



Part 1: Segregation and the Founding of Asbury Park

OVERVIEW

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What does the founding and early history of Asbury Park reveal about practices of segregation in the Northern United States?

OVERVIEW

*In this 3-part lesson collection, students watch clips from the film *Asbury Park: Riot, Redemption, Rock & Roll* and examine documents in order to gain a deeper understanding of segregation as it has been practiced in the Northern United States, both in the past and today. Students will also consider the role music has played in segregated Asbury Park. In Part 1, students explore the founding of Asbury Park and the city's history up to 1970, and debate the extent to which music played a role in integrating the city.*



On October 6, 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke in the gymnasium at Monmouth University, just outside of Asbury Park, New Jersey. Dr. King titled his speech at Monmouth “The Future of Integration,” but he began with the past – moving from 1619, the year the first enslaved African set foot on U.S. soil, through slavery into the Civil Rights Era. While celebrating recent accomplishments in ending legally enforced segregation in the United States, such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* court decision and the rectification of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Dr. King also reminded the audience: “in order to tell the truth, it is necessary to move on and not only talk about the fact that we’ve come a long, long way but to make it palpably clear that we still have a long, long way to go before the ideal of integration is a reality.”

By this point in his life, Dr. King had broadened his fight for equality beyond the legally enforced segregation of the Jim Crow South, and was now tackling the multitude of policies related to education, economics, and housing that maintained and reinforced segregation across America.

“By the thousands and the millions, Negroes all over the United States are still being lynched psychologically and spiritually,” Dr. King told the audience at Monmouth. On housing, he noted that “more than 40 percent of the Negro families of our country live in substandard housing units.” Regarding education, he pointed out that “more money is spent per pupil on suburban schools and on predominantly white schools than on schools in the Negro ghetto. . . Negro students are finishing high school reading at a sixth-grade level, not because they are dumb, not because they don’t have the native intelligence, but because the schools are overcrowded which they attend, substandard, devoid of quality.” And regarding economic issues, he stated “the vast majority of Negroes in the United States find themselves perishing on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. . .if the unemployment rate of the whole nation was anywhere

near the unemployment rate in the Negro community, our nation would be facing a tragic depression more staggering than the depression of the '30s. . . [and remember] most of the poverty-stricken Negroes in our country are working every day, but their wages are so low that they cannot purchase the basic necessities of life.”

The issues Dr. King touched upon in his speech – housing, economics, and education – have and continue to be informed by inherently racist policies, which lead to “de facto” segregation, or segregation that is not legally enforced, but nonetheless maintained. “De facto” segregation has and continues to affect the Black community in cities across America – including Asbury Park, just minutes away from where Dr. King delivered his speech.

While only occupying around one square mile, Asbury Park, New Jersey provides a case study on the way segregation in the Northern United States was practiced. The city was founded in 1871 by James A. Bradley, who found wealth manufacturing cannon brushes for the Union army. Asbury Park quickly became a resort town for people vacationing from New York City or elsewhere.

The rise of hotels and other amusements in Asbury Park required a workforce of cooks, maids, laundresses, janitors, waiters, and other essential labor. These mostly Black workers settled in the “West End” of town, away from the large resorts and Victorian mansions on the east side. In addition to living in segregated neighborhoods, Black workers endured other forms of segregation. Early in the city’s history, many white vacationers complained that the presence of Black people on the beaches was “disruptive,” to the point that Bradley sought to ban Black workers from visiting Asbury Park beaches, over concerns that their presence threatened the profitability of the resort town. Bradley insisted the proposed banning was not “a question of color or rights,” but a business decision based on his belief that potential tourists would be unwilling to “endure the crowds of Africans infesting every promenade and public space.” As a result, Asbury Park reserved some beaches for tourists alone, and others for residents, which in essence meant segregating beaches based on race.

