

Handout #3: Mississippi Delta Sharecropper Profile

Percy and Ruby, both twenty-five years old, are a black sharecropping couple living outside Greenville, Mississippi in 1948. They're married with three kids. Tomorrow's an important day: it's the settle where they will finally be given their share of the crop for the year's work. But they're worried. With all the interest charges, they didn't even clear their debt last year. Furthermore, there's talk that the plantation owner is going to buy one of those new mechanical cotton pickers. Percy and Ruby are very anxious about their future. They're wondering whether they should stay in Greenville where they've lived their entire lives and continue to pick cotton in the hope they'll be able to get far enough ahead to buy their own plot of land, or head North and take their chances in Chicago as their cousin Henry did last year. After putting the kids to bed Percy and Ruby sit down to consider their options, reflecting upon the advantages and disadvantages of each choice...