

**The Goodman Theatre**  
Student Subscription Series  
2005-2006 Season

**Student Guide**

***PURLIE***

By: Ossie Davis  
Lyrics By: Peter Udell  
Music By: Gary Geld  
Book By: Davis Rose-Udell

**Directed by**  
Sheldon Epps

**Student Guide written and designed by**  
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# EXPLORING THE PRODUCTION

## About the Author

Ossie Davis

Ossie Davis began his career in 1939 with the Rose McClendon Players in Harlem. In 1946, he made his Broadway debut in *Jeb*, followed by *Jamaica*, *The Zulu and the Zayda*, and *I'm Not Rappaport* (which he later reprised on film with Walter Matthau), among many others. In 1961, he wrote and starred in the critically acclaimed *Purlie Victorious*. His many film credits include *No Way Out* (1950, with Sidney Poitier), *The Cardinal*, *The Hill*, *The Scalphunters*, *Let's Do It Again*, *Do the Right Thing*, *Jungle Fever*, *Grumpy Old Men*, and *Get on the Bus*. He also directed four films. He made his television debut in the 1955 *Emperor Jones*, in the title role. Emmy Award nominations followed for his work in *Teacher, Teacher*, *King* and *Miss Evers' Boys*. In 2001, he received a Daytime Emmy for the children's special *Finding Buck McHenry*. He is also the author of three children's books. Mr. Davis is the recipient of the NAACP Image Award, the National Medal of Arts, and the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award, and, with Ruby Dee, the Kennedy Center Honors (2004). In 1998, he and Ms. Dee marked their 50th wedding anniversary with the publication of their joint autobiography, *With Ossie and Ruby: In This Life Together*. Mr. Davis was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame in 1994.

## About the Director

Sheldon Epps

Sheldon Epps conceived and directed the Duke Ellington musical *Play On!*, which received three Tony Award nominations and was produced both at Seattle Repertory Theatre and the Goodman Theatre, where it received four Jefferson Awards including Best Musical. The Pasadena Playhouse production was taped by PBS for broadcast as part of the *Great Performances* series. He also conceived and directed the highly acclaimed musical revue *Blues in the Night*. The Broadway production was nominated for a Tony Award as Best Musical of the Year, and the London production, which he also directed, was nominated for two Laurence Olivier Awards and ran for over a year in the West End before being broadcast in Europe by Thames Television. Mr. Epps was a co-founder and the Associate Artistic Director of the off-Broadway theater The Production Company. Mr. Epps was pleased to join the Pasadena Playhouse as Artistic Director in 1997. His directing credits at this theatre include *As Bees In Honey Drown*, *Blue*, *Play On!*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Old Settler*, *The Real Thing*, *On Borrowed Time*, *Mr. Rickey Calls a Meeting* and *Blues in the Night*, and he was production consultant for the musical *Sisterella*. At Arena Stage, he directed the world premiere of *Blue*, which was also produced off-Broadway at the Roundabout Theatre and enjoyed a national tour co-produced by the Pasadena Playhouse. Earlier this year, Epps directed *Purlie* for the Encores!® concert series in New York.

# What is a Musical?

**What is a musical?** Musical (noun) – a stage, television or film production utilizing popular style songs and dialogue to either tell a story (book musicals) and/or showcase the talents of varied performers.\*

*Purlie* is categorized as a **Musical Comedy**; defined through its use of comical concepts and dialogue paired with whimsical songs and ballads.\*

## How Are Musicals Categorized? \*\*

### Revue:

A musical show consisting of skits, songs, and dances, often satirizing current events, trends, and personalities.

Can you think of any revues?

1. The Second City Comedy Troupe
- 2.
- 3.

### Musical Comedy:

A comedic play or movie in which dialogue is interspersed with songs, especially one with a focus on musical numbers and a simple plot.

Can you think of any musical comedies?

1. Hairspray
- 2.
- 3.

### Musical Drama:

An opera in which the musical and dramatic elements are equally important; the music is appropriate to the action.

Can you think of any musical dramas?

1. Les Misérables
- 2.
- 3.

Find definitions for these three styles and give examples for each:

**Broadway Opera**

**"New" Operetta**

**Play With Music**

## Who's Involved?

**Lyricist:** The person who writes the words, or lyrics, to the melody of a song. The lyricist is responsible for matching the words with the tone of the song and greater context of the play.

**Composer:** The person who creates the melody of the songs. The composer is responsible for setting the mood of a song in its respective scene, and matching the style to that of the play's.

**Book Author:** The person who is responsible for all dialogue in the musical. Book authors can be original creators of the musical or adaptors of another's work for the musical.

**NOTE: There can be multiple collaborators in all elements of the musical's creation!**

\*Kenrick, John. "A History of the Musical: What is a Musical?" 1996-2003, at <http://www.musicals101.com/musical.htm>

\*\*All Definitions are taken from Dictionary.com

# "Purlie Victorious" Becomes "Purlie" the Musical



## Finding a **Composer** and **Lyricist**

Philip Rose (producer of the original production of *Purlie*, the musical) was very concerned with maintaining the style and tone of the original play, *Purlie Victorious*. With that in mind, Rose chose Peter Udell, an early apprentice of renowned composer Frank Loesser, as the lyricist. Udell was given the difficult task of finding his own composer; one that would be both acceptable to Philip Rose, and also compatible with Udell's own style. Udell chose Gary Geld as composer, and the two created the score that is used today.\*

## *Why do we add music and/or dance?*

In musical theatre it is often said that songs represent a *heightened sense of emotion*: a point at which the character can no longer speak his or her mind, but rather is forced to sing or dance. Most musical numbers are performed at a point of extreme emotion in the play, typically when there is an excess of joy, sadness, anger or fear. Music and dance also provokes heightened emotion from the audience. Viewers feel more drawn to a moment and emotion when experiencing it through song or dance. (Read more about the effects of music on the next page!)

*Complications:* Creating a musical is not an easy task! There must be agreement on the amount of group and solo numbers, as well as the style and length of each piece. Choreography within numbers also needs to be determined and timed.

Between the producer, composer, and lyricist of *Purlie*, many artistic disagreements arose.\*

*Cool Fact:* The score of *Purlie* was written from across the country! Geld was stationed in California, while Udell was on the East Coast. The two would send each other lyrics and music, then created the score over the phone!



