

# Life on the color line

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I cannot imagine being considered a different race at this point in my life; let alone being considered the “ other” race by two different races. Gregory Howard and his brother, Mark, had to figure out this tough challenge at an early age in the 1950s during an enormous financial and racial struggle. Many people did not accept the difference in skin color and some refused to accept anything from the other side of the color line. If I were a child in the 1950s I would probably have had hatred and other disgusting feelings toward the other races, whether I was white or black.

That is how Howard feels toward colored people in Virginia. He feels as though he and his family is better because of their skin color. They are viewed as ignorant and untrustworthy. When he was a child that is all he knew of the other race in Virginia because he was still unaware of his actual ethnicity. He still had friends that were black but they were not from school and they never came to his house or anything. They would just play together at the playground. When Greg was at the tavern, he would always talk to everyone no matter what color they were.

It was all for the good of the business and the customers were fort Belvoir soldiers. When Billy and Mike found out that they were not really “ white” even though that was the color of their skin, they figured out that life was going to be different. Billy tried as much as he could to not let people find out that he was colored once they moved to Muncie. When he first started going to class in Muncie at Garfield Elementary School, Billy met two white girls that became his best friends. He was in the fourth grade and appeared to be white.

Molly and Sally were his best friends and the three of them appeared to be white, but the girls did not know Billy was actually not white. Once they saw him on the other side of the tracks in Muncie going back to school after lunch, they no longer talked to him. None of the other “white” kids would talk to him nor would they talk to Mike. The boys’ cousin, Mary Lou would tell anyone that she could that the two boys were not actually white but they were colored just like her. Greg would not deny the fact that he was not fully white to the other colored people but he would reluctantly admit it to some of the white people.