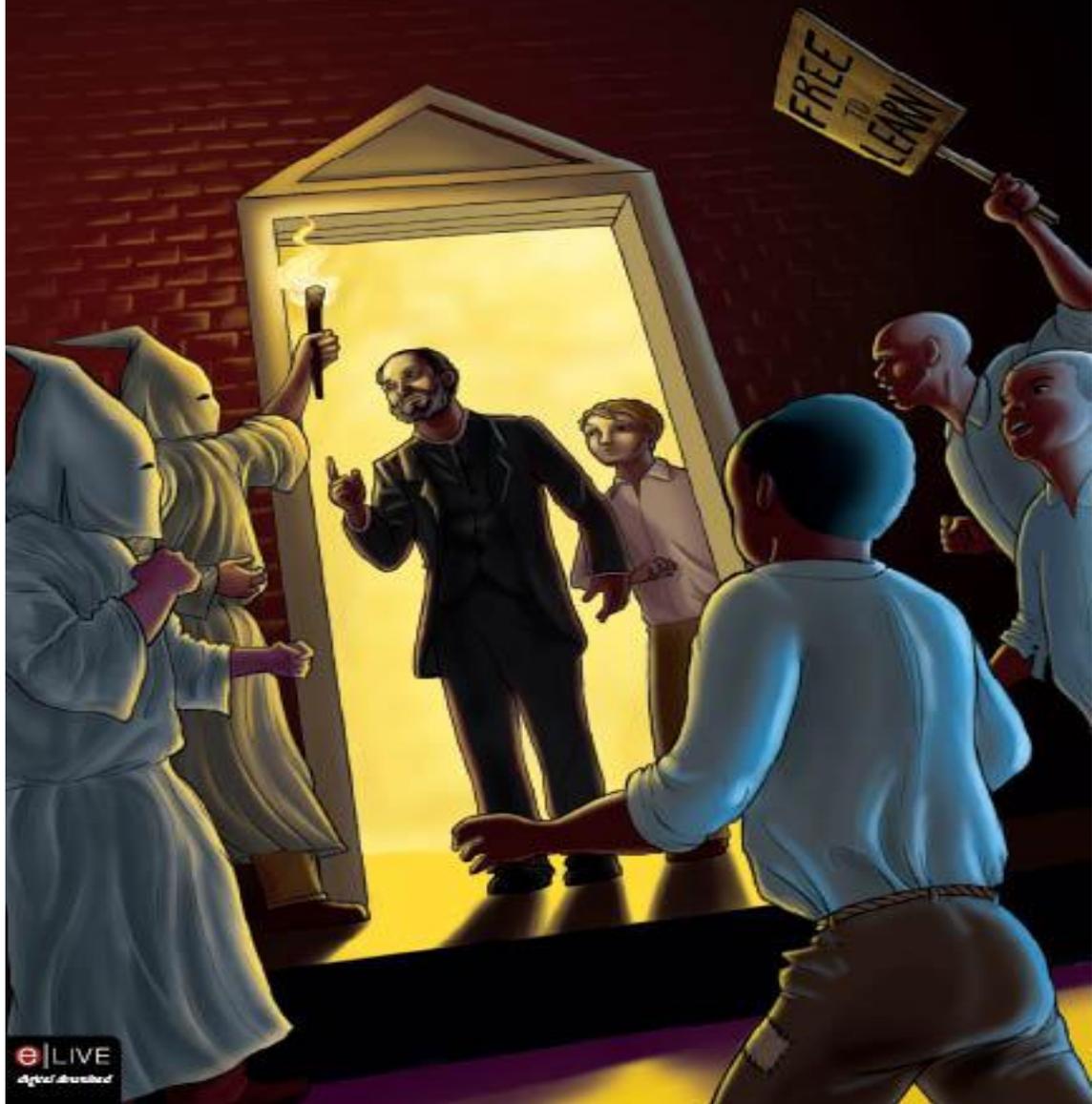


COSTLY FREEDOM

written by Terry Webb



STUDY GUIDE

Introduction for Teachers and Parents

The historical setting for this story is 1867 in Marietta, Georgia right after the Civil War during the early days of Reconstruction in the South. The illustrations used throughout the story show buildings that actually existed in Marietta or were destroyed by Sherman's army during the 1860s. The Benedict family characters were real persons. So was Mrs. Fletcher; but the other characters are fictional.

