

The Art of Migration



Born in 1917, artist Jacob Lawrence grew up at the height of Great Migration. During the Migration, often defined as 1910—1930, more than 10% of the African American population in the U.S. moved north to find work and in hopes of a better life. Lawrence painted conditions in both North and South from memory. Answer these questions about Lawrence and his work.

1. Lawrence's parents moved from the South in steps, stopping to live and work in several cities along the way before reaching New York. This slow way of traveling was:

- Representative of the experience of many African Americans during the Migration
- Uncommon. Most families traveled to their destination without stopping.

2. In his 1940 -41 series of 60 paintings, "Migration," Lawrence painted about why African Americans left the South. Among these were:

- Boll weevils
- Segregation and lynchings
- Extortion by landowners
- All of the above
- Both b) and c)

3. In his "Migration" series, Lawrence paints scenes of life for new arrivals in the North. There were hardships here, too. These included:

- Jim Crow laws that denied African Americans their right to vote
- Overcrowding
- Rejection by longstanding African American communities
- All of the above
- Both b) and c)

4. The "Migration" series includes a painting of apartment buildings ablaze. This image represents:

- Violence against African Americans in Southern urban areas
- Violence against African Americans in Northern urban areas
- The aftermath of a 1919 New York race riot that left 38 dead
- The aftermath of a 1921 race riot in Tulsa, OK , that left more than 300 dead



Sources:

Phillips Collection. *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series*.

http://www.phillipscollection.org/migration_series/index.cfm (accessed October 25, 2010).

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. *In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience*.

<http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm> (accessed October 25, 2010).

<http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/quiz>