INTRODUCTION

This study guide is designed for teachers as a companion to the Pepsi Edition of the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*. Divided into eight segments, the Pepsi Edition is two hours long, considerably shorter than the original version of *Eyes on the Prize.* The teacher, using this guide with the Pepsi Edition, can present to students a balanced rendering of the major events of the civil rights movement between the landmark years 1954 and 1965.

The first section of the study guide is devoted to what came before the advent of the modern civil rights movement, from the landing of the first slaves in Louisiana to the entrenchment of Jim Crow in the South. The subsequent sections of the guide, with three case studies, are devoted to the eight segments of the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*. Each of the eight sections includes:

Synopsis
Chronology
Glossary
Quotes
Questions

Two copies of Glossary, Quotes, and Questions appear in each section. One copy, with the list of questions, is to be copied and handed out to the students. The second copy, with the list of questions and (suggested) answers, is for the teachers. The Quotes and Questions often touch on the same points, and it is best to select Quotes for one segment of the documentary and Questions for another, etc.

The events described in *Eyes on the Prize* are recent history. To be sure, we live in the aftermath of a political revolution that has no equal. But if Jim Crow is dead, his legacy lingers. I was reminded of this in February 1994. Byron de la Beckwith was convicted (after two mistrials) of the 1963 slaying of Medgar Evers, the NAACP Field Secretary in Mississippi. I attended Beckwith's trial at the Hines County courthouse in Jackson, Mississippi. After the “guilty” verdict was read (followed by a woman's voice, “Thank God Almighty! We got justice at last!”), I drove to Ruleville, Mississippi, and knocked on the door of Roy Bryant. He was one of the two self-acknowledged killers of Emmett Till, a black youth from Chicago who was said to have “talked fresh” and whistled at Bryant's wife in the Mississippi Delta of 1955. Till paid for this with his life. “It's been forty damn years. You got to let that stuff go,” Bryant said, after inadvertently letting me into his house. “A lot of people made a bunch of damn money out of it. I ain't never made a damn nickel.” That, apparently, was his one regret about

killing Emmett Till.

At one point in the interview, Bryant tried to stand up, but could not. He was suffering from back trouble, was legally blind, but worst of all the world had changed and Bryant got caught in the transition. What he and his half-brother J. W. Milam did to Emmett Till, given the allegations, was almost expected of a white man in the Delta. But forty years later, in the twilight of his life, Bryant was afraid that the law would catch up to him. “Look what they're doing to Beckwith down there now,” he said. “They've already done it,” I reminded him. “Already done it,” he repeated, “and now they want to get me! So hell with 'em. I'm not trying to be ugly, but I just won't talk about it.” Forty years later, the killer was still afraid of a fourteen year old boy who crossed a line he did not know existed.

We live in a period of racial change and fear, a period of healing and recrimination, a period between what was and what will be. Prejudice is deeply rooted. Stereotypes of “the other” are shared by all. Each people lives in separate, insular worlds. Many (indeed, it seems an increasing number) prefer it that way. One group has little idea about how the other lives, thinks, or feels. The relationship is wrapped in myth, fear, hurt feelings, and no feelings.

This study guide is an effort to tell the story of the civil rights movement in a straight forward manner, letting the facts speak for themselves.

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I. SLAVERY, CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION, AND JIM CROW

HISTORY OF THE RACE QUESTION IN LOUISIANA

This section of the study guide is devoted to the history of the race question in Louisiana. The section begins with the arrival of the first slaves in the Louisiana territory (under French control) in 1720, discusses the institution of slavery in Louisiana, the outbreak of the Civil War, the use of black troops in the Federal armies, the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, and the Confederate response to it.

Next is a brief history of Reconstruction in Louisiana followed by an equally brief history of the so-called Redemption. This was the period after Reconstruction when the indigenous white leadership regained control of the state, maintaining its control until (and beyond) the Supreme Court's landmark decision in Brown v. the Board of Education in 1954.

SLAVERY

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters.”

-- Ephesians 6:5

In two ships, the Aurorre and the St. Louis, both chartered by the French-owned Company of the West, the first slaves arrived at present-day Algiers in 1720, opposite what was then referred to as “the post of New Orleans.” The slaves were put to work on the first extensive slave plantation in Louisiana “to test,” as one contemporary historian noted, “the advantages which were to be derived from this species of labor.”

The Africans had been seized in the Kingdom of Whydah along the Slave Coast, in present-day Benin. They had been captured in slave raids probably by slave raiders from Whydah before being chained and transported across the Atlantic Ocean in the infamous “middle passage” to the New World. The captains of the two slave ships had been directed “to trade only for well-made and healthy Negroes...not more than thirty nor less than eight years of age.” Captain Herpin of

the Aurorre was instructed “to trade for a few who know how to cultivate rice.”

In fact, the Africans brought to Louisiana (mainly) provided the labor for the cotton and sugar plantations that flourished in the fertile lands along the Mississippi River. One hundred and thirty years after the arrival of the first slaves in Louisiana, that is, on the eve of the Civil War, the stretch of plantations along the Mississippi River between Vicksburg, Mississippi, and New Orleans, the South's largest port and the nation's largest slave trading center, comprised one of the wealthiest, if not the wealthiest, part of the country.

While some view the ante-bellum past as a time of “a colorful civilization,” the plantation homes that remain in the river parishes are a silent testament to a by-gone epoch based upon the principle of human bondage and exploitation. It is argued by apologists that because slaves were property and worth a considerable sum, they were well treated by their masters who, after all, had a financial interest. Yet one need only look at how people treat their property and their family members today to be reminded that human nature is voluble and that good and evil go hand in hand. Still, kindly and even warm relations existed between individual masters and certain slaves, invariably among those who worked in the Big House and who, not infrequently, were related to the white family as a result of miscegenation (sexual union between white and black). Kindly and war relations, however, should not be taken as the rule. The worst fear of a slave in Virginia, for example, was to be sold “down South” to a sugar plantation in Louisiana.

Exceptions aside, the life of a slave in ante-bellum Louisiana was a hard, brutal existence in which the slave was subject to the whims of the slave owner. Religion served to reinforce the belief that the black man was inferior to his “massa” and that slavery was God's will.

TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE

One of the most damning accounts of slavery in Louisiana was written by black man who experienced it for twelve years. Solomon Northup, a free man of color, educated, married, working, and living in Saratoga, New York, was kidnaped by slave traders and sent to New Orleans under a false name (Pratt) in 1841.

His account is striking for its detail but also for the simple fact that no other slave left behind a detailed account of ante-bellum Louisiana. Relatively few slaves

managed to win their freedom by manumission (the act of the master freeing a slave). Flight to the North was virtually impossible. For one, slaves needed a document called “a pass” in order to travel beyond the boundaries of the plantation; “patrols” of white men in every parish controlled the movement of slaves. Secondly, slaves were denied the hint of an education, making it very difficult to blend in with the population of free people of color and thus (for example) embark on a boat bound for the north. Thirdly, slaves were not taught to swim precisely so they would not be able to cross bayous and rivers in a bid for freedom; nonetheless, slaves, called “maroons,” fled the plantations and lived in the swamps

Describing Solomon's Northup's capture and liberation, Frederick Douglass, himself a former slave who had escaped to freedom, wrote,

> “Think of it: for thirty years a man, with all a man's hopes, fears and aspirations, with a wife and children to call him by the endearing names of husband father, with a home, humble it may be, but still a home...then for twelve years a thing, a chattel personal, classed with mules and horses...Oh! It is horrible. It chills the blood to think that such are.”

Between 1841 and 1853, Northup labored as a slave under various owners, including one who was particularly kind (Ford) and another (Tibeats) who was particularly cruel, in central Louisiana near Cheneyville, not far from the setting of Harriet Beecher Stowe's book, Uncle Tom's Cabin. Northup managed to have a letter smuggled to New York, and friends (white men) came to Louisiana and procured his release. The sale of a free person of color was a serious crime, but in this case the kidnappers of Solomon Northup, although brought to trial, were never sentenced. Interest in the case petered out.

When he returned to New York, Northup wrote his book, Twelve Years a Slave. In it, he described the slave auction in New Orleans and the separation of a mother,

Eliza, from her son, Randall, after her daughter, Emily, had already been taken by another purchaser:

> “[Eliza] wanted to be with her children, she said, the little time she had to live. All the frowns and threats of Freeman (the slave trader) could not

> wholly silence the afflicted mother. She kept on begging and beseeching them, most piteously, not to separate the three. Over and over again she told them how she loved her boy. A great many times she repeated her former promises, how very faithful and obedient she would be; how hard she would labor day and night, to the last moment of her life, if he would only buy them all together. But it was of no avail; the man could not afford it. The bargain was agreed upon, and Randall must go alone. Then Eliza ran to him; embraced him passionately; kissed him again and again; told him to remember her, all the while her tears falling in the boy's face like rain...Eliza never after saw or heard of Emily or Randall. Day nor night, however, were they ever absent from her memory. In the cotton field, in the cabin, always and everywhere, she was talking of them, often to them, as if they were actually present. Only when absorbed in that illusion, or asleep, did she ever have a moment's comfort afterwards."

Solomon Northup, Twelve Years a Slave. LSU Press. 1968.

INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL

Like Solomon Northup, Harriet Jacobs escaped slavery and wrote about it. Her account offers the unique perspective of a girl growing up in the iniquitous system where absolute power included the power of white men over black women. The white community looked the other way at this abuse, and the black community grieved silently.

Until she was twelve years old, Harriet Jacobs had a "kind mistress." "I loved her," Jacobs wrote, "for she had been almost a mother to me." In a very rare occurrence, the mistress taught Jacobs how to read and write. When her mistress died, Jacobs hoped to be freed, but (bitterly) she was bequeathed to the woman's sister:

> "My mistress had taught me the precepts of God's Word: 'Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself. Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.' But I was her slave, and I suppose she did not recognize me as her neighbor."

"I would give much to blot out from my memory that one great wrong [not being freed]," Jacobs wrote. "While I was with her, she taught me to read and spell; and

for this privilege, which so rarely falls to the lot of a slave, I bless her memory."

In her new household, Jacobs found herself in the employ of Dr. Flint. He pursued her, attempting to force himself on her at every opportunity. In the chapter titled "The Trials of Girlhood," Jacobs wrote,

> "Even the little child, who is accustomed to wait on her mistress and her children, will learn, before she is twelve years old, why it is that her mistress hates such and such a one among the slaves [females]...she will become prematurely knowing in evil things. Soon she will learn to tremble when she hears her master's footfall. She will be compelled to realize that she is no longer a child. If God has bestowed beauty upon her, it will prove her greatest curse. That which commands admiration in the white women only hastens the degradation of the female slave."

To avoid Dr. Flint, Jacobs felt compelled to acquiesce in a relationship with another white man for the purpose of protecting herself. When she gave birth to this man's child, Dr. Flint was infuriated. With a pair of shears he cut "every hair close to [my] head, storming and swearing all the time." He then "pitched me down stairs in a fit of passion."

The worst came later. "When they told me my new-born was a girl," Jacobs continued, "my heart was heavier than it had ever been before. Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women."

Jacobs dreaded the likely prospect that her daughter would suffer the same sexual abuse that she had.

Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Oxford University Press. 1988.

SLAVE REVOLTS

Fear of a slave revolt was indelibly etched in the minds of white people in Louisiana and had been since the arrival of the first slaves. It was, as one historian has noted, the "persistent specter" of ante-bellum Louisiana. A few of the attempted rebellions have been recorded, but how many insurrections were

crushed, leaving behind no record, is unknown.

Here is a brief history of slave revolts in Louisiana:

- In 1732, a female slave in New Orleans revealed details of a slave plot to her master; four men and a woman were convicted and executed; the male heads were placed on posts as a warning to other slaves.

- In 1771, two slaves in Carrollton, a town near New Orleans, overpowered their master, Juan Baptiste LeBreton, flogged him, and set his hay loft on fire. The slaves were captured, “dragged behind horses, hanged, then drawn and a quartered and their bloody remains left on posts as a warning.”

- In 1791-'97, a slave insurrection in Santo Domingo, Haiti, inflamed fears of a similar conflagration in Louisiana. The ruling classes and others fled to Louisiana with stories of bloodshed.

- In 1795, a slave plot was uncovered at the Poydras planation in Point Coupee, a rich agricultural region located on the west bank of the Mississippi River above Baton Rouge. The Spanish governor, Carondelet, ordered the execution of as many as and twenty-six slaves. Fifteen were hanged. Four heads were distributed along points of “the king's highway “ to serve as a warning to other slaves. The heads of two other men were placed on pikes in New Orleans at the “plaza de armas,” present-day Jackson Square, while the heads of six others were placed on pikes “at Baton Rouge, Iberville, La Fourche de Chetimachas (Donaldsonville), Cabahanocey, and the First and Second German Coasts.” A boat named Victoria transported the doomed prisoners to these river towns, and the executions were carried out along the way, the last in New Orleans.

- In addition, twenty-two slaves at Pointe Coupee were sentenced to five ten years hard labor in Spain's American presidios or fortresses. Nine were sentenced to five years presidio duty. A white man and a Negro were banished from the province. Two other white men, considered ringleaders of the conspiracy, were sentenced to six years presidio duty. One of them, a German tailor at Pointe Coupee named George Rockemborgh, had apparently written “a memoire on liberty for the Negro slaves.”

- In 1795, seven slaves from Pointe Coupee traveled to Opelousas and Natchitoches in the hopes of inciting other slaves. Orders were issued to shoot all armed slaves on sight.

- In 1796, the refusal of three slaves to work on the repair of a crevasse at the Thomason's planation on the German Coast led to the uncovering of an alleged plan to massacre all whites except women. White families fled to New Orleans. On Easter Sunday, 1796, two hundred white settlers patrolled the plantations in anticipation of the revolt. One of the implicated slaves shot himself in the head rather than submit to capture.

- In 1804, one year after the United States assumed control of Louisiana, rumors of a slave insurrections again circulated in Pointe Coupee (and Natchitoches). Governor Clairborne wrote, “A spirit of Insurrection among the Negroes at Point (sic) Coupee has occasioned considerable alarm in that District...” Troops were dispatched to the region. One year later a Frenchman named LeGrand was arrested for trying to incite “servile insurrection.”

- In October 1805, a slave plot was uncovered in New Orleans. It involved at least thirty slaves who planned to kill all city officials and take over the city. The next year the American government forbade Haitian blacks from entering Louisiana.

THE 1811 SLAVE INSURRECTION

The largest slave revolt in the history of the United States occurred in Louisiana in January 1811, along the old River Road at the present-day site of Norco, a small community located thirty-six miles above New Orleans on the Mississippi River.

The uprising began late on the evening of January 8, 1811, at the plantation of Colonel Manuel Andry. The leader of the revolt was Charles Deslondes, a slave from Santo Domingo, Haiti, and the “property” of the widow Jean-Baptiste Deslondes.

“We began on Wednesday last to have a miniature representation of the horrors of St. Domingo,” said a white observer. This was a reference to the slave revolt in

Haiti in 1791-'97, the only successful slave revolt in the western hemisphere, the bloody outcome of which terrorized white people in nearby Louisiana where many refugees fled.

Charles Desloundes and a handful of slaves, on prearranged signal, attacked Audry and his son with axes, killing the latter but merely wounding Audry. With a few pistols but mostly with hoes, cane knives, and sticks, the insurrectionaries marched down River Road, gathering more recruits (communicating by drum) and burning and sacking plantations while offering the cry, “On to New Orleans!” Their officers wore uniforms and rode horses, and there appears to have been remarkable organization. The aim of the revolt was to liberate New Orleans, the great slave trading capital of the South. A second white man, Jean-Francois Trepagnier, was killed by one of his own “people,” that is, by a slave from his plantation. This belittled the notion of the contented slave. Manuel Audry summoned the local militia and led eighty fully armed men against the slaves in a field near the plantation of Francois Bernard Bernoudi. The rebels stood their ground, Audry admitted, with their “colors displayed and full of arrogance.” Deficient in arms, the rebels were scattered and withdrew into the swamps. General Wade Hampton, commander in chief of U. S. troops in the district, sent a detachment of soldiers and two companies of militia to crush what remained of the insurrection. Dragoons and one light artillery were sent from Baton Rouge.

In the words of historian James H. Dormon, “What followed was hardly a battle at all; it was more in the form of a mass execution, an open season on blacks in the vicinity.” On January 11, 1811, Hampton reported that sixty-six of the rebels had been killed in battle, seventeen were missing, and sixteen were taken captive and being held for trial. In addition, the same report spoke of “beaucoup de cadavres” (many bodies) still being discovered.

The trial of those captured or accused of participation in the revolt was held at Destrehan Plantation (today Destrehan is opened for tourists; on a tour in 1996 neither the 1811 slave insurrection nor the tribunal was mentioned). The tribunal consisted of five local property owners (including Jean-Noel Destrehan). When asked why he had joined the insurrection, one of the rebel leaders, Jupiter (the “property” of Manuel Andry), answered, “To kill the white” (“detruir le Blanc”).

Twenty-one of the accused were sentenced to death. They were shot (not beheaded, the traditional means), the corpses were decapitated and the heads

placed on poles along the German Coast “as a terrible example,” read the order, “to all who would disturb the public tranquility in the future.”

Scarcely a year later, on Christmas Eve 1811, Governor Claiborne wrote to Manuel Andry informing him of a rumor about yet another conspiracy “among the Negroes of German Coast,” and called for the reorganization of a regiment of militia forces “lately under your command.”

The “specter” of a slave revolt in Louisiana lasted until and indeed through the Civil War, a time of epochal change for everyone, not least of all for Southern whites whose worst fears suddenly became a reality: the sight of black men in Federal uniforms returning to the plantation “armed to the teeth.”

“Bottom rail on top now,” said a former slave to his former master.

LINCOLN

In an address at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, on February 22, 1861, President Lincoln spoke of the Declaration of Independence and of “the great principle or idea” that had kept the country together:

> “It was not the mere matter of the separation of the colonies from the mother land; but something in that Declaration giving liberty, not along to the people of this country, but hope to the world for all future time [great applause]. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance [cheers]. This is the sentiment embodied in that Declaration of Independence.”

The slavery issue had been debated for decades and by November 1860 (and the presidential elections) emotions were at a fever pitch. Abolitionists in the North argued for the immediate overthrow (or abolition) of slavery without compensation to slave owners. The abolitionists (the heralded “outsider”) were the cause of all the trouble. The slaves were content. Their station as laborers and servants was dictated by God. The Bible says so. Indeed, slavery was a “civilizing influence” and you people who don't live here can't understand the matter. These were the arguments of the white South, and any white man who argued differently feared for his life (if he had any sense).

In March 1860, one of the senators from Louisiana, Judah B. Benjamin, a slave holder himself, addressed the U. S. Senate on the subject of slaves as “property.” He said:

> “Enough for us to know that, that which we claim as property is recognized as such by the Constitution of the United States; that it has the sanction of the fathers; that it lies at the foundation of the compact by which we formed a common government; and that, without the fullest recognition and protection of that property, this Government never could have originated. It is now, in the year 1860, that we are to be driven back to an examination of the origin from which our rights are derived, or the true basis upon which they rest. We treat these questions as no longer open...We fight to preserve the Constitution, and, in so fighting, fight to preserve the Union. We consider those the true disunionists who lay an unhallowed hand on the ark of the covenant, and try to desecrate it to our loss and dishonor. Respect it, keep your unholy hands off it, leave it as it was left by the fathers, and you have brethren ready, shoulder to shoulder and side by side with you, to fight in its support. Desecrate it, pollute it, destroy our rights under it, invade the sanctuary with your modern ideas in relation to the free rights of man, to the equality of races, to amalgamation, to polygamy, and all the isms that unfortunately prevail amongst certain classes at the North - prevail with these ideas, break down the Constitution, make your ideas the governing principle by which this country is to be administered, and I say to you, and every Southern man that I know says, that if the Constitution perish, perish the Union with it.”

Lincoln was anathema to white Southerners because of his opposition to the extension of slavery into the western territories (Missouri and Kansas) where a virtual civil war had been underway for several years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.

In the November 1860 presidential elections, Lincoln, the Republican candidate, won 39.2 percent of the popular vote and a requisite number of electoral votes. In Louisiana, as in the other Southern states where only white men of property were permitted to vote, Lincoln did not receive a single popular vote.

Lincoln denied any intention of toppling the South's “peculiar institution.” “I have

no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists," he said at his inauguration in March 1861. "I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so."

SECESSION

"Secession," wrote historian Ralph Wooster, "was never as popular in Louisiana as in her sister states of the lower South." Many of the most wealthy Louisiana residents were tied to the North both socially (by birth and marriage) and economically. With the tariff, the Federal government protected the state's sugar industry from foreign competition. In addition, the commerce of the Mississippi Valley flowed down the Mississippi River and enriched Louisiana and particularly the city of New Orleans. Many Louisianians, however, deeply resented the tariff that protected Northern industries, making goods more expensive in the South. Still, the secessionist movement in the 1850's found little encouragement in the Pelican State. In the presidential campaign of 1860, the state's electoral votes went to John C. Breckinridge, the avowed secessionist, but no candidate received a majority of the popular vote. Breckinridge received 22,681 votes, John Bell 20,204, and Stephen A. Douglas 7,625. Bell and Douglas campaigned on the platform of upholding the Union, indicating that a majority of voting Louisianians "opposed radical or drastic measures for guaranteeing Southern rights."

Lincoln's election, however, inflamed the desire for secession. On Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1860, Reverend Benjamin Morgan Palmer of the First Presbyterian Church in New Orleans urged secession: "The position of the South is at this moment sublime. If she has grace given her to know her hour she will save herself, the country, and the world." Palmer pronounced that the holiest law was "the principle of self preservation." As keepers of a "providential trust," the white Southerner's foremost mission was "to conserve and to perpetuate the institution of domestic slavery now existing..."

Secession, Palmer thundered, represented the sacred defense of God and religion:

> "This argument...touches the four cardinal points of duty to ourselves, to our slaves, to the world, and to almighty God. It establishes the nature and solemnity of our present trust, to preserve and transmit our existing system of domestic servitude, with the right unchanged by man, to go and root itself where ever Providence and nature might carry it. This trust we will

discharge in the face of the worst possible peril."

A secessionist convention was held in Baton Rouge on January 23, 1861. One hundred and seven of the 130 members of the convention were slave owners in 1860, holding a total of 6,016 slaves. The ordinance of secession was voted and passed by a 113 to 17 count. The president of the convention, Alfred Mouton of Lafayette Parish, declared "the connection between the State of Louisiana and the Federal Union dissolved, and that it [Louisiana] is a free, sovereign, and independent power." All but nine delegates signed the ordinance.
The decision to break with the United States and to join the newly founded Confederate States of America was framed in the context of a Second War of Independence. The Southern argument was for "state's rights," that is, for the right of the individual states, and not the Federal government, to decide the state's laws, etc. The sons of Louisiana, with great enthusiasm, idealism, honor, and naivete, rushed off to enlist in the various regiments then forming across the state. Many were afraid that the war would be over before they had the chance to get in the fight.

Years later, in the bitter aftermath of the war, A. T. Morgan, a carpetbagger who settled on a plantation near Yazoo City, Mississippi, wrote:

> "It had not anywhere been denied that the South fought for independence as a means of better securing their 'slave property,' or that the North fought for the preservation of the union, the emancipation of the slaves having followed as one of the most unanticipated incidents of the struggle."

CIVIL WAR

Almost all of the early Louisiana regiments went off immediately to fight in Virginia. They participated in the First Battle of Manassas, a Confederate victory, in the summer of 1861. The Louisiana troops also played an important (almost central) role in Stonewall Jackson's victories in the Shenandoah Valley campaign and in the battles outside of Richmond in the spring and summer of 1862. In Louisiana, Governor Thomas Moore bemoaned a sad fact: the state had been stripped of her manpower and left virtually defenseless. In the winter of 1862, troops in Louisiana and throughout the South hurried to Tennessee to fight the battle of Shiloh on April 6-7, 1862. The Confederate troops surprised the Yankee "invaders" the first day of the battle, but withdrew from the field the next day

when the Federal troops, commanded by General U. S. Grant, were re-enforced. Shortly after the New Orleans newspapers published long lists of those native sons who had perished or been wounded at Shiloh, church bells sounded the alarm at the approach of the Federal fleet up the Mississippi River.

The month of April 1862 was a turning point in the history of Louisiana. Life would never be the same.

THE FALL OF NEW ORLEANS

In the previous few days, Admiral David Farragut bombarded and then passed the supposedly impregnable fortresses of Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip at the mouth of the Mississippi River. The Confederate commanders exhibited both incompetence and cowardice, a fatal combination. An elderly slave, understanding perfectly the significance of the occasion, hailed the passing flotilla of Federal warships as it approached New Orleans: “Three cheers for Abraham!” The Union soldiers chuckled. Few had come South to liberate the slave.

New Orleans fell to the Federal on April 26, 1862. The river was high at the time and the federal gunboats looked down on the city and commanded it admirably. The relatively few Confederate troops (reserves, home guards, and assorted companies) in New Orleans, hopelessly outgunned, abandoned the city amidst chaos and in a manner that cannot be described as gallant. The loss of its greatest port was a terrific blow to the Confederacy.

During the next three years, much of Louisiana was laid waste. Federal troops seized Baton Rouge, defeated a Confederate attack on the city, marched down Bayou Lafourche (whipping the Rebels at Labedieville), continued to Brashear (Morgan City) before moving up Bayou Teche to Opelousas (fighting several battles), detoured in the direction of Baton Rouge and nearby Port Hudson (a Confederate fort, which fell on July 8, 1863), then continued up the Red River (burning Alexandria) to the gates of Shreveport. Here the Federal armies were defeated at the Battle of Mansfield in April 1864. Along the route of the Federal armies plantations were pillaged and burned; stragglers and outrages were not few. Recognizing the necessity of crushing civilian support for the Confederacy, Federal policy called for the destruction of anything that might benefit the Rebels; homes were to be spared, but in many instances they went the way of the barns and granaries: burned.

In East Louisiana, Confederate cavalry based at Clinton, with a few batteries of cannon, attempted to disrupt shipping on the Mississippi River, and fought a running battle with Federal cavalry (including Third U. S. Colored Cavalry) during the last three years of the war. In much of Louisiana, when Confederates faced black Federal troops, neither side took prisoners. The civilian population suffered bitterly at the pillaging hands of both the Yankees and the Confederates.

FLIGHT OF THE SLAVES

Many plantation owners fled to Texas with their slaves. Individual slaves, the so-called house servants, remained loyal to their masters, with whom a not unnatural bond had been established often through the course of generations. The house servants, the body servants who grew up with their young "master," the maids who waited on their "mistress," those who had a modicum of privilege in the iniquitous system, often did not flee but saw their best opportunities remaining with those who had ruled matters once and who might well rule matters again. Much to the consternation of their masters, who had long argued (and long believed) that the slaves were a contented lot and that slavery was "civilizing influence," the great majority of slaves rejoiced at the sight of the Yankee soldiers and seized the opportunity to make good their departure from the "peculiar institution."

> "At every plantation," wrote a soldier of the Fifty-Second Massachusetts Infantry, "swarms of Negroes came out and welcomed us with rapturous demonstrations of joy." A second Massachusetts soldier reported, "The Negroes lined the streets....as they do at every village and plantation, grinning with delight to see us...offering water, corn cake, and other things to the troops."
>
> A Federal officer noted the importance of local intelligence: "The Negroes were our informers...while the whites on the plantation...told us all sorts of stories to confuse us, the darkies would gather round and, every once in a while, give vent to their surprise at their master's mendacity by the most ludicrous rolling up of the eyes, and by clasping their hands with the ejaculation, "O Lord! What is white folks coming to?"

NATIVE GUARDS

In 1861, when the war broke out, a large number of free men of color in New Orleans offered their services to the local Confederate authorities. They were men of property (some owned slaves) and had a vested interest in the ante-bellum system. On November 23, 1861, twenty-six Confederate thousand troops paraded down Canal St., among them 731 black enlisted men and 33 black officers. The black troops, called Defenders of the Native Land, were never accepted into Confederate service, but served for a time in the Louisiana militia. Indeed, free men of color had long served in the militia. They had served in the forces that suppressed the 1811 slave revolt, and had fought at the Battle of New Orleans with Andrew Jackson (who praised them, but refused pensions). When the Rebels ill-gloriously evacuated New Orleans upon Farragut's arrival in April 1862, the Defenders of the Native Land remained in the city, their link with the ante-bellum South broken.

A delegation of free people of color called on General Benjamin Butler shortly after his arrival in New Orleans. They expressed their willingness to fight for the Federal government, but Butler rejected their offer. Federal authorities found themselves in a quandary regarding the newly liberated slaves. The first blacks who sought refuge in New Orleans were detained under Federal guard at Camp Parapet (in present-day Jefferson Parish; an historical plaque marks the spot) on the northern outskirts of the city. These former slaves were labeled “contrabands of war” (a term Butler used to describe the runaways who fled to Fort Monroe, Virginia, in 1861) and perished in great numbers at the squalid “contraband camps.” Brigadier-General John Phelps, a pre-war abolitionist and commander at Camp Parapet, wanted to arm the former slaves to fight on the side of the Union, but Butler said no; the War Department had not yet issued a directive on the matter. In turn, Butler told Phelps that the black men should be employed cutting down trees between the Mississippi and Lake Ponchartrain (to open a field of fire). In protest, Phelps resigned with a stinging rebuke: “I am not willing to become the mere slave driver which you propose.”

In a classic display of self-interest, Butler's attitude on “contrabands” changed dramatically after Confederate forces attacked (and nearly overwhelmed) the Federal garrison at Baton Rouge on August 5, 1862. This heightened his fear of an attack on New Orleans and led him to embrace the idea of arming black men. On August 14, 1862, Butler informed Washington, “I shall call on Africa to intervene.” Anticipating the outrage of the white South to such a move, Butler justified this revolutionary step by arguing (imprecisely) that the same black troops he was enlisting had earlier been enlisted in Confederate service (I've read their newspapers, he said). Precisely at this time the Federal government also changed its thinking on the subject of black troops. In September 1862, following the Federal (costly) victory at the Battle of Antietam in western Maryland, President Lincoln said in a speech on the battlefield that in one hundred days he would issue the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves in (many but not all) of the states then in rebellion. The War Department soon issued orders to begin the conscription of black men into the army (they had already been serving in the navy).

