

James Reese Europe, the 369th Regiment Band, and Jazz

by Ron Nash and John McNamara

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ resources, designed to align to the Common Core State Standards. The lessons can also be modified to conform to the C3 Framework. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original documents of historical significance. Students will learn and practice the skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on these source materials.

Students will explore the connections between World War I, black soldiers, and jazz, focusing on the 369th Regiment band (the 369th Infantry Regiment was also known as the “Harlem Hellfighters”). In addition, this unit will provide opportunities to study the Jim Crow climate in the United States, even as the country mobilized to “make the world safe for democracy.” Students will read essays about the period by leading historians and explore variety of visual and textual primary sources, including sheet music, photographs, memoirs, and song lyrics, to learn about this period of American history. They will complete activity sheets, engage in class discussions, and compose brief responses to essential questions as assessments.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Analyze a secondary source using close-reading strategies
- Interpret, analyze, and demonstrate understanding of visual materials
- Draw logical inferences and summarize the essential message of a primary source
- Compare and contrast the points of view and perspectives in different types of evidence

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did African Americans respond to US involvement in World War I?
- To what extent did World War I present opportunities for African Americans to secure civil rights at home?
- How did visual culture reflect recurring themes in the depiction of African Americans in World War I?
- To what extent were African American soldiers treated with equality, justice, and respect during World War I?

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- To what extent did popular music reflect and foreshadow the status and treatment of African Americans during and after World War I?
- To what extent does music reflect the culture and mores of a society?
- To what extent did the military heroism and musical performances of the Harlem Hellfighters/369th Regiment band during World War I foreshadow popular culture and music of the 1920s?
- In what ways should the experiences of the Harlem Hellfighters/369th Regiment band during World War I be viewed as heroic and/or tragic?

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 4

GRADE LEVEL: 9–12

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6: Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on [grade-level] topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRAW.11-12.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

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LESSON 1

OVERVIEW

Students will read a secondary source that provides historical context for African American participation in World War I. They will then carefully examine and interpret a selection of documents, using the questions provided as a guide. They will show their comprehension through completed activity sheets, class discussion, and a brief oral or written response to an essential question.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of written text
- Summarize the essential message of a secondary source
- Draw conclusions based on direct evidence found in the secondary source
- Analyze and assess the meanings and messages of a selection of primary source documents

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did African Americans respond to US involvement in World War I?
- To what extent did World War I present opportunities for African Americans to secure civil rights at home?
- How did visual culture reflect recurring themes in the depiction of African Americans in World War I?

MATERIALS

- WW I Draft registration cards
 - George Herman Ruth, June 5, 1917 (National Archives, ARC Id 641780)
 - John Bray (National Archives)
- Historical Background: Chad Williams, “African Americans and World War I” (excerpts), *Africana Age: African & African Diasporan Transformation in the 20th Century*, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/essay-world-war-i.html>. Adapted for this lesson plan with the author’s permission.
- Activity Sheets
 - Analyzing an Essay: “African Americans and World War I”
 - Analyzing an Image: Sheet Music Covers
- Sheet Music Covers

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- #1: Campbell, Luci Eddie, and Allen Griggs, Jr. “Are They Equal in the Eyes of the Law?” Memphis: Campbell-Griggs Pub. Co., 1919. (Library of Congress)
 - #2: White, James, and Roger Graham. “Goodbye My Chocolate Soldier Boy.” Chicago: Roger Graham, 1918. (Library of Congress)
 - #3: Hart, Al. “Ah Didn’t Raise Mah Boy to Be a Slacker.” Omaha: Hospe Music Co., 1917. (Library of Congress)
 - #4: Garland, Tucker, and Harry Baisden. “If You Just Must Go to War (Bring the Kaiser Back).” Des Moines: Homer Garber, 1918. (Library of Congress)
 - #5: Campbell, Luci Eddie, and Allen Griggs. “Please Let Your Light Shine on Me.” Memphis: Campbell-Griggs Pub. Co., 1919. (Library of Congress)
 - #6: Carroll, Harry. “They’ll Be Mighty Proud in Dixie of Their Old Black Joe.” New York: Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., 1918. (Library of Congress)
 - #7: Skidmore, Will E., and Marshall Walker. “When I Gets Out in No-Man’s Land (I Can’t Be Bother’d with No Mule).” Kansas City: Skidmore Music Co., 1918. (Library of Congress)
 - #8: Atkinson, John. “When Rastus Johnson Cake-Walks thru Berlin.” New York: Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., [1918]. (Library of Congress)
 - #9: Breuer, Ernest, and Alfred Bryan. “When the Boys from Dixie Eat the Melon on the Rhine.” New York: Richmond, 1918. (Library of Congress)
 - #10: Brennan, J. Keirn, and Paul Cunningham. “When the Robert E. Lee Arrives in Old Tennessee All the Way from Gay Paree.” M. Witmark & Sons, 1918. (World War I Sheet Music, Brown Digital Repository, Brown University Library, repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:91408/)
 - #11: Meyer, George W., and Grant Clarke. “You’ll find Old Dixieland in France.” New York: Leo Feist, 1918. (World War I Sheet Music, Brown Digital Repository, Brown University Library, repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:94760/)
- “Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops” to the French Military, *The Crisis* 18 (May 1919): 16–18.

PROCEDURE

1. Optional homework assignments:

- Draft registration cards: Hand out the draft registration cards for George Herman “Babe” Ruth and John Bray. Ask the class to compare and contrast the two documents. The intent is to have the students notice that one card is Babe Ruth’s but more importantly that although there were no specific segregation provisions outlined in WWI draft legislation, African Americans were told to tear off one corner of their registration cards so they could easily be identified and inducted separately.

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- Distribute the Historical Background essay and the Analyzing an Essay activity sheet. The students can read the essay at home and use the activity sheet to help them select the most important and powerful phrases and begin to think about why those phrases are particularly important and powerful in preparation for class discussion.
2. Distribute the Historical Background for this lesson if you did not assign it for homework. You may choose to “share read” the essay with the class. This is done by having the students follow along silently while you begin to read aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Then ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to read aloud, still serving as the model. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English language learners (ELL).
 3. Introduce the Essential Questions for this lesson:
 - How did African Americans respond to US involvement in World War I?
 - To what extent did World War I present opportunities for African Americans to secure their civil rights?
 - How did visual culture reflect recurring themes in the depiction of African Americans in World War I?
 4. If you did not assign it for homework, distribute the Analyzing an Essay activity sheet and give the class time to complete the selection and analysis of the important or powerful phrases,. You may choose to have the students work individually, in pairs, or in small groups of three or four. You may model the selection and analysis of the first phrase.
 5. Reconvene the whole class and discuss different responses and interpretations developed by individual students or groups.
 6. Distribute the first image from the sheet music array to the class along with the Analyzing an Image activity sheet.
 7. Model the activity with the class for the first sheet music image, eliciting answers to the questions through class discussion.
 8. After analyzing the first image with the class, distribute images #2–11 (or a selection based on available time) and the activity sheets (1 for every 2 images per student or group).
 9. After giving the class enough time to complete the activity, reconvene the class and discuss the different interpretations developed by the individual students or groups.
 10. Distribute the excerpts from the French directive that was printed in the NAACP’s *The Crisis* magazine. It was written by a French officer serving on the staff of the American general John Pershing. A longer version was widely disseminated at the direction of General Pershing to French Allied units to whom African American units were seconded. This may be used as a supplementary resource to analyze the challenges African American soldiers confronted from fellow Americans

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during World War I. You may share read the text with the class or have the students read it to themselves.

ASSESSMENT

The strategy for this lesson will involve an informal assessment of the students' comprehension through the completed activity sheets and class discussion. Students will also develop and express (either orally or in writing) a viewpoint on one of the lesson's essential questions. They will use visual and textual evidence to support their positions.

- How did African Americans respond to US involvement in World War I?
- To what extent did World War I present opportunities for African Americans to secure civil rights at home?
- How did visual culture reflect recurring themes in the depiction of African Americans in World War I?

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LESSON 2

OVERVIEW

Students will read a secondary source that provides historical context for the service of the 369th Infantry Regiment (the “Harlem Hellfighters”) and the famous 369th marching band led by Lieutenant James Reese Europe during World War I. They will then carefully examine and interpret a poem and a selection of images, using an activity sheet to guide their work. The students will show their comprehension through completed activity sheets, class discussion, and a response to the unit’s essential question.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of text- and image-based evidence
- Summarize the essential message of visual primary sources
- Draw conclusions based on direct evidence found in the visual primary sources

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

To what extent were African American soldiers treated with equality, justice, and respect during World War I?

MATERIALS

- Historical Background: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 1 by Reid Badger, Professor Emeritus of American Studies, University of Alabama, and Adjunct Professor of Humanities, New York University, author of *A Life in Ragtime: A Biography of James Reese Europe*.
- Activity Sheets
 - Analyzing an Essay: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 1
 - Analyzing a Poem: “The Return of Lieutenant James Reese Europe”
 - Analyzing a Photograph: The 369th Regiment Band Returns
- Poem: Rita Dove, “The Return of Lieutenant James Reese Europe,” from *Collected Poems 1974–2004*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, NY, copyright 2016 by Rita Dove. Used with the author’s permission.

