

## Sitting Down To Stand Up For Democracy

### Overview

Students will evaluate the actions of various citizens during the Civil Rights Movement and how their actions brought about changes for society (then and now) through the examination of poetry, biographies, speeches, photographs, historical events, and civil rights philosophies.

### Grade

8

### North Carolina Essential Standards for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

- 8.H.1: Apply historical thinking to understand the creation and development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.H.2.1: Explain the impact of economic, political, social, and military conflicts (e.g. war, slavery, states' rights and citizenship and immigration policies) on the development of North Carolina and the United States
- 8.H.2.2: Summarize how leadership and citizen actions influenced the outcome of key conflicts in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.H.3.3: Explain how individuals and groups have influenced economic, political and social change in North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.C&G.1.4: Analyze access to democratic rights and freedoms among various groups in North Carolina and the United States
- 8.C&G.2.1: Evaluate the effectiveness of various approaches used to effect change in North Carolina and the United States
- 8.C&G.2.2: Analyze issues pursued through active citizen campaigns for change
- 8.C&G.2.3: Explain the impact of human and civil rights issues throughout North Carolina and United States history
- 8.C.1.3: Summarize the contributions of particular groups to the development of North Carolina and the United States

### Essential Questions

- In what ways were African Americans deprived of equality during the Jim Crow Era?
- In what ways did citizens and engaged community members work to bring about change during the Civil Rights Movement?
- Evaluate the effectiveness and/or ineffectiveness of legislation in regards to equal rights.
- How are we affected today by the actions of past citizens and community members?

### Materials

- "Sitting Down to Stand Up for Democracy," available in the Database of K-12 Resources (in PDF format)
  - To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click "View" in the top menu bar of the file, and select "Full Screen Mode"
  - To request an editable PPT version of this presentation, send a request to [CarolinaK12@unc.edu](mailto:CarolinaK12@unc.edu)
- Daybreak in Alabama, poem attached
- "A Forgotten Contribution," article and questions attached

- (Optional) Recording of Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, available at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm>
- (Optional) “Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks”; movie available for free at [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)
- Letter from CORE to President of the United States, attached
- Excerpts of Kennedy’s 1963 Civil Rights Speech, attached
- Recording of Kennedy’s 1963 Civil Rights Speech, available at: <http://www.millercenter.virginia.edu/index.php/scripps/digitalarchive/speechDetail/27>
- “I Stood Up for Democracy,” assignment attached (Internet or library access will be needed for project completion)

### Duration

2 class periods

### Preparation

Students should have a basic understanding of the Jim Crow Era.

### Procedure

#### Day One

#### Daybreak in Alabama

1. As a warm up, hand out a copy of **Langston Hughes's** poem "Daybreak in Alabama," attached and project [slide 2](#) of the accompanying Power Point. Instruct students to read the poem silently, and when finished brainstorm the images, thoughts, emotions, sounds, smells, etc. that come to mind. As an alternative, allow students to create a piece of art that represents their visualization of this poem (abstract or realistic). When students are finished, read the poem out loud and discuss:
  - What comes to mind when you read/hear this poem?
  - What images do you visualize?
  - What line and/or image strikes you the most? Why?
  - What message do you think Hughes is trying to convey?
  - Langston Hughes wrote this poem in 1959. Based on our study of the **Jim Crow Era**, would everyone in Alabama have liked his message? Explain.
2. Point out to students that Langston Hughes wrote this poem during a time when Jim Crow laws and segregation were in full effect. Thus, many people would have been angered by the concept of unity among the races. In review, have students brainstorm a list of the ways African Americans rights were deprived legally and socially during the Jim Crow Era. Chart responses on the board.

#### Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” Speech

3. Next, project [slide 3](#) of the accompanying PPT, which contains an excerpt from Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech. If possible, play a recording of the text as well. (A complete text and recording of “I Have a Dream” is available at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm>.) Tell students that while they may have heard certain excerpts of this speech many times before, this time you’d like them to listen for King’s acknowledgement of the depravities they just compiled in their class list. Afterwards, discuss:
  - What was the purpose of the March on Washington in 1963, when King delivered this speech?
  - Why did MLK say that African American’s are still “not free?”
  - What Jim Crow laws does King refer to? What other general inequalities does he highlight?
  - When king says “we’ve come here today to dramatize a shameful condition,” what condition is he referring to?
  - Describe MLK’s symbolism in the third paragraph of this excerpt. Why does he feel the check has been marked “insufficient funds?”

