

Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America

by Philip A. Klinkner - 305.896 KLI

American life is filled with talk of progress and equality, especially when the issue is that of race. But has the history of race in America really been the continuous march toward equality we'd like to imagine it has? This sweeping history of race in America argues quite the opposite: that progress toward equality has been sporadic, isolated, and surrounded by long periods of stagnation and retrenchment.

Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White - by Frank Wu - 305.8 WU

Most discussions of race and affirmative action focus on the relationship between Caucasian Americans and those of African descent. With this important book, Wu attempts to expand the discussion by including Americans of Asian descent.

African-American Autobiographies & Biographies

Soldier: the Life of Colin Powell - by Karen DeYoung - 92 POW

In a timely and fascinating biography, journalist DeYoung details the life of former Secretary of State Powell. Born to Jamaican parents and raised in the Bronx, NY, Powell has led a life that reads like a history lesson, rich in experiences that include such milestones as the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. He found structure, comfort, and his niche in the military, which he transformed into an admirable and distinguished career.

Dreams from My Father: a Story of Race and Inheritance - by Barack Obama - 92 OBA

In this lyrical, unsentimental, and compelling memoir, the son of a black African father and a white American mother searches for a workable meaning to his life as a black American. It begins in New York, where Barack Obama learns that his father—a figure he knows more as a myth than as a man—has been killed in a car accident. This sudden death inspires an emotional odyssey—first to a small town in Kansas, from which he retraces the migration of his mother's family to Hawaii, and then to Kenya, where he meets the African side of his family, confronts the bitter truth of his father's life, and at last reconciles his divided inheritance.

Find Where the Wind Goes: Moments from My Life - By Mae Jemison - 92 JEM

Dr. Mae Jemison—chemical engineer, scientist, teacher, and the first African-American woman to go into space—shares the story of her life. In this autobiography, she traces her life from her childhood determination to fly into space to when she made history as she blasted into orbit aboard the space shuttle "Endeavor".

Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary - by Juan Williams - 92 MAR

Thurgood Marshall stands today as the great architect of American race relations, having expanded the foundation of individual rights for all Americans. His victory in the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954, the landmark Supreme Court case outlawing school segregation, would have made him a historic figure even if he had not gone on to become the first African-American appointed to the Supreme Court.

Condi: the Condoleezza Rice Story - by Antonia Felix - 92 RIC

In this first biography of national security advisor Rice (b. 1954), the author traces Rice's rise to most powerful woman in the current Bush administration from her childhood in segregated Birmingham.



Suggested Reading

The books on this list are available for check out
at the Palmdale City Library. For more information,
contact the Library at 267-5600
or log onto www.cityofpalmdale.org/library.



PALMDALE
a place to call home

Racism & Prejudices - Fiction

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry - by Mildred Taylor - TEEN TAY

Winner of the 1977 Newbery Medal, this moving novel has remained in the hearts and minds of millions of readers. Set in Mississippi at the height of the Depression, it is the story of one family's struggle to maintain their integrity, pride, and independence in the face of racism and social injustice.

Uncle Tom's Cabin - by Harriet Beecher Stowe - FIC STO

Written as a reaction to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which made it illegal to assist an escaped slave. In the story, the title character is bought and sold three times. This 1852 novel provides a powerful, historical look at the treatment of slaves in the pre-Civil War South.

To Kill a Mockingbird - by Harper Lee - FIC LEE

Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with rich humor and unswerving honesty the irrationality of adult attitudes toward race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s. The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence, and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina and quiet heroism of one man's struggle for justice—but the weight of history will only tolerate so much.

True Fires - by Susan McCarthy - FIC MCC

A sleepy 1950s Florida town becomes a racial battleground. In the idyllic town of Lake Esther, Florida, little is allowed to ripple the surface calm—which is just the way Sheriff Kyle Deluth likes it. But when Deluth "removes" two young children from the local school because of the color of their skin, the sheriff's senseless act of cruelty sparks a fire under the women of Lake Esther that will scorch the lives of all involved. In their pursuit of justice, an indomitable heiress, a revered journalist, and a fading Southern Belle will forge an unlikely alliance across the racial divide. One that will change the face of the town—and their lives—forever.

Autobiography of an Ex-coloured Man - by James Weldon Johnson - FIC JOH

First published anonymously in 1912, James Weldon Johnson's penetrating work is a remarkable human account of the life of black Americans in the early twentieth century. It is a profound interpretation of his feelings towards the white man and towards members of his own race. No other book touches with such understanding and objectivity on the phenomenon once called "passing" in a white society.

Danger Zone - by David Klass - TEEN KLA

When he joins a predominantly black "Teen Dream Team" that will be representing the United States in an international basketball tournament in Rome, Jimmy Doyle makes some unexpected discoveries about prejudice, racism, and politics.

Slam! - by Walter Dean Myers - FIC MYE

Sixteen-year-old "Slam" Harris is counting on his noteworthy basketball talents to get him out of the inner city and give him a chance to succeed in life, but his coach sees things differently.

