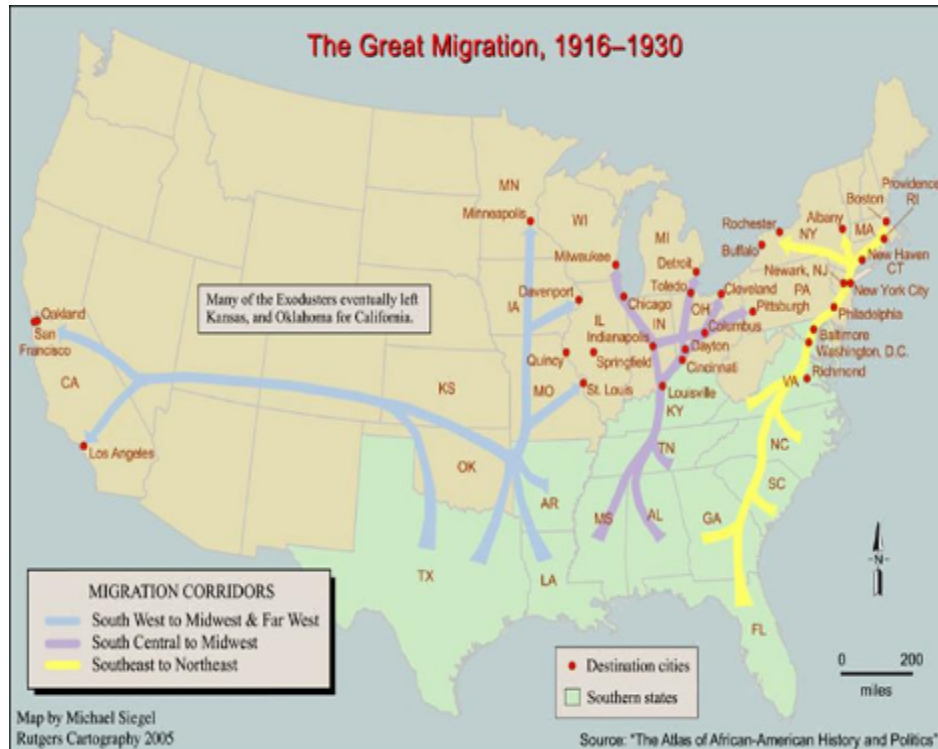


Close Read: Great Migration

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Objective

What was the Great Migration? What caused the Great Migration?

Brain Dump: Closely examine the map and read the poem that follows. Once you are done, using both the poem & map, build a prediction of what you think the Great Migration might be & what might have caused it.



One Way Ticket | By Langston Hughes

I pick up my life, And take it with me,
And I put it down in
Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, Scranton,
Any place that is North and East, And not Dixie.

I pick up my life And take it on the train,
To Los Angeles, Bakersfield, Seattle, Oakland,
Salt Lake
Any place that is North and West, And not South.

I am fed up With Jim Crow laws,
People who are cruel And afraid,
Who lynch and run,
Who are scared of me And me of them
I pick up my life And take it away
On a one-way ticket-
Gone up North Gone out West
Gone

Prediction

The Great Migration was....

The Great Migration was caused by...

Primary Source Analysis: Below is an excerpt from W.E.B. DuBois's article, "The Migration of the Negroes" (June 1917) from *Crisis Magazine* - a magazine launched by the NAACP in 1910. Read the primary source & answer the analysis questions that follow.

... As to the reasons of the migration, undoubtedly, the first & immediate cause was economic, the movement began because of floods in middle Alabama and Mississippi and because the latest devastation of the boll weevil [beetle that feeds on cotton plants - ruins cotton harvest] came in these same districts. A second economic cause was the cutting off of immigration from Europe to the North and the consequently widespread demand for common labor. The U.S. Department of Labor writes: "...that most of the help imported from the South has been employed by railroad companies, packing houses, foundries, factories, automobile plants, in the northern States as far west as Nebraska." The third reason has been outbreaks of mob violence in northern and southwestern Georgia and in western South Carolina...

These have been the three immediate causes, but back of them is, undoubtedly, the general dissatisfaction with the conditions in the South. Individuals have given us the following reasons for migration from certain points:

- Birmingham, Ala., right to vote, discontent, bad treatment, low wages, lynching
- Montgomery, Ala., low wages, lack of employment, bad treatment, oppression
- South Atlanta, Ga., schools, freedom, civil rights, low wages, lynching
- Covington, Ga., low wages, lynching
- Augusta, Ga., low wages, bad treatment
- Nashville, Tenn., low wages, violence and lynching
- Jackson, Miss., low wages, discrimination

...The character of the people who are going varies, of course, but as the Birmingham, Ala., *Age-Herald* remarks: "It is not the riff-raff of the race, the worthless Negroes, who are leaving in such large numbers. There are, to be sure, many poor Negroes among them who have little more than the clothes on their backs, but others have property and good positions which they are sacrificing in order to get away at the first opportunity.

...How great this migration will eventually prove depends upon a number of things. The entrance of the United States into the war will undoubtedly have some effect. Immediately, as the war demands more industrial goods, and as many able bodied men signing up for the war & joining the army, there is a shortage of industrial workers. When the war ends it is doubtful if the labor shortage in Europe will allow a very large migration to the United States for a generation or more. This will mean increased demand for colored laborers in the North.

At any rate, we face here a social change among American Negroes of great moment, and one which needs to be watched with intelligent interest.

Analysis Questions:

- 1) What were the three reasons W.E.B DuBois suggests that motivated African Americans to leave the south during the Great Migration?
- 2) From the list provided in the source, what seems to be the number one reason African Americans were leaving the various cities of the south? What was the second most popular reason?
- 3) According to W.E.B. DuBois, how will the United States entry into World War 1 impact the Great Migration?
- 4) Based on the reasons given for migration, how do you think African Americans who migrated to the north at this time envisioned their future life in the north?

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Application Task

The Great Migration

Directions: Using information from the document above, please respond to the following task.

Task: Using the information from the documents above and your knowledge of US History to respond to the following task:

Imagine you are an African American living in the south in the 1917. You've been a sharecropper on a farm for many years now, and you are frustrated that sharecropping doesn't provide enough income to support you and your family of four (husband/wife, two children under the age of 5).

You've decided to move your family to the North, as you've heard that there are jobs in factories there that you could get. Using the sources above, *write two separate one page diary entries* detailing your experiences around migrating. The entries should be written using the following guidelines:

- Biographical information: create a character, and give him or her a name, and decide his or her role in the family (you can adopt the perspective of the husband or the wife), provide their age, and where they live in the south.
- 1 diary entry must be about *your life in the south* - what are the living conditions like? How are you treated by other citizens in the south? What are your job prospects like?
- 1 diary entry must be about *the decision to migrate* - Why have you decided to migrate? Where are you going to migrate to? Do you plan on returning to the south? What do you hope to achieve by migrating? What do you imagine your life will be like in your new home?