanted him to play the violin, but I found out he had a natural gift....Oowwww weeee....he sure is strong, yes he is...and he can take a punch, too. Now, I don't necessarily like fighting, but as a sport...it's okay.

Mark my words, you gonna hear a lot about my son. He's gonna be a famous Detroiter. Can you guess his name? **(Audience response)** I'll give you a hint... maybe you recognize his nickname...the "BROWN BOMBER" **(Audience response)** ...Joe Louis! Well looka there! That's a sculpture of my son's fist in downtown Detroit. I told you he's gonna be famous.

I'm so glad things have changed...for the better I hope. Well, I've got to get back to my family in 1926, but I want ya'll to keep making things better...OKAY!!

SLIDE #9: MARJORIE PEBBLES MEYERS - PHOTO

CHARACTER 2: MAJORIE PEBBLES MEYERS

(Dr. Jacket/stethoscope)

(Changing costume while singing)

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, shine, shine
Let it shine!

Sing it with me: This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, shine, shine
Let it shine!

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Marjorie Peebles-Meyers. You can call me Dr. Peebles-Meyers. You see I moved to Detroit in 1939, and I am proud to say that I am the first black woman to receive my medical degree from Wayne State University – School of Medicine.

Since I was about your age, it was my lifelong dream to be a doctor. This path wasn't easy and people didn't always treat me well as a black woman in medicine but , I didn't let that stop me from pursuing my dreams.

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, shine, shine
Let it shine!

While 1943 was a very special year for me since I had finally achieved my goal of becoming a physician. But, 1943 was also a very violent year in the city of Detroit, what with the race riot on Belle Isle that summer.

SLIDE #10: FACTORY PHOTOS OF BLACKS AND WHITES

You see during World War II all the automotive companies were outfitted to make tanks and planes for the war. The US government even called Detroit, the Arsenal of Democracy, which created even more job opportunities. More than 500,000 southerners moved to Detroit from the South once again for the opportunities of employment and equal pay.

Many black families were moving north not just for better jobs but, to get away from groups like the Ku Klux Klan, a hate group from the south that threatened the safety of Black People. You see when some of the white families moved north they brought with them their unfair ideas about how black people should be treated, and they absolutely did not want to work alongside black people for the same pay. This racial tension created a lot of trouble in the City of Detroit.

Vocabulary Lesson

I'm going to ask all you brilliant minds if you know a few different words.

Does anyone know what the word ***discrimination*** means? **(take answers)**

A simple definition of **Discrimination is when a person, or group of people, treat another person, or group, different based on the color of their skin, perhaps their religion or even their age.**

Do any of you know what ***segregation*** is? **(take answers)**

A simple definition of **segregation is a system that keeps different groups separate from each other, either through physical dividers or using social pressures and laws.**

You see segregation was a part of daily life in the South. In the South, I would not have been allowed to eat in the same restaurants, use the same bathrooms or drinking fountains, attend the same schools, stay in the same hotels or even ride in the same section of the bus as white people. The authorities weren't very helpful either because oftentimes they were part of the problem...openly discriminating against black people with vicious acts of violence!

Segregation did not exist as boldly in Detroit as in the south, but as more white southerners moved to Detroit they brought with them their discriminatory attitudes towards blacks.

SLIDE#11 – DETROIT SEGREGATION PHOTOS

For instance, we have here a photo of the BIRWOOD WALL (located south of 8 Mile between Livernois and Collidge) which separates the White section of the city of Detroit from the Black section.

And here we have moving trucks/police escorts protecting black families moving into the Sojourner Truth Housing Project. The white residents in the neighborhood formed a mob to protest living next to Black People.

SLIDE #12 – PHOTOS OF DMC – DETROIT RECEIVING HOSPITAL

Even though I was a doctor and went through the same training as my white colleague's, I was not allowed to work at several hospitals because of the color of my skin. Some patients adamantly refused to let me treat them because I was black. Fortunately, some of my white colleagues helped me by admitting my patients under their names and then I was allowed to treat them. Yes, segregation may not have been quite as bad in Detroit but it did exist.

Despite the obstacles of racism and sexism...I was just appointed chief resident at Detroit Receiving Hospital which makes me the first black woman appointed to that position!

Yes, discrimination was real in Detroit, but it did not stop me from pursuing my medical career and following my dreams. This little light of mine is a song that helped me pursue my passions. Let it help you pursue yours...always let your light shine! Sing it with me:

Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine
Everywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, shine, shine
Let it shine!

SLIDE #13: MUSIC VIDEO: TEMPTATIONS – “MY GIRL” (Song for costume change and ‘DJ’ set up)

CHARACTER 3: MARTHA JEAN STEINBERG

(Afro-centric costume)

Props : (Table) Microphone, telephone (landline/push button extensions – “old school”)

SLIDE #14: PHOTOS OF MARTHA JEAN (Seated at table)

(She uses the microphone as though speaking over the radio)

There is nothing like the Motown sound! That was MY GIRL by the tempting Temptations. For all of you who are just now tuning in...you are listening to Martha Jean ‘the Queen’ Steinberg live on Detroit’s own WJLB...AND I BECHA...YEAH!