On September 27, 1862, the First Regiment of Native Guards was mustered into Federal service in New Orleans. Only eleven percent of these volunteers had earlier enlisted in the Louisiana militia serving (ostensibly) the Confederacy. The majority of the volunteers for the Federal army, however, were former slaves who had made their way to New Orleans. According to historian James G. Hollandsworth, the First Regiment was “the first officially sanctioned regiment of black soldiers in the Union army.” In very little time, two more regiments of black troops (comprised almost exclusively of former slaves) were formed: the Second and Third Native Guards. Initially, all captains and lieutenants in the First and Second Native Guards were black; the Third Native Guards had both black and white officers. Within two years, most of the black officers would be hounded from service, opening the way for white officers to have commissions and the opportunity for advancement.

One white officer wrote approvingly of the new recruits:

> “You would be surprised at the progress the blacks make in drill and the duties of soldiers. I find them better deposed [sic] to learn, and more orderly and cleanly, both in their persons and quarters, than the whites. Their fighting qualities have not yet been tested on a large scale, but I am satisfied that, knowing as they do that they will receive no quarter at the hands of the Rebels, they will fight to the death.”

A white enlisted man also wrote approvingly of the black soldiers, but with the cynicism typical of the day: “What's the use to have men from Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts dying down here in these swamps? You can't replace these men, but if a nigger dies, all you have to do is to send out and get another one.”

By and large, the Federals had an utmost disparaging opinion of the blacks, an opinion not unlike the one held by the white South. Liberated from slavery, the black men did not escape prejudice. Not least, black soldiers were paid half the salary of their white counterparts, although this injustice was later corrected.

James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., The Louisiana Native Guards (The Black Military Experience During the Civil War). LSU Press. 1995.

EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. The President freed only the slaves in the territories then under rebellion. The proclamation did not include the black population of the border states (Lincoln did not want to alienate his supporters in those states) nor the parishes then under the control of Federal troops in Louisiana. This included some of the river parishes where the great plantations stood. The Federals feared that the emancipation of the slaves would lead to the break-up of the plantation economy. They depended on the plantations for their subsistence and were interested in sugar and cotton for their own trade purposes; indeed, the Yankees established a controversial labor program in which blacks were coerced into labor. Secondly, the Federals did not want to alienate the plantation owners by liberating their “property.” In many instances, the Federals sympathized with the local white elite, with whom they had much in common. Thirdly, the Federals did not want to be burdened with the responsibilities of taking care of the tens of thousands of “contrabands.” After all, many Federal soldiers fought to preserve the Union, not to liberate the black man.

In the opinion of historian Joe Gray Taylor, there appears to have been only one “true insurrection” in Louisiana during the Civil War. In 1864, a number of blacks armed themselves at St. Martinville and fought a skirmish with local whites. Federal troops arrived from New Iberia, but by then the one-sided conflict was over: ten black men were hanging from the bridge over Bayou Teche. Yet, in

addition to this skirmish in St. Martinville (with its characteristic outcome), one obscure Confederate document (quoted in no history book) makes a passing reference to a slave rebellion in Ascension Parish in which as many as fifty slaves were killed. Nothing is known about this sanguinary event, nor of the other such uprisings that may have occurred and have been lost to the historical record.

JEFFERSON DAVIS

When it became clear that the Federal government intended to arm black men to fight in its armies, Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, issued a proclamation (Order No. 111) on December 23, 1862, dated Richmond, that addressed the issue of the South's worst fear: the black soldier dressed in blue.

Davis ordered:

> "That all negro slaves captured in arms be at once delivered over to the executive authorities of the respective States to which they belong to be dealt with according to the laws of said States." It was well known that "the laws of said States" on the subject of "all negro slaves captured in arms" were the same laws that in the ante-bellum period condemned to death those accused of "servile insurrection."

Davis continued:

> "That the like orders be executed in all cases with respect to all commissioned officers of the United States when found serving in company with armed slaves in insurrection against the authorities of the different States of this Confederacy." This meant that the white officers commanding black troops were to be dealt the same penalty as white men (and women) before the war who incited slaves to rebellion: death. Vengeance exacted on the white interloper, the so-called miscreant who breaks racial solidarity, has historically been quite vicious.

After Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, Davis issued an address to the North, to "the People of the Free States by the President of the Southern Confederacy." It was dated January 5, 1863. The Confederate president said:

> “On and after February 22, 1863, all free negroes within the limits of the Southern Confederacy shall be placed on the slave status, and be deemed to be chattels, they and their issue forever.
>
> All negroes who shall be taken in any of the States in which slavery does not now exist, in the progress of our arms, shall be adjudged, immediately after such capture, to occupy the slave status, and in all States which shall be vanquished by our arms, all free negroes shall, *ipso facto*, be reduced to the condition of helotism, so that the respective normal conditions of the white and black races may be ultimately placed on a permanent basis, so as to prevent the public peace from being thereafter endangered.
>
> ...conscientiously believing that the proper condition of the negro is slavery, or a complete subjection to the white man, - and entertaining the belief that the day is not distant when the old Union will be restored with slavery nationally declared to be the proper condition of all of African descent, - and in view of the future harmony and progress of all the States of America, I have been induced to issue this address, so that there may be no misunderstanding in the future.”

On January 12, 1863, Davis delivered an address to the Confederate Senate and House of Representatives in Richmond. Referring to Lincoln's proclamation “in which he orders and declares all slaves within ten States of the Confederacy to be free,” Davis declared:

> “We may well leave it to the instincts of that common humanity which a beneficent Creator has implanted in the breasts of our fellow-men of all countries to pass judgment on a measure by which several millions of human beings of an inferior race, peaceful and contented laborers in their sphere, are doomed to extermination, while at the same time they are encouraged to a general assassination of their masters by the insidious recommendation [by Lincoln] 'to abstain from violence unless in necessary self-defense.' Our own detestation of those who have attempted the most execrable measure recorded in the history of guilty man is tempered by profound contempt for the impotent rage which it discloses. So far as regards the action of this Government on such criminals as may attempt its execution I confined myself to informing you [Confederate congress] that I shall unless in your

> wisdom you deem some other course more expedient deliver to the several State authorities all commissioned officers of the United States that may hereafter be captured by our forces in any of the States embraced in the proclamation that they may be dealt with in accordance with the laws of those States providing for the punishment of criminals engaged in exciting servile insurrection. The enlisted soldiers I shall continue to treat as unwilling instruments in the commission of these crimes and shall direct their discharge and return to their homes on the proper and usual parole."

Thus spoke the president of the Confederacy, doubtless echoing many of the people he represented.

PORT HUDSON

The Second Native Guards, formed in New Orleans, served a tour of duty at Fort Pike, guarding the entrance to Lake Ponchartrain, and at Ship Island off the coast of Mississippi, guarding Confederate prisoners. Held in contempt, the black soldiers were purposely assigned ignominious tasks to free white troops for fighting.

In contrast, the First and Third Native Guards participated in the assault on the Confederate bastion (above Baton Rouge) at Port Hudson on May 27, 1863. The troops were under the command of Brigadier General William Dwight, Jr., who wrote to his mother the night before the attack, bragging that he was going "to test the negro question," that is, he would determine if the black soldiers would fight. "I have had the negro Regts longest in the service assigned to me and I am going to storm a detached work with them. You may look for hard fighting, or for a complete run away." Referring to the Rebels, Dwight said, "The garrison will of course be incensed and fight defiantly. The negro will have the fate of his race on his conduct. I shall compromise nothing in making this attack for I regard it as an experiment."

At ten o'clock in the morning, the First Native Guards led the charge along the Telegraph Road. The troops immediately suffered the withering fire of Confederate soldiers in rifle pits on the ridge parallel to the road and from a redoubt in the distance defended by the 39th Mississippi Regiment and 9th Louisiana Battalion. Artillery shells also pulverized the advancing troops. Indeed, the Confederates had the advantage of cannons, high ground, and, not least, a moat. Dwight prepared for

the assault by getting drunk that morning. He had not reconnoitered the terrain before the assault (contrary to his assurances) and said blithely that “it was the easiest way into Port Hudson.” Instead, it was probably the toughest route to Port Hudson. The black troops were on exposed ground, subject to fire from three sides. They appear to have fired only one round of bullets before the slaughter became too much. Some withdrew while others found what little cover existed. One black officer, Andrew Cailloux of New Orleans, who proudly viewed himself as “the blackest man” in New Orleans (and who had earlier enlisted in the Confederate sponsored Defenders of the Native Guard), issued commands in English and in French (he had studied in Paris) and continued to exhort his troops even after his arm had been shot off. A Confederate artillerist recalled the slaughter: “We moad them down and made them disperse leaving there dead and wounded on the field to stink.”

Told of the repulse, Dwight ordered an aide to tell the white commander of the Native Guards, Colonel John A. Nelson, that “I shall consider he has done nothing unless he carries the enemy's works.” The aide remonstrated: both regiments had been terribly bloodied, losing half their men. Dwight insisted: “Charge again, and let the impetuosity of the charge counterbalance the paucity of numbers.” Nelson ordered the Native Guards to charge again, but Lt. Colonel Henry Finnegass, of the Third Regiment, refused to obey the order (and was later court-martialed).

The First Native Guards lost two officers. One was Captain Cailloux. His body was left on the field for weeks (because of Yankee indifference to black soldiers, or because of Confederate contempt for the black dead, or both). Cailloux's funeral in New Orleans was one of the largest in the city's history. Second Lt. John H. Crowder also fell that day at Port Hudson. Self-educated, he had lied about his age (sixteen) and enlisted in the Federal army. He had earlier written that he “joined the Army to serve his country” and also because his mother was very poor, and he wanted to support her. Crowder was one of the youngest (if not the youngest) officer in the Federal army. He wrote to his mother, “If *Abraham* Lincoln knew that a colored Lad of my age, could command a company, what would he say [?]”

Thomas C. Prescott of the 8th New Hamphire Infantry marched with his company down Telegraph Road the evening after the assault and took note of the suffering:

> “They [black troops] suffered severe losses and as we moved back at night to our quarters, we passed the little house on the road where a temporary hospital had been established for them, and at the back door of this house we

> saw a pile of considerable size of legs and arms which had been amputated from those poor fellows."

The charge at Port Hudson on May 27, 1863, was the first time during the Civil War that a large body of black soldiers went on the attack. The impressive, suicidal charge, lasting only a few minutes and apparently causing no Confederate casualties, demonstrated that black soldiers would fight, contrary to the stereotype that depicted blacks as cowards who would flee at the first sight of their former masters (this was the Southern prediction; Northerners in great number predicted the same). Port Hudson made the idea of black troops more acceptable to the Northern public and was used by Northern recruiters to enlist more black troops for the Federal cause at a time when white casualties (and disgust with the war) were mounting. In the end, 180,000 black men fought on the side of the North, a full ten percent of its armies. The largest percentage of black men to serve came from Louisiana.

MILLIKEN'S BEND

On June 7, 1863, several days after the assault on Port Hudson, black troops (former slaves from Mississippi, mustered into service only sixteen days before) thwarted an assault by a Texas brigade of Confederates at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, near present-day Talulla. Milliken's Bend was the first time black troops fought alone in the Civil War and signified the first victory by black troops in the conflict. In the blisteringly heat, the Texans advanced on the Federal stockade under a black flag, signifying that they would give no quarter to their captives. The black soldiers, with no experience with war and little experience with guns, held their fire until the Rebels reached proximity, when the first volley of fire forced the Rebels to recoil. But still they advanced and climbed the first levee. The Confederate commander, General H. E. McCullough, described the fight,

> "The line was formed under a heavy fire from the enemy, and the troops charged the breastworks, carrying it instantly, killing and wounding many of the enemy by their deadly fire, as well as the bayonet. This charge was resisted by the negro portion of the enemy's force with considerable obstinacy, while the white or true Yankee portion, ran like whipped curs almost as soon as the charge was ordered. There were several instances in this charge where the enemy crossed bayonets with us or were shot down at

> the muzzle of the musket."

The fight was vicious. Lieutenant-Colonel Cyrus Sears, commanding the 11th Louisiana regiment of black troops, said:

> "A desperate hand to hand fight of several minutes duration then ensued; the blacks exhibiting unprecedented bravery, standing the charge nobly, until the enemy in overwhelming numbers had succeeded in gaining a position on the levee at our extreme left, from which they poured a murderous enfilading fire - chiefly upon the officers - who fell in numbers; but not until overpowered by numbers and forced from their position, were the blacks compelled to fall back, seeking shelter behind wagons, piles of boxes, and other obstructions and behind the banks of the river, pouring volley after volley into the ranks of the enemy."

At this point the Federal troops were handsomely assisted by the gunboats Choctaw and Lexington which opened fire on the advancing Confederates, who took cover behind the levee they had surmounted. The Confederates attempted to outflank the black troops, posted behind a second levee on the water's edge, but this movement was checked. Unwilling to assault the final line of defense, the Confederates soon withdrew from the field, doubtlessly bitter they had failed to whip the "armed negro" whom stereotypes had taught would not fight.

Sears, the Federal officer, criticized the white troops (23rd Iowa) who fled the fight at Milliken's Bend: "This, I believe, I am under obligation to do, not only in the interests of true history, but far more to give the honor they are entitled to, to the raw colored troops that fought there."

Sears (who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor at the Battle of Iuka) argued that at Milliken's Bend the 9th Louisiana (black) regiment suffered the highest casualty rate of any body of soldiers during the Civil War. His account of the battle, written in 1908 at his own expense and in defiance of fellow veterans (uninterested in the heroics of their former comrades in arms), said this of the black soldiers: "To ignore the debt we owe them - under the code of common humanity - for services rendered in saving the Union, we owe our negro citizens a very large debt, which we have been paying only in the coin of broken promises, inhuman neglect and barbarous abuse."

On June 12, 1863, Kirby E. Smith, the Confederate general commanding the Department Trans-Mississippi Department, wrote General Richard E. Taylor, whose troops made the attack at Milliken's Bend, and chided him:

> “I have been unofficially informed that some of your troops have captured negroes in arms. I hope this may not be so, and that your subordinates who may have been in command of capturing parties may have recognized the propriety of giving no quarter to armed negroes and their officers. In this way we may be relieved from a disagreeable dilemma.”

The “disagreeable dilemma” was the prospect of Federal retaliation if black soldiers were captured and later executed. Much better, Smith intimated, not to take black soldiers alive in the first place. On June 13, 1863, Smith's assistant adjutant-general made the general's position clear:

> “I am directed by Lieutenant-General Smith to say no quarter should be shownhem [”negro slaves taken in arms”]. If taken prisoner, however, they should be turned over to the executive authorities of the States in which they may be captured...Should negroes thus taken be executed by the military authorities capturing them it would certainly provoke retaliation. By turning them over to the civil authorities to be tried by the laws of the State no exception can be taken.”

In response to the murder of black troops by Confederate soldiers, President Lincoln issued a retaliation order. It was never acted upon.

BLACK SUFFRAGE

Commanding the Army of Northern Virginia, General R. E. Lee signed the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, on April 9, 1865. Confederate troops in Alabama surrendered at Citronelle on May 4, 1865, and troops in Shreveport did the same a month later. In Louisiana, black people were liberated, but the reality of life was quite different.

When the war ended, the matter of black voting rights had not yet been decided in the nation's capital. In Louisiana, the 1864 constitution, written under the tutelage of the Federal occupying troops, did not legalize black suffrage. Prior to the

constitutional convention in 1864, President Lincoln wrote a private letter to the Unionist governor of Louisiana Michael Hahn and suggested that “some of the colored people” be granted the right to vote, “for instance, the very intelligent and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks. They would probably help, in some trying time to come, to keep the jewel of liberty within the family of freedom. But this is only a suggestion, not to the public but to you alone.”

On April 14, 1865, five days after Lee's surrender, Lincoln was assassinated in Washington, D. C., at Ford's Theater by a Confederate sympathizer. Five years earlier, on the war's eve, the President had said, “...if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle ['that all should have an equal chance']...I would rather be assassinated on this spot than to surrender it [applause].”

THE DESOLATE SOUTH

The returning Confederate soldiers had been defeated on the field of battle, but neither they nor their kinfolk intended to be defeated on the field of politics. The white South lost the war, but would win the Reconstruction.

The Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 freed the slaves in the entire United States (finalizing Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which had freed the slaves in the regions then in rebellion). Few white Southerners reconciled themselves to the reality of the Thirteenth Amendment. Granting a black person the right to vote was beyond the comprehension of the average white Southerner who had for generations been fed with the belief that blacks were inferior and incapable of “civilization.” Black suffrage was blasphemy. The platform of the Democratic Party immediately after the war established very clearly the attitude of Southern whites to the race question:

> “Resolved, that we hold this to be a Government of White People, made and to be perpetuated for the exclusive political benefit of the White Race, and in accordance with the Constitution adjudication of the United States Supreme Court, that the people of African descent cannot be considered as citizens of the United States, and that there can in no event nor under any circumstances be any equality between the white and other Races.”

When President Lincoln was assassinated, Vice-President Andrew Johnson of Tennessee became president. Johnson, a Democrat and a former slave owner, refused to advance the idea of civil and political rights for black people. Among

other things, he was afraid the former slaves would vote with their former masters.

In the South, former Confederates took control of local governments. Black Codes, restrictive and harsh “laws” enacted by white leaders, attempted to regulate the lives and employment of black people in ways that constituted virtual peonage. Semi-slavery had replaced slavery. Black people enjoyed no political rights; black and white children attended separate schools, the black children in schools operated by the Freedman's Bureau, an organization of Northern humanitarians devoted to the education of a people for whom education had been a crime but a few years before; black passengers were assigned to special cars (the “star” street cars in New Orleans were discontinued in 1867 following much agitation by black Federal soldiers, but were reinstituted in 1902 under the solidifying hand of Jim Crow); black theater and opera goers were forced to sit in sections set aside for them (when they weren't thrown out); black patrons were generally denied service at hotels, saloons, and restaurants.

In New Orleans the political situation was unique. Before the Civil War, a large population of free people of color, numbering 10,000, lived in the city. Many were prosperous and well educated; some had been slave owners; some were light-skinned, the off spring of white and black and those born to freedom. The black population of New Orleans, in the words of one scholar, “was singularly free of what deference and circumspection which might have been expected in a slave community.”

The local black leadership were joined by white Republican leaders and opportunists from the North (known derisively as “carpetbaggers” after the piece of luggage, made of carpet, in which some carried their belongings to the South) who in turn were allied to local white Republican leaders and opportunists (called “scalawags” by locals), all for the purpose of helping to create a new South and, in not a few instances, to turn an illicit profit by controlling and distributing political patronage and the money that accompanied it.

John Richard Dent, The South as It Is: 1865-1866. LSU Press. 1965.

MECHANIC'S INSTITUTE

In New Orleans, it was said, the shooting began only after the Civil War. On July 30, 1866, in an atmosphere of extreme racial tension, black and white Republican

legislators met at the Mechanic's Institute in New Orleans, located near the corner of (then) Dryades and Canal Streets (site of the present-day Roosevelt Hotel). The legislators proposed to write a new state constitution which would assure black suffrage, in contrast to the 1864 Louisiana Constitution. A group of convention supporters, numbering several hundred, emerged from Burgundy Street and approached the Mechanic's Institute. An organized mob, including boys, policemen, and the usual rabble, awaited. Only the spark was needed and it was not long in coming. An insult was uttered, a punch thrown, a shot fired, and the riot ensued. The mob charged the Institute three times but were repulsed, although the defenders had only a few pistols. On the fourth charge, the mob overwhelmed the defenders and gave no quarter, killing an estimated thirty-four blacks and wounding one hundred and forty-six. Bodies were stacked on dray carts and hauled to the foot of Canal Street where they were unceremoniously dumped in the river. More than two hundred blacks were arrested.

Reverend Dr. Horton, a Republican legislator, pleaded with the assaulting mob, "Gentlemen, I beseech you to stop firing; we are non-combatants. If you want to arrest us, make any arrest you please, we are not prepared to defend ourselves." The police reportedly answered, "We don't want any prisoners; you have all got to die." Federal troops arrived at the scene of the carnage long after the killing had ceased.

Describing the Mechanic's Institute massacre, the New Orleans newspaper *Times* wrote, "To see the Negroes mutilated and literally beaten to death as they sought

to escape, was one of the most horrid pictures it has ever been our ill fortune to witness...One Negro fell cut and beaten, covered with blood, near the fence. And another fell killed while the police were bearing him off."

The *Daily Picayune*, in a tone of both regret and justification, stated: "No one regrets the bloody details of yesterday more than we do, it was horrifying; but there seemed no alternative..."

RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Much of the nation reacted with horror to the bloody events in New Orleans of July 30, 1866 (and to a similar race riot in Memphis later that summer). President Johnson was criticized by Radical members of Congress who saw the sacrifices of the Civil War going for naught. They disapproved of the President's lenient policies towards the defeated South and prior to the New Orleans massacre had been battling him for control of Reconstruction policies.

Thaddeus Stevens, the Radical leader in the House of Representatives, told a large audience, "Behold the awful slaughter of white men and black, of a Convention of highly respectable men, peaceably assembled in New Orleans...All this was done under the sanction of Johnson and his office-holders. It is the legitimate consequence of his 'policy.'"

The Mechanic's Institute massacre had an important impact on U. S. politics. In the crucial congressional elections in November 1866, the Radicals gained control of the U. S. Congress and were able to take control of Reconstruction policies from President Johnson.

The Fourteenth Amendment, which Congress had been passed in June 1866, was ratified. It granted citizenship to black people and made the Federal government the guarantor of citizenship rights. In March 1867, Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts, which divided the South into military districts. Black people in the South were accorded civil and political rights. Federal troops arrived in Louisiana to enforce the changes. Military rule was established. The period of Radical Reconstruction began.

The 1868 Louisiana Constitution, written by Republican legislators, both white and

black, granted all male citizens the right to vote. Former Confederate soldiers of high rank were disfranchised, but this move was soon ameliorated. The Fifteenth Amendment, granting black people and other non-whites the right to vote, was adopted in 1870.

During the ten year period of Radical Reconstruction, from 1867 to 1877, black males comprised the majority of the state's voters. Blacks were elected to the state legislature, and black officials were elected to the various political offices in each parish. In 1868, Pierre Landry was appointed mayor of Donaldsonville, the first black man to hold the office of mayor in the country. In the same year, Oscar J. Dunn, a black man, was elected lieutenant governor on the ticket with the Republican Henry Clay Warmouth, who became governor. For several months in 1872 when Warmouth was undergoing impeachment proceedings, Pickney Stewart Pinchback, the son of Mississippi plantation owner and his slave mistress, served as Louisiana governor.

By 1867, various public accommodation acts outlawed discrimination on all common carriers and by businesses and in public resorts licensed by state or municipal authorities. The 1868 Louisiana Constitution, in addition to granting black suffrage, prohibited segregation in public schools and opened public facilities "to the accommodation and patronage of all persons, without distinction or discrimination on account of race or color." By 1870, bills had been passed establishing racially integrated public schools throughout the state, although this effort met with little success outside of New Orleans.

Between 1868 and 1876, legislators outlawed discrimination in other state institutions and legalized interracial marriages. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 reinforced the state measures. In reality, many public facilities remained closed to blacks. In February 1869, a black journalist wrote, "If we venture into a theater or an opera-house, we are seized by the officers of justice, and rudely hustled out amid the jeers of the vulgar."

During Reconstruction, black people in Louisiana fought to have civil rights legislation honored "not so much because we specially coveted the privilege of attending theaters and operas and saloons," editorialized the black newspaper

Tribune in February 1869, “not even because we desired the still more important privilege of freely using public conveyances and hotels,” but rather because “under the present order of things, our manhood is sacrificed. The broad stamp of inferiority is put upon us.”

The black newspaper *Louisianian* wrote in March 1874:

> “A condition of bondage, making one race dependent upon the will of another for not only the necessities but even the amenities of life, is well-calculated to make the subordinated people servile, but our white friends over-rate the demoralizing influence of our servitude, when they suppose that we attach such value to their personal intimacy, as will make us seek it, by either improper legislation or a personal humiliation. We are not slaves now, and have no slavish instincts. With our freedom came back our self-respect, and largely to meet the social wants of our own people, do we seek the legislation which, by giving us equal prerogatives as citizens, and removing the reproach, that customs springing out of a dead civilization have imposed upon us, will enable us to grow as a race in all the true, good and beautiful things that adorn a people.”

Ted Tunnell, Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism, and Race in Louisiana 1862-1877. LSU Press. 1984.

RACIAL COOPERATION IN LABOR

The free people of color and white laborers in New Orleans were bitter competitors during the ante-bellum period. However, in the years following the Civil War there were several instances of racial cooperation among the working classes, despite the strenuous efforts of employers to divide the workers along racial lines.

In December 1865, black and white longshoreman in New Orleans cooperated with one another in a strike for higher wages. New Orleans mayor Hugh Kennedy wrote, “They marched up the levee in a long procession, white and black together. I gave orders that they should not be interfered with as long as they interfered with nobody else; but when they undertook by force to prevent other laborers from

working, the police promptly put a stop to their proceedings." The Panic of 1873 momentarily curtailed cooperation among black and white laborers, and a riot occurred when blacks, used as striker-breakers by the employers, attempted to drive whites from the unloading docks along the levee.

Racial cooperation continued when prosperity returned, and the cooperation lasted until the 1890's. Separate unions for white and black existed but cooperated with one another in dividing the jobs between the races. In 1881, black and white dock workers conducted a strike for higher wages. When a black striker was killed by police, two thousand union men of both races marched in the funeral procession.

Perhaps the most notable example of black-white cooperation in New Orleans was the 1892 labor strike. It involved twenty thousand men and was, in the words of one historian, "The first general strike in American history to enlist both skilled and unskilled labor, black and white, and to paralyze the life of a great city..."

THIBODAUX

In 1883, the Knights of Labor arrived in Louisiana. The Knights advocated a union of all working people of whatever race, while at the same time the Knights rejected the Marxist anarchist radicalism of the day. In 1887, the Knights organized the mostly black sugar cane workers in the parishes of Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. Mary, Iberville, and St. Martin. Demanding a dollar a day (a dollar fifteen for "first class" male workers, up from sixty-five cents a day), the mostly black workers threatened to strike. The planters refused to entertain the thought of negotiation. The Sugar Planters Association invited the state militia to the district in November 1887 at the height of the harvest. The bloodshed began on November 2 and reached a climax in late November at Thibodaux on Bayou Lafourche. The seat of Lafourche Parish had become a refuge for the strikers whom the planters had expelled from the cabins in their "quarters" on the plantations. Local whites, an arm of the militia known as the Louisiana Rifles, a detachment of the Washington Artillery from New Orleans, and the C. K. Guards defended the town against those "who threatened everything that was white," to quote another newspaper. That same newspaper was quick to point out that the white population was not afraid but had taken up arms "to mete out condign punishment to a set of unscrupulous wretches who for some time past have kept this community - not in a state of fear but of disquietude."

The slaughter in Thibodaux began on the night of November 22, 1887. Each side (the "white population" and the Knights of Labor) blamed the other for starting it. "Parties of armed men rode through and around the town on horseback, firing at the Negroes, and the excitement was great," reported *The Daily Picayune*. "The frequent sharp crack of the rifle, followed by regular volleys, informed those afar off that bloody work was being done." When the firing stopped the following day, thirty "sons of Africa" (reported one newspaper) were dead or dying in the streets of Thibodaux. A number of black strikers were shot and killed as they swam across Bayou Lafourche in the effort to reach the swamps and escape the massacre. "In the general vengeance wreaked upon the Negroes," continued *The Daily Picayune*, "some innocent ones suffered." The figure of those killed was probably grossly underestimated. Days later planters referred to bodies still being found in the swamps. A member of the prominent Gay family in nearby Plaquemine confided in her diary that "they say the half has not been publicized."

The sugar cane strike abruptly ended after the cessation of killing. Faced with annihilation, the black workers returned to the fields to harvest a bumper crop. The correspondent for *The Daily Picayune* reported, "After Wednesday morning's riot, and after the citizens of Thibodaux had shown their determination to keep the peace and order of the country, many hands, strikers since three weeks, returned to the Acadia plantation (on the outskirts of Thibodaux) and were reinstated to their happy satisfaction. They regretted the course they had taken and asserted that they would no longer be influenced by the leaders of the strike."

PUBLIC EDUCATION

In the rural parishes of Louisiana as well as in the cities, the Freedman's Bureau sponsored the education of black children, which had been strictly prohibited during slavery. The agents of the Freedman's Bureau were humanitarians and often deeply religious men and women from the North who had journeyed to the post-war South to help a people that Southern whites were determined to keep in a sort of intellectual bondage. An educated black person, the common belief went, was a danger to the status quo.

New Orleans had the unique experience in the South of integrated public schools between 1871 and 1877. Historian Louis R. Harlan has written that this experiment

with desegregation was “an experience shared by no other Southern community until after 1954 and by few northern communities at the time.”

After two years of legal battles following the 1868 Louisiana Constitution, which called for integrated schools, black children entered twenty-one desegregated schools in New Orleans that had formerly been white institutions, comprising about one third of the city's public schools.

At the height of integration, between five hundred and one thousand blacks and several thousand whites attended the mixed schools. Of the three public high schools in New Orleans, two were desegregated. The Radical Republican superintendent of education in Louisiana, Thomas W. Conway, was the architect of New Orleans school desegregation. He was quoted in 1874:

> “I had fully concluded to put the system of mixed schools to a thorough, practical test, and I did. The white pupils all left...and the school-house was virtually in the hands of the colored pupils. This was the picture one day. What will you think when I tell you that before I reached my office that day, the children of both races who, on the school question, seemed like deadly enemies, were many of them, joined in a circle, playing on the green, under the shade of the wide spreading live oak. In a few days I went back to see how the school was progressing, and, to my surprise, found nearly all the former pupils returned to their places; and that the school, like all the schools in the city, reported at the close of the year a larger attendance than at any time since the close of the war. The children were simply kind to each other in the school-room as in the streets and elsewhere! A year ago I visited the same school and saw therein about as many colored children as whites, with not a single indication of any ill-feeling whatever. All that is wanted in this matter of civil rights is to let the foes of the measure simply understand that we mean it. Do this, and as in the case of the enemies of free schools in Louisiana, they will be quiet.”