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- Photographs
 - #1: Lt. James Reese Europe and the 369th Regiment Band before debarking in New York, February 12, 1919, photograph by Underwood & Underwood. (National Archives, ARC Id 533506)
 - #2: James Reese Europe and an admiring Noble Sissle, ca. February 1919, photograph by Underwood & Underwood. (National Archives, ARC Id 533527)
 - #3: Parade of returned fighters of the famous 369th [African American] Infantry at the Flatiron Building, February 17, 1919, photograph by Paul Thompson. (National Archives, ARC Id 533510)
 - #4: Parade of the famous 369th Infantry on Fifth Avenue, New York City, February 17, 1919. (National Archives, NARA 111-SC-38756-ac, from the George Lane Flickr Collection)
 - #5: Color Bearers of the Famous 369th colored regiment at the beginning of parade in honor of their return to New York City, February 17, 1919. (National Archives, ARC Id 26431372)
 - #6. Children gathered along line of march, February 17, 1919, photograph by Underwood & Underwood. (National Archives, ARC Id 26431314)
 - #7: A wounded veteran and his mother watch the victory parade of the 369th, February 17, 1919. (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47de-7bab-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>)
 - #8: 369th Parade up Lenox Avenue, New York City, February 17, 1919. (National Archives, NARA111-SC-38748-ac, from the George Lane Flickr Collection)
 - #9: Governor and Mrs. Alfred Smith and former Gov. Whitman at Lenox Ave. and 136th Street, watching the victory parade of the 369th, February 17, 1919. (National Archives, NARA111-SC-38746-ac, from the George Lane Flickr Collection)

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute Part 1 of the Historical Background essay on James Reese Europe and the 369th Regiment band written by Reid Badger and the Analyzing an Essay activity sheet with the critical thinking questions. You may assign the reading and activity sheet as homework or work on it in class.
2. If you wish, you may share read the essay as described in Lesson 1 and model the response to the first critical thinking question. The students may work on the Analyzing an Essay activity sheets individually or in pairs or small groups. Give the students time to complete the activity.
3. Reconvene the whole class and discuss different responses and interpretations developed by individual students or groups.
4. Introduce the following Essential Question for the lesson: To what extent were African American soldiers treated with equality, justice, and respect during World War I?

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5. Distribute the poem “The Return of Lieutenant James Reese Europe” by Rita Dove and share read it with the class.
6. Distribute the Reading the Poem activity sheet to help the students drill down on specific elements of the poem. Again, the students can work individually or in pairs or small groups.
7. You can further engage the class on the story told in the poem using a selection of photographs of the victory parade of the 369th on February 17, 1919. Distribute photographs #1 and #2 and the Analyzing a Photograph activity sheet. Model the activity with the class for the first two photographs, eliciting answers to the questions posed in the activity sheet.
8. Distribute photographs #3–#9, or a selection of the photographs based on the available time, and the activity sheets (1 per photograph per student or group).
9. After giving the class enough time to complete the activity sheets, reconvene the whole class and discuss different responses and interpretations developed by the individual students or groups.

ASSESSMENT

The strategy for this lesson will involve an informal assessment of the students’ comprehension through the activity sheets and the class discussion. The students will also write a brief essay developing a point of view on the essential question for this lesson:

To what extent were African American soldiers treated with equality, justice, and respect during World War I?

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LESSON 3

OVERVIEW

Students will read a secondary source that provides historical context for how the 369th Regiment and Band contributed to the Allied effort in World War I. They will also analyze several songs linking World War I and music. Students will use activity sheets to guide their work. They will demonstrate their comprehension through the completed activity sheets, class discussion, and a written response to one of the lesson’s essential questions.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Identify an author’s major claims and points of view using textual evidence
- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of written and visual texts
- Draw conclusions based on direct evidence found in primary sources
- Synthesize multiple sources of information in order to arrive at a logical conclusion that is supported by textual evidence

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

To what extent did popular music reflect and foreshadow the status and treatment of African Americans during and after World War I?

To what extent does music reflect the culture and mores of a society?

MATERIALS

- Historical Background: Reid Badger, “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 2
- Activity Sheets
 - Analyzing an Essay: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 2
 - Analyzing a Song
- “The Marseillaise” from Noble Lee Sissle’s “Memoirs of Lieutenant ‘Jim’ Europe,” unpublished typescript, ca. 1942, pp. 106–107. (Library of Congress)
- Links to two audio recordings of “La Marseillaise”
 - Traditional version: “La Marseillaise” (Instrumental), www.youtube.com/watch?v=33nyRB4PY14
 - In the style of the 369th Band: “La Marseillaise,” Spirit of Chicago Orchestra, www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTNSFBemTfs

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- Song Lyrics
 - Europe, James Reese, Noble Sissle, and Eubie Blake, “On Patrol in No Man’s Land,” M. Witmark & Sons, New York, 1919. (Library of Congress)
Audio link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeIET9ZIkGk>
 - Europe, James Reese, Noble Sissle, and Eubie Blake, “All of No Man’s Land Is Ours,” M. Witmark & Sons, New York, 1918. (Library of Congress)
Audio link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qp-8vndMtVQ>
 - Donaldson, Walter, Joe Young, and Sam M. Lewis, “How ’Ya Gonna Keep ’Em down on the Farm.” Waterson, Bernstein & Snyder Co., New York, 1919. (Library of Congress)
Audio link: <http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/recordings/detail/id/7001>
- “A Negro Explains Jazz” [An interview with Lieutenant James Reese Europe], *Literary Digest* 34, April 26, 1919, pp. 28–29.

PROCEDURE

1. The Historical Background reading, Part 2 of Reid Badger’s essay on the 369th Infantry Regiment during World War I, and the Analyzing an Essay activity sheet may be assigned for homework or during class.
2. Once the students have completed the activity (either at home or in class), lead a discussion of their selection of important or powerful phrases and their answers to the critical thinking questions.
3. Introduce one of the following questions for discussion:
 - To what extent did popular music reflect the status and treatment of African Americans during and after World War I?
 - To what extent does music reflect the culture and mores of a society?
4. Provide the students with the excerpt from Noble Sissle’s “Memoirs of Lieutenant ‘Jim’ Europe,” which recounts confusion over the 369th Band’s performance of “La Marseillaise.” Then have the students listen to two recordings of the song, a traditional rendition and a version in the style of the 369th. Start a class discussion on initial student responses and the differences between the two performances.
5. Distribute the lyrics from three songs from the 369th Band’s playlist (“On Patrol in No Man’s Land,” “All of No Man’s Land Is Ours,” and “How ’Ya Gonna Keep ’Em Down on the Farm”) and the Analyzing a Song activity sheets (one per song for each student or group). Have the students first skim the words. Then play the audio.
6. Students should then carefully read each song, using the activity sheet to help them organize their assessment of the songs.
7. Reconvene the whole class and discuss different interpretations developed by the individual students or groups. NOTE: You may want to use the lyrics to explore the reality of warfare and how their experiences in Europe changed the lives and expectations of African American soldiers.

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8. You may choose to look further into the evolution of jazz. An interview with Jim Europe, “A Negro Explains ‘Jazz,’” was published in the *Literary Digest* in April 1919, just a couple of weeks before his death. The students can incorporate information from this reading in their written response to one of the essential questions.

ASSESSMENT

The strategy for this lesson involves an informal assessment of the students’ comprehension through the completed activity sheets and class discussion. Students will also develop and express (either orally or in writing) a viewpoint on one of the lesson’s essential questions. They will use evidence from the documents to support their positions.

To what extent did popular music reflect the status and treatment of African Americans during and after World War I?

OR

To what extent does music reflect the culture and mores of a society?

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LESSON 4

OVERVIEW

Students will read a secondary source that provides historical context for how the 369th contributed to the war as soldiers and musicians. They will read a primary source about the 369th band’s performance in France and look at photographs of the 369th in the field. The students will show their comprehension through completed activity sheets, class discussion, and a response to one of the lesson’s essential questions.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Identify an author’s major claims and points of view using textual evidence.
- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of written and visual texts
- Draw conclusions based on direct evidence found in primary sources
- Synthesize multiple sources of information in order to arrive at a logical conclusion that is supported by evidence

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

To what extent did the military heroism and musical performances of the Harlem Hellfighters/369th Band during World War I foreshadow popular culture and music of the 1920s?

In what ways should the experiences of the Harlem Hellfighters/369th Band during World War I be viewed as heroic and/or tragic?

MATERIALS

- Historical Background: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 3, by Reid Badger
- Activity Sheets
 - Analyzing an Essay: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 3
 - Details, Description, and Decision
 - Summary Organizers #1–3: “Playing Jazz in France”
- Overhead projector or other device to display Summary Organizer #1 to the whole class
- “Playing Jazz in France,” from Noble Lee Sissle’s “Memoirs of ‘Jim’ Europe,” unpublished typescript, ca. 1942, pp. 118–121 (Library of Congress), [https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaodyssey:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(musmisc+ody0717\)\)](https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaodyssey:@field(NUMBER+@band(musmisc+ody0717)))

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- Photographs and a poster of the 369th Regiment in France
 - #1: “St. Nazaire Stevedores; Berlin or Bust,” ca. 1918. (Courtesy of the National World War I Museum and Memorial)
 - #2: 369th soldiers serving as stevedores in a French port, ca. 1918. (Courtesy of the National World War I Museum and Memorial)
 - #3: The 369th Infantry Regiment in the trenches near Maffrecourt, France, May 4, 1918. (National Archives, 111-SC-11914)
 - #4: Col. William Hayward (right), CDR, 369th Reg., sending message by pigeon service, May 4, 1918. (National Archives 111-SC-11910)
 - #5: 369th Regiment on review, Maffrecourt, France, May 5, 1918. (National Archives, 111-SC-11916)
 - #6: Legendary band of the 369th Regiment, May 5, 1918. (National Archives, 111-SC-11907)
 - #7: Red Cross Hospital Concert, Paris, France, ca. 1918. (US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health)
 - #8: James Reese Europe the Warrior, ca. 1918. (Library of Congress)
 - #9: “The body of Lieutenant Jimmy Europe who died suddenly this week is here seen being carried from St. Mark’s Church,” photograph by Underwood & Underwood, May 1919. (Schomburg General Research and Reference Division, New York Public Library Digital Collections, 1206683)
 - #10: Publicity photo of Jason Moran at the grave of James Reese Europe in Arlington National Cemetery (14–18 NOW)
- “The Death of Lt. Jim Europe,” from Noble Lee Sissle’s “Memoirs of ‘Jim’ Europe,” unpublished typescript, ca. 1942, pp. 1–2 (Library of Congress), [https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaodysey:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(musmisc+ody0717\)\)](https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/aaodysey:@field(NUMBER+@band(musmisc+ody0717)))

PROCEDURE

1. The Historical Background with the third part of Reid Badger’s essay on the 369th Regiment in World War I and the Analyzing an Essay activity sheet may be assigned for homework or for class. Discuss the reading and the students’ response to the critical thinking questions.
2. Distribute the “Playing Jazz in France” from Nobel Lee Sissle’s memoirs of Jim Europe. Share read the passages with the class as described in Lesson 1.
3. Distribute the three Summary Organizers, each with a section of Sissle’s memoir.
4. Display Summary Organizer #1 in a format large enough for all of the class to see (an overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device). Explain that the class will work together to complete the first summary organizer.

