

# Yours for Justice, Ida B. Wells

## The Daring Life of a Crusading Journalist

Written by Philip Dray and  
illustrated by Stephen Alcorn

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Ages 8 -12 | History | Nonfiction

### Book Level Scores

Accelerated Reader | Level 6.3 | AR Quiz#: 122344  
Reading Counts | Level: 7.4 | Points: 3  
Fountas & Pinnell | Level: P | Grade Level: 3-4

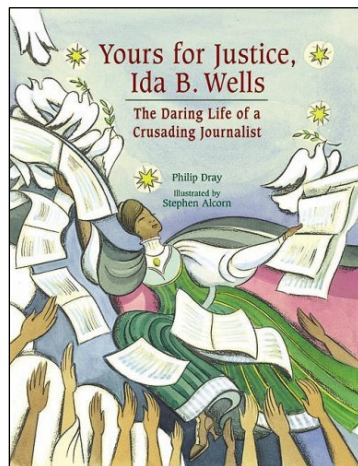
### ABOUT THE BOOK

*Yours for Justice, Ida B Wells: The Daring Life of a Crusading Journalist* shares the story of Ida B. Wells and her unflinching bravery, strong-willed courage, unquestioned talent, unabashed self-determination, uncompromising truthfulness, and unconditional love for her family and her race. Ida B. Wells-Barnett's life and experiences form a significant link in the history of African-American women's activism against racism and sexism.

Born a slave, but swaddled in love and allowed to remain with her natural parents, she attended the schools of the post-Civil War South, where learning to read opened up doors of wisdom, opportunity, and imagination. It also reinforced a sense of community and communal responsibility that shaped her life and directed her fate and her future.

In a text that begins with the Civil War and vividly moves the reader through The Emancipation Proclamation, Reconstruction, post-Reconstruction, and Jim Crow Laws, *Yours for Justice* explores this history through the eyes of a Black female journalist. Early in her life, Wells learned the significance and power of the written word. Reading the newspaper to her parents exposed her to a much larger and complicated world. Realizing that her words could influence and promote change, she dreamed of becoming a journalist.

Dray's simple, straightforward, and respectful account of one remarkable African American woman's journey from slavery to freedom, from



childhood to adulthood, and from powerlessness to power during a harrowing time in U.S. history explains how one selfless and dedicated person can alter history and write/right the wrongs of injustice.

*"The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them."* – Ida B. Wells

### THEMES

- Social Injustice/Social Justice
- African-American Women's History
- Activism
- Racism and Sexism
- Slavery/Freedom
- Journalism
- Jim Crow Laws
- Civil Rights/Human Rights
- The US Constitution and Amendments
- Dreams and Aspirations
- Segregation and Integration

### REVIEWS

#### \* STARRED REVIEW \*

"Alcorn's striking, symbol-infused hand-colored prints on creamy vellum get star billing...Author notes, a timeline and more enhance this age-appropriate introduction to difficult issues and the woman who educated the world about them."

— Publishers Weekly

"Alcorn's ink-and-watercolor illustrations have a fluid quality, conveying both action within the story and movement from one scene to the next. The use of warm colors and fanciful elements help to mute the harsh realities of lynching and segregation, while still maintaining a respectful tone. Appended with notes on Well's later life, a time line, and bibliography, this makes a good choice for middle-grade readers studying the early period of the civil rights movement."— Booklist

"...in this stirring tribute to an African-American journalist...Adding strong notes of reverence to the narrative, Alcorn's big cubist paintings center on Wells... Capped by a well-chosen list of additional resources at several levels, this handsomely packaged introduction to one of the most important progenitors of the Civil Rights Movement is just the ticket for young readers not yet ready to tackle the Fradins' definitive profile."— Kirkus Reviews

## AWARDS

- 📖 2009 Notable Children's Books in the Language Arts (NCTE)
- 📖 2009 Amelia Bloomer Project List (Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table of the American Library Association)
- 📖 2009 Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List (intermediate)
- 📖 2008 Parents' Choice Recommended Award
- 📖 2008 Children's Books, 100 Titles for Reading & Sharing (NY Public Library)
- 📖 2008 Society of School Librarians International Book Awards (honor book, Social Studies K-6)

## NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

**MATH (PreK-12)** [Mathematics standards provided by the NCTM.]

### NM-PROB.PK-12.3 PROBLEM SOLVING

Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems.