\*Rose, Philip. "You can't do that on Broadway!: A Raisin in the Sun and other theatrical possibilities,"

# The Psychology of Music

If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my day-dreams in music. I see my life in terms of music.

-Albert Einstein

Why did Udell and Geld turn a play that used to be strictly dialogue, into a musical? Music has the ability to express emotions in a way that words alone can not. Think of all the times that a song has made you feel a emotional. Slower songs tend to create a relaxed, saddened or romantic mood. Songs with heavy rhythms and faster paces often create an excited, aggressive or angry state. Over the years, however, research has been found that music can affect more than just temperament. In fact, listening to *Purlie* may affect your IQ!

## The Mozart Effect

In 1993, a scientist and researcher named Gordon Shaw did a number of experiments linking the brain to music. Shaw discovered, in an experiment called "**The Mozart Effect**," that after a group of college students listened to Mozart's "Sonata for Two Piano's in D major," their IQ's increased by up to nine points. More specifically, listening to Mozart affected their spatial-temporal reasoning: or the ability to think abstractly, especially in terms of math. Shaw found that listening to Mozart could be a way to stimulate the part of the brain that thinks mathematically and abstractly.\*

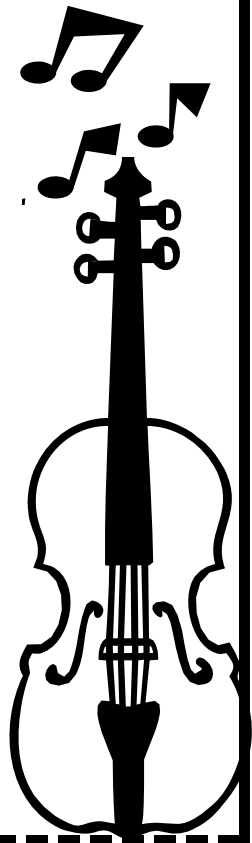
Research since Shaw's original experiment has shown similar results. In one study, a group of high school students who listened to Mozart before taking their SATs scored 51 points higher on the verbal section and 39 points higher on the mathematical section than students who did not listen to any music. \*\*



Have You Been Using the Mozart Effect?

Do you ever do your homework while listening to music? Do you know anyone who does? Do you think the concept of the Mozart effect applies? Why or why not?

Test the theory! For your next exam, study as you normally would, but listen to classical music the morning or afternoon before your test. See if you do better than you normally do!



### Music In *Purlie*

After you have seen *Purlie*, think about what songs inspired specific emotions in you.

What were the songs?

What were the emotions?

Why do you think those songs were in the scene?

### What About Your Music?

Think of the music that you listen to.

Which artists, albums or songs relax you the most?

Which artists, albums or songs excite you the most?

What artists, albums or songs stir up other specific feelings or emotions in you? What feelings do these pieces of music create? Why do you think that is?

\* - Burack, Jodi. [Uniting Mind and Music: Shaw's Vision Continues](#)

\*\* - Park, Diane W. "The Mozart Connection: Exploring the Power of Music" at <http://projects.edtech.sandi.net/dailard/mozartconnect>



# EXPLORING THE TEXT

# TEXT QUESTIONS

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## Introductory pages

1. What do churches, courts and theaters say about segregation?
2. What is the structure of the play?
3. How is time dealt with in the play?
4. How many characters are in the play?
5. How many musical numbers are in the play?

## Prologue

6. Where are we when the scene begins?
7. What is strange about this situation?
8. According to Purlie, how did Ol'Cap'n Cotchipee do him and the rest of the congregation service?
9. What do they all pray for, which is impossible?
10. What stairs is the song referring to?
11. What door is the song referring to?
12. What are the pearly gates?
13. What does Purlie think of the church as being?

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1

14. Where are we when the scene begins?
15. How old is Purlie Judson?
16. What is Purlie wearing?
17. Who is Purlie with?
18. What is it no longer "necessary to be (...) in order to be virtuous, charming, or beautiful"?
19. Who is Purlie looking for?
20. How does Lutiebelle feel about the house?
21. How does Purlie feel about the house?
22. Who does Lutiebelle keeps referring to?
23. Where does Ol' Cap'n live?
24. What does Ol'Cap'n own?
25. Who are Gitlow and Missy?
26. Why does Purlie believe that Ol'Cap'n still owns people?
27. What is Purlie's "business"?
28. What can't he wait to get?
29. What is Purlie's message in "New-Fangled Preacher-Man"?
30. What does Missy do when she finally walks in?
31. Who does Purlie think that Lutiebelle looks like?
32. What are Purlie and Missy scheming about?
33. Whose money do they want to get?
34. How much money is it?
35. What is Gitlow's new "title"?
36. Why is he home from the cotton field?
37. Where does Lutiebelle come from?
38. What is the message of Gitlow's song "Skinnin' a cat"?
39. Where did Purlie find Missy?
40. What does Purlie say about Lutiebelle's name?
41. What kind of pie does Missy offer Lutiebelle?
42. Since when does Purlie fidget?

# TEXT QUESTIONS

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## QUESTIONS FROM ACT ONE Scene 1 CONTINUED

43. Where did Purlie go that made him be "in such a hurry to change things down here"?
44. What is Lutiebelle's song about?
45. Where did Gitlow and Missy meet?
46. What is Missy hoping for Lutiebelle and Purlie?
47. Where was Cousin Bee when she died?
48. What is Missy off to do with the bat?
49. Why is Lutiebelle intimidated by the idea of impersonating Cousin Bee?
50. What is the message of "The Harder They Fall"?
51. What do we learn about Lutiebelle's upbringing?
52. According to Purlie, what is "the most important part of being somebody"?
53. What big question does Purlie ask Lutiebelle?