4. Project slide 4, which includes an excerpt from the latter part of “I Have a Dream.” Again, play this section of the speech if possible and discuss:
- What is MLK’s message in this excerpt?
  - How does this excerpt compare to Langston Hughes’s poem? Explain.
  - How does hearing this excerpt make you feel? Why?
  - Between the two excerpts we just examined, which were you most familiar with? Which do you most often hear played on TV? Why do you think this is?
  - When most people hear this excerpt played, do you think they really listen to the message, considering the reality of the Jim Crow Era, as you all just did? Explain.
  - Have Hughes’ and King’s dreams been reached today? Why or why not?
  - Can you identify people throughout history who have taken actions to try and make progress towards King’s dream of equality, justice, unity, etc.? (List student responses on the board.)

### **Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott**

5. Explain to students that they will be examining various individuals and events that challenged the inequalities during the Jim Crow Era. Project slide 5, which contains an image of Rosa Parks’ arrest. Ask students:
- What is happening in this picture?
  - Why was Rosa Parks arrested in Montgomery Alabama in 1955 (8 years before MLK’s speech)?
  - What happened after this picture was taken?
  - What is a boycott? Do you think a boycott is an effective way to bring about change? Why or why not?
  - What characteristics does it take in a person to organize/participate in a boycott? What does it take for a boycott to work?
  - What type of opposition did boycotters face?
  - Describe what it took for the Montgomery Bus Boycott to bring about change in transportation segregation. How do you think the African American community felt when the laws/expectations changed?
  - How might our society be different if the organizers and participants of the bus boycott would not have been such active, involved citizens who persevered those 382 days?
6. Share the information on slide 6 and make sure to point out facts that students may not be aware of:
- It is sometimes misconstrued that Parks wasn’t making a political statement at all...that this was just a spur of the moment decision that she stuck with because she was tired. On the contrary, Parks was active in the **NAACP**, and had recently participated in civil rights activism trainings at the **Highlander Institute** in TN. Likewise, several Montgomery leaders had been planning such a movement for sometime, including **E.D. Nixon** and **Jo Ann Robinson**. As soon as Parks was arrested, Jo Ann Robinson began spreading the word of a one day boycott, and the **Montgomery Improvement Association** was formed to organize and prolong the boycott, with a young preacher by the name of Martin Luther King, Jr. elected as its president. Compiled mainly of ministers, plans to spread the word of boycotting the buses through African American congregations were made, as well as logistical plans of organizing carpools for African Americans to keep the boycott going.
7. Project slide 7 the following quote from Rosa Parks and discuss:
- What does Parks mean when she says, “...the only tired I was, was tired of giving in?”
  - How would you characterize Rosa Parks? Why do you think such misconceptions surround her and the boycott?
  - Why do you think figures such as Rosa Parks and Dr. King are taught about when we study civil rights, but not necessarily other civil rights activists?

8. Ask students if they can identify anyone who refused to give up their seat before Rosa Parks. Project slide 8 and discuss:
- Another regarding Rosa Parks and the bus boycott. One is that she was the first person to ever make such a move. In fact, there had been several African American's challenging segregation in transportation throughout the Jim Crow South before Parks. In 1892, **Homer Plessy** was arrested for refusing to leave the "white car" of a train. In 1943 Durham, NC 16 year old **Doris Reddick** was jailed for refusing to give up her seat to a white man. In 1946, the Supreme Court outlawed segregation on interstate buses. The **Congress for Racial Equality (CORE)** set out on a "**Journey or Reconciliation**" to test whether the laws were being obeyed. Blacks and whites rode on buses through the South and endured harassment without retaliating. In 1944, famous athlete **Jackie Robinson** was arrested in Fort Hood, TX for refusing to move to the back of a bus. There are many stories where people were sitting down to stand up for their rights, including Montgomery's 15 year old **Claudette Colvin**, who was arrested 9 months before Parks for the same offense.
  - Discuss with students that this is not to take away from what Rosa Parks did. This is only to enrich the conversation, showing that there were many people contributing to the movement.
- **Optional:** End class by allowing students to view excerpts from "Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks." The movie and curriculum is available for free at <http://www.tolerance.org/kit/mighty-times-legacy-rosa-parks>.
9. For homework or as an end-of-class assignment if you are unable to show excerpts from "Mighty Times," have students read the attached "A Forgotten Contribution" and answer the corresponding questions. Discuss the article and questions as a class once students are finished or at the start of class the following day if completed for homework.

