The Legacy of SGT. Isaac Woodard, Jr. and lesson plan ideas for all grade levels

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Written by Laura M. Williams, the Great Niece of Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr., 2020, about 75 years after it occurred.

One of her purposes in writing this was to increase “Empathy, Compassion, and Diversity” among our population, especially within our school.
Laura M. Williams, the great-niece of Sergeant Isaac Woodard, Jr., 2020.
Here Sgt. Woodard becomes a griot, sharing his story for children. This story illuminates the history of inequality for African-Americans in America, while recognizing the brave souls who have chosen to lend support and bring about positive change. Sergeant Woodard’s story gives the young reader a glimpse of history, hope and faith in humanity.
Timeline

● 1919 - Born in Fairfield, South Carolina
● Grew up in Goldboro, North Carolina, 1 of 9 children
● 1942 - enlisted in the U.S. Army at Fort Jackson, South Carolina
● Served in the Pacific Theater as a longshoreman in a labor battalion, loading and unloading cargo on ships
● Age 26, honorably discharged from the U.S. Army
● February 12, 1946, along with several other black and white discharged soldiers boards a Greyhound bus to return home. He asked to leave the bus to use the restroom which led to a “heated exchange with the bus driver.” He would then be arrested and received a beating so severe it left him blind; “henious details left out.”
● July 1948, President Truman issues EO #9981

Civil Rights Timeline - Truman Library Institute
“What followed is an incredible story of angst, courage and motivation on behalf of Sgt. Woodard, President Harry S. Truman, and Judge J. Waites Waring. This incident contributed to the Civil Rights Movement and quickly gained momentum.”

- Laura M. Williams
“I’m a man just like you,” Woodard said.

“I spent 3½ years in the service of my country and thought I would be treated as a man when I returned to my country,” Woodard said. “But that was a mistake.”
“YOU CAN’T CURE A MORAL PROBLEM BY IGNORING IT.”
– President Harry S. Truman
Analyze a Video

Meet the video.
What do you see in the video? Circle all that apply.

- People
- Activities
- Objects

Is there a title?
- Yes
- No

If so, what does the title tell you about the video?

Observe its parts.
Who do you see in the video?

What activities do you see happening in the video?

What places do you see in the video?

Write two words that describe this video.

Try to make sense of it.
Who do you think made this video?

Who do you think was supposed to see the video?

When is this video from?

What is the main idea of the video? List two things (people, activities, or places) from the video that support the main idea.

Use it as historical evidence.
Where do you think you could find out more information about the people, activities or places from this video?
Lesson Plans on the Truman website:

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HTML
"Protecting our Posterity from the Prejudices of the Past"

HTML
Timeline of Civil Rights through American History
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Isaac Woodard

Sergeant Isaac Woodard Jr. was born on March 8, 1919, in Fairfield County, South Carolina to Sarah Elizabeth Woodard and Isaac Woodard Sr. He was the fifth of nine children.

At 23, Woodard enlisted in the U.S. Army at Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina. On February 12, 1946, after returning to the U.S. from serving in World War II, Woodard was on a bus heading for his home when he asked to use the restroom during a rest stop. The driver initially denied Woodard's request and spoke to him in a disrespectful manner. Woodard told him to 'treat him like a man' as he had treated him. A short verbal altercation ensued. Woodard was allowed to use the restroom. At the next stop, the driver pulled over in Batesburg, South Carolina where police officers took Woodard into custody, arrested and assaulted him while he was jailed, blinding him by beating him in the eyes.

In September of 1946, President Harry S. Truman learned of Woodard's blinding and ordered the Justice Department to open an investigation. A short time later, the officers involved were indicted and acquitted in U.S. District Court with Judge Julius Waties Waring presiding.

A short time later, Truman began the process of desegregating the U.S. military and creating the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. In an interview with Gil Noble, Woodard said, "People should learn how to live with one another and how to treat one another. Because after all, we all are human beings, regardless of color."

Woodard moved to the Bronx, New York where he lived near family and owned properties until his death in 1992. In 2019, a historical plaque was erected in Batesburg-Leesville to memorialize the 1946 attack.
Use the photograph of the marker and the bio for Isaac Woodard to compare five facts about Isaac in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bio</th>
<th>Marker</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Sgt. Isaac Woodard, a black soldier, was removed from a bus in Batesburg and arrested on Feb. 12, 1946, after a dispute with the bus driver. Woodard was beaten and blinded by a town police officer and the next day convicted in town court for “drunk and disorderly.” The incident led Harry Truman to form a Council on Civil Rights and Issue Executive Order 9981, which desegregated the U.S. Armed Forces in 1948. (Continued on other side)</td>
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This is the actual ad for the Isaac Woodard Benefit Show that occurred in 1946. Use the ad to answer the questions below.

1. When was the Benefit Show?

2. What was the address of the show?

3. Who was the Mayor of NYC?

4. How much did it cost?

5. List 3 of the artists that entertained.

6. What is the address of the Palm Cafe?
Orson Welles Commentaries

“A Dangerous, Costly, and Heartbreaking Process, Orson Wells, Radio Broadcaster, 7/26/1946
**Analyze a Sound Recording**

**Meet the sound recording.**
What do you hear in the sound recording? Circle all that apply.
- Talking
- Singing
- Speech
- Music
- News Report
- Interview
- Discussion

Is there a title?
- Yes
- No

If so, what does the title tell you about the recording?

**Try to make sense of it.**
Who do you think made this sound recording?

Who do you think was supposed to hear this recording?

When is this recording from?

What is the main idea of the recording?
List two things (words or sounds) from the recording that support the main idea.

**Observe its parts.**
Who do you hear in the sound recording?

What is the sound recording about?

Write two words that describe this sound recording.

**Use it as historical evidence.**
Where do you think you could find out more information about the people or topics from this sound recording?

*NATIONAL ARCHIVES*
In writing about these crimes and attempts to hold attackers accountable, Joplin, Missouri born poet and activist, Langston Hughes, deemed the quest for justice, “a dangerous, costly and heartbreaking process.”
Dr. Kori Schake, Senior Fellow and Director of Foreign and Defense Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute, said she worked under Michelle Howard’s leadership which was “one of inclusion” and one which “created a sense of community.”

We are the “LEGACY of Truman’s Executive Order,” as she praised her mentor, Master Chief Williams, Sr., USN (Ret.) and Vice Adm. Melvin G. Williams, Jr., USN (Ret.).

-Admiral (Ret.) Michelle Howard, U.S. Navy
Truman Library Institute
“...the foundation....supports those who desire to learn more...who desire to be action-oriented and patriotic and who cross (all kinds of ) lines... and who understand democracy is not merely a spectator sport...”
-Terry Babcock-Lumish, Executive Secretary for the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation

THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY