VOICES OF CHANGE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Caudill College of Humanities

Morehead State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

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VOICES OF CHANGE

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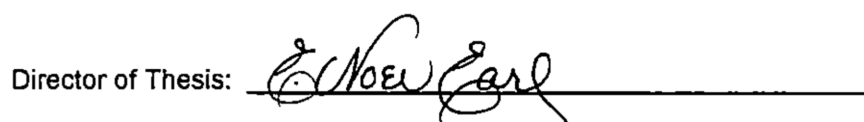
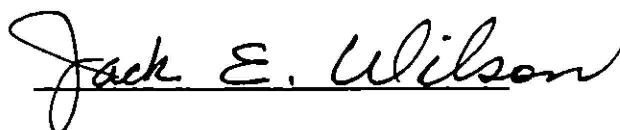
Director of Thesis: 

Voices of Change includes a process paper and manuscript focusing on the Civil Rights Movement. The reader's theatre is comprised of seventeen monologues interspersed with narration by the immortal voice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The process paper and the reader's theatre both offer insight surrounding how and why the Civil Rights Movement evolved. By focusing on these issues the reader absorbs history as it is presented with the emotions of the people who felt the pains of prejudice and discrimination.

Accepted by: , Chair



Accepted by the faculty of the Caudill College of Humanities, Morehead State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.

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Introduction

". . . I must confess that I am not afraid of the word 'tension.' I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood."

Martin Luther King, Jr.
"Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
(Chestnut and Cass, foreword)

The above words written so eloquently by Dr. King reflect the attitudes of not only the black man, but how and why the Civil Rights Movement had to come about. Voices of Change is a representation of these attitudes, a reader's theatre manuscript focusing on the changes and events that occurred during this drastic restructuring period in our American culture. To follow this argument thematically and support the foundations for the nature of this work, I must first look at the historical background of this era focusing primarily on what caused Negroes to seek civil rights. Next, I must examine a chronological order of events leading to the boiling and breaking point of Negroes and civil rights workers standing up for equality. After establishing what occurred during this historic period in our society, I will focus on how and why I decided to write, organize and compile research about this era. In doing this I will explain how I got interested in this topic, the format of the production and some questions a work of this nature may raise.

Historical Background

The Civil Rights Movement evolved out of a need for change. Negroes were once considered to be property. In his book Race and Nationality in American Life, Oscar Handlin offers a definition of slavery that displays exactly how the Negro man was once defined by white society. This definition alone establishes the need for change. He writes,

> "By the latter half of the eighteenth century, slavery was a clearly defined status: that condition of a natural person, in which, by operation of law, the application of physical and mental powers depends . . . upon the will of another . . . and in which he is incapable. . . of . . . holding property (or any other rights) . . . except as the agent or instrument of another. In slavery . . . the state, in ignoring the personality of the slave . . . commits the control of his conduct . . . to the master, together with the power of transferring his authority to another." (Handlin, 4)

This legal definition implies slavery not only as physical control but as a mental or emotional hold on those bound by racial prejudice. Therefore, even after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, Negroes were still denied the same rights as whites in our society for many grueling years. For example, Negroes were denied voting rights, bus privileges, and were forbidden to eat in some public restaurants and lunch counters.

The Negroes in 1865 were full of hope and promise although discrimination and segregation still stood in the way of their progress. According to Carol F. Drisko and Edgar A. Toppin in their book, The Unfinished March, the prophecies of what were to come in time were not hard to figure out. The freedman wanted to try out his freedom. He wanted to see if he could move from place to place without asking for permission. He wanted a good job, a place to live and plenty to eat. He wanted land to farm and he was eager to be educated. In essence, Negroes wanted everything that whites had because they were now free. (Drisko and Toppin, 1)

Drisko and Toppin also state, after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, the South fought back by organizing a set of Black Codes that were still dehumanizing. For example, if a Negro was not employed then he could be arrested or if a Negro quit a job

before his contract was up, regardless of circumstance, he could be fined up to fifty dollars. Negroes held mass meetings throughout the south during 1865. In these meetings, they began forming relations with the United States Government to break discrimination laws, asking President Lincoln to help to ensure that these laws were not to continue. (Drisko and Toppin, 9)

Negroes continued on this way for a number of years, fighting the battle but not winning the war. However, after World War II, television gained popularity. American Negroes saw the way white Americans lived. More importantly, they also saw Negroes, in country after country in Africa, winning independence from their white colonial masters.