## Scene 2

54. Where does the scene take place?
55. Why does Charlie have a black eye?
56. What kind of relationship do Charlie and Idella have?
57. What instrument does Charlie play?
58. What kind of songs does he write?
59. What is the dynamic between Idella and Ol'Cap'n?
60. What kind of power does Idella have over Ol'Cap'n?
61. Define the dynamic between Ol'Cap'n and Charlie?
62. Who is the most efficient cotton picker?
63. What is "traditional" according to Ol'Cap'n?
64. What is the message of "Big Fish, Little Fish"?
65. How does Charlie feel about the financial agreement between Ol'Cap'n and the people on the plantation?
66. What is the relationship between Ol'Cap'n and Gitlow?
67. What is surprising about this relationship?
68. According to Ol'Cap'n, what word can't Charlie say correctly?
69. What was Charlie talking about in his song?
70. How does Gitlow soothe the Ol'Cap'n?

## Scene 3

71. What is the first mistake that Lutiebelle makes upon meeting Ol'Cap'n?
72. What kind of mistakes does she continue to make as she tells Aunt Henrietta's story?
73. What tactic does Purlie use to try to affect Ol'Cap'n?
74. What is the point of the scroll?
75. What trick does Ol'Cap'n pull on Purlie and Lutiebelle?

## Scene 4

76. What is "Down Home" about?
77. According to Missy, how did everyone avoid getting put in jail?
78. What does Missy suggest Purlie ask Lutiebelle to do?
79. What does Gitlow claim to have when he arrives home?
80. What did he do with Lutiebelle?

# TEXT QUESTIONS

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## QUESTIONS FROM ACT ONE Scene 4 CONTINUED

81. What is Purlie's reaction to this?
82. What happened to Lutiebelle?
83. What did Ol'Cap'n do?
84. What does Purlie decide to do?
85. What is Purlie's response to Gitlow saying "the man only kissed your woman"?

## ACT TWO

### Scene 1

86. Where does the scene take place?
87. What is this song about?

### Scene 2

88. Where does this scene take place?
89. What time is it?
90. What does Lutiebelle keep hearing?
91. What is Lutiebelle planning on doing to show her gratitude?
92. What is the message of Missy's song?
93. Who does the Ol'Cap'n have on his side according to Gitlow?
94. What is Gitlow's song about?
95. What does Purlie claim to have done?
96. What does he have with him as proof?
97. Where does Purlie ask Lutiebelle to hide the money?
98. What do the stage directions tell us about Purlie's story?
99. What is the big question that Purlie asks himself that makes him turn around and go back to Ol'Cap'n?
100. How do Gitlow, Missy and Lutiebelle respond to Purlie's story?
101. Where did Purlie's mother die? Why?
102. What news does Idella bring?
103. What did Purlie actually spend the night doing?
104. What does Gitlow ask Ol'Cap'n upon his arrival?
105. What do Gitlow, Missy and Lutiebelle have to say about stealing?
106. What does Charlie say as soon as he arrives?
107. What is his reason for doing it?
108. What does Purlie want a cut of?
109. What did Ol'Cap'n tell Charlie to do?
110. What did Charlie actually do?
111. What does Purlie try to give Charlie upon hearing this news?
112. Charlie accepts the money on what condition?
113. What does Charlie sing about?
114. What happened to Ol'Cap'n?

## EPILOGUE

115. Where does the scene take place?
116. What does Purlie say he has found in being black?
117. What political texts does Purlie refer to as he ends his speech?

# Style - Satire!

## Beginning With the End?

The opening scene of *Purlie* is the death of Ol' Cap'n Cotchipee. Before the play begins, the audience knows that one character will die.

There is a literary device called **dramatic irony**, which means that the audience knows something that the characters do not.

Is the death of Ol' Cap'n dramatic irony? Why or why not?

Do you think this knowledge of Ol' Cap'n Cotchipee's death makes the play more or less suspenseful? Why or why not?

Can you think of at least three plays or movies that begin with the ending?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Can you think of at least three plays or movies that begin with a character's death?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Can you think of at least three plays or movies that use dramatic irony in a different way?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*"The purpose of 'Purlie' is to point a mocking finger at racial segregation and laugh it out of existence"*

*-Ossie Davis*

**Satire** is a literary device which mocks social injustices or human vices. Satire is usually used for corrective purposes: for example, in *Purlie*, satire is a device used to make fun of racial prejudice. Satires typically use exaggerated or stereotyped situations to ridicule a targeted injustice.

Can you think of stereotyped characters, behaviors, or situations in *Purlie*? What do you think Ossie Davis is trying to ridicule with these characters/actions/scenes?

Do you think that satires, which are humorous, are more effective than dramas in terms of critiquing society? Is laughter an effective tool for social change? Why or why not?

Do you think that Ossie Davis accomplished his goal of writing a successful satire?

## It's Everywhere!

Satire comes in all forms: articles, movies, television, novels and cartoons are a few. Popular satires include: *The Simpsons*, *South Park*, *The Daily Show* and *The Onion*.

Can you think of any more?

## Make It Your Own...

Can you think of a social injustice or individual problem that needs to be addressed? How would you create a satire to comment on this situation? What characters, situations, and behavior would you use to highlight and exaggerate whatever problem is occurring?

Do you think a satire would impact you more if you were connected to the issue? Why or why not?

Do you think *Purlie* is still a needed satire? If so, do you think there will be a time when it is no longer needed?

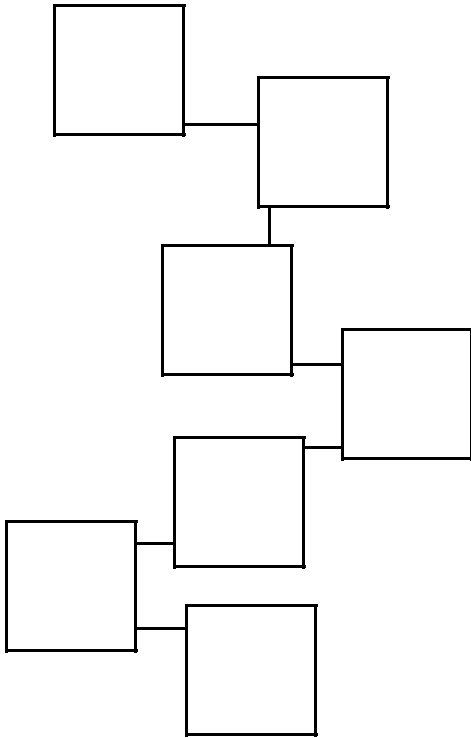


# Characters

## EXPLORING STATUS IN *PURLIE*

“Status” means the amount of power or standing that one person has over another. In *Purlie*, there are clear distinctions between who has the most power. Below are two status diagrams — one for the beginning of the play, and one for the end of the play. For each diagram, place the characters (names are given below) in the appropriate position. The highest point of the diagram means the most amount of power or status. The lowest point means the least amount of power or status. Be prepared to defend your reason for placing each character in their chosen spots.

