



# UNFINISHED

The Long Civil Rights Movement

# BUSINESSES



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# UNFINISHED

The Long Civil Rights Movement

# BUSINESS



University Walkout, 1975.  
COURTESY OF THE BROWN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

## Unless We Remember

### President Christina Paxson

In Ouidah, Benin on the coast of West Africa, adjacent to the Port of No Return gate through which hundreds of thousands of Africans boarded ships bound for slavery in the Americas, there is a metal sculpture of the *Tree of Forgetting* that once stood there.

The sculpture depicts how, before boarding, Africans were forced to circle the *Tree of Forgetting* – men nine times, women seven times – so they would forget their lives in Africa, and arrive in the New World not knowing who they were. Their memories were ritually erased.

Today, at the site of the *Tree of Forgetting* memorial, visitors will find an impromptu street gallery featuring folk art renditions of traditional rulers, and portraits of prominent African Americans and Civil Rights

leaders, painted by local artists. Martin Luther King, Jr. is there, as is Rosa Parks, captured in her iconic moment on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama.

The power of memory – to anchor historical narratives and distill eternal truths – is central to the work of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. This exhibition, *Unfinished Business: The Long Civil Rights Movement* opens new windows of inquiry into the legacy of slavery, the struggle for civil rights, and the unfinished business of securing racial equality in America.

Brown's institutional memory on these matters has for generations been a source of guidance, and a constant reminder of the University's commitment to combating racism with knowledge and understanding.

Under President Ruth Simmons' leadership, Brown was one of the first institutions of higher education to examine its role in the slave trade, appointing a Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice. And it was the Committee's report that recommended the creation of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice.

This decision marked a recognition that issues of racial inequality cannot be fully understood and resolved

*unless we remember.* Over the arc of Brown's history, we have drawn wisdom – about ourselves as an evolving community of scholars and students – from remembrances of campus dialogue on slavery and race, and of actions we took to learn and heal.

We remember and lionize Brown student James Tallmadge, who called for the abolition of slavery at the University's commencement ceremony in 1790, and had the audacity to speak up for his beliefs and buck conventional wisdom.

We remember our partnership with Tougaloo College in Mississippi, forged in 1964 and sustained for more than 50 years, as a bridge of understanding. The exchanges of faculty and students between Brown and Tougaloo continue to strengthen constituencies that powered the Civil Rights Movement and prompted Brown to do better in living its values.

We remember Brown students who mobilized groups like the Organization of United African Peoples, the Asian American Students Association, the Queer Alliance, the Latin American Student Organization,

*Over the arc of Brown's history, we have drawn wisdom – about ourselves as an evolving community of scholars and students – from remembrances of campus dialogue on slavery and race, and of actions we took to learn and heal.*

Native Americans at Brown, and the Third World Coalition, learned the lessons of organizing and found their voices.

And more recently, we remember the powerful conversations we shared about identity and lived experience, that informed the development of *Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion*, our action plan to shape a more inclusive and respectful Brown community.

As a university, institutional memory is vital. For it is our education and research that inevitably expand the ways we know so that we might better understand the links between past events and present challenges – and be better positioned to effect meaningful change.

Brown students, too, are vital. They walk out of classrooms, they organize protests, and they advocate for the marginalized. What we seek to do is offer them not just the tools to move beyond moments of courage, but the inspiration to become wise, measured and passionate activists who tackle the racial disparities that persist in America.

This catalog of essays will cast fresh light on the history of the Civil Rights Movement and the ways it challenged America. And it will elicit new understanding of the movement, and build the intellectual connections that help our students find transformative meaning in these historic events.

My office on the Brown campus is in University Hall, a building erected in 1770 partly by the enslaved, some of whom perhaps circled the *Tree of Forgetting* in Benin. On the Quiet Green, just outside my office window, there is a metal sculpture of a partly embedded ball-and-chain, long a symbol of bondage. It is fashioned to both represent the weight of history still half-buried and embody hope for the future.

The creation of the sculpture was recommended by Brown's Slavery and Justice Committee, to serve as a "... living site of memory, inviting reflection and fresh discovery without provoking paralysis or shame." In other words, it compels us not to forget.

It is said that we reveal ourselves, as a society and as nation by what we remember and what we take away from those memories. I believe this exhibition, in making good on Brown's mission to advance knowledge and understanding, reveals us as a community aspiring to be better.

*Christina Paxson, PhD is the current President of Brown University.*



**University Walkout, 1968.**  
COURTESY OF THE BROWN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



**University Walkout, 1985.**  
COURTESY OF THE BROWN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



**In Light of the 2016 Election, 2016.**  
COURTESY OF MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS



**#Sanctuary, 2016.**  
COURTESY OF MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS

## Director's Note

### Anthony Bogues

In 2012 when the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice began, one of its first projects was to undertake an oral history of ten of the figures who were active within the "Civil Rights Movement." For a week we hosted these individuals at the Center. Writer, former Brown professor, and a field secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Charles E. Cobb Jr., did the interviews. Today these interviews are part of the Freedom Archive held at Brown University. The CSSJ undertook this project in part because we recognized that there were individuals who had dedicated their entire life to organizing against the legacies of racial slavery and for full equality in America. Many of these individuals are not known. For us at the Center the importance of documenting history, of finding ways to facilitate a platform so that marginalized voices are not lost to the historical record, is a necessity.

Today in the so-called post-Civil Rights age we find that the historical memory of that era in modern American history still circles around a few names. As well, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which outlawed discrimination became in the eyes of many a law which put an end to the structures of anti-Black racism. Of course, we know that anti-Black racism and its structures are alive and continue to shape American society.

Thinking about history, memory, and how the "Civil Rights Movement" is remembered and the contemporary conditions of Black life, the CSSJ decided to first do an exhibition around the art installation of what was called "The Rosa Parks House." For a variety of legal reasons this was not possible. However, for the Center the exhibition was not primarily about Rosa Parks herself but rather about the Black organizing tradition which she was part of. When we could no longer link the exhibition to the Parks project we decided to further deepen the exhibition along our initial lines – telling the 20th century story of the Black organizing political tradition and the relationship of the "Civil Rights Movement" to this tradition. The exhibition is a historical one. It does not privilege individuals but pays attention to organizations and politics. It has a soundscape because music and song were integral to the Black freedom struggle. In doing this exhibition we return to one of our objectives, creating a public history not about only slavery but its legacies and the efforts to abolish them. The exhibition has been a team effort of the Center but it would not have been possible without the splendid curatorial eyes of Maiyah Gamble-Rivers and Shana Weinberg.

*Anthony Bogues is the Director of Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University.*

### After a Cross is Burned in Front of a Freedom House, It is Turned into a Freedom Sign.

PHOTO BY TAMIO WAKAYAMA, COURTESY OF CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT VETERANS WEBSITE WWW.CRMVET.ORG



Alt Right, Neo Nazis Hold Torch Rally  
at University of Virginia  
Shay Horse  
2017

COURTESY OF SIPA USA VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS



## *This is America*

### **Shana Weinberg and Maiyah Gamble-Rivers**

As we thought about this exhibition, and the individuals who were and continue to be part of the Black Freedom Struggle, we could not help but reflect on the 2017 violent attack in Charlottesville, Virginia. On the anniversary of the counter-protest to the “Unite the Right” rally, we see glimpses of the freedom struggles of the 20th century and the violence and risks that regular people took in their resistance against white supremacy. While images of men in the night with torches and sheets over their head conjure up visuals from films such as the 1915 *Birth of a Nation* or memories of rural 1960s Mississippi, many in the nation were surprised to see the hateful ideals of white supremacy embodied by hundreds of unmasked white marchers in 2017. This public display made it clear that white supremacy is normalized in American society.

Charlottesville happened at a time when many cities were rethinking their monuments and the history and memories they convey. In 2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center stated that following Charlottesville, 30 confederate monuments had been removed. While the racial tension in Charlottesville supposedly surrounded the removal of a Robert E. Lee statue, it was fueled by questions of belonging and about not only who owns “Southern History,” but also, “American History.” The marchers’ chants of “we will not be forgotten” and “white lives matter” raise questions about what is presumed lost for some in the white community when rights are given to communities of color. What is at stake in telling a more inclusive history? Former Grand Wizard, David Duke of the Ku Klux Klan,

told white protestors, “we are determined to take our country back ... we are going to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump. That’s what we believe in. That’s why we voted for Donald Trump, because he said he’s going to take our country back.” This national myth about the founding of America and who it belongs to already centers whiteness in its narrative. An alternative narrative threatens the racial power structure that has been sustained since the start of slavery. This idea that America needs to be taken back perpetuates a belief that white America is under attack when historically that has never been so.

When we began working on this exhibition we were thinking about how museums and exhibitions nationally often present the history of the Civil Rights Movement as finished, in the past. We hope that *Unfinished Business: The Long Civil Rights Movement* challenges this idea by showing a sustained fight within the Black community to resist white supremacy, oppression and demand their unalienable rights. We highlight the ways in which various groups have created strategies to demand the freedom they ought to have.

During this challenging time we find ourselves in a political climate in which elected officials can run on an openly white supremacist ticket, and where the rights of communities of color are being taken away or exposed to the risk of violence. We must remind ourselves of past individuals who risked their lives to vote; to end segregation in public spaces; to take control of their communities and imagine what freedom in America could look like.

*We hope that this exhibition represents a form of activism while presenting historical knowledge ... showing America for what it is instead of what it never was.*

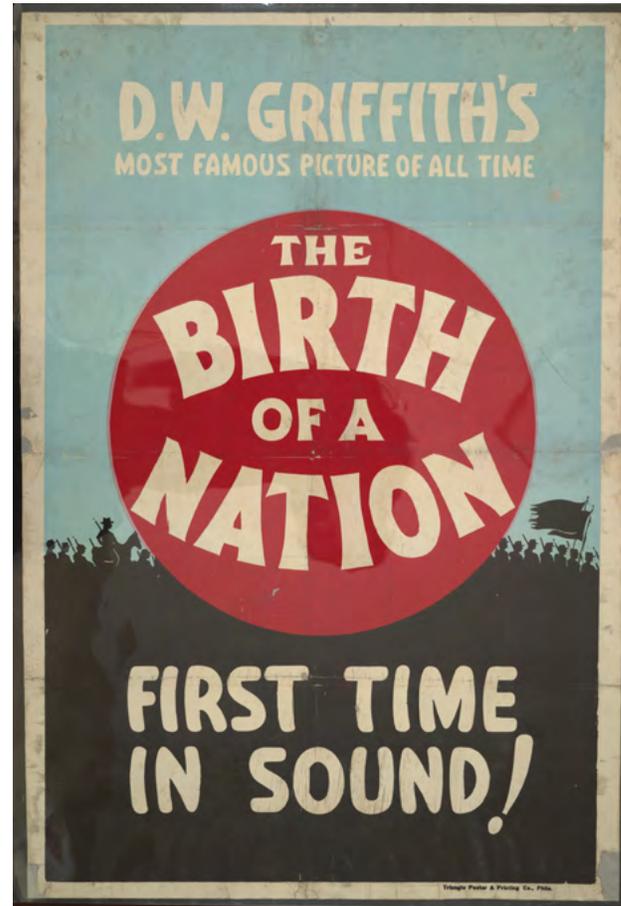
We are also reminded of the words of Toni Morrison who in 2015 wrote,

*“we are in a time of dread ... but there is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal. The oppressors plan is simple ... distract with themes of ... defiant national pride that enshrine past hurts and humiliations ... I know the world is bruised and bleeding, and though it is important not to ignore its pain, it is also critical to refuse to succumb to its malevolence. Like failure, chaos contains information that can lead to knowledge – even wisdom. Like art.”*

This is a crucial moment when the reverberations of Charlottesville are felt throughout America. So too are the afterlives of Charlottesville, the 2016 Presidential election, the deaths of Mike Brown in Ferguson, Freddie Gray in Baltimore, the nine worshipers in Charleston, Sandra Bland in Texas, and Eric Garner in New York. The poor water conditions of the low-income communities of Flint, the general conditions of life for the residents of the lower ninth ward of New Orleans, and the ways in which the citizens of Puerto Rico were treated after hurricanes Irma and Maria, all point to these reverberations. Central to all of these moments is the manufacturing of white fear. We hope that this exhibition reads as a form of activism while presenting historical knowledge. We hope to show America for what it is instead of what it never was.

*Shana Weinberg* is the Assistant Director at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University.

*Malyah Gamble-Rivers* is the Manager of Programs & Community Engagement at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University.



[ABOVE]  
**The Birth of a Nation, 1930–1940**  
PHILADELPHIA: TRIANGLE POSTER & PRINTING CO., COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-DIG-PPMSC-04381]

[OPPOSITE]  
**DC: Unite the Right Second march Meets Heavy Resistance, 2018**  
PHOTO BY KARLA ANN COTE, COURTESY OF SIPA USA VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

*“I know the world is bruised and bleeding, and though it is important not to ignore its pain, it is also critical to refuse to succumb to its malevolence.”*

Toni Morrison





# **EXHIBITION GALLERY**

**T**he Civil Rights Movement (The Southern Freedom Movement) was a catalyst for social change in America disrupting the legal system of Jim Crow and racial segregation. It was composed of ordinary Black women, men, and children, many of whom placed their lives on the line to fight racial segregation. Through marches, sit-ins, protests, boycotts, and massive voter registration drives, the Movement overturned formal Jim Crow laws. No longer were white only signs on bathrooms, water fountains, and restaurants legal. Black folks did not have to ride at the back of the bus and “colored people’s days” at public parks, swimming pools, and zoos were abolished. The right to vote, taken away after the collapse of Reconstruction, was restored. In its many forms, the Movement represented various currents within the Black political and social organizing tradition. This tradition is characterized by moments of resistance including petitioning, marching, and rebellion. The tradition exploded into American public life in the mid-20th century and challenged the structures of white American power. Whether it was SNCC organizing in Mississippi; CORE organizing Freedom Rides; SCLC organizing marches; female domestic workers becoming the backbone of the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama; the NAACP organizing protests or legal defense teams; or Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party demanding to integrate the Democratic Party convention, the Black organizing political tradition staged a historic confrontation with America itself.

Yet the legal and political victories of the “Civil Rights Movement” did not end racial domination in America. Anti-Black racism continued and today shapes both Black lives and American society. Today there is mass incarceration; the continued police attacks on Black men and women; a public education system that reinscribes old segregation practices; the ways in which American society refuses to confront the history of racial slavery and its many legacies, all point to the fact that there is “unfinished business.”

In this exhibition we tell the story of the organizing tradition and how it confronted America. We trace the tradition from the moment of Emancipation until the presidential campaigns of Jesse Jackson. It is a story not often told, yet it is a necessary one for our times. The Southern Freedom Movement inspired many struggles for equal rights in America and around the world. Today, the songs of the movement continue to remind us that injustice can be fought and that in the end “we shall overcome.”

*The CSSJ Curatorial Team*

# RACIAL TERROR

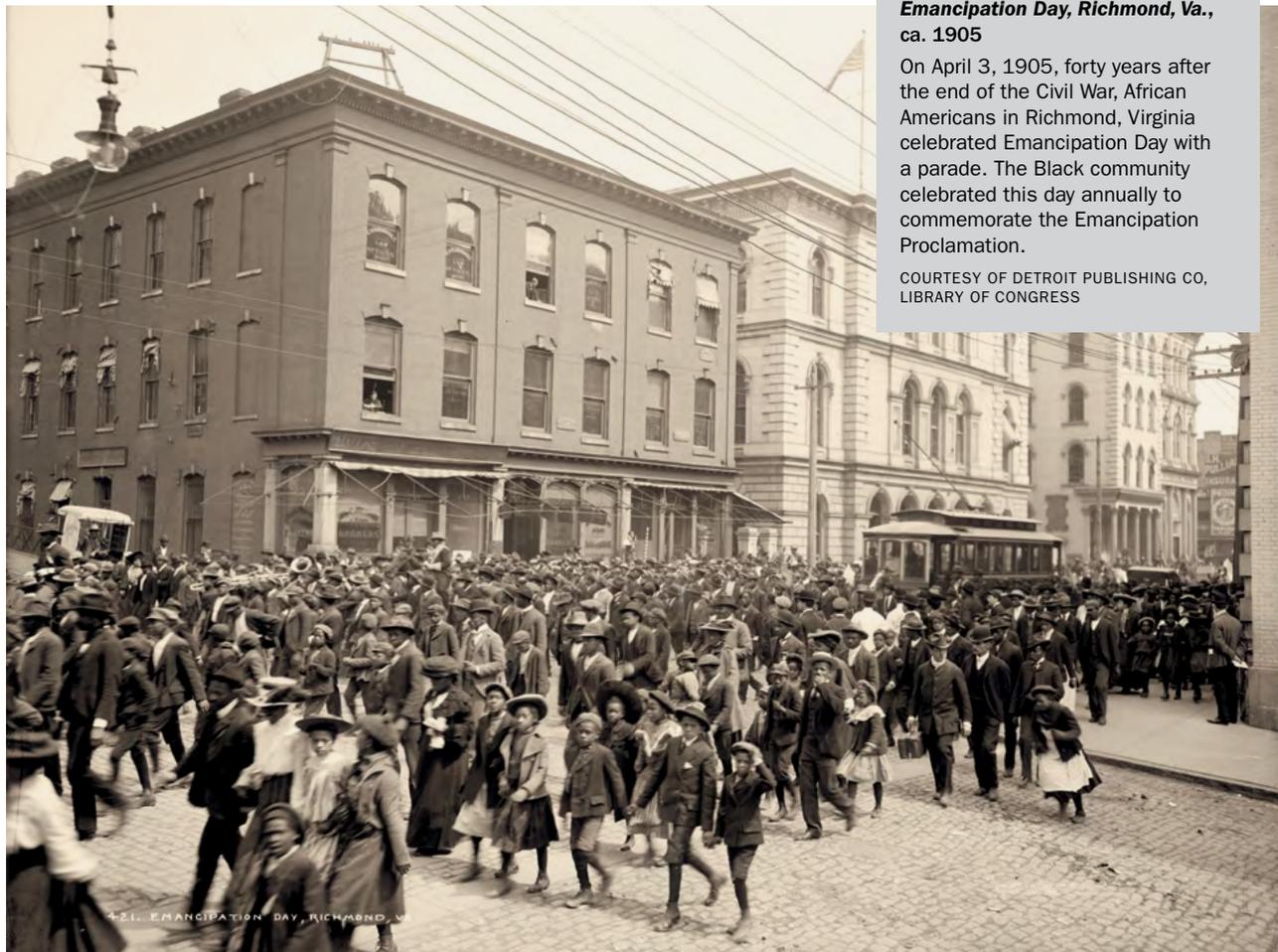


# BLACK RESISTANCE

## EMANCIPATION Making Freedom

In 1863, two years after the start of the American Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation changed the status of over 3 million enslaved Blacks in Confederate states. However, it would take another two years before many enslaved people within the Southern Confederacy would find out about their freedom. In January 1865, the 13th Amendment which declared that, “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime ... shall exist within the United States” was passed. At the end of the Civil War, an era of Reconstruction began in the Southern states. Newly freed Blacks could now legally marry, learn to read and write, and participate in state legislatures. This period did not last long, and by the end of the 19th century

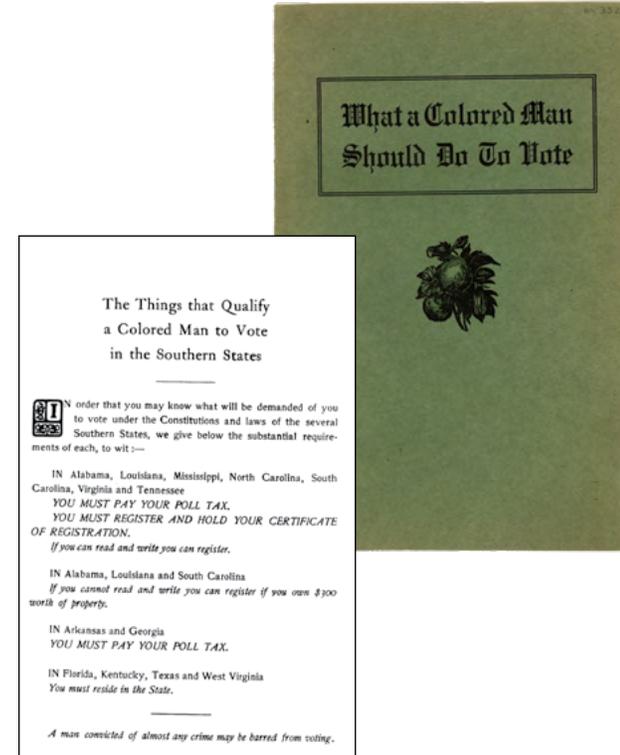
the gains of the Black population were reversed by what W. E.B. Du Bois called a “counter-revolution.” Blacks found themselves in systems of involuntary servitude through sharecropping, convict leasing, and were forced into poor living conditions. Newly established laws prevented their full rights as American citizens. Although the 14th Amendment gave African Americans the right to vote, this did not stop Black voters from being systematically turned away from voting polls. The active resistance of white Americans led to the passage of the 15th Amendment, prohibiting any state from denying any citizen the right to vote. Yet the Black community continued to be denied political participation through the enactment of laws, customs, and the use of intimidation. Racial violence, including lynching, was used as a tactic to reverse Black political and social gains. Yet, in the midst of this terror, the Black community fought back.



**Emancipation Day, Richmond, Va., ca. 1905**

On April 3, 1905, forty years after the end of the Civil War, African Americans in Richmond, Virginia celebrated Emancipation Day with a parade. The Black community celebrated this day annually to commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation.

COURTESY OF DETROIT PUBLISHING CO, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



[ABOVE]

**To the colored men of voting age in the southern states/ What a colored man should do to vote, ca. 1900s**

With Jim Crow laws preventing the Black vote in the South, pamphlets like this informed the Black community how to register to vote state by state. The pamphlet also highlighted laws in different states that could prevent Black citizens from voting.

PRESS OF E.A. WRIGHT, PHILADELPHIA, COURTESY OF THE RARE BOOK AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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**Ku Klux Klan rally in Calera, Alabama, during which “a class of one hundred aliens” is “naturalized before the fiery cross.” July 4, 1924**

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan held a public meeting on July 4, 1924 in Shelby, Alabama inviting the white community to learn more about the Klan and their values. Families were encouraged to attend the naturalization ceremony followed by a fireworks show in celebration of American independence.

COURTESY OF THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

*“Do you know I’ve never voted in my life, never been able to exercise my right as a citizen because of the poll tax? ... I can’t pay a poll tax, can’t have a voice in my own government.”*

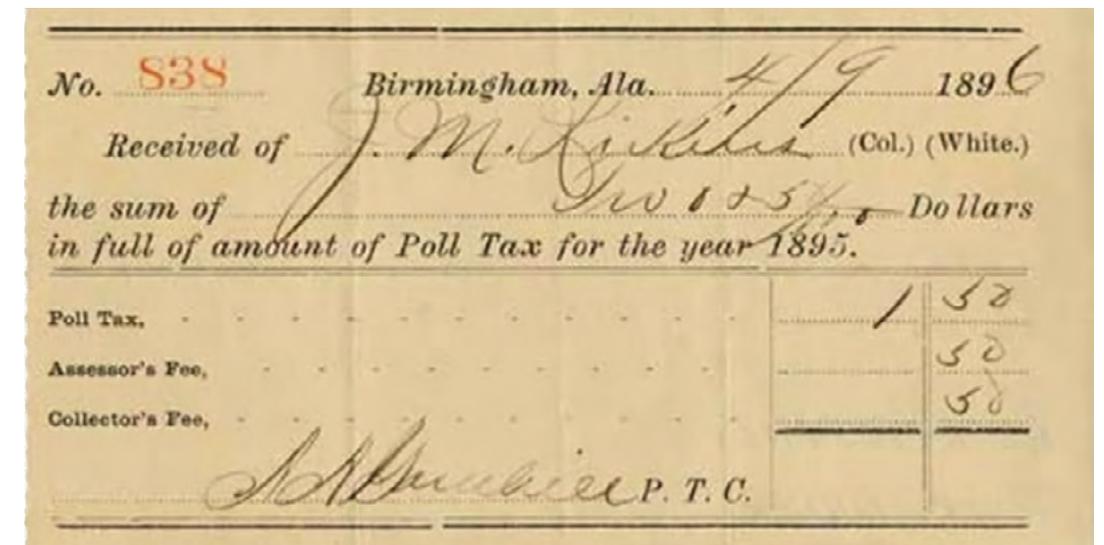
Mr. Trout, WPA Narratives

[BELOW]

**Poll tax receipt, 1896**

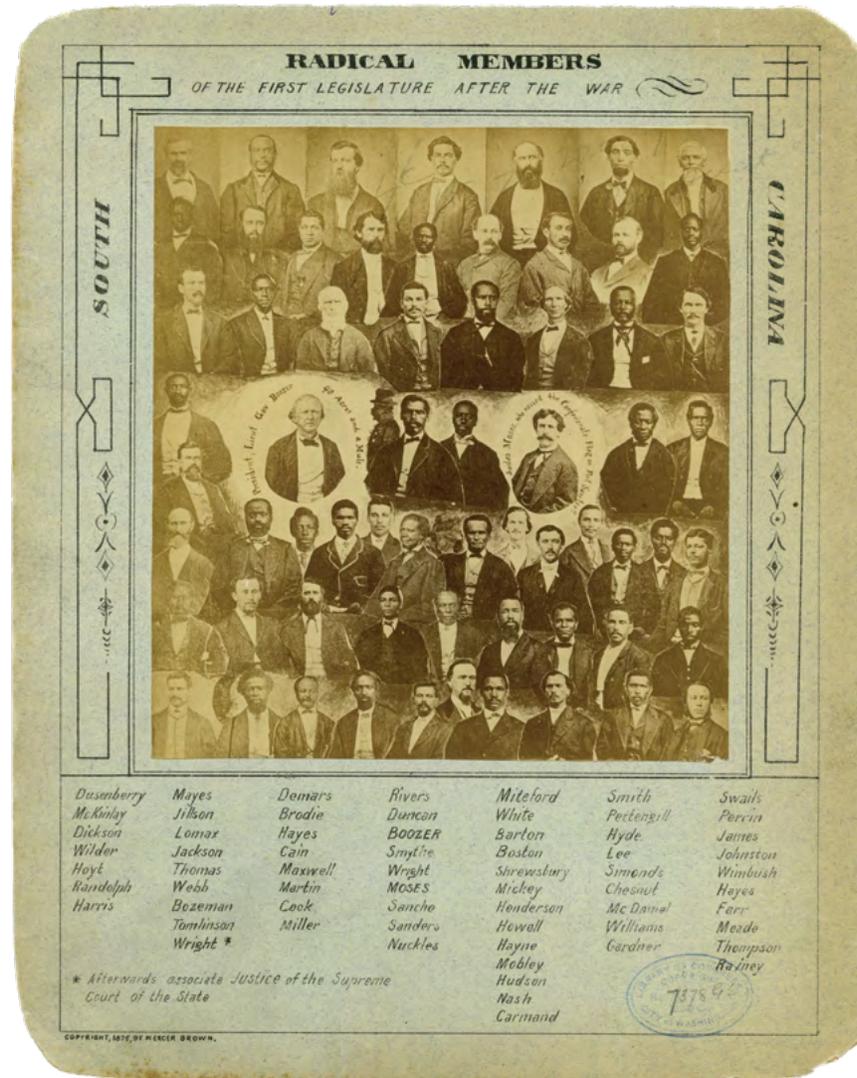
Across the South, poll taxes were instituted as a way to deny African Americans and poor men the right to vote. This Alabama poll tax shows a fee of \$1.50 equivalent to roughly \$30 today.

COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY



*“We were told that we were all free, and could go when and where we pleased. My mother ... explained to us what it all meant, that this was the day for which she had been so long praying, but fearing that she would never live to see.”*

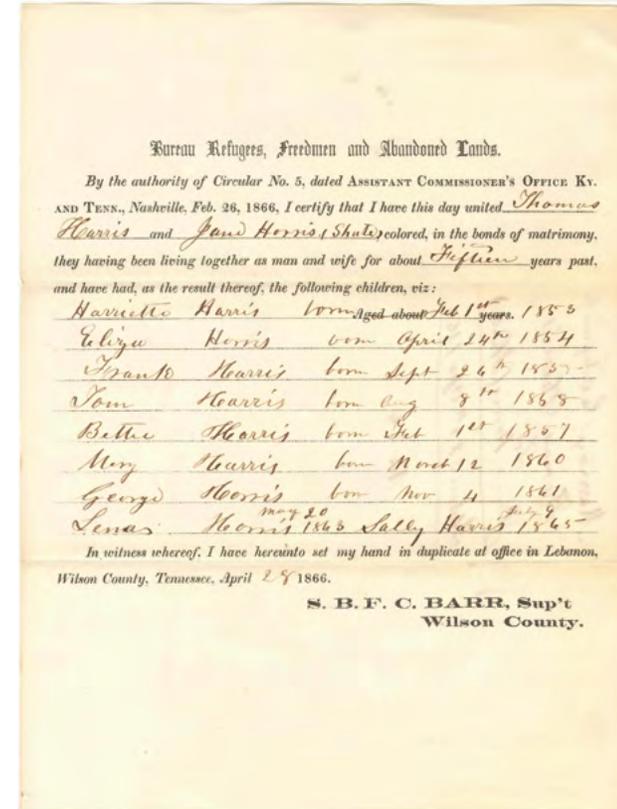
Booker T. Washington remembers Emancipation Day in early 1863, when he was a boy of nine in Virginia



[LEFT] **Radical members of the first legislature after the war, South Carolina, ca. 1876**

During Reconstruction African Americans immersed themselves in Southern political life, holding positions in public offices at all levels. Through this political process they worked towards equal rights. Black Codes would eventually be passed stripping the Black community of any political gains, including voting.

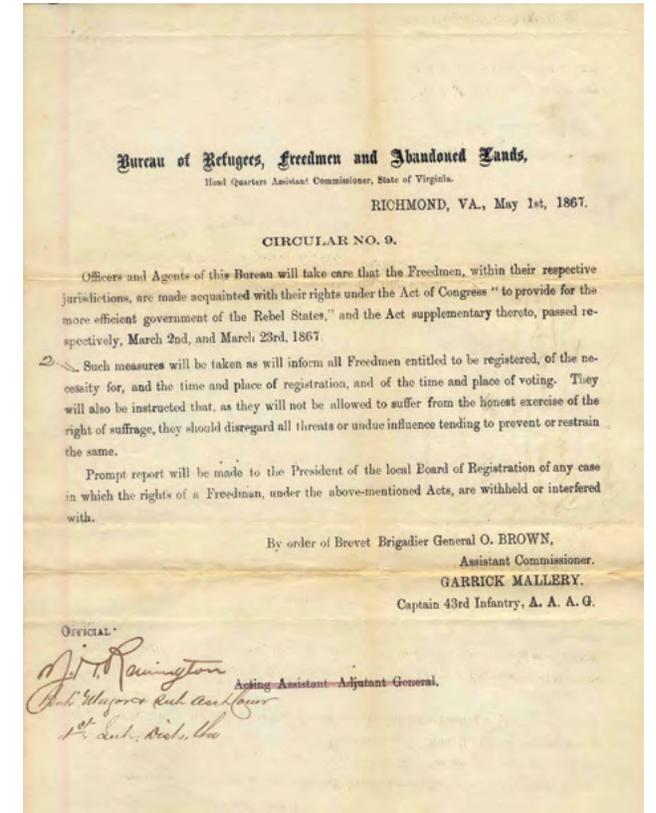
COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



[ABOVE] **Marriage Certificate of Thomas Harris and Jane Harris (Shute)**

Viewed as property, enslaved Blacks were not allowed to marry or enter into legal contracts. Upon gaining their freedom, African Americans took advantage of the opportunity to legally marry.

FREEDMEN'S BUREAU RECORDS M1875, ROLL 4, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



[ABOVE] **Freedmen's Right to Vote, May 1, 1867**

Organized during Reconstruction under the War Department, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands was responsible for overseeing the transition from slavery to freedom. This included protecting newly freed Blacks' right to vote.

FREEDMEN'S BUREAU RECORDS M1913, ROLL 97, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



[LEFT] **[Freedmen's school, Edisto Island, S.C.], ca. 1862-1865**

Throughout the history of slavery in colonial America and the United States, laws prevented enslaved African American access to education. South Carolina passed a law as early as 1740 making Black education illegal. In the early 19th century, Congress passed laws making it illegal for enslaved African Americans to learn how to read or write.

PHOTO BY SAMUEL A. COOLEY, COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## SEGREGATION IN THE SOUTH Jim Crow

In the early 20th century, following the emancipation of slavery, Black life in the South was defined by extreme racial oppression formalized through Jim Crow laws. The Ku Klux Klan terrorized Black men, women, and children with acts of violence and intimidation including lynching. African Americans resisted these conditions of Black life in different ways. One such form of resistance was Garveyism, which rallied Black people all over the world to unite to fight both racial injustice and colonialism. Marcus Garvey's organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) became the largest Black organization in the world with members in the USA, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere. By the 1920s, the work of Garvey was significantly shaping the ways in which some Black Americans understood their circumstances. The UNIA's message of Black pride and its slogan "Africa for Africans, those at Home and Abroad" had broad appeal. Ida B. Wells, an African American journalist and activist, organized against the conditions of racial terror and fought for anti-lynching laws by documenting the horrors she saw throughout the South. Wells and Garvey are two examples of early 20th century African American political and social organizers. Their work would influence and inspire future activists. Garvey's political ideas about Black pride would become central to the Black organizing tradition. The groundbreaking journalistic practices of Wells would shape the activism of many, including the field secretaries of the NAACP as well as the organization's approach to legislative reform.



[ABOVE]

### Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Journalist and Civil Rights Activist

Ida B. Wells used investigative journalism as a tool to combat the violence experienced by African Americans. During the 1890s, Wells documented lynchings in America. Rather than a form of punishment for a crime which was usually the reported justification, she argued that it was a means for whites to control and intimidate the Black community.

PHOTO BY OSCAR B. WILLIS, COURTESY OF THE SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE, PHOTOGRAPHS AND PRINTS DIVISION, THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

[LEFT]

### A Man was Lynched Yesterday, 1936

The NAACP's 5th Avenue headquarters in Manhattan flew this flag to remind New Yorkers of the daily threat of lynching faced by Black people living in the United States. The organization was forced to remove the flag in 1938 by the building's owner. However, contemporary artists and activists have recently begun to use this iconic flag again to draw attention to anti-Black violence faced by the African American community today.

COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-USZ62-33793]



[LEFT]

### Tenant Farmer South of Muskogee, Oklahoma, 1939

The living conditions of African Americans did not improve following the emancipation of slavery. Here a tenant farmer stands on his front porch in a house owned by an out-of-state landlord. Many formerly enslaved people found themselves living in dilapidated buildings including this Black farmer in Oklahoma.

PHOTO BY RUSSELL LEE, FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION – OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*“Brave men do not gather by thousands to torture and murder a single individual, so gagged and bound he cannot make even feeble resistance or defense.”*

Ida B. Wells

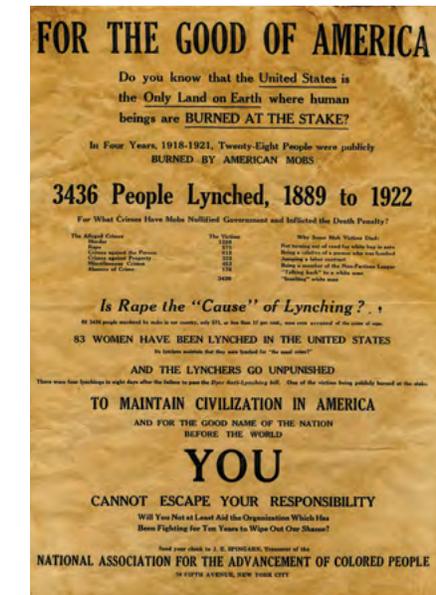


[ABOVE]

### Marcus Garvey, Leader and Founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, 1922

As a Pan-Africanist, Marcus Garvey founded the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), advocating for African American return to Africa. Garveyism promoted a Pan-African philosophy that sought to remove European colonialism from continental Africa.

COURTESY OF NY DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE VIA GETTY IMAGES



[ABOVE]

### Poster for the NAACP Anti-Lynching Campaign, 1922

This anti-lynching poster circulated by the NAACP shows statistics of public burnings and lynchings in the United States within a 33 year span. This poster also served as a call for action and NAACP donations, expressly telling readers that they "could not escape their responsibility."

PUBLISHED BY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE, COURTESY OF THE COLLECTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

## SEGREGATION IN THE NORTH Great Migration

Between 1916–1930, 1.6 million African Americans fled the South during the Great Migration. Fleeing racial violence and poor job prospects, they hoped to create better lives up North. They settled in major cities such as Detroit, Chicago, and New York. By 1930, half of the African American population had left the South. While the North provided new opportunities, African Americans were surprised to find that in these Northern cities they still experienced racial discrimination. In response to segregated workplaces and racism, Black workers created unions in various industries. The first such union to be recognized by the American Federation of Labor was the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, founded by activist A. Philip Randolph. The objective of the union was to provide Pullman Company workers with job security and fair wages. The North would also become known for race riots that took place following the Black exodus from the South. The waves of violent and racially driven riots led to the death of Black residents and destruction of their communities, churches and homes. Anti-Black racism in the North made it clear that American racism was not just a Southern phenomenon. American society was a racist one, and African Americans continued to struggle for a sense of belonging, equality and freedom.



[ABOVE]

### View of Tulsa during the Race Riots, 1921

For two days beginning on May 31, 1921, white mobs attacked the African American community of Greenwood (“Black Wall Street”) in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The riot began following accusations that a 19-year-old Black teenager allegedly assaulted a white girl two years his junior.

COURTESY OF THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION



[ABOVE]

### Silent Parade in New York City against the East St. Louis Riots, 1917

Following the East St. Louis Riots, the NAACP organized a silent march down 5th Avenue in New York on July 28, 1917. Over 10,000 men, women, and children marched in silence and demanded President Wilson act to protect Black lives.

COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

[BELOW]

### A Segregated Railroad-Depot Waiting Room in Jacksonville, Florida, 1921

Jim Crow laws segregated every aspect of American life, even waiting areas in public spaces like train stations. Here African Americans wait in the “colored” section of the train station before boarding a train headed North.

COURTESY OF THE STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORIDA



[LEFT]

### African American Man with a Camera Surveying the Rubble from the Tulsa Race Riots, 1921

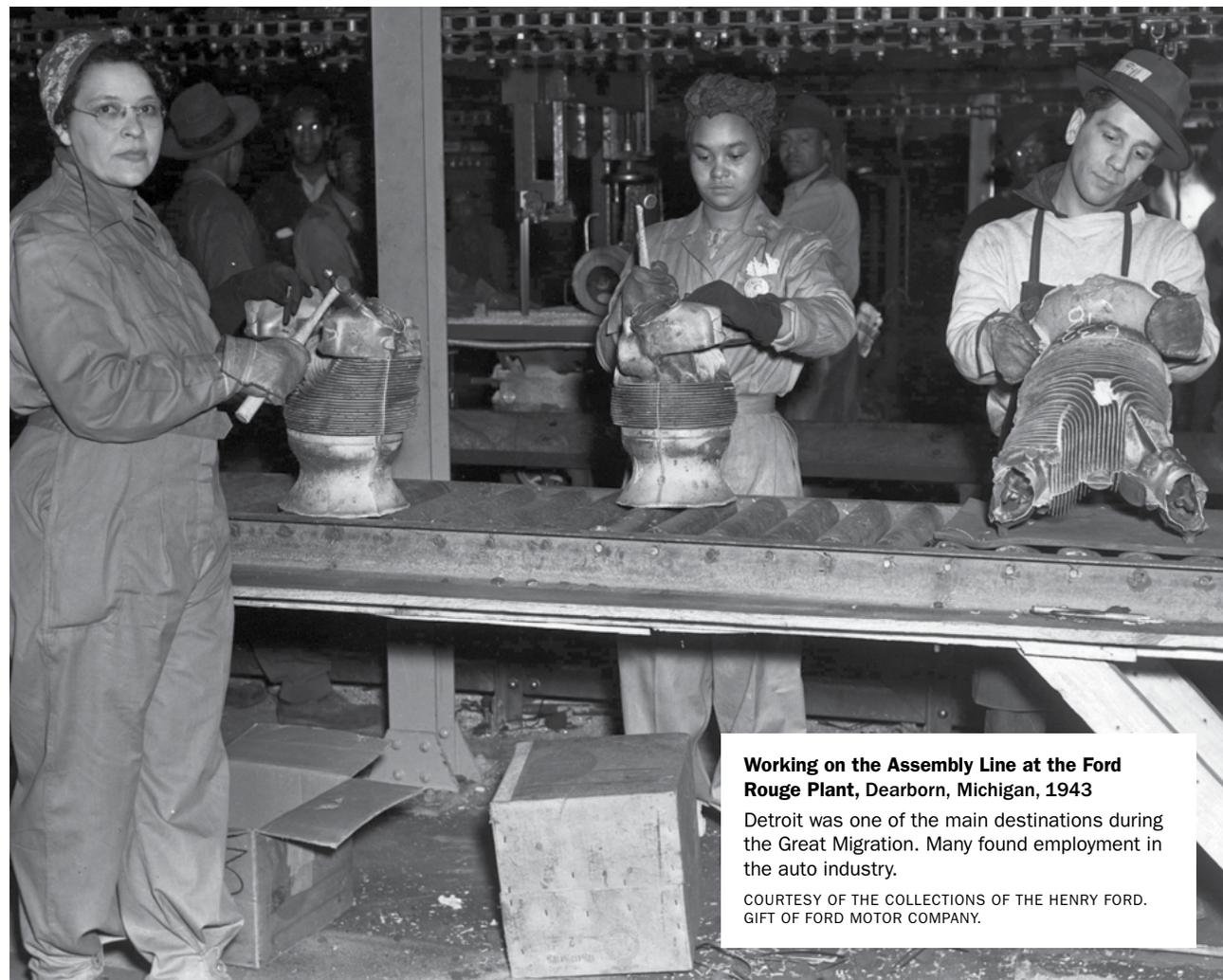
35 blocks of Greenwood, the wealthiest Black community at the time was destroyed. Hundreds of Black residents were injured, thousands were arrested, over 30 were killed and close to 10,000 residents found themselves homeless.

COURTESY OF THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION



*“Besides the white-Black competition for employment in the cities, there was also white-Black competition for living space ... white opposition effectively closed the market to newcomers, thereby creating ghettos ... City government, banks, and realtors conspired to keep African Americans’ residential opportunities constricted.”*

Robert B. Grant, *The Reality of Opportunity: Living Conditions*



**Working on the Assembly Line at the Ford Rouge Plant, Dearborn, Michigan, 1943**

Detroit was one of the main destinations during the Great Migration. Many found employment in the auto industry.

COURTESY OF THE COLLECTIONS OF THE HENRY FORD. GIFT OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY.



[LEFT]

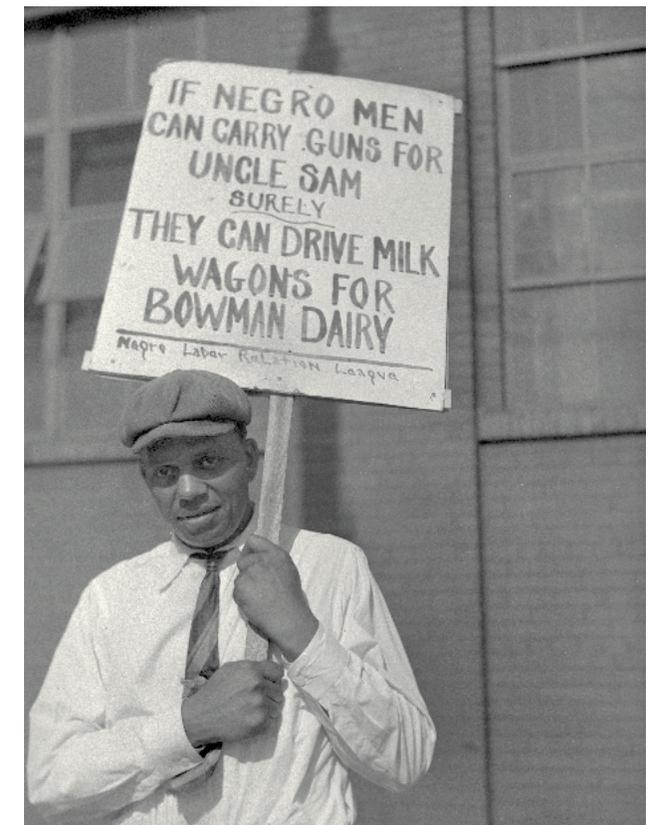
**Young Boy Drinking at “Colored” Water Cooler in Streetcar Terminal, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 1939**

The 1896 Supreme Court Plessy v. Ferguson ruling upheld racial segregation laws in public facilities as long as the facilities were equal in quality. This ruling is where the doctrine, “separate but equal” comes from.

PHOTO BY RUSSELL LEE, COURTESY OF PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-DIG-FSA-8A26761]

*“The essence of trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, the poor.”*

A. Philip Randolph



[RIGHT]

**African American Carrying Sign in Front of Milk Company, Chicago, Illinois, 1941**

In 1937, African American residents of Chicago formed the Negro Labor Relations League to put pressure on local companies to hire Black workers. Black Chicagoans boycotted white businesses including the city’s largest dairy supplier, Bowman’s Dairy, nicknamed “Jim Crow Dairy.”

PHOTO BY JOHN VACHON, COURTESY OF PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, FSA/OWI COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-DIG-FSA-8C19566]

A large crowd of Black people, many with their hands raised, set against a red background. The image is a composite of a solid red background on the left and a photograph of a diverse group of Black individuals on the right. The photograph shows a dense crowd of people, many of whom have their hands raised in the air, suggesting a moment of celebration, protest, or collective action. The lighting is warm, and the overall mood is one of unity and empowerment. The text 'THE BLACK ORGANIZING TRADITION' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the lower portion of the photograph.

**THE BLACK  
ORGANIZING  
TRADITION**

**“OLDEST AND BOLDEST”**

## **The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was founded in 1909 after violent race riots in Springfield, Illinois. With the exception of W.E.B. Du Bois, many of the initial leadership roles were held by whites. The organization’s early work focused on anti-lynching campaigns and the desegregation of public institutions such as schools. It did this through legislative reform, lobbying, and advocacy. The NAACP created a national network of organizers and local branches, with its central headquarters located in New York City. A decade after its founding, the organization had 90,000 members across 300 branches. Northern branches were established first, but by 1918 all Southern states had local NAACP

*“last thirty-one years 2,867 colored men and women have been lynched by mobs without trial ... We believe that this spirit of lawlessness is doing untold injury to our country and we submit that the record proves that the States are either unwilling or unable to put down lynching and mob violence.”*

Petition to the White House from the 1917 NAACP Silent Protest Parade



[LEFT]

### **Miss. Juanita Jackson Visits Scottsboro Boys in Prison, 1936**

The “Scottsboro Boys” refers to the nine African American teenagers falsely accused of raping two white women on an Alabama train. The NAACP provided support for the boys and their families during their imprisonment. Miss Juanita Jackson featured with eight of the nine young men, was a lifelong civil rights activist and would go on to become the first African American to practice law in Maryland.

COURTESY OF THE PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, VISUAL MATERIALS FROM THE NAACP RECORDS, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-USZ62-116731]

affiliates. During Ella Baker’s tenure as the NAACP’s Director of Branches, she created opportunities to empower and train local leaders. Local branches provided many individuals with their first introduction to formal activism, including Rosa Parks. The bureaucratic and top-down decision making structure of the central office sometimes frustrated local leaders. Additionally, there was often a divide between the economic class and educational background of the central office workers and local organizers.

To Southern officials, the NAACP represented a threat to white supremacy and many tried to shut down local branches. Local NAACP members faced enormous violence and economic hardship as a result of their organizing work. Membership was prohibited for workers in different industries or local government. With the NAACP and its members under attack, new grassroots organizations such as the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) emerged as new alternatives in the fight for racial equality.



[ABOVE]

### **Niagara Movement Delegates, Boston, Massachusetts, 1907**

Founded by W.E.B. Du Bois and others in 1905, the Niagara Movement’s founding documents argued for Black equal rights in opposition to Booker T. Washington’s philosophy of self-improvement. After the deadly 1908 race riot in Springfield, Illinois, organizers began to see the need for a new organization comprised of Blacks and whites working in solidarity against racial violence. Several leaders of the Niagara Movement, including Du Bois, would help found this new organization, called the NAACP.

PHOTO BY E. CHICKERINGS, W. E. B. DU BOIS PAPERS (MS 312). COURTESY OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST LIBRARIES

*“Even more than the work of any one branch, the activists of the statewide organization of NAACP branches represented a threat to Southern society’s oppression of Blacks.”*

NAACP historian Dorothy Autrey

[RIGHT]

**The Crisis Vol. 14 No. 5, September 1917**

Published in September 1917, this edition of *The Crisis* included articles on the East St. Louis Race Riot which occurred in May, and the Silent Parade in New York held later that summer to highlight anti-Black violence. The magazine also featured advertisements for NAACP membership, recommendations of books by African American authors as well as poetry and short stories.

EDITED BY: W.E.B. DU BOIS; ILLUSTRATED BY: FRANK WALTERS, PUBLISHED BY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE, COURTESY OF THE COLLECTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, GIFT OF BOBBIE ROSS IN MEMORY OF ELIZABETH DILLARD

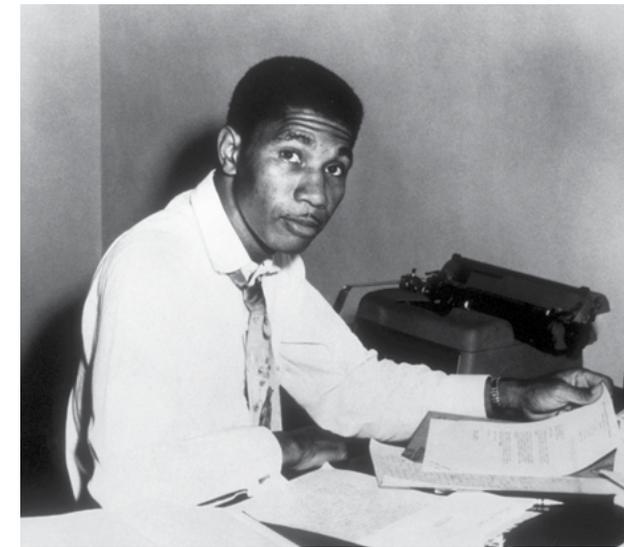


[BELOW]

**The Atlanta Conference, NAACP 1920**

NAACP delegates convened in Atlanta in 1920, the first time the annual conference was organized in the South. The meeting focused on voting rights, anti-lynching legislation, the migration of African Americans to cities in the North, and the elimination of Jim Crow. Following the meeting and its widespread press coverage, the Georgia NAACP branches faced discrimination and violence which hindered the growth of local branches within the state for the next two decades.

COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-DIG-PPMCSA-39049]



[LEFT]

**Medgar Evers in Jackson, Mississippi, ca. 1960**

A World War II veteran, Medgar Evers became the first NAACP Field Secretary in Mississippi in 1954. He worked to share information about anti-Black violence such as lynchings. In 1963 he was assassinated in his driveway by a white supremacist. The year before his home had been firebombed.