Reconstruction was a difficult period in American history, often overlooked or downplayed in text books. Newly freed slaves were excited about their opportunities for education, land ownership and self employment. However, they faced the anger and resentments of many of their former owners, whose whole economic and social way of life had just been destroyed. Two of the characters in this story, Albert and Will, epitomize these opposing historical realities. The politics of that time reflected the clash of opinions as to how to deal with the defeated confederacy and what to do about the Negro issue. Land was given to freed slaves and then taken away again. The Freedmen's Association wanted equal voting rights, education and employment for freed slaves. They gained national recognition and influence and then died out. Radical Republicans in Congress wanted to set up a military rule in each of the southern states to carry out emancipation. President Johnson attempted to restore representation in Congress to the Southern States and was almost impeached. Angry people turned into violent people.

Many older generations of Southern Blacks and Southern Whites, who lived through these traumatic times in our nation's history, have buried and carried the pain and hurt that comes from suffering a life-time or more than three generations of life-times of injustices.

Please be prepared for some of your students, especially students-of-color, to react angrily to the racism and what today is considered racist language used in this story. Southern white students may still hold loyalties to the Confederacy. As an author, I sought to be true to the southern former slave dialect at that time, as well as how defeated southern white former slave owners reacted to their emancipation. I seriously considered not using the full term "nigger," which term even I find offensive. But I allowed my characters to use the hated word because —after reading many slave narratives and social commentary of this period of history— I discovered that former slaves used that word about themselves as well as the words "Negra" and "colored."

Therefore, I suggest that before students read the story the teacher or parent explore with them their reactions to the scene depicted on the book's cover as well as what the title means to each of them.

Module One

Using Art to Tell a Story

- Examine the cover of *Costly Freedom*. What potential conflict do you see from the characters depicted in the drawing? Notice especially the two standing in the doorway. What role do you think they will have in averting the conflict? How does the cover make you feel?
- Write a sentence or two that defines what is meant by the title of the story, *Costly Freedom*.
- Find the illustrations placed in the story (pp. 24, 62 and 66). These drawings and photos were original to that period of history and show some of the buildings depicted in the story. Now look carefully at the illustration entitled Emancipation on the next page. Find the stories told in this illustration.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Module Two

Historical Fiction

This story is written during a specific period of American history called Reconstruction. After the Civil War the President and Congress had to make some decisions about what to do with freed slaves as well as deciding how to restore and rebuild the South.

- When you read the story note what different ideas about Reconstruction are expressed through the fictional characters such as Master Calhoun, Mrs. Fletcher, Rev. Benedict, Albert, Sam and Will Cobb.
- Discuss or debate by taking the role of one of the characters in the book expressing his or her opinion of reconstruction.
- In the Foreword to the story, the curator of the Museum in Marietta tells us how long it actually took for southern whites and southern blacks to be educated together. Discuss why you think it took so long.
- Some parts of this story are historical and some fictional. Share one example of an historical fact and one that is fictional. Explore other facts, opinions and fiction on a blog found through author's website.

Module Three

Social Attitudes

As Americans each of us has a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Our Declaration of Independence calls these our inalienable rights. Our freedom as Americans entitles each of us to be treated as equals. We are entitled to our own thoughts and opinions. Sometimes our thoughts or opinions are like others. Sometimes, not. If we're afraid, angry or hurt our thoughts or feelings may come out in a negative or harmful way. Think about a time that one of your parents said to you that you needed to change your negative attitude.