Television played a role in changing Negro attititudes, "Cracks began to appear in the walls of segregation. But before the heart of America would soften toward the Negro, the great democratic processes of our government would have to take up the cause of equal rights for all American citizens. " (Harris, 20)

Many Negroes began to demand equal rights. Janet Harris in her book, The Long Freedom Road, stated, "It took a host of different kinds of people--ranging from a farsighted Supreme Court Justice (Thurgood Marshall) to a plucky little Kansas girl (Linda Brown) -- to set the changes in motion." (Harris, 7)

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court announced a decision that was a victory for the Negro race. Linda Brown was allowed to attend a white school after she and her father, Oliver Brown, protested the conditions she endured to attend a school for Negroes. The events surrounding this protest are not nearly as important as the outcomes. Brown was allowed to be educated with whites, overturning the Plessy versus Ferguson decision that schools were separated but equal. This day was a triumphant victory for Negroes, because with integration they hoped equality was close at hand. (Sowell, 13)

With measures like these, Negroes gained more and more ground to end segregation and discrimination. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s message of nonviolence also led Negroes to victory. King, a minister and motivational speaker, helped Negroes to organize and become unified.

Sit-ins, stand-ins, and kneel-ins showed America nonviolent forms of protest and assured them that Negroes would not stop fighting until they achieved their goal of attaining civil rights. On February 1, 1960, four Negro students at North Carolina Technical and State University at Greensboro, sat down at a white lunch counter refusing to leave until served. This incident prompted other Negroes to do the same thing, forcing a tidal wave of nonviolent communication designed to end visible prejudice in society. (Walter, 1) In conducting these protests, Negroes were trained by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference or SCLC, a group of citizens concerned with ending discrimination. Protestors were urged to:

1) Make every effort to protect your head.
2) Protect others by placing you body between them and the abuse.
3) Do not strike back or curse if abused.
4) Do not block entrances or doorways or aisles.
5) Act courteously and friendly at all times. (Walter, 2)

The racist attitudes Negroes had to overcome seemed unmovable. However, with time, perseverance, and determination as their guideposts, they began to win the battle to end segregation, discrimination, and prejudice.

The 1960's exploded as an age for civil rights. According to S. Carl Hirsch in his book, The Riddle of Racism, out of frustration, outrage, and the tension of segregation and discrimination, a hundred black ghettoes exploded. Sweltering days gave way to the fires that lit up the night sky. The Watts Riots forced an entire nation to take notice of the

frustrations surrounding Negro society, bringing home the realization of the Negroes demand for equality. The outbreaks were random and unpredictable. Negroes were angry because they had been fighting for over a century and they had not gained the grounds of equality which they so desperately needed and deserved. (Hirsh, 182)

In a desperate attempt to end the turmoil, President Johnson set up the National Advisory Commission. Along with this attempt to end the chaotic riots came the Kerner Commission, a group of eleven politicians and congressmen organized to formulate a solution to end these outbreaks of looting, violence and destruction.

The Kerner Commission stated that the outbreaks were not part of any organized plan or conspiracy. They concluded that white racism was responsible for these acts. The report revealed,

> "While condemning the use of violence, Negro people fighting for their freedom was actually serving the nation. Negro protest has been firmly rooted in the basic values of American society, seeking not their destruction, but their fulfillment. Race prejudice has shaped our history decisively and now it threatens our future. It seems as though prejudice is not only in the minds of individuals, it has soaked into the major institutions of this nation including the government itself." (Hirsh, 185)

Prior to the results found by the Kerner Commission, President Kennedy had presented the term "affirmative action." This term was first used in the context of racial discrimination by Kennedy in his Executive Order No. 10,925 in 1961. It stated, "Federal contractors should take affirmative action to ensure that the applicants are employed, and to insure that the employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." (Sowell, 39)

Whites also joined efforts to aid in the fight for equality. Several student workers got involved, which strongly weakened the beliefs of the aging white society. When white civil rights workers became active other prejudiced whites saw their own race striving for the equal right of the Negroes they had scorned, denied, and with whom they refused to associate. (Watters, 309)

The events surrounding this period were, at best, unbelievable. It seems that with everything there is a price to pay. For most of us it is hard to believe that young college students were trained to protect their heads when protesting for their own freedom. It is sad to think that people, not a half a century ago, would kill or injure a student engaged in nonviolent protest.