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5. Explain that the objective is to select key words from the text and then use those words to create a summary sentence that demonstrates an understanding of what Noble Sissle said in the first selection from the text.
6. Guidelines for Selecting the Key Words: Key Words are very important to understanding the text. Without them the selection would not make sense. These words are usually nouns or verbs. Tell the students not to pick “connector” words (*are, is, the, and, so, etc.*). The number of key words depends on the length of the original selection. This selection is 310 words, so you can pick eight to ten Key Words. The students must know the meaning of the words they select. This will give them practice reasoning out word meanings in context and advancing their dictionary skills.
7. Students will now select eight to ten words from the text that they believe are key words and write them in the Key Words section of their organizers.
8. Survey the class to find out what they chose as key words. You can ask for a show of hands to determine the most popular choices. Using this vote and some discussion the class should, with your guidance, decide on eight to ten Key Words. Now, no matter which words the students had previously selected, have them write the words agreed upon by the class or chosen by you into the Key Words section.
9. Explain that the class will use these key words to write a sentence that summarizes what Sissle said in this passage. This should be a whole-class discussion-and-negotiation process. You might find that the class decides they don’t need some of the Key Words to make the summary even more streamlined. This is part of the negotiation process. Copy the final negotiated sentence(s) into the organizer.
10. Tell the students to restate their summary sentence in their own words; they do not have to use Sissle’s words. Again, this is a class discussion-and-negotiation process. All the students should write the agreed-upon restatement into their organizers.
11. Hand out Summary Organizer #2 with the second selection from the Sissle memoir. Depending on time and your students’ abilities, you may choose to continue modeling the activity or allow them to work individually or in small groups. If you choose to assign #2 and/or #3 for homework, you may ask the students to circle the Key Words and continue with the rest of the activity in class, or ask them to complete the summary organizer at home and discuss their final restatements during the next class period.
12. Distribute the ten images documenting the 369th Regiment and the band in action. The student can use these images to develop responses to this lesson’s essential questions. Depending on the available time and your students’ needs, you may distribute the Details, Description, and Decision activity sheet to guide their analysis of the images.
13. Teachers can also choose to use the excerpt from Noble Sissle’s memoirs that documents the tragic death of James Reese Europe. This resource is particularly relevant to the essential question that addresses the tragic element in the history of the 369th Band.

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ASSESSMENT

The strategy for this lesson will involve an informal assessment of the students' comprehension through the completed activity sheets and class discussion. Students will also develop and express (either orally or in writing) a viewpoint on one of the lesson's essential questions. They will use evidence from all the resources provided throughout this unit to support their positions.

To what extent did the military heroism and musical performances of the Harlem Hellfighters/369th Regiment band during World War I foreshadow popular culture and music of the 1920s?

OR

In what ways should the experiences of the Harlem Hellfighters/369th Regiment band during World War I be viewed as heroic and/or tragic?

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Draft Registration Card, 1917

Form 1 **30267** REGISTRATION CARD No. **28**

1 Name in full *George Herman Ruth* Age, in yrs. **23**
(Given name) (Family name)

2 Home address **680 Commonwealth Ave Boston Mass.**
(No.) (Street) (City) (State)

3 Date of birth **Feb 7 1894**
(Month) (Day) (Year)

4 Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? **natural born**

5 Where were you born? **Baltimore Maryland U.S.**
(Town) (State) (Nation)

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? _____

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? **Base Ball -**

8 By whom employed? **Bruno American** **28**
 Where employed? **Fenway Park -**

9 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? **wife**

10 Married or single (which)? **Married** Race (specify which)? **Caucasian**

11 What military service have you had? Rank **None**; branch _____; years _____; Nation or State _____

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? **- No -**

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

Geo. Ruth
(Signature or mark)

If person is of African descent, tear off this corner

(National Archives)

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Draft Registration Card, 1917

Form 1 **2972 REGISTRATION CARD** No. 51

1 Name in full John Bray Age, in yrs. 29
(Given name) (Family name)

2 Home address Ramus Louisiana
(No.) (Street) (City) (State)

3 Date of birth December 25 1988
(Month) (Day) (Year)

4 Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? Natural Born

5 Where were you born? Royalville Louisiana USA
(Town) (State) (Nation)

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? Pool man (18)

8 By whom employed? Ramus Lumber Co
Where employed? Ramus Louisiana

9 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? mother

10 Married or single (which)? single Race (specify which)?

11 What military service have you had? Rank _____; branch _____; years _____; Nation or State _____

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? Heart trouble

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

John Bray
(Signature or mark)

(National Archives)

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Historical Background: “African Americans and World War I” by Chad Williams

On April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson stood before Congress and issued a declaration of war against Germany. “The world must be made safe for democracy,” he stated and framed the war effort as a crusade to secure the rights of democracy and self-determination on a global scale.

Almost immediately the African American press used Wilson’s words to frame the war as a struggle for African American civil rights. “Let us have a real democracy for the United States and then we can advise a house cleaning over on the other side of the water,” the Baltimore *Afro-American* newspaper asserted. “Colored folks should be patriotic,” the Richmond *Planet* newspaper insisted, “Do not let us be chargeable with being disloyal to the flag.”

Thus for African Americans, the war became an important test of America’s commitment to the ideal of democracy and the rights of citizenship for all people, regardless of race. The American government mobilized the entire nation for war and African Americans were expected to do their part. Large segments of the black population, however, remained hesitant to support a cause they deemed hypocritical.

Racial violence tested blacks’ patriotic resolve. On July 2, 1917, in East St. Louis, tensions between black and white workers sparked a bloody four-day riot that left upwards of 125 black residents dead and the nation stunned. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People responded by holding a Silent Protest Parade in New York City on July 28, 1917.

The following month, violence erupted again in Texas. Black soldiers of the 3rd Battalion of the 24th Infantry, stationed at Camp Logan near Houston, had grown increasingly tired of racial discrimination and abuse from local white residents and from the police in particular. On the night of August 23, 1917, the soldiers retaliated by marching on the city and killing sixteen white civilians and law enforcement personnel. Four black soldiers died as well. The Houston rebellion shocked the nation and encouraged white southern politicians to oppose the future training of black soldiers in the South. Three military court-martial proceedings convicted 110 soldiers. Sixty-three received life sentences and thirteen were hung without due process. The army buried their bodies in unmarked graves.

Despite the bloodshed at Houston, the black press and civil rights organizations like the NAACP insisted that African Americans should receive the opportunity to serve as soldiers and fight in the war. Joel Spingarn, a former chairman of the NAACP, worked to establish an officers’ training camp for black candidates. “All of you cannot be leaders,” he stated, “but those of you who have the capacity for leadership must be given an opportunity to test and display it.” The camp opened on June 18, 1917, in Des Moines, Iowa, with 1,250 aspiring black officer

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candidates. At the close of the camp on October 17, 1917, 639 men received commissions.

Ultimately, the US military created two combat divisions for African Americans. One, the 92nd Division, was composed of draftees and officers. The second, the 93rd Division, was made up of mostly National Guard units from New York, Chicago, Washington DC, Cleveland, and Massachusetts. The army, however, assigned the vast majority of soldiers to service units, reflecting a belief that black men were more suited for manual labor than combat duty. Black soldiers were stationed and trained throughout the country, although most facilities were located in the South. They had to endure racial segregation and often received substandard clothing, shelter, and social services. At the same time, the army presented many black servicemen, particularly those from the rural South, with opportunities unavailable to them as civilians, such as remedial education and basic health care. Military service was also a broadening experience that introduced black men to different people and different parts of the country.

Source: *Africana Age: African & African Diasporan Transformation in the 20th Century*, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/essay-world-war-i.html>. Adapted with the author's permission.

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Analyzing an Essay: “African Americans and World War I”

Important Phrases: Which are the most important or powerful phrases or sentences in this essay? Choose three phrases.

Phrase 1:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 2:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 3:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

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Analyzing an Image: Sheet Music Covers

Image # _____

Give the image a title:

What is the significance of the central figure(s) or object(s)?

What action is taking place?

What mood or tone is created by the image and what is creating that mood or tone?

What message is the artist communicating to the viewer?

Image # _____

Give the image a title:

What is the significance of the central figure(s) or object(s)?

What action is taking place?

What mood or tone is created by the image and what is creating that mood or tone?

What message is the artist communicating to the viewer?

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#1

© CIE 455164
JUL 19 1919

ARE THEY EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THE LAW?

Words by
Sergt. Allen R. Griggs, Jr.
Music by
Miss L. E. Campbell
COMPOSERS OF
"Please Let Your Light Shine on Me"

Price 25¢

h/1646
i.c

Published by
Campbell-Griggs Pub. Co.
711 SAXON AVE., MEMPHIS, TENN.