## Day 2

### Sit-Ins

10. Project the picture on slide 9 of a sit-in at the **Jackson, MS Woolworth sit-in**. Ask students to discuss:
- What do you see in this picture? What do you interpret is happening?
  - What emotions do you see represented in this picture?
  - What do you think this person is thinking and/or feeling? (Point to various people in the image.)
  - What are the people sitting at the lunch counter risking?
  - If you were one of the people sitting at the lunch counter, would you respond differently? Explain.
  - Why do you think those sitting at the counter are not responding violently?
11. Explain to students that as a means of protesting segregated lunch counters and stores, African Americans and white allies began to organize "sit-ins," a form of peaceful protest in which participants would take a seat meant for "whites only" and wait for service.
12. Share the introductory information on slide 10 regarding the **Greensboro Sit-Ins**, then hand out the attached reading regarding the 1960 Greensboro, NC sit-ins. Students may read individually, or in partners, and discuss/answer the questions following. Once all students have finished, discuss thoughts as a class. (See the Carolina K-12's "The Greensboro Sit-Ins: A Counter Revolution in North Carolina" for a detailed exploration of this topic.)
13. Next, project slide 11 and discuss the **Royal Ice Cream sit-in**, which again illustrates that while the Greensboro Sit-Ins may have been more widely publicized, other integration attempts had been taken beforehand.

- **Teacher note:** A related story to share with students is that of the “Friendship Nine,” who were arrested for their sit-in in Rock Hill, SC (only 30 min. from Charlotte, NC) on Jan. 31, 1961. This 1961 movement also began the “Jail, No Bail” philosophy, which meant civil rights activists who were arrested refused to pay or accept bail. While this meant they would remain behind bars, it also meant the cities enforcing racist laws would not profit from bail money. An excellent 25 minute documentary on the Rock Hill, SC events is available at <http://video.sctv.org/video/1836521874/>. (Teachers with limited time can also play the brief 3 minute movie trailer.)

### Non-Violence Philosophy

14. Next, focus students on the non-violence philosophy many civil rights activists used when standing up for their rights by projecting slide 12 which contains an excerpt from a statement from the Southern Negro Leaders Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration. Discuss:
- What are the integration leaders asking of African Americans?
  - Do you agree or disagree that “non-violent resistance transforms weakness into strength and breeds courage in the face of danger?”
  - If participants in lunch counter sit-ins had defended themselves with violence, what might the result have been?
  - How do you imagine the media would have portrayed such violence?
  - What would be most difficult about adopting the philosophy of non-violence? What does it say about civil rights protestors who were able to do this?

### Freedom Rides

11. Next, project slide 13 and ask students:
- What do you see here?
  - What do you imagine has happened in this picture? What is the story here?
12. Project slide 14 and handout the attached CORE letter to President Kennedy. Instruct students to take a few moments to read the letter as an introduction to the 1961 Freedom Ride movement. After students have read, discuss as a class:
- According to James Farmer, what are the plans and purposes of the Freedom Ride?
  - Why do you think they are sending an interracial, mixed gender and mixed heritage (2/3 of the group are noted as being southern) group?
  - Why do you think Farmer wrote this letter to the President?
  - Why has he specifically explained that the group is trained in non-violence techniques?
  - What do you think Farmer means when he says that the rides are an “appeal to the best in all Americans?”
  - In what ways does Farmer note that Jim Crow degrades democracy? Why does he classify Jim Crow as a danger to our country?
  - Why do you think he ends with a quote by General Lee?
13. Explain to students that in 1961, this group of “Freedom Riders” did exactly as the letter explained:
- The first Freedom Ride, led by CORE director James Farmer, left Washington, D.C. on May 4, 1961. The original interracial group of 7 Blacks and 6 Whites traveled south on two buses – one Greyhound and one Trailways. Three journalists also accompanied the group.
  - Their plan was to ride through Virginia, North & South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, ending with a rally in New Orleans, Louisiana on May 17 - the seventh anniversary of the *Brown* decision.
  - The Freedom Riders' tactics for their journey were to have at least one interracial pair sitting in adjoining seats and at least one black Rider sitting up front (in the seats usually reserved for white customers only), while the rest would sit scattered throughout the rest of the bus. One rider would

abide by the South's segregation rules in order to avoid arrest and to contact CORE and arrange bail for those who were arrested.