COURTESY OF MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

[RIGHT]

**Office of the NAACP's *The Crisis* Magazine**

In 1910 W.E.B. Du Bois published the first edition of the NAACP's magazine, *The Crisis*, which examined civil rights issues facing the Black community and shared Black scholarship, art, and culture.

COURTESY OF GEORGE RINHART/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES



Photo by Underwood & Underwood, N.Y.

**“GIVE LIGHT AND THE PEOPLE  
WILL FIND A WAY”**

## **Black Grassroots Organizing in the South**

The NAACP was a fast-growing network, but it failed to penetrate some of the most dangerous parts of the South, including many rural towns in Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama. Many Black veterans who had fought for democracy overseas during World War II returned home to a racially segregated United States. Veteran and NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers took up the task of organizing voter registration to increase political power in the African American community. The Deep South became home to an array of grassroots organizations working in tandem, including the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) which operated as an independent political party aiming to elect Black candidates into county level positions. Grassroots organizing in Southern states dispelled the myth that poor people had to be led by the socially elite.

Organizations such as the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and LCFO united in voter registration and education efforts throughout the South. Many organizers left school, lost their jobs, faced eviction, and experienced racial violence and police brutality at the hands of white Southerners. While voting rights campaigns at the local level were a collective effort, socioeconomic class differences in the Black community created tension amongst organizations. This tension became evident when Fannie Lou Hamer unsuccessfully ran for a seat within the U.S. Senate as a candidate of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). NAACP President Roy Wilkins refused to support MFDP, fearful that the delegation would incite “white-backlash.” In the end, many in the Black middle-class did not support the MFDP delegation. MFDP delegates were forced to participate as non-voting guests despite having the voting majority.

### **New Black Voters Reading Ballots**

Because African Americans were systematically prohibited from voting, voter registration campaigns included teaching the community how to pass literacy tests, to read and fill out ballots. Here, a group of African American women are reading sample ballots during a class in an Alabama church.

COURTESY OF FLIP SCHULKE/CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES



LEFT]

**Lowndes County Freedom House and LCFO Headquarters. From left to right, SNCC workers, unidentified, Michael (Oshoosi) Wright, and Jennifer Lawson.**

Lowndes County was 80 percent Black but not a single Black person was registered to vote. The Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) worked to register African Americans in Alabama to vote. LCFO was equally dedicated to voting for Black candidates who would fight for the needs of the community and not just other white candidates who would say anything to get the Black vote.

PHOTO BY DOUG HARRIS, COURTESY OF CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT VETERANS WEBSITE WWW.CRMVET.ORG

*“Sometimes it seem like to tell the truth today is to run the risk of being killed. But if I fall, I’ll fall five feet four inches forward in the fight for freedom. I’m not backing off.”*

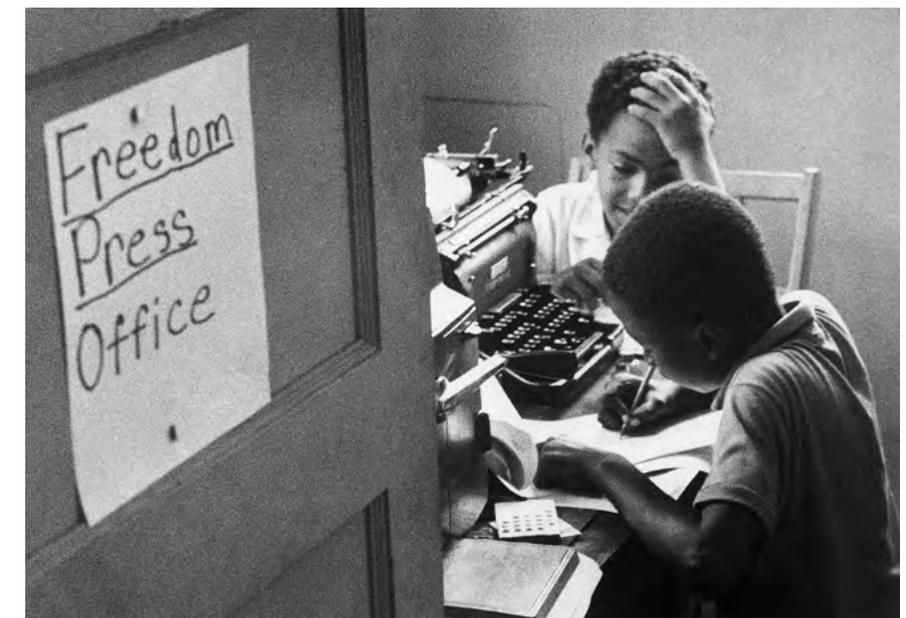
Fannie Lou Hamer

[RIGHT]

### **African American Boys in Mississippi Press Office, 1964**

The press played a crucial role in increasing Black voter registration in the South. The two young African Americans pictured here are working in the Freedom Press Office in Hattiesburg, Mississippi for the Mississippi Project.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN/CORBIS/BETTMANN ARCHIVE





[LEFT]

**Guarding the Freedom House at night, 1964**

The African American community has a long history of armed resistance. During and after Reconstruction, African Americans claimed Second Amendment rights as their own to continue the long-standing practice of taking up arms in self-defense.

PHOTO BY MATT HERRON, COURTESY OF MATT HERRON/TAKE STOCK/THE IMAGE WORKS



[ABOVE]

**Fannie Lou Hamer, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegate, at the Democratic National Convention, 1964**

During the 1964 Democratic National Convention in New Jersey, Fannie Lou Hamer gave her testimony before the credentials committee, sharing her personal experience and the experience of thousands who had unsuccessfully tried to register to vote in her speech, "I Question America."

PHOTO BY WARREN K. LEFFLER, COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-DIG-PPMSC-01267]



[ABOVE]

**Self-defense in Lowndes County, 1971**

Nonviolence was a useful and necessary tactic for the Civil Rights Movement. However, nonviolence and self-defense were never mutually exclusive. While many appreciated King's call for nonviolence, others felt they had the right to defend themselves. The Deacons for Self-Defense and Justice began guarding the homes of activists in Jonesboro, Louisiana in 1964.

PHOTO BY DOUGLAS R. GILBERT, COURTESY OF LOOK MAGAZINE PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-L9-65-246]

**Race Relations Civil Rights Canton, Mississippi, 1966**

The "March Against Fear" was a single-man protest organized by James Meredith in an attempt to racially-integrate the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Following an assassination attempt upon Meredith during his march to Jackson other leaders and supporters took up the march on his behalf. While en route to Jackson these marchers were met with violence from highway patrolmen and police officers.

COURTESY OF ROLLS PRESS/POPPERFOTO/GETTY IMAGES



*"The President will not allow that illiterate woman to speak from the floor of the convention."*

Hubert Humphrey Jr., U.S. Vice President

**GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING  
& COLLECTIVE ACTION**

**Highlander Folk School**

Highlander Folk School helped to shape and integrate grassroots activism during the Southern Freedom Movement. Founded in 1932 by Myles Horton and Don West, it began as a training center focused on worker rights and economic justice. By the mid 1950s, with the help of Septima Clark and others, Highlander began to offer a citizenship program to inform African Americans about their rights and strategies for nonviolent organizing. For some participants it was the first time they had been in an integrated environment. Students were required to return home and share what they had learned at Highlander with their community. The school became known for its organizing work and attendees risked retaliation for their participation.

In 1955, a year after the Brown v. Board of Education decision that deemed segregated public schools unconstitutional, Rosa Parks attended a two-week workshop at the Highlander Folk School. A few days before the end of workshop, Emmett Till, a 14 year old boy from Chicago, Illinois was brutally murdered for supposedly whistling at a white woman at a Mississippi grocery store. Both Till's violent death and the experience of Highlander would influence Mrs. Parks' famous refusal to give up her seat just months later. Under the guise of deterring communism in America, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) closed the school in 1961.



[LEFT]

**Lecturing at Highlander**

Highlander founder and director Myles Horton believed that “oppressed people [knew] the answers to their own problems.” Workshops encouraged participants to think critically about their experiences and how to use those experiences to organize for change.

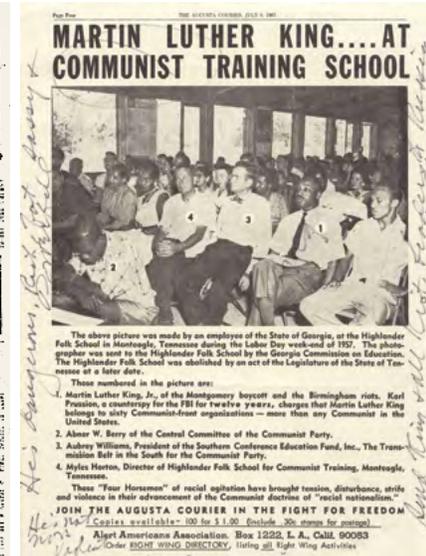
COURTESY OF THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*“I was 42-years old and it was one of the few times in my life up to that point when I did not feel any hostility from white people.”*

Rosa Parks

*“What we are working for is an educational program that has become a resource and rallying point for scores of brave Southerners who are leading the fight for justice and better race relations in these crucial days.”*

Septima Clark



[FAR LEFT]

**Nation Shocked, Vow Action in Lynching of Chicago Youth, 1955**

For many African Americans, the brutal lynching of Emmett Till was a call to arms. In August 1955, two white men kidnapped and murdered the fourteen-year-old who was visiting family in Mississippi. *The Chicago Defender*, a prominent Black newspaper based in Till's hometown, devoted nearly the entire front page to the story.

COURTESY OF CHICAGO DEFENDER

[LEFT]

**Martin Luther King Broadside, 1963**

The success of the Highlander School and its interracial environment led it to become increasingly attacked as a Communist training school. This broadside produced by the Georgia Commission on Education was circulated across the South. It includes a handwritten note stating, "Send King & all Riot leaders to Russia or back to Africa."

COURTESY OF THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

[RIGHT]

**Martin Luther King, Pete Seeger, Rosa Parks, Ralph Abernathy, and Charis Horton at Highlander Institute, 1957**

Over Labor Day weekend, 1957, activists from across the country gathered in Monteagle, Tennessee for the 25th anniversary of the Highlander Folk School. At the time, the school offered a rare slice of interracial life in the segregated South. Today, the school (now the Highlander Research and Education Center) remains a center for grassroots organizing.

COURTESY OF THE HIGHLANDER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER LIBRARY



[LEFT]

**Billboard Targeting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1965**

Billboards across the South, including this one on the road that marchers took from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama were meant to discredit Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The picture is from a workshop at Highlander. Rosa Parks is at far left, but she is not identified in the image.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES



## SPARKING A REVOLUTION Montgomery Bus Boycott

The Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) was created to organize the citywide bus boycott sparked by Rosa Parks' famous refusal to give up her seat in December 1955. Dr. King was selected as the leader of the newly formed MIA. Only twenty-six years old and recently arrived in Montgomery, local leaders hoped that he could galvanize and unite factions within the community. Originally planned as a one day protest, the community agreed to continue the boycott until their demands were met. The MIA's Transportation Committee created a carpooling network based on the successful 1953 Baton Rouge bus boycott. Bi-weekly mass meetings provided cohesion to the protest, moral

support, and opportunities for fundraising. The MIA also operated a welfare committee and relief fund that supported individuals who had lost jobs due to their participation in the boycott.

White local officials and community groups used a variety of tactics to try to end the boycott. As the boycott continued, violence towards the Black community escalated. After 13 months, the Supreme Court ruled that Montgomery's segregated buses were unconstitutional. The success of this mass protest sparked more demonstrations across the country and brought Dr. King to national prominence. It also provoked more violence towards the Black community in Montgomery. After the end of the boycott, MIA became a founding organization for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), led by Dr. King, and continued to work for racial equality over the next decade.

*“At present our Committee [NAACP Brooklyn branch] is raising money to buy a station wagon to send to Montgomery. Thousands of people, Negro and white, are working behind the lines to help you who are carrying out the fight on the front lines. All we ask is that you stand your ground, hold fast, and wait ... Help is on the way.”*

NAACP Brooklyn leader to Dr. King

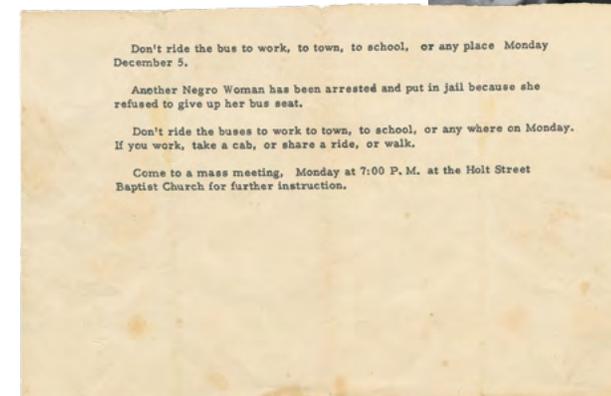
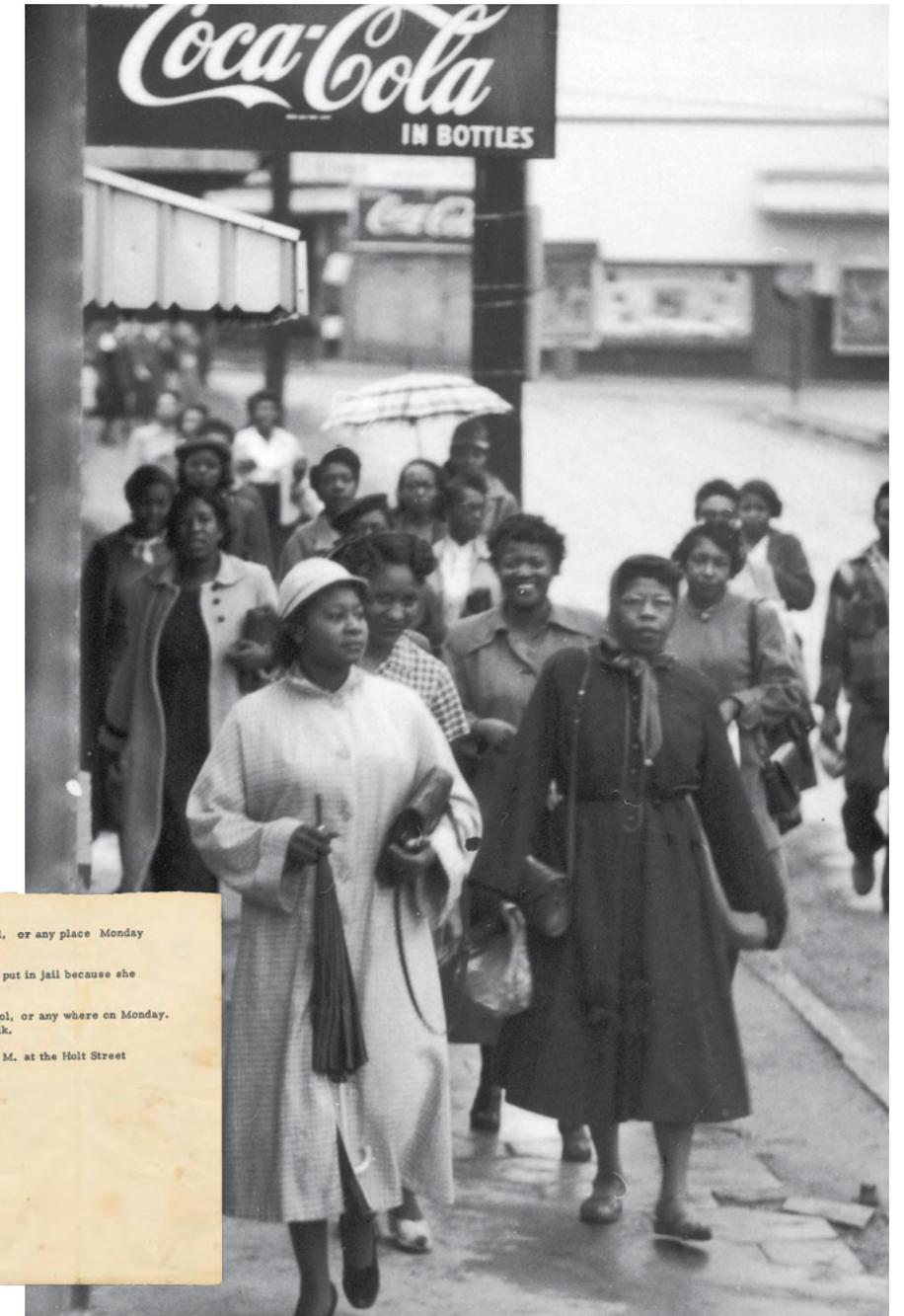


[LEFT]

### Bus Boycott, Montgomery, Alabama, 1955

To help the community avoid using city buses, Black postal workers mapped out carpooling transportation routes. Community members volunteered to drive boycotters and the Montgomery Improvement Association purchased station wagons called “rolling churches” to bring people to and from work. Eddie L. and Dorothy Posey owned the parking lot featured in this image in the heart of the Black business district. It became one of the main stops for the carpooling system.

DAN WEINER  
PHOTO BY DAN WEINER; COPYRIGHT COURTESY OF JOHN BRODERICK



[ABOVE]

### Flyer Encouraging People to Participate in a Bus Boycott in Montgomery, Alabama following the Arrest of Rosa Parks, 1955

Professor Jo Ann Robinson of Alabama State College and a member of the Women's Political Council (WPC), printed thousands of these flyers in the middle of the night. The WPC had been discussing plans for years about how to organize a city-wide bus boycott and used Mrs. Parks' arrest to initiate this protest. These flyers helped mobilize members of the Black community.

COURTESY OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

[ABOVE]

### African American Citizens Walking to Work and Shopping, 1955

Black Montgomery residents walked through the rain and heat during the 381 days of the bus boycott. As African Americans comprised 70% of the ridership, their united refusal to support segregated buses had an immediate financial impact.

COURTESY OF DON CRAVENS/THE LIFE IMAGES COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES



[ABOVE]

**African American Women and Children, at Church Rally for Bus Boycott. 1956**

Black churches played a critical role in organizing the Montgomery Bus Boycott. At a mass meeting shortly after Rosa Parks' arrest, Rev. Abernathy shared with the community the demands made by the Montgomery Improvement Association to local officials on their behalf, "The first demand was for courteous treatment on the buses. The second called for first-come, first-served seating ... The third requested the hiring of Black drivers on Black bus routes."

COURTESY OF DON CRAVENS/THE LIFE IMAGES COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES



[ABOVE]

**Rosa Parks Goes to Trial, 1955**

While often described as "demur," Rosa Parks had been an activist for decades prior to her arrest for refusing to give up her seat on a city bus. Pictured here with E.D. Nixon, President of the Alabama NAACP, Nixon and Parks worked to document racial terror in the state, including the rape of Mrs. Recy Taylor.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

*"We felt that we were somebody. That somebody had listened to us, that we had forced the white man to give what we knew [was] our own citizenship ... And if you have never had the feeling that ... You are [no longer] an alien, but that this is your country too, then you don't know what I'm talking about. It is a hilarious feeling that just goes all over you, that makes you feel that America is a great country and we're going to do more to make it greater."*

Dr. Jo Ann Robinson, member of the Women's Political Council

**NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION**  
**Southern Christian**  
**Leadership Conference**

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was formed in Atlanta after the successful Montgomery bus boycott with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as its first president. SCLC mobilized Black churches and local organizations across the South. The network provided local groups with support and resources, confidence and sustenance that they were part of a larger movement for change. One of the first projects after its founding was the Crusade for Citizenship program which focused on doubling the number of Black voters in the South, particularly for the 1958 and 1960 elections.

In 1963, SCLC worked with the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) to organize the Birmingham campaign to put pressure on local officials and businesses to desegregate. The campaign included boycotts of stores downtown, sit-ins at lunch counters, protest marches to city hall, and voter registration drives. Hundreds of protestors were arrested and with so many in jail, including Dr. King, SCLC organizer James Bevel mobilized youth marchers to continue the protests. Police Commissioner "Bull" Connor reacted with violence against the young people. When the nation saw images of children being attacked by police dogs, high pressure water hoses, and police clubs, many were outraged. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy sent a representative to negotiate the desegregation of businesses downtown. This was met with more violence from the white community, including the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church which killed four young students and injured several more just before Sunday service.

**Segregation Protest March, 1963**

Young women outside of the 16th Street Baptist Church marched to end segregation in Birmingham.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES



[ABOVE]

**17-Year-Old Civil Rights Demonstrator in Birmingham, 1963**

In Birmingham after many leaders were arrested, youth were encouraged to take to the streets to continue protests. Many in the United States were shocked to see television footage of young people being attacked by local police, dogs, and water hoses in a campaign of violence organized by Birmingham Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor.

PHOTO BY BILL HUDSON. COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED PRESS

*“Since the NAACP was like waving a red flag in front of some Southern whites, we decided that we needed an organization that would do the same thing and yet be called a Christian organization ... We chose ‘Southern Christian Leadership Conference,’ so they could say, “Well that’s Baptist Preachers,’ so they didn’t fear us.”*

Reverend T.J. Jemison, leader of 1953 Baton Rouge bus boycott and founding member of SCLC



[ABOVE]

**Marchers with SCLC sign for the Savannah Freedom Now Movement, during the March on Washington, 1963**

Marchers shown at the 1963 March on Washington hold up SCLC signs for "Savannah Freedom Now," a campaign to desegregate the city.

PHOTO BY MARION S. TRIKOSKO, COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-DIG-PPMSCA-37242]



[LEFT]

**Demonstrators Getting on School Bus, 1963**

Hundreds were arrested during the Birmingham campaign including Dr. King. While imprisoned, he wrote his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail" which was a response to an article in *The Birmingham News* that denounced the demonstrations. Written on the margins of a newspaper and covertly taken from his cell, King famously wrote, "I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

COURTESY OF BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

*"And of course, we based [the SCLC] on everything that happened in the past – Frederick Douglass, slaves, and Marcus Garvey; everybody who struggled for freedom and who were caught up in the same web ... we were meeting and matching our moment in history. That is what we sought. This was the need we saw."*

Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth

[BELOW]

**Boys Carrying Casket at Church Bombing Funeral, 1963**

The Birmingham campaign and protest activities led to more violence towards the Black community including the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church. This bombing claimed the lives of four young girls and injured several other young people who were attending Sunday service.

COURTESY OF DECLAN HAUN/CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM/GETTY IMAGES



**MARCHING IN THE TRACKS OF THE BLACK ORGANIZING TRADITION**  
**March on Washington**

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963 was a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement. The march aimed to draw attention to continued labor discrimination and the lack of job opportunities for the Black community. In the wake of the Birmingham movement, it would also focus on an end to segregation through the passage of civil rights legislation. The Kennedy administration tried unsuccessfully to get organizers to call off the march, fearing that any public perception of Blacks as “threatening” would hinder the bill’s passing.

Organizers A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin worked in collaboration with key labor and civil rights

organizations such as SCLC, CORE, NAACP, SNCC, and the National Urban League. Rustin and his team had only a couple of months to plan the march which they hoped would draw 100,000 people from all over the country. It was imperative that the march be perfectly organized and peaceful as this was a key opportunity for media coverage and the nation to see Black and white people marching in unity. Twenty-five cent buttons were sold to help raise money for the march. Rustin’s staff worked to mobilize local communities to attend. They organized 2,000 “freedom buses” and 30 trains to arrive in Washington, D.C. by 9 AM and to leave the city by sunset. On the day of the march, organizers were overwhelmed to see 250,000 people stream in from all over the nation. The speakers, representing labor and civil rights organizations as well as representatives of various religious clergy, were carefully selected. Despite the passage of civil rights legislation the next year, violence against the Black community continued.

**Activists Marching to Lincoln Memorial, 1963**

With the Capitol at their back, people from across the United States marched to the Lincoln Memorial. Serving as a powerful backdrop, the Lincoln Memorial became an important symbol for African Americans to critique the contradictions of racism within United States democracy.

PHOTO BY FLIP SCHULKE, COURTESY OF FLIP SCHULKE/CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES



*“The March on Washington took place because the Negro needed allies ... The March was not a Negro action. It was an action by Negroes and whites together. Not just the leaders of the Negro organizations, but leading Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish spokesmen called the people into the street. And Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, white and Black, responded.”*

Bayard Rustin



[ABOVE]

**Marchers Arriving in Washington D.C., 1963**

Specially chartered “freedom buses” and trains brought thousands of people from across the country to the March on Washington. With only a few months to plan, Rustin’s staff helped to coordinate the logistics of bringing nearly a quarter million people to and from the city in one day. Here a group arrives at Washington’s Union Station.

PHOTO BY FLIP SCHULKE, COURTESY OF FLIP SCHULKE/CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

[LEFT]

**Bayard Rustin, Deputy Director and Cleveland Robinson, Chairman of Administrative Committee, 1963**

The organizational logistics of the march was a huge undertaking. Bayard Rustin recalled that, “we wanted to get everybody, from the whole country, into Washington by nine o’clock in the morning and out of Washington by sundown. We had to consult doctors on exactly what people should bring to eat so that they wouldn’t get sick ... we had to arrange what we would do if there was a terrible thunderstorm that day.”

PHOTO BY ORLANDO FERNANDEZ, COURTESY OF NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM AND THE SUN NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS





[ABOVE]

**A. Philip Randolph, 1963**

A. Philip Randolph, founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union, had planned a 1941 March on Washington protest to highlight the discrimination Black workers faced in World War II defense industries. Plans for the march were met with resistance from the federal government and ultimately canceled after an executive order on fair labor practices was issued by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Despite this order, discrimination in the workforce continued.

PHOTO BY JOHN BOTTEGA, COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM AND THE SUN NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*“In a sense we’ve come to our nation’s capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men ... would be guaranteed the “unalienable rights” of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” It is obvious today that ... America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked “insufficient funds.”*

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., March on Washington



[LEFT]

**John Lewis Speaks from the Steps of the Lincoln Memorial at the March on Washington, 1963**

All speeches were reviewed the day before the march. John Lewis, chairman of SNCC, reluctantly agreed to edit his speech at the last minute as the organizers were uncomfortable with the line that stated that the Black community could not wait for legislative change but would “take matters into [their] own hands and create a source of power outside of any national structure ... leaving a scorched earth of nonviolence.”

PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/MAGNUM PHOTOS



[LEFT]

**NBC News: March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, 1963**

This paper with the headline, “They’re Pouring In From All Over” shows the assembly and march route. The march was widely publicized and televised. It was an important opportunity to show the nation an image of Blacks and whites united in peaceful solidarity for change.

COURTESY OF NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES

[BELOW]

**Protesters Holding Signs, 1963**

The march brought together activists from many Civil Rights organizations. Here young people wearing SNCC pins marched to end segregation, gain voting rights, and demand better job opportunities.

PHOTO BY WALLY MCNAMEE, COURTESY OF WALLY MCNAMEE/CORBIS/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES



**WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED**  
**Student Nonviolent**  
**Coordinating Committee**

On February 1, 1960, Franklin E. McCain Sr., Ezell Blair, Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan), Joseph McNeil, and David Richmond, students at North Carolina A&T, marched to the Woolworth Store in downtown Greensboro and demanded to be served at the “whites only” counter. This nonviolent protest created a wave of sit-ins all over the country. Just two months later the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was formed. It was the only national civil rights organization completely led by young people. Mentored by Ella Jo Baker, members of SNCC committed themselves full-time to bottom-up grassroots organizing in order to radically transform American democracy. SNCC challenged Southern white power by organizing Freedom Rides which integrated

buses through the segregated South. Members spent the summer of 1964 canvassing some of the most disenfranchised parts of the South to register African Americans to vote, while also establishing Freedom Schools. Freedom Summer would be marked by the deaths of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, three young civil rights workers who were murdered on July 21, 1964 by the KKK while on assignment in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

By the mid 1960s SNCC adopted a Black Power approach, following the assassination attempt of James Meredith who integrated the University of Mississippi and murder of U.S. Navy veteran Sammy Younge Jr. by white supremacists. SNCC eventually began to organize against the Vietnam War and the military draft, highlighting what many African Americans felt was the hypocrisy of fighting for freedom overseas but constantly being denied rights at home. Much like other organizations of the Civil Rights Movement, SNCC became a target of the FBI’s COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program).

*“The ministers from the SCLC and some others, felt sort of left out ... They didn’t want to lose them [the students] because this was something new, this was vitality, I suppose. What they didn’t know [was] that the young people had already decided they were going to be independent and this was difficult, of course, for someone who had been accustomed to feeling ‘these children of my church’....”*

Ella Baker on the SCLC ministers and the creation of SNCC



[LEFT]  
**Don’t Buy Segregation. Protesters near Southside Sundry and Southside Business Machines, Farmville, Virginia, 1963**

One of the most useful tactics of the Movement was to encourage Black buyers not to spend their money where they couldn’t work. The Black community owned their buying power in the same way they held the voting power. By putting financial pressure on stores they gained leverage, desegregating these various shops.

COURTESY OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH LIBRARIES



[ABOVE]  
**Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) led by Julian Bond, Atlanta, Georgia, March 23, 1963**

At the center of this photo is Julian Bond, one of the original leaders of SNCC. Like many of the young people within the organization, Julian Bond dropped out of college to organize through non-violent direct action. During his lifetime, Bond served both in the House of Representatives and Senate for the State of Georgia.

PHOTO BY RICHARD AVEDON, COURTESY OF THE RICHARD AVEDON FOUNDATION



[RIGHT]  
**Freedom School, Summer Project, 1976**

Freedom Summer was dedicated to voter registration but was also committed to establishing and running Freedom Schools. These informal schools gave African American youth their first chance at an equal education to that of white students.

PHOTO BY MATT HERON, COURTESY OF MATT HERON/TAKE STOCK/THE IMAGE WORKS



[ABOVE]

**SNCC staff sit-in at a Toddle House, 1963**

In this 1963 image, Judy Richardson protests segregation at a Toddle House lunch counter with other SNCC members. Richardson worked at the SNCC national office in Atlanta, Georgia.

PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/MAGNUM PHOTOS



[LEFT]

**Come Let Us Build a New World Together, 1963**

This 1962 photo was taken during a protest by SNCC to desegregate a white swimming pool in Cairo, Illinois. Using photographs by SNCC staff photographer Danny Lyon, the organization printed a series of posters to promote its work and attract new volunteers. Volunteers would be crucial to the voter registration work of SNCC.

PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/MAGNUM PHOTOS

*“Your work is just beginning. If you go back home and sit down and take what these white men in Mississippi are doing to us ... if you take it and don’t do something about it ... then God damn your souls.”*

Mississippi CORE leader Dave Dennis delivering the eulogy for James Chaney, murdered during Freedom Summer



[ABOVE]

**McComb Students Kneel in Prayer, 1961**

Students kneeled and prayed in protest for voting rights in McComb, Mississippi. Shortly after this picture was taken many were arrested and charged with “disorderly conduct,” including high school student Brenda Travis who spent a month in the Pike County Jail. Upon her released, Travis learned that she had been suspended from school.

PHOTO BY ERLE JOHNSTON, COURTESY OF CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT VETERANS WEBSITE WWW.CRMVET.ORG

**DIRECT ACTION**  
**Congress of Racial Equality**

Headquartered just across the street from New York City Hall, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was greatly influenced by Gandhi's nonviolent resistance against British rule in India and adopted this approach in their efforts to dismantle racial segregation in America. Originally led by James Farmer, CORE organized campaigns around desegregation, voting rights, and other forms of racial discrimination. Beginning in 1947, members organized "Journeys of Reconciliation" with Black and white men riding together throughout the South. In 1961, CORE, along with other grassroots organizations such as SNCC, organized "Freedom Rides" to draw attention to racial segregation in the South.

**Congress of Racial Equality Members Carry Picket Signs outside Columbia University's John Jay Hall in Support of Employee Demands for Union Representation, 1964**

Students of CORE supported Columbia University employees' demands for union representation during the 1960s. In 2018, employed graduate students and adjunct professors at Columbia and other prominent institutions find themselves again trying to unionize and address issues of pay and how they are treated.

PHOTO BY FRED PALUMBO, COURTESY OF NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM AND THE SUN NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Riders, both men and women, were met with racial violence and terror by white communities during their journeys. The journeys sparked national attention and led to similar rides throughout the country. Under the direction of James Farmer, CORE was heavily involved in the efforts of the Southern Freedom Movement and participated in the Freedom Summer of 1964, registering African Americans to vote and establishing Freedom Schools in some of the most disenfranchised areas in Mississippi. CORE also worked to desegregate schools, focusing on Northern cities.

In 1968 CORE took a more militant approach under the direction of new national director Roy Innis. CORE drafted the Community Self-Determination Bill which aimed to "put the economy of the Black community back into Black hands." It was the first bill accepted into Congress by a Black group. This bill put Innis and CORE at odds with the African American community as he did not embrace the desegregation efforts of the movement. Innis and CORE believed that the only way to foster long-term independence and stability in low-income Black communities was through community-controlled segregated schools, businesses, health facilities, and sanitation jobs. Innis, over time, became a Conservative figure and controversial within the Black community.



[ABOVE] Ken Rice, Left, and Stan Brezenoff, Dragging Crosses, Lead Members of Brooklyn CORE on March from Brooklyn to City Hall, 1964

Members of CORE made a five-mile journey from Brooklyn to City Hall, carrying large crosses. CORE used different protest tactics like this one to bring attention to Black life in the North.

PHOTO BY WALTER ALBERTIN, COURTESY OF NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM AND THE SUN NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*"We of CORE – the nationalists – are the field-hand Blacks."*

Roy Innis, ca.1968



[ABOVE] James Farmer & CORE at World's Fair, 1964

The Brooklyn chapter of CORE organized a "stall in" during the World Fair of 1964. Some of the tactics of the "stall in" included scheduling 2,500 cars to run out of gas on the highway leading to the fair, pulling emergency brakes on trains, and finally releasing live rats into the audience just before President Lyndon B. Johnson was scheduled to speak.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN /GETTY IMAGES

*"to bring about equality for all people regardless of race, creed, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic background."*

CORE Mission (1942)



[ABOVE] CORE Pickets in front of 125 North St., New York City, Protesting Slum Housing, 1964

From 1963–64, protestors fought to change the housing policy in New York City, forcing landlords to finally repair dilapidated buildings. CORE used demonstrations like this to highlight and bring attention to the rat infested neighborhoods that African Americans were relegated to.

PHOTO BY PHYLLIS TWACHTMAN, COURTESY OF NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM AND THE SUN NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

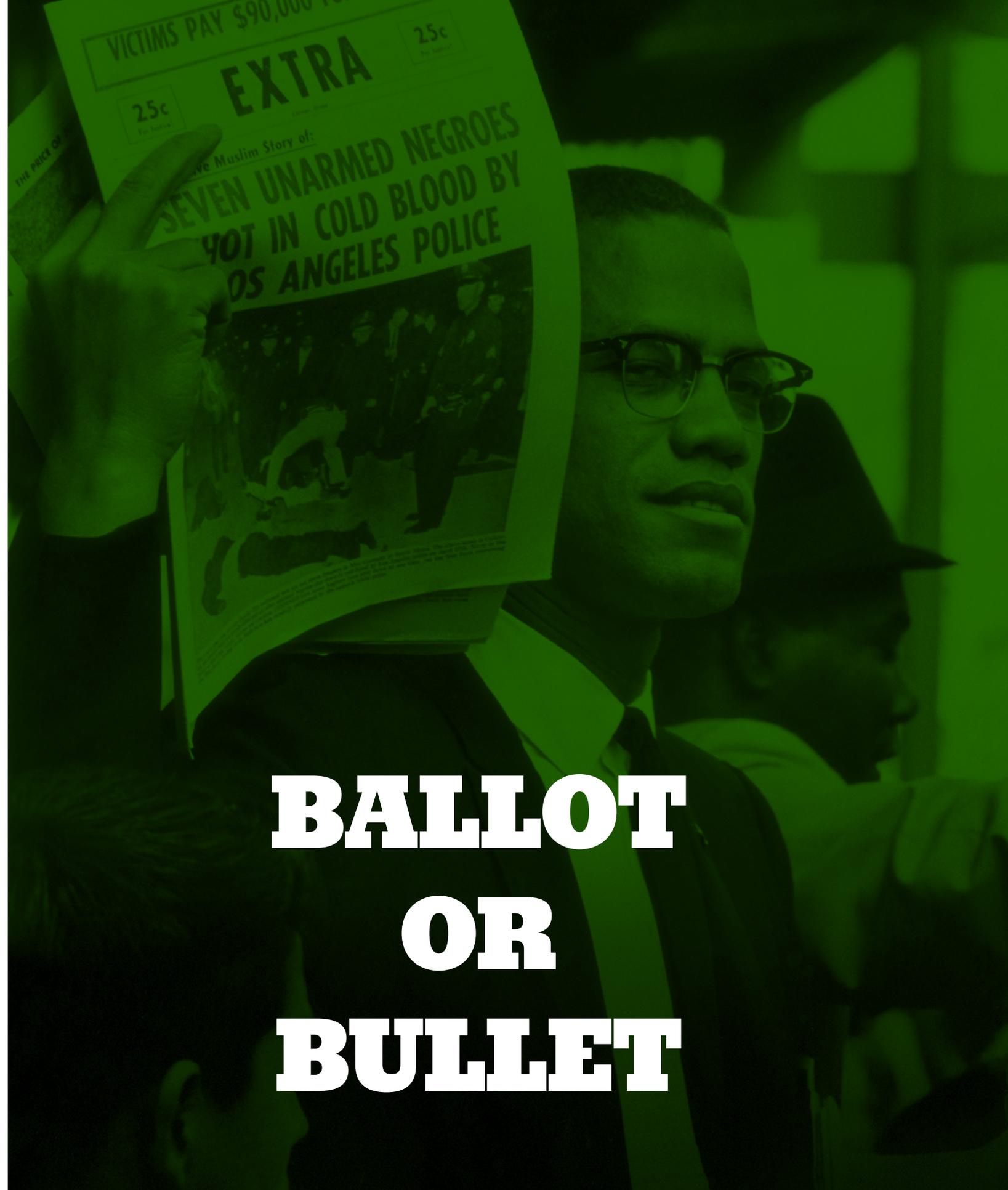


[ABOVE]

**Burning Bus After Attack, 1961**

Following the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling which declared racial segregation in public education to be unconstitutional, Freedom Riders travelled South in organized protests against racism in the United States. They were met with resistance at multiple stops along the way and attacked by white supremacists. Tires were slashed, windows were broken and rags lit on fire were thrown into the windows, causing the bus to burst into flames and forcing riders into the violent mob.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES



# BALLOT OR BULLET

**BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY**  
**Malcolm X and Nation of Islam**

Under the direction of Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam (NOI) served as a sanctuary for millions of African Americans including Malcolm X (born Malcolm Little). The NOI was a mixture of religion, education, economic mobility and self-reliance to foster Black unity, pride and self-discipline. Malcolm X was introduced to the Nation while incarcerated. As a NOI Minister, he developed a strong political presence in Harlem, New York preaching Black nationalism, self-defense and racial separation to drastically change the condition of African Americans. Malcolm X went on to establish NOI temples all over the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and developed a great following.

Heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay) was inspired by Malcolm X to publicly join the NOI in 1964. That same year Malcolm X announced his separation from the NOI, adopting Sunni Islam and changing his name to el-Hajj Malik

el-Shabazz. He developed a desire to work within the Civil Rights Movement and also to respond to police brutality that members of the Nation were facing. NOI was against racial integration, Black involvement in the political process and the use of non-violence as a political strategy. While he no longer followed the teachings of Elijah Mohammed, el-Shabazz still advocated for Black self-defense, self-determination, and adopted the politics of Pan-Africanism. Inspired by his African sojourn, he created the Organization of African American Unity (OAAU). Following his separation from NOI, el-Shabazz attended the US Senate debate on Civil Rights where he met with Martin Luther King Jr. for the first and only time in his life. During the election year of 1964, el-Shabazz gave his speech "The Ballot or Bullet" urging African Americans to vote wisely and to no longer align themselves with the false promises of the democratic candidates. On February 21, 1965, just three months after the election, el-Shabazz would be killed by members of the NOI. Many Civil Rights activists attended his funeral including John Lewis and James Forman (SNCC), Andrew Young (SCLC), Bayard Rustin, and James Farmer (CORE). His work would live on, influencing Black radical political thought including the Oakland, California based organization, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.

*A ballot is like a bullet. You don't throw your ballots until you see a target, and if that target is not within your reach, keep your ballot in your pocket.*

Malcolm X



[LEFT]

**Malcolm X Preaching, 1963**

As a Minister, Malcolm X began preaching on New York City streets and his ability to bring attention and insight to the Black condition brought many followers to the Nation of Islam. Malcolm X became a highly requested public speaker. He is pictured here preaching at a mosque in Harlem, New York.

PHOTO BY RICHARD SAUNDERS, COURTESY OF RICHARD SAUNDERS/PICTORIAL PARADE/ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



[LEFT]

**Nation of Islam women outside a Southside Muslim Temple**

While most of the media coverage of the Nation of Islam was of men, women were equally critical to the struggle for Black self-determination. Women ran the schools, elevated female voices in the NOI newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks* and were activists in the community just as much as male members of the Nation.

PHOTO BY EVE ARNOLD, COURTESY OF EVE ARNOLD/MAGNUM PHOTOS

*"While we did not always see eye to eye on methods to solve the race problem, I always had a deep affection for Malcolm and felt that he had a great ability to put his finger on the existence and root of the problem. He was an eloquent spokesman for his point of view and no one can honestly doubt that Malcolm had a great concern for the problems that we face as a race."*

Martin Luther King Jr. on the death of Malcolm X

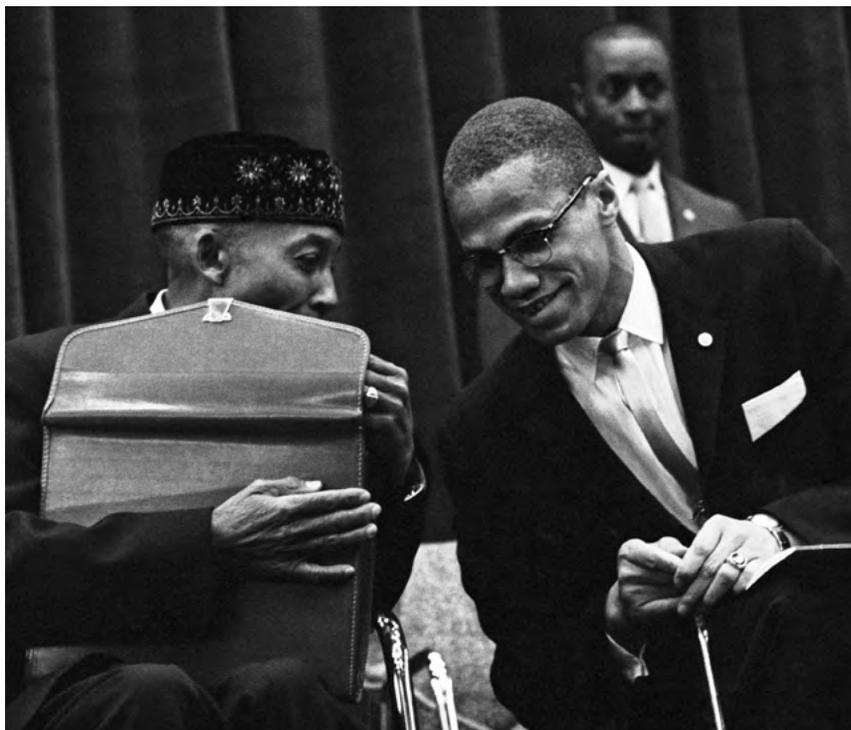


[ABOVE]

**Malcolm X Holding Up Black Muslim Newspaper, Chicago, Illinois, 1963**

Malcolm X helped to establish a mosque in Los Angeles, California. Members of the Nation were harrassed for selling copies of *Muhammad Speaks* by white police officers. The charges were later dropped. During one altercation over forty police officers attacked members of the L.A. mosque and seven Muslims were shot. Their deaths were all considered "justifiable."

PHOTO BY GORDON PARKS, COURTESY OF AND COPYRIGHT THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION



[LEFT]

**Malcolm X and Elijah Mohammed, 1962**

Elijah Muhammad served as a mentor to Malcolm X during his time in the Nation of Islam. Two years after this picture, Malcolm X left the Nation due to allegations of his mentor engaging in secret relationships with at least six women. These relationships went against the teachings of the Nation of Islam.

PHOTO BY EVE ARNOLD, COURTESY OF EVE ARNOLD/MAGNUM PHOTOS

[BELOW]

**Cassius Clay And Malcolm X, 1964**

Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X are pictured following his victory in Miami against Sonny Liston for Heavyweight Champion of the World. Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali were great friends until Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam. In his autobiography, Muhammad Ali wrote that one of his biggest regrets in life was turning his back on Malcolm X.

COURTESY OF BOB GOMEL/THE LIFE IMAGES COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES



[ABOVE]

**Untitled, Chicago, Illinois, 1963**

Gender segregation was a common practice in the Nation of Islam. Men in the NOI were often regarded as the protectors of women, but they were not allowed to pray in the same area.

PHOTO BY GORDON PARKS, COURTESY OF AND COPYRIGHT THE GORDON PARKS FOUNDATION

## ARMED DEFENSE & SELF DETERMINATION Black Panther Party

The Black Panther Party was created in 1966, a year after the Watts Riots of Los Angeles. By the mid-1960s, Los Angeles had a large Black and Mexican population but its cities remained heavily segregated, especially in housing. African Americans, Asians, and Mexicans were prohibited from living in the suburbs and found themselves in neighborhoods like Watts and Compton, experiencing extreme racial discrimination by a white-dominated police department. Oakland Police would carry their shotguns in full view as a tactic to intimidate communities of color. To protect Black communities and de-escalate racial tension in Los Angeles, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP). They embraced the panther logo earlier used by the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in Alabama. By involving “lower-class” brothers, they started as a political education group that studied Black radical and anti-colonial literature such as Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*, Malcolm X, Mao, and Che Guevara. Newton and Seale concluded that the only way to gain freedom was through Black self-defense

and by meeting force with force. To provide for the immediate needs of the community, the Black Panther Party created social welfare programs such as the Free Breakfast for School Children program, free community health services, and clothing drives.

The BPP went into communities informing people of their right to arm themselves with weapons and spread their knowledge of criminal law. By October 1966, Newton and Seale had developed a 10 Point Program, separated into two categories: “what we believe” and “what we want.” Republican Donald Mumford threatened to pass a “Black Panther Bill” making it illegal for them to patrol with their weapons. Despite the passing of the bill, people across the country formed their own Black Panther Party chapters. By 1968, the Black Panther Party was heavily targeted by the FBI’s COINTELPRO. The FBI worked tirelessly to undermine support for the Panthers and sought to “create factionalism between not only the national leaders but also local leaders, and took steps to neutralize all organizational efforts of the [Black Panther Party].” In an effort to dissolve the Panthers, many of its leaders and members found themselves behind bars. Issues of succession and leadership arose and by the 1980s the Black Panther Party was no longer the force it had been a decade before.



[LEFT]

### Black Panthers Meal Program, 1969

The Black Panther Party is most often remembered for its approach to armed resistance. What is often ignored is their deep investment in the Black community, including their free breakfast program which provided a meal for Black students before school.

PHOTO BY WILLIAM P. STRAETER, COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED PRESS

[BELOW]

### Panther Free Food Program

A Party member prepares bags of food for distribution at the Oakland Coliseum at the Black Panther Community Survival Conference. At the conference, the Black Panther party registered members of the community to vote, tested them for sickle-cell anemia, and distributed food.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN SHAMES, ©2018, STEPHEN SHAMES, COURTESY STEVEN KASHER GALLERY, 1972 – OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, USA



*“First you have free breakfast,  
then you have medical care,  
then you have free bus rides,  
and soon you have FREEDOM!”*

Fred Hampton, Deputy Chairman,  
Black Panther Party, Illinois

[OPPOSITE]

### Black Panthers hold Free Huey signs at a rally at the Alameda County Courthouse where Black Panther Minister of Defense, Huey P. Newton, is on trial for killing an Oakland policeman.

On October 28, 1967, Oakland police officer John Frey was shot to death during an altercation with Huey P. Newton during a traffic stop. Newton was convicted of voluntary manslaughter at trial, but the conviction was later overturned. At the time, Newton claimed that he had been falsely accused, leading to the “Free Huey” campaign. Newton was released after three years, when his conviction was reversed on appeal.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN SHAMES, ©2018, STEPHEN SHAMES, COURTESY STEVEN KASHER GALLERY, 1968 – OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, USA



[LEFT]  
**Sickle-Cell Anemia Testing during Bobby Seale's Black Panther Party Campaign for Mayor of Oakland**

By 1972 the party officially added free government health care to their Ten Point Program. The Black Panther Party saw the correlation between poverty and poor health and opened thirteen free health clinics across the country, which provided a variety of services including tests for sickle cell anemia. The Party was critical of the U.S. government's lack of interest in this disease which disproportionately affected the African American community.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN SHAMES, ©2018, STEPHEN SHAMES, COURTESY STEVEN KASHER GALLERY, 1972 - OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, USA

*“What good, however, was nonviolence when the police are determined to rule by force.”*

Huey P. Newton



[RIGHT]  
**Black Panther National Chairman Bobby Seale & Huey P. Newton**

Black Panther national chairman Bobby Seale and defense minister Huey Newton are shown in Oakland, California before the start of a rally against police brutality. The Black Panther Party was known for “policing the police” and armed resistance was a critical component of their Ten Point Program.

COURTESY OF SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE.**

**We believe we can end police brutality in our Black community by organizing Black self-defense groups that are dedicated to defending our Black community from racist police oppression and brutality. The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives a right to bear arms. We therefore believe that all Black people should arm themselves for self-defense.**

Black Panther Party Ten Point Program

[BELOW]  
**Carmichael Speaks at Berkeley, 1966**

Former SNCC Chairman Stokely Carmichael's famous call for “Black Power” wasn't the only thing that made him appear radical. During his speech at Berkeley, he approached the podium and declared, “to hell with the draft.” African Americans like Carmichael openly resisted the draft, unable to reconcile fighting for a country that did not recognize Black humanity. During his time with the Black Panther Party, Carmichael served as honorary prime minister.

COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED PRESS



## “ONE MAN, ONE VOTE” Black Voting Power

Black voter registration was a central aim of the Southern Freedom Movement. Local white leaders across the South used a variety of tactics to limit Black participation in the political process, from poll taxes and literacy tests to violence and harassment. In 1964, the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) organized Freedom Summer in partnership with SNCC and CORE to draw attention to the disenfranchisement of Black voters and the violence they faced, particularly in Mississippi. Freedom Summer drew hundreds of college-aged volunteers, Black and white from around the nation. They worked with local communities across the state to organize Freedom Schools and voter registration drives. Additionally, the

### Civil Rights Demonstrators at Democratic National Convention, 1964

This image depicts protestors outside of the 1964 Democratic National Convention where protestors sought to give seats to representatives from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. At center is Rita Schwerner, widow of Michael Schwerner, who was killed for his activism during Freedom Summer.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES



Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) led by Fannie Lou Hamer formed to draw attention to the white-dominated state Democratic Party.

Volunteers and community members faced brutal retaliation for their participation in Freedom Summer. According to the SNCC Digital Gateway, during the summer of 1964 there were “6 known murders, 35 known shootings, 4 people critically wounded, at least 80 volunteers beaten, and more than 1,000 people arrested.” The next year, in 1965 marchers highlighting the disenfranchisement of Black voters attempted to march 54 miles from Selma to Montgomery but were met with violence by local authorities and white supremacists groups. The efforts of these volunteers and activists led to the nation’s increasing awareness of the violence faced by the Black community in the South. Their efforts helped to pressure Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In the law’s first year, 250,000 new Black voters were registered. One year later in 1966, two-thirds of the Southern states had over 50% of the Black community registered to vote. More Black voters created a strong African American voting base with the expectation that elected officials should represent their needs and look like them.