### LANGUAGE ARTS (K – 12)

[Language Arts standards provided by the NCTE.]

### NL-ENG.K-12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

## BEFORE YOU READ

1. Because of the sensitive and mature nature of this subject, the instructor should contextualize the story by preparing reading, listening, and if available, audio-visual centers.

**Reading center:** Place books on the following topics in a classroom reading area: African and African American folktales or folklore; African-American women writers (fiction and nonfiction); The Civil War, The US South, Reconstruction, The Emancipation Proclamation, The Constitution—especially the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments—Abraham Lincoln, and political and social activism.

**Listening center:** Make available recordings of African-American slave songs, early ballads, work songs, spirituals, speeches, sermons, protest songs, and readings of some of the folklore.

**Audio-Video center:** Offer videos of speeches, sermons, and documentaries on slavery and post-slavery African-American life.

2. Have students write in their journals responses to what they see, read, and hear for use in future discussions, writings, and group work. Based on the background from the texts the teacher and students use, students should be prepared to make inferences and draw conclusions based on intertextualities (See activities for THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX in this teacher's guide).

3. Prepare on chart paper and then discuss some of the information below. Keep the chart up as a reference after reading the book.

- Millions of Africans were stolen from their homeland, communities, and families and forced to work as slaves.
- These Africans had no idea where they were going or what was expected of them. They were chained and as many people as possible were stuffed into the holds of the ships because the slavers expected a certain number of the Africans to die.
- Slaves were forbidden to learn to read or to teach reading to others.
- Families and tribespeople were separated so that there would be no threat of rebellion.
- Discipline was maintained with whipping, beatings, starvation, and maiming.
- Slaves were sold nude either on auction blocks or in lots, like chattel (personal property owned by an individual).
- Slaves were thrown together without regard for gender, age, language, or country of origin.
- Slave owners wanted slaves to believe that everything about their homeland and their culture was inferior. Slaves were punished for practicing any aspect of their culture, especially their languages.
- Most slaves were given insufficient clothing and rations. Small children were not allotted any clothing, were fed in pig troughs without dishes or utensils, and were usually cared for by an elderly slave woman.
- Slavery was constitutionally legal and slaves were considered to be worth three-fifths of a human being.
- Science, religion, stereotypes, mythologies, gaps in history and culture, and hate can be used to abuse a group/race of people.

### Ask students the following questions:

1. Who was Ida B. Wells?
2. What is a journalist and what do they do?
3. Who are abolitionists, suffragists, and prohibitionists? [Explain that these groups changed the laws and the Constitution because of their activism].
4. What are activists and what do they do? [Activists are people who use different methods to change society or promote political change.]
5. Name people you think of as activists. Tell how they were activists.  
[Answers may include Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Henry David Thoreau, Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, Cesar Chavez, etc. You may also want to include some celebrities who are known for their activism, i.e. Brad Pitt, Richard Gere, Sean Penn, Mos Def, Angelina Jolie, Magic Johnson, Oprah Winfrey]

**Identify some famous activists (see above) and ask students the following questions:**

6. What methods did these people use to bring about change?
7. Is all activism positive?
8. Have older students discuss lynching. If appropriate, at this point, read or play the song “Strange Fruit” by Lewis Allen as sung by Billie Holiday. Have students write personal responses to the song. Have them list any words that they do not understand. Discuss the use of imagery/figurative language.
9. What would be the purpose of lynching? How would you respond to news of a lynching? Is there a link between slavery and lynching? If so, what is it? Does lynching still happen today? How? Where?

### AS YOU READ

Read the book aloud to the class straight through to hold the students’ interest and to promote a love of reading. Then, review the book a second time, stopping to allow students to point out parts of the story they had questions about and/or interested them. Next, discuss and answer questions. All questions that cannot be answered during the discussion can be written down on chart paper and used at a later time as part of the learning activities in this guide.