In contradiction to Asbury Park’s history of segregation, the thriving music scene the city created offers a story of racial integration. In its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s, Asbury Park became a prime location for touring musicians, introducing Black and white residents alike to new musical experiences. For the youth living in or nearby Asbury Park, these experiences translated into a thriving and integrated local music scene, with clubs like The Upstage providing opportunities for integrated groups to come and play music together – producing, perhaps most notably, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- The definition of “*de facto*” segregation
- The importance of Asbury Park to the history of American Popular music
- The history of segregation in Asbury Park
- The role music can play in bringing people together

2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to define practices of segregation and systemic racism in the Northern United States and consider how some music venues were a source of integration by analyzing primary source documents and watching clips from the film *Asbury Park: Riot, Redemption, Rock & Roll*.

ACTIVITIES

MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY:

1. Tell students that in this lesson they will be examining the idea of “*de facto*” segregation. Ask students:
 - What might the term “*de facto*” segregation mean? Have you heard the term before? How might it differ from “segregation” as you understand it?
 - In Latin, “*de facto*” means “in fact” or “in effect.” In legal terms, it is the opposite of “*de jure*,” which means, “according to the law.” Does this distinction offer a clue into what “*de facto*” segregation might mean, and how it might compare to “*de jure*” segregation?”
 - In what ways might segregation persist, even if there are no longer strict laws enforcing it? In what areas or aspects of life might segregation continue to happen?
2. Pass out **Handout - Excerpts from Dr. Martin Luther King’s Speech at Monmouth University**. Have students read Excerpt 1, then ask:
 - What might Dr. King mean when he says Black people in the United States continue to be lynched “psychologically and spiritually”?
 - What are the major areas of segregation Dr. King is addressing in this excerpt? How might these fall under the idea of “*de facto*” segregation?
 - What, according to Dr. King, is the result of these aspects of segregation? What “conditions emerge” as a result of these forms of segregation?

PROCEDURE

1. Tell students that “*de facto*” segregation has and continues to occur in places throughout the United States. In class they will be taking the city of Asbury Park, which is just miles away from Monmouth University where Dr. King gave his speech, as a case study to further examine how “*de facto*” segregation occurs.
2. Play **Clip 1, The Founding of Asbury Park**. Then ask students:
 - Who founded Asbury Park? When was it founded?
 - What was Bradley’s original vision for Asbury Park? Why did that vision change?
 - According to the video, why was Asbury Park “A Tale of Two Cities”?
 - Who generally inhabited the east side of the city? Who inhabited the west side? In what ways might the two sides come into conflict?
3. Tell students that one of the first conflicts that occurred in Asbury Park related to whether the mostly Black workers on the West Side were allowed access to the beach on the East Side. They will be analyzing how the debate proceeded by examining New York Times articles and editorials from the summer of 1887.
4. Show **Image 1, Beach Segregation Debate Activity**. Gather students together into groups, and give each group **Handout - Debate over Beach Segregation in Asbury Park, 1887**. Tell students to look over the articles in the handout, and make notes on the three items listed on Image 1. (*Teachers may encourage students in groups to split up readings and summarize the articles they read to the rest of the group*). Emphasize that many of the terms used in these articles are antiquated and considered offensive today.
5. After student groups have time to go through all the documents, ask the class:
 - What was the source of controversy discussed in the newspaper articles?
 - Who was the primary figure representing Asbury Park? Who represented the Black community?
 - What principle arguments did the Black community make in asserting their right to visit Asbury Park beaches?
 - What arguments did officials of Asbury Park make for forbidding the Black community access to Asbury Park beaches?
 - Recall the article “Africa and Asbury Park.” What is the author’s primary argument?
 - In “Africa and Asbury Park,” the author writes “it is asking something too much for poor Mr. Bradley to convert himself from a man of business, engaged in the lawful speculation in real estate, to a philanthropist bent upon securing the use of God’s beach to colored.” What might the author mean by this? What division is he establishing?
6. Tell students that as a result of these debates, the city of Asbury Park created beaches reserved for tourists, and those reserved for residents - this in essence segregated the beaches of the city along racial lines. Ask students:
 - How was the segregation of the beaches in Asbury Park an example of “*de facto*” segregation and not “*de jure*” segregation?
 - Asbury Park has been referred to as “the Jim Crow of the North.” What does “Jim Crow” refer to, and why might have Asbury Park gained this description? (“*Jim Crow*” refers

to a series of laws in the Southern states that enforced segregation.)