[ABOVE]

### Civil Rights Marchers Travelling from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, 1965

Two days after the violence of Bloody Sunday, demonstrators assembled again to begin the fifty mile journey from Selma to Montgomery, on a day that would become known as Turnaround Tuesday. The televised violence towards peaceful demonstrators put pressure on the federal government to pass the Voting Rights Act during the summer of 1965.

COURTESY OF BUYENLARGE/GETTY IMAGES

*“Police brutality, political and economic intimidations, and other legal and social impediments have been consistently directed against the Negro ... we need more federal legislation and aggressive action in the area of civil rights and liberties, and in voting in particular.”*

Baton Rouge Committee on Registration Education pamphlet on *Negro Voting in Louisiana*, ca. 1963–1964



[ABOVE]  
**Demonstration at Night, 1964**

Protesters outside of the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City in support of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's demand for integrating the all-white Democratic Party of Mississippi.

COURTESY OF THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

[BELOW]  
**Bloody Sunday, 1965**

In the spring of 1965, protesters organized by SNCC and SCLC attempted to march from Selma to Montgomery to highlight voter discrimination. Peaceful protesters were met with brutal violence at the hands of Alabama state troopers. Known as "Bloody Sunday" the attack on demonstrators was televised across the nation.

COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED PRESS



*“Do what you are told in each and every statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test. You have 10 minutes to complete the test.”*

Louisiana Literacy Test, ca. 1960



[ABOVE]  
**Registrar Fills Out Form, 1966**

This image from Canton, Mississippi shows new voters registering after the passage of the Voting Rights Act. At the time this image was taken, Southern states had appealed this act and were waiting for a review by the Supreme Court.

COURTESY OF BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES



[ABOVE]  
**Mrs. Hamer and Microphones on Television, 1964**

During the 1964 Democratic National Convention, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer shared her experience of violence and discrimination when trying to vote. During her televised speech she declared, “I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.” Hamer educated people across the country about the experiences of the Black community. Despite Hamer’s compelling testimony, party leaders refused to give MFD members any delegate positions.

COURTESY OF THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## “WE ARE THE VANGUARD” Black Political Representation

Following the 1960s push for voting rights, the 1970s represented an increase in Black political representation at every level of government. In 1969, Shirley Chisholm became the first African American woman elected to Congress. In 1972, Shirley Chisholm announced her run for the Presidency with the slogan, “Unbossed and Unbought” focusing on educational reform and anti-poverty platforms. That same year the National Black Political Convention convened thousands of Black community leaders in Gary, Indiana to create a national political agenda and encourage African Americans to run for office. Chisholm did not attend. Nor did other leaders and organizations such as the NAACP, due to the meeting’s decision to exclude the white community. Despite her work, many Black leaders at the time did not endorse Chisholm’s candidacy and some declared their public support for her male opponent George McGovern.

In the decade following the convention, the number of Black elected officials more than doubled, reaching over 5,000 at the local, state, and national level. With more Black voters and politicians than ever before, criticism of the Democratic Party’s support of issues facing communities of color grew. Veteran Civil Rights activist Jesse Jackson mobilized the Black community to assert their rights and focused on increasing voter turnout, especially in the socially conservative era of the presidency of Ronald Reagan. Jackson’s presidential runs in 1984 and 1988 showed that a “Rainbow Coalition” which included unity among underrepresented groups such as communities of color, LGBTQ communities, and the poor could be organized collectively for change. Jackson’s campaigns represented a high point in Black representational politics at the time.

### National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana, 1972

Writer Amiri Baraka remembered the Gary Convention as an important opportunity “... to create [a] Black agenda so that every politician would have to take this into consideration if they wanted to run ... the things the African-American people wanted ... nationally.”

PHOTO BY CHARLES KNOBLOCK, COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED PRESS



### Shirley Chisholm at Protest, 1971

After arriving in Congress, Chisholm stated, “I have no intention of just sitting quietly and observing ... I intend to focus attention on the nation’s problems.” During her tenure, Chisholm helped to found the Congressional Black Caucus and the National Women’s Political Caucus. After her unsuccessful 1972 presidential run, she continued to serve in Congress until 1983.

PHOTO BY MIKE LIEN, COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK TIMES CO./MIKE LIEN/GETTY IMAGES

*“I want history to remember me ... not as the first black woman to have made a bid for the presidency of the United States, but as a Black woman who lived in the 20th century and who dared to be herself. I want to be remembered as a catalyst for change in America.”*

Shirley Chisholm

*“From Fannie Lou Hamer in Atlantic City in 1964 to the Rainbow Coalition in San Francisco today; from the Atlantic to the Pacific, we have experienced pain but progress ... We lost Malcolm, Martin, Medgar, Bobby, John, and Viola. The team that got us here must be expanded, not abandoned.*

Jesse Jackson,  
1984 Democratic National Convention



[ABOVE]  
**Poster for Presidential Candidate Shirley Chisholm, 1972**  
The first African American to run for president, Shirley Chisholm, campaigned on the slogan “Unbossed and Unbought.” She sought to give voice to the urban poor and Black communities.

COURTESY OF THE COLLECTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, GIFTED WITH PRIDE FROM ELLEN BROOKS

[BELOW]  
**Jesse Jackson at National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana, 1972**  
Reflecting on the National Black Political Convention, Jesse Jackson stated, “Getting the right to vote in '65 was the beginning of a process” but the convention was critical for mobilizing more Black candidates for political office.

PHOTO BY JIM WELLS, COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED PRESS

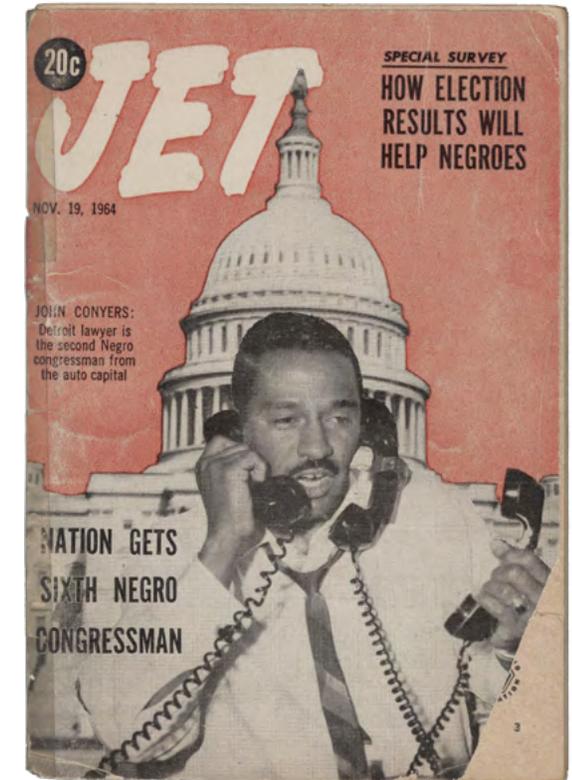


[RIGHT]

**How Election Results will Help Negroes, 1964**

This 1964 Jet Magazine cover features John Conyers, recently elected to Congress after Reconstruction. Representing Detroit, Conyers was the sixth African American elected to Congress. The magazine asks readers to consider how more Black elected officials would improve conditions for the community.

JET MAGAZINE COVER, COURTESY OF THE COLLECTION OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



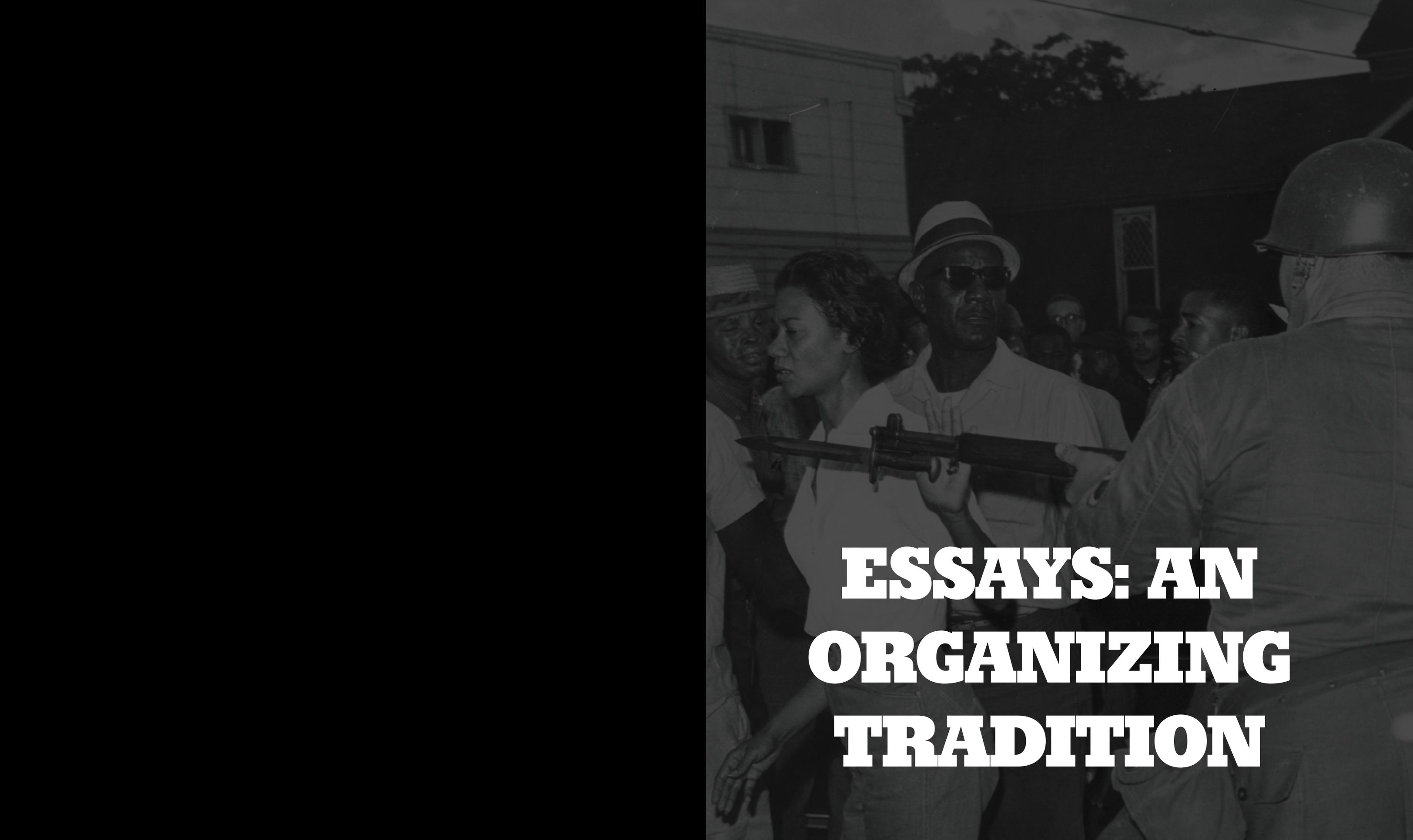
[BELOW]

**Jesse Jackson for President, 1984**

In an editorial backing Jackson’s 1988 presidential run, *The Nation* staff stated that the “campaign became a new civil rights movement with an added dimension of economic justice deriving in spirit from the last campaigns of Martin Luther King Jr. with the Black working poor. Civil Rights veteran Jesse Jackson’s run for the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns worked to mobilize the poor and disenfranchised.

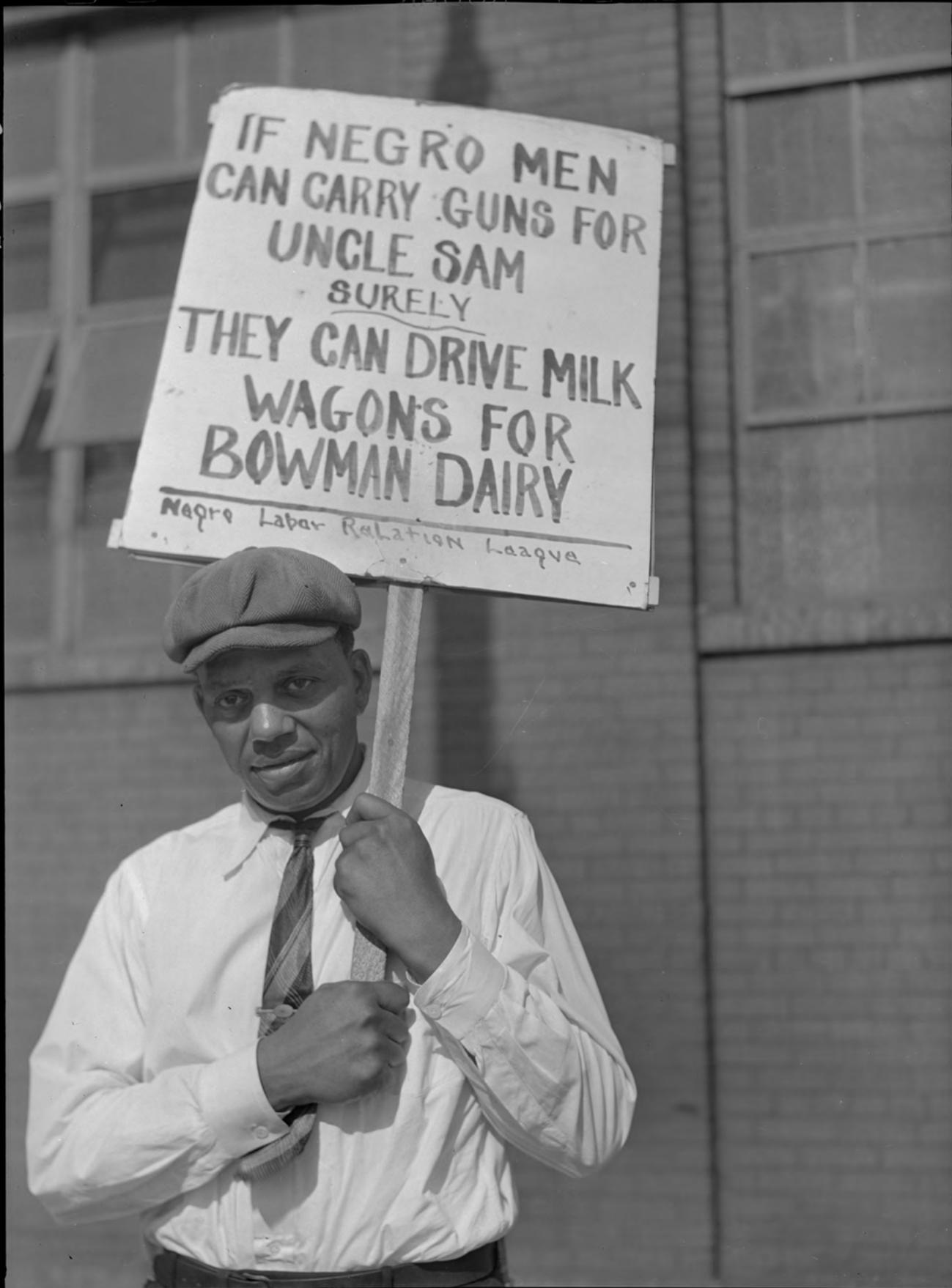
PHOTO BY BARBARA ALPER, COURTESY OF BARBARA ALPER/GETTY IMAGES



A black and white photograph capturing a tense moment in a crowd. In the center, a man wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt and a fedora-style hat holds a large, dark knife horizontally across his chest. He is looking towards the right. To his left, a woman with dark hair is looking in the same direction. In the background, other people are visible, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. On the right side of the frame, the back of a soldier wearing a helmet and a uniform is visible, facing the crowd. The overall atmosphere is one of conflict or a significant public event.

**ESSAYS: AN  
ORGANIZING  
TRADITION**

63103-29



## Organizing Traditions and the Black Freedom Struggle

**Charles E. Cobb Jr.**

What I know with unshakable certainty, is that the Post World War II generation, building on struggles that began unfolding when the first captive Africans were off-loaded on American shores and sold, through the mid-20th century surge of Black struggle broke through the more than 100 years of discrimination and denial that followed slavery. But I must hasten to add it did not eliminate the white supremacy that had defined culture and practice in the United States since its founding days, as we can see with our current President.

This fact, rooted in what I term “the founding contradiction,” is best defined by Thomas Jefferson, one of the nation’s founders and a slave-owner willing to sell for extra money those enslaved on his Virginia plantation, but unwilling to grant them freedom. It was Jefferson who declared in the founding document he wrote that all men were created equal and “endowed” by unalienable rights. To understand the freedom struggle of the 1950s and 60s, or as historian Hasan Kwame Jeffries defines it – the “Freedom Rights” struggle – understanding this basic flaw in the setup of American life is essential.

Limited space prevents anything like a full discussion of that here, but importantly, and in my view the far too often minimized or overlooked resistance represented by the freedom rights struggle of Black people needs to be pushed forward. Especially in these times, because even the limited progress made as a result of this struggle is under threat and a clearer understanding

may shed some light on the continuing relevance of that struggle.

But how should we understand this struggle? Most often the public sees freedom or civil rights struggle as being mass protest in public spaces led by charismatic leaders. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. has come to be the great symbol of this. However, the real Movement tradition is the organizing tradition which stretches with varying degrees of intensity from slave revolts to 20th century efforts at empowerment in the Black Belt

*Enslaved Africans, after all, were not marching on auction blocks in protest. They were organizing: revolt, escape, sabotage, even assassination.*

South. Enslaved Africans, after all, were not marching on auction blocks in protest. They were organizing: revolt, escape, sabotage, even assassination. Young organizers from groups like SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) and CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality) embedded themselves in communities throughout the

Black Belt seeking the right to vote and cultivating local organizations. They stood on the shoulders of earlier organizations like the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) and local NAACP chapters. The organizing tradition continues today with the young activists of the Movement for Black Life who are about more than protest and who most recently announced a “Project for Electoral Justice” aimed at the 2018 elections. It does no disservice to the work of Rev. King to emphasize this tradition. As a 26-year-old minister new to Montgomery, Alabama he was thrust into leadership by the Movement that had been steadily emerging since the end of World War II. Rosa Parks was no weary seamstress; in the 1940s she began organizing

women to fight against the rape of Black women. Many of the women crucial to the Montgomery bus boycott had joined her in this effort.

Acknowledgement and recognition of what ordinary people did then and across centuries has almost disappeared. As Julian Bond once put it, the public's understanding of the Movement can be boiled down to three short sentences: "Rosa Parks sat down. Martin Luther King stood up. And then the white folks saw the light and saved the day." One consequence of this misperception is that it is difficult to identify what might be useful for continuing struggle.

There are several reasons for the intensification of struggle in the decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Among them, World War II and its impact on the Black soldiers who fought in it, anti-colonial struggles, changes in law, and expanded NAACP in the South. But three elements deserve particular analysis:

First, people – Black people – who were usually spoken of or for by others began finding their own voices and speaking for themselves in ways that could not be ignored. Fannie Lou Hamer of Mississippi is a great symbol of this. She first emerged among a small group seeking the right to register to vote. She'd been a sharecropper on Mississippi cotton plantations all of her life; had only six years of formal public education. When the plantation owner where she lived and worked demanded that she abandon her registration attempt, she told him, "I didn't go down there [to the county courthouse] to register for you. I went down there for myself." Mrs. Hamer became one of the great leaders

of Mississippi's movement; even a national voice for Black struggle.

Secondly, there was a convergence of young people with older people willing to share their experiences and networks. Mrs. Hamer was 49-years-old when she attempted to register. The SNCC workers who brought her there had not reached the age of 21. And the SNCC workers traveled with Mrs. Hamer, often to where she led. No one could deny the authenticity of her voice or the legitimacy of her desire and commitment to change. As one of these workers said, she was "Mississippi to the bone."

Thirdly, as much as the Movement challenged racism and white supremacy, more importantly it was defined by the challenges Black people made to one another within the Black community. To work with Mrs. Hamer, to travel with her, did not involve much confrontation with white people. One moved within the Black community, and what Mrs. Hamer did was challenge other Black people to do what she did: break the rules and habits of white supremacy and take control of their lives.

And though we have focused on Mrs. Hamer here, this is not a Mississippi story. This is a Movement story that gets to the heart of everything that was done, everything that was accomplished and points the way to all that remains to be done.

*Charles E. Cobb Jr. is a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee veteran and the author of This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible.*



## *A shy African American student from Tarrytown, New York, is transformed by the power – and people – of the Movement.*

### *My Enduring "Circle of Trust"*

**Judy Richardson**

I saw the national office of SNCC for the first time in November 1963. It was a teeny, run-down office at 8½ Raymond Street, a one-block side street off Hunter (now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard), near the Atlanta University Center. The office was located on the second floor above a beauty shop. It definitely did not fit my image of a "national office."

I was nineteen and had gone to Atlanta with Reggie Robinson, SNCC's field secretary in Cambridge, Maryland, where I had been working full-time since leaving Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. From the downstairs glass door of the national office I saw this large man at the top of the stairs, dressed in overalls and sweeping the stairs.

Reggie saw him, too, then ran up the stairs and, with broad smiles and much hollering, they hugged each other like long-lost brothers.

I thought, *Whoah, this is truly an egalitarian office*, since I assumed the man to be the janitor. It was only after Reggie called the man's name that I realized this was James Forman, SNCC's larger-than-life executive secretary.

There was such joy, warmth, and affection in this moment that I thought, *Judy, you haven't just joined an organization, you've joined a family; SNCC really is a band of brothers and a circle of trust*. And I assumed I'd be in it the rest of my life.

Now, I later found out that Forman often swept up, and not so much to clean the perpetually dirty office (which was good, since he wasn't all that good at it). Rather, he was showing us that, as he often said, no job was

too lowly for anyone in SNCC to do, and every job was important to sustaining the organization. Reggie introduced us and, through questioning, Forman found out that I had taken a semester off from Swarthmore and that I could take shorthand (which was kind of like texting but with symbols) and type ninety words per minute. I never made it back to Cambridge.

My first contact with SNCC began when I joined a busload of Swarthmore students traveling to Cambridge to support locally led demonstrations against

segregated facilities. The trips were organized by the Swarthmore Political Action Committee (SPAC), the campus SDS chapter. I initially went on a lark, not out of any great commitment. I was, after all, away from home – and my mother – for the first time in my life, so I figured, Why not?

One of my first demonstrations

took place at the segregated Choptank Inn, a dark, smelly bar and grill. I don't remember much about the place, just the big white man standing in the doorway telling me I couldn't come in. For me, all the little slights; all the small acts of racism I'd experienced growing up became bound up in this one man. And I became absolutely enraged. But I had now found a constructive vehicle through which I could struggle against the racism – and that was SNCC.

At that point, for me, the Cambridge Movement was SNCC. More specifically, it was Gloria Richardson, the firebrand local leader of the Movement, and Reggie Robinson from Baltimore, the veteran organizer who had been assigned there after the local movement requested SNCC assistance. I watched Gloria – tall,

*... I had now found a constructive vehicle through which I could struggle against the racism – and that was SNCC.*

thin, fearless, ramrod straight, and dressed in a shirt and jeans – leading the mass meetings and demonstrations and never backing down, even in the face of National Guard rifles and suffocating tear gas. I watched Reggie Robinson, not much older than me, working in tandem with Gloria, moving the crowd, strategizing with her and others around Gloria’s kitchen table late at night (a number of us lived in her house). I decided this was a world I had to join – if only for a while.

It was a world very different from where I’d grown up, in Tarrytown, New York, about twenty-five miles north of New York City. Tarrytown, home of the author Washington Irving, was steeped in tradition. I went to Washington Irving Jr. High and Sleepy Hollow High School, and our high school mascot was “The Headless Horseman.” Yup.

I grew up in the “under the hill” section near the railroad tracks. The main employer in town was “the plant,” the Chevrolet plant where the fathers of everyone I knew worked: Black folks, Italians, Poles – everyone. My father had helped unionize the plant, where he worked on the assembly line and was treasurer of the United Auto Workers local. When I was seven he had a heart attack and died “on the line,” leaving my mother to support my older sister, Carita (“Chita”), and me. My mother immediately got a job as a clerk at Macy’s in nearby White Plains and managed to keep food on the table and still send Chita a little spending money after she was accepted to Bennington College on full scholarship.

My mother had an eighth-grade education, was amazingly literate, always corrected my grammar, watched *Meet the Press* every week, read the then-liberal *New York Post* religiously, and played a mean jazz piano. On Sundays she read the Bible and listened to a religious radio program broadcast by the Ethical Culture Society. She was extremely distrustful of organized religion,

though she never told me why. She also almost never talked about race. This, then, was the world I left when I went to Swarthmore, a prestigious Quaker college in Pennsylvania.

By January of my freshman year I was going to Cambridge just about every weekend and generally landing in jail. Coming back to campus was like coming back to another life – reality had now, become my SNCC/Cambridge world, with all its camaraderie, passion, immediacy, and overwhelming sense of purpose.

I would return to campus on Monday or Tuesday and miss some of my classes, so my studies began to suffer. Adding to my worry, I was on full scholarship and one of only eight African American students in the freshman class. Swarthmore’s magnanimous commitment to diversity (ten out of more than three hundred in the entire student body) was a big deal for the college, and they handled it with caution. We eight freshmen were evenly divided between males and females (presumably so we wouldn’t have to date outside our group), and the administration roomed

all eight of us with children from Quaker families, who I think they believed would accept us more readily.