### AFTER YOU READ

Ask the following questions:

1. Based on the reading, describe Wells’s personality and the *tone/mood* of the book.
  2. What is Ida’s favorite pastime or hobby? How is her pastime beneficial for her whole family, especially her parents?
  3. How many siblings does Ida have?
  4. What happens during the yellow fever epidemic that proves Ida’s determination and her love of her family?
  5. What is her first job? What obstacles does she overcome to be successful at her job? How does her initial response to the needs of her community prepare you for her future achievements?
  6. Identify Ida’s dreams. Do any of her dreams come true? She dreams for herself and her people. What are some of your dreams? What dreams do you have for your community? Society? The world?
  7. What is a lyceum? Why does Wells call the lyceum “a breath of life to me”?
  8. What is Ida’s journalistic nickname?
  9. What happens to Tom Moss that changes Ida’s life and her way of thinking?
  10. Besides her writing, Wells also lectures and gives speeches. Why are all of these methods of communication important to her activism?
3. Yours for Justice, Ida B. Wells

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### LANGUAGE ARTS

**Adjectives** – Review the definition of an adjective. Read the book and have students write down or raise their hands whenever they hear an adjective. Compile a list of the adjectives that students identified and discuss how they help tell the story.

**Journalism** – This text offers the learner an excellent opportunity to utilize the skills necessary for journalistic writing. First, explain to the class the standards for writing articles for newspapers: The 5 W’s (what, when, where, who, and why) and How. Let them know that journalism is meant to be objective (unbiased); the reporter relies on facts and interviews to inform the public of events. Have students clip an article from any newspaper; ask them to identify the 5 W’s and How from the article. Then, discuss some of their findings. Are all of the 5 W’s and How included in the article? If not, why? Are interviews included? Remind them that the words of people other than the writer are included in quotation marks. Ask them to identify any adjectives included in the article. Do the adjectives add to the writing or do they sway the reader in a certain direction? If the adjectives influence their opinions, is the article objective or subjective (biased)?

**Journalism** – Have students write an article on a current event. Tell them to answer the 5 W’s and How. Instruct them to include quotations based on interviews (real or imagined). Have them exchange articles for peer reviews. Ask the peer reviewers to tell the class how well the articles explained the event. Did it answer all their questions about the event or did it bring up more? Could they base their own opinions on the information provided? Did the reading make them want to learn more about the subject? Was the article interesting? Did it hold their attention? Why or why not? Did the writer use adjectives to liven up their stories? Were the articles objective or subjective?

**Journalism and Creative Writing** – Have students choose one illustration from *Yours for Justice, Ida B. Wells*. Ask them to write an article based on the images in the picture. Let their imaginations run wild, but hold them to what they see in the text as the basis of their article. Again, make sure that they follow journalistic standards; however, remind them that “just the facts” can often make writing boring. Encourage the use of well-selected adjectives and adverbs.

**Journalism and Interviewing** – Place students in pairs. Either have them create their own questions or hand out a list of questions for them to use in preparation for writing an article on a classmate.

Some possible topics: Where were you when some specific event occurred (for example, when Obama was elected president) What was your response? Did it affect your life? If so, how? What is your best/worst memory? What would you like to be when you grow up? What is your favorite activity? Why? What is the most interesting trip you have ever taken? Where would you like to go if you could go anywhere? What is the most interesting fact about your family? Your school? Your town? Your state? An alternative to this exercise is to have students interview an older person in their family or community. Have students ask about a specific historical event and the interviewee's personal response to it. Then, write an article based on the interview and any necessary additional research.