Meeting the Pieman - by Victor Wartofsky - FIC WAR

When a Jewish carpenter is crippled by arthritis and can no longer support himself at his trade, he buys a grocery store in a black ghetto and runs into great hostility and animosity.

Native Son - by Richard Wright - FIC WRI

Society plays an important part in the terrible crimes of an African American boy.

Snow Falling on Cedars - by David Guterson - FIC GUT

Set on an island in the straits north of Puget Sound, Washington, where everyone is either a fisherman or a berry farmer, the story is nominally about a murder trial. But since it's set in the 1950s, lingering memories of World War II, internment camps, and racism helps fuel suspicion of a Japanese-American fisherman, a lifelong resident of the islands.

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter - by Carson McCullers - FIC MCC

Mick Kelly, the adolescent at the center of this novel, is passionately musical and attracted to freaks and outcasts. Mick's spiritual kinship with John Stinger, a deaf mute, and with other social misfits provides a haunting look into the abyss encountered by human beings in their attempts at love.

Racism - Nonfiction

Black Like Me - by John Howard Griffin - 305.8 GRI

Concerned by the lack of communication between the races and wondering what "adjustments and discriminations" he would face as a African-American in the Deep South, the late author left behind his privileged life as a Southern white man to step into the body of a stranger. In 1959, Griffin headed to New Orleans, darkened his skin, and immersed himself in black society. He then traveled to several states until he could no longer stand the racism, segregation, and degrading living conditions.

Us and Them: A History of Intolerance in America - by Jim Carnes - YA 305.8 CAR

The history of intolerance in the United States begins in colonial times. Discrimination on the basis of religion, race, and sexual orientation has been characteristic of our society for more than three centuries. Through 14 case studies, using original documents, historical photos, newly commissioned paintings, and dramatic narratives, readers begin to understand the history and psychology of intolerance as they witness firsthand the struggles that have shaped our collective identity.

Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism - by James Loewen - 363.55 LOE

In the long and troubled history of race relations in the U.S., one fairly hidden and unstudied practice has been the blatant exclusion of racial minorities in towns and suburbs through violence, laws, and tradition. Loewen, explores the history of places where blacks were warned, "Don't let the sun go down on you in this town." He details the creation and maintenance of sundown towns in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere in the early part of the twentieth century, with practices that continue to this day. In an alarmingly large number of towns, virtually no minorities—other than those imprisoned or otherwise institutionalized—live there.

Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel about the American Obsession

by Studs Terkel - 305.8 TER

In a rare and revealing look how at how people in America truly feel about race, Terkel brings out the full complexity of the thoughts and emotions of both blacks and whites, uncovering a fascinating narrative of changing opinions. Preachers, street punks, college students, Klansmen, interracial couples, the nephew of the founder of apartheid, and Emmett Till's mother are among those whose voices appear in Race. In all, nearly one hundred Americans talk openly about attitudes that few are willing to admit in public: feelings about affirmative action, gentrification, secret prejudices, and dashed hopes.

One Voice

Succeeding and Overcoming Obstacles in the Face of Stereotyping and Discrimination.

January 19, 2009

Palmdale Playhouse, Palmdale, California

Discussion/ Activity Guide

DIVERSITY

(Older Students)

1. Compile a list if everyone you can think of that touches your life in some way, i.e. family members, teachers, employers, teammates, hair dresser, etc. and their ethnic/racial background. How many different groups are represented?
2. Research an ethnic, racial or religious group, i.e. Mexican-Americans, German Americans, African American, Irish-Americans, Muslims, Catholics, etc. What kind of challenges did/do they face in America? Did/do people discriminate against them? How?
3. Think about a time you felt different or left out. Why did you feel that way and what were the feelings? Did someone help make you feel better? How?

(Younger Students)

1. Look around your class, sports team, church, etc. How many people have brown hair, blond hair, dark skin, light skin, blue eyes, etc. How many different types of people did you count? Was anyone exactly the same as someone else?
2. Think about a time you felt different or left out. Why did you feel that way and what were the feelings? Did someone help make you feel better? How?

STEREOTYPING

(Older Students)

1. Select several groups of people, for example, Asian men, African American women, gay men, etc. List all the stereotypes that come to mind, for example, Asian men are smart, blond girls aren't smart, etc. Discuss where you think these ideas come from. Is it easier to think of negative perceptions or positive ones? Why do you think that is?
2. Has anyone ever made an assumption about you because of a stereotype that was untrue? How did you react to the situation? Did you feel hurt? Did you express the way you felt to the person who made the erroneous assumption?

(Younger Students)

1. Have you ever thought something about someone before you even met him or her? How do you decide if someone is “cool” or someone that you might want to get to know better?

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Think about a time you felt different or left out. Why did you feel that way and what were the feelings? Did someone help make you feel better? How?