As it turned out, at least on one issue neither the Quaker children nor the rest of the campus quite lived up to their liberal reputation. The demonstrations in Cambridge absolutely split the school. My white, “Big Sister,” who had warmly oriented me to the campus those first weeks after my arrival, now passed me in the dorm hall in stony silence. Two friends from my dorm stopped speaking to me. Other white students, referring to segregated facilities, said that a proprietor had the right to refuse service to anyone. One student, who had earlier amazed me in my poli-sci class with references to people, places, and philosophies I hadn’t even known existed, now pronounced that the Cambridge demonstrations were forcing integration



on Southerners before they were ready. And besides, he added with great certainty, Swarthmore’s Negro students would do better to stop meddling in things that were not their concern and concentrate on getting an education – this was the best way to help “their people.”

In January 1963, the second semester of my freshman year, Penny Patch, a Swarthmore student who’d been on SNCC staff in Southwest Georgia, returned to campus. She encouraged me to take a semester off to work with SNCC full-time (though she cautioned me that Ruby Doris Robinson, who ran the Atlanta office with an iron hand, would first have to approve my application). I decided to make the leap. But first I had to tell my mother – which I truly dreaded.

I finally called her on the hall phone in my dorm. I was amazed – and relieved – at how calmly she took the news. I thought, *See, Judy, that wasn’t so hard*. But fifteen minutes later my sister called me, shouting, “What did you tell Ma? She’s going crazy! And what do you mean you’re leaving school?” Obviously, my mother hadn’t argued with me, knowing that she’d just get my sister to talk some sense into me. But once I made them both understand how important it was that I do this – and that it would be for just *one semester* (a semester that turned into three years) – they were really supportive. In fact, my sister left her job and became a fundraiser for SNCC out of our New York office, and my mother started sending me civil rights-related news clippings.

#### MOTHER’S LETTER

I recently found a letter my mother wrote me in October of 1964, at the end of a summer of beatings and killings and church burnings. By that time they had also found the bodies of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner. The letter reads (in her as-always beautiful script):

*Sunday eve. 10/25*

*Hi – Nothing much to say ... Talked to Chita on the phone. She says that she will be too dead tired to have any Thanksgiving dinner. She has 3 SNCC [fundraising] parties to line up and it is keeping her very busy. We’ll have to do something; I don’t know what. Well, everything is fine here. Please, do not get any colds. Keep away from people who are sneezing and get your rest. Well, I guess I’ll go to bed. I haven’t had much sleep lately. ‘Nite, Mommie, xxxooo.*

My mother never let on that she was frightened, never asked me to come home. I don’t think I realized then how frightened for me she must have been and how many sleepless nights she must have had.

After my arrival in Atlanta, I worked there for several months in the SNCC office, where I was Jim Forman’s secretary. For those who look with today’s eyes at that sentence, let me just say that I found no problem with that then and don’t now. Whatever sexism I found in SNCC (and, of course, we didn’t use that term then) was always, for me, balanced by an incredible sense of power. And that was nurtured in me as much by the men as by the women of SNCC. In fact, I always felt respected for whatever skills I brought to the organization.

As Forman’s secretary I was immediately thrown into the deep end of the pool. I got a crash course in dealing with SNCC’s far-flung project staff, their strengths, and their weaknesses (just like a real family). I also had contact with the Friends of SNCC offices that were fundraising for us in cities throughout the North, with our campus travelers who were organizing campus chapters of SNCC at Black colleges in the South, and with the many pro bono lawyers, like Bill Kunstler, Victor Rabinowitz, and Leonard Boudin, and the Lawyers Constitutional Defense Committee.

Thinking back on those days I realize that much of my strength – and my values – was instilled in me not only by my family but also by the movement folks who gave me room to grow and helped form me. I remember sitting one day in the little area outside Forman’s office, transcribing a mass meeting speech given by Prathia Hall, a SNCC field secretary then posted to Selma, Alabama. As she described the violence in Selma, the awful beauty of her words – and the intensity of her moral outrage – took me by such force that I remember typing onto that long, green mimeo stencil with tears just streaming down my face. It was as if some force of nature had swept me away to another place. When I think about it now, I’m amazed I said anything to anyone in SNCC – I was so in awe of everyone.

#### WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED: THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Looking back on it now, the amazing thing about SNCC was how much we were able/allowed to define ourselves, both as young people and as women.

I was given incredible support to do things I otherwise wouldn't have thought myself capable of.

However, this didn't mean you didn't have to fight against racist or sexist assumptions, even within the organization. We weren't always one big, happy family. But SNCC was a youth organization and, therefore, less wedded 'to tradition – even internally. I also think SNCC drew a certain kind of woman (just as it attracted a certain kind of man). And many of the women – like Diane Nash and Ruby Doris – had been leaders and activists in their own right before assuming positions in SNCC. Beyond that, when it came to women's issues, because SNCC was so much on the cutting edge, you could, as we used to say, "raise the contradictions" and force the men to listen – most times.

Case in point: the issue of who did the minutes of meetings. At some point during the spring of 1964, the other women in the Atlanta office and I decided to protest the fact that only women took the minutes and were responsible for office administration. I still have my diary entries recording the days and days it took me to transcribe my notes from my first three-day staff meeting. Unfortunately, because I knew shorthand and had such high regard for all the field staff, I took almost-verbatim notes of the meetings. Since we usually met from late morning to 3:00 or 4:00 A.M. the next day, this meant that those of us (all women)

who took the minutes always had pages and pages of notes to transcribe; type up, and put on those horrible green, mimeograph stencils. For that first meeting I had thirty-three typewritten pages.

So when Forman came back from one of his fundraising trips, he was greeted by a halfway serious sit-in by five of us in the little area adjacent to his office – Mary King, Mildred Forman (Forman's then-wife), Bobbi Yancy, Ruby Doris, and me – all singing "We Shall Not Be Moved" and holding picket signs that read "Unfair" and "Now" and "No more work till justice comes to the Atlanta office!"

He looked baffled and none too pleased when he saw us, but we talked it out and it was agreed that from then on both men and women would take the minutes. Now, this agreement stuck not because all the men understood the justice of the issue but because the women in the organization would no longer go along with the silliness.

*Judy Richardson is a documentary filmmaker and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee veteran.*

## The Rosa Parks Story & Civil Rights Movement

### Françoise Hamlin

On December 1, 1955, 43 year-old African American, Mrs. Rosa Parks, wearily sat down on the nearest bus seat available after a long workday as a seamstress at a downtown department store in Montgomery, Alabama. She drifted into her own thoughts, interrupted by the driver's shouts directed in her direction. As per state law, he had demanded that she immediately relinquish her seat in order for a white man to occupy the entire row.

She demurely and defiantly refused, sparking a year-long city-wide bus boycott and added fuel to already nascent mass movement-building nationwide. Rosa Parks became an icon and "the mother of the movement" for civil rights justice, the model of decorum and abused womanhood – this moment preserved in amber. Yet she had a life before and after the boycott, one misremembered and minimized.

Rosa Louise McCauley was born (February 4, 1913) and raised in Alabama, where her father (James McCauley) was a skilled carpenter and stonemason and her mother (Leona Edwards McCauley) a schoolteacher. After her birth in Tuskegee, the family spent a stint with her father's large family in Abbeville before settling with her mother's parents in Pine Level. Her father's wanderlust separated her parents but Rosa came of age with her grandparents (born around the Civil War and later Garveyites), instilling lessons of fairness,

standing up for oneself, and a devout Christian faith to anchor her feisty determination. As a child she recognized injustice from the inadequate educational opportunities to rampant unchecked Klan violence. She also understood the value of hard work and stewardship, working their own land, and laboring on others' to supplement her mother's teaching income, and later, domestic work. Rosa McCauley came from a line of rebels and had a backbone of steel.

*Rosa Parks became an icon and "the mother of the movement" for civil rights justice, the model of decorum and abused womanhood ... Yet she had a life before and after the boycott, one misremembered and minimized.*

McCauley went to Montgomery to attend Alabama State Normal School for three terms, taught by white northern teachers who further instilled self-respect and fired ambitions in their students. She dropped out in 11th grade to care for her ailing grandmother. She met Raymond Parks

in 1931, a barber keenly involved in the defense of the Scottsboro Boys (nine Black boys accused of raping two white women on a train and facing the death penalty). A man with no formal schooling and ten years her senior, Raymond was an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) before they married in December 1932, and he helped open her eyes to activism, as she already possessed the necessary stamina. With her husband's encouragement, Mrs. Parks received her high school diploma the following year, while hosting clandestine strategy meetings for the boys' defense in their weapon-guarded home.

[RIGHT]

**A meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Executive Secretary James Forman leads singing in the SNCC office.**

(From Left) Mike Sayer, McArthur Cotton, James Forman, Marion Barry, Lester MacKinney, Mike Thelwell, Lawrence Guyot, Judy Richardson, John Lewis, Jean Wheeler and Julian Bond, 1963–1964.

PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/MAGNUM PHOTOS



## TURNING POINT

1943 was a turning point for Rosa Parks. She tried to register to vote (succeeding in 1945, on her third try), but also met Edgar Daniel (E.D.) Nixon, the fearless and proud NAACP Montgomery Branch President and Pullman porter. Joining the NAACP that December, she immediately became secretary (there were only two active women members) where she first worked on voter registration drives, staying in the midst of Montgomery's black leadership activities, and traveled to record cases of racial discrimination and violence. One case involved 24 year-old Abbeville native, Recy Taylor, brutally raped by six white men in September 1944, and the unsuccessful struggle to get the rapists indicted. Following World War II, white violence escalated, particularly attacks directed toward Black veterans like Rosa Parks' brother, Sylvester, who subsequently left Montgomery to work in the auto industry in Detroit, never to return. This collected data formed her theoretical framework from which she developed a philosophy of resistance and her activist mettle. She met NAACP officers from around the nation and even spoke at the 1948 state convention, sharing intellectual and political insights underestimated even by those with whom she worked daily.

For a short time the Parks family had jobs at the Maxwell Field Army Air Force base where they shunted between integrated and segregated spaces daily, suffering the indignities and tasting the possibilities. By 1949 Mrs. Parks served as the NAACP Youth Council advisor, organizing and politicizing young people to attempt direct action campaigns. Well-ensconced in activist circles, despite her gentle, self-effacing manner, leaders noticed Parks and encouraged her pursuit for justice. In the summer of 1955 she went to the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, again experiencing integrated spaces, for training on how to implement the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision locally. At this point her husband, wrecked by poor



health, supported his wife and held meetings in their home, but no longer participated directly in activities, disenchanted after repeatedly failing to register to vote (until he moved to Detroit).

Mrs. Parks worked as an assistant tailor at the Montgomery Fair Department store at this time, spending her lunch hours on the phone making arrangements and organizing for one of her many volunteer positions. Her leadership did not mirror the traditional front man variety. She armed the generals with intelligence, did the field research, and used her skills and talents. She led from the field, not the office.

Buses had been confrontational sites throughout the century. In 1955 alone, the Montgomery NAACP contemplated representing the cases of two other women (teenagers Claudette Colvin and Mary Smith) who had suffered disrespect by boorish bus drivers. The tension was ripe. Mrs. Parks had been removed from the bus before and had never forgotten the insult, or the driver. Indeed, she had made a point of never boarding the bus if driven by James F. Blake who had manhandled her in 1943.

On December 1st, however, distracted by thoughts of the organizing activities for an upcoming NAACP workshop that week, she paid her fare without looking and sat down. In her autobiography she noted that, "the only tired I was, was of giving in," particularly to him. Resolve and quiet dignity prevailed.

Years of organizing, training, and activism primed her for what lay ahead, so her worries revolved around her family as she was the breadwinner and her frail mother and husband feared for her safety. Nevertheless, she made the decision to move forward and went to work the next day, opting to take a taxi to avoid the buses.

## TIRELESS WORK

Thanks to the tireless work of the Women's Political Council (founding in 1942 by black mostly middle class women around suffrage) the bus boycott coordinated

with Parks' trial date, December 5th. After her conviction the packed meeting at the Holt Street Baptist Church that night launched the career of the young Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the appointed leader of the hours-old Montgomery Improvement Association. Parks did not feel the need to speak that night, overwhelmed by the day's events and the community's response.

The store manager fired Parks in January 1956 (after the holiday rush). Her husband resigned from his job following too many taunts and declining health. He stayed home with her mother while she traveled due to her newfound notoriety, successfully fundraising for the ongoing boycott, or working in the carpool dispatch office, never taking a penny to help support her household. Already economically unstable, the landlord raised their rent when they were unemployed and unemployable. Nevertheless, she swallowed her terror as usual, and pressed forward with the boycott logistics, practicing the perseverance that she preached from the podiums across the country.

On November 13, 1956 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in *Browder v. Gayle*, dismantling bus segregation in Alabama, and on December 20th the written order took effect, thus ending the boycott.

Montgomery's race relations deteriorated further as retaliatory white violence increased. Pro-segregationists made sure to terrorize the Parks family; Raymond Parks, overwhelmed by depression and alcohol, slept with his gun close at hand. A small child plagued with chronic tonsillitis, Rosa Parks had had health problems throughout her life (including chronic bursitis) and now insomnia manifested and stress-induced stomach ulcers festered. The Montgomery protests had accelerated movements throughout the nation, and Parks became a particular target for hate.

The couple and her mother moved to Detroit to join her brother Sylvester, although their financial needs persisted. Mrs. Parks would travel to speak but did not collect

honoraria, and only had sporadic low wage work in Detroit. She created networks in Detroit with the local NAACP and other organizations but none yielded work opportunities. The family proudly and humbly lived at subsistence levels for nearly a decade, with piecemeal work, rare monetary donations, and a family garden. Only when John Conyers, the newly elected Michigan Congressman offered her a job starting March 1, 1965 (crediting her for his victory) did she have a somewhat reliable income, remaining an assistant in his office until she retired September 30, 1988.

## SEXISM

Within the movement, sexism stepped in front of her light, as it did for many women. Notably during the 1963 March on Washington she and other leading women spoke nary a word at the podium. The fickle nature of the media, politics, and celebrity meant that few of the younger activists recognized her when she completed the last few miles of the Selma march in 1965 after "Bloody Sunday," at Dr. King's request. She gave an impassioned and impromptu speech at the end when King pulled her forward. Montgomery, the city she had left eight years earlier remained hostile to her presence. Rosa Parks never drew attention to herself even though the slights upset her. It was not her style. She did not side with dramatics or grandstanding but knew her worth and never balked from service, often at her own expense. Yet

others' reactions (jealousy, shunning, or anger) hurt and isolated her.

The adjectives usually associated with Mrs. Parks include: quiet, humble, self-deprecating, kind, determined, devoutly Christian, reticent, and loyal, and she was all these things. She was also brave, proud, exacting, efficient, stubborn, effective, and rebellious, always questioning; always opened to listening for alternative arguments and outlooks for the Black freedom struggle. She was both demure and defiant.

Mrs. Parks' philosophical and political loyalties adhered to the principle of life with dignity, respect and fairness – not to organizations – so given her decades of activism toward this end, she wholeheartedly embraced the



values of Black Power in the 1960s. She admired “Detroit Red” (Malcolm X), and the wave of young people who now eschewed the tactic of nonviolence, that had not thwarted vicious repercussions, for self-defense. Involved in a variety of local activist work, Mrs. Parks also pushed for prisoner rights, criminal justice, and women’s issues. She understood the economic root cause of the urban uprisings, and witnessed Detroit in flames in summer 1967, acknowledging the pain and hopelessness of the youth, and the entrenched police aggression. Loyal to progressive activism, no matter the origin, Rosa Parks could not be pigeonholed.

In 1975, she returned to Montgomery for the 20th anniversary of the boycott and gave an impassioned message of perseverance from the Holt Street Baptist Church pulpit. Cancer brought more economic and emotional loss as one by one her family died: Raymond Parks passed in 1977 aged 74 after a prolonged illness; her brother three months later, and her mother in 1979 aged 91. The toll of visiting three hospitals and caring for her family reduced her to part-time work, and heart problems added to her own ailments.

#### CITIZENSHIP

In 1987, she founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development along the lines of the movement citizenship and freedom schools to provide leadership with dignity training, and for young people to continue their education and learn about their self-worth. It built on a lifetime working with youth to equip them with survival tools and to fight for freedom. Mrs. Parks took teens on Black history site tours across the country for one month in the summers, to Montgomery, or Harpers Ferry, the Great Plains, or Nova Scotia, and her institute served more than five thousand by 2000 with all her publications aimed for teen audiences.

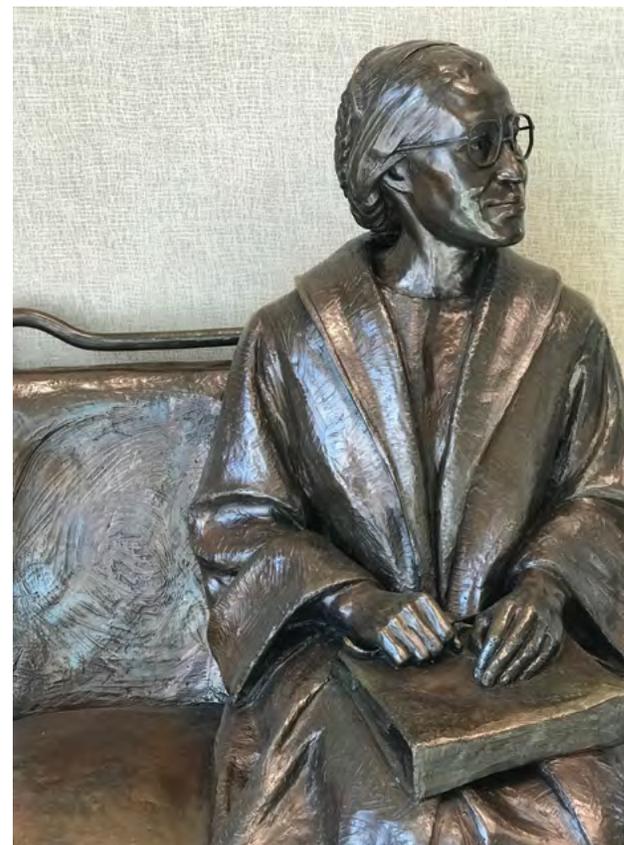
In 1994, after a young Black man attacked the 81 year old in her home, she moved one last time to a gated high rise and spent her last decade more and more confined to her apartment. Always an avid reader, keeping abreast of how young people made sense of their world and worked for equity, she continued work with her Institute.

Mrs. Parks received numerous honorary degrees and awards, including the Congressional Medal for lifetime achievement from President Clinton in 1999, and a personal greeting and embrace from Nelson Mandela

who visiting the U.S. four months after his release recognized her immediately. Ultimately, however, she understood that she stood as a symbol for a moment in time, regardless of the decades of radical work she did before and after. To be sure, her action accelerated mass movement activity nationwide, but without her activist past she would have not been the model plaintiff tough enough to stay the course and then survive its aftermath that wrought huge personal costs both financially and physically to her and her family.

Mrs. Rosa Parks died peacefully on October 24, 2005 in her Detroit home. Rep. Conyers made sure she laid in rest in the Capitol Rotunda, the first woman and the second African American to do so. Thousands of mourners in Montgomery, Washington, D.C., and Detroit paid their respects as she traveled one last time, feting a woman whose life modeled service and leadership as one and the same.

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**Rosa Parks Seated**  
(Rosa Parks Museum, Montgomery, Alabama), 2018.  
COURTESY OF MAIAH GAMBLE-RIVERS

## A Rosary for Rosa

### Herb Boyd

Finding a fresh perspective on the life and legacy of Rosa Parks is a daunting, nearly impossible task. The thoroughgoing research of Douglas Brinkley and Jeanne Theoharis as well as Rosa’s own words with James Haskins would render most new efforts rather redundant, particularly with the topic confined to her Detroit days. While the experts on her productive and absolutely astonishing life have weighed in, there are thousands of others who have praised and cited Rosa’s remarkable commitment and iconic odyssey. There’s no way in this brief summary to capture even a representative body of the salutes, but words from a few of the notables, mostly former and current Detroiters, should suffice and provide some semblance of why she is in the Parthenon of the civil and human rights struggle.

In his autobiography, Malcolm X, when asked about the Montgomery Boycott in 1955, framed his response in what led up to it. “Mrs. Rosa Parks was riding home on a bus and at some bus stop the white cracker bus driver ordered Mrs. Parks to get up and to give her seat to some white passenger who had just got on the bus. I’d say, ‘Now just *imagine* that! This good, hardworking, Christian-believing Black woman, she’s paid her money, she’s in her seat. Just because she’s Black, she’s asked to get up! I mean, sometimes even for *me* it’s hard to believe the white man’s arrogance!’” (*Autobiography*, p. 274)

***Now just imagine that! This good, hardworking, Christian-believing Black woman, she’s paid her money, she’s in her seat. Just because she’s Black, she’s asked to get up! I mean, sometimes even for me it’s hard to believe the white man’s arrogance!***

Malcolm X

Betty Shabazz, Malcolm’s wife, may not have been as effusive but she possessed an enduring respect for Rosa that she expressed in a letter to her in April 1997. “I remain steadfast in my admiration of both of you [Parks and Malcolm] and my own personal commitment to ensure that injustice is always met with resistance. I have learned from the lives of two history-makers, even as I write my own.” (*Betty Shabazz*, by Russell J. Rickford, Sourcebooks, 2003, p. 524)

Such tributes to Rosa should come as no surprise since she often noted that Malcolm was one of her heroes and that she attended the memorial services for Betty’s mother at Bethel AME Church in Detroit in 1994.

Many know the story about how Judge Damon Keith, who upon learning that Rosa had not been invited to greet the arrival of Nelson and Winnie Mandela to Detroit in 1990, went and picked her up and hurried to the airport to join Mayor Coleman Young in welcoming the famous couple. There was a long line of dignitaries at the airport, but the Mandelas’ shouted out “Rosa, Rosa, Rosa,” after seeing her face in the crowd.

Nelson told the press that Rosa had been his inspiration during his long years in prison. She had been an inspiration to Keith as well. “Mother Parks represents everything that my legal and judicial career has stood for. It was an honor to celebrate her life with the rest of the world.” (*Crusader for Justice*, by Peter Hammer and Trevor Coleman, Wayne State University Press, 2014, p. 235–36).

“Rosa used to come into the co-op,” said Source Bookseller owner Janet Webster Jones, recalling the great lady’s visit to the Spiral Collective in the Cass Corridor. “I never really spoke to her aside from what was necessary to ring up her purchases, although I was always aware of her calm presence in the store. She seemed quiet, almost shy woman who just came in to buy her vegetables and didn’t want to be at the center of any hoopla. One time I pointed her out to a shopper. The woman rushed over to Parks to speak to the hero who had started the Montgomery Bus Boycott that kicked off the modern civil rights struggle. Parks seemed disturbed by the attention, as though her privacy had been violated.” (*Detroit Resurgent*, Edited by Howard Bossen and John P. Beck, 2014, p. 160)

On numerous occasions I was privileged to be in Rosa’s company, and once with Alex Haley and others, I was photographed with her. My most memorable moment was an opportunity to interview her during her visit to New York City and to experience that exhilaration others have recounted. That same tranquility, serenity that Janet remembered resonating from Rosa transpired during our meeting. I struggled to ask her questions that she hadn’t heard a thousand times. After a few stumbling pleasantries, I joined her in silence.

Among the notable Detroiters, none was on more intimate terms with her than Rep. John Conyers, who employed her in his office from 1967 to 1988. In one of the Congressman’s most regrettable moments when he had to retire from Congress, Rosa was on his mind. “I vehemently deny any and all allegations of harassment or dishonor, but I recognize that in this present environment, due process will not be afforded me,” Conyers said. “I was taught by a great woman,

my mother, to honor women. The first employee I ever hired was Mrs. Rosa Parks, who worked in my office for 22 years. It has been a great honor to work alongside some of the most talented and honorable staff on Capitol Hill and in Detroit, both women and men.” (Congressional Record Volume 163, Number 198, Tuesday, December 5, 2017)

Rosa’s sojourn in Detroit began with Rep. Conyers and he ends his long tenure by invoking her name in his farewell address on December 5, the date in which the Montgomery Bus Boycott began in 1955.

My hope is that the words and memories assembled here, during reflection, can be seen as a kind of rosary, used as a form of meditation on Rosa’s life and another path toward the mysteries of our salvation.

*Herb Boyd is an American Journalist, Educator, Activist and Author of Black Detroit: A People’s History of Self-Determination.*



**Rosa Parks with Malcolm X Poster at the Gary Convention, 1972.**  
COURTESY OF LEROY HENDERSON

## Women of the Movement

Courtesy of SNCC Digital Gateway, SNCC Legacy Project and Duke University, <https://snccdigital.org>

### ELLA JO BAKER

There would not have been a SNCC without Ella Baker. While serving as Executive Secretary for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), she organized the founding conference of SNCC, held at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina during the Easter weekend of 1960. She had immediately recognized the potential of the students involved in the sit-in movement and wanted to bring leaders of the Movement together to meet one another and to consider future work. Miss Baker, as the students usually called her, persuaded Martin Luther King Jr. to put up the \$800 needed to hold the conference. Rev. King hoped they would become an SCLC student wing. Ella Baker, however, encouraged the students to think about forming their own organization.

Addressing the conference, Rev. King asked the students to commit to nonviolence as a way of life, but for most in attendance, nonviolence was simply an effective tactic. Speaking to the conference, Ella Baker told the students that their struggle was “much bigger than a hamburger or even a giant-sized coke.” In presenting this bigger picture and encouraging them to form their own organization, Ella Baker displayed a talent she had been employing for more than two decades: assisting people to empower themselves. The students decided to form their own organization, SNCC. And with the formation of SNCC, she encouraged the new organization to organize from the bottom up.