I GOT SUNSHINE reminds me of when I moved to Detroit in 1963 from Memphis, Tennessee! Lawd, I thought it was hot down there. Now on this steamy Sunday afternoon on July 23rd, 1967...we’re gonna keep playin’ those R&B tunes and chat about what’s goin’ on in our fine city of Detroit and I BETCHA...YEAH!

SLIDE #15: BARRY GORDY/MOTOWN RECORDS

We’re going to play a few more tunes produced by my personal friend Mr. Barry Gordy of Motown Records. Man, Gordy’s been doin’ great things, givin’ **black folks** the opportunity to sing and record amazing music for all audiences! To think Motown Records all began IN 1959 and it has become the most successful African American owned music business ever! Now, Mr. Barry Gordy...like myself moved to Detroit from the South...Georgia in particular, for the opportunities of factory work.

But, we’re here for the music this fine afternoon. Now, we have a very special program in store for you all! We are holding auditions for new talent in the city of Detroit right here in our studio. The winner just might be heard by Mr. Barry Gordy himself. Also, I’ll be interviewing some of our studio audience members, and taking calls from our listening audience...just say what’s on your mind...AND I BETCHA! YEAH!

Let’s begin with the auditions. (Stand in front of Studio Audience) Who wants to audition today? Let’s see who wants to attempt DANCING IN THE STREETS by Martha Reeves and the Vandellas!! Everyone stand up. Before we audition I need to teach you some dance moves of the 1960’s.

SLIDE #16: 60’S DANCE MOVES

(Teach dance moves: Add Cool Jerk, Boogaloo, Twist, Mashed Potatoes, Shing-a-ling, Uncle Willie/James Brown, Horse, Pony, Monkey)

Okay, are ya’ll ready to put the dance moves with the song. Let’s go!

SLIDE #17: VANDELLA’S AUDITION (Complete entire song)

Let’s give the Vandellas a hand.

(Back to Mic) Now for an important question for our listeners today: What role can music play in bringing peace and harmony to this world? Say what’s on your mind. **(Audience response).**

Now myself and my friend Mr. Barry Gordy believe that music has a big role to play in bringing different people together. Mr. Barry Gordy made many African American musicians and singers into stars. This means that white folks listened to them too and even see them in concert and on television. Mr. Gordy's music is a big part of the Civil Rights Movement.

Let's open this up to the audience. What do you know about the civil rights movement? (Answers) Have any of you heard about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.?

The civil rights movement began in the early 1960's because African Americans were fighting to have the same rights as white people in this country. Do you recall learning about segregation? They were fighting to end segregation and to make sure the law treated black people fairly.

Wait a minute, the phone lines are flashing. They're going crazy! What's going on? (Answers phone) You're on the line with the Queen. What's on your mind? Say what? A rebellion...? Where... you sayin' its 12th Street?! Fires... stores are gone! Hold on....(Pick up phone) Hello, you're on the line with the Queen. What, snipers... really? Started how... with the big four...police brutality? Hold on... (Pick up phone) Hello, you're on the line with the Queen. Someone's lost their life... the National Guard is coming...I want you to stay tuned to the Queen! (Hang up phone).

I need everybody to hold on. I need to talk to my producer for a minute. (Pick up headphone). What's goin' on? Uhhhh huh. Uhhh huh! Oh yeah! Okay, let me get back to my listeners.

WJLB listeners, the police have reported that a riot has broken out at 12th Street and Clairmount. I'm here to take all your calls and I'm going to stay on the air until I feel our city is safe. Now, don't be leavin' your homes to go see what goin on. You stay inside...okay?

I want to ask my listening audience what advice would you give the citizens of the city of Detroit to keep the peace in our city? **(Audience response)** Those are great ideas! But above all...we must learn to RESPECT one another.

(To audience) Now, when the uprising broke out in Detroit on July 23, 1967, I convinced WJLB to cancel its normal evening programming to allow me to shout out to the people on air to stop rioting. I stayed on the air for 48 straight hours. This sleepless jester to my fellow citizens to find peace in their hearts inspired me to start a call-in-show with the city's police commission called "Buzz the Fuzz." I believe in my heart that this prevented the unrest from being worse than it was.

I believe the spirit of Detroit will come back to be a beautiful place if we put peace and love in our hearts. I also believe that music is a powerful way to bring the races together. And above all we must learn to RESPECT ONE ANOTHER.

(To Mic) I want to close this program out today with a hit song that was released April 1967 that is so appropriate today. I want my studio audience to feel free to get up and do some of the dance moves ya'll learned. Here we go!!

SLIDE#18: RESPECT - ARETHA FRANKLIN

Thank you for joining us today on a journey of THE GREAT MIGRATION OF DETROIT... and remember R-E-S-P-E-C-T.