### BEGINNING

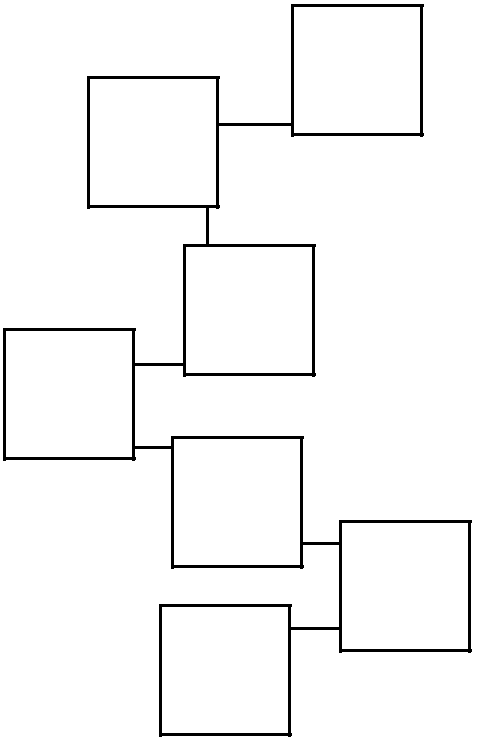


**CHARACTERS IN PURLIE**  
 Purlie Victorious Judson  
 Lutiebelle Gussie Mae Jenkins  
 Missy Judson  
 Gitlow Judson  
 Charlie Cotchipee  
 Idella Landy  
 Ol' Cap'n Cotchipee

“Who made it like this...who put the white man on top?”  
 -Purlie Victorious



### ENDING



## Improvise Your Status!

For this game, you will need ten slips of paper, numbered 1-10 and a scene from *Purlie*. Have volunteers go up and take a number randomly. **Don't show anyone your number!** The number you receive is the amount of status, or power, you have (1 is the least amount of power, 10 is the most). After each volunteer has chosen a slip of paper, read the scene with the other volunteers, acting your part according to the amount of status you have. Remember — you don't know what other numbers have been chosen, so be aware of how the other characters are acting! At the end of the scene, have the class guess what number each volunteer had.

More challenging? Have each volunteer draw a new number in the middle of their reading. Have the class guess both numbers for each volunteer. How did the change affect the reading?

# Vocabulary

Abhor
Abomination
Apathy
Avenging
Battle of Chickamauga
Bemused
Benign
Bereaved
Berserk
Boll
Britches
Bustard
Buzzard
Canaan
Catastrophe
Clarion
Commissary
Delirious
Diffidently
Discord
Dominion
Drudge
Embezzled
Exuberance
Gentility
Impelled



**HERE IS A LIST OF WORDS IN PURLIE. FIRST PLAY THE GAME AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE, THEN FIND DEFINITIONS FOR ALL REMAINING WORDS.**



Incredulous
Indignation
Ingrates
Insolent
Intones
Legitimate
Mangled
Ministrations
Monstrosity
New-Fangled
Obliged
Obsequious
Parable
Passels
Posthumously
Poultice
Pulpit
Ramshackle
Rhetoric
Rutabaga
Servitude
Sheba
Sovereign
Threadbare
Vengeance
Zion

## Vocabulary Game

Pick words on the vocabulary list that nobody knows. Have one person look up the definition in the dictionary and write it down while everyone else is writing down a fake definition of the word. Mix all of the definitions together, and have one person read them all out loud. If you guess the correct definition, you get a point. If someone else guesses your fake definition, you also get a point. Play as many rounds as you can, and see who can get the most points.



# EXPLORING THE CONTEXT

# Purlie Timeline

## 1860-1960

This timeline should help you understand the events that led up to *Purlie*. *Purlie* is set in Georgia, in approximately 1960. On your own, research facts about Georgia in 1960 and discuss how the 1960's relates to *Purlie*'s language, characters, settings and scenarios. Next research the time in between 1960 and the present and discuss how the civil rights movement affected society. How do you think *Purlie* would be different if it were set during that time?

\*\* - Urdang, Laurence, *The Timetables of American History*. Simon & Schuster Inc.: New York, NY, 1996

\* - Taken *directly* from The Encyclopædia Britannica's Guide to Black History at <http://www.britannica.com/Blackhistory/timeline.do>

**1863**

- Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation \*

**1860**

**1861**

- The Civil War begins in Charleston, South Carolina\*

\*\*\* - Hartin, Eric R. "Plessy v. Ferguson 1892" at <http://northpark.edu/history/WebChron/USA/PlessyFerguson.html>

### **Plessy Vs Ferguson** \*\*\*

Homer Plessy, a 30 year old shoe maker was jailed for sitting in the "white section" of a train car. He took his case to court, where it was ruled that segregation was legal under the "separate but equal" principle. This meant that as long as the facilities were of equal quality, blacks and whites were allowed to be isolated from one another.

Homer Plessy was 1/8 black and 7/8 white.

The ruling was unchallenged for almost 50 years.

**1865**

- The Civil War ends on April 26
- the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands to aid four million black Americans in transition from slavery to freedom. \*