*“strong people don’t need strong leaders”*



**Ella Baker, who called the 1960 meeting of student activists in Raleigh, North Carolina that created the SNCC. 1964**

PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/MAGNUM PHOTOS

Born in Norfolk, Virginia and raised in Littleton, North Carolina, she was known by those around her as “a whirlwind.” Her tireless pursuit of change echoed the stories that Baker told about her maternal grandmother. Born into slavery in Halifax County, North Carolina, “Bet” Ross refused to marry the man her master had chosen and was punished for her insubordination with hard labor plowing fallow fields. Despite the work, she nevertheless attended every celebration on the plantation, dancing until the early hours of the morning to show that her spirit remained unbowed. That was the energy that young SNCC organizers, some nearly four decades her junior, saw in Miss Baker. And Baker recognized that “the young people were the hope of any movement ... They were the people who kept the spirit going.”

## VICTORIA GRAY (ADAMS)

Victoria “Vicki” Gray acted as a bridge between her community and SNCC organizers. When SNCC’s Curtis Hayes and Hollis Watkins, arrived in Hattiesburg, Mississippi in March of 1962, Victoria “Vicki” Gray was one of the first people to attend the meeting. After trying to register herself to vote, she used her roots in the community to garner support for SNCC’s voter registration efforts. Ms. Gray’s connections helped her become an effective community organizer. She organized a phone tree so that the “SNCC youngsters,” as she affectionately called them, would have at least one hot meal a day. She convinced her minister at St. John’s Methodist Episcopal to open the church up to citizenship education classes. After attending an SCLC training in 1963, Gray began teaching these classes herself, and before long, she became a SNCC field secretary.

Gray became one of the leaders of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party – an integrated political party that planned to challenge the all-white Mississippi Democratic Party at the national party’s convention scheduled for August 1964 in Atlantic City. Gray explained, “and no matter what more politically sophisticated people may say about it, the truth of the matter is we are the only democratic party in Mississippi, because there is absolutely nothing democratic about the regular Mississippi Democratic Party.” The 1964 challenge was unsuccessful, and the white Mississippi delegates held onto their seats.

Although suffering a crushing blow in Atlantic City, the MFDP pressed on. Ms. Gray ran for Senate on the MFDP ticket, making her the first woman from Mississippi to run for Senate. Along with Fannie Lou Hamer and Annie Devine, Victoria Gray continued challenging the white power structure through her leadership in the MFDP. In 1968, the Mississippi Democratic Party was integrated. Victoria Gray was among a cohort of ordinary Mississippians who became leaders in SNCC and the Mississippi Movement. Reflecting on her experience in SNCC, Ms. Gray said, “When I met [Ella Baker] and that community of youthful civil rights activists, I realized that this was exactly what I’d been looking for all of my conscious existence ... It was like coming home.”



**Victoria Jackson Gray**  
July 1964

HERBERT RANDALL FREEDOM SUMMER PHOTOGRAPHS,  
COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI LIBRARIES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

*“there were two kinds of people in grassroots politics, ‘those who are in the Movement and those who have the Movement in them. The Movement is in me ... and I know it always will be.’”*

## AMELIA BOYNTON

Amelia Boynton’s introduction to politics came as a ten-year-old when traveling by horse and buggy she accompanied her mother – a committed women’s suffragist – “knocking on doors and ringing doorbells, giving women the proper information, taking them to the registration board and/or taking them to the polls to cast their votes.”

After studying home economics at Tuskegee University, Boynton began working as the home demonstration agent in Dallas County. There she met and married agricultural extension agent, Samuel William (S.W.) Boynton. They traveled down dusty dirt roads deep in the rurals and backwoods of the county teaching Black people better methods for farming but also “how to gain political, financial, and educational strength.” As Mr. Boynton often said, “Ownership makes any man respected. Living on the plantation makes a man’s family a part of the owner’s possession.” In addition to their demonstration work, the Boynton’s operated a insurance agency, real estate office, and employment agency out of their office on Franklin Street, located directly across from the city jail. In the mid-1930s, Amelia and S.W. Boynton began working with and revitalizing the moribund Dallas County Voters League. Its handful of members met in the back room of their office, working to get more Black people on the voting rolls.

In 1964, Amelia Boynton became the first African American woman in the state of Alabama to run for Congress, challenging a white incumbent for the Alabama Fourth District seat. The campaign motto, hung in her office window, was “A voteless people is a hopeless people.” Despite being defeated, she earned eleven percent of the local vote, where only five percent of Black district residents were registered. On January 2, 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. kicked off a nationally-gearred campaign for voting rights in Selma, and Boynton again worked wholeheartedly to drum up local support. Her home on 1315 Lapsley Street housed a consistent stream of movement activists. “People run in and out all the time,” she said.

*“A voteless people is a hopeless people.”*



**Amelia Boynton speaking to an audience during a civil rights meeting at Brown Chapel AME Church in Selma, Alabama.**  
1966

PHOTO BY JIM PEPPLER, COURTESY OF THE JIM PEPPLER SOUTHERN COURIER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION (ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY)

On March 7, 1965 – Bloody Sunday – Amelia Boynton marched in the first rows of a line of six hundred protesters, crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge headed for Montgomery. When the marchers refused to turn around, the troopers advanced. Boynton was tear gassed and beaten unconscious. Two weeks after she was released from the hospital, she sat on the platform in Montgomery as Martin Luther King addressed a crowd of thousands. In 2015, Amelia Boynton crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge again, this time on the fiftieth anniversary of Bloody Sunday, a celebration to her lifelong dedication to the struggle for freedom.

## UNITA BLACKWELL

After Charlie Cobb and Ivanhoe Donaldson were chased at gunpoint out of Sharkey County into neighboring Issaquena County, the first Black person they encountered was Unita Blackwell standing outside of a small store she owned in the town of Mayersville, the county seat. She let them use her telephone, and she also introduced the two SNCC workers to Henry Sias, a small farmer and local NAACP leader. Although Sias was a respected patriarch within the community, Unita Blackwell quickly emerged as the leader of the fledgling Movement in Issaquena County, where no Black person was registered to vote.

She was born into a sharecropping family in the Mississippi Delta during the Great Depression. Blackwell's childhood was governed by a set of rules referred to as "the plantation." This, she explained, "When the bossman says you go to the fields, everybody went to the fields; schools closed down." Resistance, however, was also part of her experience growing up. Her father refused to send her to the fields. He told the plantation owner, "this is his wife and baby, and wasn't the plantation owner's." Nonetheless, after growing up, Blackwell worked as a farm laborer for most of her life, bouncing from place to place looking for better economic opportunities.

At the time, SNCC voter registration projects were expanding throughout the Mississippi Delta where the population was two-thirds Black. There and across the state, voting rights were systematically denied to Black people; only 3 percent of voting-age Black people were registered to vote. Unita Blackwell remembered that she hadn't known that she could vote until she heard a SNCC organizer talk about it at a Sunday mass meeting.

Blackwell was one of just eight people who volunteered to go down to the county courthouse and try to register to vote. She failed the registration exam, despite being able to read and write. No one in that first group passed. Voter registration laws empowered voting registrars to fail anyone they chose to fail. By 1964, Blackwell became a full-time SNCC field secretary, encouraging friends and neighbors to register to vote and leading groups to the courthouse. During the 1964 Freedom Summer, Blackwell was elected a member of the executive committee of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and traveled to Atlantic City as a part



**Unita Blackwell speaking at a hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty at the Heidelberg Hotel in Jackson, Mississippi.**

PHOTO BY JIM PEPLER, COURTESY OF THE JIM PEPLER SOUTHERN COURIER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION (ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY)

*“This was a continuous thing ... we was to continue to go out to get people to bring them in ... to make sure we try to register to vote.”*

of the MFDP delegation that also included Henry Sias. The delegation hoped to replace the white-only Mississippi delegation at the 1964 Democratic National Convention.

After the party failed to secure seats for its delegates, Blackwell returned home, and continued her efforts to change her own home county. On April 1, 1965, she filed suit against the Issaquena County Board of Education in protest of the school's suspension of 300 students, including her son Jerry, for wearing Freedom pins. The case also called for school desegregation in Mississippi, following *Brown v. the Board of Education*, eventually reaching the U.S. Supreme Court, which upheld the ruling. Blackwell went on to become Mayersville's first African American and female mayor in 1976, a position she held for 25 years. In 1992, she was the recipient of the prestigious MacArthur Foundation's "Genius" Grant.

## SEPTIMA CLARK

Septima Poinsette Clark pioneered the link between education and political organizing, especially political organizing aimed at gaining the right to vote. She stressed that education was key to gaining political, economic, and social power. Long before SNCC's Freedom Schools, Clark was developing a grassroots citizenship education program that used everyday materials to think about big questions. From reading catalogues to writing on dry cleaner bags instead of chalkboards, Clark not only found creative ways to teach literacy but also helped people become leaders.

Clark was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1898 to a mother who was "fiercely proud" and a father who was gentle and tolerant. Both recognized the importance of education, although they came from very different life experiences. Clark's father was formerly enslaved on the Poinsette Plantation and her mother was raised in Haiti and was taught how to read and write at a young age. When they saw the conditions of Clark's grade school as compared to those that the white children of Charleston attended, they were outraged.

Clark decided to become a teacher herself, seeing education as a tool to be put in the hands of the people to gain a better life. Clark began teaching adult literacy on Johns Island after school. She would have her students write stories about their daily lives and think critically about the world around them. Clark joined the NAACP but then lost her teaching position due to her affiliation with the organization. Clark then became the director of workshops at the Highlander Folk School founded by Myles Horton, which she had first visited in 1954. While at Highlander, Clark stayed connected to her teaching roots, developing the Citizenship School curriculum she had begun developing on Johns Island.

*“Literacy means liberation.”*



**Citizenship School, Johns Island, South Carolina, with Septima Clark (center) and Bernice Robinson (standing), 1959**

PHOTO BY IDA BERMAN, COURTESY OF CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT VETERANS WEBSITE WWW.CRMVET.ORG

By 1961, 37 Citizenship Schools had been established on the Sea Islands and nearby mainland. These students went on to start a low-income housing project, credit union, nursing home, and more within their communities. The Citizenship Schools eventually became part of SCLC, and Clark moved to Atlanta, driving all over the Deep South to recruit folks to be Citizenship School teachers.

Clark believed in the power of literacy and nonviolent resistance, and she was interested in the work of the young activists. Like her good friend Ella Baker, Septima Clark bridged the gap between SNCC and an older generation in a way that few did, and her lifelong work in adult literacy and citizenship education helped pave the way for SNCC's organizing work, especially the Freedom Schools of Mississippi.

## GLORIA RICHARDSON

Gloria Richardson did not emerge out of nowhere. A divorced mother of two, she was born in Baltimore, Maryland to a middle-class family with a history of local activism. They were the owners of grocery stores in Cambridge's Second Ward, a predominantly Black community separated from the white neighborhood by Race Street. Gloria knew early on that racism went beyond separate schools and restaurants. Racism, and the denial of appropriate health care because of it, caused the early deaths of her father and uncle. Her own activism began in 1938 at Howard University in Washington, DC. She protested at the local Woolworth's and even conditions at Howard, before returning to Cambridge shortly after graduation.

Even as one of the relatively few college-educated Black women in Cambridge, job prospects for Richardson were low. Though she was able to work at the pharmacy her family then owned, she saw how difficult it was for working-class Black residents of the Second Ward to survive. When SNCC came to the Eastern Shore on Christmas Eve 1961, Richardson's uncle Herbert St. Clair and cousin Freddie helped post bond for the protestors. Richardson first got involved with the Movement when groups of high-schoolers, including her daughter Donna, began holding demonstrations and boycotts to disrupt the local economy.

***“A first-class citizen does not beg for freedom. A first-class citizen does not plead to the white power-structure to give him something that the whites have no power to give or take away. Human rights are human rights, not white rights.”***



**Gloria Richardson at protests in Cambridge, Maryland 1963**  
COURTESY OF ASSOCIATED PRESS

Richardson attended SNCC's 1962 Atlanta conference and returned to Cambridge with a new outlook on organizing. She became a member of SNCC's executive board. With the help of students from Swarthmore College, they surveyed the Second Ward to ensure that the organization prioritized the needs of the community. The Cambridge Movement angered not only the Kennedy administration nearby in Washington, D.C., but also national civil rights leaders. National hostility toward her activism did not hinder Richardson's local efforts. Two years of struggle finally broke the back of segregation. Richardson married photographer Frank Dandridge and moved to New York where she continued her activism. Richardson's work left a legacy for Black women to be unabashedly radical in the fight for civil rights.

## BERNICE JOHNSON (REAGON)

When the student sit-in movement erupted in the spring of 1960, Bernice Johnson was a student at Albany State College (now University). Johnson and a group of interested students decided “that we would combine campus issues with issues raised by the growing sit-in movement and take them to the administration.” The school depended on state funding, however, and Albany State president William Dennis let students know such protests would not be tolerated. Johnson's involvement in civil rights had begun a year earlier when she joined Albany's NAACP Youth Council. “Our first effort was to get Negroes hired at a white-owned drugstore in a Negro neighborhood,” recalled Annette Jones, one of Johnson's closest collaborators in the council.

When SNCC organizers Charles Sherrod and Cordell Reagon came to Albany in the fall of 1961, they found the students at Albany State ready for action. Johnson remembered that Sherrod approached her and asked her to join SNCC. She was at first put off. “I told Sherrod that they needed to find another name for the organization ... the term nonviolent did not name anything in my experience.” But something was happening “and I didn't want it to happen without me.”

That November, the Albany Movement was organized in reaction to the arrests of Bertha Gober and Blanton Hall for testing the Interstate Commerce Commission's

***“Our first effort was to get Negroes hired at a white-owned drugstore in a Negro neighborhood”***



**Bob Zellner, Bernice Reagon, Cordell Reagon, Dottie Miller (Zellner) and Avon Rollins at a mass meeting outside a small church, 1963**

PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/MAGNUM PHOTOS

ruling ordering the desegregation of interstate buses and trains. Johnson was now pouring almost all of her time into the local Movement. She served on the program committee, she planned meetings, and provided music. At one of the first mass meetings in Union Baptist Church, Johnson was asked to lead the participants in song. She started to sing “Over my head, I see Trouble in the Air,” but she quickly realized that “trouble” wasn't the right word for the occasion. “So instead I put in freedom and by the second line everyone was singing.”

Johnson was suspended from Albany State for her activism. She spent a semester at Spelman College in Atlanta before joining SNCC's newly-formed Freedom Singers in 1962. She married the group's co-founder Cordell Reagon. The Freedom Singers toured the country to raise money for SNCC projects in the Deep South. The group also moved in and out of movement hotspots, using their music to provide a spark for local activism. In 1966, Johnson Reagon founded the Harambee Singers and in 1973, she formed Sweet Honey in the Rock, an all-women, African American a cappella group that sought to effect change and portray the Black experience through their voices. Johnson Reagon continued to use her powerful singing to allow others to study the African American oral tradition in radio, film, and concerts across the country.

## JUNE JOHNSON

June Elizabeth Johnson was born in 1947 in Greenwood, Mississippi, just a few miles from where 14-year-old Emmett Till's body was found. Even as a child, she felt "frustration," seeing her parents fear talking openly about the crushing oppression of white supremacy in Mississippi and the South. She decided that she was going to find a way to fight it. Johnson first heard about SNCC from a flyer given to her at a local church, and she snuck to voter registration workshops in the evenings while her parents were at work.

June was only a 15-years-old high school student when her involvement with Greenwood's emerging Movement began in 1962. Johnson's early activism pulled her parents into the Movement; her mother and father, Lula Belle and Theodore Johnson, opened their home to SNCC workers. Mrs. Johnson cooked for many of them. Her father, Theodore Johnson, even slept on the floor once, so SNCC organizer Jean Wheeler could have his bed.

In June 1963, Johnson and a group of SNCC workers were returning from a voter registration training workshop in South Carolina and tried to sit in the front of their Trailways bus. When the driver protested, the workers demanded the driver's name, telling him they would file a complaint with the bus company. At each stop along the way, the driver stepped away to make a call. Upon arriving in Winona, Johnson and the civil rights workers sat on the white side of the waiting room and were arrested by waiting law enforcement. Johnson was badly beaten, as were Ms. Fannie Lou Hamer, Euvester Simpson, and Annell Ponder of SCLC. When Lawrence Guyot came up to Winona to check on the group, he, too, was arrested and beaten.

While they sat in jail, Medgar Evers was murdered. All of these events strengthened June Johnson's commitment. Johnson went on to organize both the Greenwood Voters' League and worked with the MFDP and COFO. After she left SNCC staff, she worked as a paralegal and helped sue Greenwood and Leflore County for its racist practices. She served as the first Vice President for the Office of Early Childhood Development in Jackson and continued to assist numerous organizations for equality, both in Mississippi and in Washington, D.C., where she lived for several years.



**June Johnson, 1963**  
PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/  
MAGNUM PHOTOS

*“I didn’t care what happened to me, I was going to be free or continue to be a part of a struggle to fight for the freedom of people of this country.”*

## DORIE LADNER

Dorie Ladner was “born a rebel against oppression.” A native of the Hattiesburg, Mississippi community known as Palmer's Crossing, she spent her childhood fighting back against the oppressive racial norms that governed the lives of Black people there. Her mother taught all of her eight children that they “were as good as anybody.”

The Ladner family was close to Vernon Dahmer and his family. Dahmer was the president of the Forrest County branch of the NAACP and a vocal proponent of voting rights. Dahmer helped Dorie and her sister Joyce form an NAACP Youth Council in nearby Hattiesburg. Clyde Kennard, another older activist who attended school at the University of Chicago, agreed to serve as the youth council's advisor. Pretty soon, Kennard and Dahmer were bringing the Ladner sisters to Jackson for statewide NAACP meetings.

The Ladners met Medgar Evers, NAACP field secretary for Mississippi on one of their Jackson trips, and he also became an important mentor when they enrolled in Jackson State College. “Every Wednesday, we would go over and talk to him about freedom, which was abstract; all we wanted to know was about our freedom,” Dorie explained. In 1961, with Evers' guidance, Ladner joined the protests of the “Tougaloo [College] Nine,” a group of students from Tougaloo who were arrested for trying to integrate the public library in downtown Jackson. As a consequence of her activism, Ladner was expelled from Jackson State. She and her sister later matriculated at Tougaloo College, which was known for its liberal stance towards student activism.

When Evers was assassinated in June 1963, it was especially hard on Dorie and her sister. The anger that had been building up after every murder and lynching, especially those of Clyde Kennard and Emmett Till. Despite her family's insistence that she get an education, Dorie dropped out of Tougaloo three separate times to work for SNCC full-time. She once told her sister Joyce, “I can't stay in school and know my people are suffering.” In the summer of 1962, she started working on SNCC's voter registration projects in the Delta. Three years later, she became SNCC's project director in Natchez, Mississippi.



**SNCC workers stand outside the funeral of the 4 girls who'd been killed by the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church. From left to right: Emma Bell, Dorie Ladner, Dona Richards, Sam Shirah and Doris Derby. 1963**  
PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/  
MAGNUM PHOTOS

*“I’m so grateful that I was exposed to people who at the time had vision”*

## CAROLYN DANIELS

When Charles Sherrod expanded SNCC's voter registration efforts into "the rurals" of Southwest Georgia in 1962, Mrs. Carolyn Daniels, then a 33-year-old single mother, took them in. She lived and owned a beauty shop in Dawson, the county seat of Terrell County, nicknamed "Terrible Terrell." From the beginning of this work, she stood up to an onslaught of harassment and terror from white vigilantes. The unwavering support of local people, like Mrs. Daniels, was the foundation on which SNCC's grassroots work rested everywhere in the South.

Carolyn Daniels began walking the county's backroads with Sherrod, urging people to register to vote. At church meetings, she taught people how to fill out voter registration forms; she also organized citizenship classes supported by SCLC. Terrorists burned down Movement churches in Terrell and neighboring Lee counties during the summer of 1962, but Daniels remained undeterred and continued her voter education classes in makeshift tents.

In September 1962, night riders fired shots into Daniels' two-bedroom home. They wounded Jack Chatfield, a white Northern volunteer, who had been in Southwest Georgia for just two days. Mrs. Daniels continued welcoming SNCC volunteers. Prathia Hall remembered the house being filled wall-to-wall with people. Daniels would lend her red and white Chevy Impala to SNCC workers, so they could drive people to the courthouse. Attacks against her and the Movement continued. On the night of December 8, 1963, Daniels, while lying in her bed, heard a car door slam and footsteps. Then shots shattered her bedroom windows, and a bomb rolled under the bed but failed to detonate. Daniels went to the hospital to attend to her injured foot. When she came back, her house was gone. The bomb had gone off while she was out. But Carolyn Daniels rebuilt her home and continued on.



**Carolyn Daniels, 1963**  
PHOTO BY DANNY LYON, COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/  
MAGNUM PHOTOS

## BRENDA TRAVIS

When SNCC arrived in McComb, Brenda Travis had already made up her mind that she needed to do something – anything – to change the unjust world she lived in. As a ten-year-old, she watched the county sheriff burst into her home and arrest her thirteen-year-old brother for an unknown reason. She had seen the photograph of Emmett Till's battered, bloated body in the September 15, 1955 issue of *Jet* magazine. So, when SNCC came to town in 1961, the 15-year-old Travis saw a way to fight so many of the things that angered her. Soon she was at the forefront of the McComb student movement.

With the involvement of young people like Travis – who were too young to vote – plans for direct action protest took off. After Hollis Watkins and Curtis Hayes were arrested for sitting in at Woolworth's, SNCC staff asked for volunteers at a mass meeting to keep the momentum going. "I knew that I could not sit still and be silent," Travis remembered, "So I volunteered to go to jail." Travis, along with fellow students Robert Talbert and Ike Lewis, sat in at the Greyhound Bus Station and were arrested. During their month-long stay in the Pike County jail, the young people remembered the tactics that SNCC organizers had taught them, praying and singing freedom songs to lift their spirits.

After her release, Brenda Travis learned that she had been expelled from school. News spread and over one hundred of her classmates walked out of school in protest of her expulsion. The students marched from Burglund High School to McComb city hall, stopping at the SNCC headquarters on the way. During this protest, a police officer yanked Travis off the steps of city hall and arrested her again. Without going before a judge, she was sent to a youth correctional facility. "When I was placed in reformatory school," Travis recalled, "nobody knew where I was, not even my attorney."

*"I don't consider myself a leader. I consider myself a person who follows their own convictions, and that's what I did."*



**McComb students kneel in prayer, 1961**  
PHOTO BY ERLE JOHNSTON, COURTESY OF  
CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT VETERANS WEBSITE  
WWW.CRMVET.ORG

Back in McComb, Travis' mother faced retaliation because of her daughter's civil rights activities. Local whites repeatedly refused her work and eventually pushed her to leave her young children with relatives while she looked for work in other parts of Mississippi. Travis was eventually released into the custody of a professor from Talladega College, but then fled with the help of James and Mildred Forman after he was abusive. Others from SNCC, like Julian Bond and Ms. Baker, helped ensure that Travis was cared for and received an education.

## RUBY DORIS

Calling from the field to SNCC in Atlanta meant calling Ruby Doris. From her position as SNCC's administrative secretary, she saw to it that field secretaries got what they needed. If anybody ran SNCC, it was Ruby Doris. Her strength and commitment manifested early in life. Born to a middle class family, Smith was relatively shielded from segregation growing up but "was conscious of my blackness." Smith once told her sister that her mission in life was to set the Black people free. "I will never rest until it happens. I will die for that cause," she said. The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the February 1, 1960 Greensboro sit-ins showed Smith a way to fight against the many injustices she felt and saw.

As a student at Spelman College, Ruby Doris Smith picketed and participated in sit-ins in Atlanta, joining the Atlanta Student Movement. That led her to SNCC's founding conference at Shaw University. Then in February, 1961 at the age of eighteen, Smith volunteered to go to Rock Hill, South Carolina to support the "Rock Hill Nine," local college students who had sat in and refused bail after they were arrested. Smith, along with fellow student activists Diane Nash, Charles Sherrod, and Charles Jones, sat in and helped popularize SNCC's "Jail-No-Bail" strategy by serving out their 30-day jail sentence. Smith's sentence included serving time on the chain gang. From there, Smith joined the Freedom Rides, serving 45 days in Parchman Penitentiary after being arrested in Jackson, Mississippi.

***Smith, along with fellow student activists Diane Nash, Charles Sherrod, and Charles Jones, sat in and helped popularize SNCC's "Jail-No-Bail" strategy by serving out their 30-day jail. Smith's sentence included serving time on the chain gang.***



**Ruby Doris Smith (Robinson)**  
COURTESY OF SNCC DIGITAL GATEWAY [HTTPS://  
SNCCDIGITAL.ORG](https://snccdigital.org)

In 1963, Smith formally became SNCC's administrative secretary. In the Atlanta office she worked closely with Jim Forman and coordinated SNCC efforts in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. She also made sure that field staff had cars, creating the Sojourner Truth Motor Fleet and incorporating it as a separate entity. In 1966, Ruby Doris Smith Robinson was elected to replace Jim Forman – who was stepping down – as SNCC's executive secretary. She was the first and only woman to serve on SNCC's executive committee. That fact mattered little to her. Being a woman had never limited her capabilities or authority – nor would anyone have suggested that it did.

Only one year later, she died of terminal cancer at the very young age of 25 – a devastating loss to her Movement colleagues and SNCC itself. On the headstone at her Atlanta grave site are words appropriate for both her life and SNCC: "If you think free, you are free."

## The NAACP Youth Council and the Civil Rights Movement

### Pilar McCloud

The NAACP has always played part in the history of Black America. A little over 80 years ago the NAACP decided nationally it needed to involve its youth in the civil rights process. That's when the NAACP Youth Council was created and born. Since then youth across the states who are participants in the NAACP have taken on many roles and challenges. They have marched, they have protested, they have been thrown in jail and they have expressed their frustration with the process as it pertains to Black America, and especially their disdain towards the way Black young people are treated in this country.

We have seen on a national level across the globe the way young people, particularly our young men, are being disrespected and mistreated in all forms, from police brutality right on down to the way they are disrespected by educators who are supposed to be there to engage with them and help them reach their next phase in life. The one thing that I can say is that in Providence, Rhode Island we have not seen as many of the situations as some of the larger cities have, such as New York or Boston or California or Florida. But that doesn't mean that we don't have our own fair share of problems.