For my generation what Negroes must have gone through to eat, vote, or be educated is unimaginable. However, for those who fought and died for their beliefs it was a way of life. Before focusing on why I chose to write Voices of Change, let us examine a chronology of some the events that gave impetus to the Civil Rights Movement.

Chronology of Events

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court declares school segregation to be unconstitutional in the case Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka. Negroes hoped that with integration equality would be close at hand. However, during this same year, the first Citizen's Council was formed by whites in Mississippi to block school integration.

1955 found civil right's issues becoming even more heated as a collage of events shook a nation. Claudette Colvin, a teenager, was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white person in Montgomery, Alabama. Later that year, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat , which led to the Alabama Bus Boycott. Martin Luther King, Jr. was elected as their leader and buses were eventually integrated in Montgomery.

Emmitt Till, a Chicago teenager, was arrested and killed for talking to a white woman in an improper way. Reverend George Lee, an active member in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was murdered for his voter registration activities.

As 1956 began, it seemed that Negroes were losing their battle. The state of Alabama effectively outlawed the NAACP within its borders. Authrine Lucy entered the University of Alabama, but the state succeeded in removing her from the university. Southern politicians publish their Southern Manifesto, which defended segregation. However, in November of that same year, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Montgomery bus segregation laws were unconstitutional.

1957 through 1959 offered a series of ups and downs for the Negro Civil Rights Movement. Three major events occurred in 1957 that gave hope that equality was close at hand. First, in January, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference grew out of the successful Montgomery bus boycott. On August 29, Congress passed a civil rights act that

strengthened Negroes' voting rights. Also, during that year of victories, Central High School became desegregated opening its doors to the Negro community in Little Rock, Arkansas.

In 1958, Ernest Green became the first Negro student to graduate from Little Rock's Central High School. During the following school year, Arkansas governor, Orval Faubus closed all public schools in Little Rock to prevent further integration. In 1959, Mack Charles Parker was lynched in Poplarville, Mississippi. A grand jury received evidence in the case but refused to believe a lynching had occurred.

In February of 1960, sit-ins took place at segregated facilities in Greensburo, North Carolina. Similar protest occurred all over the South and in some northern communities. More than a hundred students from nine states met at Shaw University and formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee or SNCC.

As time progressed more and more Negroes joined the cause for equality. In 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality or CORE organized the Freedom Rides via interstate buses through the Southern states. Riders were met with violence in Alabama. United States Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, asked movement leaders to stop the demonstration and concentrate on voter registration because he felt voting rights was less a volatile issue.

Finally, in February of 1962, the Supreme Court ruled that state-sponsored segregation in travel was illegal. In April of this year, the Voter Education Project was started. Negroes fought against segregation in Albany, Georgia, even though by doing this they ignored police orders.

The Voter Education project and the SNCC(Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) began a sustained effort to register voters in Mississippi in 1963. Harvey Gantt became the first Negro student to enter Clemson University in South Carolina. Massive protest demonstrations took place in Birmingham, Alabama, to challenge segregation. Governor George Wallace tried to prevent integration at the University of Alabama by

standing in the doorway of the school. Medger Evers, the head of the NAACP, was murdered. On August 28, 1963, over a quarter of a million people of all races joined in the March on Washington to demonstrate for civil rights. At the event, Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech.

1964 was full of events that impacted an entire nation. That summer was better known as the "Freedom Summer." The project began in Mississippi with a plan to bring more than a thousand young people to the state to work on voter registration and other community projects. On June 16, the Mount Zion Community Church was burned to the ground and on June 21, three civil rights workers were murdered by Ku Klux Klan members in Mississippi.

Both blacks and whites were persecuted for being involved in the Civil Rights Movement. For example, on February 18, 1965, Jimmie Lee Jackson, a civil rights worker, was beaten and shot by the state police in Marion, Alabama. On March 7, civil rights demonstrators began to march from Selma to Montgomery. On March 21, thousands of protesters began a five-day march from Selma to Montgomery demanding voting rights. With these constant marches and protests the walls of segregation slowly began to fall.

