

Names _____

***The Secret Life of Bees* WEBQUEST**

The Secret Life of Bees primarily takes place in **1964 South Carolina 1964**. There are several historical events occurring around this date especially in the **Civil Rights Movement**. Although our narrator, Lily Owens is white, her closest friend and confidant, Rosaleen, is African-American. This Web quest will give you a brief view into important events before and in 1964, as well as allusions to the Wailing Wall and Black Mary.

Directions: Visit the following websites and answer the questions **thoroughly** in complete sentences. To use the actual links (versus typing in the full URL, go to our class website and look in today's post.

EVENT ONE: Birmingham Church Bombing

Historical Event: On September 15, 1963 a bomb explodes in a church in Birmingham, Alabama

Connection to *The Secret Life*: In chapter 4, Lily finds a piece of paper in May's Wailing Wall that says: "Birmingham, Sept 15, four little angels dead" (80).

<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/birmingham-church-bombing>

1) What happened? (Who, what, when, where)

2) What was the outcome of the trial?

Look at some of the photographs that were taken after the bombing:

http://www.bplonline.org/resources/digital_project/SixteenthStBaptistBomb.asp

(Make sure you enlarge the pictures and look at them closely.)

3) What strikes you about these pictures?

EVENT TWO: The 24th Amendment (Poll Tax)

Historical Event: On January 23, 1964, the 24th Amendment is ratified.

http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/modern/jb_modern_polltax_1.html

(Look at both pages)

Connection to *Secret Life*: One the reasons Rosaleen (in Chapter 1) can now register to vote was because she doesn't need to pay a tax anymore.

1) What was a poll tax?

2) Why did we need the 24th Amendment if the 15th Amendment allowed African-Americans to vote?

EVENT THREE: Freedom Summer

Historical Event: The summer of 1964 is often called the Freedom Summer because of the efforts of civil rights workers to exact change.

<http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/civilrights-55-65/mississippi.html>

Connection to *Secret Life*: This is the summer during which Rosaleen and Lily are traveling from Sylvan to Tiburon and living with the Boatwrights.

1) What prevented many African-Americans from registering to vote?

2) What were some of the major goals of the Freedom Summer Project?

EVENT FOUR: Three Freedom Summer Workers Killed

Historical Event: On June 24th, 1964, three civil rights workers were killed; they were working to register people to vote.

<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/bhmjustice4.html>

Connection to *Secret Life*: This event was historically about a week before Chapter 1 in the book; Rosaleen was probably well aware of these killings. Lily tells us that she is uneasy about Rosaleen going to register because, “Last night the television said a man in Mississippi was killed for registering to vote...” (27). Lily also makes a direct reference to Rosaleen when talks to her in the hospital: “If you stay here, those men are gonna come back and kill you. I’m serious. They’re gonna kill you, like those colored people in Mississippi got killed” (47).

1) What happened?

2) Who is Edgar Ray Killen?

3) Why was the case reopened in 1999? What ended up happening?

EVENT FIVE: The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Historical Event: On July 2nd, President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAcivil64.htm>

Connection to *Secret Life*: This is the bill Rosaleen sees President Johnson signing on television in the first chapter. As she holds the TV antennae for Rosaleen, Lily tells us, “I looked over at Rosaleen, who sat there shaking her head mumbling, ‘Lord have mercy,’ just looking so disbelieving and happy, like people on television when they answered the \$64,000 question” (20). Later, when Rosaleen tells Lily that no motel will let her (a black woman) stay, Lily asks: “Well, what was the point of the Civil Rights Act? Doesn’t that mean people have to let you stay in their motels and eat in their restaurants if you want to?” Rosaleen answers, “That’s what it means, but you gonna have to drag people kicking and screaming to do it” (60).

1) What do you consider important background information about this act?

2) What did the Civil Rights Act of 1964 do?

EVENT SIX: Martin Luther King Jr. Arrested

Historical Event: Martin Luther King Jr. Arrested in Florida (a few weeks before the Civil Rights Act was signed by President Johnson)

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/martin-luther-king-jr-timeline.html>

Connection to *Secret Life*: Lily says that, “All people ever talked about after churches were the Negroes and whether they’d get their civil rights. Who was winning—the white people’s team or the colored people’s team? Like it was a do-or-die contest. When that minister from Alabama, Revered Martin Luther King, got arrested last month in Florida for wanting to eat in a restaurant, the men at church acted like the white people’s team had won the pennant race. I knew they would not take this news lying down, not in one million years” (21).

1) What other important events happened to Martin Luther King Jr. in 1964?

2) Review the timeline. Record two other important events/accomplishments in MLK’s life (besides the ones that occurred in 1964).

SEVEN: ALLUSION to the WAILING WALL

Read the following (about the wall): <http://www.aish.com/w/a/>

Connection to *Secret Life*: In chapter 4, Lily discovers that one of the Calendar sisters, May, puts pieces of paper in a stone rock wall when she is upset. This is an allusion to the Wailing Wall (also known as the Western Wall) in Jerusalem.

Read the following (about the wall): <http://www.aish.com/w/a/>

1. What are three facts you learned about the wall?

Read the following: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-the-wailing-wall.htm>

- 1) What additional facts have you learned about the wall?

EIGHT: Jim Crow Laws

Connection to *Secret Life*: Throughout the novel, Lily and other characters will talk about Jim Crow or the Jim Crow laws.

Skim through the Jim Crow laws and look at the posted sign link.

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what.htm>

Posted Sign – (Link)

<http://sweetauburn.us/rings/jimcrow.htm>

1. What were the Jim Crow laws and how did they get their name? Provide three examples.

2. What message does this sign communicate?

3. How would you feel if you saw this sign posted?

TEN: Mary and The Black Madonna

Connection to Secret Life: The Calendar sisters, particularly August, will refer many times to a Black Madonna.

Click on the following link and read text blocks 1, 2, 4-8. Then answer the following questions.

Who is Mary?

<http://www.ourcatholicfaith.org/mary.html>

1. Who is Mary?
2. What is a "hail Mary?" Explain its parts.
3. Is this information about Mary true? How do you know?
4. How would you define "faith" based on what you have read?

Study the following picture and read the first paragraph that accompanies it.

the Black Madonna

<http://interfaithmary.net/pages/Czech%20Republic,%20Prague,%20Breznice.htm>

5. What is the first thing you notice about the image?
6. Could this image be controversial? How?
7. What does the inscription in Mary's halo say? How is this important?
8. What purpose does Mary serve?
9. Is God a color? Which one? Explain your thoughts and why this is important to people.