We have had issues ranging from students being knocked down and having adults sitting on them in Providence right on down to students being disrespected by their educators or not being listened to. We have seen small-scale forms of police action. All of these things are unacceptable but yet these are the struggles in the fight that the Youth Council must face. In addition to those fights they have taken up the charge of making sure that they help people register to vote and let people know the importance of voting. They have also in Providence in particular marched 127

miles in 2015 on The Journey For Justice, fighting for all to have equality.

I know that as the NAACP secretary at the time Rosa Parks was asked to be the symbol of the bus boycott, this wasn't something that happened by mistake although people like to paint their own picture of what happened during that Movement, history shows the facts. Nothing that the NAACP ever did was by accident or mistake, everything was strategically organized. You see a movement cannot move and cannot make its greatest impact if there is no plan in place. So when Rosa made the decision and decided that she would put herself on the battlefield that was something that had been discussed with her husband and her family.

Young people have always played an integral role in the Movement from when it first began. Young people were the ones who left schools to protest. They did this because they did not wish for their parents to lose their jobs. Young people were the ones who took that charge when they were given the signal sent over the radio airwaves by a local DJ. During the period of the Movement young people knew the time to walk out of schools and leave to get on buses and head down to boycott. Yes those young people were well aware that they were going to get arrested so they packed toothbrushes and their hair curlers and a book for reading. The point was for them to get arrested that makes a bigger statement. Young people have always led the charge – Why? Because sometimes the adults were not always able to, not because they did not want to.

### TAKING THE LEAD

With all of the movements happening today from #MeToo to Black Lives Matter there is no doubt in my mind the young people will always take up the charge.

Why? Because they see things through a different perspective, a different lens. They see some things that we as adults might see but are too afraid to speak about. These millennials are not afraid and they're going to speak against and stand up for justice. I believe it was Martin Luther King Jr. who said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

When I look back and I think about the young people of the 1950s and 1960s, they came before me and took a stand for civil rights and social justice. When I think about those little Black girls who were killed in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, when I think about those young people there were hosed down by fire hoses or attacked by police dogs; when I think about the young people that went to jail that were beaten from walking across The Edmund Pettus Bridge; when I think about all the things that people had to endure just so that in 2018 we may have a better chance than they had during the Civil Rights Movement, it brings tears to my eyes. When I think about how much sacrifice I've seen the young people in this generation go through, the marches, the protesting, the planning, the walking out of schools, and getting on buses and going to D.C. to have their voices be heard because you're sick and tired of school shootings, when I think about Rosa Parks and all that she must've endured sitting on the bus, I think of how she and others were tired of being oppressed, tired of being suppressed, tired of being made to feel like you are less than. Tired of always having to bow down to someone else. Tired of being made to feel like your voice does not matter. People get tired! She got tired! Our young people are tired! I myself am tired! But the fight must go on ... the fight will continue ... we will never give up. We will persevere until freedom and justice and true equality is had for all humankind regardless of your race, creed, or color, regardless of your sexuality. When we can truly all, and I do mean all, stand and sing the Star-Spangled Banner and it actually pertains to all of us and not just some of us. That is true freedom.

Until then – the fight will continue.

*Pilar McCloud is Co-Director of Unified Solutions, United Way Young Leaders Circle, CEO/Founder A Sweet Creation Youth Organization, former NAACP Chair of Youth/College and former NEAC NAACP YouthWorks Committee Advisor.*



Providence NAACP Youth Council



Providence NAACP Youth Council volunteering on a farm in Puerto Rico

## The Black Freedom Struggle and the Remaking of America

### Anthony Bogues

In September 1964, a pamphlet with the title, *Negro Americans Take the Lead* was published in Detroit. Its core argument was that by 1964, there was a "Negro Revolution," which by a series of struggles "throughout the South and across the North displayed an amazing range of demands, of organizational methods and forms." In 1964, Martin Luther King speaking at the New School in New York City delivered a lecture titled

"The Summer of our Discontent" in which he argued that the "Civil Rights Movement" was part of a "Negro Revolution." King made it clear that the "Negro Revolution" was not only about "lightning flashes and growing rains of protest" but was "America's second revolution." Later on, Malcolm X proclaimed that there was a difference between the "Black revolution and the Negro revolution." However, no matter the



Martin Luther King and Malcolm X waiting for press conference, 1964

While both Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X both worked to improve the living conditions of African Americans in the U.S. they actually only met once in their lifetimes. Their one and only encounter took place at the U.S. Senate hearing on the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

PHOTO BY M. S. TRIKOSKO, COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS [LC-USZ6-1847]

differences between these two thinkers and activists, each understood that the Black freedom struggle at that historic moment posed fundamental challenges to America's power structure.

This Movement emerged forcefully in the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955 and opened up an era of Black freedom struggles. From Fayette County in Tennessee where there was a long struggle for voting rights; to the 1960's sit-in movements and then the struggle for political rights organized by the Student Nonviolent Organizing Committee (SNCC); to the Freedom Rides in May 1961 organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE); the various legal campaigns against Jim Crow led by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the activities of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the structures of America's anti-Black racism came under sustained assault.

If in the mid 20th century the "Black revolution" was the major political, cultural, and social force pushing America and shaking it to its core, one should understand that this "revolution" did not happen suddenly and that it drew upon a long tradition of African American intellectual and political histories. The explosion of the Black struggle in mid-20th century America was therefore rooted in a longer historic Black struggle to transform America.

### BLACK ABOLITIONISM

When Prince Hall in 1774 petitioned the military governor, Thomas Gage for the abolition of slavery he made a political statement. In 1777 when he and seven others petitioned the Massachusetts State Council for liberty as "the natural right of all men, and their children, who were born in this land of liberty, not to be held slaves," they laid down one of the central ideas of Black abolitionism – Black freedom. Black abolitionism was a set of political ideas and activities against slavery. Its activities ranged from the over 200 armed rebellions of ten or more of the enslaved during slavery to acts of every day refusals, arson, and sabotage. One of the most important Black abolitionist, David Walker wrote in 1829 a seminal political work *Walker's Appeal in Four Articles*. Addressed to the "Colored Citizens of the World," the appeal advocated for the immediate

abolition of slavery. Using biblical language it posited the idea of equality for all and called for racial solidarity amongst the African American population. Another Black abolitionist Maria Stewart in 1831 in her writing, *Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, The Sure Foundation on Which We Must Build* also advocated the ending of slavery as well as Black autonomy. The central idea of Black abolitionism was the immediate ending of slavery and full Black equality and therefore freedom. This idea of the necessary relationship between full equality and freedom became central to the Black freedom struggle.



### POST-SLAVERY

In the wake of slavery, Black political activity continued. During the era of Reconstruction much of it was focused on using Black voting rights to gain representation in state legislatures of the South. That era came to close when Jim Crow laws and racial terror became the order of the day. Jim Crow laws were upheld in 1896 by the Supreme Court with the separate but equal doctrine handed down in the Plessy v. Ferguson case.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Black life in the USA was harsh. Laws and customs in the South denied equality to African Americans and in the North the customs of segregation were active in daily life. All these practices created specific forms of oppression and resistance.

The imposition of Jim Crow laws and the consolidation of segregation in American life occurred within a context of the full colonization of the African continent. Colonialism was linked to anti-Black racism. Racism advocated the so-called "inferiority" of the Black person so one element of the struggle against racism and colonial domination was the reversal of this inferiority complex. In the early 20th century the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) became the single largest Black organization in the world. Formed first in Jamaica in 1914 and then moving to NYC in 1916, the movement led by Marcus Garvey advocated Black racial pride and "Africa for Africans those at Home and Abroad." The UNIA was not the only movement that was preoccupied with Africa. In 1901, W.E.B. Du Bois and Henry Sylvester Williams and others organized the

first Pan-African Congress in London. The congress was attended by some 57 delegates from 15 countries. Du Bois, writing about the congress noted that, "the idea of one Africa uniting the thought and ideals of all the native peoples of the Dark Continent belongs to the 20th century." So if in the 19th century one central idea of Black thought was full equality, freedom, and the abolition of slavery, in the early 20th century two other ideas were added, Black racial pride and the centrality of Africa to black freedom.

The "Black Revolution" of the mid 20th century combined all these idea and James Brown's song "Say it Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud" was a Black anthem and a soundtrack for this revolution.

Think of all the currents and plethora of movements of the period other than the ones we conventionally associate with the "Civil Rights Movement." Black Power, a slogan first shouted by the SNCC organizer Willie Ricks and then taken up by Stokely Carmichael; the Black Panther Party attracting young black men and women across American cities and creating a 10 Point Program with the demand, "We want freedom: We want Power to determine the Destiny of our Black Community." Recall the Detroit Revolutionary Union Movement formed 1968 in the Chrysler plant in Detroit, which by 1969 had become the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. The League argued for Black liberation within the context of a worldwide workers movement from the former colonized countries. Its constitution stated, "We must act swiftly to help organize DRUM type organizations ... the Mississippi Delta, the mines of Bolivia, the rubber plantations of Indonesia, and the oil fields of Biafra or the Chrysler plant in South Africa." The Black freedom struggle following the adage of "by any means necessary" also practiced a political electoral strategy. Often beginning with the idea of Black control over Black communities, this strategy over time broadened to state representation and finally to running for presidential office. Often the movement was torn about Black electoral participation but some saw this and the newly won voting rights as part of reforming American society. One of the most profound freedom document to emerge from this period was written by a group of Black feminists who began meeting in 1974 and published in 1977, the *Combahee River Collective Statement*. This statement argued that the "various systems of oppression are interlocking" and that a "Black feminist politics also have an

obvious connection to movements for Black liberation." The members of the collective noted "as we developed politically we addressed ourselves to heterosexism and economic oppression under capitalism."

All of this points to the fact that the Black organizing and political tradition is a deep and broad one. It is about transforming America, creating the 'second revolution' which King spoke about, one that transforms limited political liberty inherited from the 1776 revolution into freedom and full equality for all. At the core of the Black freedom struggle is a drive towards ending various forms of oppression and constituting a community of full equality and freedom. It is about transforming our current conceptions of citizenship. The "Civil Rights Movement" belongs to this tradition of Black struggle. In the words of Ella Baker, these struggles were based on the ability "to see the world for what it is and move to transform it." There is much unfinished work to do to transform and remake America.

*Anthony Bogues is the Asa Messer Professor of Humanities and Critical Theory, Professor of Africana Studies and Director of Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University.*

## Reflections on the Black Lives Matter Movement

### Barbara Ransby

The Black Lives Matter Movement (BLMM), 2012 to 2017, marks the most recent iteration of the ongoing Black freedom struggle in the United States. Sparked by incidents of police and vigilante violence against Black individuals and communities, BLMM was a series of spontaneous protests and organized campaigns. The demands and grievances of protesters, however, extended far beyond police brutality to include demands for access to education, jobs, and democratic decision making, as well as environmental justice, LGBTQ rights, and disability rights: a new generation of activists were railing against a myriad of problems that compromise, threaten and cut short Black people's lives, especially the most vulnerable members of Black communities.

Black Lives Matter, the slogan, began in 2013 with a social media hashtag initiated by three Black feminist activists (two of them queer), Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors (now Patrisse Khan-Cullors), and Opal Tometi in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the 2012 murder of unarmed Black teenager, Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida. It grew from there gaining traction during the uprising in Ferguson Missouri in the summer of 2014 in response to the police murder of another unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown. The Ferguson community was outraged, protesting non-stop and ignoring curfews imposed by local authorities. Things escalated when police used heavy-handed tactics, including teargas and pepper spray, to disperse crowds and suppress peaceful protests. Even journalists were caught up in the fray and arrested by police for simply doing their jobs. Local Ferguson residents took the lead but supporters flocked to the little Missouri town from all over the country. Ferguson became the epicenter for a new wave of protests that spread to New York, Atlanta, Baltimore, Oakland, Los Angeles and beyond. Social media was an instrumental

tool in mobilizing mass support. In Ferguson new groups like Tribe X, Millennial Activists United, and Lost Voices linked up with veteran organizers in the Organization for Black Struggle to sustain mass protests and disruptions for several months. By December 2014 the Movement for Black Lives was forming as an umbrella coalition for other national and regional groups like Black Youth Project 100, Million Hoodies United, The Dream Defenders in Florida, and Black Lives Matter Global Network. Tens of thousands participated in rallies, vigils, and direct actions under the general banner of Black Lives Matter. The slogan reverberated through the lyrics of popular songs, the defiant statements of professional athletes and the scripts of prime time television shows. There were solidarity actions from the U.K. to Canada to South Africa to Palestine.

While Ferguson was the most sustained and intense uprising of the BLMM period, it was the catalyst for other large protests such as the one that occurred in Baltimore after the death of a 25 year-old Black man, Freddie Gray, in police custody in 2015. Angry protesters insisted that Gray's death was a result of institutionalized racism despite the fact that the Mayor and half of the police implicated were Black. It was not about individuals per se, they insisted, but the systemic devaluation of the lives of certain young, poor Black people. In addition to Ferguson and Baltimore there were hundreds of protests around the country in a particularly intense three-year period that witnessed high profile police killings, or deaths in police custody of numerous individuals. Many of the incidents were captured on cell phones and either live streamed or widely circulated on social media. Victims, whose deaths triggered protests include: Walter Scott in South Carolina; 12 year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland; Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge; Eric Garner in Staten Island; Korryn Gaines in Baltimore County; Rekia Boyd

in Chicago: Philando Castile in Minnesota; Sandra Bland in Texas, and the list goes on. Significantly, while most of the high profile cases that captured the most media attention were those involving male victims, Black feminist organizers insisted that Black women too were victims of police violence. Kimberlé Crenshaw's African American Policy Forum and Black Youth Project 100 were two of the catalysts for the #SAYHERNAME campaign that foregrounded the cases of dozens of Black women victims as well.

There are dozens of national and local organizations that have organized under the Black Lives Matter banner, many of them have come together in the Movement for Black Lives coalition, which in August of 2016 issued a comprehensive policy document titled, "The Vision for Black Lives," which not only addresses issues of racial injustice, narrowly defined, but is essentially a platform for progressive issues writ large. In some ways this movement represents a continuation of Black radical traditions of resistance that go back to slavery, in other ways it is a forward-looking and uniquely 21st century movement.

### FEATURES OF THE MOVEMENT

There are several features that distinguish and define this movement. Black feminist politics were palpable from the very beginning. Some of the key leaders that emerged in Ferguson in the summer of 2014 were young queer women. One of the groups that formed around the same time was Black Youth Project 100 openly organizes using "a Black queer feminist lens." The Black feminist politics of intersectionality, based on an understanding of the interrelated and symbiotic nature of multiple systems of oppression, is articulated in various ways in BLMM documents, quotes and speeches. Secondly, Black Lives Matter organizers rejected the "politics of respectability" that would require leaders be educated, proper, and conform to a certain middle class decorum. In contrast, BLMM organizers frequently championed the voices of poor and working class Black people, formerly incarcerated people, as well as LGBTQ activists. This approach and politics breaks with the tactic of early Civil Rights Movement leaders who tried to identify representatives of the movement that conformed to middle class notions of respectability and were likely to be appealing to a general public. BLMM rejected this strategy arguing that the marginalized sectors of the Black community

had to be at the center of any legitimate and inclusive agenda for change. Thirdly, the leadership style of most BLMM organizations is group-centered and non-hierarchical, breaking ranks again with the charismatic male-led civil rights groups of the past. Finally, it is significant that this widespread protest movement against anti-Black racism arose during the tenure of the first African American U.S. president, Barack Obama. In essence protesters felt Obama had been either unable or unwilling to address the problems and dangers facing Black people in the United States. They rejected the idea that the symbolic victory of a Black family in the White House should somehow be a balm on the wounds of continued racist injustices.

BLMM organizers employed bold tactics like shutting down major freeways and bridges, blockading buildings, giving speeches in fancy restaurants, and holding encampments in public venues to draw attention to the issue of continuing police violence. Many of the leaders of BLMM were influenced by precursor organizations like Critical Resistance and INCITE: Women of Color Against Violence, formed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, both of which critiqued the criminal justice system and called for long term goal of a society without prisons altogether. While BLMM represents a departure from certain kind of mainstream Black politics, it also represents a continuation of a Black radical tradition as reflected in the work of groups and individuals from the Black Panther Party and the Combahee River Collective to Ella Baker, Angela Davis, and Black Liberation movement leader, former political prisoner and exile, Assata Shakur. Many of BLMM activists have championed Shakur in particular, not because they necessarily want to replicate the politics of the 1960s and early 70s, but they celebrate her spirit of determined resistance, often reciting her quote: "It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win." For those short-sighted observers who suggested that the U.S. had finally overcome its racist past with the election of President Obama in 2008, BLMM was a sharp and clear reminder that the struggle is far from over and freedom for African Americans, is far from won. In very different terms the outcome of the 2016 presidential election underscored that very same point.

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## Unfinished Business of the Movement

Today the “Civil Rights Movement” is understood as a brief historical moment in the distant past. The Movement was central both to American and world history in the long 20th century. A Movement which began against segregation and Jim Crow laws shook America. Its political ideas and organizing tactics spread throughout the world. The movement challenged the foundations of white racial democracy in America. Today anti-Black racism still structures contemporary America. While there are no more signs which say “whites only,” in daily life anti-Black racial assumptions frame the everyday lives of Black folks. Formal Jim Crow is dead but segregation in public schools and housing continues. The rates of incarceration of the African American population is higher than any other segment of American society. The police continue to

attack and kill unarmed Black men and women. The Black freedom struggle, in whatever form it took, was always about, as King stated, the “second American revolution.” It was about transforming the narrow political liberty of the 1776 American Revolution into full freedom for all. It is a transformation in which America may become, in the words of the poet Langston Hughes, the “land that never has been yet.” For that to happen there is much “unfinished business.”

**“For this is your home, my friend, do not be driven from it ... we can make America what America must become.”**

James Baldwin

**SNCC Demonstration at the Cairo Pool, 1962.**

PHOTO BY DANNY LYON. COURTESY OF DANNY LYON/MAGNUM PHOTOS



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## Contributor's Bios

**Christina Paxson** is the nineteenth president of Brown University and Professor of Economics and Public Policy. She assumed the role of president on July 1, 2012. As an early initiative of her presidency, Paxson worked with students, faculty and staff to develop *Building on Distinction*, a 10-year strategic plan launched in 2014 that is shaping the growth and progress of a University committed to addressing the defining challenges of the 21st century. She is leading Brown in its increased emphasis on teaching, research and scholarship that spans disciplines in such areas as bioengineering, environmental security, data sciences and addressing societal issues through humanistic inquiry.

In the fourth year of her presidency, President Paxson led an inclusive, campus-wide effort to create more just, diverse, and inclusive communities in support of Brown's mission of education and discovery. In February 2016, Brown released *Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion: An Action Plan for Brown University*, which provides a detailed set of action plans to meet the goal of creating knowledge and preparing students to serve their communities, the nation and the world. President Paxson is driving investment in all of these efforts with an eye toward positioning Brown to be a leader in teaching, research and innovation in the decades ahead.

**Anthony Bogues** is a writer, scholar and curator and the inaugural director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. He is the Asa Messer Professor of Humanities and Critical Theory. He is the author of *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C.L.R. James; Black Heretics and Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals; Empire of Liberty: Power, Freedom and Desire* and editor of the following: *From Revolution in the Tropics to Imagined Landscapes: the Art of Edouard Duval-Carrié; Metamorphosis: The Art of Edouard Duval-Carrié; After Man, Towards the Human: Critical Essays on Sylvia Wynter and The George Lamming Reader: The Aesthetics of Decolonization*. He recently co-edited a special issue of the Italian journal *Filosofia Politica* on Black political thought. A former distinguished visiting professor at University of Cape Town, he is now a member of the scientific committee of Le Centre d'Art in Haiti and visiting professor/curator at the University of Johannesburg.

**Herb Boyd** is an award-winning author and journalist who has taught African American History since 1969 when he was a founding member of the Black Studies Department at Detroit's Wayne State University. He currently teaches African American History and Culture at the City College of New York in Harlem where he lives. In 2013, Boyd was inducted into the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame. He has also been inducted into the Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent and as a journalist, into the Madison Square Garden Hall of Fame. Along with his writing and teaching Boyd frequently moderates panels on African American issues and current events. An avid researcher Boyd is the author/editor of 25 books and his most recent is *Black Detroit: A People's History of Self Determination*.

**Charles E. Cobb Jr.**, born in Washington D.C. in 1943. A founding member of the National Association of Black Journalists, Cobb began his journalism career in 1974 as a reporter for WHUR Radio in Washington, DC. In 1976 he joined the staff of National Public Radio as a foreign affairs reporter. He was an on-air writer/correspondent for PBS's FRONTLINE from 1980–84. From 1985–1997 Cobb was a member of the Editorial Staff of National Geographic magazine – the first Black writer to become one of that magazine's staff writers. On July 24, 2008 the National Association of Black Journalists honored Cobb's work by inducting him into their "Hall of Fame." Cobb is co-author, with the legendary civil rights organizer and educator, Robert P. Moses, of the book *Radical Equations, Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project*. He co-edited *No Easy Victories, African Liberation and American Activists Over a Half Century, 1950–2000*, with William Minter and Gail Hovey. His book, *On the Road to Freedom, a Guided Tour of the Civil Rights Trail* was published in 2008. His latest book is *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Possible*, published by Duke University Press.

**Maiyah Gamble-Rivers** is a recent Brown University Graduate, receiving her Master's in Public Humanities and completing her fellowship at the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice (CSSJ). She now serves as the Manager of Programs and Community Engagement at the CSSJ, developing programs and curriculum for high school students in the city of Providence and serves on the Center's curatorial team. In 2015 she developed a curriculum, led workshops, and accompanied students on a Civil Rights Trip throughout the South. The program will go into its fourth year during the 2018–2019 academic year.

**Françoise N. Hamlin** (Ph.D. Yale University, 2004) is an Associate Professor in History and Africana Studies and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses primarily in twentieth century U.S. history, African American history, southern history, cultural studies and Africana Studies. Prior to joining the faculty at Brown, Professor Hamlin was a DuBois-Mandela-Rodney fellow at the University of Michigan (2004–2005), and an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (2005–2007). Since then she has been a Charles Warren Center Fellow at Harvard University (2007–2008), and a Woodrow Wilson-Mellon Fellow (2010–2011). Most recently she is the American Council of Learned Societies, Frederick Burkhardt Fellow (2017–2018) at the Radcliffe Institute. Françoise N. Hamlin is author of *Crossroads at Clarksdale: The Black Freedom Struggle in the Mississippi Delta after World War II* and *These Truly Are The Brave: An Anthology of African American Writings on Citizenship and War*.

**Pilar McCloud** is the CEO and founder of A Sweet Creation youth organization, which was founded in the Olneyville section of Providence. McCloud recently served as the chairwoman of The NAACP Providence Branch Youth High School and College Chapters as well as an officer and Executive Board member. McCloud formerly served as the New England Area Conference Advisor for the YouthWorks Committee serving the 15 chapters of the NAACP in the New England area that have active youth councils. She is also co-director of Unified Solutions an incubator organization for grassroots nonprofit organizations in Providence. After working with youth in various communities for over a decade McCloud completed her 3rd term as an AmeriCorps member at Youth Build Preparatory Academy as the mentor team leader. She mentors youth with Big Brothers Big Sisters of The Ocean State, GoodWill Industries, The Met High School and Nathanael Greene Middle School. She is a member of The National Mentor Partnership. McCloud has received several awards and accolades including The Youth Build 2015 Humanitarian Award, The National Secretaries of State Medallion Award in 2015 for Civic Leadership & Advocacy, along with being the 2015 NAACP Rosa Parks Award winner.

**Barbara Ransby** is Distinguished Professor of African American Studies, Gender and Women's Studies and History at the University of Illinois at Chicago where she directs the campus wide Social Justice Initiative. She is a longtime activist and the author of numerous books and articles including the award-winning, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*. Her most recent book, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Re-imagining Freedom in the 21st Century* was published by University of California Press in August 2018.

**Judy Richardson** was on SNCC staff from 1963 to 1966: in Maryland; Mississippi, during 1964 Freedom Summer; and in Georgia and Alabama. She ran the office for Julian Bond's successful first campaign for the Georgia legislature; co-founded Drum & Spear Bookstore in D.C., then the country's largest African American bookstore; and was Director of Information for the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. Her experiences in the Movement influenced the rest of her life. She worked on Blackside's fourteen-hour PBS series *Eyes on the Prize* and was its education director. She also co-produced Blackside's *Malcolm X: Make It Plain*. As a Senior Producer with Northern Light Productions she produced African American historical documentaries for broadcast and museum, including all the videos for the National Park Service's "Little Rock Nine" historic site and, most recently, PBS's *Scarred Justice: The Orangeburg Massacre, 1968*. She has worked for numerous social justice organizations and writes, lectures, and conducts teacher workshops on the Civil Rights Movement. She co-edited *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*, with five other female SNCC staffers. Published by University of Illinois Press, the anthology includes the memoirs of fifty-two courageous women on the front lines of the 1960's Southern Civil Rights Movement. She was awarded an honorary doctorate by Swarthmore College and was a visiting professor at Brown University.

**Shana Weinberg** is the Assistant Director at the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice at Brown University. She has been with the Center since it first opened in 2012, serving as its inaugural staff member. Over the last five years she has helped to develop the Center's public humanities programming and serves as the co-curator for its exhibitions. Shana has worked on projects at institutions such as the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, the Jewish Women's Archive and Rhode Island Public Radio. She has served as a museum educator at the Spertus Museum in Chicago and the Nantucket Historical Association's Whaling Museum. Shana holds an MA in Public Humanities from Brown University.

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**“For this is your home,  
my friend, do not be  
driven from it ... we can  
make America what  
America must become.”**

James Baldwin