**1879**

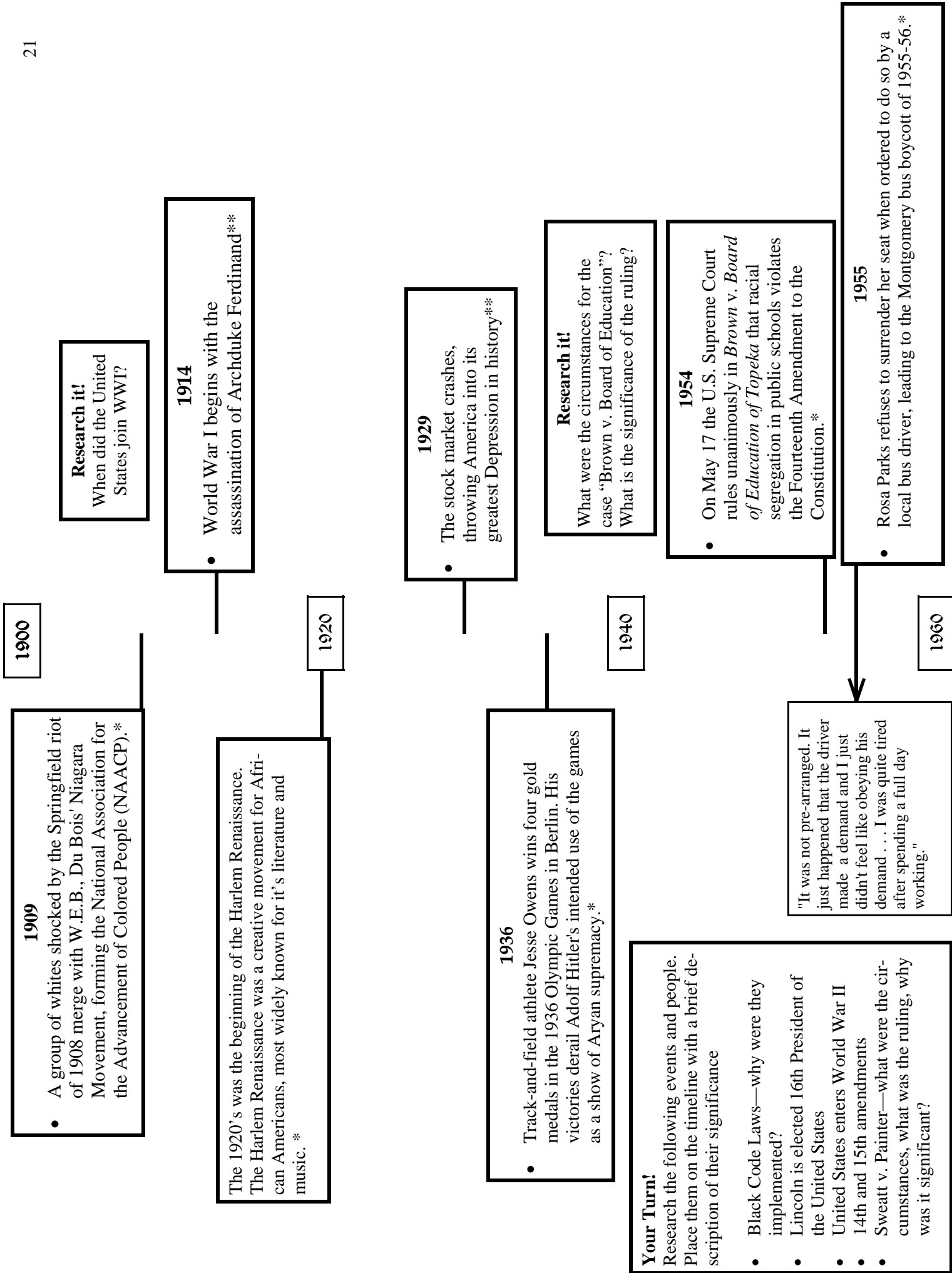
- Thomas Edison invents the light bulb\*\*



**1880**

**1896**

- In the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds the doctrine of separate but equal.\*



# Prices From 1960 To 2005

In the play, Purlie wanted the \$500 that his cousin left behind so that he could buy a Church. With inflation rates, what was **\$500** in 1960 would be over **\$3,000** today!

Below is a comparison chart for prices in the 1960s and 2005.

Object	Price in 1960	Adjusted Price for	Price in 2005
Cotton Dress	\$4.84*	\$30.67	\$35.00
Color Television	\$400.00*	\$2,534.70	\$175.00
Scrabble	\$2.60*	\$16.48	
Car Tires	\$11.25*	\$73.00	
1 Carat Diamond	\$767.00*	\$4,860.29	\$6,000
Barbie	\$2.26*	\$14.32	\$12.99
Radio	\$40.00*	\$253.47	\$15.00
Hershey Bar	\$0.05**	\$0.32	
Stamp	\$0.04**	\$0.25	
Gallon of regular	\$0.31**	\$1.96	
Gallon of Milk	\$0.49**	\$3.11	
New Car	\$2,500.00**	\$15,841.89	\$21,000.00

## Your Turn!

Fill in the blank spaces in the chart.

Look up prices online, in catalogues, or simply check where the objects are sold! (For example, stop by the grocery store on the way home and check how much a gallon of milk costs.)

Feel free to add more objects to the list. Either look up prices of the 1960's or ask someone who would remember what things used to cost then. To check for adjusted price due to inflation, go to <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>.



## What's Wrong With This Picture?

Discuss...

The middle pricing section is the "adjusted rate" column. This means that the middle section gives the amount that any given object would be if the only variable to consider was the inflation rate over time.

Notice which objects cost more, less, or relatively equal to their adjusted rates.

Why do you think that is? With a partner, discuss some reasons why the pricing for 2005 is different than its adjusted cost. Some suggested topics to discuss are: technological differences, types of materials, designers and brand names and the increase of options.



## If You Could Time Travel...

What three objects do you think would be the most profitable to buy from the 1960's to sell today.

What are three objects that would be the most profitable to buy from today and sell 1960?

## Think About It...

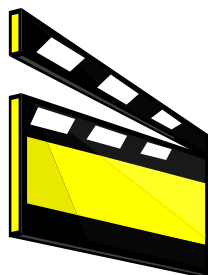
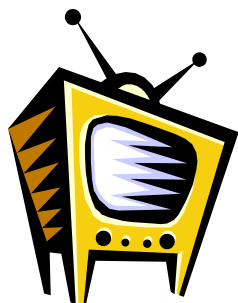
Purlie risked going to jail to for \$500. Why was buying the church so important to him? What did it represent?

Today that \$500 would be \$3,000. Would you risk going to prison for \$3,000? Purlie bought a church with his money. What would you do with \$3,000?