7. Explain to students that as a resort town, Asbury Park drew a lot of musicians and entertainers, both to the east and west sides.

Play **Clip 2, Music in Asbury Park**. Ask students:

- In what ways, according to the clip, did music help integrate the east and west side of Asbury Park?
- How might have racially integrated gatherings of musicians and audiences helped to highlight segregation in Asbury Park?
- What limits do integrated venues have towards confronting segregation? Consider, for example, the price of tickets to get to see one of these concerts: could people on the West Side afford them?

SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Tell students to conclude this part of the lesson, the class will be discussing in more detail the potential music might have in addressing segregation.

2. Play **Clip 3, Steven Van Zandt on Music**, and explain to students that Steven Van Zandt is a musician, actor, and activist that began his career in Asbury Park. Ask students:

- What might Van Zandt mean when he says music is the “universal language”? What example does he give supporting this idea?
- Van Zandt mentions that music has the ability to communicate outside “government” and “formality.” How might this make music a powerful means of spreading a message?
- How might music act as a “common ground” for a diversity of audiences?
- What limitations does music have in fostering integration? What barriers remain that limit music’s ability to create a more equal society?

3. Ask students to read excerpt 2 in *Handout – Excerpts from Dr. Martin Luther King’s Speech at Monmouth University*. Ask students:

- What “myth” does Dr. King introduce in this excerpt? Why does he describe it as a “myth”?
- To Dr. King, what is the purpose of legislation? What is it capable of doing, and what is it incapable of doing?
- How does Dr. King differentiate between legislation and morality?
- Consider Van Zandt’s comments on music. Where might music fit into Dr. King’s thinking in terms of change and legislation?

4. Show **Image 2, Asbury Park Part 1 Summary Activity**. After student groups complete the activity, ask them to share the issue they chose, and the sentence they wrote on how music might address the issue. Tell students to save their sentence, as it will be used in Part 2 of the lesson.



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Watch the first two minutes of this interview with artist Noname (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNbDtwYlwuk&feature=emb_logo). Then write a reflective essay considering why Noname would like a less integrated, more Black audience for her performances.
2. As a class, spend a few days reading or listening to Ta-Nehisi Coates' essay "The Case for Reparations," (<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>) and consider how the issues Coates' addresses might be considered instances of "*de facto*" segregation.

STANDARDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS*College and Career Readiness Reading Anchor Standards for Grades 6-12 for English Language Arts*

Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Reading 2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Reading 3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure 4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Craft and Structure 6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing for Grades 6-12

Text Types and Purposes 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge 7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge 9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening for Grades 6-12

Comprehension & Collaboration 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension & Collaboration 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Presentation of Knowledge 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language for Grades 6-12

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Language 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use 6: Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 3: People, Place, and Environments

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

Theme 7: Production, Distributions, and Consumption

Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION (NAFME)

Core Music Standard: Responding

Analyze: Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response.

Interpret: Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators' and/or performers' expressive intent.

Evaluate: Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Connecting 11: Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Core Music Standard: Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standards 11: Relate artistic ideas and work with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.



RESOURCES

VIDEO RESOURCES

- *Asbury Park: Riot, Redemption, Rock & Roll- The Founding of Asbury Park*
- Music in Asbury Park

HANDOUTS

- Handout- Excerpts from Dr. Martin Luther King's Speech at Monmouth University
- Handout- Debate Over Beach Segregation in Asbury Park, 1887