

## LESSON PLAN SUPPLEMENT

### Navigating Jim Crow:

The Chitlin' Circuit, the "5" Royales and the Birmingham Children's March

**Pedagogical Overview \* Script \* Teacher's Cheat Sheet  
Extra Credit \* Extra Resources \* Bibliography  
Appendix \* Acknowledgements \* Authors' Bios**

(This is the companion to the Lesson Plan and the Student Materials.)

### PEDAGOGICAL OVERVIEW:

#### **Lesson Features:**

Multisensory Learning: Music is a welcoming gateway to American history. Most students love music and some will even recognize echoes of the "5" Royales in today's pop and hip-hop. By using music, as well as video, this lesson appeals to a range of learners, especially visual and auditory learners.

Primary Source Materials: This lesson engages students in analyzing primary source materials, specifically song lyrics from "The Slummer the Slum," video interviews with musicians and marchers, and written excerpts from a 1999 interview with John Tanner of the "5" Royales.

Local and NC History and Culture: Focusing on the "5" Royales, a musical group from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, makes it easier for students to relate to the subject matter, as the group was from their hometown.

#### **Student Background Needed:**

1. Knowledge of Historical Survey Topics: Slavery and Reconstruction
2. Knowledge of the Jim Crow system and the Civil Rights Movement (Desirable)
3. Some knowledge of American South vernacular culture—its "sense of place," including literature, food and music (Desirable)

#### **Teacher Background Needed:**

1. Awareness of the trajectory of the Civil Rights Movement
2. Knowledge of Slavery, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow
3. Some Knowledge of the Birmingham Children's March (also called the "Birmingham Children's Crusade")
4. (Desirable): Some knowledge of the Chitlin' Circuit

#### **Teacher Preparation:**

1. Watch **PowerPoint** to prepare for the lesson.
2. Have ready **projector with online access** and **PowerPoint**.
3. Have ready for each student a copy of the **Student Materials**.

## TEACHER'S SCRIPT

### **PART I: Introduction to the Lesson**

Today, we're going to learn about Jim Crow Laws, the Chitlin' Circuit, and a musical group from Winston-Salem that toured it, the \*"5" Royales.

After a short break, you will learn about the Birmingham Children's March, also called "The Birmingham Children's Crusade." This was a protest by kids and teenagers against Jim Crow laws, and it was one of the most important marches of the Civil Rights Movement. By on their way to a gig in Texas in 1963, the "5" Royales from Winston-Salem drove through Birmingham, Alabama, on the second day of the march.

#### Vocabulary Words- (Optional)

First, let's review the vocabulary words. Please take out your "Vocabulary Check."

### **PART II- Jim Crow Laws**

(No teacher script)

### **PART III: The Chitlin' Circuit** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTgw\\_Aag23g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTgw_Aag23g)

Before you play the video: This video is about the Chitlin' Circuit. It was made by the state of Mississippi's tourism department, but the experiences and challenges the Chitlin' Circuit musicians encountered under Jim Crow in Mississippi were similar to what they experienced other places, including in North Carolina.

### **PART IV: The "5" Royals and "The Slummer the Slum"**

Before you show the PowerPoint slides:, In the late 1950s and 1960s, the "5" Royales from Winston-Salem were stars of the Chitlin' Circuit. Let's learn more about them.

(Show PowerPoint slides #4 - #17.)

After these slides: Now let's focus on the "5" Royales' 1958 song "The Slummer the Slum." Rock historian Dave Marsh named this song one of the best 1,001 songs ever written. Audiences on the Chitlin' Circuit loved dancing to this catchy song. Because the song's title was unusual and potentially controversial, though, it received little radio airplay.

First, we're going to learn the meaning of two terms in this song: "Purple People Eater" and "Slummer."

(Go to PowerPoint slide #18 and read definitions.)

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\*It's believed that the reason the group used quotation marks around the "5" was because sometimes the group had six members.