\*- Prices taken from 1960 Sears Catalogue

\*\* - Prices taken from <http://www.1960sflashback.com/Economy/asp>

# USA in 1960



## Top 10 Songs

1960*	2005**
You Talk Too Much -Joe Jones	We Belong Together -Mariah Carey
Cathy's Clown -The Everly Brothers	Don't Cha' Think? -The Pussy Cat Dolls
The Twist -Chubby Checker	Pon de Replay -Rihanna
Save The Last Dance For Me -The Drifters	Let Me Hold You -Li'l Bow Wow
Running Bear Johnny Preston	You And Me -Lifehouse
Sweet Nothings -Brenda Lee	Shake It Off -Mariah Carey
Handy Man -Jimmy Jones	Behind These Hazel Eyes -Kelly Clarkson
Walk, Don't Run -The Ventures	Listen To Your Heart -D.H.T
Alley-Oop -The Hollywood Argyles	Lose Control -Missy Elliot
Stay -Maurice Williams & The Zodiacs	Pimpin' All Over The World -Ludacris

## Top 10 Television Shows

1960*	2005***
Gunsmoke	Lost
Wagon Train	Family Guy
Have Gun, will travel	The 4400
The Andy Griffith Show	Charmed
The Real McCoys	Smallville
Rawhide	Gilmore Girls
Candid Camera	The O.C.
The Untouchables	Desperate Housewives
The Price is Right	Laguna Beach
The Jack Benny Show	Weeds

## Top 5 Movies

1960*	2005****
Psycho	Star Wars: Episode III
La Vita Dolce	Batman Begins
The Alamo	War of the Worlds
G.I. Blues	Fantastic Four
Macumba Love	Mr. and Mrs. Smith

### SPORTS:

#### World Series winners

1960: Pittsburgh Pirates\*

2004: Boston Red Sox

#### NBA champions:

1960: Boston Celtics\*

2004: San Antonio Spurs

#### NFL Champions:

1960: Philadelphia Eagles\*

2005: New England Patriots

### Does Race Still Matter? Discuss With A Partner!

What do you notice about this page in terms of racial representation? Look at the names of the artists, movies, songs and television shows. Were African Americans overall represented more, less, or equally in 1960 as they are today? What about specifically in music? Television? Movies? Sports? Fashion?

In your opinion, which forms of media have more racial diversity now than they did 45 years ago? Why do you think that is?

Which areas have an equal amount of racial diversity today as they did 45 years ago? Why do you think that is?

Which areas have a less amount of racial diversity today as they did 45 years ago? Why do you think that is?

\*\*-[billboard.com/bb/charts/hot100.jsp](http://billboard.com/bb/charts/hot100.jsp)

\*\*\*-[www.tv.com/shows.html](http://www.tv.com/shows.html)

\*\*\*\*-[www.the-numbers.com/movies/](http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/)

\*-All T.V. shows, songs, movies and sports winners were taken from [www.1960sflashback.com](http://www.1960sflashback.com)

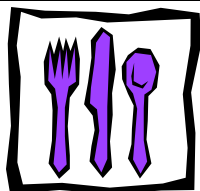
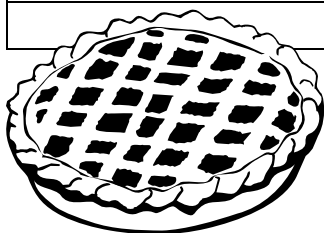
# Home Cooked Meals

“Give a boy a fish and he can eat for a day; teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime”  
-Proverb

All kinds of southern foods are mentioned throughout *Purlie*. Black-eyed peas, grits, catfish and hush-puppies are not only ingredients and dishes: they evoke a sense of place. Mentioning these foods helps establish the show’s setting just as much as the costumes and the set do. For each of the characters in *Purlie*, this food goes hand in hand with their sense of home and community.

In *Purlie*, Missy is famous for her potato pie. While she never divulges her secret recipe, below is the sweet potato pie recipe from Abby Fisher, a former slave, who wrote a cook book in 1881.

Ingredients:	Equipment
2 lbs of sweet potatoes	Large Pot
1 tablespoon of butter	Potato masher or large fork
5 eggs	Fine colander
½ cup of milk	Measuring spoons
sugar to taste (around one cup)	Large Bowl
1 orange	Medium Bowl
zest of half the orange	Measuring cup
½ teaspoon of salt	Vegetable peeler or zester
two prepared pie crusts (fresh or frozen)	Sharp knife
	Large spoon for mixing
	2 aluminium pie tins
	Pot holder



## Your Home Cooking!

Every family has their favorite dishes. Food is often at the center of family celebrations. Does your family have a special recipe that is eaten only at special occasions? Perhaps it is something you request for your birthday or is made only once a year for a holiday. These special foods have the power to remind us of our family even if we find ourselves far away from home. The smells and tastes of certain foods have the power to trigger very vivid memories. Can you think of a time that you’ve smelled a dish and been reminded of something?



Is there food that reminds you of home? A special occasion? A certain family member? Ask the cook in your family who makes that dish to teach you the recipe. Record the recipe so you can make it again and again. While you are cooking don’t just learn the steps, ask questions about the significance of the food you are preparing. You might learn some surprising things about not only cooking, but your family.

## Create a Recipe Card

On the next sheet of paper, write down the ingredients and preparation steps for your family’s recipe.

On one side of the card, write down:

- The name of the dish
- Who taught you how to cook it
- The ingredients needed
- The equipment needed

On the back of the card, write down:

- Explanation on how to prepare the dish
- How the dish tastes: sweet, sour, spicy, rich, light, etc.
- How long the dish has been in your family
- When this dish is made (For a special occasion? Nightly?)
- What this dish means to you

## Preparation:

1. Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Boil the potatoes in water until soft
3. Peel the potatoes.
4. While hot, mash the peeled potatoes through a fine colander into a large bowl
5. Mix one tablespoon of butter and a half teaspoon of salt into the mashed potatoes
6. Beat the eggs in a separate bowl
7. Add to the eggs the milk, sugar, juice of one orange, orange zest. Stir the liquid, add the mixture to the potatoes and mix well.
8. Pour the batter evenly into the pie shells and bake for 40 – 45 minutes

# Create Your Own Recipe Card

Recipe Card #1: Front

**Name of the Dish:**

**Name of the Cook:**

**Ingredients Needed:**

**Equipment Needed:**

Recipe Card #2: Front

**Name of the Dish:**

**Name of the Cook:**

**Ingredients Needed:**

**Equipment Needed:**

Recipe Card #1: Back

**Preparation Steps:**

1.