(Library of Congress)

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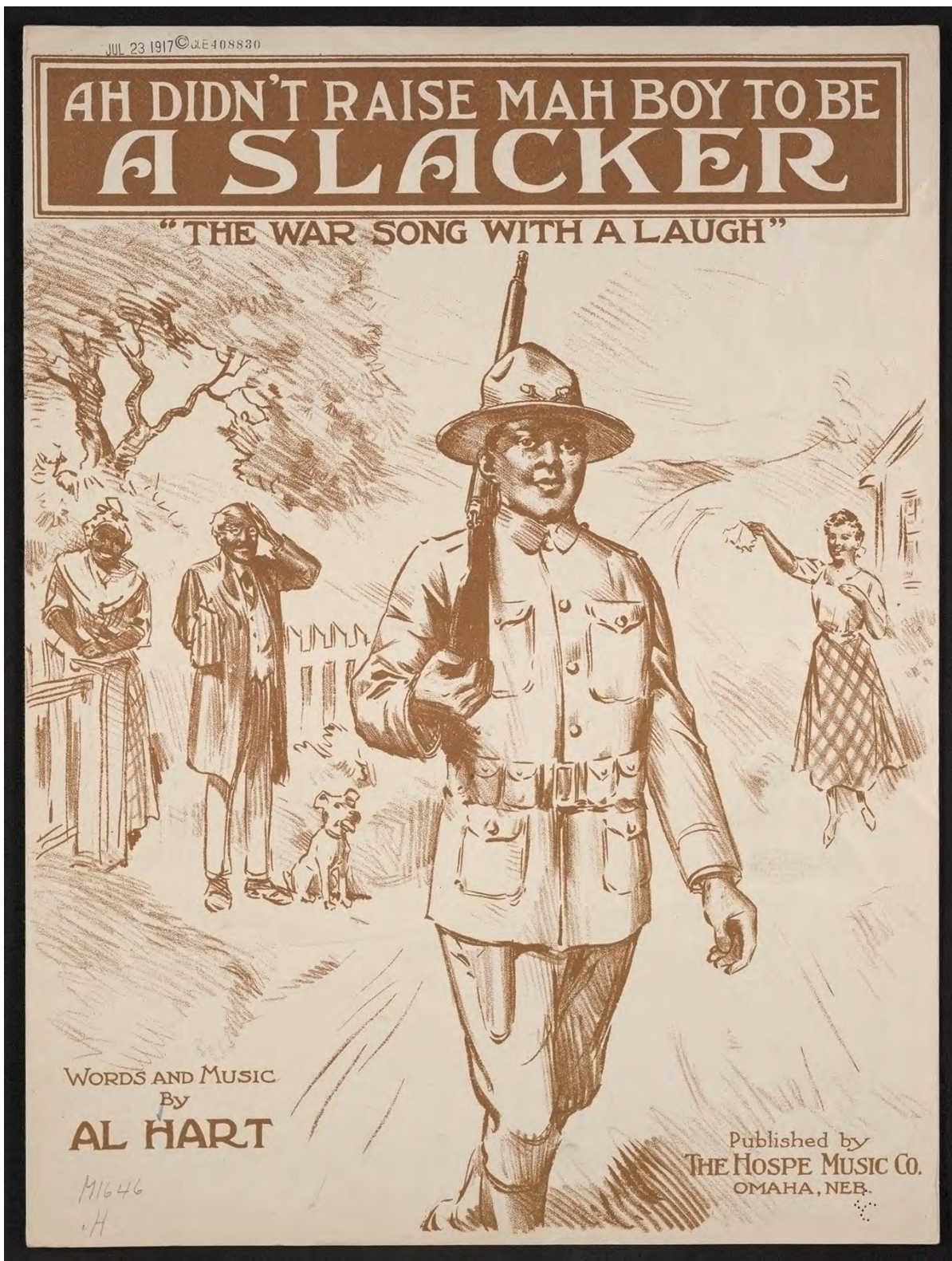
#2



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#5

The image is a vintage song sheet cover for the song "Please Let Your Light Shine on Me". At the top left, it is dated "JUL 19 1919". The title "PLEASE LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE ON ME" is written in large, bold, black letters. Below the title, the word "SONG" is written in blue. The lyrics are attributed to "WORDS BY Sergt. Allen Griggs, Jr." and "MUSIC BY Miss L.E. Campbell". Below this, it says "COMPOSERS OF 'Are They Equal in the Eyes of the Law?'". The central illustration shows the Statue of Liberty on a pedestal, with a beam of light from her torch shining down on three men in suits and hats. One man on the left is gesturing towards the statue, while the other two are talking. The background is a light blue sky with a white ground area. At the bottom, it says "Published by Campbell-Griggs Pub. Co. 711 SAXON AVE., MEMPHIS, TENN." and includes a small copyright notice "© Cl E455163".

JUL 19 1919

PLEASE LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE ON ME

SONG

WORDS BY
Sergt. Allen Griggs, Jr.

MUSIC BY
Miss L.E. Campbell

COMPOSERS OF
"Are They Equal in the Eyes of the Law?"

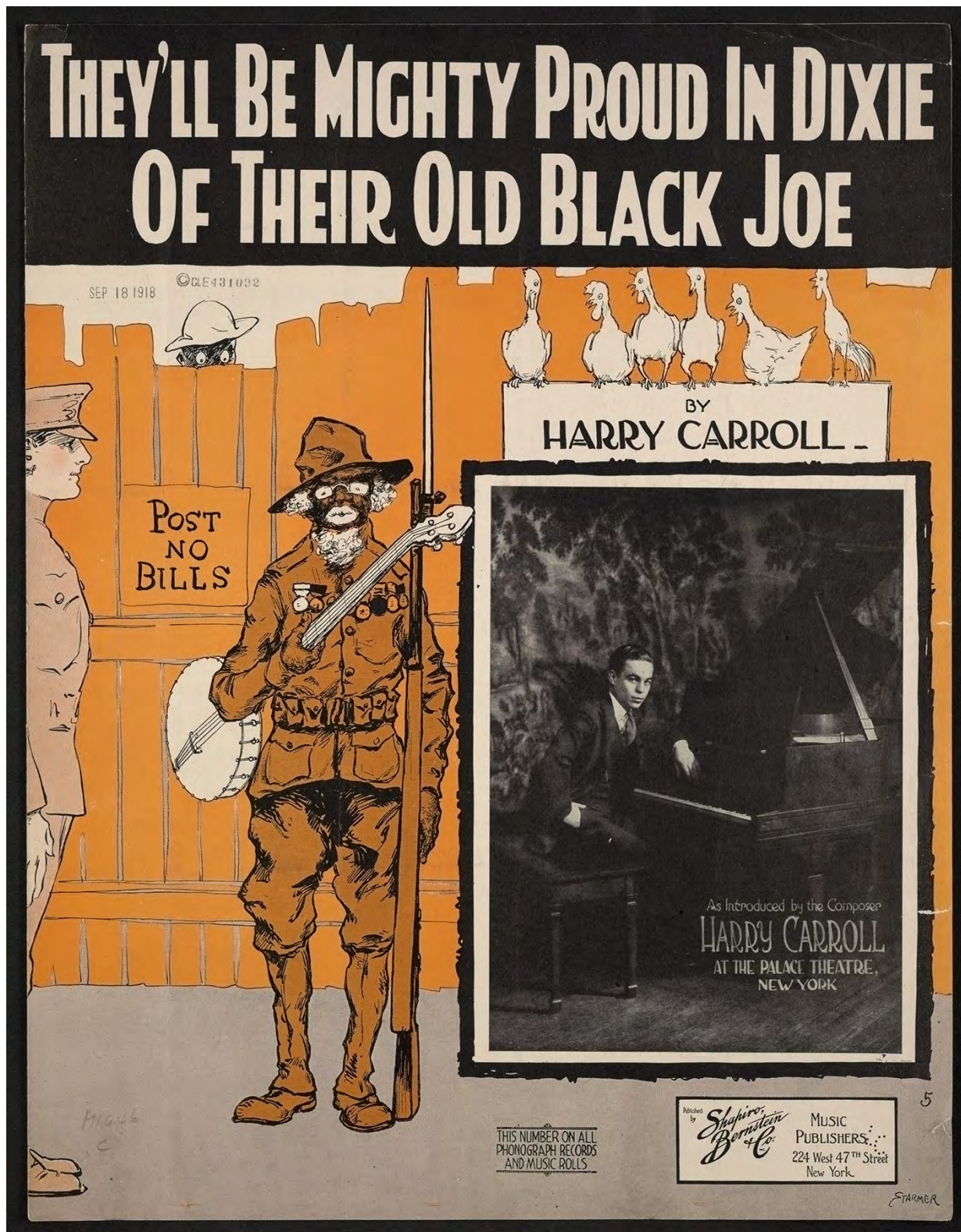
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#7

©CLE#30371
AUG 29 1918

DEACON SERIES #4

When I Gets Out In No-Man's Land

(I CAN'T BE BOTHER'D WITH NO MULE)

Words & Music By
WILL E. SKIDMORE
& MARSHALL WALKER

Writers of
No. 1: "Pray For The Lights"
No. 2: "Long, Tall, Brown-skin Gal"
No. 3: "Somebody's Done Me Wrong"



Featured By



GENE GREENE

WATWICK

SKIDMORE
KANSAS CITY, MO.
MUSIC CO.

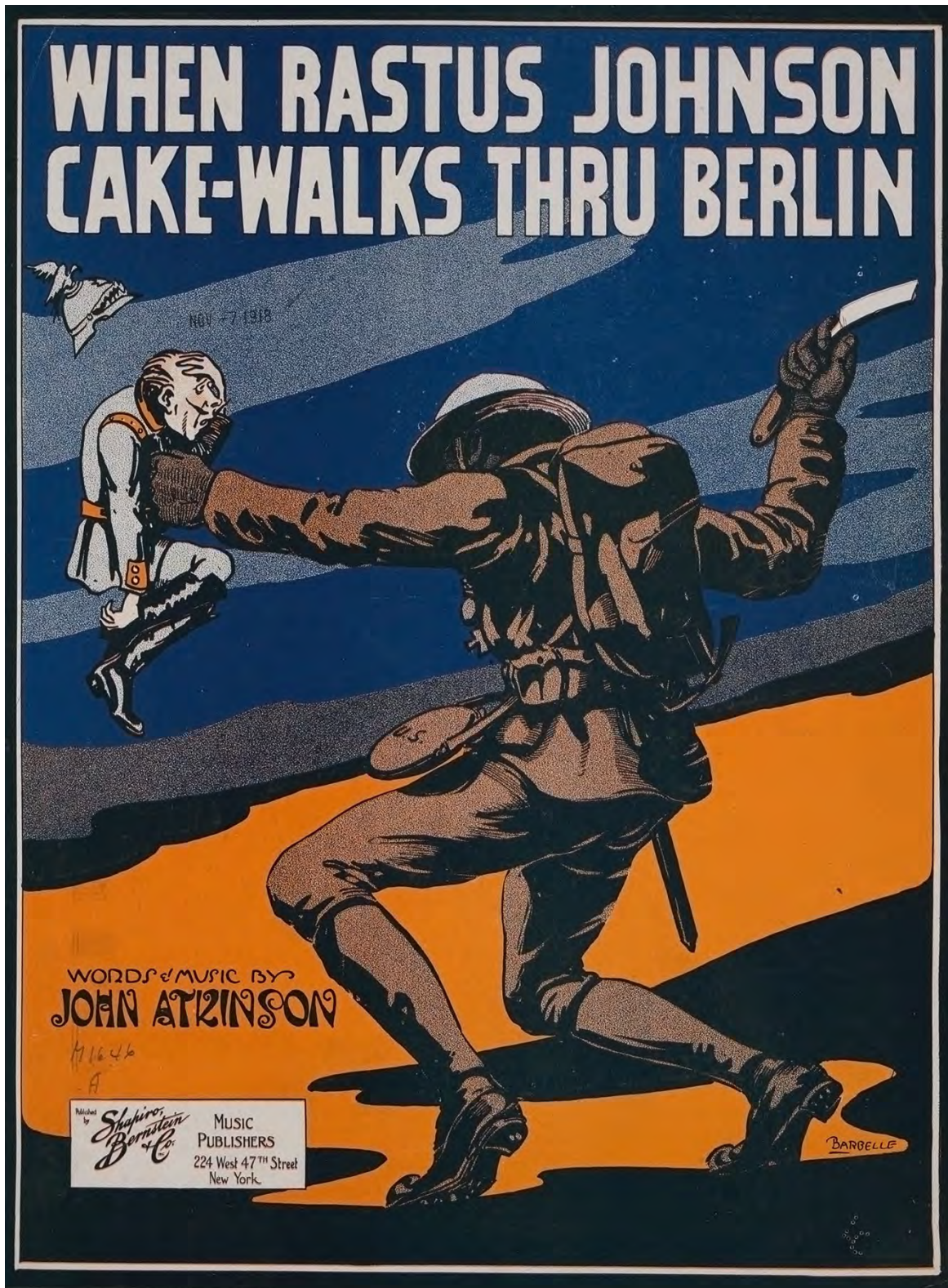
Exclusive Selling Agents
Published by JOS. W. STERN'S CO. NEW YORK