**Journalism, Multicultural Understanding and Diversity, and the Use of Adjectives** – Show students pictures from newspapers, magazines, or books. Tell them nothing about the pictures, but ask them to write down as many adjectives as necessary to adequately describe the picture. Or show students pictures of a diverse group of people. Again, have them write down adjectives to describe the people. Go over some of the lists in class. Ask students why they chose specific descriptive words. Do the words they chose indicate bias? Discuss with them that sometimes the ideas that we have about certain things are not rooted in fact but in our own experiences. Give them some examples, (i.e. “The dangerous and savage Amazon jungle houses many poisonous plants and animals,” as opposed to “The beautiful and lush Amazon jungle houses many exotic plants and animals.”) Or that the omission of some facts may cause one to come to faulty conclusions, (for example, The Dutch bought the island of Manhattan from the Native Americans for 28 beads. Without the knowledge that many Native American tribes did not believe that one could own the land and that paper money was of no value to them, one could come to the conclusion that Native Americans were not very smart and that Euro-Americans possessed superior intelligence.) Explain that in writing, what is left out is often as important as what is included. Thus, we need people like Ida B. Wells to tell the truth from another perspective. Different eyes and different voices see and tell the same story based on their understanding of truth. If desired, assign students a broad topic, (for example, the war in Iraq, the education system in America, the quality of school lunches, a literary figure or author—perhaps Dray). Have students write an article that utilizes as many of the adjectives on their lists as possible, then, read some of the articles pointing out how their truths, “facts” differ.

**Writing a Diary Entry** – Wells kept extensive diaries all her life. Choose one of the pivotal events in Wells's life and write an entry for that day. For example, the day she won or lost her lawsuit, the first day teaching, the death of her parents or Tom Moss, her move to Memphis, her first article published, her job in New York City, her marriage, or the birth of her first child.

**Vocabulary** – Create a vocabulary list from some of the themes listed at the beginning of the guide and from adjectives found in the text. Review or introduce the use of prefixes and suffixes. Have students identify prefixes and suffixes and their meanings for any appropriate words on their list. Then, based on context, ask students to define the words and use them in a sentence—of course, dictionaries should be available. Ask for parts of speech; remind students that concepts like slavery, justice, freedom, liberty, and lynching are nouns. This may be a good activity for students to do in pairs or small groups.

**Uses of Symbolism and Imagery/Making Inferences** – Show students the pictures in the text. Besides illustrating the words, what other purposes do the pictures serve? Explain that sometimes the images are meant to stand for something else or to add to the written text. For example, show students the first two pages of the book. Ask them to identify the things that they see. Then, read the text. What additional information do they get from the pictures? The Wells family is inside of a loving home. How do you know? The husband is touching his wife in a protective manner. The wife holds a ribbon connected to Ida's cradle. There is a loving link among the three people. Ida is obviously happy and reaching up to her parents. There is a heart painted on the cradle—an undeniable symbol of love. Very close, but outside, a war rages; inside, a cat arches her back—in fear or in contentment? On the second page, Jim is drawn hard at work, but still connected to his wife and daughter by proximity. In the background, are “pearly” open gates that end in a rising sun. Images of nature—the fluffy clouds, the flower, and the dove—bring what to the students' minds? Also, they should note the beginning of a road that runs throughout the book. This is the beginning of Ida's journey from childhood to adulthood, and all of the images emphasize the early influences on her life. Have students continue to go through the illustrations, preferably in small groups, looking for symbols and discussing the importance of those symbols. Remind students that eventually their book illustrations will be replaced by only words. Their understanding of the use of imagery and symbolism will help them to find meanings, themes, and main ideas in the texts.

**Research** – African-American women’s contributions to American history, literature, and political and social activism are often overlooked or ignored. There has long been African-American female protest in the songs sung to children that kept Africa alive in their memories and spirits; in the refusal to accept their third-class status by utilizing the courts, violence, and writing; in the healing and spiritual rituals learned across the ocean; in the refusal to give up on hope, love, mothering, and salvation with the smallest actions. Choose a woman from the list below and write a brief article about the contributions to society, justice, and/or change of that particular African-American woman. Compare her methods for promoting change to Wells’s methods. Explain the saying, “the pen is mightier than the sword.” How do most of these women use the power of the written, spoken, or sung word?