- The riders were all trained and committed to non-violent, direct action. Even if attacked, they would not respond with violence in self-defense.
- The Freedom Ride met little resistance in the upper south unlike the first "Journey of Reconciliation."
- However, on May 14, 1961, Mother's Day, the Freedom Riders divided into 2 groups (one on a Trailways bus, the other on a Greyhound bus) as they departed Atlanta, GA for Alabama. The buses left an hour apart from each other.
- An angry mob of approximately 200 gathered at the Greyhound bus terminal to protest the first bus as it arrived in Anniston. The violent protesters smashed windows, slashed tires and threatened the Riders before local police escorted the bus out of town. The bus, followed by a long line of cars and trucks was forced to pull over as the tires went flat.
- The mob resumed its attack, throwing a firebomb through a broken window on the bus. The Riders escape but many suffered smoke inhalation and had to be transported to a hospital.
- Even with the understanding that more violence against them would occur, the freedom rides continued their journey.
- After violence attacks in Birmingham, with no police protection in sight, federal officials called for the riders to fly out of the area to safety, but they refused and carried on the rides, even though they continually were met with violence.
- The stories of the Freedom Rides made headline news around the world. President Kennedy eventually had to intervene to stop the violence against the riders. By the end of this "Freedom Summer," 328 riders had been arrested throughout Mississippi. Finally, the US Attorney General asked the Interstate Commerce Commission to issue regulations against segregated terminals. The Commission complied, and Southern states were forced to uphold the Supreme Court ruling.

➤ **Teacher note:** For a detailed lesson and PPT on this subject, see the Carolina K-12's "The Freedom Rides of 1961," available in the Database of Civic Resources or by sending a request to [CarolinaK12@unc.edu](mailto:CarolinaK12@unc.edu)

14. Ask students:

- Why do you think the Freedom Riders continued on, even after they experienced such adversity?
- How would you describe the volunteers who participated in the Freedom Rides?
- Do you think you would have been brave enough to participate? Why or why not? Would you be strong enough to remain nonviolent? Explain. (Discuss the difficulty of historical perspective with students. It might be easy to think that we would have joined them, because many of us have never experienced the level of threat and danger that they did. When faced with the realities of the time however, it would take quite a lot of courage and conviction to make this choice.)
- Are you surprised of all of the examples we have seen where Southern states were not implementing federal mandates and laws? What did it take to get individual states to finally comply?
- Why do you think Southerners were so opposed to integration?

### Malcolm X

11. Next, project [slide 15](#) and ask students if any of them can identify the man pictured. Explain that the image is of Malcolm X, national speaker for the Nation of Islam, an organization with a declared aim of resurrecting the spiritual, mental, social, and economic conditions of the black men and women of America and the rest of the world. As students what they already know about Malcolm X then read the quote from the slide out loud. Discuss:

- Based on our discussion and these quotes, how would you compare and contrast Malcolm X's beliefs to those of Dr. King and the nonviolent philosophy?
- How do you think Malcolm X would have responded to the violence bestowed upon protestors in sit-ins and freedom rides?

- What does Malcolm X mean when he says “A man who believes in freedom will do anything under the sun to acquire or preserve his freedom?”
- What is your opinion of Malcolm X’s view of the “brotherhood of man?”
- Many people stereotype Malcolm X and say that he perpetuated violence. Based on this quote, is he condoning unprecedented violence?
- Why do you think some people may have been intimidated by Malcolm X, who was assassinated in 1965? Likewise, why do you think some people were intimidated by Martin Luther King, Jr., who was assassinated in 1968?