M1646
.X

(Library of Congress)

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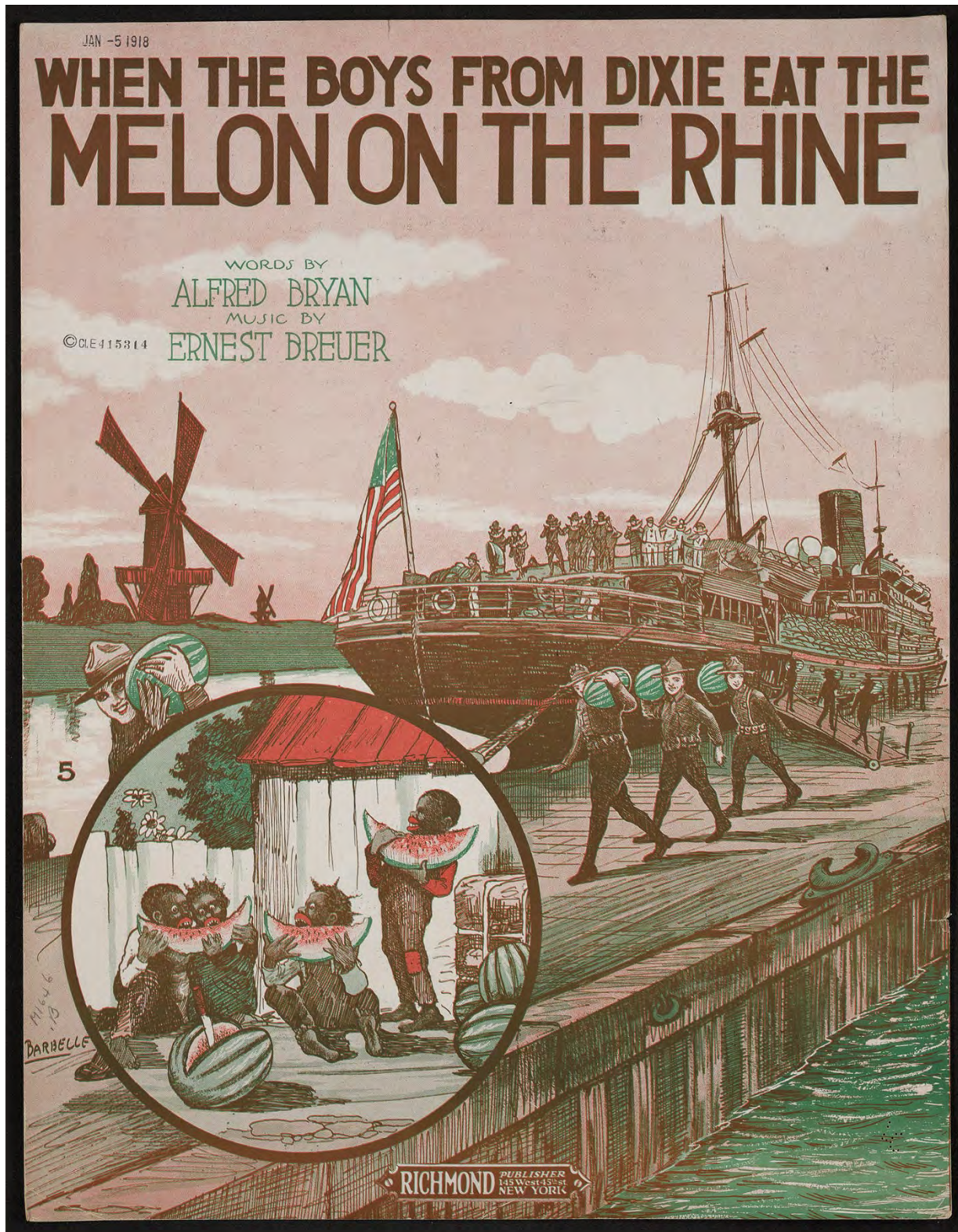
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#11

INTRODUCED BY BERT WILLIAMS IN ZIEGFELD MIDNIGHT FROLIC

C. K.
Words by
GRANT CLARKE

Music by
GEO. W. MEYER

You can't go
wrong with
any 'Feist'
Song

YOU'LL FIND OLD DIXIELAND IN FRANCE

POPULAR EDITION
LEO. FEIST INC. NEW YORK
HERMAN DAREWSKI MUSIC PUBLISHING CO. LONDON, ENG.

(Library of Congress)

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“Secret Information Concerning Black American Troops” to the French Military

August 7, 1918

It is important for French officers who have been called upon to exercise command over black American troops, or to live in close contact with them, to have an exact idea of the position occupied by Negroes in the United States. The information set forth in the following communication ought to be given to these officers and it is to their interest to have these matters known and widely disseminated. . . .

American opinion is unanimous on the “color question” and does not admit of any discussion.

The increasing number of Negroes in the United States (about 15,000,000) would create for the white race in the Republic a menace of degeneracy were it not that an impassable gulf has been made between them. . . .

The French public has become accustomed to treating the Negro with familiarity and indulgence. This indulgence and this familiarity are matters of grievous concern to the Americans. They consider them an affront to their national policy. They are afraid that contact with the French will inspire in black Americans aspirations which to them [the whites] appear intolerable. It is of the utmost importance that every effort be made to avoid profoundly estranging American opinion.

Although a citizen of the United States, the black man is regarded by the white American as an inferior being with whom relations of business or service only are possible. . . .

The vices of the Negro are a constant menace to the American who has to repress them sternly. For instance, the black American troops in France have, by themselves, given rise to as many complaints for attempted rape as all the rest of the army. . . .

Conclusion

1. We must prevent the rise of any pronounced degree of intimacy between French officers and black officers. . . . We must not eat with them, must not shake hands or seek to talk or meet with them outside of the requirements of military service.
2. We must not commend too highly the black American troops, particularly in the presence of [white] Americans. It is all right to recognize their good qualities and their services, but only in moderate terms strictly in keeping with the truth.
3. Make a point of keeping the native cantonment population from “spoiling” the Negroes. [White] Americans become greatly incensed at any public expression of intimacy between white women with black men. . . .

Military authority cannot intervene directly in this question, but it can through the civil authorities exercise some influence on the population.

(Signed) LINARD

Source: *The Crisis* 18 (May 1919): 16–18.

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Historical Background: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 1
by Reid Badger

On a bright morning in mid-February of 1919, a million New Yorkers welcomed home the 15th Infantry Regiment of the New York National Guard who had fought so well in the Great War. Having survived 191 days under enemy fire and been awarded the Croix de Guerre for valor by the French government, the “Harlem Hellfighters,” as they came to be known, had been given the honor of leading the victorious Allies to the Rhine. One hundred and seventy-one of the regiment’s officers and men had been decorated for bravery under fire, a record among the American forces. Casualties, however, had been heavy; eight hundred of the original two thousand young men who had embarked from Hoboken on December 12, 1917, did not return.

Most of the parades in New York during the war period marched down Fifth Avenue, but this one was moving uptown—and for good reason. With the exception of its officers, the 15th was composed entirely of black Americans recruited from Brooklyn, mid-Manhattan, and especially Harlem. Marching in the dense French Phalanx formation unfamiliar to most Americans, these soldiers conveyed an impression of confidence and power and pride. It was the “most wonderful day of my life,” recalled Melville Miller, a nineteen-year-old private who marched that day, “the day we marched up Fifth Avenue. That’s one day that there wasn’t the slightest bit of prejudice in New York City.”

New Yorkers were also drawn to the parade that day because they wanted to hear the music of the Hellfighters marching band. There were several outstanding military bands in the American Expeditionary Force, but it may well have been true, as the men of the 15th believed—and the newspapers agreed—that theirs was the best. Under the direction of Lt. James Reese Europe, the Hellfighters band had become celebrated for introducing European audiences to the live sound of orchestrated American ragtime, blues, and a new genre of music being called “Jazz.” And Jim Europe was being described as America’s first “Jazz King.”

Before the war, Europe had established himself as a composer of songs and instrumental pieces and as the musical director for a number of successful musical comedies. In 1910 he became principal organizer and first president of the Clef Club, the first effective black musicians’ union in New York, and on May 2, 1912, he led 125 singers and instrumentalists in a “Symphony of Negro Music” at Carnegie Hall in a concert of ragtime, liturgical compositions, waltzes, and marches. It would be hard to overestimate the significance of the event. In 1913, he joined dancers Vernon and Irene Castle in a partnership that revolutionized American attitudes toward social dancing, and their phenomenal success led Victor Records to award Europe and his Society Orchestra the first recording contract ever given by a major label to a black aggregation. In the process Europe gained virtual control of the cabaret and dance business in the city for black musicians.