In view of the integration in New Orleans of at least some schools, the parochial schools (Catholic, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian) and private schools all expanded (in ways similar to the explosion of private schools, or Christian academies, following the Brown v. the Board decision in 1954). In 1874, the prospect of continued desegregation in New Orleans schools suffered a blow when the U. S. Congress removed the school desegregation clause from the congressional Civil

Rights bill.

In December 1874, two months after the Battle of Liberty Place, during a race riot instigated by the White League. White high school students (called “Regulators” after their “night-riding” elders) attacked black students, forcibly ejected them from the schools, insulted and beat up teachers, and threatened to hang the school superintendent. The schools, however, reopened on an integrated basis, and the mixed school system continued until 1877, the year Reconstruction ended in Louisiana when the protective hand of the Federal government was removed.

An account of this period is The Segregation Struggle in Louisiana 1862-77 by Roger A. Fischer. University of Illinois Press. 1974.

IN VIOLENCE VERITAS

In Louisiana, as elsewhere in the South, the fight against Negro suffrage amounted to nothing less than a terrorist campaign. Violence was exerted to intimidate, as it always had been. Black men in political roles or exhibiting leadership qualities were the first to be killed. Their houses were burned to the ground, their families run out of town. To be touched by fear, one need not have seen the limp body of a man hanging from a tree. One had only to hear about it. The tales of violence were passed down through the generations and exacted a toll that can hardly be calculated.

The Ku Klux Klan had a limited following in southern Louisiana. It despised Catholics in addition to black people and Jews. Instead, a white vigilante group called the White Knights of the Camellia was formed in St. Mary Parish in 1867 “to prevent power from falling into the hands of the inferior race.” This organization quickly spread, opening chapters far and wide. Various “rifle clubs” and local militia groups served the same purpose: keeping black people suppressed.

OPELOUSAS

In September 1868, prior to elections, Opelousas became the site of a massacre of local blacks by a large representation of the white community, including many of the most prominent citizens. The slaughter started when three white men beat up an eighteen year old carpetbagger named Emerson Bentley, the white editor of the

local Republican newspaper and a teacher of black children at the Freedmen's Bureau school. In response to Bentley's beating, local blacks came to his rescue. Twelve were arrested by the sheriff. They were taken from jail and hung that night. In the next few days bands of armed whites on horseback scoured the countryside and killed blacks in what was described as a "Negro hunt." It is estimated that two hundred blacks were killed in the fields and swamps surrounding Opelousas. The same type of "Negro hunt" occurred outside Shreveport a short time before.

James Thompson, a prominent resident of St. Landry Parish who ordered the execution of blacks captured during the riot, told armed whites that he "wanted them to kill everything that was captured." Fifty armed white horsemen chased Swan Miller, a Freedman and "totally unknown to party organization," for four nights simply because he hid a white man being chased by mobs during the riot.

NEW ORLEANS

Preceding the 1868 elections, New Orleans "resembled a major European city in the throes of violent revolution," said one observer. Democratic Clubs and Republican Clubs had pitched battles on the streets. Sixty-three people, most of them black, were killed in the city. The historian George Rable wrote that the blacks in New Orleans "displayed an apparent...willingness to match their enemies blow for blow and shot for shot" during these October riots.

A U. S. Congressional report established that 1,081 people were killed during the 1868 elections in Louisiana, and 135 were wounded. Not all the deaths which occurred during this time were reported to authorities. Even after the November elections, an additional 114 people were killed.

The Freedmen's Bureau chief in Louisiana, General Edward Hatch, wrote that it "is very seldom that a Negro is simply wounded. If he is hit at all, he is finished."

DONALDSONVILLE

During the November 1870 elections, a political riot occurred in Donaldsonville, seventy miles upriver from New Orleans. A group of white men refused to release the ballot boxes to the Republican voter registrant, arguing (correctly) that state law required the ballots to be counted in the courthouse. A group of black men tried to retrieve the ballots. One of the men was shot and wounded, providing all the spark

that was needed in an already volatile situation. Led by David Fischer, the parish's black constable, the local black militia was summoned to march on Donaldsonville. Two white men, William C. Lawes (a former Confederate) and Marx Schonberg (a carpetbagger) sallied forth in a buggy to meet the militia on the outskirts of town. They attempted to negotiate a solution, but were slain in circumstances that remain unclear. Lawes was mutilated by cane knives. The militia then marched into Donaldsonville, frightened the white people, threatened to burn the town (but did not), and tried to get its hands on local members of the white opposition (Knights of the White Camellia), all of whom narrowly escaped. The militia soon withdrew from town when Federal troops arrived from New Orleans.

The dispute over the ballot boxes had its origins in both racism and political patronage. The black militia wanted to eliminate those with the reputation of intimidating black voters. It also wanted to eliminate black politicians, like Pierre Landry, the former mayor of Donaldsonville, who was cooperating with the white elite, believing this was the best road for the freedmen. In addition, the leaders of the ruling Republican party in the parish fell out of partnership, splintering into two groups; each wanted to be elected to secure the opportunity to make money by, for example, receiving the lucrative franchise to operate the ferry over Bayou Lafourche. The so-called Negro Revolt in Donaldsonville arose from a mixture of race, politics, and greed.

David Fischer and the two Oliver brothers, all black men, were convicted of murdering Lawes and Schonberg, but were later freed in a deal arranged by the Republican governor, Henry Clay Warmoth.

COLFAX

The 1872 gubernatorial elections in Louisiana were disputed. The Republicans argued that William Pitt Kellogg had been elected, the Democrats that John McEnery was the victor. On April 13, 1873, Easter Sunday, the town of Colfax, Grant Parish, was the site of a political dispute that became a one-sided battle: one hundred and three blacks died in the fighting; three whites perished. The blacks died in the burning court house or were executed afterwards. The court house had been set afire by a black man ordered to do so by the white vigilantes upon the penalty of death. The vigilantes promised to spare the black men in the burning building, but shot them down when they emerged. One white participant described what happened to forty-eight prisoners taken in the fight: “When I got back to the

garden I heard Luke Hadnot say, 'I can take five,' and five men stepped out. Luke lined them up and his old gun went off, and he killed all five of them with two shots. Then it was like popcorn in a skillet. They killed those forty-eight." By the time Federal troops arrived at Colfax, the massacre had ended, and the killers had rewoven themselves into the fabric of the community whence they had come. The slain black men were buried on the court house grounds.

In the case U. S. v. Cruikshank, the Supreme Court dismissed the indictments against nine of the white vigilantes involved in the Colfax massacre, arguing that the Fourteenth Amendment proscribed only "state action," not crimes committed by "individuals."

COUSHATTA

On August 30, 1874, Coushatta, in Red River Parish, became the site of racial bloodletting. The Republican office-holders in the area were seized and put under guard by local vigilantes, representatives of the White League. Told they were to be given safe escort out of town so they could make their way to the North, the doomed prisoners, with four black men, were executed on the side of the road. The leading Republican politician of the area, Marshall Twitchell, escaped the bloodbath by the good luck of being out of town. Much of his family, however, did not. Later, a paid assassin ambushed Twitchell as he crossed the Red River in a skiff. The Vermont war hero and carpetbagger was wounded, ultimately losing both arms and a leg. Unlike the others, he survived.

Twitchell's harrowing account of post-war Louisiana is titled, Carpetbagger from Vermont: The Autobiography of Marshall Harvey Twitchell (Edited by Ted Tunnell) LSU Press. 1989.

BULL DOOZERS

In a letter written in 1927, Charles M. Barrow, a wealthy planter in West Feliciana Parish, wrote of his activities during the 1876 gubernatorial election in Louisiana (between the Republican Stephen B. Packard and the Democrat Francis T. Nicholls). The following excerpt tells of a local "night rider" organization known as the Bull Doozers:

> “Nothing intimidates a negro so much as mystery, and seeing armed men riding around at night through their quarters on the different plantations, set them to thinking. The work of our little body was done altogether at night and we seldom spent a whole night in our bed. Occasionally there were a few necks broken and straps used among the worst...Two nights before the election, which was in November 1876, we made a raid down through a section of the Parish where the negroes hadn't come into line as they should. Tom Rice, a leader among them and whom we were after, hearing the horses' hoofs, hid in the brake back of his house and killed Mr. West. He escaped then but was caught later and hung by the road side. A few days before that, while returning from the field, on the way to breakfast, I was shot at but not struck...After the election, the negroes realizing that they were among their true friends became reconciled and West Feliciana now boasts of having the best class of negroes in the State. You seldom meet one who doesn't touch his hat...The name of 'Bull Doozer' originated in this way: a negro was about to be punished for some offense. A Dutchman, who was a by-stander, remarked, 'Ee shudt haf a bull dussen,' meaning he should have a dozen lashes with a bull whip. We were thereafterwards called 'Bull Doozers.'”

Barrow described the murder of a Republican politician in the aftermath of Reconstruction:

> “One of the white Republican leaders, failing to get away in time, one day while walking up the streets in St. Francisville, must have stepped on a torpedo, judging from the holes in his body, but no one knows to this day how they got there.”

UNIFICATION MOVEMENT

In 1872, a group of businessmen sponsored the Unification Movement. Former Confederate General P. T. G. Beauregard was chosen as the spokesman. The Unification Movement wanted to end the political turbulence in the city and make the city a suitable environment for business. One white businessman remarked, “I am not afraid that they [the black people] will in any considerable degree, abuse their privileges, and for ourselves, we want nothing but peaceful government.” The

members of the Unification Movement recognized the importance of the large black vote in the state, a political reality which even the white supremacists begrudgingly had to recognize. The Unificationists proposed that the Reconstruction amendments be honored, including the provisions for public accommodations and integrated schools, that whites desist in violence, that blacks leave the Republican Party, and that political offices be equally divided between the two races.

The Unification Movement enjoyed little support in New Orleans and even less in the rural parishes. Many whites and blacks were steadfastly against it. The race question in Louisiana did not admit of compromise.

The businessmen of the Unification Movement, in their motives and goals, were the antecedents of the business leaders almost a hundred years later, who in 1961 sought a peaceful solution to the integration crisis largely because they recognized that turmoil was bad for business.

THE WHITE LEAGUE

The New Orleans Crescent City Democratic Club, which had intimidated black voters in 1868 and 1872, reorganized itself into the White League to fight the Unificationists. One of the founders of the White League was Frederick N. Ogden, a former Confederate cavalry officer in East Louisiana (where he fought black Federal soldiers in a war that can be described as one of extermination).

In New Orleans, the White League was a militia group comprising former Confederate officers as well as prominent young men from Uptown who had come of age since “de wah.” Essentially, the White League served as the armed force of the Democratic Party. It had various cousin organizations throughout the state, and the first White League appears to have originated in Opelousas. The purpose of the White League was bluntly expressed:

> “The white man’s party is determined to rescue Louisiana from the polluting embraces of such a hybrid pack of lecherous pimps as [Radical Republican politicians] Kellogg, Packard, Durell, Pinchback...and their followers, who were conceived in sin, brought forth in pollution, nursed by filthy hobbies, and dropped in Louisiana to show to the world to what depth of corruption,

disgrace and infamy human nature can stoop when the flesh is weak and the spirit willing."

The 1872 elections in Louisiana were characteristically violent and ended with a characteristically disputed count. In effect, the White League stole the elections at the polls by intimidating blacks, and the Republicans stole it back by having their Returning Board manipulate the count. The Republican candidate William Pitt Kellogg declared himself the winner, and his position was ultimately supported by the Federal government. When that became apparent, the Democratic candidate John McEnery conceded defeat.

BATTLE OF LIBERTY PLACE

The tense situation in New Orleans, the state capital of that time, reached a bloody climax on September 14, 1874. This was the so-called Battle of Liberty Place, as the white supremacists hailed it in subsequent years. On that day, the White League overwhelmed the Metropolitan Police, a mostly black military organization in the service of the Kellogg administration. It was commanded by the former Confederate general, James Longstreet.

The site of the brief conflict was the foot of Canal Street in front of the Custom House. The Metropolitan Police were outnumbered and outflanked. Despite the presence of cannon and a Gatlin gun, the charge of the White League could not be stayed. The Metropolitan Police retreated to the Cabildo and to the St. Louis Hotel, which was being used as the state house. Governor Kellogg sought refuge in the Custom House. The White League wisely did not bother the Custom House, recognizing the sanctity of Federal property and the dire consequences of tampering with it.

For three days the White League ruled New Orleans, but the arrival of Federal reinforcements (twenty-two war ships anchored on the Mississippi River and Federal troops came by train from Brookhaven, Mississippi) returned control of the city (and the state) to the Kellogg administration.

The great majority of white people in New Orleans supported the aims and the means of the White League. A few, however, sided with the Republican administration. These individuals were ostracized by their friends and neighbors. A

New Orleans woman later recalled an incident which occurred on a street car: another girl “whose father had gone over to the Republicans got on. The car was full of her life-long friends and even relatives, but she was no more recognized than if she had been an invisible presence.”

This example of social ostracization would repeat itself in New Orleans during the desegregation crisis of the 1960's, when those who attempted to implement the Federal government's integration orders were shunned by their friends and neighbors.

TILDEN-HAYES COMPROMISE

Federal troops supported Kellogg, but the Louisiana governor had suffered an irreparable blow to his prestige as a result of the ignominious rout of his troops at the so-called Battle of Liberty Place.

As had been the case for a long time, political anarchy reigned in much of Louisiana. New Orleans was not an exception. The Federal government grew tired of the continuing political difficulties in Louisiana, which appeared to be the most recalcitrant of the defeated Southern states and the most willing to employ violence to keep black people in a state of semi-slavery. Louisiana had become an albatross around the neck of the Federal government. The nation appeared to desire a return to some kind of normalcy, even if meant abandoning the black people of the South to their former masters. Thus, a war that began between North and South became a war between white and black.

The November 1876 presidential election between Samuel J. Tilde, a Democrat, and Rutherford B. Hayes, a Republican, was disputed in Louisiana and accompanied by the usual instances of violence. The election results depended on who found himself in a strong enough position to count the votes. In 1876, this was the Democratic Party. Violence had triumphed. The supporters of Rutherford Hayes, even though he was a Republican (the party of Lincoln), reached an agreement with the Louisiana Democrats whereby the Louisiana electoral votes would be cast in favor of Hayes; in exchange, Hayes, when inaugurated, would remove Federal troops from Louisiana. This arrangement, known as the Tilde-Hayes Compromise, represented the Federal government's de facto abandonment of black people in the South. The so-called compromise led to the inauguration in

April 1877 of Francis T. Nicholas as Louisiana governor. Nicholas was a former Confederate brigadier-general who served in Virginia, losing an arm at the battle of Winchester and a leg at Chancellorsville. When nominated the previous summer, Nicholas was introduced as the next governor of Louisiana, “or what's left of him.”

The Redeemers could afford to be jocular. When they took office in 1877, the state Senate promised “acceptance in good faith of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, equal protection of the laws and education for black and white, and the promotion of kindly feeling between the two races.” This proved a sad mockery of a lofty promise, and undercut severely the proud notion of Southern paternalism.

Federal troops were gradually withdrawn from Louisiana, and Reconstruction came to an end. Louisiana fell into the hands of the same social and economic class that had ruled the state before the Civil War. Now began the slow and very cautious series of legal steps leading to removal of all the rights black people had been granted and enjoyed during the brief period of Reconstruction.

The 1879 Louisiana Constitution, written by the Redeemers, repealed the equal-rights provisions of the 1868 Louisiana Constitution, written by the Radicals. The pendulum had shifted in the South and in the country.

EROSION OF BLACK RIGHTS

Governor Francis T. Nicholas and his Bourbon allies (as the conservative group was labeled, a reference to the reactionary aristocrats who came to power in France after the Napoleonic revolution) were cautious about tampering with civil rights out of fear that Federal troops would return to the state. Nicholas quietly encouraged the separation of the races in schools, hospitals, and other public institutions and facilities, but the white political leadership did not pass discriminatory legislation until the 1890's when it became obvious that the Federal government and the courts had long tired of forcing racial change on the recalcitrant white people of Louisiana.

In the 1880's, the lines of segregation were increasingly enforced by law. In 1883, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that the Civil Rights Bill of 1875 was an intrusion upon private individuals. Chief Justice Joseph Bradley wrote that the black man must no longer “be the special favorite of the laws” and must seek protection for his

rights “in the ordinary modes by which other men's rights are protected.”

In 1890, the Louisiana legislature passed the “separate car act” prohibiting blacks from sitting in train cars reserved for whites. As historian Raphael Cassimere has written, “The new law was part of a concerted attempt by the Louisiana legislature to place legal authority behind the already entrenched practice of racial segregation.” In 1894, the legislature ordered separate waiting rooms. These laws merely confirmed the existing conditions of affairs. In 1902, according to historian Dale A. Sobers, “Jim Crow boarded the city street cars,” which had been desegregated in 1867 at the beginning of Radical Reconstruction. Ironically, the movement to re-segregate the New Orleans streetcars originated from a legislator in a parish that did not have a single streetcar. Those who owned and operated the streetcars in New Orleans were not terribly interested in segregated streetcars because it meant they had to provide additional streetcars and suffer the economic burden therein.

In 1894, the legislature prohibited interracial marriages. In 1908, the legislature outlawed concubinage, making it a felony offense for a white and a black to cohabitate.

PLESSY V. FERGUSON

The steady erosion of black rights culminated in the U. S. Supreme Court case “Plessy v. Ferguson.”

On June 7, 1892, Homer Adolphe Plessy, a thirty-four year old light-skinned black man, boarded the East Louisiana Railway for Covington. Plessy had been selected by the Citizens Committee, a multi-racial civil rights organization in New Orleans, to challenge the Louisiana “separate car act” of 1890. As expected, Plessy was arrested and his case brought to trial.

Led by the carpetbagger and novelist Albion Tourgee, a white man, the Citizens Committee provided legal counsel for Plessy. Tourgee argued that the “separate car act” established “an insidious distinction and discrimination between Citizens of the United States based on race which is obnoxious to the fundamental principles of National Citizenship.” This argument was based on the novel premise that all Americans were citizens, one of the sanguine results of the Civil War. The

Fourteenth Amendment extended the Bill of Rights to the citizens of the states and thus, in effect, changed the U. S. Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment also expanded the role of the Federal government, which was now called upon to protect the rights of all citizens. The Citizens Committee referred to this new concept of citizenship (universal and equal) when it attacked the “separate car act” as a violation of “the privileges and immunities of Citizens of the United States and the rights secured by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Federal Constitution.”

Judge John H. Ferguson of Orleans Parish Criminal Court rejected the Citizens Committee's argument and upheld the constitutionality of the “separate car act.” The Citizens Committee appealed to the Louisiana Supreme Court. It was presided over by Francis T. Nicholas, the former governor who had signed the 1890 act into law. The state's highest court agreed with the lower court's decision. The Citizens Committee next appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court.

The case was heard in October 1895. Historian Cassimere has written, “Black Louisianians tried vainly to enlist support from other prominent African American leaders across the country.” In the end, Albion Tourgee argued the case before the high court. Even supporters of the Citizens Committee saw little purpose in fighting a battle “which was forlorn.” Instead, some black leaders endorsed the self-help doctrine advocated by Booker T. Washington or the back-to-Africa movement espoused by black separatist Marcus Garvey. Others simply resigned themselves to a bitter fate in “the land of the free.” The Citizens Committee was virtually alone in arguing for the interracial ideal. As Rodolphe Lucien Desdunes stated:

> “It is more noble and dignified to fight, no matter what, than to show a passive attitude of resignation. Absolute submission augments the oppressor's power and creates doubts about the feelings of the oppressed...Liberty is won by continued resistance to tyranny.”

Before the justices of the U. S. Supreme Court, Tourgee argued that the “separate car act” violated both the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments by perpetuating distinctions “of a servile character, coincident with the institution of slavery...The object of such a law is simply to debase and distinguish against the inferior race...for the gratification and recognition of the sentiment of white superiority and white supremacy of right and power.” The separate-but-equal doctrine, given the imprimatur of constitutionality, would lead to a flood of discriminatory legislation.

The court issued its decision on May 18, 1896. The majority of the justices held that the “separate car act” met the test of “reasonableness” under which legislatures were “at liberty to act with reference to the established usages, customs, and traditions of the people...”

The decision in Plessy v. Ferguson reflected the nation's hardening attitude on race. Social Darwinism, the “survival of the fittest” argument that offered a scientific basis for social and economic inequality, returned racism to respectability and underlined the belief, as the historian Cassimere has written, “that social status reflected the natural order of things and was beyond the reach of law.” In the Plessy v. Ferguson decision, Justice Henry Billings Brown wrote, “If the civil and political rights of both races be equal, one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane...”

The one dissenter in the Plessy decision was Justice John Marshall Harlan, a former Kentucky slave owner. Noting that “Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among its citizens,” Harlan drew this conclusion:

> “The present decision, it may well be apprehended, will not only stimulate aggressions, more or less brutal and irritating, upon the admitted rights of colored citizens, but will encourage the belief that it is possible, by means of state enactments, to defeat the beneficent purpose which the people of the United States had in mind when they adopted the recent amendments of the Constitution.”

Harlan reserved a harsh opinion for another despised minority, the Chinese. They could never be assimilated into the mainstream of American life, he argued.

“What happens to a dream deferred?” the poet Langston Hughes later asked. “Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun, or fester like a sore and run?”

DISFRANCHISEMENT

Speaking at his second inauguration as Louisiana governor, Murphy J. Foster spoke of “some action” regarding suffrage restriction but promised that “the rich man in

his palace and the poor man in his humble home shall be protected." Foster, representing the social and economic elite of the state, viewed the growing Populist movement in the state with both disdain and fear. The prospect of poor whites and blacks joining forces was a threat to Bourbon rule. In June 1896, the General Assembly passed a series of registration and election laws whose purpose was to reduce the votes of the "uneducated of both races," in the words of historian William Ivy Hair. The new rules effectively disfranchised ninety percent of black voters and fifty percent of whites, the latter group comprising the "poor whites." Uneducated white Populists, the *Iberville South* newspaper reported, "are no better than negroes." The same General Assembly refused to increase the already minimal funding for public schools. The Baton Rouge newspaper the *Daily Advocate* editorialized, "The education of a bad citizen will increase his power for evil and make him a worse citizen."

A constitutional convention was called in 1898 to formalize the changes in the election laws. As a result, voters now had to demonstrate the ability to read and write (to the satisfaction of the registrar), or, as an alternative, to show that they owned property of not less than $300.00. As a result of a "grandfather clause," which permitted white voters to retain the vote if their grandfathers had voted prior to the Civil War, white voters eventually returned to the same number as in the 1880's. As historian Hair has written, "The real havoc had been wreaked with black voters: only 5,320 were still on the rolls in 1900, which was less than one-twentieth their previous number." Truth to tell, most black voters had not been permitted the free ballot since Reconstruction, terror (and not a voting law) being the impediment.

The new Louisiana constitution was not submitted for voter approval. Bourbonism was triumphant. In a sense, the Civil War was over.

A CARNIVAL OF FURY

In 1900, New Orleans experienced a race riot that set the racial tone for the next fifty years. In late July, a black man named Robert Charles killed two policemen and wounded another. In response, white mobs scourged the city for the purpose of beating and killing black people. The local newspaper *The Picayune* reported, "The city has not seen such an utter disregard of the law since the days of 1866, when the revolution against Negro domination occurred, and the streets of the city ran with blood...As it was, there seemed to be no leader, and the mobs moved first one way

and then another. The supreme sentiment was to kill Negroes."

Historian William Ivy Hair described the New Orleans massacre in his book, A Carnival of Fury.

PUBLIC EDUCATION UNDER THE REDEEMERS

The Redeemers had little interest in public education. As the historian Hair has put it, "If judged alone by the results of their handiwork, it would appear that the Democratic Party, after it came to power in 1877, held Negro and poor white children personally responsible for the failings of the Reconstruction school system."

The state of Louisiana, Hair wrote, "climbed from fifth to first place in ignorance between 1880 and 1890." The state was the only one in which the percentage of native whites who could not read or write rose, and the only state where illiteracy among blacks remained above seventy percent.

A public school official said, "When the intelligent classes...secured possession of the government, there many who said of the public school, 'Cut it away. Why cumbereth it the ground?'" In 1879, at the constitutional convention, an effort was made to abolish the office of state superintendent of public education. Populist critics charged that the Redeemers deliberately undercut Louisiana's school system in the effort to keep the lower classes of both races (particularly in the rural countryside) ignorant, docile, and thus manageable.

In 1890, Louisiana allocated the least amount of the state budget to public education of any of the four poorest Southern states, despite the fact that Louisiana was the wealthiest of those four (which included Arkansas, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Florida). In Louisiana, there were 115 white children per teacher, and 309 black children per teacher. This was the most dismal record of any Southern state. Arkansas, the state with the second most dismal record, had 91 white children per teacher, and 107 black children per teacher.

In 1880, almost twenty percent of the white population in Louisiana was illiterate; almost eighty percent of the black population was illiterate. In sum, forty-nine percent of the state's population, white and black, could not read or write.

The Redeemer's record on public education, said historian Hair, was “a social disaster of frightful magnitude.”

In a singular gesture to black education, the Louisiana state convention in 1879 established Southern University “for the education of persons of color.” The legislature, however, failed to provide funding for construction of the new university. The faculty, taking a pay cut and arranging for future salaries to be used as collateral for a loan, managed to construct one building. In 1896, Governor Murphy J. Foster referred to Southern University and unwittingly noted, “This institution is a fair index to what is being done throughout the state for the education of colored people.”

RACE AND SEX IN THE SOUTH

In the 1890's, coinciding with the drive towards industrialism and the loss of material security during an economic depression, harsh feelings towards black people intensified. During this period, known as the Radical era, the image of the “black rapist beast” took (deeper) root in the imagination of the white Southerner. Describing the “black rapist beast” as “a case of unreality, *in extremis*,” historian Joel Williamson has written, “That mythical being, so totally the creature of the white male imagination, has labored for white people in and after the Radical era probably as no real black person has ever done.”

Before the Civil War, white people had depicted the black person as childlike and generally contented. Then, on the eve of a new century, the black man was portrayed as the “insatiable satyr” who lusted after white women. Both times the derogatory view of the black man made the world manageable for the white man, explaining his superiority and justifying his violence.
The radical era ushered in a period of American history in which lynching became “ordinary.”

Joel Williamson, A Rage for Order: Black/White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation. Oxford University Press. 1986.

II. CASE STUDY: BROWN V. THE BOARD

On May 17, 1954, the U. S. Supreme court issued its decision in Brown v. the Board of Education. The court decided in favor of a black girl named Linda Brown, saying “separate but equal” in public education was unconstitutional While black people quietly rejoiced at the prospect of change, much of the white South bristled at the untoward implications of the landmark decision: namely, racial change, the most dreaded prospect.

...

1. The bi-racial NAACP was founded in New York in 1909. It determined that the fight for equality began with the fight for education. The Plessy decision had to be overturned. Charles Houston of Howard University's law school set out to develop a group of socially-conscious lawyers, a group which included Thurgood Marshall.

2. In 1938, the Supreme Court ordered the admission of a black student to the all-white University of Missouri law school. This established “the Gaines principle.”

3. The Second World War, and the rise of communism, had an important impact of the course of race relations in the country.

4. In 1951, the Supreme Court ruled against the attempt by the University of Oklamoma to separate a black student, George McLaurin, from white students. McLaurin had been forced to sit in the doorway. On the same day as the

“McLaurin” decision, the court decided in favor of a black student, Heman Sweatt. The University of Texas Law School had tried to segregate Sweatt by building a separate building for black students.

5. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court issued its decision in Brown v. the Board and thereby reversed the Plessy decision as it applied to public education. The court argued that desegregation be carried out “with all deliberate speed.” Thus the battle began.

III. EMMETT TILL - 1955

"*The fact that Emmett Till, a young black man, could be found floating down the river in Mississippi, as indeed many had done through the years, just set into concrete the determination of people to move forward."*

-- Fred Shuttlesworth, SCLC leader in Montgomery, Alabama

EMMETT TILL: SYNOPSIS:

This segment of the documentary is 10:08 minutes long.

A key point about the murder of Emmett Till is when it happened: 1954, the year after the Supreme Court's landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education. Racial tension in the South reached an intensity unknown since the days of Reconstruction. White people talked of "drawing the line" against racial change. In the seventy years prior to the Brown decision, over five hundred lynchings had been documented in Mississippi alone. This had been the traditional answer to any hint of racial change. Violence was the foundation of the system.

Emmett Till was fourteen years old. He was black and lived in Chicago. In August 1955, his mother, Mamie Till-Bradley, agreed to let Emmett, her only child, visit his uncle Mose Wright in the Mississippi Delta. She did so with a reluctance based on the harsh reality of Jim Crow segregation. She instructed Emmett to be submissive to white people in Mississippi. He thought that the "silliest thing he'd ever heard." The stage was set for a clash of two worlds.

Mose Wright lived near the small town of Money, Mississippi. Emmett attended a racially mixed school in Chicago. In his wallet were school photographs of both white and black friends, including a photograph of a white girl. He told his astonished Mississippi cousins that the white girl was his girlfriend. Such a relationship was unknown in the Delta. On the evening of August 24, 1955, Emmett and his friends stopped at Roy Bryant's 'Meat and Grocery Store' in Money. His friends dared him to get "a date" with the white woman inside the store. She was Carolyn Bryant, the twenty-one year old wife of proprietor Roy Bryant, who was away at the time trucking shrimp from Louisiana to Texas. Carolyn Bryant later

testified that Emmett Till grappled her hand, embraced her, and asked her for “date.” Emmett's cousin Curtis Jones said that Emmett yelled “Bye baby.” Emmett would not have the opportunity to testify about what occurred in the store that evening.