Lucy Terry	Angela Davis
Maria Stewart	Condoleezza Rice
Phillis Wheatley	Toni Morrison
Harriet Jacobs	Alice Walker
Frances E.W. Harper	Oprah Winfrey
Anna Julia Cooper	Queen Latifah
Pauline Hopkins	Coretta Scott King
Sonia Sanchez	Audre Lorde
Sojourner Truth	Maya Angelou
Alice Moore Dunbar Nelson	Bessie Smith
Zora Neale Hurston	Ntozake Shange
Marita Bonner	Octavia Butler
Gwendolyn Brooks	Elizabeth Key
Anne Petry	Bell Hooks
Dorothy Height	Myrlie Evers
Shirley Chisolm	Mae Jemison
Betty Shabazz	Willie B. Barrow
Nina Simone	Harriet Tubman
Nikki Giovanni	Faye Wattleton
Lorraine Hansberry	Daisy Bates
Carole Mosley Braun	Florynce Kennedy
Billie Holiday	Ruby Dee
Etta Baker	Mary Church Terrell
Fannie Lou Hamer	Patricia Harris
Toni Cade Bambara	Marian Wright Edelman
Rosa Parks	Mary McLeod Bethune
Barbara Jordan	Bernice Johnson Reagon
Kathleen Cleaver	Eleanor Holmes Norton
Wangari Maathai (African)	

## MATH

**Basic Math Skills** – Review addition and subtraction and drawing conclusions (logic) by using the timeline to determine the number of years between events. Instructors will probably want to include their own dates in some of the questions. For example, how many years elapsed between the Emancipation Proclamation and the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States in 2008? How many years go by between the birth of Ida B. Wells and the overturn of the idea of “separate but equal” as official Southern policy? How old would Wells have been when Shirley Chisolm became the first African-American woman to run for president (1972)? How

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long after the end of the Civil War (1865) was the student born? Ask students why there are so many years between the 15th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act.

**Statistics** – Journalists often rely on statistics to prove their arguments. Define statistics. Have students locate statistics about their state, for example, population statistics: have them find the entire population; then, ask them to break down the statistics by age, race, gender, income, high school graduates, registered voters, etc. They can also locate statistics about the sources of income in the state. Finding fun statistics is also an option. How many people took rides in air balloons? How many people watch *The Simpsons* regularly? Additional math equations can be created around the statistics—for example, what percentage of the population is under 13?

**Reading Statistics** – Give students a page of statistics from *The Red Record*; then on a worksheet, ask students specific questions about the facts. For example, how many black women were lynched in a given year? Or, connect this exercise to another discipline, like Social Studies. Give them statistics from a country, state, or person that they have studied or are studying and ask specific questions about the statistical information. Can statistics be manipulated? Remind them that while Wells uses statistics to condemn lynching, other writers and orators use statistics to justify lynching. These activities may best be done in pairs.

## ART

**1.** Besides being a freelance writer and journalist, Ida B. Wells was a fiery orator. Many times, she would give speeches from the backs of trains. These were called whistle-stop speeches. She was always impeccably dressed and often wore lavish hats; she was usually accompanied by her young children. Imagine Wells on the back of the train, holding one baby, other children gathered around her and clinging to her. People would wait for hours for her to arrive. She would deliver indignant speeches against lynching and injustice. (She was not a popular figure for many Southern audiences.) Draw a picture of the image of the young mother, social activist, and eloquent speaker on the back of the train. It may be a literal picture or an abstract portrait using symbols to represent the variety of elements that Ida embodies.

**2.** Introduce the haiku to students.

([www.kidzone/poetry/haiku.htm](http://www.kidzone/poetry/haiku.htm) or

[www.abcteach.com/Contributions/HaikuContest.htm](http://www.abcteach.com/Contributions/HaikuContest.htm)).

Explain the basic pattern of this Japanese-originated poetry form containing a total of 17 syllables—the American form is usually three

separate lines of five, then seven, then five syllables. Read a few amusing or easily interpreted ones to the class, then have students try their hands at their own haiku, based on *Yours for Justice* and a specific incident in Ida B. Wells's life. Or let them write a haiku based on their response to the reading. Give students construction paper and crayons, paint, or markers to illustrate their haiku. Emphasize that the haiku is often used to describe nature or an emotion.

## MUSIC

Remind students of any language limitations that are school or school district policy before beginning any of the activities in this section.

**1.** Have students choose a song that they consider a protest song. Tell them to read through the words/lyrics without the music. Allow them to write an explanation or analysis of the significance of the song. Then, have them listen to the song with the music. How does the music enhance or detract from the words? Ask them to identify dominant instruments used. Now, may be an appropriate time to play "Strange Fruit." You may want to include another version along with Billie Holiday's. Is the song more powerful than the written word? Read some portion of Ida B. Wells's writing for comparison. This may be a good homework assignment to finalize in class.