Reid Badger, Professor Emeritus of American Studies, University of Alabama, and Adjunct Professor of Humanities, New York University, is the author of *A Life in Ragtime: A Biography of James Reese Europe*.

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Analyzing an Essay: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 1

Important Phrases: Which are the most important or powerful phrases or sentences in this scholarly essay? Choose three.

Phrase 1:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 2:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 3:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Critical Thinking Questions

Cite examples from the text in your answers.

- Briefly describe the achievements and costs of battle experienced by the Harlem Hellfighters (the 369th Regiment) during World War I.

- Why did the 369th Regiment march uptown rather than downtown along Fifth Avenue?
 - Why did one of the soldiers in the regiment call the parade the “most wonderful day of my life”?

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3. (a) Why was the Harlem Hellfighters' band considered to be the best in the American military?
(b) How did the musical leadership of Lt. James Reese Europe contribute to the band's success?

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Analyzing a Poem: “The Return of Lieutenant James Reese Europe”

1. What is the tone of the poem (the narrator’s attitude toward the subject)? What is the mood of the poem (the general feeling or atmosphere created by the poem)?

2. What evidence does the poem provide regarding the readiness and preparation of the 369th Regiment?

3. What facts does the poet emphasize in stanza 2 regarding the 369th band’s impact on various audiences?

4. Rewrite Stanza 3 in your own words. Which line is the most powerful? Why? Be specific and use the text to support your position.

5. Based on the final stanza, how does the poet assess/summarize the WWI experiences of African American soldiers upon their return to New York City?

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Analyzing a Photograph: The 369th Infantry Regiment Returns

Photograph # _____

Give the image a title: _____

What is the significance of the central figure(s) or object(s)?

What action is taking place in the photograph?

What mood or tone is created by the photograph and what in the image is creating that mood or tone?

What message is the photographer communicating to the viewer?

Final thoughts on the image as it relates to the 369th Regiment returning home.

Photograph # _____

Give the image a title: _____

What is the significance of the central figure(s) or object(s)?

What action is taking place in the photograph?

What mood or tone is created by the photograph and what in the image is creating that mood or tone?

What message is the photographer communicating to the viewer?

Final thoughts on the image as it relates to the 369th Regiment returning home.

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“The Return of Lieutenant James Reese Europe” by Rita Dove

- 1) We trained in the streets: the streets where we came from.
We drilled with sticks, boys darting between bushes, shouting--
that’s all you thought we were good for. We trained anyway.
In camp we had no plates or forks. First to sail, first to join the French,
first to see combat with the shortest training time.

My, the sun is looking fine today.
- 2) We toured devastation, American good will
in a forty-four piece band. Dignitaries smiled; the wounded
settled back to dream. That old woman in St. Nazaire
who tucked up her skirts so she could “walk the dog.”
German prisoners tapping their feet as we went by.

Miss Flatiron with your tall cool self: How do.
- 3) You didn’t want us when we left but we went.
You didn’t want us coming back but here we are,
stepping right up white-faced Fifth Avenue in a phalanx
(no prancing, no showing of teeth, no swank)
past the Library lions, eyes forward, tin hats aligned--

a massive, upheld human shield.
- 4) No jazz for you: We’ll play a brisk French march
and show our ribbons, flash our croix de guerre
(yes, we learned French, too) all the way
until we reach 110th Street and yes! take our turn
onto Lenox Avenue and all those brown faces and then--

Baby, Here Comes Your Daddy Now!

Source: “The Return of Lieutenant James Reese Europe,” from *Collected Poems 1974–2004*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, NY, copyright 2016 by Rita Dove. Used with the author’s permission.

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WORKSHOP USE ONLY—NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION**Historical Background: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 2**
by Reid Badger

In late 1915, as the official position of the United States toward the war in Europe began to shift toward preparedness, there were some 10,000 black soldiers on active duty in four regular Army units. In New York, Governor Whitman asked William Hayward, a former public service commissioner, to organize the state’s first black National Guard regiment. Many Americans at the time believed that black soldiers were incapable of front-line duty, but Hayward was not one of them. The following year, the 15th Infantry received a significant recruit. On September 18, James Reese Europe enlisted as a private and was assigned to a machine gun company. Europe’s reasons for joining, at least initially, had less to do with patriotism than with his belief that a National Guard unit in Harlem would be a major asset to the black community. When Colonel Hayward found that recruitment was not progressing satisfactorily—and knowing he had one of the most celebrated band leaders in the city in his ranks—he approached Europe about organizing a regimental brass band. Europe, now a lieutenant in charge of a company, at first resisted. But if Army regulations could be bent (officers did not direct bands, the regulation twenty-eight musicians were inadequate, bonuses would be needed to induce first-class musicians to join) and, in addition, if he could recruit a few saxophone players from Puerto Rico, then, perhaps, he told Hayward, he could put together a good, even a great band.

By the spring of 1917 Europe had what he needed, and as the new regimental band began to offer regular concerts, enlistment increased. Despite the US entry into the war in April, the prospect that the 15th Regiment might be nationalized into the US Army, given the general hostility toward black soldiers, seemed remote. Nevertheless, on Sunday, July 15, 1917, the 15th Infantry Regiment of the New York National Guard was mustered into active service and ordered to join the 27th Division then in training at Camp Wadsworth in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Spartanburg officials protested the assignment of black soldiers, fearing a repeat of the recent and deadly Houston race riot, but Colonel Hayward assured community officials that his men would not challenge local customs and not react violently to the predictable insults they could expect. He also offered to provide his regimental band for public concerts and dances. The local populace responded enthusiastically to Europe’s band and both black soldiers and well-meaning white citizens did their best, but, in the end, the situation proved untenable. After barely two weeks at camp, the Army high command ordered the 15th Regiment to be shipped, half-trained, to France. New York’s black regiment was being given an opportunity to prove itself, it appeared, and Colonel Hayward was elated.

On New Year’s Day 1918, the first African American combat unit to set foot on French soil marched ashore on the Brittany Coast to be greeted by a curious crowd of French soldiers and

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sailors. As instructed, Lieutenant Europe had the band ready and they struck up the “La Marseillaise.” The response from the Frenchmen was surprising—they seemed at first not to recognize their own national anthem. Then, suddenly, “there came over their faces an astonished look” and they snapped to attention. These Frenchmen had not been privileged to hear the sound of African American music in the cafes and theaters of Paris before the war and they were confused at first—then captivated—by the novelty of Europe’s interpretation. This kind of reaction became routine wherever the band performed in France in 1918.

Reid Badger, Professor Emeritus of American Studies, University of Alabama, and Adjunct Professor of Humanities, New York University, is the author of *A Life in Ragtime: A Biography of James Reese Europe*.

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Analyzing an Essay: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 2

Important Phrases: Which are the most important or powerful phrases or sentences in this scholarly essay? Choose three.

Phrase 1:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 2:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 3:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Critical Thinking Questions

Cite examples from the text in your answers.

1. Why were the white American military leaders reluctant to “nationalize” New York’s first black (15th) National Guard regiment into the US Army?

2. Why did the US Army subsequently send this regiment of black soldiers to France?

3. How did the French military forces and people respond to the musicianship of the Harlem Hellfighters marching band?

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Analyzing a Song

Song Title: _____

Important Phrases: Which are the most important or powerful phrases in the song? Choose three.

Phrase 1.

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 2.

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 3.

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Using your analysis of the phrases as evidence, state the theme or message of this song:

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“The Marseillaise” from Noble Lee Sissle’s “Memoirs of Lieutenant ‘Jim’ Europe”

Col. Hayward had ordered the band to carry their instruments and the band was hardly on shore before an order came from the Colonel to have them play. The first tune that Lt. Europe selected was the Marseillaise. When the first note was struck the French sailors and soldiers standing around hardly seemed to recognize the strains of their National anthem. At first we were non-plussed to know why there was no outward demonstration upon their recognizing their National anthem and the customary coming to attention that every soldier gives at the playing of his National hymn, but suddenly, as the band had played eight or ten bars there came over their faces an astonished look, quickly alert snap-into-it-attention and salute by every French soldier and sailor present.

It was quite a while after that before we found out why the Frenchmen were so slow in coming to attention. It was only found out after we heard the French band play their National air. Just like an organ playing a hymn was their interpretation of their piece, and it took us quite a few seconds before we realized that the French band was playing the Marseillaise. However, after we had been in France and had played our National hymn and the Marseillaise on quite a few occasions, we found out that the military, inspired, rhythmic interpretation of the national hymns please the Frenchmen. In fact, it thrilled them to a far greater extent than their own bands playing. It was the unaccustomed interpretation of their anthem that caused the French soldiers and sailors to be so tardy in coming to the salute.

Source: Noble Lee Sissle, “Memoirs of ‘Jim’ Europe,” unpublished typescript, pp. 106–107 (Library of Congress)

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Lyrics

On Patrol in No Man's Land

by James Reese Europe, Noble Sissle, and Eubie Blake, [1919]

What's the time, nine, all in line,
 Alright, boys, now take it slow
 Are you ready? steady! very good Eddy,
 Over the top, let's go

Quiet, sly it, else you'll start a riot,
 Keep your proper distance, follow 'long
 Cover, smother, when you see me hover,
 Obey my orders and you can't go wrong

There's a minnenwerfer coming, look out (Bang!)
 Hear that roar, there's one more
 Stand fast, there's a Vary Light
 Don't gasp or they'll find you alright

Don't start to bombing with those hand grenades
 There's a machine gun, Holy Spades
 Alert, Gas, put on your masks
 Adjust it correctly and hurry up fast!

Drop! there's a rocket from the Boche Barrage
 Down! hug the ground close as you can, don't
 stand
 Creep and crawl, follow me, that's all
 What do you hear, nothing near, all is clear, don't
 fear,

That's the life of a stroll when you take a patrol
 Out in No Man's Land! Ain't it grand?
 Out in No Man's Land

All of No Man's Land Is Ours

By James Reese Europe, Noble Sissle, and Eubie Blake

Hello, Central, Hello, Hurry,
 Give me 4-0-3,
 Hello, Mary, Hello, Dearie,
 Yes, yes, this is me!
 Just landed on the pier
 And found the telephone,
 We've been parted for a year,
 Thank God at last I'm home!
 Haven't time to talk a lot,
 Though I'm feeling mighty gay;
 Little sweet forget-me-not,
 I've only time to say:

All of No Man's land is ours, dear,
 Now I've come back to you, my honey true.