At two o'clock in the morning of August 28, 1955, Roy Bryant and his half-brother J. W. Milam abducted Emmett Till from Mose Wright's cabin. Till's body was recovered from the Tallahatchie River three days later. It was beaten and mutilated almost beyond recognition. Emmett's silver ring with the initials "L.T." (his father's initials) was found on the body, and with this evidence Mose Wright identified the body as his nephew.

Milam and Bryant were arrested and tried for murder in Sumner, Mississippi. Black activists like Aaron Henry of the Clarksdale, Mississippi, NAACP later said he was surprised a trial took place. The kidnaping charges against Milam and Bryant would later be dropped, although the two men acknowledged kidnaping Till (but denied killing him). The white community came to the defense of the two men. It was a question of "outsiders" versus "us." Media from around the nation and world descended on tiny Sumner, including several black journalist, much to the astonishment and consternation of local whites who did not have experience with educated black people. The trial was seen as the opening salvo of the civil rights era. The most dramatic moment occurred when Emmett Till's uncle Mose Wright was asked to identify the men who had abducted his nephew. The elderly black man stood up in the courtroom amid great tension and pointed his long finger at the defendants and identified each with the words typical of the local vernacular, “thar he.”

The defense argued that the disfigured body retrieved from the Tallahatchie River could not be identified. The ring, the defense argued, had been planted on the body by the NAACP and Mamie Till-Bradley, Emmett's mother, was secretly working with the NAACP to discredit Mississippi. The jury of local men acquitted Milam and Bryant after deliberating for an hour and seven minutes. The local sheriff sent Coca-Colas into the jury room and told the jurors to take their time reaching a decision in order "to make it look good." After the trial, the black people in Money, Mississippi, boycotted Bryant's store, and he was forced to close. This was an early indication of the power black people wielded by virtue of their money and where they chose to spend it.

The killing of Emmett Till was not unique in the Mississippi Delta or in the South of that time. Lynching was "ordinary," as former activist Julian Bond reminds us in the documentary. Falsely cloaked in a chivalrous defense of white women, the killing of black men in the South had a political motive: to intimidate blacks and to thwart their aspirations for equality, principally, the right to vote.

Several months after the trial, Milam and Bryant told their story to journalist William Bradford Huie for a fee of four thousand dollars. This amounted to a confession of how, where, and why (to protect white women) they murdered Emmett Till. The two men had been acquitted in a state court and did not fear being tried on Federal charges. Nor were the two men psychologically on the defensive. They (rightly) assumed the local white community knew that they had killed Emmett Till. Indeed, the five lawyers in Sumner, the pillars of the community, had represented the men; two of the lawyers, Breland and Whitten, had arranged Huie's interviews with them (to let the grisly details demonstrate to the world the extent to which the South would go to preserve the "pure" way of Southern life). The story was published in *Look Magazine* (January 1956) under the title "Story of Approved Killing in Mississippi." Some members of the white community were embarrassed by the details. In the end, Milam and Bryant were ostracized by the same people who had rallied to their defense at the trial. However, they were ostracized not because of what they did to Emmett Till, but because of what they did to the white community. The two men could find neither work nor a bank loan and were forced to move to East Texas.

The trial in Sumner ("A good place to raise a boy," read the sign outside of town) received national and international attention. It brought to light the brutality of Jim Crow segregation and the unflinching attitude taken by white Southerners towards racial change. The trial also demonstrated the courage of several black individuals, most prominently Till's mother Mamie Till-Mobley and his uncle Mose Wright, who defied the terror that had long defined race relations.

EMMETT TILL: CHRONOLOGY

May 17, 1954 - The Supreme Court issues decision in Brown v. Board of Education establishing that segregation in public education is unconstitutional. Describing it as Black Monday, Segregationists decry the decision. White Citizens' Councils are organized in South to fight implementation of decision.

1955 - Reverend George W. Lee and Lamar Smith, NAACP organizers, are killed in Mississippi while trying to register blacks to vote.

August 21, 1955 - Fourteen year old Emmett Till leaves his home in Chicago to visit relatives in the Mississippi Delta.

August 24, 1955 - "Incident" at Roy Bryant's store in Money, Mississippi.

August 28, 1955 - Emmett Till is abducted at night by Bryant and Milam from his uncle Mose Wright's cabin outside of Money. Till is murdered and his body, tied to a 74 pound gin fan, is dumped into the Tallahatchie River. Body is recovered three days later.

September 19-23, 1955 - With the white community solidly behind them, Milam and Bryant are tried and acquitted for Till's murder in Sumner, Mississippi.

December 1, 1955 - Rosa Parks arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a public bus.

December 5, 1955 - Montgomery Improvement Association formed. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., elected president. Boycott launched.

January 1956 - Huie's interview with Milam and Bryant (and their confession) appears in *Look Magazine* titled "Story of Approved Killing in Mississippi." White community in Delta embarrassed by the grisly details.

January 1957 - Second Huie article about Milam and Bryant: "What happened to Emmett Till's killers?" Ostracized, the killers move to East Texas.
1983 - J.W. Milam dies of cancer.

1994 - Legally blind, Roy Bryant dies in Ruleville, Mississippi. His one apparent regret about killing Emmett Till: "A bunch of people made a lot money out of it. I ain't never made a damn nickel."

EMMETT TILL: GLOSSARY TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: identify the following; explain the significance of each.

1. Jim Crow segregation - By the late 19th century, Jim Crow, the name of a lame black man (played by a white) in "a comic performance," came to signify the far-reaching and institutionalized system of segregation, formalized by law, that was the way of life in the South and in other parts of the country.

2. NAACP - The racially mixed National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded in 1909 "to achieve, through peaceful and lawful means, equal citizenship rights for all American citizens..." Fighting to end segregation through the court system, NAACP legal counsel Thurgood Marshall won a notable victory in the 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, which outlawed segregation in public education. The NAACP was loathed by segregationists. It was identified with

communism (whose intention was allegedly to weaken the U. S. by promoting race mixing) and became the focus of white Southern ire.

3. Brown v. Board of Education - On May 17, 1954, the U. S. Supreme Court established that separate educational facilities "are inherently unequal." The justices could not sanction racial superiority, particularly after the defeat of Nazi Germany and the revelations about the Holocaust. The argument for integration was presented by the NAACP's lawyer Thurgood Marshall.

4. White Citizen's Council - In response to the Brown decision, segregationists throughout the South organized White Citizens' Councils to thwart the aspirations of black people to enjoy political rights. The councils included leading members of the white community, and employed economic measures (job loss, mortgages called in) to intimidate black people. The economic weapon served the purpose of a noose. Different from the Ku Klux Klan in that it abstained from overt violence, the Citizens' Council nonetheless tacitly approved of the Klan and shared the same goal: keeping the black man down.

5. Mose Wright - Mose Wright was Emmett Till's uncle. He was an elderly sharecropper and (long winded) preacher in Money, Mississippi. During the trial, Mose Wright identified the killers with the words, "Thar he." His example was one of supreme courage. He departed Mississippi after the trial, fearing for his life and leaving behind “the best damn hunting dog in seven states.” Mose Wright died in Chicago in the 1970's, a forgotten hero.

EMMETT TILL: GLOSSARY

NAME _____

Instructions: identify the following; be specific; explain the significance of each.

1. Jim Crow segregation -

2. NAACP -

3. Brown v. Board of Education -

4. White Citizen's Council -

5. Mose Wright -

EMMETT TILL: QUOTES TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "Sunday morning about two-thirty someone called at the door. I said, 'Who is it?' Someone said, 'This is Mr. Bryant. I want to talk to you and the boy,' and when I opened the door, there was a man standing with a pistol in one hand and a flash light in the other hand, and he asked me, 'Did I have two boys from Chicago?' I told him 'I have,' and he said 'I wants the boy that done all that talk.' Then marched him to the car and asked someone there, 'Is this the right boy?' And the answer was, 'It is.' And they drove towards Money."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Mose Wright, Emmett Till's uncle, said this.

What is he describing? Be specific.

He is describing that early morning when Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam abducted his nephew Emmett Till.

What information does this passage convey? Be specific. In your opinion, who might have been the "someone" in the car?

The passage conveys the information that Bryant had a pistol that night. There was no opportunity for Mose Wright or Emmett Till to fight or to flee. Who was the "someone" in the car? It is possible the person was Carolyn Bryant. She alone could have identified Emmett Till.

What is historically significant about this passage?

The passage is historically significant because it describes a brutal abduction that was not untypical of the political culture of that time. The early morning knock on the door was the fear of every black household, and a bitter reality repeated over decades. White inspired terror aimed to instill black passivity.

2. "Thar he."

Who said this?

Mose Wright, Emmett Till's uncle, said this.

When was this statement made? Under what circumstances? Explain.

This statement was made at the moment during the trial when Mose Wright was asked to identify the men who had abducted Emmett Till that early morning. Captured in the photograph taken surreptiously at the time, Mose Wright stood up and pointed at Bryant and Milam and further identified them with the words "Thar he," meaning "There is he is" or "That's the man."

What is the historical significance of this statement?

The historical significance is that Mose Wright, a black man, had the courage to stand up in a court filled with hostile white people and point an accusing finger at two white men. The system of white supremacy was founded on fear and terror. Mose Wright defied both in the Sumner, Mississippi, courtroom.

3. "...and I'm sure that every last Anglo-Saxon one of you has the courage to free these men in the face of that [outside] pressure."

Who said this? Who was this person? When was the statement made?

This was said by one of Milam and Bryant's defense lawyers (John Whitten) during his summation at the trial.

What is the significance of this quote? What does it tell us about the person who made it? What was his intent in making it?

The quote is significant because the person who said it clearly was appealing to the racial prejudice of the jury members. He was not arguing the merits of the case; he was arguing the color of skin. He was saying (in effect), ‘They're white (i.e. Anglo-Saxon), you're white; acquit them.’ He was also appealing to another powerful emotion: the jury's "us" versus "them" prejudice. As a lawyer, he was playing the race card on behalf of his clients. Lawyers justify such actions by arguing that everyone has the right to a defense, no matter

what the cost to truth.

4. "But J.W. Milam looked up at me and said, 'Well, when he told me about this white girl he had, he said, 'My friend, that's what this war is about down here now. That's what we got to fight to protect. I just looked at him, and said, 'Boy you ain't never going to see the sun come up again.'"

Who said this? Who was this person? Explain.

The author of this quote is William Bradford Huie, the journalist who interviewed Milam and Bryant after their acquittals. His significance is that he published the killers' confession in which they detailed their version of how and why they murdered Emmett Till.

Why, according to their own testimony, did Milam and Bryant murder Emmett Till?

They said they killed the fourteen year old in order to defend white women in the South. This argument touched a deep emotion of the white South, which had long been taught that white women had much to fear from black men. The time honored argument said it was the duty of white men to defend the virtue of white women. The abuse of black women by white men, very much apart of the Southern culture, was a subject that white people let pass unnoticed.

What is the "war" Milam refers to?

He is referring to white resistance to racial change heralded by the civil rights and particularly by the recent (1954) decision in Brown v. the Board, a decision which threatened great changes in South.

In your opinion, why did Milam and Bryant murder Emmett Till? What was their motive or motives? Explain.

This answer requires a personal opinion. However, it should be noted that in the Southern culture of that time, Milam and Bryant felt obliged to teach Till (and other "wayward" black youths) a lesson in the aftermath of the

"incident" at Bryant's store. Violence, to repeat, was the foundation of the system. What Milam and Bryant did was not untypical. Far from it. It should also be noted that racial change directly threatened people like Milam and Bryant. If black people were treated fairly in the Mississippi Delta, Milam and Bryant's status would be threatened and their economic livelihood threatened by new (black) competitors.

5. *"I believe that the whole United States is mourning with me, and if the death of my son can mean something to the other unfortunate people all over the world, then for him to have died a hero would mean more to me than for him to have just died."*

Who said this? Who was this person?

Mamie Till-Bradley, Emmett Till's mother, said this.

In your opinion, did the death of Emmett Till serve to "mean something to the other unfortunate people all over the world?" Explain, offering examples.

This answer requires a personal opinion.

How did Emmett Till's murder affect public opinion, both white and black, in America? Explain.

Significant parts of the American public were outraged by the show of violence in Mississippi. The murder of Emmett Till demonstrated the brutal nature of Jim Crow segregation. The murder gave many black people the strength and determination to fight segregation. "It set in concrete our determination to go forward," as Fred Shuttlesworth of SCLC said. It is important to note that the Montgomery Bus Boycott began two months after the trial in Sumner.

In your opinion, did Emmett Till die a "hero?" If so, why? If not, why not? Explain.

This answer requires a personal opinion.

EMMETT TILL: QUOTES

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "Sunday morning about two-thirty someone called at the door. I said, 'Who is it?' Someone said, 'This is Mr. Bryant. I want to talk to you and the boy,' and when I opened the door, there was a man standing with a pistol in one hand and a flash light in the other hand, and he asked me, 'Did I have two boys from Chicago?' I told him 'I have,' and he said 'I wants the boy that done all that talk.' Then marched him to the car and asked someone there, 'Is this the right boy?' And the

answer was, ‘It is.’ And they drove towards Money."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What is he describing? Be specific.

What information does this passage convey? Be specific. In your opinion, who might have been the "someone" in the car?

What is historically significant about this passage?

2. ‘Thar he.’

Who said this?

When was this statement made? Under what circumstances? Explain.

What is the historical significance of this statement?

3. "...and I'm sure that every last Anglo-Saxon one of you has the courage to free these men in the face of that [outside] pressure."

Who said this? Who was this person? When was the statement when?

What is the significance of this quote? What does it tell us about the person who made it? What was his intent in making it?

4. "But J. W. Milam looked up at me and said, ‘Well, when he told me about this

white girl he had,' he said, 'My friend, that's what this war is about down here now. That's what we got to fight to protect. I just looked at him, and said, 'Boy you ain't never going to see the sun come up again.'"

Who said this? Who was his person? What is this person's significance in the Emmett Till story?

According to their own testimony, why did Milam and Bryant murder Emmett Till?

What is the "war" Milam refers to?

In your opinion, why did Milam and Bryant murder Emmett Till? What was their motive or motives? Explain.

5. *"I believe that the whole United States is mourning with me, and if the death of my son can mean something to the other unfortunate people all over the world, then for him to have died a hero would mean more to me than for him to have just died."*

Who said this? Who was this person?

In your opinion, how did the death of Emmett Till serve to "mean something to the other unfortunate people all over the world?" Explain, offering examples.

How did Emmett Till's murder affect public opinion, both white and black, in America? Explain.

In your opinion, did Emmett Till die a "hero?" If so, why? If not, why not? Explain.

EMMETT TILL: QUESTIONS TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions in complete sentences. When relevant, offer examples.

1. Define Jim Crow segregation as practiced in the South before the civil rights movement. What was the purpose of segregation? Give examples.

Legal segregation, in effect from 1890's until the 1960's, was designed both to keep the races physically separate from another and to compel black people to live an existence of inferior status and limited opportunity. Separate bathrooms, water fountains, and waiting rooms were reserved for "colored only," but additionally the right to vote and (frequently) the right to own land were also denied blacks. For centuries white people had been taught that blacks were inferior, child-like, and needed the kind and enlightened hand of their “best friends:” the whites. White people were also raised with stories about Reconstruction, how awful it was, and whose fault it was: the blacks. White people in the South were virtually monolithic in their view of black people, and to view the matter with any detachment, to consider another point of view, was inviting retaliation on oneself and one's family. Conformity and fear were very important factors in terms of understanding the unyielding white response to integration.

Specifically, how did legal segregation influence education?

Segregated public education invariably meant that schools for black children received less of everything and what the schools did receive (books, etc) was often second-hand from whites schools. Inadequate opportunity in education had a political purpose: it served to keep black people ignorant and the status quo intact.

2. What did the U. S. Supreme Court establish in the case Brown v. Board of Education? In what year was the decision handed down? What was the historical significance of the decision?

In May 1954, the Supreme Court established in Brown v. Board that

segregation in public education was unconstitutional. The decision was historically significant because it reversed the precedent established by Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896, which originally established the doctrine of "separate but equal." Brown v. the Board opened the gates for racial change.

How did Southern white conservatives respond to the Brown decision? Specifically, what actions were taken in defense of segregation?

White conservatives rejected the Supreme Court decision and leading figures in local communities established the White Citizen's Councils to fight desegregation. The Councils tried to intimidate black people with threats of economic retaliation should they demand their political rights.

3. Lynching (and other examples of white inspired violence) served a purpose beyond the killing of an individual. What was that purpose? Explain.

Violence directed against (usually black males) served the political purpose of instilling fear in black people and making them very wary about pressing their political demands (such as the right to vote). Violence was used to keep black people "in their place."

4. Who was Mose Wright?

Mose Wright was Emmett Till's uncle in Mississippi.

How did Mose Wright identify the body of Emmett Till?

A silver ring with the initials "L. T." (after his father Lewis Till) was found on Emmett Till's mutilated body. Otherwise, Mose Wright would not have been able to identify his nephew's body. The killers were stupid, or contemptuous, or both. At the trial, the jury simply dismissed the importance of the ring and voted their racial conscience.

At the trial, what did Mose Wright testify? What was the significance of his testimony?

Mose Wright testified that Milam and Bryant were the men who abducted

Emmett Till. In effect, Mose Wright, a black man, was accusing two white men of murder. This was one of the first public instances of a black man defying fear and terror to implicate white men for crimes against black people.

5. What is the significance of the Emmett Till case? What made it different from similar cases? Explain.

The murder of a fourteen year old, for violating the racial caste system, revealed the brutality of Jim Crow segregation. The murder of Emmett Till was different from other murders because Till was from Chicago and his disappearance caused a stir. If he had been from Mississippi, Till's murder would have gone the way of other countless murders of black people: dismissed and forgotten by all save the black community. The murder and trial followed the Brown v. Board decision, which had enraged white Southerners, and the trial was seen as the opening round of the civil rights struggles. The trial received national and international attention, and the importance of the media was demonstrated. The leaders of the civil rights movement well understood the importance of the media, and shrewdly fashioned the movement around media attention.

Specifically, how did it influence the civil rights movement?

Till's murder enraged black Americans and gave many the determination to fight Jim Crow segregation. It also enraged segments of white America.

EMMETT TILL: QUESTIONS

NAME _____

Instructions: answer each of the following questions in complete sentences. When relevant, offer examples.

1. Define Jim Crow segregation as practiced in the South before the civil rights movement. What was the purpose of segregation? Give examples.

   Specifically, how did legal segregation influence education?

2. What did the U. S. Supreme Court establish in case Brown v. Board of Education? In what year was the decision handed down?

   What was the historical significance of the decision?

   How did Southern white conservatives respond to the Brown decision? Specifically, what actions were taken in defense of segregation?

3. Lynching (and other examples of white inspired violence) served a purpose beyond the killing of an individual. What was that purpose? Explain.

4. Who was Mose Wright?

   How did Mose Wright identify the body of Emmett Till?

   At the trial, what did Mose Wright testify? What was the significance of his testimony?

5. What is the significance of the Emmett Till case? What made it different from similar cases? Explain.

Specifically, how did it influence the civil rights movement?

IV. CASE STUDY: EMMETT TILL

The Emmett Till murder proved to be the opening round of the modern civil rights struggle. In the aftermath of the Brown decision, the nation (and the world) focused on the brutal slaying, and also on the reaction of white Mississippians who appeared determined at all costs to thwart any hint of racial fairness.

...

1. The Brown decision intensified the racial atmosphere in the South.

2. George Lee and Lamar Smith were murdered in 1955.

3. Emmett Till, 14 years old, attended a racially mixed school in Chicago. He took the train to the Delta in August 1955 to visit his Uncle Mose Wright. At Roy Bryant's store in Money, Emmett Till (according to Carolyn Bryant) violated the Iron Taboo of the South.

4. J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant were arrested for the murder of Emmett Till. The trial was held in Sumner, Mississippi. Mamie Till-Mobley, Emmett's mother, testified at the trial. John Whitten was one of the five lawyers in town who defended the two killers. Mose Wright identified Milam and Bryant as the men who abducted his nephew.

5. William Bradford Huie, a wealthy white journalist with an intense interest in the race question, interviewed Milam and Bryant and published their confession in *Look Magazine*.

6. In February 1994, Byron de la Beckwith, acquitted twice before by hung juries, was convicted in the slaying of Medgar Evers. Two days later, Roy Bryant, living in Ruleville, Mississippi, sat in his small, dark living room, afraid that the law would finally make him pay for his crimes.

V. MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA - 1955

"Why do you push us around?"

-- Rosa Parks to police officer

"I do not know, but the law is the law, and you are under arrest."

-- Police officer to Rosa Parks

MONTGOMERY: SYNOPSIS

This segment of the documentary is 5:36 minutes long.

As in every Southern city, drivers on public buses in Montgomery, Alabama, enforced the rules of Jim Crow segregation. By law, blacks sat in the back and whites in the front. A movable "race screen" separated the two. A black person had to relinquish his or her seat to a white person, a child included. This was a particularly degrading aspect of segregation that humiliated black people on a daily basis.

In Montgomery, on December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a forty-three year old seamstress and NAACP secretary and youth director, rode home from work seated in the middle section of a public bus. She was tired. The bus filled with passengers and the driver, James Blake, commanded Rosa Parks and other blacks to relinquish their seats to white passengers. "Make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats," he threatened. Rosa Parks had been forced from her seat by the same driver in 1943. This time she refused to get up, although other black riders obligingly moved to the rear of the bus. A policeman arrived and Rosa Parks was arrested.

E. D. Nixon, formerly of the local NAACP where he had worked with Rosa Parks, seized upon the arrest of this individual of impeccable character to test the city's segregation laws. It was important that Rosa Parks was an upstanding person because the white press would surely attack her character when the case became known. Likewise, it was impossible for the segregationists to argue that Rosa Parks was a “troublemaker” or “outside agitator.”

Jo Ann Robinson, not a native of Alabama but an English teacher at a local black college, Alabama State, and head of the Woman's Political Counsel,

mimeographed thirty-five thousand handbills urging the black community to boycott the public buses. It was noted that two-thirds of all bus patrons were black. The boycott was set for December 5, 1955, a Monday. It was not spontaneous. It was anticipated and well-organized.

Not all black leaders (most of them ministers) in Montgomery were in favor of the boycott. Not by a long shot. But on the first morning of the boycott, few black people rode the buses to work. The majority of people walked or paid a dime for a ride in black owned taxis (the same price as the bus), the owners of black taxi companies having agreed to cooperate in the effort.

The boycott was a stunning success. The system had been challenged directly. This emboldened the black community. That afternoon black leaders gathered and formed a new organization to represent the black community in its dealings with white political leadership of the city. The new organization was called the Montgomery Improvement Association. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a twenty-six Baptist minister and a newcomer to Montgomery, was elected president.

On the night of December 5, 1955, a meeting was held at the Holt Street Baptist Church. Thousands attended. The streets outside overflowed. Song and prayer sustained the enthusiasm and courage of those who had gathered. Dr. King, "the new preacher in town," was the key-note speaker. “If we are wrong,” he intoned, “then God Almighty is wrong.” Dr. King's stirring oratory (and remarkable courage) would be an important factor in the civil rights movement.

MIA's demands were limited and within the scope of segregation: courteous treatment; seating on first-come, first-served basis; the hiring of black bus drivers along black routes. These demands were rejected by the white leadership as violating "state statutes and city code." Given the limited nature of the demands, the outright rejection emphasized the view among the black leadership that Jim Crow was not willingly going to depart the stage.

MIA established a car pool network to shuttle black people to and from work each day. Dr. King had conferred with Reverend T. J. Jemison in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to learn how he had coordinated car pools during a 1953 boycott of public buses in that city. The Baton Rouge boycott, a failure owing to broken promises by the white leadership, was a valuable precedent to the Montgomery boycott.

Each day automobiles privately owned by black people transported the boycotters to and from their jobs. These volunteered automobiles were called "rolling churches." The black community demonstrated it could do without public transportation. Public transportation, on the other hand, could not do without black people. It lost a lot of money. Attacking the pocket book of the white community, to repeat, would prove an important weapon of the civil rights movement.

The Montgomery boycott was extended to the downtown merchants whose stores observed the rules of segregation. During the Christmas season of 1955 the merchants suffered financial losses that caused them to rethink the advantages of Jim Crow. They were interested less in racial segregation than in profits. Yet the merchants, tied to the notion of conformity, did not feel strong enough to defy the city fathers. Meekly, they awaited for someone else to make the decision (and take the heat).

The Ku Klux Klan staged rallies outside of Montgomery. The homes of Dr. King and E. D. Nixon were bombed. In a key blunder by the white leaders of Montgomery, Dr. King was arrested under an old Alabama statute that denied people the right to boycott. The move brought national attention to Dr. King's struggles in Montgomery.

The bombings continued. Reverend Abernathy and the homes of two other black pastors were blown up. Four black churches were torched. Membership in the White Citizen's Council, six thousand in February 1956, doubled in size.

On November 13, 1956, the U. S. Supreme Court affirmed a lower court's decision outlawing segregation on public buses. After almost a year of walking to and from work, a year of car-pooling, a year of violence, the black people of Montgomery had won.

However, it could not go unnoticed that the victory in Montgomery was the result of a federal court order and not the result of accommodation by the white leadership of the city. In the city where the Confederacy was founded in 1861, a battle had been won, but the war would go on.

MONTGOMERY: CHRONOLOGY

1946 - Dozens of blacks in Montgomery, Alabama, are arrested on public buses for refusing to relinquish their seats to white people.

June 1953 - Short-lived and unsuccessful bus boycott in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is a precursor to Montgomery Bus Boycott.

1954 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., arrives in Montgomery to assume leadership of

the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church.

Early 1955 - Fifteen year old Claudette Colvin and an elderly woman are dragged from bus after refusing to give up their seats to whites. Colvin is arrested but the other woman departs before police arrive.

December 1, 1955 - Rosa Parks arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a public bus.

December 5, 1955 - Through actions of Women's Political Council, a boycott of buses is launched by the city's black populace. Montgomery Improvement Association is formed with Dr. King elected president.

January 30, 1956 - Dr. King's house is bombed in Montgomery.

February 1, 1956 - E. D. Nixon's house is bombed in Montgomery. Black lawyer Fred Gray files suit in federal court challenging constitutionality of bus segregation.

February 21, 1956 - Grand jury indicts eighty-nine blacks, including Dr. King and twenty-four ministers, for conspiring to boycott. National press drawn to case.

November 13, 1956 - U. S. Supreme Court affirms lower court's decision outlawing segregation on buses. Segregationist argue ruling violates State's Rights.
December 21, 1956 - Blacks in Montgomery resume riding city buses, this time on desegregated basis. Boycott lasted thirteen months.

January 1957 - Bombings of black churches and homes of black leaders continue.

January 10-11, 1957 - Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is formed at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. King is elected president.

MONTGOMERY: GLOSSARY TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in the Montgomery bus boycott.

1. Rosa Parks - Quiet and unassuming, forty-three years old and a seamstress, Rosa Parks was closely associated with the NAACP in Montgomery. Coming home from work on December 1, 1955, she was arrested on a public bus for refusing to relinquish her seat to a white man. This defiant act helped trigger the modern civil rights movement. Rosa Parks was booked with violating a Jim Crow ordinance. Her arrest rallied the black community of Montgomery into concerted action that resulted in a boycott of the public buses. A major fight for civil rights began; the civil rights movement was underway.

2. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - Dr. King was a 26 year old Baptist minister and

newcomer to Montgomery when Rosa Park's arrest catapulted him into the leadership of the Montgomery Improvement Association. Advocating Gandhi's tenets of non-violent protest, Dr. King became the leading representative of the civil rights movement. His message and oratory gave strength to countless. Dr. King was assassinated as he stood on the porch of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968. The previous night he had given one of his most impassioned speeches he which he seemed to anticipate his death. Dr. King had come to Memphis to support a garbage workers' strike.

3. Jo Ann Robinson - Jo Ann Robinson, not an Alabama native, was an English teacher at a local college (Alabama State) and head of the Women's Political Council in Montgomery (formed in 1946). She played a decisive role in organizing Montgomery's black population in support of the bus boycott. Using the college's machine, she mimeographed handouts explaining the boycott and had them distributed across the city. Her actions reflected the organization of the incipient movement and the skill with which it seized upon the political opportunities presented by Rosa Park's arrest.

4. "Rolling Churches" - To sustain the boycott of the public buses, Montgomery's black leaders organized car pools involving automobiles privately owned by local black people. These automobiles, dubbed "Rolling churches," represented a vital contribution to the successful boycott and reflected the selfless actions of many black people in Montgomery. Black owned taxis also contributed to the car pools. Leaders of the White Citizens' Council attempted to undercut the car pools, pressuring insurance companies to deny coverage to the car owners. Lloyd's of London issued the necessary coverage and the car pools continued. The idea of car pools came from the little-known bus boycott in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1953.

5. Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) - SCLC was founded in Atlanta, Georgia, in January 1957, following the successful conclusion of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. An umbrella organization of various black groups, SCLC sought to garner the energy of the Montgomery movement and direct it against other bastions of Jim Crow segregation. Dr. King was elected president of SCLC. His top lieutenant was Reverend Ralph Abernathy.

MONTGOMERY: GLOSSARY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in the Montgomery bus boycott.

1. Rosa Parks -

2. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. -

3. Jo Ann Robinson -

4. "Rolling Churches" -

5. Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) -

MONTGOMERY: QUOTES TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "And when the policeman approached me and one of them asked if the driver had asked me to stand? And I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Why don't you stand up?' I said, 'I don't think I should have to stand up.' I said to him, 'Why do you push us around?'"

Who said this? Who was this person?

Rosa Parks said this. She was a seamstress and activist (youth counselor and secretary) at the NAACP in Montgomery, Alabama.

The statement describes what incident? What was the impact of the incident? Explain.

