

# Double Victory: Black Americans in World War II

## Previsit Materials and Guiding Questions

Photo # USN 1136993 USS Intrepid in the South China Sea, Nov. 1968



### *Intrepid* History

- USS *Intrepid* was an aircraft carrier that served from 1943–1974, carrying up to 100 aircraft at a time in its earliest years.
- Approximately 3,000 men lived and worked on board on any given mission, including underrepresented sailors (Black, Latino and Filipino sailors).
- It participated in World War II, the Cold War, the Vietnam War and as a NASA recovery vessel.
- *Intrepid* has been a museum in New York City since 1982.



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- What is happening at home during World War II? In particular, what is happening in all four of these images?
- Compare the Dr. Pepper image and Dining Room image. In what ways are they similar?
- Describe your reaction to the two bus images. What feelings come up when you view these two images?
- What more can we learn about these lived experiences?





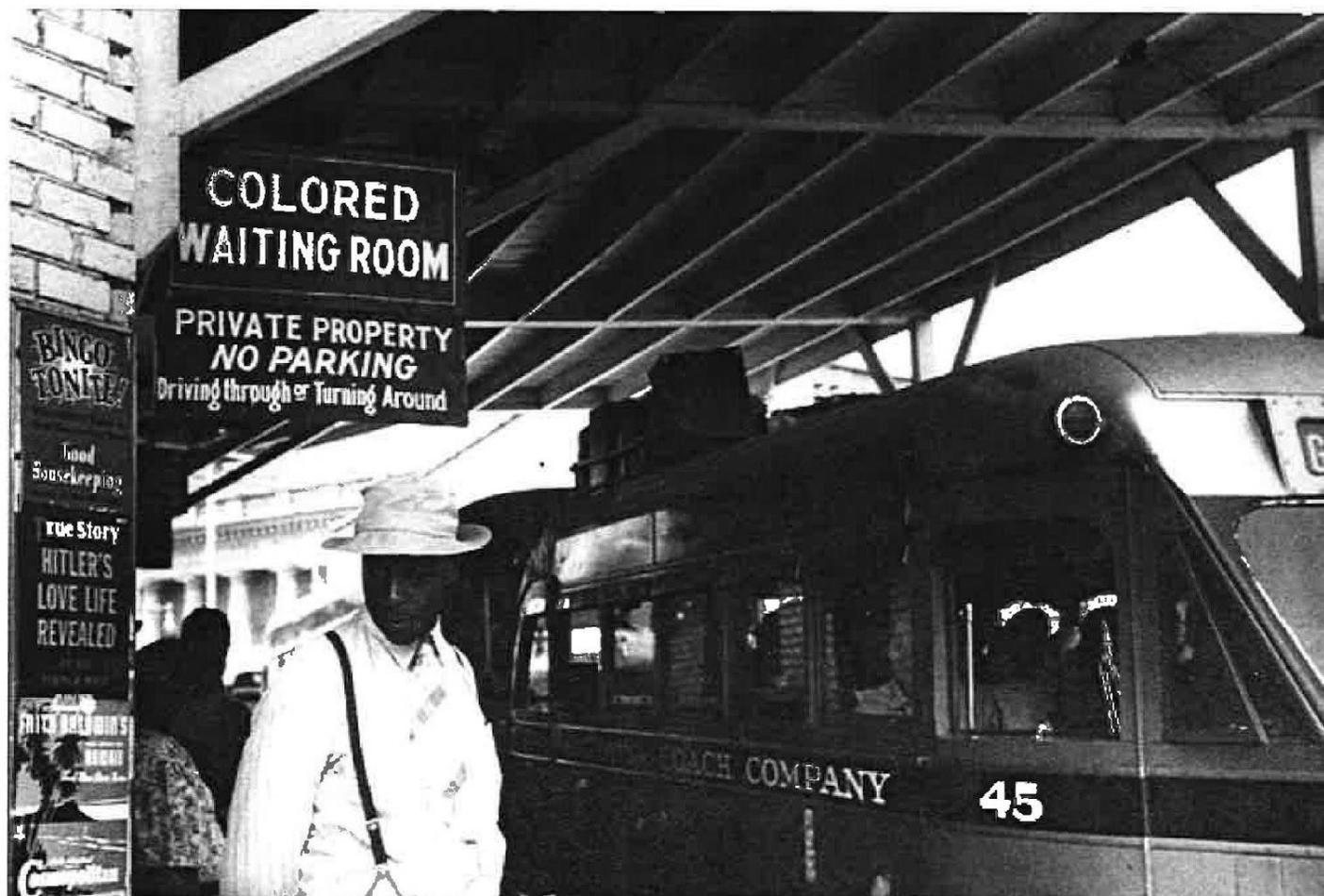
Black man enters a movie theater using a segregated entrance on Saturday afternoon, Belzoni, Mississippi Delta, Mississippi, 1939  
Photo: Library of Congress