**2.** Choose a protest song and distribute the words to the class. Try to find one with which students are not familiar. In pairs, have them write an interpretation of the lyrics. Then, play several versions of the song and have them respond to the inclusion of the music and to the various musical interpretations of the same words. Also, include the instructions on instrumentation included in Activity 1. Music suggestions: "Black Man" by Stevie Wonder, or works by Joni Mitchell, Michael Jackson, U-2, Sweet Honey in the Rock, or Marvin Gaye.

**3.** Have students write their own protest song based on something that they would like to see changed. It can be a light issue (extended bedtime, more computer time, fewer or more months of school), or it can be something about which they feel strongly, or a topical issue, (global warming, recycling, extinction of certain species, electric cars). Remind them that they are not expected to write like adults or professional songwriters. Allow them to write their own voices in their own language.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

For appropriate maps, log on to [www.etc.usf.edu/maps/809](http://www.etc.usf.edu/maps/809) or 5290 or [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FILE:us\\_secession\\_map\\_1865.svg](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FILE:us_secession_map_1865.svg)

**Maps** – using a blank map of the United States trace Wells's physical journeys as outlined in the text. Identify and locate the capitals of the various states or countries that Wells visited or lived in. Remember that she was an international figure who gave speeches in Scotland and England. In a related activity, discuss emotional and spiritual journeys. Have students create a map of Wells's nonphysical journeys. Have students create their own physical, emotional, and spiritual maps. Allow them to project beyond their present age.

**Maps** – Remind students that the borders of the United States have changed greatly since 1862 (the year of Wells's birth). Using The Emancipation Proclamation, have students identify, on a time-appropriate map, the states that were in rebellion (The Confederate States of America) against the federal government. Identify the slave-holding states. List the states involved in the Civil War with their capitals.

**Research** – Assign students to research groups; give each group one of the southern states defined as the Deep South. First, allow students to brainstorm about what they already know or think they know about the assigned state. Second, ask them to research and outline a general overview of the state: capital, geography (rivers, mountains, etc), population by race and gender, natural resources, education system, colleges and universities, industries, and any state laws enacted during the years Wells was alive (1862–1931). Based on their findings, have them write a brief history of the state. Have students include statistics on the state today. Then, have students report their findings to the class. Use their reports as a basis for a discussion on regional culture: language/accents, rituals, food, popular culture, etc. Have them define The South.

**Geography** – Based on *Yours for Justice, Ida B. Wells*, first define, then discuss the differences between rural and urban life. Expand the discussion to include and define suburbs. Were there suburbs during Wells's lifetime?

## ADVANCED ACTIVITIES

(Thinking Outside the Box)

### Cause and Effect/Making Inferences/Reading and Writing Beyond the Ending

Place students in groups and assign each group one of the following questions:

**1.** In Dray's book, after the loss of Wells's lawsuit, he quotes her response as, "I had hoped for such great things from my suit for my people..." "and just now if it were possible [I] would gather my race in my arms and fly away with them." African history/folklore includes many stories about the ability of African people to fly. Alcorn's illustrations use many images of flight: flight as freedom, as power, as salvation, as protection and as journey. What do these references to flight explain about African and African-American life? What does the inclusion of flight in African-American history say about the attempts of racism and slavery to erase all aspects and memories of African culture?

**2.** There is a long legacy of African-American resistance to slavery, to Jim Crow Laws, to lynching, and to mob violence. Black Americans struggle, write, are imprisoned, are persecuted, and die to make life better for future generations. If there had been no Ida B. Wells and other champions of equality, could there be a Barack Obama? Now that the United States has its first Black American president, is race inequality dead? Besides Obama, what ideas come to mind when you see Black people on TV, in movies, in the news, or when you hear "Black music?" Do we tend to see groups or individuals? Why?

**3.** Compare the images of nature, the city, and Ida B. Wells throughout the text. How do these images convey Mood/Tone? Match an emotion to the images. How do these pictures make you feel? Look at the single blooming flower on page two of the book and compare the emotion of that picture to the picked and dying flower on the page following the murder of Tom Moss.

