

Making Inferences: *Answers Based on Evidence and Reasoning*

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks (Chapter Two: Clover)

Example: Was it better or worse for Henrietta to grow up in Tommy Lack's house, instead of with her father, Johnny Pleasant?

My Inference: Henrietta was much better off with Tommy Lacks.

My Evidence: Chapter two says that Johnny Lacks didn't have patience with kids. It also says that he used to hit people with his cane. That would be a poor environment for a child to grow up in.

1. If you saw Henrietta growing up in Clover, what type of clothes would she be wearing?

My Inference: *Answers will vary. Sample answer:*

She would be wearing clothes suitable for working in the heat. Her clothes were probably cheap and patched maybe hand-me-downs. Outdoors the sun was intense. She might be wearing something over her hair to protect it. Indoors she might wear a sweater or something warm.

My Evidence:

Henrietta worked hard, in the barn, and in the tobacco fields. There were lots of kids of different ages, so hand-me-downs are a real possibility. When she was indoors, the home house was so cold that corpses could be kept for days without a problem; she might have to bundle up.

(Over: There's more on the back. Yay!!!)

2. Did Henrietta have a happy childhood, or a sad childhood?

My Inference: Answers will vary. Sample answer:

Growing up was often a good time for Henrietta. It was a hard life, no question. It was filled with work, racism and poverty. But there seems to have been a lot of happiness in it also.

My Evidence:

She grew up with lots of kids (including female kids) around, and family. The chapter talks about them doing 'kid stuff' at night (ghost stories), and when they went to the tobacco auction. There were movies on weekends.

3. Was the Lacks family religious?

My Inference: Answers will vary. Sample answer:

The Lacks family belonged to a Church, but religion doesn't seem to have been a primary focus in their lives.

My Evidence:

The Chapter says that the Church records of Henrietta's congregation are filled with "the names of the women cast from the Congregation for bearing children out of wedlock, but for some reason Henrietta never was...."

Henrietta and Day are married at "their preacher's house" which suggests there was a relationship with a Church and a preacher.

But there is no mention in the story of regular Church attendance or regular participation in the life of a Church.