### **Kennedy’s 1963 Civil Rights Speech**

12. As a review of many of the issues discussed, play a recording of Kennedy’s 1963 Civil Rights Speech, available at

<http://www.millercenter.virginia.edu/index.php/scripps/digitalarchive/speechDetail/27>. Likewise, handout the attached copy of the speech for students to read as they listen to Kennedy’s words. Instruct students to highlight parts of the speech that strike them as they listen to Kennedy’s words. After the speech, discuss:

- How did you feel as you read/heard President Kennedy’s words?
- What do you think is the most moving line(s) of his speech? Which part do you most agree with?
- What inequalities does Kennedy point out in his speech?
- Kennedy points out that at the time of this speech, America was “committed to a worldwide struggle to promote and protect the rights of all who wish to be free.” What struggle is he referring to? How was this ironic worldwide struggle related to what was happening on American soil?
- How do you think citizens in 1963 responded to these ideas? (Consider all citizens in all regions of the US.)
- In paragraph 11, Kennedy says “Now the time has come for the nation to fulfill its promise.” What do you think he means?
- Even though learning about such history can be very shocking and angering, why is it important to remain open-minded and not let ourselves be resentful? Why is hate not an effective way to fight hate?

### **Culminating Activities**

- Watch “Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks,” movie and curriculum available for free at <http://www.tolerance.org>
- Watch “The Children’s March,” available for free at <http://www.tolerance.org>
- Watch “February One,” available for purchase at <http://www.februaryonedocumentary.com/>
- Complete the attached activity “I Stood Up for Democracy”
- Complete CEC’s project “Living History: Local Voices of the Civil Rights Movement”

### **Resources**

- The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott: <http://www.montgomeryboycott.com>
- Malcolm X: <http://www.cmgww.com/historic/malcolm/>
- Free at Last: A History of the Civil Rights Movement & Those Who Died in the Struggle; available at <http://www.tolerance.org>

**Daybreak in Alabama**  
**by Langston Hughes**

When I get to be a composer  
I'm gonna write me some music about  
Daybreak in Alabama  
And I'm gonna put the purtiest songs in it  
Rising out of the ground like a swamp mist  
And falling out of heaven like soft dew.  
I'm gonna put some tall tall trees in it  
And the scent of pine needles  
And the smell of red clay after rain  
And long red necks  
And poppy colored faces  
And big brown arms  
And the field daisy eyes  
Of black and white black white black people  
And I'm gonna put white hands  
And black hands and brown and yellow hands  
And red clay earth hands in it  
Touching everybody with kind fingers  
And touching each other natural as dew  
In that dawn of music when I  
Get to be a composer  
And write about daybreak  
In Alabama.



## A Forgotten Contribution

March 1, 2009

### **Before Rosa Parks, 15-year-old Claudette Colvin refused to give up her seat on the bus.**

Rosa Parks's name is known round the world, but what about Claudette Colvin? On March 2, 1955, nine months before Parks famously refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Ala., a skinny, 15-year-old schoolgirl was yanked by both wrists and dragged off a very similar bus.

A new book by Phillip Hoose, "Claudette Colvin, Twice Toward Justice," describes how the girl stood her ground, yelling, "It's my constitutional right" as the cops pulled her off the bus, threw her into the back of a cop car, and handcuffed her through the window. In Hoose's telling, a teacher named Geraldine Nesbitt had emboldened her students, teaching them about the 14th Amendment. "It just so happens they picked me at the wrong time—it was Negro History Month, and I was filled up like a computer," Colvin tells NEWSWEEK, "I felt like Sojourner Truth was pushing down on one shoulder and Harriet Tubman was pushing down on the other—saying, 'Sit down girl!' I was glued to my seat."

Today, Colvin is 69 years old and is a retired nursing-home nurse living in New York City—her bold actions largely forgotten and long ago eclipsed by Parks. "I just dropped out of sight," she says of her move to New York in 1958. "The people in Montgomery, they didn't try to find me. I didn't look for them and they didn't look for me." In the years that followed her heroism, Colvin felt completely isolated from the Alabama activists who had once been so interested in her case.

But at the time, as Hoose describes, Colvin's dramatic arrest did not go unnoticed; energized by the prospect of using her case to challenge the segregation laws in court, black leaders hired an ambitious young lawyer to defend her and raised funds from the community for her trial. A 26-year-old Martin Luther King Jr. accompanied black leaders to the police commissioner to plead her case. Colvin was convicted nonetheless, and the news tore across Montgomery. There was talk of a bus boycott—African-Americans made up three fourths of the passengers and the Women's Political Council, headed by Jo Anne Robinson (a professor at the historically black Alabama State College) had long known a boycott would be their most powerful weapon.