The statement describes the evening of December 1, 1955, as Rosa Parks rode home on a public bus. The front of the bus, reserved for whites, was full, and the bus driver commanded Rosa Parks, a black woman, to stand up and move to the rear. She refused. Rosa Parks was arrested, and the black leadership in Montgomery seized upon the arrest to rally the black community. The bus boycott began four days later.

How did the policeman respond to the question, "Why do you push us around?" What role did the police play in the Jim Crow South? Explain.

He said, "I don't know, but the law is the law and you're under arrest." The police were the (not infrequent) brutal guardians of Jim Crow segregation. The local sheriff was the equivalent of the Gestapo. In reference to the policeman's response to Rosa Parks, it might be pointed out that Jim Crow segregation was the law of that time. In this respect, the policeman is justified in his statement. Another question is: when is it necessary for a person (in this instance a policeman) to refuse to implement or to honor laws or orders that are unjust?

2. "We are not wrong in what we are doing, if we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, the constitution of the United States is wrong. If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said this. He was a 26 year old Baptist Minister in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955 (although from Atlanta, Georgia). King was elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association on December 5, 1955. He later organized and led the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a leading civil rights group.

"If we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong."

What is meant by this statement? Explain.

This is a reference to the 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown v. the Board of Education. The decision declared "separate but equal" in public schools unconstitutional. It can be argued that the question of legal segregation was called into question for the first time since the Supreme Court's decision in Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896, which established the principle of "separate but equal" (albeit, in regard to public transportation).

3. "We thought you could just shame America. 'Look America, look at your promises. Look at how you're treating your poor negro citizens. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.'
But you can't shame segregationists. 'Rattlesnakes don't commit suicide.'"

Who said this? Who was this person?

Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth said this. He was a SCLC leader in the Montgomery protest.

According to the person quoted here, was it possible to "shame" America? Explain.

Shuttlesworth concludes that "you can't shame segregationists" by calling into question the iniquitous system. He says, "Rattlesnakes don't commit suicide." He is comparing the segregationists with rattlesnakes.

In <u>your</u> opinion, was it possible to "shame" America? Explain.

This answer requires the student's opinion. However, it should be noted that much of America was embarrassed, enraged, and “shamed” by the demonstrations of Southern brutality. This show of national revulsion had an important influence on Washington and the actions of the Federal government. The civil rights leaders desired to prick the conscience of America. They certainly believed (at least in the beginning) that it was possible to "shame" the country. Shaming the country was a critical part of their strategy, and explains the importance attributed to the media, the vehicle by which to get out the message. The important distinction is this: it was possible to "shame" white people <u>outside</u> of the South, but it seems the majority of white people in the South felt they could not reconsider their white supremacist views, given their deeply felt convictions on race and their deeply felt fears of breaking with local customs and being ostracized from the community.

4. "No, I'm not. My attitude is, this is great cause, great issue that we are confronted with, and I've always felt ultimately along the way of life an individual must stand up and be counted or face the consequences whatever they are, and if he's filled with fear, you can't do it."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Dr. King said this. He was MIA's leader.

When was this statement made? What is the historic significance of this statement? Explain.

The statement was made after Dr. King's home was bombed in Montgomery. Dr. King was not home; his wife and children narrowly escaped the bombing. The action was intended to kill, but, if not, at least to intimidate Dr. King and force him to desist from his civil rights activities. In this quote, Dr. King makes it very clear that he will not desist. In other words, the violence traditionally used to suppress black people did not work this time.

"I've always felt ultimately along the way of life an individual must stand up and be counted or face the consequences whatever they are..."

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.

This answer requires the student's opinion, but it is a splendid opportunity to address moral questions and the fiber of students.

Have there been incidents in your life in which you have had to "stand up and be counted?" Explain.

This answer depend's on the student's individual experiences. The question offers an opportunity to explore values and moral choices. The students might also be asked to describe the actions of others in terms of the expression to "stand up and be counted."

5. "We had won self-respect. 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, but 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."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Jo Ann Robinson said this. She was an English teacher at Alabama State in Montgomery and helped organize the bus boycott.

What does this person mean, "We had won self-respect?" Explain.

The black people of Montgomery had organized a boycott that lasted over a year. The black populace had gone 'toe to toe' with the white leadership of the city. In the end, of course, a federal court decided in favor of desegregation of public facilities, including transportation, but the black people of Montgomery could nonetheless savor the triumph. It is important to emphasize that one of the important weapons of Jim Crow segregation was the denial of self-respect, of esteem, to black people. The reason for this was simple: if you treat someone as “less,” they sometimes begin to feel like they are “less.” This is why, for example, blacks did not receive courtesy titles, such as Mr. and Mrs., in newspapers and on the street. They were given the demeaning titles of “aunt” or “uncle,” and referred to by their first names. The suppression of black people involved an intricate network of insults; language was a principal weapon of the system.

Black people had challenged the Jim Crow system and triumphed (on the federal level), an important symbol. This enhanced a sense of "self-respect" and dignity that aimed to replace the stamp of inferiority that the United States experience had imposed.

MONTGOMERY: QUOTES

NAME _____

Instructions: identify the following quotes.

1. "And when the policeman approached me and one of them asked if the driver had asked me to stand? And I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Why don't you stand up?' I said, 'I don't think I should have to stand up.' I said to him, 'Why do you push us around?'"

Who said this? Who was this person?

The statement describes what incident? What was the impact of the incident? Explain.

How did the policeman respond to the question, "Why do you push us around?" What role did the police play in the Jim Crow South? Explain.

2. "We are not wrong in what we are doing, if we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, the constitution of the United States is wrong. If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong."

Who said this? Who was this person?

"If we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong."

What is meant by this statement? Explain.

3. "We thought you could just shame America. 'Look America, look at your promises. Look at how you're treating your poor negro citizens. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.' But you can't shame segregationists. 'Rattlesnakes don't commit suicide.'"

Who said this? Who was this person?

According to the person quoted here, was it possible to "shame" America? Explain.

In <u>your</u> opinion, was it possible to "shame" America? Explain.

4. "No, I'm not. My attitude is, this is great cause, great issue that we are confronted with, and I've always felt ultimately along the way of life an individual must stand up and be counted or face the consequences whatever they are, and if he's filled with fear, you can't do it."

Who said this? Who was this person?

When was this statement made? What is the historic significance of this statement? Explain.

"I've always felt ultimately along the way of life an individual must stand up and be counted or face the consequences whatever they are..."

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.

Have there been incidents in your life in which you have had to "stand up and be counted?" Explain.

5. "We had won self-respect. 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, but 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."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What does this person mean, "We had won self-respect?" Explain.

MONTGOMERY: QUESTIONS TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Who was Rosa Parks?

Rosa Parks was a forty-three year old seamstress long associated with the Montgomery NAACP (as secretary and head of Youth Council). She was a person of impeccable character and an ideal candidate to challenge Jim Crow segregation.

Describe the encounter between Rosa Parks and the bus driver on December 1, 1955. What was its significance?

According to segregation's rules, a black person was required to give up his or her seat to a white person. On December 1, 1955, the white bus driver ordered Rosa Parks and other blacks to relinquish their seat to white people. Rosa Parks refused, was arrested, and her case rallied Montgomery blacks and led them to demand an end to the inferior status accorded black people.

The significance of Rosa Parks is that her actions represented the act of defiance that triggered the modern civil rights movement.

2. What strategy was adopted by black leaders in Montgomery to protest segregation on the public buses? What was the significance of this strategy?

Black leaders decided to boycott the public buses. They recognized that the buses were dependent upon black patrons and believed the loss of revenue would force the white leadership to negotiate. The significance of the strategy was the realization that black people, as consumers willing to withhold their business (and dollars), had a significant weapon versus white merchants and the white leadership.

How did black leaders implement their strategy? How did they overcome the obstacles before them? Be specific.

Many blacks simply walked to work, but others caught rides with black owned taxis and privately owned automobiles, the so-called "rolling

churches." The car-pools shuttled black people to and from work, thereby negating the need for the public buses. Black leaders also established an umbrella organization, the Montgomery Improvement Association. Led by Dr. King, it attempted to negotiate a solution with city leaders, an effort that fell on deaf ears.

3. In the documentary, Fred Shuttlesworth of SCLC offers the observation, "You can't shame a rattlesnake." What is he referring to? Explain.

Shuttlesworth believed that the news reports and media images of black people organizing in Montgomery to fight the obvious unfairness of segregation would arouse the nation's indignation and thus embarrass or "shame" the white leadership in Montgomery and compel them to grant concessions to the black population. The white leadership, however, refused to budge. As Shuttlesworth intimates, the arch-segregationists, like rattlesnakes, could not be embarrassed or shamed. Indeed, it required the actions of a Federal court (and not a local court) to force the desegregation of Montgomery buses (and public buses throughout the South). That order was handed down on November 13, 1956.

4. In your opinion, why of all places was a public bus the setting where, in a sense, the Civil Rights movement began? Explain.

This question requires an answer based on personal opinion. However, it should be noted that segregation as practiced on public buses amounted to daily humiliation of black people. It was a constant source of irritation and anger, a tinder box waiting to explode. Rosa Parks was not the first person to refuse to relinquish her seat. In Montgomery itself, shortly after the turn of the century, a futile boycott of public transportation had been launched. In 1955, shortly before Rosa Park's celebrated arrest, a fifteen year old black girl, Claudette Colvin, had been arrested for refusing to give up her seat. The local NAACP wanted to use her arrest as the test case against segregation, but she became pregnant and was seen as a candidate vulnerable to malicious innuendo by the white press and the Citizen's Council.

5. For white and black people alike, what were the lessons of the Montgomery Bus Boycott?

Black people realized that they could effectively organize the black community and challenge Jim Crow segregation. The boycott demonstrated that fear and terror, cultivated over centuries, had not crippled black people and had not broken their will to resist. Initially, black leaders made only limited demands on the white leadership, but these limited demands were wholly rejected. This demonstrated that the white leadership was unwilling to modify the system, and that change would have to come via the powers of the Federal government. Indeed, the bus boycott came to an end only when the Federal government established that segregation on public transportation was unconstitutional (November 13, 1956). It is important to note that black people had been arrested in Montgomery in 1946 when they refused to give up their seats.

MONTGOMERY: QUESTIONS

NAME _____

Instructions: answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Who was Rosa Parks?

   Describe the encounter between Rosa Parks and the bus driver on December 1, 1955. What was its significance?

2. What strategy was adopted by black leaders in Montgomery to protest segregation on the public buses? What was the significance of this strategy?

   How did black leaders implement their strategy? How did they overcome the obstacles before them? Be specific.

3. In the documentary, Fred Shuttlesworth of SCLC offers the observation, "You can't shame a rattlesnake." What is he referring to? Explain.

4. In your opinion, why of all places was a public bus the setting where, in a sense, the Civil Rights movement began? Explain.
5. For white and black people alike, what were the lessons of the Montgomery Bus Boycott? Explain.

VI. LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS - 1957

"Stone this time. Dynamite next."

-- Message tied to rock hurled through Daisy Bates' window

LITTLE ROCK: SYNOPSIS

This segment of the documentary is 12:08 minutes long.

In 1957, three years after the Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. Board of Education, few classrooms in the South were racially mixed. A few school districts in Texas and Arkansas were the exceptions. Acceptance of the court's order was slow. Segregation in public education remained the rule and black schools remained inferior.

Little Rock, Arkansas, was viewed as a moderate city on racial matters. The University of Arkansas (Fayette) integrated its law school in 1948. Thirty-three percent of all Arkansas black people of voting age were registered to vote. Orval Faubus, governor of the state, was viewed as a "moderate" on race matters, but he decided he needed the segregationist vote to win the 1958 gubernatorial election. He announced a poll indicating that eighty-five percent of the state's white people were against integration.

In 1957, the local NAACP in Little Rock filed suit in federal court hoping to force immediate compliance with the Supreme Court's Brown decision. An appeals court ruled that plans for integration in Little Rock had complied with the Supreme Court's "with deliberate speed" proviso. The same court ruling, however, warned against further delays.

Tested and highly qualified, nine black students, known as the Little Rock Nine, were selected to be the first black students to integrate Central High School. The first day of school was September 5, 1957. Eight of the students met first at the home of Daisy Bates, the local NAACP director whose role was instrumental throughout the forthcoming crisis. Elizabeth Eckford's family did not have a telephone; she did not receive the message to meet at Daisy Bate's home. After

praying with her family, the fifteen year old caught the bus to Central High.

Governor Faubus ordered the State National Guard to stand outside Central High and prevent the black students from entering the school. A white mob, including a group of angry mothers, stood outside the school. Eight of the black students arrived in a station wagon and entered the school by way of a side door. Elizabeth Eckford, having arrived by bus, tried to enter the school from the front. The National Guard refused to admit her. The crowd turned ugly. "Lynch her!" someone screamed. Grace Lorch, a white woman in the crowd whose husband taught at a local black college, walked Elizabeth Eckford to a nearby bus stop. The two got on the bus and out of harm's reach.

That night on the evening news the nation watched film footage of the riot outside Central High. Indignation and outrage followed. Not for the last time would the media play an important role during the civil rights struggles. On September 14, 1957, Faubus met President Eisenhower in Newport, Rhode Island. Eisenhower felt he had convinced Faubus of the need to comply with the Supreme Court's decision, but Faubus simply removed the State National Guard from Central High. On Monday, September 23, when the Little Rock Nine returned to school, a large crowd outside threatened to storm the school and attack the black students. Only the Little Rock police, whose willingness to defend the black students was questionable, separated the mob from the black students. In the end, the black students were whisked out in speeding automobiles under armed guard.

Central High became the setting for a classic showdown between the federal government and a state government. The issue of "state's rights," decided by the Civil War almost a hundred years before, was about to be decided anew.

President Eisenhower sent the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock to impose the desegregation of Central High. The rifle toting paratroopers quickly dispersed the mob outside the school. A soldier was assigned to each black student. Some abuses were difficult to prevent. Minnijean Brown, provoked by white students who screamed "nigger" at her, dumped a bowl of chili on a provocateur. She was later suspended from school. "One down, eight to go," jeered a placard passed around the school.

On May 29, 1958, Ernest Green became the first black student to graduate from Central High. At the beginning of the 1958 school year, Faubus closed all

public schools in Little Rock. That same year he was elected governor for the third term.

LITTLE ROCK: CHRONOLOGY

May 17, 1954 - U.S. Supreme Court issues decision in Brown v. Board of Education which establishes as unconstitutional "separate but equal" in public education. It later rules that desegregation be implemented "with all deliberate speed."

February 1956 - NAACP files suit to force Little Rock school board to integrate school system.

April 27, 1957 - Appeals Court rules that Little Rock desegregation plan has complied with "deliberate speed" ruling but insists that no further delays be permitted.

September 2, 1957 - Governor Faubus appears on television and announces Central High School in Little Rock will be surrounded by National Guardsmen to prevent desegregation.

September 3, 1957 - First day of classes at Central High. No students enter school as it is surrounded by National Guardsmen.

September 4, 1957 - First day of class for Little Rock Nine; Elizabeth Eckford arrives alone and is heckled and threatened by white mob. Black students whisked out of school for safety reasons.

September 14, 1957 - Faubus meets President Eisenhower in Rhode Island and appears to agree to desegregation.

September 23, 1957 - Little Rock Nine enter Central High. White mob initiates riot on the street. Black students escorted home.

September 24, 1957 - Rioting in front of Central High continues. That night federal troops (101st Airborne) arrive in Little Rock to ensure desegregation.

September 25, 1957 - Little Rock Nine escorted to Central High under armed guard. Mob dispersed.

December 1957 - "Chili-incident" at Central High.

May 29, 1958 - Ernest Green is first black student to graduate from Central High.

July 1958- By a wide margin Faubus is nominated for a third term as governor.

September 1958 - Public schools in Little Rock closed for year.

August 1959 - Public schools reopened on integrated basis according to federal law.

LITTLE ROCK: GLOSSARY TEACHER'S COPY

NAME_____

Instructions: identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in the Little Rock desegregation crisis.

1. Orval Faubus - Orval Faubus was governor of Arkansas at the time of the desegregation crisis. Desiring the votes of arch-segregationists in order to be re-elected, Faubus appealed to that vote by posting Arkansas National Guardsmen outside of Central High School with orders to prevent desegregation. Faubus was re-elected in 1958.

2. State's Rights - Orval Faubus, and other segregationists, argued that the federal government did not have the right to intervene in local affairs of the individual states. This argument, known as State's Rights, had been nullified by the American Civil War's outcome. The dispute in Little Rock was a classic contest between the state government and the federal government over which body had the ultimate power of decision.

3. Daisy Bates - Daisy Bates was the Arkansas director of the NAACP and offered tremendous support tot he Little Rock Nine. Each morning the nine black students first met at her house before U.S. troops escorted them, under armed guard, to Central High School. Daisy Bates suffered threats of violence but did not waver in her determination. She is an example of the courageous individual, tens of thousands of whom comprised the movement.

4. Little Rock Nine - The Little Rock Nine were the nine students selected by the local school board to be the first black students to integrate Central High School. Their grades were very high, removing them from accusations of being unqualified. These students demonstrated courage and conviction and were among the very first black students since Reconstruction (after the Civil War) to defy segregation in public education.

5. Grace Lorch - Grace Lorch, the wife of a white professor at a local black college, was present on the first day of the desegregation crisis at Central High School. She helped extract Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Little Rock

Nine, from the angry white mob. Grace Lorch was an example of the rare white person who intervened on behalf of the black students.

LITTLE ROCK: GLOSSARY

NAME _____

Instructions: identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in the Little Rock desegregation crisis.

1. Orval Faubus -

2. State's Rights -

3. Daisy Bates -

4. Little Rock Nine -

5. Grace Lorch -

LITTLE ROCK: QUOTES TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "All of the people in the South are in favor of segregation, and Supreme Court or no Supreme Court we are going to maintain segregated schools down in Dixie."

Who said this? What office did he hold? Where was he from?

The author of this statement was U.S. Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi.

When was the statement made? Why was it made?

The statement was made following the Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. the Board of Education. Eastland made the statement to serve notice to the federal government that white Southerners would simply not allow public schools to be integrated.

What was the significance of the statement? Explain.

Coming from a U.S. senator, the statement was a forceful challenge to the federal government. It was an assertion of the supremacy of state's rights over the laws of the federal government, an issue decided as a result of the American Civil War 1861-'62. The author being a prominent and influential U.S. senator, the statement also rallied white Southerners to what was termed "massive resistance" to federally imposed integration.

2. "It has to be the most frightening thing because she had a crowd of white people behind her threatening to kill her. She had nobody. I mean there was not a black face in sight. No one she could turn to as a friend except to this women who came out of the crowd and guided her through the mob and onto the bus and got her home safely."

What day is described here? Specifically, who is the "she" referred to? Who is the "woman" referred to? Describe what happened here.

This is an account by Ernest Green of the first day of classes at Central High. The "she" referred to is Elizabeth Eckford, a fellow black student, who

arrived alone at the school on the first day of integration. She was threatened by the white mob outside of Central High. The "woman" referred to is Grace Lorch, a white woman who helped rescue Elizabeth Eckford from the mob.

3. "This challenge must be met and with such measures that will preserve to the people as a whole their fully protected rights. Mob rule cannot be allowed to override the decisions of our courts."

Who said this? Who was this person? When was this statement made?

President Dwight Eisenhower made this statement on national television the night of September 5, 1957, after the riot outside Central High School that morning.

What were the "measures" taken to "preserve to the people as a whole their fully protected rights?"

President Eisenhower sent soldiers of the 101st Airborne to Little Rock for the purpose of restoring order at Central High School and overseeing the peaceful integration of the school.

What was the significance of this statement?

By sending federal troops to Little Rock to impose "the decisions of our courts," Eisenhower forcefully demonstrated the power of the federal government over the wishes of a state government. An important constitutional issue was made very clear by the president's action.

4. "I began to change from being somebody who considered myself a moderate, who, if I had my way, would have said, 'Let's don't integrate, because it's the state's right to decide.' I changed to someone who felt a real sense of compassion for those students, and felt like they deserved something that I had, and I also developed a real dislike for the people that were out there causing problems."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Craig Rains made this statement. A white student, he was a senior at Central High School.

What was the significance of this statement?

The significance is that a white person, although raised in a society where black people were accorded an inferior position, can change his opinion about what is right and what is not.

5. "When they called my name, there was nothing, just the name, and then there was eerie silence. Nobody clapped. But I figured they didn't have to...because after I got that diploma, that was it. I had accomplished what I had come there for."

Who said this? What was this person's significance in terms of the desegregation of Central High?

Ernest Green made this statement. On May 29, 1958, he was the first black student to graduate from Central High. He received his diploma that day alongside six hundred and one white seniors.

LITTLE ROCK: QUOTES

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "All of the people in the South are in favor of segregation, and Supreme Court or no Supreme Court we are going to maintain segregated schools down in Dixie."

Who said this? What office did he hold? Where was he from?

When was the statement made? Why was it made?

What was the significance of the statement? Explain.

2. "It has to be most frightening thing because she had a crowd of white people behind her threatening to kill her. She had nobody. I mean there was not a black face in sight. No one she could turn to as a friend except to this women who came out of the crowd and guided her through the mob and onto the bus and got her home safely."

What day is described here? Specifically, who is the "she" referred to?

Who is the "woman" referred to? Describe what happened here.

3. "This challenge must be met and with such measures that will preserve to the people as a whole their fully protected rights. Mob rule cannot be allowed to override the decisions of our courts."

Who said this? Who was this person? When was the statement made?

What were the "measures" taken to "preserve to the people as a whole their fully protected rights?"

What was the significance of this statement?

4. "I began to change from being somebody who considered myself a moderate, who, if I had my way, would have said, 'Let's don't integrate, because it's the state's right to decide.' I changed to someone who felt a real sense of compassion for those students, and felt like they deserved something that I had, and I also developed a real dislike for the people that were out there causing problems."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What was the significance of this statement?

5. "When they called my name, there was nothing, just the name, and then there was eerie silence. Nobody clapped. But I figured they didn't have to...because after I got that diploma, that was it. I had accomplished what I had come there for."

Who said this? What was this person's significance in terms of the desegregation of Central High? Explain.

LITTLE ROCK: QUESTIONS TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Who was Orval Faubus? Describe the position taken by Faupus during the Little Rock desegregation crisis.

Faubus was governor of Arkansas during the crisis. Although viewed as a moderate on race matter before the crisis, Faubus emerged as a defender of segregation.

Why did he adopt this position? Was he successful? Explain.

Faubus adopted his firm segregationist stance in the effort to win the votes of Arkansas segregationists. His strategy appeared successful. He was re-elected in 1958. However, Faubus was rejected by voters in three gubernatorial bids in the 1970's and '80's.

2. In the documentary, Craig Rains, a white student, described his changing attitude on the subject of integration during the course of the school year. What was his attitude in the beginning? How did it change?

In the beginning, Rains felt that the state should be allowed to decide if schools should be integrated, the so-called State's Rights argument. Gradually, however, Rains felt compassion for the black students and anger towards the white mob outside, which he viewed as the cause of the trouble.

In your opinion, why did Craig Rains change his opinion? What is the significance of his statement?

This question requires a personal opinion. It might be said, however, that Rains got to know the black students on a personal basis and recognized that the negative stereotypes about blacks were false. His statement is significant because it suggests that stereotypes tend to disappear when a person gets to

know a person of the opposite race.

3. Who was U.S. President at the time of the Little Rock crisis? What actions did he take? Why? Specifically, what was the role of the federal government during the crisis? Give examples.

Dwight Eisenhower was president at the time. He was extremely reluctant to intervene in the domestic affairs of a state. However, when Faubus appeared to renege on his promise to support the desegregation efforts and when the mob outside Central High School threatened to lynch the black students, Eisenhower felt he had no alternative. He sent federal troops to Little Rock to enforce desegregation. In the end, the president said that he was compelled by law to implement the Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. Board of Education.

Federal troops escorted the Little Rock Nine to school each morning. The troops stood guard outside the school to prevent the white mob from attacking the black students. Inside the school, each black student had a guard as his or her escort.

4. Who was Elizabeth Eckford? What happened to her on the first day of school? Specifically, who helped her? What is the significance of this incident?

Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Little Rock Nine, arrived alone at Central High School on the first day of classes. She did not receive the message to meet first at Daisy Bates' home. At the school National Guardsmen denied her entrance. The white mob threatened to lynch her. A white woman, Grace Lorch, emerged from the crowd and escorted Elizabeth Eckford to a nearby bus station, where both boarded a bus and left the threatening crowd. This incident reveals that one courageous person, Grace Lorch, can make a difference. She saved a life.

5. What is the historical significance of the Little Rock crisis? Explain.

The Little Rock crisis precipitated a classic confrontation between a state government and the federal government. The question decided in Little Rock

was simple: who has the ultimate authority? In Little Rock, Governor Faupus attempted to defy the federal government. He refused to implement the decision rendered by the U.S. Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education. President Eisenhower, representing the federal government, was loathe to intervene in state affairs. In the end, Eisenhower was forced to send federal troops to Little Rock in order to enforce the law. It was the first time since Reconstruction that the federal government used physical force to implement a federal law.

LITTLE ROCK: QUESTIONS

NAME _____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Who was Orval Faubus? Describe the position taken by Faupus during the Little Rock desegregation crisis.

Why did he adopt this position? Was he successful? Explain.

2. In the documentary, Craig Rains, a white student, described his changing attitude on the subject of integration during the course of the school year. What was his attitude in the beginning? How did it change?

In your opinion, why did Craig Rains change his opinion? What is the significance of his statement?

3. Who was U. S. President at the time of the Little Rock crisis?

What actions did he take? Why? Specifically, what was the role of the federal government during the crisis? Give examples.

4. Who was Elizabeth Eckford? What happened to her on the first day of school? Specifically, who helped her? What is the significance of this

incident?

5. What is the historical significance of the Little Rock crisis? Explain.

VII. SIT-INS - 1960

"*Mayor West, do you think it is wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of their race or color?"*

-- Diane Nash to Nashville Mayor Ben West

"And I found that I had to answer it frankly and honestly - that I did not agree that it was morally right for someone to sell them merchandise and refuse them service. And I had to answer it just exactly like that. Of course I received considerable criticism for it, but if I had to answer it again I would answer it in the same way again because it was a moral question and it was one a man has to answer and not a politician."

-- Ben West, describing his response to Diane Nash

SIT-INS: SYNOPSIS

This segment of the documentary is 10:31 minutes long.

James Lawson is a key figure in the sit-in story. A pacifist and seminary student, he lived three years in India studying Mahandas Gandhi's use of non-violent resistance to British rule. When he returned to the U. S., Lawson established workshops to teach the precepts of non-violence to black college students in Nashville, Tennessee. Nashville was known as the "Athens of the South," the proud setting of twelve colleges, four of which were for black students. Like other cities in the South, Nashville was strictly segregated. Many of the black students from the North had their first experience with Jim Crow when they arrived in Nashville. One was Diane Nash from Chicago, a student at Fisk University; another was John Lewis, an Alabama sharecropper's son and a student at the American Baptist Theological Seminary. Both attended Lawson's workshops on non-violence.

On February 1, 1960, four black freshmen from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College staged a sit-in at the counter of a F. A. Woolworth Company

store in Greensboro, North Carolina. All four had been members of the NAACP Youth Council. The NAACP, curiously, was often maligned for its tepid approach, an interpretation not substantiated by the example of Greensboro, where the sit-in movement began. The "Greensboro Four" sat for half an hour without being served and then left when the store closed. The sit-ins in Greensboro continued.

On February 18, 1960, Nashville's black students organized two hundred people for sit-ins at the city's major stores, all of whose lunch counters were archly-segregated. For two weeks there was no incident. On February 27, the students were attacked by a mob of white youths; the police were not present. Prepared for this moment, the black students did not fight back. Eighty-one of the students were arrested by police and charged with ‘disorderly conduct.’ John Lewis and other students refused to pay the fines and spent thirty-three days in jail.

Black citizens in Nashville boycotted the stores targeted by the students. Blacks spent fifty million dollars in Nashville stores, ten million in the downtown stores. Whites feared going downtown to shop. Sales suffered. Merchants wanted a settlement. Once again, the purchasing power of black people had made itself felt.

Ella Baker, director of SCLC, helped organize a meeting of students involved in the sit-ins for the purpose of establishing a common strategy. The meeting, held in Raleigh, North Carolina, in April 1960, led to the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC (pronounced "snick"). Ella Baker insisted that the students have their own separate organization and that they not be absorbed into SCLC. SNCC would be a student-run organization and would coordinate the sit-in demonstrations.

On April 19, 1960, Z. Alexander Looby's house was dynamited in Nashville. Looby was a black attorney and city councilman, a conservative in many respects and far removed from the image of a "radical" or "outside agitator," but he had agreed to represent the arrested sit-in participants. This made him a target. The powerful blast united the black community. It also enraged a segment of the white community, although most whites kept a studied silence. In that time, deep rooted fears and the strong hand of conformity governed the behavior of many.

The afternoon of the bombing, twenty-five hundred students and community members marched on city hall, singing at first but then walking in silence. Mayor Ben West met the student delegation on the front steps. In response to Diane Nash's

question (and in a rare step by a Southern white man, least of all a mayor of a large Southern city), Mayor West replied, as if considering the question for the first time, that he did not believe discrimination based on "race or color" was fair.

The next day a newspaper headlined, "Mayor Says Integrate Counters." Mayor West's words were well-received by the business community. Its members could now point to the mayor and use him as an excuse for desegregating their counters, etc. The sit-in protests in Nashville cast light on the Achilles Heal of Jim Crow segregation: namely, the importance of black peoples' purchasing power. To repeat, this would be used as a tool to fight racial injustice in cities and towns throughout the South.

The march on city hall in Nashville, conducted in virtual silence, was the first protest march of its kind in the modern civil rights period. The students in Nashville were extremely well-organized. To some, the Nashville movement epitomized a passing of the torch from the older generation to a younger generation. The older generation appeared (however fair) to be represented by the NAACP and identified with the tedious and seemingly unending court battles for equal rights. The younger generation, raised in the hopeful atmosphere of Brown v. Board of Education and the brutal reality of Emmett Till, were less patient.