**4.** Based on what you have learned from this book and unit, why would white male passengers feel free to forcibly remove Wells from the train? What images of African-American women do you see most often in popular culture? Besides celebrities, how and where do you see African-American women in American history and culture?

### APPENDIX

Many of the laws are included in Dray's timeline, but most students will need further explanations for complete understanding of the differences between the legal words and the reality of practice.

**1807** U.S. ban on the importation of slaves makes slaves more valuable. Female slaves became

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increasingly used as breeders. This begins a new chapter in the dehumanization of African-American women and initiates new methods of torture (punishment) that allow slaveholders to beat the female without hurting the fetus. Racist ideologies about Black female sexuality emerge to justify the practice of breeding. Many children are removed from the mother's care so no bonding or nurturing can occur.

### The Emancipation Proclamation - (1/1/1863)

Written and delivered by Abraham Lincoln-

<http://www.nps.gov/ncro/anti/emancipation.html>

Read or play The Emancipation Proclamation, stopping frequently to explain any questions students may have. You should include an age-friendly version for distribution to students. While many students may have difficulty with the words, an impassioned delivery makes the historical significance of the document clear. Remind students that more Americans died in the Civil War than in any other war because it divided the country. Once the Proclamation, the voice of the President speaking for and to the people, proclaimed freedom for the enslaved, anyone continuing to hold slaves broke the official law of the land and was subject to punishment by the military units of the United States. Legally, the army of the Southern states rebelled against America. The soldiers were considered traitors. Point out that Lincoln included rules for the freed slaves.

### Amendments to the Constitution

<http://www.usconstitution.net/constkids.html>

**13th Amendment** (1865) Bans slavery and bonded servitude

**14th Amendment** (1868) Grants full citizenship rights to African-Americans; effectively overturns The Dred Scott Decision (1857) which stated that African slaves and their descendants were not protected by the Constitution and could never be citizens of America. Dred Scott has never officially been overturned by the Supreme Court

**15th Amendment** (1870) Grants voting rights to Black men.

**1865-1877** Southern Reconstruction attempts to rebuild the South after the Civil War and to prepare the newly freed slaves for life in America. Education is paramount. Federal troops installed in Southern states to ensure compliance with laws, especially voting rights. By the time federal troops withdraw in 1877, most states in the South have enacted state laws (Jim Crow Laws) that override the laws of the federal government and place Blacks in essentially the same place they were prior to the new amendments. Violence, intimidation, and economic deprivation are used to keep African-Americans from trying to exercise or to continue exercising their rights of American citizenship.

**1896** Plessy vs. Ferguson upholds Jim Crow Laws by legalizing concept of separate but equal.

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**1954** Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas overturns *Plessy*, finds that segregation and equality are mutually exclusive. A new era of lynching begins as again African-Americans demand their legal rights.

**Black Women’s Club Movement “Lifting As We Climb”** Beginning with the Emancipation Proclamation, African-Americans realized that they would have to bond together for protection, economic advancement, and to maintain their rights. In the 1880s and 1890s, African-American women responded to their unique position in America—not White, not male—by establishing a variety of clubs. More than merely a meeting place for upper and middle-class women, these clubs worked toward political, social, and economic change. Ida B. Wells was one such member. The clubs’ motto, “lifting as we climb,” appealed to a communal ideology in which those who had education, money, and connections had a duty and a responsibility to those who did not. Thus, in addition to using various means of activism to fight injustice and inequality, they established schools for poor and uneducated Black women to teach them reading, writing, and arithmetic. The club women did (and continue to do) community outreach: teaching personal hygiene, parenting, managing a household, supplying necessities, advocating for fair treatment on jobs, filing law suits, and re-instilling pride, self-determination, power over their own bodies, and self-esteem. Contrary to the American ideal of “rugged individualism,” these women reached back to their African roots that emphasized interdependence. The importance of learning writing and reading—the establishment of newsletters, papers, publishing companies, and reading circles—opened up outlets of support that last to the present day.