Before listening to the song: "The Slummer the Slum"

*In 1958, when the “5” Royales released “The Slummer the Slum,” it was not wise for African Americans in the South to write songs that clearly expressed protest. Musicians could lose record contracts, radio stations could stop playing their songs, and musicians’ safety could even be at risk. During this time, any protest lyrics would need to be subtle, masked, and easily deniable. Songs that had obvious protest lyrics would not emerge until later in the 1960s. (These include “Mississippi Godd#!” by Nina Simone (1964), as well as “Talking Birmingham” by Phil Ochs (1965).)*

*Though critics and some casual listeners hear protest in the lyrics of “The Slummer the Slum,” that’s not the case for everyone. Other listeners hear a fun, dance number filled with funny, nonsense lyrics. As far as we know, “5” Royales’ lyricist Lowman Pauling did not explain what he meant by this song, so there can be valid differences of opinion. It’s fine to have different opinions on this.*

(Proceed to slide #19 and play the song.  
While playing, show the song lyrics on slide #20.)

**PART V: The Birmingham Children’s March**  
<https://vimeo.com/442870349> (3:39-6:23)

Introduction to this section: *In 1963, five years after the “5” Royales started performing “The Slummer the Slum,” Civil Rights protesters were participating in organized, overt protests. A protest in Birmingham, Alabama, called the “Birmingham Children’s March” put young people on the front lines.*

(Show PowerPoint slides #21 - #25.)

Before showing PowerPoint slides #26 - #29: *These last PowerPoint slides show how the successes of the Birmingham Children’s March impacted the Civil Rights Movement. Pay attention to the overall gains for African Americans, as well as to some unintended consequences for the “5” Royales and other Chitlin’ Circuit musicians.*

Tell students that PowerPoint slides #30 -#33 depict recognition that the “5” Royales received locally and nationally.

## **TEACHER'S CHEAT SHEET:**

**HOOK:** (At the start of class, do this brief hook activity to engage students. There are no right or wrong answers.)

Play the song "[The Slummer the Slum](#)" and then ask students:

**What caught your attention most and is there anything in this song that reminds you of the music you listen to today? Explain.**

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### **PART I: Jim Crow Laws Discussion Questions**

(Refer to PowerPoint [slides #2 - #3](#). This is a whole class discussion with no writing required.)

**Summary of Jim Crow Laws:** "Jim Crow" (so called after a black character in minstrel shows) was the name of a series of segregation laws which operated mainly, but not only, in southern and border states, between 1877 and the mid-1960s. These laws called for separate facilities for whites and blacks. Usually, facilities for blacks were inferior. The most common types of Jim Crow laws prohibited intermarriage and ordered business owners and public institutions to keep their black and white customers separated. Many states, and even cities, punished citizens legally for violating the Jim Crow laws. African Americans also had to worry about the possibility of being the victims of violence if they did not obey the Jim Crow laws, or were perceived not to obey them.

Below is a sampling of Jim Crow laws in Alabama and Georgia. There were Jim Crow Laws similar to these in other states. (These laws were from earlier than 1964, when Jim Crow laws became outlawed everywhere.)

#### **Restaurants**

It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city, at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectually separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided for each compartment. (*Alabama*)

**Discussion Question:** Imagine you were an African American living under this Jim Crow law. How would this law impact your making plans to go out to eat at a restaurant?

Possible answers could include: I'd need to learn which restaurants I could go to, so I wouldn't walk into a whites-only restaurant. I'd need to rely mostly on word of mouth and pay attention to what my friends and family were telling me. At restaurants that served to blacks in a separate section, I'd have to eat in an area partitioned for blacks and likely enter through a rear door, so I might prefer going to a restaurant that served only blacks, was owned and run by blacks, and where I felt more welcome and comfortable. Likely I'd have a limited choice of such restaurants.

### **Parks**

It shall be unlawful for colored people to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the benefit, use and enjoyment of white persons...and unlawful for any white person to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the use and benefit of colored persons. (*Georgia*)

**Discussion Question:** Imagine you were an African American living under this Jim Crow law. How would this law impact your making plans as to which park you would visit?

Possible answers could include: I'd need to learn which parks I could go to, so I wouldn't go to parks where I was not allowed. I'd need to rely mostly on word of mouth. It would not be safe for me to go to a whites-only park because I'd be breaking the law. Likely I'd have a limited choice of parks to choose from, and some towns might not have any.

