

Discussion Questions for *Facing the Color Line: Race and ethnicity in Cache Valley*

As part of the Common Literature Experience at Utah State University, students in Connections and English 1010 read *Warriors Don't Cry*, Melba Patillo Beals' memoir about the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. The Library has created a digital collection to augment this reading. The collection consists of letters to and from USU President Daryl Chase, articles, letters to the editor, and interviews, etc. dealing with race relations at USU and in Cache Valley in the 1950s and 1960s. Contemporary government documents such as the Congressional Record and the executive order from President Eisenhower to send troops to Little Rock provide the federal view of events. The collection also features links to Arkansas and national newspapers reporting on the school integration events at Little Rock and their repercussions. Using these digitized primary sources, students can explore issues presented in the book, beginning with the study questions suggested below.

1. Read the Executive Order from 1957 and the Congressional Hearing from 1958 (beginning with the testimony on page 1 from Mr. Thurmond). How do these documents explain the federal government's involvement at Central High School, as well as the reasons for opposition to the use of federal troops? How does the Congressional debate and politicians' concerns compare to the story told in *Warriors Don't Cry*? Was the average person in Little Rock more concerned about the federal troops coming to Central High or racial integration?
2. Read some of the documents related to racial integration and discrimination at USU and in the Cache Valley. How do these documents compare to Little Rock in 1957, as told in *Warriors Don't Cry*? Are the arguments and language about racial integration similar or different?
3. Listen to the interview with Darnel Haney. How does his story compare to Melba Patillo Beals' life? Did they face similar issues? Were there geographic differences? How did each of them respond to the racial attitudes they encountered in their young lives?
4. Many people assume that Utah did not face severe race discrimination and segregation issues in the 1950s and 1960s because of its predominantly white population. Read Ross Peterson's article and one of the primary sources from the Daryl Chase letters. Do you think Utah had a problem "facing the color line" fifty years ago? How do you think this compares to the situation in the South at the same time? How do you think Utah is "facing the color line" today?

Using Primary Sources in the Classroom

Because primary sources provide firsthand evidence of historical events, they are an essential resource for conducting research. They include written accounts such as photographs, diaries, letters, newspaper articles, and manuscripts; verbal accounts such as contemporary video and sound recordings, and oral histories; and images such as photographs, slides, etc.

Merrill-Cazier Library has many unique collections of primary source materials housed in both the Special Collections and Archives and the Government Documents departments. The Digital

Library is selectively digitizing and mounting these for easy access by students and researchers via the Digital Library at <http://digital.lib.usu.edu>. *Facing the Color Line: Race and Ethnicity in Cache Valley* is one of six collections currently available.

If you would like more information about using primary documents as teaching materials in your classes, please contact:

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