

## A Trip Through Texas

In the passage that follows William Pickens, an African-American, describes a journey through Texas during 1923. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

**I sit in a Jim Crow car as I write. I had bought my ticket to El Paso. I was told by the Pullman conductor in a very loud and gruff voice, "Well, you can't ride in this car after you get into Texas. I suppose you know that?" The object is to "rub it in."**

**In El Paso I waited for my friends in the Negro waiting-room., off in one corner of the station. The main waiting-room had phone booths, ticket offices, and whatnot. In the main waiting room I saw not only the "white people," but all the non-American "colored peoples," yellow Chinese, brown Japanese, and the many-colored Mexicans...When I reached the little humiliating hole assigned to "Negroes," I found there only four or five colored people, all intelligent.**

**I stayed in El Paso three days. Friends took me around by car so that I would be protected against the "rear-seat" treatment of the street cars. They also took me into Mexico, just a few hundred yards from Jim Crowism. In Mexico, black and white people come from Texas and gamble at the same table, drink at the same bar, and eat in the same restaurant, while the dark-skinned, almost black Mexican policeman patrols.**

**Then I went to buy a ticket for San Antonio. I found that colored passengers are allowed to go to San Antonio on only one train a day, and one that leaves at night. Any foreigner can travel freely, but not the mothers or wives or sisters of the black Americans who fought, bled, and died in France in the World War.**

**In the morning on the train I went to get some breakfast in the dining car, before 7 o'clock, before the whites got hungry. And what did I find as I passed through the whole string of cars to the rear? All the other races of the world, as usual.**

**In the Jim Crow car there was just one toilet and washroom for use by colored women and men. And the Jim Crow car is not a car, mind you, but only the end of a car, part of the white men's smoker, separated only by a partition that rises part of the way from the floor, so that all the sickening smoke can drift over all night and day.**

**When I reached the dining-car there was not another person there. I was asked did I "want anything." I replied briefly, breakfast. Then there was confusion and much conferring. Finally I was given a seat at the end of the car where the porters eat and then a green curtain was drawn between me and the rest of the vacant dining-car!**

Adapted from "A Trip Through Texas, 1923," by William Pickens, in *The Nation*. August 15, 1923

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Use complete sentences for your answers:-

In what year and in what state did this story take place?

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What does William Pickens mean by a “Jim Crow Car” in the first sentence?

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List six (6) examples of segregation (*separate but not equal*) mentioned in the passage

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

What was the reaction of William Pickens toward life in Mexico?

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According to Pickens, what was not fair for the female relatives of Black Americans who died during World War I?

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