### **Restrooms**

Every employer of white or negro males shall provide for such white or negro males reasonably accessible and separate toilet facilities. (*Alabama*)

**Discussion Question:** How would this law impact your life away from home?

Possible answers could include: I'd need to learn which toilets I could go to, because I couldn't use toilets in whites-only gas stations and restaurants. There would only be a limited number of restrooms I could use, and sometimes there may not be any nearby, so I would have to plan ahead. It would not be safe for me to go to a whites-only restroom because I'd be breaking the law.

## **PART II: Chitlin' Circuit Video Analysis Questions** (whole class/small group)

**Chitlin' Circuit #1:** (Play video clip at 2:26 – 2:34)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTgw\\_Aag23g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTgw_Aag23g)

**In this video clip, founder of the American Blues Network, Rip Daniels, says:**  
“They had to carry in some cases their own petrol, and in all cases, they had to have dependable transportation. You did not want to break down.”

**Question:** Why did musicians on the Chitlin' Circuit need to bring their own petrol (gasoline); what were the dangers facing these musicians if they ran out of gas or their car broke down?

*Possible responses could include:*

The musicians were afraid that not all service stations would make gas available to them. If they ran out of gas or their car broke down, they were afraid they could be stranded and then attacked by violent racists who didn't want them in their town.

**Chitlin' Circuit #2:** (Play video clip at 2:35 – 2:44)

**In this video clip, author Preston Lauterbach says:**

“A driver on the Chitlin' Circuit had to know how to navigate this world. He had to know what towns and what parts of town were safe for him to stop in.”

**Question:** What were some thoughts that might have gone through a musician’s mind when mapping out his journey?

*Possible responses could include:*

Thoughts going through musicians’ heads could have included: “Where can I go that will have tourist homes (guest houses), gas stations, stores and restaurants that will serve me as an African American traveler?”

**Chitlin' Circuit #3:** (Play video clip at 2:54–3:07)

**In this video, Little Milton’s road manager, Scrap Iron, says:**

“I mean when we used to eat, we used to go around to the back of the restaurant. You couldn’t go in there and sit down and eat like we do now. You would go to the back door, and ‘What you want, boy?’”

**Question:** What did Scrap Iron’s memory reveal about the effects that Jim Crow laws had on him and other African Americans?

*Possible responses could include:*

Not allowed in the front door and being required to go to the back of the restaurant felt insulting, as it felt insulting to be a grown man and called the condescending term “boy.”

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**PART III: “The Slummer the Slum” Text Analysis Questions** (whole class/small group)

**“The Slummer the Slum” #1:**

**Question:** What may the “5” Royales be saying in the first stanza?

Now don't try to figure out  
Where I come from  
Now don't try to figure out  
Where I come from  
I could be the smart guy from Wall Street  
I could be the Purple People Eater's son

**Give evidence.**

*Possible responses could include:*

The author of this song may be saying something along the lines of: Don’t stereotype me. You don’t know me, who I can be or what I can be. I could be a financial whiz earning money on Wall Street, or I could be the son of a mythical creature in the hit song of the day (a Purple People Eater). Students may also mention that at the time, since blacks and whites were separated under Jim Crow laws, they did not have many opportunities get to know each other, so it was easy to jump to stereotyped views based on lack of knowledge and experience.

**Put that message on a bumper sticker.**

**“The Slummer the Slum” #2:**

**Question:** What may the “5” Royales be saying in the last stanza?

Now there's only one difference  
between me and you  
Now there's only one difference  
between me and you  
You've got money in your pocket, oh no  
And I've got a hole in my shoe

**Give evidence.**

*Possible* responses could include:

You and I aren't as different as you may think. We've got things in common. The main difference is that you're rich and I'm poor, which is probably a big part of why you're looking down on me. This stanza speaks to the issue of racial inequality contributing to economic inequality.

**Put that message on a bumper sticker.**

**PART IV: Birmingham Children's March Critical Thinking Questions**

**Birmingham Children's March #1:** (Play video clip at 4:08 – 5:18)

<https://vimeo.com/442870349>

**In this video, Bull Connor, Birmingham Commissioner of Public Safety, says:**

“I always worked under this philosophy: You can never whip these birds if you don't keep you and them separate.”

**Question:** What does this quote suggest about how Bull Connor and other segregationists viewed African Americans? Give evidence.

*Possible* responses could include:

Bull Connor and other segregationists viewed blacks as inferior and threatening and saw segregation as a way of keeping African Americans in their place.

**Birmingham Children's March #2:** (Play video clip at 6:05 – 6:17)

**In this video, movement leader Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth says:**

“We thought you could just shame the white man into ‘look how bad you're treating your negroes,’ you know. But I found out that they were determined not to give one inch.

**Question:** Why would shaming not work and what did work?

*Possible* responses could include:

Jim Crow lasted as long as it did because it was advantageous to many whites. Whites who held negative stereotypes about blacks were afraid of integration and of losing social, economic, and political power. What succeeded in overthrowing the system of Jim Crow

was organized, nonviolent protest that awakened the conscience of many people around the country and world.

**Birmingham Children’s March #3:**

**Question:** In the short term, how did the Birmingham Children’s March hurt the “5” Royales? In the long-term, how did the march help improve the lives of the “5” Royales? Provide evidence.

*Possible* responses could include:

In the short term, the march hurt the “5” Royales because they were detained by police the day they drove through Birmingham on their way to Texas, and they missed their gig. In the long term, the march improved the lives of the “5” Royals because it helped pave the way for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ending legalized segregation, which gave the members of the “5” Royales more rights as citizens.

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**PART V: Culminating Questions:**

(whole class discussion, individual written answers if time allows)

**Culminating Question #1:**

**In what ways does the song “The Slummer the Slum” by the “5” Royales reflect the history of the times?**

*Possible* responses could include:

The music reflects the jubilant, funky dance numbers Africans Americans enjoyed at the Chitlin' Circuit clubs. Dancing to the high-energy music helped people who felt oppressed under Jim Crow have fun and release stress. The lyrics—which express frustration about negative assumptions about African Americans, economic inequalities, and the failing of many whites to appreciate what they shared in common with blacks—may have reflected some of the thoughts lyricist Lowman Pauling and other African Americans had living under Jim Crow.

**Culminating Question #2:**

**How and why did the subtle protest of the “5” Royales’ song “The Slummer the Slum” differ from the more overt protest of the Birmingham Children’s March?**

*Possible* responses could include:

“The Slummer the Slum” lyrics expressing protest were subtle and masked because in 1958, it would not have been wise to overtly protest Jim Crow. The “5” Royales could have been cut off from radio airplay and lost their record contract. Also, they could have risked being attacked by racist whites. Five years later in 1963, (likely inspired in part by the subtle protest of songs like “The Slummer the Slum”), the peaceful Birmingham child marchers were part of a large, national protest movement under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Though still risky to protest, the child marchers were not the family breadwinners at risk of being fired, enjoyed safety in numbers, and had the backing of movement leaders and white allies.



**Culminating Question #3:**

**The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed the Jim Crow laws. What were some of the intended consequences for African Americans, in general, and specifically for the “5” Royales and other Chitlin' circuit musicians? What were some of the unintended consequences? Give evidence for your arguments.**

*Possible responses could include:*

Intended consequences: Successes of the Civil Rights Movement, including the 1963 Birmingham Children’s March, had led to the legal end of Jim Crow laws. African Americans gained access to venues where they’d been denied.

Unintended consequences: Sometimes desegregation in the South came at a cost to African American communities because integrated markets mostly favored white institutions. In the wake of Jim Crow, African American businesses, including Chitlin' Circuit venues, often closed. Desegregation allowed blacks to attend all entertainment venues, meaning there was less of a market for segregated entertainment venues catering to blacks.

After the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for the “5” Royales and for many musicians on the Chitlin' Circuit, their musical careers collapsed. In 1965, after over a decade of rising to fame on the Chitlin' Circuit with many hit songs, the “5” Royales returned to obscurity outside the music industry. Members of the group resumed the type of ordinary jobs from which they thought the music business had rescued them.