A rest stop for Greyhound bus passengers on the way from Louisville, Kentucky, to Nashville, Tennessee, with separate accommodations for Black passengers, 1943  
Photo: Library of Congress



A Greyhound bus trip from Louisville, Kentucky, to Memphis, Tennessee, and the terminals. Waiting for a bus at the Memphis station, 1943  
Photo: Library of Congress



A sign indicating segregated waiting rooms for Black passengers at a bus station in Durham, North Carolina, 1940  
Photo: Library of Congress

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## Postvisit Activities and Extensions

1. Have students work in breakout rooms and provide a different set of materials to each group:

a. **Eugene Smith**

- Cleaning Staterooms – Smith oral history excerpt (12:50 to 14:55)
- Discrimination – Smith oral history excerpt (14:57 to 16:38)
- Segregation – Smith oral history excerpt (27:22 to 30:05)
- Southerners – Smith oral history excerpt (35:05 to 37:32)

b. **Henry Mouzon**

- Boot Camp and Steward's Mate – Mouzon oral history excerpt (5:26 to 8:40)
- Segregation – Mouzon oral history excerpt (11:20 to 13:15)
- Kitchen – Mouzon oral history excerpt (28:43 to 32:40)
- Gunner and Medals – Mouzon oral history excerpt (52:16 to 57:23)

# Eugene Smith

Four oral history excerpts and transcript excerpts

- [Cleaning Staterooms](#) ([Transcript](#))
- [Discrimination](#) ([Transcript](#))
- [Segregation](#) ([Transcript](#))
- [Southerners](#) ([Transcript](#))

# Henry Mouzon

Four oral history excerpts and transcript excerpts

- [Boot Camp and Steward's Mate](#) ([Transcript](#))
- [Segregation](#) ([Transcript](#))
- [Kitchen](#) ([Transcript](#))
- [Gunner and Medals](#) ([Transcript](#))

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2. Ask students to listen to their excerpts and discuss the following in their room with their group:

- How do Smith and Mouzon's experiences compare to each other?
- How does Eugene Smith compare his experiences in the Navy with growing up in the South?\*
- Describe the relationship between both men's jobs and race onboard *Intrepid*.
- What do both men have to say about discrimination during and/or after the war?
- How do these men feel about the Navy Cross? What do you notice them saying in regards to the process?

\*Clarify misconceptions that the South was the only part of the country that had problems with racial discrimination. Jim Crow laws in the South enforced racial segregation. However, remind students that during the time period Mouzon and Smith discussed, discrimination was prevalent throughout the entire country. You can even use the image of the Black driver sleeping under a truck in D.C. as a discussion point.

<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/great-depression-and-world-war-ii-1929-1945/race-relations-in-1930s-and-1940s/>

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### 3. Thumbs up/Thumbs down (Wrap-up)

- Share Thumbs Up/Thumbs down activity with students in which they give a thumbs up which represents a point they agree with, discuss why they agree, then share out to the rest of the group, and a thumbs down represents a point with which they disagree. Students need to defend their argument, regardless if they agree or disagree.
- Ask students to participate in a trial run in which they agree or disagree with the statement “Colder weather is better than warm weather.” Remind students to defend their argument, regardless if they agree or disagree.
- Once students understand the activity, have students participate in a round in which they “agree” or “disagree” with the statement “Citizens of a country should set aside other issues in times of war.”
- Once that round is completed, have students participate in a round in which they “agree” or “disagree” with the statement “Activism including the March on Washington and the Double V campaign increased opportunities for Black Americans during World War II.” Be sure to differentiate the proposed 1941 March on Washington and double victory as separate forms of activism happening around the same time. This is a way to address misconceptions.
- Finally, have students participate in a round in which they “agree” or “disagree” with the statement “Attitudes toward people of color have changed between World War II and today.”