SIT-INS: CHRONOLOGY

1958 - James Lawson begins workshops on non-violence in Nashville, Tennessee. Students from black colleges attend, including John Lewis and Diane Nash.

February 1, 1960 - Four black freshmen from local college stage a sit-in at F. W. Woolworth Company store in Greensboro, North Carolina; it is the first sit-in to protest segregated counters.

February 18, 1960 - Black college students in Nashville stage sit-ins at segregated lunch counters.

February 27, 1960 - Students are attacked inside store by white thugs. Police arrive and arrest black students, charging them with "disorderly conduct."

March 2, 1960 - Sixty-three students are arrested for staging a sit-in at the Greyhound and Trailways bus terminals in Nashville.

April 1960 - Estimated 98% of black people refuse to patronize segregated stores.

April 1960 - Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) established by college students in Raleigh, North Carolina.

April 19, 1960 - Home of Z. Alexander Looby, prominent black attorney in Nashville, is destroyed by dynamite. That same day 2,500 students and community members march to Nashville city hall, the first protest march of the modern civil rights period. Diane Nash confronts Mayor Ben West.

May 10, 1960 - Six formerly segregated stores in Nashville begin serving food to blacks.

May 4, 1961 - Freedom Riders leave Washington, D. C., for journey through the South. On May 14 (Mother's Day), Greyhound bus carrying Freedom Riders firebomed outside Anniston, Alabama. Riders beaten by Klansmen at Birmingham, Alabama. On May 20, riders attacked in Montgomery. Black church besieged by white mob. May 24, riders travel to Jackson, Mississippi; arrested and sentenced to sixty days at prison.

October 1960 - Sit-ins have taken place in 112 Southern cities.

October 19, 1960 - Sit-ins renewed in Atlanta, Georgia.

November 1960 - John F. Kennedy defeats Richard Nixon in presidential race; Kennedy receives sixty-eight percent of black vote.

SIT-INS: GLOSSARY TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in terms of the sit-in movement.

1. Jim Lawson - In the 1950's, Jim Lawson was a divinity student at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Lawson then spent three years in India studying Mohandas Gandhi's use of non-violent resistance in his struggles to gain India's independence from British rule. Lawson returned to Nashville and conducted workshops on non-violent resistance. The techniques he espoused were used during the Nashville sit-in demonstrations. He was dismissed from divinity school because he offered instruction to the sit-in participants.

2. John Lewis - John Lewis, an Alabama sharecropper's son, was a student at Nashville's American Baptist Theological Seminary when he first attended one of Jim Lawson's workshops on non-violence. Lewis became one of the leaders of Nashville sit-in movement in 1960. That same year Lewis helped organize SNCC. Lewis had been deeply influenced by the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Lewis would suffer terrible physical punishment (as a Freedom Rider at the hands of a white mob in Birmingham) for his beliefs. Utterly fearless, he led the march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. John Lewis is today a U. S. Congressman representing a district in Georgia, his native state.

3. Diane Nash - Diane Nash left her home in Chicago to attend Fisk University in segregated Nashville. Disgusted by Jim Crow segregation, she attended Jim Lawson's workshops on non-violence and led the sit-in demonstrations. During the march on Nashville's city hall, Nash confronted Mayor Ben West and asked if he thought it morally right to discriminate based on "race or color?" He replied in the negative. Nash helped organize SNCC in April 1960. Like John Lewis, Nash is an example of the single person who can make a difference. The movement was full of ordinary people who did the extraordinary.

4. Z. Alexander Looby - Z. Alexander Looby was a prominent black lawyer in

Nashville who agreed to defend the sit-in demonstrators after they were arrested. He was a member of the black middle class and his presence at the side of the young activists demonstrated that the movement was not one of "outside agitators," as the segregationists argued. Looby's house was bombed in April 1960, an outrage that led to the massive march on Nashville's city hall where Diane Nash confronted Mayor Ben West.

5. Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) - In April 1960, in Raleigh, North Carolina, SCLC sponsored a meeting of students involved in the sit-ins. The students rejected the idea of becoming a youth arm of SCLC and instead established their own organization, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which would organize the sit-in movement. The actions of SNCC were based on non-violence and direct action.

SIT-INS: GLOSSARY NAME _____

Instructions: identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in terms of the sit-in movement.

1. Jim Lawson -

2. John Lewis -

3. Diane Nash -

4. Z. Alexander Looby -

5. Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) -

SIT-INS: QUOTES TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "When Jim Lawson came to the city, he began to organize students, and the most important thing for both students and we who were ministers, is we had workshops, and the workshops in non-violence made the difference."

Who was Jim Lawson? What was his significance?

Jim Lawson, a seminarian and pacifist, studied Ghandian non-violent tactics in colonial India and returned to conduct workshops on non-violent resistance for black students in Nashville.

"The workshops in non-violence made the difference." In your opinion, why were the workshops so important? Explain.

The workshops subjected the participants to vile language and (simulated) physical harassment which was intended to prepare them for the treatment meted out in the South, "to in fact begin to take the blows and still respond with some sense of dignity." The workshops also taught the participants the philosophy behind non-violence: namely, to shame the nation and compel federal impetus in desegregating the South. The workshops prepared the so-called "foot soldiers" of the movement for the physical and spiritual battles ahead.

2. *"It's just not the things we're used to down here...I was not raised with 'em...I've never lived with 'em, and I'm not going to start now."*

Who said this?

A young white man said it.

What "things" is this person not "used to down here?"

The person is not used black people sitting down at the store counters

reserved for white people. In the larger view, he is not used to the revolutionary concept of treating black people with equality.

What is this person's justification for his or her attitude? Explain.

The young man's justification is that he was "not raised with 'em," meaning black people. He says he has never "lived with 'em..." It is an emotional response. He doesn't explain why he's against racial change in all its forms; he's simply against it because he never had any experience with it.

In your opinion, what is the reason for this person's attitude?

This is a question that requires the student's opinion, but it might be pointed out that this young white man was no different from many others of the time: he was imbued with the characteristics of a (white) culture that viewed black people as "less," pure and simple. It might also be said that he was from the class most directly threatened by the overthrow of Jim Crow segregation, namely, the lower middle class who viewed the unshackling of black people as a direct economic threat. This class of people had precious little in the world, but one thing gave them a feeling of superiority: the color of their skin. It was their lone badge. On top of everything else, people (no matter the color) are afraid of change and the unknown.

3. "*The day that the police first arrested us, the police said, 'Okay, all you nigras get up from the lunch counter or we're going to arrest you.' And their attitude was like, 'Well, we warned you.' Of course we were prepared for this. They said, 'Everybody's under arrest.'*

Who said this? What was this person's role?

Diane Nash said this. She was a student activist in Nashville, one of the leaders in the sit-in movement, and (soon to be) a SNCC activist.

What scene is described here?

Described here is the day the student activists were first arrested in

downtown Nashville as they sat at a segregated lunch counter.

What happened after the police said, "*Everybody's under arrest?*" How did the students react? How did the police react? Describe what happened.

The students sitting at the counter were arrested and led to the police paddy wagons outside. Other student activists, similarly trained in non-violent techniques, took the vacant seats. According to Diane Nash, the police were "confounded." They arrested the second wave of activists. A third wave then sat down. This was the way the boycotters hoped to win by filling the counter seats and by filling the jails.

4. "Mayor West, do you feel it is wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of their race or color?"

Who said this? Under what circumstances was it said?

Diane Nash, one of the student activists, asked this question of Mayor Ben West on the day of the mass march on city hall in Nashville. That morning Z. Alexander Looby's house had been bombed, initiating the march.

What was Mayor West's response? What was his reasoning? Explain.

Mayor West responded that he did not think it was "morally right for someone to sell them merchandise and refuse them service." He spoke as a man and not as a politician. In other words, a politician was governed by the views most likely to garner votes, and the votes in Nashville were mostly cast by white people, who were (in the definite majority) against the actions of the students. Thus, West's statement was not an astute move politically speaking. But he intimates that he was speaking to a higher audience: his conscience.

How was Mayor West's response viewed at the time? Explain.

West's response was quite unique, and was viewed as such. Virtually no

mayor of a Southern town or city ever publicly spoke out in a manner that acknowledged the "moral" necessity of racial change. Note that Mayor West didn't say he was in favor of black voting rights, the real issue, but instead he depicted the issue in terms of basic fairness, the difference between right and wrong, period. This argument was seldom heard by such a leading figure in the white community. Generally speaking, the leading white men were members of the White Citizen's Council of the area, and stood against racial change in any form.

5. "*Mayor Says Integrate Counter*."

When did this quote appear? Where did it appear? What does it describe? Explain.

The quote is taken from the headline in a Nashville newspaper the day after Mayor West's declaration in response to Diane Nash's question presented to him on the steps of city hall. The quote describes West's acknowledgment that it was "morally" wrong, in essence, to segregate the lunch counters.

What was the reaction on the part of downtown white merchants to Mayor West declaration?

The merchants were pleased to the degree that they could now desegregate the counters and allow business to proceed as it had before the sit-ins began. The sit-ins cost the merchants a lot of money, but white pressure and inherent conformity forced them to honor Jim Crow laws. To many it was with relief that they could point to Mayor West and say, ‘He ordered it.’ Mayor West was duly criticized by the white community, "but if I had to answer it again I would answer it in the same way again because it was a moral question and it was one a man has to answer and not a politician."

SIT-INS: QUOTES

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. *"When Jim Lawson came to the city, he began to organize students, and the most important thing for both students and we who were ministers, is we had workshops, and the workshops in non-violence made the difference."*

   Who was Jim Lawson? What was his significance?

   "The workshops in non-violence made the difference." In your opinion, why were the workshops so important? Explain.

2. *"It's just not the things we're used to down here...I was not raised with 'em...I've never lived with 'em, and I'm not going to start now."*

   Who said this?

   What are the "things" this person is not "used to down here?"

   What is this person's justification for his or her attitude?

   In your opinion, what is the reason for this person's attitude?

3. *"The day that the police first arrested us, the police said, 'Okay, all you*

nigras get up from the lunch counter or we're going to arrest you.' And their attitude was like, 'Well, we warned you.' Of course we were prepared for this. They said, 'Everybody's under arrest.'"

Who said this? Who was this person?

What scene is described here?

What happened after the police said, "Everybody's under arrest?" How did the students react? How did the police react? Describe what happened.

4. *"Mayor West, do you feel it is wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of their race or color?"*

Who said this? Under what circumstances was it said?

What was Mayor West's response? What was his reasoning? Explain.

How was Mayor West's response viewed at the time? Explain.

5. *"Mayor Says Integrate Counter."*

When did this quote appear? Where did it appear? What does it describe? Explain.

What was the reaction on the part of downtown white merchants to Mayor West declaration?

SIT-INS: QUESTIONS TEACHER'S COPY

NAME_____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Who was Jim Lawson?

Jim Lawson was a divinity student who studied Gandhi's techniques of non-violent protest.

What theory did he espouse to confront and overthrow legal segregation? How was this theory communicated to university students? Explain.

He conducted workshops in Nashville in which he taught local college students the principles of non-violent resistance and the moral superiority of this approach. Lawson was the spiritual leader of the Nashville sit-ins.

2. What was the aim of the sit-ins in Nashville?

The aim of the sit-ins was to force store lunch counters to desegregate.

How did they seek to achieve their aim?

The students sought to achieve their aim by staging sit-ins at the segregated counters in Nashville, thereby drawing attention to the problem and also disrupting business.

What happened? Specifically, what was the role of the police? Who was arrested? What was the charge?

The police arrived and arrested the demonstrators, who were charged with "disorderly conduct." When this tier of demonstrators was hauled off to jail, a second group took their places, and so on. The police were the ultimate

guarantors of Jim Crow segregation. They enforced the law.

3. Two thousand people marched to city hall in Nashville on April 19, 1960. What was the march in response to?

The march on city hall was in response to the bombing of Z. Alexander Looby's home.

On the steps of the Nashville city hall on the day of the march, Diane Nash asked mayor Ben West a question. What was the question?

She asked him if he believed it was morally right to discriminate against a person based on "race or color."

How did the mayor respond? What was his justification?

The mayor replied that no, he did not believe it was fair. He gave this answer, he later said, because he was speaking not as a politician but as a man.

4. What does SNCC stand for?

SNCC stands for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

When, where, and why was this organization founded? Who founded it?

SNCC was formed by student participants of sit-in movement in April 1960 at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. It was formed to establish an organization of young people that would be independent from both SCLC and the NAACP.

What was SNCC's purpose and its philosophy? Explain.

SNCC's purpose was to fight racial injustice. Its philosophy was based on non-violence and direct action.

5. What was the historic significance of the Nashville sit-in movement?

The movement demonstrated that the civil rights movement would not be dominated by SCLC or the NAACP, but that young people would play a large part in the movement. The Nashville movement also demonstrated that white merchants were partly dependent on black purchasing power, and that blacks could use the withdrawal of that purchasing power to influence the white community on matters of segregation.

SIT-INS: QUESTIONS

NAME_____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Who was Jim Lawson?

What theory did he espouse to confront and overthrow legal segregation? How was this theory communicated to university students? Explain.

2. What was the aim of the sit-ins in Nashville?

How did they seek to achieve their aim?

What happened? Specifically, what was the role of the police? Who was arrested? What was the charge?

3. Two thousand people marched to city hall in Nashville on April 19, 1960. What was the march in response to?

On the steps of the Nashville city hall on the day of the march, Diane Nash asked mayor Ben West a question. What was the question?

How did the mayor respond? What was his justification?

4. What does SNCC stand for?

When, where, and why was this organization founded? Who founded it?

What was SNCC's purpose and its philosophy? Explain.

5. What was the historic significance of the Nashville sit-in movement?

VIII. WHO SHALL LEAD? ALBANY - 1961

“He said, 'Reverend, Lords knows I don't want to have you in my prison.'”

--Dr. King, repeating Laurie Pritchett's comment

“This was the only time I've ever seen when [it] seemed he [Dr. King] didn't know which way to go.”

-- Laurie Pritchett, Albany's police chief

ALBANY: SYNOPSIS

This segment of the documentary is 7:49 minutes long.

Albany, Georgia, is located in the southwest region of the state. In 1961, Albany was largely a farming community; black people comprised almost half the population of 56,000. A black middle class and a measure of black prosperity existed. Life was archly-segregated, the daily acts of denigration a part of existence. In 1961, Albany became the setting of a civil rights struggle involving Dr. King, local SNCC leaders like Charles Sherrod, and a Southern sheriff named Laurie Pritchett.

In the summer of 1961, twenty-two year old Charles Sherrod, with fellow SNCC worker Cordell Reagon and a group of local students, seated himself in the ‘white only’ waiting room at Albany's Trailways bus terminal. The black activists aimed to test the recent Federal court ruling banning discrimination in inter-state bus and train stations. The police arrived and ordered them out. The activists departed. The point was made: segregation remained despite the federal order.

The NAACP criticized SNCC's actions. The older organization relied on a network of established leaders in the community: ministers, teachers, and other professionals. The NAACP had elected to fight Jim Crow segregation in the courts. In contrast, SNCC was a student-run organization and grass-roots in its approach. SNCC cooperated with everybody they could in the black community, including

young people who were seen as natural leaders. These young people were groomed for non-violent direction action.

Disagreements between SCLC and SNCC threatened to cripple organized opposition to Jim Crow. On November 17, 1961, an umbrella organization named the Albany Movement was established, its purpose to coordinate the activities of the various opposition groups. Dr. William Alexander, a local osteopath, was elected president.

Protests at the Trailways station continued. Sheriff Laurie Pritchett refused to charge the protestors with federal offenses. Instead, they were arrested on a city ordinance "of failing to obey the orders of a law enforcement officer." The issue remained a local affair, much to Pritchett's liking. Two SNCC protestors from nearby Albany State were expelled from school by the black administration.

Protest marches to city hall continued. High school students were first employed in civil rights activities here in Albany. Singing at the top of their lungs and inspiring those around them as well as themselves, hundreds were arrested for "parading without a permit." In preparing for this showdown, Sherriff Pritchett had read Dr. King's Writings On Non-Violent Social Change, which was based on Ghandi's experiences overthrowing British rule in colonial India. Pritchett understood King's tactics: to fill up the jails and force overcrowding; to gain national and international media attention and the moral high ground in a debate about basic human rights; and to force a dialogue leading to the implementation of racial change. Shrewdly, Pritchett arranged for the protestors to be jailed in nearby communities. At one point he had two thousand prisoners, but none in his own jail. Pritchett thus avoided the problem of overcrowding. Nor did he employ violence as a tactic. It would have led to very media attention he did not want.

Leaders of the Albany Movement did not anticipate the mass arrests. It was for this reason that Dr. Anderson called a college friend, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and asked him to come and speak in Albany. It was to be a quick visit. After Dr. King gave an emotional speech at the Shiloh Baptist Church, he was asked to lead the protest in Albany. The next day Dr. King and two hundred and fifty demonstrators were arrested at city hall.

Internecine disputes emerged between SNCC and SCLC. In the documentary, Charles Sherrod of SNCC says that his organization wanted to build a movement

based on the masses of people and not on the charismatic personality of one man, Dr. King. In turn, T. Walker Wyatt, executive director of SCLC, replies that SNCC was "in over its head" and refused to take advice from SCLC. Meanwhile, Sheriff Pritchett was all to happy to exploit the differences between the black groups, citing "outside agitation" as the source of the problem.

While Dr. King was in jail, city officials signed an agreement with leaders of the Albany Movement. Promises were made to desegregate and to open a dialogue. In exchange, the pressure would be lifted. Two months later the white leadership reneged on the promises. In February 1962, Dr. King and Ralph Abernathy were ordered to pay $78 fine or serve forty-five days in jail. They chose the jail, but the Sheriff arranged for "someone" to pay the fine. Dr. King and Abernathy were released from jail, to their keen disappointment. A Federal District judge issued a temporary restraining order to stop the demonstrations.

In July 1962, members of the black community, angered by a police beating of a black woman, threw rocks at police. "Did you see them non-violent rocks?" Chief Pritchett asked the media. Dr. King was arrested a second time. The staunch segregationists refused to offer concessions. The movement had come up short.

Albany provided a learning experience. What was the purpose in Albany? Was it to test federal law on inter-state travel? Was it to desegregate the downtown stores? Was it about voting rights? Who was in charge? Cooperation between the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC was a vital prerequisite to future protests. Disputes from within hurt the movement. The presence of Dr. King alone did not assure success. Demonstrations and arrests would not necessarily bring on the federal government.

These were the lessons learned in Albany and taken to Birmingham.

Was Albany a failure? It restored a sense of human dignity to many people.

Some felt so. But Albany gave many people a chance to fight back, and the fight continues in Albany to this day. When Dr. King departed, Charles Sherrod observed, "We didn't miss a beat."

ALBANY: CHRONOLOGY

Summer 1961 - Field representatives of SNCC arrive in Albany, Georgia, to help organize the black community against Jim Crow segregation.

November 1, 1961 - A ruling of the Interstate Commerce Commission went into effect that backed up the Supreme Court's 1960 decision prohibiting segregation in interstate bus and train stations.

November 17, 1961 - Several local adult groups form the Albany Movement, an umbrella organization that would attempt to coordinate the activists in Albany.

November 22, 1961 - SNCC and SCLC representatives stage sit-in at the Albany bus station and are arrested. They hope to go to court and ask the federal government to enforce the desegregation ruling. Sheriff Pritchett refuses to arrest protestors on federal charges.

December 10, 1961 - Freedom Riders from SNCC, five white and five black, arrive in Albany and enter segregated waiting rooms at train station. They are arrested. Following SNCC philosophy, they refuse to take bail. Protests continue. By mid-December, five hundred have been arrested. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., of SCLC, is invited to Albany. Emphasizing non-violence, Dr. King leads demonstration on Albany's city hall. Two hundred and fifty are arrested.

December 18, 1961 - While Dr. King is in jail, the Albany Movement leaders (including Marion Page, the movement's secretary, and Dr. Anderson) sign a (supposed) agreement with white city leaders. King is released and leaves Albany believing peaceful negotiations are underway. Promises made to Albany Movement (desegregation of bus and train stations, etc.) are not honored.

July 1961 - Dr. King and Ralph Abernathy are ordered to pay $78 or serve forty-five days in jail. They choose the jail time, but Pritchett, behind the scenes, arranges for payment of the fine. The two civil rights leaders are released.

July 20, 1962 - A federal judge issues a temporary restraining order to stop the demonstrations in Albany.

July 25, 1962 - Demonstrators clash with police in Albany, throwing rocks and violating Dr. King's non-violent philosophy. Protestors are arrested for "disturbing the peace."

July 27, 1962 - Dr. King is arrested in Albany, but is released two weeks later. He departs, frustrated. The movement is at low ebb. Mass protests continue in Albany through 1965.

ALBANY: GLOSSARY TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in terms of the events in Albany.

1. Charles Sherrod - Charles Sherrod was a twenty-one year old SNCC activist in Albany. With Cordell Reagon he staged a sit-in at the Trailways bus terminal to test the Supreme Court's 1960 ruling prohibiting segregation in interstate bus and train stations; led other sit-ins; traveled countryside registering black people to vote; clashed with SCLC over strategy in Albany.

2. Dr. William Anderson - Anderson was elected president of the Albany Movement in November 1961. The organization joined the various black groups under one roof. Anderson was an osteopath and a drugstore owner. He was arrested, along with Dr. King and Ralph Abernathy.

3. Laurie Pritchett - Pritchett was police chief in Albany. He had read Dr. King's book on the Montgomery Bus Boycott. He sought to side-step the tactics of non-violence by refusing to arrest demonstrators on federal charges (and thus avoiding federal involvement), and by parceling out the jailed demonstrators to jailhouses in the surrounding countryside (and thus avoiding the problem of overcrowded jails). Pritchett also arranged for Dr. King's bail to be paid by a mysterious benefactor.

4. Wyatt T. Walker - Walker was executive director of SCLC and accompanied King to Albany where he felt SCLC operated as a "firefighter" dealing with tactical and public relations problems caused by SNCC.

5. Freedom Riders - Freedom Riders were a group of white and black activists who braved violence and traveled through the South on buses and trains in order to test local compliance with the federal law prohibiting segregation in interstate travel. In December 1961, ten Freedom Riders (five black, five white) tested segregation's rules at the Albany train station; eight were arrested for "trespassing."

ALBANY: GLOSSARY NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in terms of the events in Albany.

1. Charles Sherrod -

2. Dr. William Anderson -

3. Laurie Pritchett -

4. Wyatt T. Walker -

5. Freedom Riders -

ALBANY: QUOTES TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "Some of us really didn't think we'd get arrested because this was a federal mandate. If they mess with us now they're going to get the federal government on them. Nobody's going to mess with the federal government, we thought."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Charles Sherrod, a SNCC leader in Albany, Georgia, said this.

What is described here?

Sherrod is describing the protest he organized at the Trailways Bus Station in downtown Albany.

Specifically, what is meant by "federal mandate" in this instance?

"Federal mandate" in this instance refers to the November 1, 1961, ruling by the Interstate Commerce Commission which backed up the Supreme Court's 1960 decision prohibiting segregation in interstate bus and train stations.

Explain what is meant by the sentence, "Nobody's going to mess with the federal government, we thought." Specifically, what happened?

Sherrod believed that the black protestors would not be arrested or harassed because they were protected by a federal law prohibiting segregation in a bus or train station. He was wrong. With due intimidation, the police told the protestors to leave. They left. The police shrewdly did not charge the protestors with violating a segregation law. Nor did they arrest the protestors. The federal government did not intervene.

2. "Well, in Albany, we were like fire fighters. The fire was already burning. I'll try to say this as charitably as I can: SNCC was in over its head. They wanted to get the international and national attention that Martin Luther King's presence would generate. But they did not want the input of his organization."

Who said this? Who was this person?

T. Wyatt Walker, an executive director of SCLC, said this.

Describe the criticism here of SNCC. What accounts for it?

SCLC was not a part of the Albany protest at the outset. Leaders of the

protest were local SNCC people like Charles Sherrod. This led to disputes over direction, tactics, purpose. Walker says Dr. King and SCLC came to the rescue in Albany. SNCC had lost control. SCLC arrived, but SNCC refused to listen.

3. "When Dr. King would come in, we would get three of four thousand people. Two or three thousand people without much effort. So that was in our favor. But when he left, it was more difficult for us to get people to come. So this phenomenon of 'Doc' flying into places where we worked and then flying out to another place, which was needed, made it difficult for us to organize."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Charles Sherrod, of SNCC's branch in Albany, said this.

Describe the criticism here of Dr. King and SCLC.

Sherrod wanted to establish a grass-roots movement in which local black people would play the dominant role. This movement, he argued, would outlast a charismatic leader like Dr. King who rallied the black community during his visits but who was not a permanent fixture in Albany. When he left, the media left. Sherrod complains it was difficult to organize under those circumstances.

4. "I sat down and took a map. How many jails was in a fifteen mile radius, how many was in a thirty-mile radius? And I contacted those authorities. They assured us that we could use their [jails]."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Laurie Pritchett said this. He was police chief in Albany.

What made this person different from his contemporaries?

Pritchett, unlike other Southern police chiefs who confronted the civil rights movement, read Dr. King's writings on the subject of Gandhi and non-violent

protest. As a result, Pritchett understood the movement's tactics: namely, to fill the jails and cause overcrowding, forcing the city fathers to negotiate with the black leadership.

What is described in this passage? Specifically, what was the purpose? Explain.

Pritchett describes his efforts to thwart the civil rights protests in Albany by sending arrested protestors to jails outside of the city, thus avoiding the problem of jail overcrowding and the need to negotiate with Dr. King and other black leaders.

5. "I knew that if he [King] stayed in jail, we'd continue to have problems. So I talked to some people. I said, 'We've got to get him out and once we do I think he'll leave here...'"

"*Yes, it was done at my request. And it sort of surprised Dr. King. This was the only time I've ever seen when [it] seemed he didn't know which way to go."*
Who said this? Who was this person?

Laurie Pritchett said this. He was police chief in Albany.

What occasion does this passage describe? Explain.

Dr. King had been arrested and jailed in Albany (with Ralph Abernathy and others). They wanted to be jailed, hoping their incarceration would draw national attention to the movement. Pritchett understood these motives clearly. He wanted to avoid national media attention, fearful it would weaken his position and force racial change on Albany.

What is the meaning of "it" in the sentence, "Yes, it was done at my request." Specifically, what was done? Explain.

Pritchett arranged for a wealthy white person to pay Dr. King's fine at the jail. With the fine mysteriously paid, Dr. King was ordered out of jail. Paradoxically, Dr. King wanted to remain in jail, and Pritchett wanted him out of jail.

ALBANY: QUOTES

NAME_____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "Some of us really didn't think we'd get arrested because this was a federal mandate. If they mess with us now they're going to get the federal government on them. Nobody's going to mess with the federal government, we thought."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What is described here?

Specifically, what is meant by "federal mandate" in this instance?

Explain what is meant by the sentence, "Nobody's going to mess with the federal government, we thought." Specifically, what happened?

2. "Well, in Albany, we were like fire fighters. The fire was already burning. I'll try to say this as charitably as I can: SNCC was in over its head. They wanted to get the international and national attention that Martin Luther King's presence would generate. But they did not want the input of his organization."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Describe the criticism here of SNCC. What accounts for it?

3. "When Dr. King would come in, we would get three of four thousand people. Two or three thousand people without much effort. So that was in our favor. But when he left, it was more difficult for us to get people to come. So this phenomenon of 'Doc' flying into places where we worked and then flying out to another place, which was needed, made it difficult for us to organize."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Describe the criticism here of Dr. King and SCLC.

4. "I sat down and took a map. How many jails was in a fifteen mile radius, how many was in a thirty-mile radius? And I contacted those authorities. They assured us that we could use their [jails]."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What made this person different from his contemporaries?

What is described in this passage? Specifically, what was the purpose? Explain.

5. "Yes, it was done at my request. And it sort of surprised Dr. King. This was the only time I've ever seen when [it] seemed he didn't know which way to go."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What occasion does this passage describe? Explain.

What is the meaning of "it" in the sentence, "Yes, it was done at my request." Specifically, what was done? Explain.

ALBANY: QUESTIONS TEACHER'S COPY

NAME_____

Instructions: answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. What were the differences between SCLC and SNCC in organizing a protest movement in a community like Albany?

The younger and less patient SNCC members differed from their elders in SCLC in approach in terms of organizing a community. SCLC generally worked with the established black members (including ministers) of the community while SNCC looked for "natural leaders" among the young and old and, as Juan Williams has written, "not necessarily those with credentials."

2. Based on the statements by Charles Sherrod (of SNCC) and Wyatt Walker (of SCLC) in the documentary, what was the basis of the conflict between the two black organizations in Albany, Georgia? Explain.

Sherrod appeared to resent the role played by SCLC and Dr. King (referred to as "De Law" by SNCC activists). While acknowledging Dr. King charismatic personality, his moral courage, and his influence with the media, Sherrod said that SNCC wanted to build a broadly based movement with indigenous support rather than on a charismatic leader who was not always present. Walker, in turn, considered SNCC activists amateurs who had gotten in over their heads and needed the expert leadership of Dr. King and SCLC to bail them out.

3. Who was Laurie Pritchett? Specifically, how did Pritchett prepare for the civil rights demonstrations in Albany, Georgia?

Laurie Pritchett was the shrewd police chief in Albany. He had read Dr. King's writings on non-violence and understood his tactics.

What were Pritchett's tactics towards the activists once the Albany demonstrations began? Specifically, how did he try to thwart the demonstrations?

Pritchett refused to arrest the demonstrators on federal charges in order to avoid federal involvement. He dispersed the arrested demonstrators to jails in the nearby area to avoid the problem of overcrowding the Albany jail. He eschewed violence to avoid bad publicity. He shrewdly had Dr. King's bail paid by a mysterious source in order to avoid the adverse publicity of having the respected leader in jail; Pritchett also believed King would thereafter leave town.