Wedding bells in Juney June,
 All will tell their tuney tune,
 That vict'ries won, the war is over,
 The whole wide world is wreathed in clover.

Then, hand-in-hand we'll stroll through life,
 dear,
 Just think how happy we will be,
 (I mean, we three.)
 We'll pick a bungalow amongst the fragrant
 bow'rs,
 And spend our honeymoon with the blooming
 flowers,
 All of No Man's Land is ours.

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How 'Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm?

“Reuben, Reuben, I’ve been thinking,”
Said his wifey dear;
“Now that all is peaceful and calm,
The boys will soon be back on the farm;”

Mister Reuben, started winking,
And slowly rubbed his chin;
He pulled his chair up close to mother,
And he asked her with a grin:

Refrain:

How 'ya gonna keep 'em, down on the farm,
After they've seen Paree?
How 'ya gonna keep 'em away from Broadway;
Jazzin' aroun', And paintin' the town?

How 'ya gonna keep 'em away from harm?
That's the mystery;
They'll never want to see a rake or plow,
And who the deuce can parlez-vous a cow?

How 'ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm,
After they've seen Paree?

“Reuben, Reuben, You’re mistaken,”
Said his wifey dear;
“Once a farmer, always a jay,
And farmers always stick to the hay;”

“Mother Reuben, I’m not fakin’,
Tho’ you may think it strange;
But wine and women play the mischief,
With a boy who’s loose with change.”

Refrain

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“A Negro Explains ‘Jazz,’” an Interview with Lt. Jim Europe

Lieutenant Europe says: “With the brass instruments we put in mutes and make a whirling motion with the tongue, at the same time blowing full pressure. With wind instruments we pinch the mouthpiece and blow hard. This produces the peculiar sound which you all know. To us it is not discordant, as we play the music as it is written, only we accent strongly in this manner the notes which originally would be without accent [i.e., syncopation]. It is natural for us to do this; it is, indeed a racial musical characteristic. I have to call a daily rehearsal of my band to prevent the musicians from adding to their music more than I wish them to. Whenever possible they all embroider their parts in order to produce new, peculiar sounds. Some of these effects are excellent and some are not, and I have to be continually on the lookout to cut out the results of my musicians’ originality. . . .

“I went back to my band, and with it I went to Paris. . . . After the concert was over the leader of the band of the Garde Républicain came over and asked me for the score of one of the jazz compositions we had played. He said he wanted his band to play it. I gave it to him, and the next day he again came to see me. He explained that he couldn’t seem to get the effects I got, and asked me to go to a rehearsal. I went with him. The great band played the composition superbly—but he was right: the jazz effects were missing. I took an instrument and showed him how it could be done, and he told me that his own musicians felt sure that my band had used special instruments. Indeed, some of them, afterward attending one of my rehearsals, did not believe what I had said until they had examined the instruments used by my men.”

Source: *Literary Digest*, April 26, 1919, pp. 28–29.

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Historical Background: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 3
by Reid Badger

After the initial excitement of reaching France, the officers and men of the 15th were disappointed when orders came assigning them to an engineering detachment at St. Nazaire. Reluctantly, they exchanged their rifles for picks and shovels, and did their duty, but as the days dragged into weeks and no new orders were forthcoming, morale sagged and Colonel Hayward, fearing that his combat troops were in danger of becoming permanent stevedores, wrote to General Pershing pleading for front line duty. In requesting reassignment, Hayward had the endorsement of the commanding officer at St. Nazaire, who did not share the Army’s prejudice against them. He also had something that the AEF headquarters decided it wanted—Jim Europe’s regimental band. In mid-January, Hayward received orders to send the band to the rest camp at Aix-les-Bains to provide entertainment for the first American troops on leave there, and the band performed so well that their initial two-week assignment was extended. By then Hayward’s persistent appeals produced results. Still unwilling to order the New York regiment to join a white division, the American command told Hayward he could either return with his men to the United States and await the formation of one of the proposed black divisions, or be transferred immediately to the French army. There was no hesitation, and in the first week of March, New York’s 15th Infantry received orders to join the 16th Division of the French Fourth Army. “Our great American general simply put the black orphan in a basket, set it on the doorstep of the French, pulled the bell, and went away,” Hayward remarked.

Having joined the French army, the 15th Regiment—now designated the 369th Infantry Regiment of the American Expeditionary Force—distinguished itself in several critical battles during the final German offensives of the spring and summer, and again, in September of 1918, serving nearly six months in the front lines, and earning their “Hellfighters” nickname. Jim Europe and the band, after traveling over two thousand miles and playing for countless French, British, and American troops and French civilians, rejoined their comrades in March and remained with them through much of the fighting. Europe, himself, taking charge of his machine gun company, served in the trenches until a German gas attack in June hospitalized him. Finally, in mid-October, while recovering from their role in the bloody Meuse-Argonne offensive, the 369th Regiment was ordered to a relatively quiet sector in Alsace and it was while there that the hostilities that began four years and three months earlier—and waged at such a staggering cost—ceased on the Western Front. In November, after being the first Allied unit to reach the banks of the Rhine, the 369th was ordered home.

On February 17, 1919, the 369th Hellfighters Infantry Regiment, the “Old New York 15th,” received one of the grandest parades that anyone could remember. The warm spirit of the early

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spring turned bitter in the Red Summer of 1919, however, as more than a dozen race riots erupted and hundreds of black Americans, including soldiers recently returned from France, were shot, lynched, or beaten to death.

For thirty-nine-year-old Jim Europe and his famous 369th Band, there was a new recording contract, and a national concert tour was arranged. But on May 9, he was tragically murdered during a concert in Boston. After receiving the first public funeral for a black person in New York City's history, the man who had done so much to make it possible for black Americans to be heard—and to give America itself its characteristic voice—was buried with full honors in Arlington National Cemetery.

Reid Badger, Professor Emeritus of American Studies, University of Alabama, and Adjunct Professor of Humanities, New York University, is the author of *A Life in Ragtime: A Biography of James Reese Europe*.

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Analyzing an Essay: “The ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ and the ‘Jazz King,’” Part 3

Important Phrases: Which are the most important or powerful phrases or sentences in this scholarly essay? Choose three.

Phrase 1:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 2:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 3:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Critical Thinking Questions

Cite examples from the text in your answers.

1. Why did the Harlem Hellfighters exhibit disappointment and low morale after their initial assignment to France?

2. Based on Colonial William Hayward’s statement that the US Army “simply put the black orphan in a basket, set it at the doorstep of the French, . . . and went away,” briefly explain why and how this black American regiment joined the French army.

3. Briefly explain how the “warm spirit” of military victory for black soldiers in World War I “turned bitter” when they returned to the United States.

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“Playing Jazz in France” from Noble Lee Sissle’s “Memoirs of Lieutenant ‘Jim’ Europe”

When our country was dance-mad a few years ago, we quite agreed with the popular Broadway composer who wrote,

Syncopation rules the nation
You can’t get away from it.

But if you could see the effect our good old “jazz” melodies have on the people of every race and creed, you would change the word “nation” quoted above to “world.”

Inasmuch as the press seems to have kept the public well informed of our band’s effort to make the boys happy in this land where everybody speaks everything but English, I will endeavor to start off with a few notes concerning James Reese Europe, its organizer and conductor. This Lieutenant Europe is the same Europe whose orchestras are considered to have done a goodly share [toward making syncopated music popular on Broadway. Having been] associated with Lieutenant Europe in civil life during his “jazz” bombardment on the delicate, classical, musical ears of New York’s critics, and having watched “The Walls of Jericho,” come tumbling down, I was naturally curious to see what would be the effect of a “real American tune,” as Victor Herbert calls our Southern syncopated tunes, as played by a real American band.

At last the opportunity came, and it was at a town in France where there were no American troops, and our audience, with the exception of an American general and his staff, was all French people. I am sure the greater part of the crowd had never heard a ragtime number. So what happened can be taken as a test of the success of our music in this country, where all is sadness and sorrow.

The program started with a French march, followed by favorite overtures and vocal selections by our male quartette, all of which were heartily applauded. . . . Next followed an arrangement of “Plantation Melodies” and then came the fireworks, “The Memphis Blues.”

Lieutenant Europe, before raising his baton, twitched his shoulders, apparently to be sure that his tight-fitting military coat would stand the strain, each musician shifted his feet, the players of brass horns blew the saliva from their instruments, the drummers tightened their drumheads, every one settled back in their seats, half-closed their eyes, and when the baton came down with a swoop that brought forth a soul-rousing crash both director and musicians seemed to forget their surroundings; they were lost in scenes and memories. Cornet and clarinet players began to manipulate notes in that typical rhythm (that rhythm which no artist has ever been able to put down on paper); as the drummers struck their stride their shoulders began shaking in time to their syncopated raps.

Then, it seemed, the whole audience began to sway, dignified French officers began to pat their

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feet along with the American general, who, temporarily, had lost his style and grace.

Lieutenant Europe was no longer the Lieutenant Europe of a moment ago, but once more Jim Europe, who a few months ago rocked New York with his syncopated baton. His body swayed in willowy motions and his head was bobbing as it did in days when terpsichorean festivities reigned supreme. He turned to the trombone players, who sat impatiently waiting for their cue to have a “Jazz spasm,” and they drew their slides out to the extremity and jerked them back with that characteristic crack.

The audience could stand it no longer; the “Jazz germ” hit them, and it seemed to find the vital spot, loosening all muscles and causing what is known in America as an “Eagle Rocking Fit.” “There now,” I said to myself. “Colonel Hayward has brought his band over here and started ragtimitis in France; ain’t this an awful thing to visit upon a nation with so many burdens?” But when the band had finished and the people were roaring with laughter, their faces wreathed in smiles, I was forced to say that this is just what France needs at this critical moment.

All through France the same thing happened. Troop trains carrying Allied soldiers from everywhere passed us en route, and every head came out of the window when we struck up a good old Dixie tune. Even German prisoners forgot they were prisoners, dropped their work to listen, and pat their feet to the stirring American tunes.

