



TOPIC/OBJECTIVE: Research Background
information to understand
the Nickel Boys better

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CLASS/PERIOD: 3B

DATE: 2/2/23

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How do the background resources for the Nickel Boys reflect the themes present in the story?

QUESTIONS:

How was the school able to stay open until 2017?

How did the law allow for black facilities to go to jail while white facilities were well-kept?

How did this counterculture affect African American lives in terms of punishment from the law?

How does one draw the line with fantasy elements in heavy, based on a true story writings?

NOTES: Dozier School for Boys / Reform schools

- reform school for youth criminals. Due to the reasoning that its main reason was to "save kids from dangerous neighborhoods, they proportionally incarcerated more black kids

- kids were treated terribly. They were beat and crushed. 80 people were killed. The school didn't close until 2011.

Jim Crow laws

- Laws that allowed for legal segregation. Black facilities were in bad shape as compared to white facilities. Black people were lynched and wrongfully accused of rape because they were considered "more dangerous" due to their skin color.

Emergence of African American Culture

- "Black is beautiful" emerged from culture and there were many shows, writings, and other forms of media portraying black people in good light

Fantasy vs realism

- Colson Whitehead uses fantasy elements like his characters and setting elements to transform his piece into brutal realism

as a fiction writer

words that don't belong to everyone

- words like the N-words are not to be spoken by people who aren't black because of its historical context.

SUMMARY: The Nickel Boys is a book about a fictional account of the horrors of the Dozier School, set during the time of Jim Crow laws, yet also during civil rights movements and an emergence of cultures, and how the two main characters see it through their lenses.