Was he successful? Explain.

Pritchett was successful. Dr. King left town. Though the demonstrations continued for another six years, the Albany Movement faltered. The civil rights movement, in general, appeared to be a cross-roads, only to be given a new life by subsequent (violent) events in Birmingham. Pritchett said he had met non-violence with non-violence. He was right.

4. What lessons did the civil rights activists learn as a result of their experiences in Albany, Georgia? Explain.

SNCC and SCLC were at odds with one another in Albany, and this allowed police chief Pritchett to argue that the problems was not with local blacks but with "outsiders." The movement's objective in Albany was not clear. Was it voter registration, interstate travel, or segregated counters? The absence of a single objective caused confusion.

ALBANY: QUESTIONS

NAME_____

Instructions: answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. What were the differences between SCLC and SNCC in organizing a protest movement in a community like Albany?

2. Based on the statements by Charles Sherrod (of SNCC) and Wyatt Walker (of SCLC) in the documentary, what was the basis of the conflict between the two black organizations in Albany, Georgia? Explain.

3. Who was Laurie Pritchett? Specifically, how did Pritchett prepare for the civil rights demonstrations in Albany, Georgia?

   What were Pritchett's tactics towards the activists once the Albany demonstrations began? Specifically, how did he try to thwart the demonstrations?

   Was he successful? Explain.

4. What lessons did the civil rights activists learn as a result of their experiences in Albany, Georgia? Explain.

IX. BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

"Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!"

-- George Wallace, at his inauguration as Alabama governor on January 14, 1963

BIRMINGHAM: SYNOPSIS

This segment of the documentary is 19:13 minutes long.

After the set-backs in Albany, Georgia, Dr. King and SCLC were determined to recover the initiative in the civil rights struggle. Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth of SCLC suggested to Dr. King that Birmingham, Alabama, was the place to begin: "If you come to Birmingham, this movement can not only gain prestige, it can really shake the country." The archly-segregated Alabama city was known as "Bombingham" because of eighteen unsolved bombings in the city between 1957 and 1963. The city was run by three vehement segregationists, including police commissioner Eugene "Bull" Conner.

Dr. King and his advisers devised a strategy for Birmingham, believing the lack of single, well-defined goal had condemned the Albany effort to failure. The Birmingham plan, titled "Project "C" ("C" for Confrontation), targeted the city's downtown businesses. It called for Dr. King to be arrested, and aimed to show the face of Southern racism. Easter, traditionally a lucrative time for the downtown merchants, was selected as the moment to unleash the demonstrations (picketing and boycotts). On the first day, Dr. King was disappointed by the low number of blacks who turned out to demonstrate. The city had refused to issue a parade permit. Blacks were arrested in great number. A court order banned further demonstrations.

In a dramatic decision reached on Good Friday, Dr. King walked out of the (black owned) Gaston Motel, his temporary residence in Birmingham, and led a small group to the courthouse. He purposely violated the court order and was arrested. This brought national publicity, and the movement was revived. Local white ministers criticized Dr. King in a full-page newspaper advertisement. Dr. King scribbled his response on the margins of the newspaper and on scraps of toilet

paper. The response became known as "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." When released on bond, Dr. King (and his top lieutenant Reverend Ralph Abernathy) devised a new strategy with the help of James Bevel, a veteran of the Nashville sit-ins. The new strategy called for the employment of black children in the demonstrations. Unlike their parents, children had no economic responsibilities and no fear of losing their jobs. Additionally, the sight of children being hauled off to jail (on school buses) would surely prick the nation's conscience. On May 2, 1963, the children began their demonstrations. It was the so-called "children's crusade." They were arrested immediately. The following day "Bull" Conner met the second wave of child protestors with police dogs and powerful water hoses. The dogs tore peoples' clothes off while the hoses knocked others down (and tore the bark off trees). This brutal response galvanized the black community of Birmingham behind Dr. King, and enraged the nation against "Bull" Conner and the city of Birmingham. On May 10, 1963, two thousand-five hundred black people, including two thousand children, were incarcerated in the jails in Birmingham and in the county. As a result, a group of Birmingham businessmen (Senior Citizens' Committee), fearing the demonstration's economic consequences, agreed to desegregate lunch counters and to hire black workers in clerical and sales positions.

The Ku Klux Klan staged rallies outside of Birmingham, issuing dire warnings, and several hours later a bomb exploded outside Dr. King's room at the Gaston Motel. Rioting erupted; seven stores were burned. Rioting broke out in cities across the country.

President Kennedy ordered federal troops to Birmingham. On June 19, 1963, the president delivered a new Civil Rights Bill to Congress. It allowed the attorney general to initiate suits for school integration and to shut off funds to federal programs in which discrimination could be proved. Determined to prevent this civil rights bill from dying in Congress, Dr. King, SCLC, CORE, the NAACP, SNCC, and other civil rights groups, organized "The March on Washington" for August 1963. Two hundred and fifty thousand gathered before the Lincoln Monument in the nation's capital on August 28, 1963, and heard Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Eighteen days after the demonstration, dynamite exploded in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. Fourteen were injured and four children, attending a bible school class, were killed. This tested the non-violent movement like never before, shaking its pacifist beliefs to the core.

BIRMINGHAM: CHRONOLOGY

1956 - NAACP is forced to quit Alabama; Fred Shuttlesworth's home is bombed; singer Nat King Cole is beaten during a performance.

April 1961 - With connivance of police, white toughs attack inter-racial Freedom Riders at Birmingham Trailways Bus Station (Mother's Day). Police had removed themselves from riot.

1962 - Birmingham closes sixty-eight parks, thirty-eight playgrounds, six swimming pools, and four golf courses to side step federal court order.

January 1963 - George Wallace is inaugurated Alabama governor and declares: "Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!"

March 1963 - Project "C" is launched, aimed at downtown businesses.
Mass arrests follow.

April 12, 1963 - Defying court order, Dr. King marches on Good Friday and is arrested; he writes "Letter From a Birmingham Jail." In key move, black schoolchildren are recruited to join demonstrations. Water hoses and dogs are turned on protestors.

May 6, 1963 - More than two thousand demonstrators are jailed. Hoses and dogs are again used on protestors.

May 10, 1963 - Agreement announced between black leaders and white merchants; counters to be desegregated and blacks hired. Klan rally that night; bombings hours later. Rioting; seven stores burned.

June 11, 1963 - Governor Wallace symbolically blocks James Hood and Vivian Malone at door of University of Alabama; under federal guard, the two are registered.

June 19, 1963 - Kennedy delivers Civil Rights Bill to Congress.
August 28, 1963 - March on Washington; Dr. King delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech. To accommodate Philip Randolph, an aged veteran of the fight, John Lewis moderates his own speech criticizing the Kennedy administration.

BIRMINGHAM: GLOSSARY TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in the Montgomery bus boycott.

1. "Bombingham" - Birmingham, Alabama, described by Dr. King as the most thoroughly segregated city in the South, was known as "Bombingham" because of the eighteen unsolved bombings in black neighborhoods between 1957 and 1963.

2. Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Conner - Conner was Commissioner of Public Safety in Birmingham, one of three commissioners who governed the city. Conner's harsh tactics against the civil rights activists (dogs, water hoses) enraged the nation and played directly into SCLC's hands.

3. George Wallace - Wallace was inaugurated Alabama governor in January 1963, pledging "segregation forever." In June 1963, Wallace stood in the doorway at the University of Alabama to prevent (symbolically) two black students from registering.

4. Project "C" - In January 1963, SCLC prepared a coordinated attack on segregation in Birmingham titled Project "C." The "C" stood for confrontation. The primary focus of the Birmingham demonstrations would be the downtown businesses.

5. "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" - Project "C" called for Dr. King to be arrested by Birmingham police on Palm Sunday, 1963. Defying a court order forbidding demonstrations, Dr. King and supporters marched on April 12, 1963, and were arrested. In jail, he read a letter in the *Birmingham News* written by local white ministers which criticized his leadership and instructed him to be patient. King replied with his "Letter From a Birmingham Jail."

BIRMINGHAM: GLOSSARY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in the Montgomery bus boycott.

1. "Bombingham" -

2. Theophilus Eugene "Bull" Conner -

3. George Wallace -

4. Project "C" -

5. "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" -

BIRMINGHAM: QUOTES TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "Look, I don't know what to do. I just know that something has got to change in Birmingham. I don't know whether I can raise money to get people out of jail. I do know that I can go into jail with them."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said this. He was the leader of SCLC.

On what occasion was this statement made? Be specific.

Dr. King made this statement after relatively few black people responded to his initial call for demonstrations in downtown Birmingham. Some black business men and white clergy in the city denounced Dr. King.

What occurred immediately after this statement was made? What was the result in terms of national impact?

After making this statement (which is read by Andrew Young in the documentary), Dr. King left the Gaston Motel and marched with others to the courthouse. They were arrested. Dr. King spent eight days in jail, wrote his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," and drew national attention to the civil rights movement in Birmingham. Andrew Young said, "That was I think the beginning of his true leadership."

2. "For years now, I have heard the word 'Wait' It rings in the ears of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never.' We must come to see with one of our distinguished jurists that 'justice too long delayed is justice denied.'"

Where does this passage come from? Who is its author? Where was it written?

The passage comes from Dr. King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." It was written while Dr. King was in the Birmingham jail.

To whom is the passage directed? Why was it written?

The passage is directed to a group of white clergymen in Birmingham who criticized Dr. King in a newspaper advertisement, claiming King was a "trouble-maker" who wanted "to stir up trouble" to gain "publicity." The passage is taken from Dr. King's response to the clergy. It was written along the edges of a copy of the *New York Times* while Dr. King was in jail.

3. "It was a masterpiece of the use of media to explain a cause to the general public of the nation. In those days you have fifteen minutes of national news and fifteen minutes of local news, and in marching only one block they could get enough news film to fill all the newscasts of all the television stations of the United States."

Who said this? Who was this person?

David Vaughn said this. He was a white lawyer in Birmingham (who served as a conduit between the white and black leadership in the city). A. G. Gaston, a black man who was a motel owner and a businessman in Birmingham, referred to Vaughn as "Lawyer Vaughn." The expression “lawyer” is taken from the vernacular of the time.

Describe what is meant by "a masterpiece of the use of media." Was it a "masterpiece of the use of media?" Explain.

Vaughn says the national media readily captured the scenes of police employing dogs and high powered water hoses against the demonstrators, many of whom were children. He suggests these scenes depicted the purpose of the civil rights movement to the American public in graphic and easily understood terms. The footage was broadcast to the nation that night. Yes, it was a "masterpiece of the use of media." The footage of the brutal treatment meted out in Birmingham had a profound impact, winning sympathy and support for the civil rights movement. The federal government was forced to take note, as it was worried about its image abroad vis a vis the Soviets and the propaganda question of who stood for justice in the world.

4. "No business people in Birmingham or any other city have the authority to

attempt any type of negotiations when it deals with governmental affairs with municipalities. Martin Luther King's epitaph, in my opinion, can be written here in Birmingham."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Robert Shelton said this. He was a leader of the local Ku Klux Klan.

When was this statement made? What occurred a few hours later?

The statement was made after the white leadership in Birmingham reached an agreement with Dr. King which promised a desegregation of downtown stores. A few hours after Shelton uttered this threat, Dr. King's room at the Gaston Motel was bombed. He was not present, having left the city. Alabama State troopers clashed with the crowd. Beatings and rioting followed, spreading to other cities.

What was the national reaction to this act of violence?

President Kennedy chose this moment to propose a new Civil Rights Bill. The civil rights movement, led by Dr. King and his lieutenants, wanted to make sure that the administration followed through on its promise, and it was for this reason that the March on Washington was planned for August 1963.

5. "We said we'd do something about it. We had two options. The first one was we felt confident that if we tried we could find out who done it, and we could make sure that they got killed. And we considered that as a real option, and the second option was..."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Diane Nash said this. She was a SNCC leader and young activist.

What is described in this statement? Specifically, what period of time does it describe?

Diane Nash describes the questions raised and the options available to the civil rights movement in the period of time directly after the bombing of Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church in September 1963. Fifteen were injured; four children were killed. The bombing shook the non-violent movement to the core.

What was the "second option?" Specifically, how could black people "protect black children?"

Diane Nash says that if black people in Alabama had the right to vote, they could protect their children from white inspired bombings and terror. Political power was the answer, and this was the choice made by the leaders of the movement after Birmingham. Attention was thus turned to Mississippi and to Freedom Summer in 1964.

BIRMINGHAM: QUOTES

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "Look, I don't know what to do. I just know that something has got to change in Birmingham. I don't know whether I can raise money to get people out of jail. I do know that I can go into jail with them."

Who said this? Who was this person?

On what occasion was this statement made? Be specific.

What occurred immediately after this statement was made? What was the result in terms of national impact?

2. "For years now, I have heard the word 'Wait' It rings in the ears of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never.' We must come to see with one of our distinguished jurists that 'justice too long delayed is justice denied.'"

Where does this passage come from? Who is its author? Where was it written?

To whom is the passage directed? Why was it written?

3. "It was a masterpiece of the use of media to explain a cause to the general public of the nation. In those days you have fifteen minutes of national news and fifteen minutes of local news, and in marching only one block they could get enough news film to fill all the newscasts of all the television stations of the United States."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Describe what is meant by "a masterpiece of the use of media." Was it a "masterpiece of the use of media?" Explain.

4. "No business people in Birmingham or any other city have the authority to attempt any type of negotiations when it deals with governmental affairs with municipalities. Martin Luther King's epitaph, in my opinion, can be written here in Birmingham."

Who said this? Who was this person?

When was this statement made? What occurred a few hours later?

What was the national reaction to this act of violence?

5. "We said we'd do something about it. We had two options. The first one was we felt confident that if we tried we could find out who done it, and we could make sure that they got killed. And we considered that as a real option, and the second option was..."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What is described in this statement? Specifically, what period of time does it

describe?

What was the "second option?" Specifically, how could black people "protect black children?"

BIRMINGHAM: QUESTIONS TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Why did civil rights leaders choose Birmingham as their next target?

After Albany, Dr. King and other civil rights leaders felt that they needed a decisive and well-publicized victory in order to regain the political momentum. Fred Shuttlesworth (of SCLC in Birmingham) promised Dr. King, "If you come to Birmingham, this movement can not only gain prestige, it can really shake the country."

What was Birmingham's reputation? Specifically, who was "Bull" Conner? What was his role?

Birmingham had a reputation for harsh segregation and unsolved bombings. It was known as "Bombingham." "Bull" Conner was police commissioner and his violent response to demonstrators played right into the hands of SCLC activists.

2. Why did black leaders in Birmingham decide to recruit black school children for the demonstrations? Specifically, what did the leaders hope to gain?

The black leaders decided to involve black school children in the protests because school children could be carted off to jail without economic consequences for the family. The arrest of the parents, in contrast, would jeopardize a family. In addition, the great number of children would fill the Birmingham jail and create problems for the police. Finally, the sight of children being brutalized by police would outrage public opinion and garner support for the movement, which in turn would force the federal government to intervene on behalf of civil rights.

Was the strategy a success? Explain.

The strategy was an overwhelming success. The sight of the Birmingham fire department turning water hoses on the demonstrators and the sight of police dogs attacking the demonstrators gained the movement a great deal of political leverage. The scenes of brutality in Birmingham appear to have convinced the Kennedy administration that a civil rights bill was necessary to protect the civil rights of black people in the South.

3. Describe the circumstances behind Dr. King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail." When did he write it? Why did he write it? What were his main points? Explain.

Dr. King was arrested in Birmingham in April 1963. His arrest was designed to win support for the movement, but a group of white ministers wrote a letter to the *Birmingham News* in which they criticized Dr. King and urged him to be patient on the matter of racial change. From his cell, King scribbled a response to the ministers on the edges of another newspaper. He argued that blacks had been urged to be patient about obtaining political rights for a long time, and that “wait” invariably meant “never.”

4. What was the March on Washington? When did it occur? What was its purpose?

In August 1963, two hundred and fifty thousand demonstrators, a coalition of civil rights workers, church groups, and labor leaders, gathered before the Lincoln Monument in Washington, D. C. The purpose of the March on Washington was to build pressure on Congress to pass the Civil Rights Bill that President Kennedy had unveiled on June 19, 1963.

What was the disagreement between John Lewis and SCLC members? How was it resolved? Explain.

In his speech in Washington, John Lewis of SNCC planned to criticize the Kennedy administration for what he believed was the government's laggard attitude on civil rights. As a SNCC activist, Lewis knew that SNCC workers

were being beaten in the South while the federal government did little to protect them. SCLC leaders did not want to antagonize the Kennedy administration, and a. Philip Randolph, the civil right movement's elder statesman, pleaded with the young SNCC activist to soften his speech. Reluctantly, John Lewis agreed, honoring his much respected elder.

5. What is the significance of Birmingham in the history of the civil rights movement?

Birmingham allowed the civil rights movement to regain momentum. The tactics employed by "Bull" Conner, revealing the brutality of segregation, played directly into the hands of the movement. Dr. King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" articulately summarized the goal of the movement. President Kennedy's Civil Rights Bill, presented to Congress, was in part a result of what Americans had witnessed in Birmingham. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, one of the results of the Birmingham demonstrations, offered the country a moral vision, a rallying point.

BIRMINGHAM: QUESTIONS

NAME _____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Why did civil rights leaders choose Birmingham as their next target?

What was Birmingham's reputation? Specifically, who was "Bull" Conner? What was his role?

2. Why did black leaders in Birmingham decide to recruit black school children for the demonstrations? Specifically, what did the leaders hope to gain?

Was the strategy a success? Explain.

3. Describe the circumstances behind Dr. King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail." When did he write it? Why did he write it? What were his main points? Explain.

4. What was the March on Washington? When did it occur? What was its purpose?

What was the disagreement between John Lewis and SCLC members? How was it resolved? Explain.

5. What is the significance of Birmingham in the history of the civil rights movement?

X. CASE STUDY: SNCC IN SOUTH-WEST MISSISSIPPI

In 1961, Bob Moses and SNCC, to prove they could do it anywhere, decided to fight the issue of voting rights in the most difficult place imaginable. The first choice was the Mississippi Delta, where Emmett Till (and others) had been killed. But Amzie Moore of the NAACP in the Delta warned Bob Moses that SNCC members would be murdered very quickly if they showed up there. Moses chose the next toughest place: South-West Mississippi. In August 1961, he and a small staff established a SNCC headquarters in McComb, and began a voter registration drive in the region, including in nearby Liberty.

...

1. Bob Moses established several contacts in Liberty, including Herbert Lee. Lee was murdered in September 1961 at a cotton gin in Liberty. The killer, claiming self-defense, was a Mississippi state legislator, E. H. Hurst. One of the witnesses was a black man, Louis Allen.

2. The Heffners, a white family in McComb, invited some COFO volunteers, also white, into their home and served them tamales. For this the white couple were ostracized by the white community, and fled to live in Washington, D. C.

3. Bob Zellner, a white SNCC activist from East Brewton, Alabama, arrived in McComb in early October 1961. On his first day Zellner joined a protest march to city hall. He was seized, beaten, and soon found himself beneath the lynching tree.

4. Louis Allen, a logger in Liberty, witnessed the murder of Herbert Lee. He wanted to testify about what really happened and asked for federal protection. It was denied. Allen was found murdered in front of his home on January 31, 1964, a day before he planned to leave for Milwaukee.

5. Hank Allen, Louis Allen's son, found his father's body the night he was killed. He believes he knows who the killer is.

Clayborne Carson, In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960's. Harvard University Press. 1981.

XI. POWER AND THE VOTE - 1964

"Freedom has never been free."

-- Medgar Evers

POWER AND THE VOTE: SYNOPSIS

This segment of the documentary is 18:03 minutes long.

It begins with a brief reference to Malcolm X and to his organization, the Nation of Islam. The majority of this segment, however, is devoted to the struggle for civil rights in Mississippi, viewed as the state where white supremacy was most deeply rooted.

In the 1950's and early 1960's, the leading civil rights activist in Mississippi was Medgar Evers, a World War II veteran and the NAACP's first field secretary in the state. With Aaron Henry and others from the NAACP, Evers arranged for local blacks (who had information about the crime) to testify at the Emmett Till trial in 1955. In 1963, he initiated a boycott of segregated stores in Jackson, Mississippi, all the while encouraging blacks to register to vote. On June 12, 1963, Evers was murdered by a sniper outside his home in Jackson. Two all-white juries failed to convict white supremacist Byron de la Beckwith of the crime in the 1960's, having reached "hung juries." However, Beckwith then bragged about the murder for a number of years. In February 1994, he was again brought to trial and convicted of murder by a racially mixed jury.

The struggle for voter registration in Mississippi continued after the death of Medgar Evers. Five percent of black people were registered to vote. Due to terror (a tradition of lynchings) and intimidation (jail, job loss, mortgages and loans withdrawn, forced off plantations where they lived in meager dwellings constituting the "quarters"), only two percent of black people actually exercised the right to vote. At the courthouse, white officials thwarted black people attempting to register by requiring them to read and interpret a passage from the U. S. Constitution. This had to be done to the satisfaction of the not infrequently illiterate registrant.

Louis Allen, who witnessed the murder of Herbert Lee in 1961, was murdered on the night of January 31, 1964.

In June 1964, SNCC launched a voter registration drive in Mississippi named Freedom Summer. Bob Moses of SNCC was a driving force behind the effort. White college students (and others) from outside the South were asked to volunteer for the voter registration drive in Mississippi. SNCC leaders calculated that the nation's conscience would more easily be aroused if white students, with influential parents, became the object of white violence and Mississippi attitudes. The SNCC activists opened forty-one Freedom Schools throughout the state. The schools prepared black people to register to vote and taught basic subjects (like math and reading) as well as a novel subject: black history. Inadequate education had long been viewed as one of the tools by which the Jim Crow system suppressed black people. White segregationists, as noted in the documentary by William Simmons of the Citizen's Council, were outraged by what they viewed as "an invasion" of the Magnolia State by "outsider agitators" who had come to flaunt "our customs." The dire poverty of blacks spoke eloquently of Magnolia State's "customs."

On June 21, 1964, three SNCC workers were abducted and murdered by a group of white thugs (including the local sheriff) outside of Philadelphia, Mississippi. Two of the SNCC people were white, Jewish, and from the North (Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner); the third was a black Mississippian (James Chaney). The local sheriff (Cecil Price) and more than twenty other white men were charged with the murder, but these charges were dropped; six men served prison terms of less than six years, charged in federal court with civil rights violation of those who had been killed. Several of the killers live today in Philadelphia. One operates a bar.

During the search for the three SNCC workers, the bodies of several black men were discovered in rivers and forests, but little attention was paid to them. The nation appeared concerned solely because two white men had disappeared. During the search, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The legislation addressed desegregation of public facilities but did not speak to voting rights. In the summer of 1964, eighty civil rights workers were beaten, and one thousand were arrested. Many black churches were burned.

The Democratic Convention was held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in August 1964. Intending to confront the all-white Mississippi delegation and to

demand a place for black Mississippians at the convention, black leaders in Mississippi formed their own political party named the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. It had sixty thousand members. MSFD delegates had been duly elected by black Mississippians earlier that summer and arrived wholly uninvited at the convention. President Johnson wanted a peaceful convention and was angered at their presence. He was particularly angered at the emotional speech given by MSFD vice chairman Fannie Lou Hammer. The president immediately called his own press conference in the hopes of diverting media coverage from Fannie Lou Hammer. His effort failed, as her speech was aired on the evening news. Once again, the media had played an important role.

Johnson desired the support of the white Mississippians and, by extension, the support of the white South. He knew the white Southerners would flee the party if the black Mississippians were admitted to the convention. The president, through his intermediaries Hubert Humphrey (who would be his vice-president) and Walter Mondale, offered the MSFD two seats on the convention floor as "delegates-at-large." The black Mississippians refused to accept the seats. As Fannie Lou Hammer said, "We didn't come all this way for two seats when all of us are tired."

Mary King, Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement. William Morrow and Company. New York. 1987.

POWER AND THE VOTE: CHRONOLOGY

1954 - Medgar Evers applies to University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) Law School. His petition is rejected ostensibly because Evers had supplied no recommendations from white people.

1955 - Evers becomes first NAACP field director in Mississippi.

1955 - Reverend George Lee is murdered in Belzona, Mississippi. Lamar Smith is murdered in Brookhaven, Mississippi. Both had been active in voter registration. Emmett Till murdered in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, for having allegedly whistled at a white woman.

August 1961 - SNCC's Bob Moses initiates voter registration drive and picketing in McComb and Liberty, Mississippi.

September 25, 1961 - Herbert Lee, a NAACP worker and the father of nine, is murdered in Liberty, Mississippi.

January 1961 - Medgar Evers launches boycott of Jackson, Mississippi, stores. Boycott is halted owing to lack of bail money.

September 1961 - James Meredith registers as a student at Ole Miss. Riots ensue. Federal troops arrive to restore order.

May 1963 - Jackson, Mississippi boycott is resumed.

June 12, 1963 - Medgar Evers is killed outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi. There is nearly a riot in Jackson during funeral.

November 22, 1963 - President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

Fall of 1963 - Mock election, or Freedom Vote, is held in Mississippi.

June 20, 1964 - First wave of college students leave for Freedom Summer in Mississippi.
June 21, 1964 - Civil rights workers Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney are abducted outside Philadelphia, Mississippi. Their bodies are

discovered on August 4, 1964.

July 2, 1964 - President Lyndon Johnson signs into law the Civil Rights Act that had been submitted by John Kennedy in 1963.

August 1964 - Democratic convention is held in Atlantic City, New Jersey. MDFP sends contingent to challenge all-white Mississippi Democratic Party. MDFP receives two "delegates-at-large," but boycotts convention.

November 1964 - Presidential election; Johnson defeats Goldwater.

POWER AND THE VOTE: GLOSSARY TEACHER'S COPY
NAME_____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in terms of the Mississippi civil rights movement.

1. Medgar Evers - Evers, a World War II veteran, became the NAACP's first field director in Mississippi. He organized boycotts of segregated stores in Jackson, Mississippi, and traveled the state registering black people to vote. He was murdered in June 1963 by white supremacist Byron de la Beckwith. His example, and his murder, inspired activists in Mississippi. Beckwith was finally convicted of the crime in 1994.

2. Bob Moses - Moses, a Harvard educated SNCC activist, began registering black people to vote in south-west Mississippi in 1961. Moses organized Freedom Summer in 1964. He invited white college students and ministers from outside of the South to come to Mississippi and register black people to vote. Moses, quiet, soft-spoken, fearless, and determined, inspired awe and confidence among the activists.

3. Freedom Summer - Freedom Summer, organized by SNCC's Bob Moses, was the effort during the summer of 1964 to register black people to vote in anticipation of the 1964 presidential elections. Moses invited white college students and others from beyond the Mason-Dixon Line to come to Mississippi, recognizing that violence meted out to sons and daughters of influential whites would more readily lead to national outrage than violence meted out to black Mississippians. Activists in Freedom Summer also established Freedom Schools to teach reading, mathematics, and black history to black children.

4. Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Signed into law by President Johnson in June 1964, the Civil Rights Act established the unconstitutionality of segregation in places of public accommodation such as restaurants, stores,

   movie theaters, etc. The act did not address the issue of voting rights as President Johnson believed that white Southerners should be brought along slowly on the matter of racial change.

5. Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party (MSDP) - The MSDP was formed in 1964 to confront the all-white Democratic delegation from Mississippi to the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The MSDP delegates were duly elected by black voters in Mississippi. Aaron Henry and Fannie Lou Hammer were leaders of the MFDP, which received a paltry two "delegates-at-large" at the convention. Nonetheless, the struggles of the MFDP to gain recognition at the convention dramaticized the plight of black Mississippians.

POWER AND THE VOTE: GLOSSARY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in terms of the Mississippi civil rights movement.

1. Medgar Evers -

2. Bob Moses -

3. Freedom Summer -

4. Civil Rights Act of 1964 -

5. Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party (MSDP) -

POWER & THE VOTE: QUOTES TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "The honorable Elijah Mohamed teaches us that it is time for you and me to stand up for ourselves. It is time for you and me to see for ourselves. It is time for you and me to hear for ourselves. And it's time for you and me to fight for ourselves. We don't need anybody seeing for us or fighting for us. We'll fight our own battles with the help of our God."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Malcolm X said this. He was leader of the Nation of Islam in the United States.

What is the message that comes across from this passage?

The message is a call for self-reliance in the black community, a central tenet of the Nation of Islam's philosophy.

2. "We hope to send into Mississippi this summer up to one thousand ministers, lawyers, students, from all around the country who will engage in a program that is designed to open up Mississippi to the country."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Bob Moses said this. He was a SNCC leader active in voter registration in south-west Mississippi in the early 1960's. In 1964, he was one of the leading organizers of Freedom Summer in Mississippi.

Who were the "students" referred to in the passage? Specifically, what was the importance of sending these particular students to Mississippi?

The students referred to were mostly white college students from regions outside the South. They came from relatively privileged homes. Their parents (including lawyers, doctors, bankers, and politicians) had political influence and could focus attention on misdeeds occurring in Mississippi where their children's lives were at stake.

What was meant by "...a program that is designed to open up Mississippi to the country." Specifically, how would this be accomplished?

The strategy was to send the Freedom Summer volunteers to encourage (and prepare) black people in Mississippi to organize politically and to register to vote. The premise was that the presence of white activists in Mississippi would focus the nation's attention of the injustices in the state. White American would show more of a concern.

3. "And they would say 'yes' to everything we said. We'd ask, 'Would like to be involved in the voter registration drive? Will you go down to vote?' And they'd say, 'Yes sir.' And we knew we were not getting across. We knew they were just waiting for us to go away because we were a danger to them, and in many ways we were."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Peter Orris said this. He was a volunteer during Freedom Summer in Mississippi.

"...We were a danger to them." Who are the "them" referred to? Why was there "a danger?"