**EXTRA RESOURCES:**

**A. Music:** The “5” Royales

1. Various “5” Royales songs on YouTube, including 2 of their biggest hits “Think” and “Dedicated to the One I Love”
2. “*Music’s Unsung Pioneer*” *Winston-Salem Journal*: December 16, 2014
3. Numerous other articles in the *Winston-Salem Journal* about the “5” Royales, most by staff writer Lisa O’Donnell

**B. Historical:** Birmingham Children’s March:

1. American *Freedom Stories: Children’s Crusade of 1963*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV0k-3Hkjsw>
2. Civil Rights Radio- Alabama Public Radio  
Radio documentary of Birmingham Children’s March  
<http://apr.org/post/best-documentary-alabama-public-radio-civil-rights-radio#stream/0>

**C. Historical:** Chitlin' Circuit:

1. Online article: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2014/02/16/275313723/the-origin-and-hot-stank-of-the-chitlin-circuit>
2. Book: Lauterbach, Preston. *The Chitlin' Circuit: And The Road to Rock “n” Roll*. New York: W. W Norton & Company, Inc., 2011.
3. Radio Interview with author: <https://www.npr.org/2011/12/20/140596530/before-rock-n-roll-the-chitlin-circuit-performed>

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## APPENDIX:

### “5” Royales Timeline

(This is an optional resource for teachers who wish to learn more about the “5” Royales.)

During their recording career from 1952 to 1965, the “5” Royales recorded more than one hundred songs and five top-ten R&B hits. This limited timeline covers some of their important milestones.

- **1926** – John Tanner and Lowman Pauling are born in Winston-Salem, NC
- **1932** – Tanner and Pauling grow up in musical families
- **1938** – The Royal Sons Quintet (gospel group) forms in Winston-Salem
- **1943** – John Tanner joins U.S. army
- **1945** – John Tanner returns home and rejoins The Royal Sons Quintet as the main vocalist with Lowman Pauling as the guitarist and primary songwriter; group is very popular on the Southeastern church and revival circuit and is also on the radio, with a regular program on Winston-Salem’s WSJS-AM
- **1950** – WSJS engineer Bob Woodward records some Royals Sons demos and contacts Apollo Records in NYC
- **1951** – Apollo Records signs Royal Sons’ and releases “Bedside of a Neighbor;”  
– Apollo asks group to switch to secular songs;; group changes name to “Royales” and releases first secular number, “Too Much of a Little Bit;” (group includes John Tanner, Lowman Pauling, Obediah Carter, James Moore, and Otto Jeffries, who would be replaced by Eugene Tanner)
- **1952** – group changes name to “5” Royales and releases “Baby Don’t Do it”; begins successful touring career with live shows on the Chitlin’ Circuit, with fans dancing and enjoying the wild on-stage music, choreography, and antics
- **1953** – “Baby Don’t Do It” and “Help Me Somebody” hit #1 on *Billboard’s* R&B chart
- **1954** – “5” Royales switch to the King Records label
- **1957** – releases hit “Think” and “Dedicated to the One I Love,” which becomes an American hit standard covered by other artists
- **1958** – releases “The Slummer the Slum”
- **1963** – drives through Birmingham, Alabama, on the second day of the Birmingham Children’s March
- **1965** – group disbands
- **1992** – awarded North Carolina Folk Heritage Award
- **2009** –inducted into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame (posthumously)
- **2015** – inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (posthumously)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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## AUTHOR BIOS:

**Elizabeth A. Carlson**, a former classroom teacher, is the founder and Program Director of Carolina Music Ways, a nonprofit organization based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, that educates students about iconic North Carolina musicians and their connections to American history and culture. She is also the author of *North Carolina String Music Masters: Old-Time and Bluegrass Legends*. Carlson holds a BA in English and American Studies from Princeton University and an Ed.M. in Language and Literacy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**Charles Montague** teaches History at Raleigh Charter High School in Raleigh, North Carolina. With a deep love for folklore and music, he founded and advises SOOTS, the school’s Sustaining Roots Music Community Project. With a special interest in civil rights history, Montague has worked with the Center for the Study of the American South at UNC-Chapel Hill as an American South Teaching Fellow, developing curriculum on the impact of lynching images on the Civil Rights Movement. Montague holds a BA in African, Asian and Islamic History from Washington and Lee University and an MA in American History from Villanova University.

**Kathy White**, a nationally board-certified teacher in American History and English, is a curriculum designer and teacher trainer who has led professional development workshops for teachers around the country. White served in classroom and administrative roles in the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District, including Curriculum Coordinator for Secondary Education. She has since worked for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History as a teacher trainer, master fellow, and curriculum designer and helped create the curriculum commissioned for the Broadway show *Hamilton*. White holds a BA in Political Science from the University of Richmond and an MPA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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