But leaders were unsure about Colvin. Hoose describes their thoughts at the time: "'Some felt she was too young to be the trigger that precipitated the movement,' wrote Robinson. E. D. Nixon, an influential black leader heavily involved with the case, said, 'I had to be sure that I had somebody I could win with!'"

Despite Colvin's lack of fame, Hoose believes she was an instrumental predecessor to Parks's actions nine months later. Before Colvin, Hoose tells NEWSWEEK, civil-rights leaders in Montgomery had been taking measured steps. Colvin "threw the stone in the water and forced them to jump in and think about what they had to do," he explains. Colvin's attorney, Fred Gray, a civil-rights activist who still practices law in Alabama, agrees: "Claudette gave all of us moral courage. If she had not done what she did, I am not sure that we would have been able to mount the support for Mrs. Parks."

When Parks was arrested on Dec. 1, 1955, Montgomery was ready. Within days, Robinson and the Women's Political Council had organized a wildly successful and crippling bus boycott, and snapped the whole country to attention. Unlike Colvin, Parks was a refined and grandmotherly seamstress completely above reproach—she was the face that leaders had been searching for.

Colvin remained anonymous. She knew Parks, often spending the night at her house after weekly NAACP youth meetings, which she had gotten involved with after her arrest. Some time during the summer of 1955, Colvin

became pregnant by an older, married man. Nixon would later say the pregnancy was part of the reason activists chose not to use Colvin as the face of their boycott. Still, in May 1956, Colvin testified with three other women in a successful class-action suit that ultimately desegregated the Montgomery buses.

Hoose hopes his book will introduce Colvin's contributions to a larger audience. "I want it to be impossible to tell the story of the civil-rights movement without Claudette" he says. "Rosa Parks has to scoot over a little bit." The civil-rights movement was made up of a million tiny acts by anonymous individuals, says Richard Willing, a former USA Today reporter who wrote a story about Colvin in 1995. Rosa Parks makes a "great book mark," he says, pointing out that even she lived in obscurity for many years working in a congressman's office in Detroit. Historian David Garrow, a biographer of Dr. King, adds that oversimplifying the story to only include Parks sends "the implicit message that everything in history happens only because of unusually great individuals." The reality is usually more complex than that, he says.

While she's glad Hoose has told her whole story, Colvin says she's satisfied with a bigger reward. "Being dragged off that bus was worth it just to see Barack Obama become president, because so many others gave their lives and didn't get to see it, and I thank God for letting me see it."

*Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2009/03/01/a-forgotten-contribution.html> (Source Link does not work)*

**Answer:**

1. Based on what you read, how would you describe Claudette Colvin?
2. What influenced Colvin to refuse to give up her seat on the bus?
3. In what ways was Colvin instrumental in the Civil Rights Movement?
4. What does Richard Willing mean when he says that "the civil-rights movement was made up of a million tiny acts by anonymous individuals?" Why is it important to recognize these people, in addition to recognizing the contributions of more well known activists such as Rosa Parks?

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

### 1960 Sit-Ins

Despite hard-fought gains in the fight for racial equality, segregation remained firmly entrenched in 1960's America. Blacks in the South were still treated as second-class citizens and their calls for justice remained largely unheard by the nation. There had been some advances in the arena of civil rights with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* U. S. Supreme Court decision, the Montgomery bus boycott from 1955 to 1956, and the federally enforced desegregation of Little Rock's Central High School in 1957, but after that strong defiance by ardent segregationists pushed the Movement into retreat.

Then, on February 1st, 1960, Greensboro NC, four students from North Carolina A&T University walked into a Woolworth store. They made several purchases, then sat down at the "whites-only" lunch counter and asked to be served.

"We don't serve colored here," was the response from the waitress, but David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair, and Joseph McNeil kept their seats until the store closed that evening.

The following day, they returned with 19 other black students. By the end of the week, 400 students, white and black, were taking shifts sitting at the counter. This ignited a wave of student sit-ins across the South. Over the next weeks, sit-ins were taking place in seven North Carolina cities. Young people in more than 100 Southern cities challenged segregation in restaurants, parks, pools, theaters, libraries, etc., with over 3,600 of them being arrested for the simple act of sitting. Even in Northern cities, where segregation had long ago been fought and won, picket-line sprung up at Woolworth and Kress stores.