The "them" refers to black people who were encouraged to vote by Freedom Summer activists. The "danger" resulted because some white people in the local communities threatened blacks with violence if the blacks tried to register to vote. Subtle forms of pressure, constituting a "danger," were also applied. Blacks involved in political activity were fired from their jobs, had their mortgages withdrawn, or were simply put on an ominous list published in the local newspaper for all to see and know.

In your opinion, did the Freedom Summer volunteers have the right to endanger black people in Mississippi?

This answer requires an opinion. It should be pointed out that this question touches upon the time-honored maxim: "The end justifies the means." The question is: does it? Was it right to call upon people to suffer through dangerous times in order to win the right to vote?

4. "You see, I know what is going to happen. I feel it deep in my heart - when they find the people who killed those guys in Neshoba County....they [will] come back to the state of Mississippi and have a jury of all their cousins and aunts and uncles. And I know what they are going to say: 'Not guilty.' Because no one saw them pull the trigger."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Dave Dennis said this. He headed CORE's Mississippi staff during the 1964 Freedom Summer.

When (and why) was this statement made? Who were "those guys in Neshoba County?"

The statement was made during an address Dave Dennis gave at a church in Meridian, Mississippi, at the funeral of James Chaney. Dennis had been instructed to give a "moderate" address, but the sight of James Chaney's eight year old brother, Ben, in the church prompted Dennis to give an impassioned address.

"Those guys" is a reference to James Chaney, a black Mississippian, Andrew Goodman, a young white man (Jewish) who had just arrived in Mississippi, and Michael Schwerner, another young man (Jewish) who had been in Mississippi for several weeks and had drawn the attention and murderous ire of local whites. All three were SNCC activists. In June 1964, after investigating the burning of a black church, the three men were arrested by the local sheriff, released, and then abducted on a remote highway. They were murdered (Chaney was terribly beaten before being killed) and dumped in an earthen dam.

What happened to the killers?

Many of the white men who participated in the abduction and murder of the three civil rights workers were arrested and tried on federal charges of having violated the civil rights of the three activists. They were sentenced to varying terms in prison, the longest being less than six years. The men were never tried on state charges of murder. Several still live in Philadelphia, Mississippi, where one operates a bar.

5. "If the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America. Is this America? The land of the free and the home of the brave? Where we have to sleep with out telephones off the hook, because our lives be threatened daily?"

Who said this? Who was this person?

Fannie Lou Hammer said this. She was a leading member of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

What was the Freedom Democratic Party? **What was its goal at the Democratic National Convention in 1964?**

The Freedom Democratic Party was comprised of black delegates from Mississippi. The MFDP was the answer of black Mississippians to the state's Democratic Party, in which the maintenance of Jim Crow segregation was a leading principle in the party platform.

Why did President Johnson object to the presence of the MFDP at the Democratic convention? How did he attempt to thwart Fannie Lou Hammer? Did it work?

President Johnson objected to the MFDP because he did not want to alienate Mississippi's all-white delegation nor did he want to alienate Southern whites in general, whose votes he would need for his re-election in November 1964. Johnson attempted to thwart Fannie Lou Hammer when she was speaking on the convention floor by calling a presidential press conference and thus diverting the national media from Fannie Lou Hammer to himself speaking from the Oval Office. The tactic failed, as the national media replayed Fannie Lou Hammer's address that night on the evening news.

What did President Johnson (through his intermediaries) offer the MFDP at the Democratic Convention? For the MFDP and the Mississippi Democratic Party, what was the result of the president's actions?

President Johnson offered the MFDP two "delegate-at-large" seats on the

convention floor. The MFDP refused to accept the two seats. As Fannie Lou Hammer said, "We didn't come all this way for two seats when all us is tired." The white Democratic Party, angered by Johnson's concessions (however modest), left the convention. Johnson defeated Goldwater in November 1964, but he did not carry the South.

POWER AND THE VOTE: QUOTES

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "The honorable Elijah Mohamed teaches us that it is time for you and me to stand up for ourselves. It is time for you and me to see for ourselves. It is time for you and me to hear for ourselves. And it's time for you and me to fight for ourselves. We don't need anybody seeing for us or fighting for us. We'll fight our own battles with the help of our God."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What is the message that comes across from this passage?

2. "We hope to send into Mississippi this summer up to one thousand ministers, lawyers, students, from all around the country who will engage in a program that is designed to open up Mississippi to the country."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Who were the "students" referred to in the passage? Specifically, what was the importance of sending these particular students to Mississippi?

What was meant by "...a program that is designed to open up Mississippi to the country." Specifically, how would this be accomplished?

3. "And they would say 'yes' to everything we said. We'd ask, 'Would like to be involved in the voter registration drive? Will you go down to vote?' And they'd say,

‘Yes sir.’ And we knew we were not getting across. We knew they were just waiting for us to go away because we were a danger to them, and in many ways we were."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Who are the "them" referred to? Why was there "a danger?"

In your opinion, did the Freedom Summer volunteers have the right to endanger black people in Mississippi?

4. "You see, I know what is going to happen. I feel it deep in my heart - when they find the people who killed those guys in Neshoba County....they [will] come back to the state of Mississippi and have a jury of all their cousins and aunts and uncles. And I know what they are going to say: ‘Not guilty.’ Because no one saw them pull the trigger."

Who said this? Who was this person?

When (and why) was this statement made? Who were "those guys in Neshoba County?"

What happened to the killers?

5. "If the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America. Is this America? The land of the free and the home of the brave? Where we have to sleep with out telephones off the hook, because our lives be threatened daily?"

Who said this? Who was this person?

What was the Freedom Democratic Party? What was its goal at the Democratic National Convention in 1964?

Why did President Johnson object to the presence of the MFDP at the Democratic convention? How did he attempt to thwart Fannie Lou Hammer? Did it work?

What did President Johnson (through his intermediaries) offer the MFDP at the Democratic Convention? For the MFDP and the Mississippi Democratic Party, what was the result of the president's actions?

POWER AND THE VOTE: QUESTIONS TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Who was Medgar Evers? Specifically, what position did he hold? What goals did he seek to achieve? How did he seek to achieve these goals? What happened to Evers? What happened to his killer?

Medgar Evers was a black Mississippian, a World War II veteran, and the first full time NAACP field secretary in Mississippi. In 1960, he requested that stores in the state capital, Jackson, hire black people. When the request was refused, Evers launched a boycott of the stores. Evers also traveled the state registering black people to vote. He was murdered on June 12, 1963, outside his home in Jackson. His assassin, Byron de la Beckwith, was released after two hung-juries in the 1960's but finally convicted in 1994 by a racially mixed jury.

2. What was the two-fold purpose of Freedom Summer? What was its strategy? Explain.

The purpose of Freedom Summer was to register black people to vote in the 1964 presidential election. Another purpose was to draw attention to the brutality used to enforce segregation in Mississippi and thus win national support for the civil rights movement. The strategy was based on encouraging white college students from the West and North to spend the summer in Mississippi helping register black people to vote. This strategy was based on the belief that public opinion in the nation would be more outraged if white students were beaten in Mississippi than if local blacks were beaten. In addition, some of the white college students had influential parents who, it was argued, would make their anger known in Washington and hopefully influence Congress on the matter of the Civil Rights Act. It was signed on July 2, 1964.

3. How did white Mississippians, in general, view Freedom Summer?

White Mississippians, in general, viewed Freedom Summer as a threat to their local customs and traditions (i.e. to white supremacy). They viewed the Freedom Summer activists as "hippies" and "outside agitators" who were determined to cause trouble in Mississippi, where it was argued by whites that the local blacks were perfectly content until “agitated” by “outsiders” (or by a visit North).

Who were Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney? Where were they from? What happened to them?

Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney were civil rights activists working in Neshoba County, Mississippi, in June 1964. Goodman and Schwerner were white Northerners. They were both Jewish, an important point to underline in this (more recent) time of black-Jewish tension. Chaney was a black Mississippian. The three were first arrested by the local sheriff, jailed in Philadelphia, Mississippi, and then released. Leaving Philadelphia, the three were seized and murdered. Their bodies were buried in an earthen dam.

What is the significance of the case involving Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney? How did their murder affect public opinion across the nation?

The murder of the three activists revealed anew the extent to which some whites would go to defend segregation. The case is also significant because it drew national attention, largely because two of the activists were white. Indeed, while searching for the three bodies, a number of dead black males were located in the rivers and swamps, but their discovery merited little interest. The killers were later tried on federal charges of having violated the civil rights of the slain activists and served up to six years in prison. To this day, they have never tried on state charges for murder.

4. Who was Fannie Lou Hammer?

Hammer, raised in poverty and with only a third grade education, began registering black people to vote near her home in Ruleville, Mississippi. As a result, she was thrown off the plantation where she had worked as a book keeper, and she was later severely beaten in a Mississippi jail. Hammer

became a leader of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and her emotional speech during the 1964 Democratic National Convention won wide sympathy for the cause of civil rights.

What was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party? Specifically, what was its purpose?

The MFDP was a political party elected by black Mississippians to travel to the National Democratic Convention in August 1964 and challenge the all white Democratic delegation from Mississippi.

What was the result of the MFDP's actions? Specifically, why did President Johnson object to the MFDP? What actions did the president take to deny publicity to MFDP? Explain.

The MFDP disrupted the Democratic Convention and brought national attention to the plight of black Mississippians. In an effort at conciliation, the National Democratic leaders offered the MFDP delegation two "delegate at-large" seats on the convention floor. MFDP rejected the two seats. Two seats were not nearly enough to represent all black Mississippians. President Johnson believed he needed the votes of white Southerners and reasoned that he would lose that vote if he conceded more delegate seats to the MFDP. The president attempted to divert the national media from Fannie Lou Hammer's emotional address in Atlantic City by calling his own press conference, interrupting live coverage of Hammer's address. However, the essence of that address was played on the nightly news.

POWER AND THE VOTE: QUESTIONS

NAME _____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. Who was Medgar Evers? Specifically, what position did he hold? What goals did he seek to achieve? How did he seek to achieve these goals? What happened to Evers? What happened to his killer?

2. What was the two-fold purpose of Freedom Summer? What was its strategy? Explain.

3. How did white Mississippians, in general, view Freedom Summer?

   Who were Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney? Where were they from? What happened to them?

   What is the significance of the case involving Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney? How did their murder affect public opinion across the nation?

4. Who was Fannie Lou Hammer?

   What was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party? Specifically, what was its purpose?

   What was the result of the MFDP's actions? Specifically, why did President Johnson object to the MFDP? What actions did the president take to deny

publicity to MFDP? Explain.

XII. SELMA, ALABAMA - 1965

"*This is Selma, Alabama, where there are more Negroes in jail with me than there are on the voting rolls."*

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

SELMA: SYNOPSIS

This segment of the documentary lasts 22:01 minutes.

Selma is located in central Alabama. In early 1965, SNCC and SCLC leaders chose Selma to confront local authorities on the voting rights issue. The object of the Selma action was to force the federal government to intervene on the behalf of black people in the South and, pointedly, to guarantee their right to vote. The 1964 Civil Rights Act legislated the end of discrimination in restaurants and other places of public accommodation, but it did not address the issue of voting rights, a critical omission that was largely due to President Johnson's belief that white Southerners should be brought along gradually on the matter of racial change.

In demanding black voting rights in Selma, SNCC and SCLC fully expected to provoke the local sheriff, the hot-tempered Jim Clark. Often wearing a white steel helmet while tooting a truncheon, Clark (arrested for selling marijuana years later) almost willingly appeared to be the caricature of the racist Southern sheriff. By provoking a violent response from Clark and having it recorded and televised by the national media, black leaders hoped to appeal to the nation's conscience and hence garner political support for the passage of the Voting Rights Act. The slogan of black activists in Selma was "One Man, One Vote."

The plan was to stage marches on the Dallas County courthouse in Selma with the aim of registering to vote. A local court had issued an order against congregating on the street. In January 1965, Sheriff Clark, choosing his victims unwisely, seized a black Selma woman, Amelia Boynton, and roughly handled her before the rolling cameras. The sight of the high-heeled and dignified Boynton grabbed around the neck by Clark was seen across the nation. Two days later

several hundred Selma school teachers, representatives of the black middle class, marched on the courthouse. This elite had traditionally held itself aloof from civil rights activities, which threatened their relatively privileged position in the Jim Crow world. Andrew Young of SCLC said the teachers' march was "the most significant thing that has happened in the racial movement since Birmingham."

On February 1, 1963, Dr. King led 250 demonstrators to the court house. All were arrested. The next day 500 black school children marched on the courthouse and were arrested. Three hundred more followed and were arrested. Sheriff Clark appeared to play into the hands of SNCC and SCLC. On February 4, 1963, Malcolm X came to Selma at the invitation of SNCC. Speaking in Brown's AME Chapel, the militant Nation of Islam leader said that "white people should thank Dr. King for holding people in check, for there are other [black leaders] who do not believe in these [non-violent] measures." This was a clear reference by Malcolm X to himself.

On February 16, 1963, SCLC executive staff member C. T. Vivian led 25 demonstrators to the court house where he compared Sheriff Clark's fellow officers to the Nazis who had followed Hitler in Germany. Clark, standing nearby, could restrain himself no more. He struck Vivian in the face. It was a "sucker's punch," and dramatic footage for the national media. On February 18, Vivian spoke in Marion, Alabama, and that night twenty-six year old Jimmy Lee Jackson, while protecting his mother from a beating, was shot and killed by a Alabama state trooper. Many were beaten, including journalists.

To protest the murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson, SCLC organized a march from Selma to the state capitol at Montgomery eighty miles away. SNCC did not approve of the march but agreed to allow its members to participate. This event would be known as "Bloody Sunday." The 250 demonstrators, led by John Lewis, were stopped at the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the way out of Selma. They were beaten and tear-gassed by Alabama State Troopers, ordered to halt the march by Governor George Wallace. Sheriff Clark's mounted "posse" charged the demonstrators. This display of brutality was recorded by the media and seen by the nation. Dramatic footage of the events in Selma interrupted ABC's broadcast of "Judgment at Nuremburg," a film about the postwar trial of Nazi war criminals.

Days later a second march was led by Dr. King, but it was halted by police at the Edmund Pettus Bridge (an account of this particular march is not included in the

documentary). After a prayer, Dr. King led the group back to Brown's AME Chapel, confusing and disappointing many. That night a white Unitarian minister, James Reeb, was killed in Selma.

President Lyndon Johnson, in a joint session of Congress on March 15, 1965, presented his proposal for a Voting Rights Act. "Their cause," the president intoned, "must be our cause, too. Because it's not just Negroes, but it's really all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome." The refrain "We shall overcome" was indelibly linked to the civil rights movement, and hearing the president repeat it deeply moved Dr. King and other civil rights veterans. On March 21, 1963, the third and final march from Selma to Montgomery began. Protected by federalized Alabama State Troopers, the march was led by Dr. King and other luminaires, white and black. By the time the march reached Montgomery, it was 25,000 strong. That night Viola Liuzzo, a white volunteer from Detroit, was murdered by Klansmen on the highway between Selma and Montgomery. She was car-pooling marchers back to Selma.

On August 6, 1965, President Johnson signed the 1965 Civil Rights Act. Dr. King, Rosa Parks, and other civil rights leaders stood by the president as he signed the bill. Winning the right to vote was a major accomplishment of the civil rights movement.

Frank Sikora, Selma, Lord, Selma: Girlhood Memories of the Civil Rights Days. University of Alabama Press. 1979. This is an account of Selma as seen from the eyes of two young girls who displayed uncommon bravery.

SELMA: CHRONOLOGY

February 1963 - Two SNCC workers begin conducting voting clinics in Selma, Alabama. On October 7, 1963, SNCC workers accompany 250 blacks to register to vote at courthouse in Selma. Sheriff Jim Clark orders them beaten and arrested.

January 18, 1965 - Dr. King and SCLC begin Selma campaign.

January 19, 1965 - Sheriff Clark attacks Amelia Boynton at courthouse. Scenes of brutality are recorded by media and broadcast to nation. On January 22, 1963, a hundred of Selma's black school teachers march on courthouse to protest Boynton's arrest.

February 1, 1965 - Dr. King and 250 protestors arrested at courthouse. Five hundred of Selma's school children march and are arrested. On February 4, 1963, militant Black Muslim minister Malcolm X speaks in Selma at invitation of SNCC.

February 16, 1965 - SCLC executive staff member C. T. Vivian leads 25 demonstrators to courthouse and is struck by Sheriff Clark.

February 18, 1965 - Jimmie Lee Jackson is shot and killed by an Alabama state trooper. Plans are made to march 80 miles from Selma to Montgomery, the Alabama state capitol. On March 6, 1963, seventy members of Concerned White Citizens of Alabama march on Selma court house to protest police brutality and the denial of black voting rights.

March 7, 1965- On "Bloody Sunday," Hosea Williams and John Lewis of SNCC lead 250 marchers to Edmund Pettus Bridge at Selma en route to Montgomery. The group is halted by police on horseback, beaten, and tear gassed. Scenes of brutality broadcast are to nation.

March 9, 1965 - Led by Dr. King, a second march begins from Selma to Montgomery. Faced by police, Dr. King stops at Edmund Pettus Bridge, offers a

prayer, and turns group back. White Unitarian minister James Reeb beaten to death that night in Selma.

March 15, 1965 - President Johnson presents his proposal for a Voting Rights Act,

concluding his speech to Congress with civil rights refrain, "We shall overcome."

March 21, 1965 - Final march from Selma to Montgomery begins. Alabama National Guard federalized and ordered to protect marchers. On March 25, 1963, 25,000 arrive at Alabama state capitol in Montgomery. That night a white homemaker from Detroit and a volunteer driver, Viola Liuzzo, is shot and killed by Klansmen.

August 6, 1965 - President Johnson signs Voting Rights Act into law.

SELMA: GLOSSARY TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in terms of the civil rights struggle in Selma.

1. Jim Clark - Clark was the hot-tempered sheriff in Selma who, with his flagrant brutality, played directly into the hands of civil rights organizers. In the 1970's, Clark was arrested for growing marijuana.

2. C. T. Vivian - Vivian was a SCLC executive staff member who played a leading role in the civil rights activities in Selma. On February 16, 1965, after comparing Sheriff Clark's officers to Nazis who followed Hitler, Vivian was struck by Clark before the rolling cameras. Two days later Vivian was invited to speak in nearby Marion, Alabama. The group gathered there was attacked by Alabama state troopers. Jimmie Lee Johnson was killed, precipitating the march to Montgomery.

3. Jimmy Lee Jackson - Twenty-six year old Jimmy Lee Jackson was shot and killed by an Alabama state trooper in Marion, Alabama, after C. T. Vivian's address. Jackson died while protecting his grandfather and mother from blows. His death led black leaders to call for a march from Selma to Montgomery, the Alabama state capitol.

4. Edmund Pettus Bridge - The first march from Selma to Montgomery ended abruptly at the Edmund Pettus Bridge when Alabama State Troopers and Sheriff Clark's "posse" attacked the 250 marchers, beating and tear-gassing them. The attack (remembered as "Bloody Sunday") was recorded by the national media and provoked outrage across the nation. A second march from Selma to Montgomery (the so-called "ministers' march") stopped short of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, but the third march, under the protection of federalized Alabama troops, did not stop until it reached Montgomery.

5. 1965 Voting Rights Act - Support for the Voting Rights Act increased after the murders in Alabama (Jimmy Lee Jackson, James Reeb, Viola Liuzzo). On August 6, 1965, President Johnson, sitting in the President's Room where Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation one hundred and

four year earlier, signed into law the 1965 Voting Rights Act. It guaranteed the right of all Americans to vote, removing the obstacles imposed by Jim Crow, and was a major accomplishment of the civil rights movement.

SELMA: GLOSSARY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following places, people, or events, and explain their significance in terms of the civil rights struggle in Selma.

1. Jim Clark -

2. C. T. Vivian -

3. Jimmy Lee Jackson -

4. Edmund Pettus Bridge -

5. 1965 Voting Rights Act -

SELMA: QUOTES TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "They picked Selma just like a movie producer would pick a set. You had the right ingredients. You should have seen Clark in his day..."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Joe Smitherman said this. He was Selma's mayor in 1965 (and for many years afterwards).

What was meant by the statement, "They picked Selma just like a movie producer would pick a set?" Specifically, who were "they?"

"They" refers to the civil rights leaders who planned the demonstrations in Selma. Smitherman suggests they were shrewd to select Selma because of Jim Clark, the volatile sheriff who the civil rights leaders anticipated would be provoked into responding violently to the demonstrators. It was the perfect "movie set" for the film footage they desired.

Who is the "Clark" referred to? Describe him. What was his role in Selma?

"Clark" refers to Sheriff Jim Clark of Dallas County, Alabama. He wore a white helmet "like General Patton" and an "Eisenhower jacket." He had a swagger stick. He was the full expression of the classic bully, and made a very bad impression on television. In Selma, Clark struck T. C. Vivian in front of the cameras, and helped organize the beating of activists at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Unflatteringly, he personified the image of the quintessential Southern sheriff. Clark became a symbol of the evil the civil rights movement aimed to overthrow.

2. "I think that the people in this part of the world would do well to listen to Dr. Martin Luther King and give him what he is asking for and give it to him fast before some other factions come along and try to do it another way. What he's asking for is right and that's the ballot, and if he can't get it the way he's trying to get it, it's going to be gotten, one way or the other."

Who said this? Who was this person?

Malcolm X said this. He was leader of the Nation of Islam.

When and where was this statement made? What is its significance?

The statement was made in Selma at the height of the confrontations with Sheriff Clark at the Dallas County courthouse. The significance of the statement is twofold: first, Malcolm X publicly made a statement supporting Dr. King (the Nation of Islam leader disagreed with SCLC on fundamental issues); second, Malcolm X suggested that there was "another way" to obtain the vote if Dr. King was not successful in his peaceful efforts. These carefully chosen words intimated violence, and made Dr. King appear "reasonable," a favorable alternative. Of course, many whites saw the two black men as one and the same: a threat.

3. "But believe me there were those who followed Hitler like you blindly follow this Sheriff Clark who didn't say their day would come."

Who said this? Who was this person?

T. C. Vivian said this. He was a SCLC leader in Selma and was at the forefront of the daily demonstrations on the steps of the Dallas County courthouse.

What was meant by this statement? **To whom was it directed? Specifically, explain the reference to Hitler.**

Vivian compared the Selma policemen (on the courthouse steps) "blindly" following the orders of Sheriff Clark to the Nazis who followed Hitler (and committed crimes under the pretense of merely following orders). Vivian said these Nazis did not fear they would be held accountable for their crimes, but they were ultimately held accountable (some of them), just as Clark's underlings would be held accountable later on (Vivian intimated).

What was the result of this statement? Explain.

This was the statement that finally provoked Sheriff Jim Clark. He heard the reference (and comparison) to Nazis and exploded. He struck T. C. Vivian with a blind-side punch (wounding his own hand). Clark's officers attacked the crowd. The melee was filmed by the news media and broadcast nationally, fulfilling the wishes of the civil rights leaders to demonstrate the brutality of Jim Crow segregation.

4. "We was infuriated to the point that we wanted to carry Jimmy's body to George Wallace, and dump it on the steps of the capital. We had got about like how the white folk are. We had to determined, decided, that we was going to get killed or we was going to be free."

Who made this statement? Who was this person?

Albert Turner, a civil rights activist, made this statement.

Who was the "Jimmy" mentioned in this statement? Who was this person? Specifically, what happened to this person?

This was a reference to Jimmie Lee Jackson. He was a black man who, while protecting his mother from a beating, was killed by a Alabama State trooper in Marion, Alabama, near Selma.

What was the significance (and the result) of "Jimmy's" death?

His killing prompted the march from Selma to Montgomery, the Alabama State capital. This led to the beating at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, which in turn heightened the nation's focus on racial brutality in the South. The murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson, while not untypical of the time, was seized upon by black leaders to propel the movement forward on the current of anger and outrage.

5. "Their cause must be our cause too. Because it's not just negroes, but really it's all of us who must a overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice, and 'We shall overcome.'"

Who said this? Who was this person? When was the statement made?

President Lyndon Johnson said this in a speech to Congress eight days after the beatings on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma.

What was the purpose of the speech in which this statement was made?

Seizing upon the brutal images broadcast from Selma (and the negative impression these images made on the nation), President Johnson addressed Congress and announced his intention to pass a Voting Rights Act. The act which would place the power of the federal government behind the right of black people to vote in the South and elsewhere.

"We shall overcome." What was the significance of this expression? How did affect Dr. Martin Luther King?

This was an expression closely identified with the civil rights movement. President Johnson's use of the expression suggested the president supported its goals and was making its fight, his fight. Dr. King was deeply affected by Johnson's use of the expression.

SELMA: QUOTES

NAME _____

Instructions: Identify the following quotes.

1. "They picked Selma just like a movie producer would pick a set. You had the right ingredients. You should have seen Clark in his day..."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What was meant by the statement, "They picked Selma just like a movie producer would pick a set?" Specifically, who were "they?"

Who is the "Clark" referred to? Describe him. What was his role in Selma?

*2. "I think that the people in this part of the world would do well to listen to Dr. Martin Luther King and give him what he is asking for and give it to him fast before some other factions come along and try to do it another way. What he's asking for is right and that's the ballot, and if he can't get it the way he's trying to get it, it's goin*g to be gotten, one way or the other."

Who said this? Who was this person?

When and where was this statement made? What is its significance?

3. "But believe me there were those who followed Hitler like you blindly follow this Sheriff Clark who didn't say their day would come."

Who said this? Who was this person?

What was meant by this statement? To whom was it directed? Specifically, explain the reference to Hitler.

What was the result of this statement? Explain.

4. "We was infuriated to the point that we wanted to carry Jimmy's body to George Wallace, and dump it on the steps of the capital. We had got about like how the white folk are. We had to determined, decided, that we was going to get killed or we was going to be free."

Who was the "Jimmy" mentioned in this statement? Who was this person? Specifically, what happened to this person?

What was the significance (and the result) of "Jimmy's" death?

5. "Their cause must be our cause too. Because it's not just negroes, but really it's all of us who must a overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice, and 'We shall overcome.'"

Who said this? Who was this person? When was the statement made?

What was the purpose of the speech in which this statement was made?

"We shall overcome." What was the significance of this expression? How did affect Dr. Martin Luther King?

SELMA: QUESTIONS TEACHER'S COPY

NAME _____

Instructions: answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. What was the purpose of the civil rights demonstrations in Selma, Alabama, in 1965?

The purpose of the demonstrations in Selma was to provoke the conscience of the nation by demonstrating the brutality used to enforce Jim Crow segregation. In turn, movement leaders hoped to win federal intervention in Alabama and to gain support for the pending Voting Rights Act.

Describe the tactics used to achieve the goals of the movement in Selma?

Civil rights leaders wanted to provoke the arch-segregationists in Selma before the cameras, allowing the nation to witness the brutality and thus arouse public opinion on behalf of the movement.

2. Who was Jim Clark?

Clark was Selma's hot tempered sheriff whose brutal methods played directly into the hands of movement organizers.

Describe the confrontation between Sheriff Jim Clark and SCLC member T. C. Vivian in front of the courthouse in Selma. Specifically, what did Vivian say that provoked Clark?

In one of many demonstrations, Vivian led 25 supporters to the courthouse where Clark and his deputies blocked the entrance. Vivian told the deputies that the Nazis who followed Hitler eventually had to pay for their crimes. He was, in essence, comparing the deputies to Nazis and Clark to Hitler.

What was the result of the confrontation?

Clark could restrain himself no more. Before the cameras, he struck Vivian in the face. The nation witnessed (yet again) the brutal enforcement of

segregation. Two days later Vivian was called upon to address a group in nearby Marion, Alabama. That night Jimmy Lee Jackson was murdered by a state trooper.

3. What was the purpose of the first attempted march from Selma to Montgomery? Specifically, why was it planned?

The march was organized to protest the murder of Jimmy Lee Jackson.

What happened at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma?

State troopers with Sheriff Clark and his "posse" brutally routed the 250 demonstrators.

What was the result of this first march? Explain.

The brutal treatment meted out to the peaceful marchers was recorded by the media and broadcast to the nation, which was enraged.

4. Why was the third march from Selma to Montgomery successful?

The marchers were protected by federalized troops.

What was the significance of Montgomery as the destination of the marchers?

The movement began in Montgomery ten years before when Rosa Parks was arrested on a public bus for refusing to relinquish her seat to a white person. It began as a small movement, but ten years later 25,000 people (of all denominations and races) marched on the state capitol in Montgomery.

5. What was the significance of the 1965 Voting Rights Act? Who signed it into law?

Although the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution had in 1870 prohibited racial discrimination in voting, the great majority of blacks in the

South were denied the right to vote. The 1965 Voting Rights Act, signed by President Johnson on August 6, 1965, removed all the obstacles and guaranteed the right of all Americans to vote.

How was the passage of that act influenced by the civil rights struggles in the South? Explain.

The necessary support for the Voting Rights Act was difficult to obtain in the U. S. Congress. The education of the American public about the harsh reality of Jim Crow segregation was one of the objectives of the civil rights movement. In turn, black leaders hoped that the public would be outraged and would put pressure on their representatives in Washington to pass the Voting Rights Act. The strategy worked, although at great personal sacrifice to many.

SELMA: QUESTIONS

NAME _____

Instructions: Answer each of the following questions completely and in full sentences. When relevant, offer examples to support your answer.

1. **What was the purpose of the civil rights demonstration in Selma, Alabama, in 1965?**

Describe the tactics used to achieve the goals of the movement in Selma?

2. Who was Jim Clark?

Describe the confrontation between Sheriff Jim Clark and SCLC member T. C. Vivian in front of the courthouse in Selma. Specifically, what did Vivian say that provoked Clark?

What was the result of the confrontation?

3. What was the purpose of the first attempted march from Selma to Montgomery? Specifically, why was it planned?

What happened at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma? What was the result of this first march? Explain.

4. Why was the third march from Selma to Montgomery successful?

What was the significance of Montgomery as the destination of the marchers?

5. What was the significance of the 1965 Voting Rights Act? Who signed it into law?

How was the passage of that act influenced by the civil rights struggles in the South? Explain.