**A Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States, 1892–1894** Wells did extensive research and on-site investigation and interviews before compiling this intense, factual, and inclusive record of the numbers of people lynched, the justifications for this lawlessness, and a course of action to end the horror. Her writing skills and the statistics laid out a flawless case that lynching was nothing more than an excuse to steal, kill, maim, and keep alive racist stereotypes that disempowered and intimidated Black Americans to stay in their place as second class citizens. She argued that while Blacks were slaves they were considered property and thus, represented monetary value and someone’s chattel. Once Blacks were freed, their value was greatly diminished. Lynching deprived no white of his/her property and there were more than enough Black workers still in the South to make the lynching of a few hundred Black people of no great economic loss. Summary information of the main points of this text can be found at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/14977>.

### **Wells’s Appeal to Individuals and Groups:**

Ida B. Wells told everyone to distribute *A Red Record* freely. “*Tell the world the facts.*” She stated that a true Christian world will respond with outrage against Americans who condone and encourage lynching. Some of Ida Wells’s instructions to her readers:

1. Spread the word from *A Red Record*; let the truth be known about the real reasons for lynching. Stop living and believing in myths and know the facts.
2. Appeal to all Christian and moral forces—churches, clubs, YMCA’s, WCTU’s—to pass resolutions of condemnation and protest for every lynching. Let no bloody body go uncounted. Send people to the site of the atrocity, let the community see what its people are doing in the name of Christ and America.
3. Financially boycott places where mob violence is allowed to go unchecked. The South is still attempting to rebuild. Money is needed everywhere. Withhold money: where there is no equality or justice, there will be no money. Appeal to politicians to cut off funding to states that do not recognize federal laws.
4. Black Americans need to follow their own morality and culture. Whites created a culture of violence by creating the environment that made lynching possible and justifiable, so it is up to Whites to fix this thinking and behavior.
5. Pass a resolution that condemns and punishes lynching. Send the resolution to the House of Representatives. Write letters to congressmen and senators detailing demands of anti-lynching legislation.

### **SOURCES**

**Internet sites:** Most are included in the body of the guide as reference resources.

[www.strangefruit.org](http://www.strangefruit.org)

### **HELPFUL WEBSITES**

[www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/wells-barnett\\_ida/index.html](http://www.olemiss.edu/mwp/dir/wells-barnett_ida/index.html)

[www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\\_people\\_wells.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_people_wells.html)

[www.idabwells.org](http://www.idabwells.org)

[www.afroamhistory.about.com](http://www.afroamhistory.about.com)

[www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmtimeline.html](http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmtimeline.html)

[www.lib.washington.edu/subject/History/tm/black.html](http://www.lib.washington.edu/subject/History/tm/black.html)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**PHILIP DRAY** has written many books, including *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America*, which won the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Book Award and was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. He is a veteran civil rights historian and a compelling public speaker who gives lively, fun presentations, and encourages questions from the audience. Dray provides a 30-minute slide show and a 20-30 minute Q&A suitable for young audiences on the life and times of Ida B. Wells. **(Intended audience: Grades 3-9) E, M, H**

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**STEPHEN ALCORN** is an award-winning illustrator of numerous books for young people, including *Lincoln: In His Own Words*; *Let it Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters*, a Coretta Scott King Award Honor Book; *Yours for Justice, Ida B. Wells: The Daring Life of a Crusading Journalist*; and *Keep On!: The Story of Matthew Henson, Co-Discoverer of the North Pole*. An internationally renowned artist and printmaker, Alcorn spent his formative years in Florence, Italy, where he attended Istituto Statale d'Arte. While there, he was exposed to a wide range of mediums and developed a taste for using bold, warm colors. Twice the recipient of The Carter G. Woodson Book Award, Alcorn's work has been featured in numerous magazines and hangs in many private and permanent collections in the United States and Europe. He lives with his wife Sabina, a botanical artist, and their two daughters. Together they founded The Alcorn Studio & Gallery in 1993, which is open to the general public and features rotating exhibits of the artists' paintings, printmaking, and book illustrations. Visit his website at [www.alcorngallery.com](http://www.alcorngallery.com). **(Intended audience: Grades 4-Adult) E, M, H**

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Dr. Kathy P. Kilpatrick.

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