Throughout the sit-ins, participants were often beaten, sprayed with food, burned with cigarettes, and tormented in unimaginable ways. However, never did they respond with violence. Like Martin Luther King Jr., the sit-in movement encompassed Gandhi's philosophy of passivism. Students sat peacefully while being screamed at and spat upon.

Finally, on July 26, 1960, the manager of the Greensboro Woolworth agreed to integrate the lunch counter.

#### Think about it...

1. Why was it such a revolutionary action for a black person to sit down at a "whites-only" lunch counter in 1960 North Carolina?
2. How do you imagine the A&T students felt when taking that seat for the first time?
3. Evaluate the use of "nonviolence" in the sit-in movements. Do you agree or disagree with this philosophy? Explain.
4. Why do you think many civil rights activists believed so passionately in nonviolence?
5. How would you characterize David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair, and Joseph McNeil?

**Letter from CORE to President of the United States, April 26, 1961**

My dear Mr. President:

We expect you will be interested in our Freedom Ride, 1961. It is designed to forward the completion of integrated bus service and accommodations in the Deep South.

About fifteen CORE members will travel as inter-state passengers on Greyhound and Trailways routes. We leave Washington early in May and, traveling through Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, plan to arrive in New Orleans on Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

The group is interracial. Two-thirds are Southerners. Three are women. We propose to challenge, en route, every form of segregation met by the bus passenger. We are experienced in, and dedicate to, the Gandhian principles of non-violence.

Our plans are entirely open. Further, information is available to all.

Freedom Ride is an appeal to the best in all Americans. We travel peaceable to persuade them that Jim Crow betrays democracy. It degrades democracy at home. It degrades democracy abroad. We feel that there is no way to overstate the danger that denial of democratic and constitutional rights brings to our beloved country.

And so we feel it our duty to affirm our principles by asserting our rights. With the survival of democracy at state, there is an imperative, immediate need for acts of self-determination. "Abandon your animosities and make your sons Americans" said Robert E. Lee. Freedom Ride would make that, "ALL your sons... NOW."

Sincerely yours,

James Farmer,  
National Director

## I Stood Up for Democracy

1. Choose one of the Civil Rights activists listed below. If you find another person not on the list you would like to focus on, you must clear it with your teacher first.
2. Research this person, and note the ways he/she stood up for democracy and equal rights. Determine why it is important that this person be remembered.
3. Create one of the following to teach others about this person, his/her life and legacy:
  - a song or rap
  - a poster with text and visual aids
  - a speech
  - a skit
  - a painting, drawing, collage, or other artistic expression
  - a monologue
  - a PowerPoint presentation
  - a scrapbook or brochure
4. You will present your work to class on \_\_\_\_\_.

### Choices:

Ralph Abernathy	Reverend George Lee	Harry T. Moore
Marcus Garvey	Lamar Smith	James Meredith
Martin Luther King, Jr.	James Chaney	Joseph McNeil
Coretta Scott King	John Earl Reese	David Richmond
Rosa Parks	Willie Edwards Jr.	Jibreel Khazan
Medgar Evers	Mack Charles Parker	Franklin McCain
Harry T. Moore	Herbert Lee	Golden Frinks
John Lewis	Louis Allen	Robert Williams
Fannie Lou Hammer	Cpl. Roman Ducksworth, Jr.	Anna Julia Haywood Cooper
Julian Bond	Paul Guihard	John Hope Franklin
Fred Shuttlesworth	Virgil Lamar Ware	Kelly M. Alexander
Aaron Henry	Reverend Bruch Klunder	Annie Wealthy Holland
Bob Moses	Andrew Goodman	
Malcolm X	Michael Schwerner	
The Little Rock 9	Charles Cheney	
Jimmie Lee Jackson	Daisy Bates	
E.D. Nixon	Jonathan Daniels	
Claudette Colvin	William Lewis Moore	
Jo Ann Robinson	Ella Jo Baker	
Jackie Robinson	Thurgood Marshall	
Viola Gregg Liuzzo	Tuskegee Airmen	
Addie Mae Collins	Angela Davis	
Denise McNair	Emma Goldman	
Carole Robertson	Cynthia Wesley	
Emmett Teel	Stokley Carmichael	