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Prejudice Across America

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The experiences of a teacher and his white students on a nationwide trek toward racial understanding

In 1998 James Waller took twenty-one white college students from Washington state on a month-long journey. *Prejudice Across America* is the record of their interaction with the American Indian, Asian American, African American, Hispanic, and Jewish experiences nationwide. Few books have so directly and humanly captured the moment when whites confront the realities of those living as a minority in America.

Waller reports here on this innovative and award-winning trek. In Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Memphis, New Orleans, Birmingham, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C., his students hear both the official story of prejudice and the street story from people living and dealing with racism on a daily basis. *Prejudice Across America* is as much the journal of these travelers and what they face as it is a sweeping, up-close survey of the nation's racial landscape.

The students walk the cheerless halls of a South Side housing project in Chicago, experience the agitated aftermath of the Olympic Games in Atlanta, and attend a briefing with President Clinton's Initiative on Race. All along the way, they hold wide-ranging group discussions and experience the unpredictable adventure of traveling by train, plane, and public transit.

Drawing on student journals and on interviews with community leaders and activists throughout the country, Waller paints a compelling and provocative portrait of the nation's prejudice. In addition, *Prejudice Across America* includes analyses of the obstacles to reconciliation in each of the cities on the tour's itinerary.

As they travel, students confront the thorny issues of race in America, face down stereotypical thoughts, prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors, and uncover more tough questions than easy answers. As Waller and another group of students prepare for a similar trek in 2001, *Prejudice Across America* will allow readers to join them in introspection and self-discovery in the urban reality of an America where diversity isn't simply a buzzword, but a way of life.

James Waller is a professor of psychology at Whitworth College in Spokane, Washington. He has also published *Face to Face: The Changing State of Racism Across America* (1998).

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