But the thing that capped the climax happened up in Northern France. We were playing our Colonel’s favorite ragtime, “The Army Blues,” in a little village where we were the first American troops there, and among the crowd listening to that band, was an old lady about sixty years of age. To everyone’s surprise, all of a sudden, she started doing a dance that resembled “Walking the Dog.” Then I was cured, and satisfied that American music would some day be the world’s music. While at Aix-les-Bains other musicians from American bands said their experiences had been the same.

Who would think that little U. S. A. would ever give to the world a rhythm and melodies that, in the midst of such universal sorrow, would cause all students of music to yearn to learn how to play it? Such is the case, because every musician we meet—and they all seem to be masters of their instruments—are always asking the boys to teach them how to play ragtime. I sometimes think if the Kaiser ever heard a good syncopated melody he would not take himself so seriously.

If France was well supplied with American bands, playing their lively tunes, I’m sure it would help a good deal in bringing home entertainment to our boys, and at the same time make the heart of sorrow-stricken France beat a deal lighter.

Source: Noble Lee Sissle, “Memoirs of ‘Jim’ Europe,” unpublished typescript, pp. 118–121 (Library of Congress)

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#1



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(National World War I Museum and Memorial)

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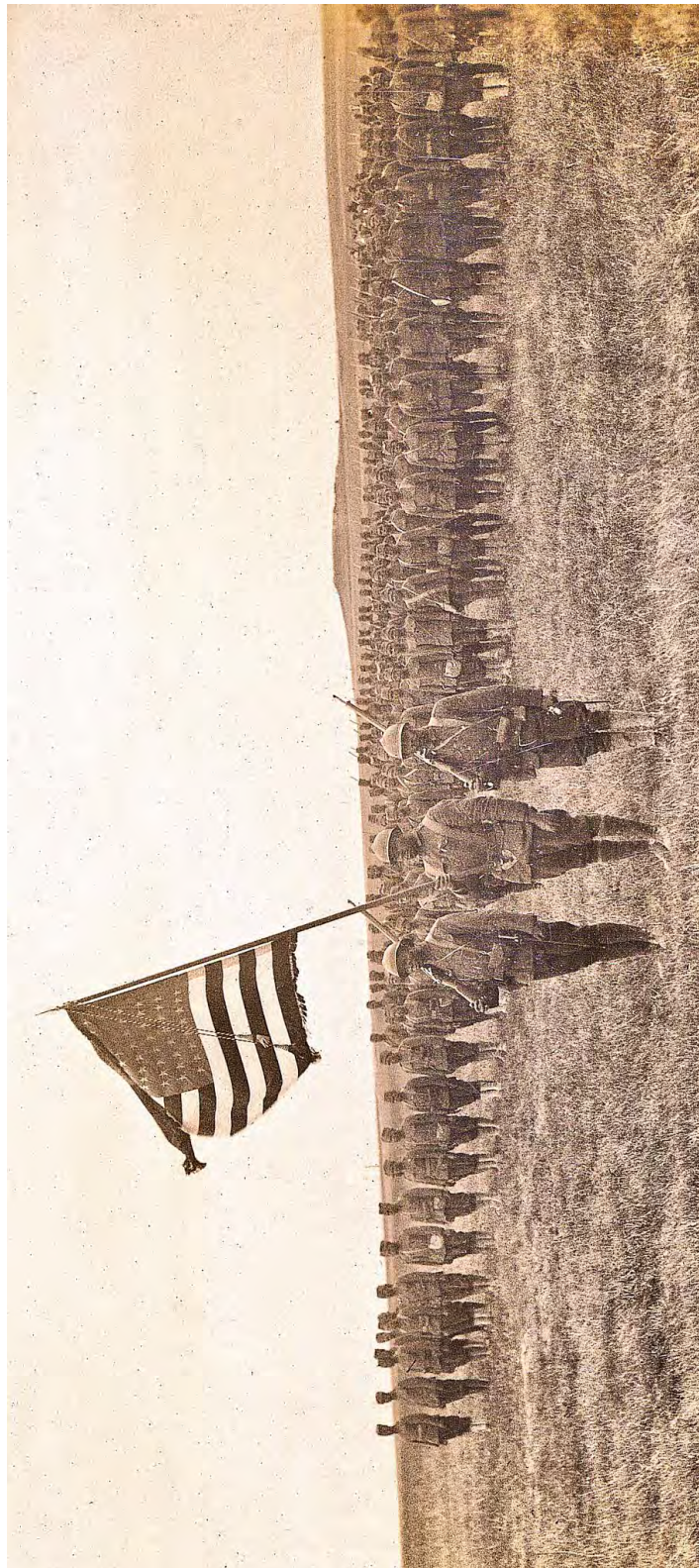
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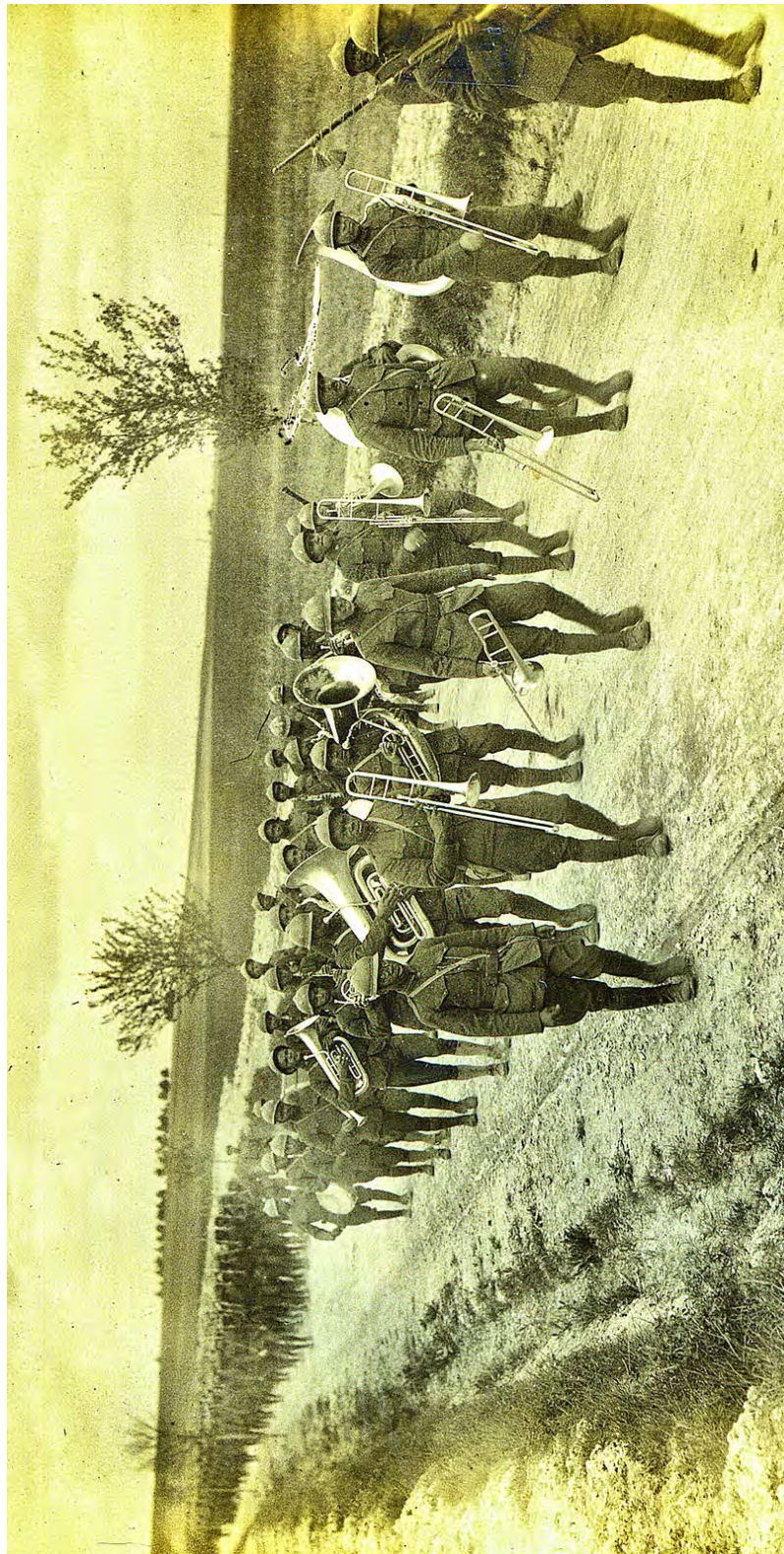
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“The Death of Lieutenant Jim Europe,” by Noble Lee Sissle

“Lieutenant Europe—we have little hopes for your recovering, our only possible means of saving your life is by an operation. If you’ve anything to say you must say it now.”

“I’ve nothing to say—I’ll get along all right,” very feebly answered the band master as he lay on the operating table in the emergency room of the Boston City Hospital, where he had been rushed after being stabbed in the neck, by his protégé drummer boy. During the Intermission of the opening concert of a three day engagement which was to mark the end of a triumphant ten weeks trans-continental tour. Just then the door of the operating room softly opened and Herbert Wright, handcuffed to a plain clothes man, was ushered into the room.

“Lieutenant Europe, is this the boy that stabbed you?” quietly asked the officer in charge of the assassin; “Yes; that is Herbert, but don’t lock him up; for he’s a good boy—just got a little excited tonight.”

“But, Lieutenant Europe,” urged the chief surgeon, “you are in a serious condition—and we’ve little hopes of saving you. If you have anything to say, you must say it now. We have hardly any hopes of your recovery. How do you feel about it?”

“I have nothing to say, I’ll get along all right. Herbert didn’t mean to do it—just hot-headed—go ahead and operate—I’ll get well.”

The doctors speedily administered the ether to their fastly weakening patient, for the operation, the operation from which Lieutenant Jim Europe never regained consciousness.

Source: Noble Lee Sissle, “Memoirs of ‘Jim’ Europe,” unpublished typescript, ca. 1942, pp. 1–2. (Library of Congress)

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Analyzing an Essay: “The Death of Jim Europe”

Important Phrases: Which are the most informative and important phrases or sentences in this essay? Choose three phrases.

Phrase 1:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 2:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?

Phrase 3:

Why is this phrase important or powerful?