Some attitudes are influenced by the media; some by what we hear on TV or through the Internet; some attitudes arise because of traumatic events that just happen. When one social group of people holds the same negative attitudes about another group of people we call that prejudice. Prejudice leads to hostility and bias words or actions against the other group. Hate crimes or terrorism may result.

- List some of your opinions. Then list some of negative attitudes you may have had when you were feeling hurt or angry.
- After you read the story, describe Will's attitudes and how he acted on them. How did his friends influence his attitudes? How did the events that happened to his family influence his attitudes? Discuss which of his attitudes changed by the end of the story; which did not.
- What social attitudes are influenced by the media or the Internet today?

Module Four

Hate Crimes or Terrorism

Since September 11, 2001, America has been at war against a terrorist group called al Qaeda. Members of al Qaeda or individuals trained by them are influenced by a charismatic leader called Osama Bin Laden who hates the modern Western way of life. The Nazis, another terrorist group led by Hitler, didn't like Jews so they threatened them, rounded up whole families, sent them to concentration camps and then killed them in gas chambers. Today there are over 932 such groups in the United States who hate other groups of people usually of another color, religion or background. Even though our federal government has passed a Hate Crimes Prevention Law to protect all classes of people from threats and intimidation every citizen needs to be alert to who these groups are, their Internet websites and to be willing to report any suspicious bias comments or actions.

During the period of history after the Civil War many Americans who lived in southern states were hurt and very angry that their way of life and economic security had so radically changed. Some prominent citizens and former Confederate soldiers joined together to form Ku Klux Klans and terrorized the South. There are still 187 Klan groups and 161 Neo-Nazi groups in existence today. Klansmen usually meet secretly dressed in white robes and veil their faces. During the period of Reconstruction they rode their horses around their neighborhoods carrying fiery torches— sometimes in the form of crosses—threatening, lynching, and

destroying. They hung freed slaves and those sympathetic to Emancipation as well as burning down houses and beating up on anyone who crossed them.

- Define the terms such as bias, prejudice, and terrorism.
- Read the story and identify the terrorist actions of the Ku Klux Klan. How did each of the characters in the story react to their words and actions?
- What caused the negative attitudes in the South that led to prejudice and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan? Do you think these same attitudes exist today? Why or why not?
- Do an internet search of websites that include the terms KKK or knights, militia, white pride or Aryan.
- Look up other websites and groups in your state through www.splcentr.org
- Discuss ways to prevent terrorism.

The Southern Poverty Law Center's 2009 "Hate Group"
Map
www.splcenter.org



Count the number in your state.

The Ku Klux Klan



Mercury Photo by John Strickler

As pedestrians walk through their ranks, Ku Klux Klan members distribute leaflets along High Street in Pottstown during an April 1996 recruitment drive. Residents confronted Klan members, but no injuries were reported.

Militia Movement: Sometimes Armed & Dangerous



- Gun Rights
- Anti-Immigration Focus
- Sovereign Citizens
- Defense of Life Style
- Individual vs. Federal
- Posse Comitatus

Racist Rock

- Supremacist groups utilize “White Power Rock” music to indoctrinate young people with the hate message.
- Lyrics are extremely violent and hateful and are used to vilify members of other races, religions or ancestry.
- Songs become a rallying cry for violence.
- Racist rock has become a “cash cow” for some groups.



Targeting Kids Online

- Games
 - Puzzles
 - Shooting Games
- Homework Help
- Support Groups
- Scholarship Funds



First Amendment Issues

“Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press”

However

The Government can regulate some of the conduct associated with speech, but cannot base its regulations on the content or viewpoint expressed.

- Who gets to decide whose organization, activities or language is “good or bad?”

It's not the government.

Blog with

www.authorterrywebb.com

who writes it like it was lest we forget

and in our silence let it happen again