2.

**Dish History:**

How does this dish taste?

When is this dish made?

What significance does this dish have for you and your family?

Recipe Card #2: Back

**Preparation Steps:**

1.

2.

**Dish History:**

How does this dish taste?

When is this dish made?

What significance does this dish have for you and your family?

# Some Food For Thought

Definitions taken from "Allrecipes"  
at <http://search.allrecipes.com>

Here is a list of some other Southern foods mentioned in *Purlie*. Have you ever eaten any of them?

**Okra:** Ethiopian slaves brought the okra plant to America's South, where it's still popular today. Okra is useful for soups and stews, but can also be marinated and served raw. Many people prefer breaded and fried okra.

**Huckleberries:** A huckleberry is often mistaken for the blueberry. The huckleberry, however, has 10 small, hard seeds in the center and is not as sweet. Huckleberries are good eaten plain or in baked goods such as muffins or pies.

**Turnips:** Turnips have long been popular in Great Britain and northern Europe. Small, young turnips have a delicate, slightly sweet taste. As they age, however, their taste becomes stronger and their texture coarser, sometimes almost woody.

**Rutabaga:** This cabbage-family root vegetable is thought to be a cross between cabbage and turnip. The name comes from the Swedish rotabagge, which is why this vegetable is also called a Swede or Swedish turnip. Rutabagas have a pale yellow, slightly sweet, firm flesh.

**Sweet potato:** There are many varieties of sweet potato but the two that are widely grown commercially are a pale sweet potato and the darker skinned "yam." The pale sweet potato is not sweet after being cooked, rather it is dry and crumbly. The darker variety is much more sweet and moist.

**Black-eyed peas:** The black-eyed pea is thought to have been introduced to the United States through the African slave trade. Black-eyed peas have long been associated with good luck. A dish of peas is a New Year's tradition in most areas of the South, thought to bring luck and prosperity for the new year.

**Fatback:** Fatback is the fresh layer of fat that runs along the animal's back. It is used to make lard and cracklings.

**Cracklings:** Crunchy pieces of pork fat that separate from the rest of the fat. Cracklings turn brown and crispy.

**Catfish:** There are a variety of catfish. The channel catfish, weighing from 1 to 10 pounds, is considered the best eating. Catfish have a tough, inedible skin that must be removed before cooking. The flesh is firm, low in fat and mild in flavor. Catfish can be fried, poached, steamed, baked or grilled

**Grits:** The term "grits" refers to any coarsely ground grain such as corn, oats or rice. Most grits come in a choice of grinds-coarse, medium and fine. Grits can be cooked with water or milk-usually by boiling or baking. Grits can be eaten as hot cereal or served as a side dish.

**Fritters:** A small, sweet or savory, deep-fried cake made either by combining chopped food with a thick batter or by dipping pieces of food into a similar batter.

**Hush puppies:** This Southern specialty is a small cornmeal dumpling, flavored with chopped scallions, deep-fried and served hot. Hushpuppies are a traditional accompaniment for fried catfish. Their name is said to have come from a cook's trick for quieting dogs: by tossing scraps of the fried batter under the table and whispering, 'Hush, puppy!'

**Hoe Cakes:** A traditional Southern cornmeal pancake that are supposed to have been named so because they were originally cooked on the blade of a hoe over an open fire.

**Corn dodgers:** A ball of cornmeal (and flour), water (or milk), oil (or lard) and usually sugar. This is deep fried, or sometimes baked. Also known as a corn dab.

## Find It...

Missy describes Lutiebelle as "pretty as a pan of butter-milk biscuits." Can you find which other foods on this page are used to describe people and situations?

What does that tell you about the use of food in *Purlie*?



# EXPLORING THE SOCIAL ISSUES

# sharecropping

Missy and Gitlow Judson, as well as many other people in Purlie's life, were sharecroppers. A sharecropper made little wages, and was typically in debt. These next two pages will help you understand the economic position of most sharecroppers, as well as give you a sense of their daily routines.

"All this debt – according to this book every family in this valley owes money they'll never be able to pay back."

-Charlie Cotchipee

## Sharecropping:

After the end of the Civil War, there were two groups of people with large financial problems:

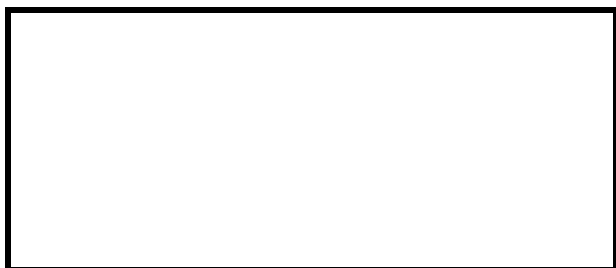
- 1) Former slaves had neither money nor credit with which to buy their own land.
- 2) Plantation owners could not afford to pay people to work on their expansive farms.

To solve each of their problems, the two groups entered into a new relationship known as sharecropping. In this agreement, the land owners provided the former slave a plot of land, a cabin, seeds and farming supplies and the former slave became a sharecropper providing the only thing they had to offer: labor. In exchange for the land and supplies, the sharecropper agreed to "share" their crop, most often cotton, with the land owner. The amounts "shared" varied from plantation to plantation. Some crops were split 50/50, but others were not so equitable. After the harvest, the plantation owner would sell the crop and calculate each sharecropper's portion of the profits. He would then deduct the value of the supplies that had been provided and pay the sharecropper the difference in cash.\*

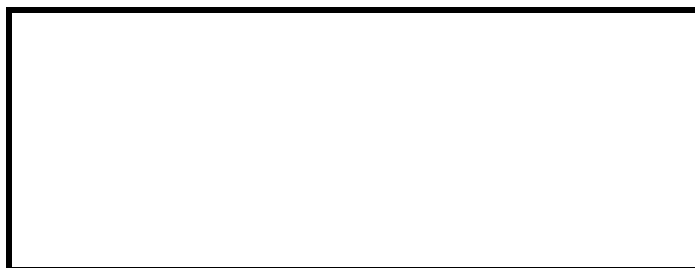
\*-"The Sharecropping System," at <http://blueslyrics.tripod.com/dictionary/sharecropping.htm>

"[Ol' Cap'n] could live away up there in his fine white mansion, and us down here in a shack not fitting to house the fleas upon his dogs!" -Purlie Victorious

ACTIVITY: Find photos online or at the library of a sharecropper's house and the home of a plantation owner. Do you think Purlie's distinctions ("mansion" and "shack") are accurate?



Sharecropper's Home



Plantation Owner's Home

# Sharecropping

"We're cheating them...and they know we're cheating them. How long do you expect them to stand for it?"

-Charlie Cotchipee

Imagine a life as a sharecropper. Write a creative short story about your daily life and how you feel about the people around you. What are both the positive and negative aspects of your life?

## The Plantation Store:

While the plantation owner or landlord provided supplies for farming, there was still the problem of living expenses (food and clothing). Since the sharecroppers did not have money until the crop was sold, they could not shop in local stores for these items. To assist his sharecroppers, the landlord often set up a plantation store where the sharecroppers and their families were allowed to charge purchases and not have to pay their bill until the harvest. This way, when the harvest came and the crop was sold, sharecroppers would have money to pay back their debts to the plantation owner.

On the surface this seemed like a fair deal for both parties, but what started as a mutually dependent relationship quickly evolved into a new form of slavery. More often than not, the combination of a bad harvest and falling cotton prices left the sharecroppers with little to no money after the harvest. As a result, they started each new year in debt. The plantation owner might then charge them interest on the amount they owed. Some of the land owners were known to cheat their sharecroppers by intentionally miscalculating the sharecropper's debts, quoting a price for their crop lower than the actual market value and inflate the prices of goods in the plantation store. Such underhanded practices insured that the sharecroppers would be forced to stay on the land and work for the plantation owner.

As the years passed the debts grew. When a sharecropper died, his or her debts were passed on to their children, thus tying families to the plantation for generations. While sharecropping started after the Civil War and primarily evolved as a relationship between former slaves and the plantation owners, the practice crossed racial boundaries. By 1900, 85% of the South's black farmers and 35% of its white ones lived as sharecroppers.\*

\*-McDonald, Archie P. "Sharecroppers," at [www.texasescape.com/AllThingsHistorical/SharecroppersAMD602.htm](http://www.texasescape.com/AllThingsHistorical/SharecroppersAMD602.htm)

## Do The Math...

A sharecropping record from 1940 for Riley B. King, a 14 year old who was living and working alone, gives a good impression of how economically difficult sharecropping was. Over a 5 month period, King paid \$13.50 for rent (\$2.50 per week), \$1.00 for a pair of pants, and \$0.50 for a wrench. He paid \$1.12 in interest (most likely from debt he owed years before), and \$0.40 for a cotton sack. He was paid \$5.00 for manual labor around his plantation owner's farm, and in those five months, earned \$4.18 for his crop. While King earned \$9.18, he had spent \$16.72, meaning he still owed \$7.54.

\*\*-"The Sharecropping Record of Riley B King, Age 14, 1940" at [www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~sawyer/bb-shrcrp.html](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~sawyer/bb-shrcrp.html)

# 1960

## The North vs The South

“[Purlie] went up North for a while and now he’s in such a hurry to change things down here I’m afraid he’ll lose his mind”  
-Missy Judson

Black-White Relations in 1960 were extremely complicated. Even more confusing — the way that African Americans were treated typically depended on location. Though there were exceptions, most associate better treatment with the North, and worse treatment with the South. Georgia, where *Purlie* is set, was especially well known for an era of “white supremacy,” where African Americans were subjected to prejudice, hate crimes, and a lack of rights.

Research African American Treatment in the North as well as the South, and write your findings in the chart below. Compare your research with your other classmates’.

What does this tell you about society in 1960?

1960	
The North	The South

### Interview...

Interview a family member or friend that lived in 1960. Ask them what it was like to live in that time period.

Where were they living then?  
 What were they doing?  
 What was society and politics like?  
 What were racial relations like then?  
 What was their favorite thing about 1960?  
 What was their least favorite thing about 1960?

Be sure to make up your own questions to ask as well. (What about the time period interests you? What do you want to ask about?)

Write a journalistic article about your interview. What about your interview is important to know in today’s society? Have we changed?

# Racial Slurs

In today's society, we are very politically correct about our speech. The 1960's were a different story. That era, as represented by *Purlie*, was filled with casually used racial slurs. On page 32, Ol' Cap'n calls Gitlow Judson, "a cotton-pickinger darky." How many racial slurs can you find in *Purlie*?



What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of racial slurs? Is it a name, a group, an emotion, a person, or something else? What do you think most people first think of?

Michael Gomez, an accomplished student at the University of Illinois in Champaign–Urbana, was walking to his engineering internship when he heard someone yelling at him. Gomez wrote:

"I was walking to work when I heard some teenagers across the street shout "lazy nigger!" I was too shocked to be angry. I didn't even know that happened anymore."

-Michael Gomez, 20

Can you think of a time when you have personally been affected by a racial slur? Either a time when it has been directed at you, when it has come from you, or when you have been a witness to a slur. How did it make you feel?

Write a short essay or story about your experience.

Hold a class discussion about racial slurs. Use this space to fill in all of the slurs that your class comes up with. How many slurs can you find? How many slurs were mentioned that you did not know?

Be cautious – you may have classmates who are sensitive to many of these names.

Discuss the differences between slurs today and the slurs in 1960, as represented by *Purlie*.

# Study Guide Questions

1. What is the importance of music? Why would someone want to convert a straight play into a musical?
2. What is the definition of a satirical piece? Why is *Purlie* satirical?
3. Why is status an important element in the play? What does it tell you about the relationship between the characters? How does the plot line relate to Purlie's status?
4. How do the events and laws in 1960 contrast how Purlie and his family are treated?
5. What are some major differences between 1960 and 2005 in terms of society, media and economics?
6. What importance does food hold in *Purlie*? How does it comment on Purlie's family and lifestyle?
7. What was life like for a sharecropper? Why did someone choose to be a sharecropper?
8. What are some of the differences between treatment of African Americans in the North and the South during 1960?
9. How far have we moved passed racial segregation? What do racial slurs do for our social structure?
10. Do you feel you appreciate *Purlie* more now that you know the history and structure behind it? Why or why not?