By 1966, the Civil Rights Movement was deeply split. CORE and SNCC workers advocated armed self-defense and some former civil rights workers favored aggressive violence. Black nationalist groups attracted many who might have joined the nonviolent movement. SNCC and, to a great extent, CORE became all-black organizations; they seemed confused over the steps to take next and spent much of their energy on internal fighting.

Although, civil rights is still in question today, the Civil Rights Movement of the fifties and sixties suffered its greatest blow on April 4, 1968. On that day, their leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. , was shot to death in Memphis. (Levine, 143-147 and Powledge 649-656)

Discussion of the Work

After reviewing these events I have compiled a collection of monologues intermingled with original narration and factual material. The reader's theatre manuscript is entitled, Voices of Change. I chose this period dating through the fifties and sixties because it was so crucial in the shaping of America's psyche. It amazed me that there was a time, not so long ago, when Negroes could not sit or eat where they wanted. For example, as discussed earlier in this paper, Negroes had to give up their seats on buses if a white person wanted their seat. Furthermore, Negroes could only eat in certain places in particular sections. Quite frankly, this situation was so unbelievable that it provoked interest and I wanted to explore what had happened for myself.

The idea for Voices of Change first came to me last year. As a student, in Dr. Jack Wilson's Graduate Seminar, I explored the social and political themes of the late fifties and early sixties focusing on the parallel movements of civil rights and student protest. Through the discussion in Dr. Wilson's class I became interested in and, in turn, discovered a lot of intriguing data about several individuals involved in the reshaping of our country during this era. People like Elizabeth Eckford, Malcolm X, and Rosa Parks fascinated me. Their stories were compelling and deserved much more than a sentence or a brief paragraph in a history book. They needed to be heard by my generation as clearly as they were heard by their own. The characters I chose primarily focused on civil rights. I believe they sent a message that rings just as true today as ever--freedom, equality, justice.

After reading the information about each character, I simply tried to place myself in the person's situation while writing. For example, I read how Elizabeth Eckford, a Negro girl who tried to enter a white school in Little Rock, Arkansas, had been spat on by the crowd. I contemplated how she must have felt as a victim of discrimination, prejudice and abuse. My feelings tried to encompass hers while I was placing together her monologue.

Each character was chosen on the basis of which persons interested me while I was researching. The reader's theatre is narrated by the immortal voice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The voice of Dr. King sets up the monologues before the characters actually walk on stage. Dr. King was one of the few people who was actually an intrinsic part of the whole Civil Rights Movement. As narrator, the purpose of Dr. King's voice is to allow characters to exit and enter the stage while setting up the next scene. The reader's theatre explores five major areas of the movement: the contributions made by Negro women; segregation and education; the hate of prejudice; whites who got involved in the Civil Rights Movement; and the opinions of public figures. Through this analysis, the reader is taken on a journey to see how equality evolved.

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Introduction

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightening. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one or it may be a physical one or it may be both moral and physical. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and will . . . men may not get all they pay for in this world but they must certainly pay for what they get."

Frederick Douglas

Voices of Change is a collection of original monologues based on facts from the fifties and sixties interspersed with narration from the immortal voice of Martin Luther King, Jr. The above quotation by Frederick Douglas states, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." The work examines that struggle and focuses on the efforts of men and women, both black and white, to promote equality and end segregation.

List of Characters
(in order of appearance)

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Rosa Parks

Ann Moody

Fannie Lou Hamer

Daisey Bates

Frances Foster

George Wallace

Elizabeth Eckford

Linda Brown

Thurgood Marshall

Mamie Bradley Till

Maureen Murphy

Sharon Burger

Jane Stembridge

Jill -- March on Washington

Malcolm X

John Lennon

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The fifties and sixties were a time of social and political changes because Negroes were tired of the chains of discrimination and segregation. The United States was being turned upside down and shaken. In the wake of the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, Negroes were still not being treated equally. For just a moment, imagine what it would have been like to suffer discrimination and segregation. Not being able to ride on buses, eat in restaurants or attend public institutions was commonplace for the Negro in the United States.

One hundred and thirty-five years after Lincoln's declaration, prejudice is still flowing in American veins. However the black man has come a long way and his plight has not gone unheard. For the next few moments you will hear true stories based on historic facts from this era of dynamic changes in our history.

Among the most courageous youth that America has ever seen are the young black men and women who strove to promote civil rights in the fifties and sixties. Although some of their names may be unfamiliar their stories are not. Caressing the pages of history are Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white man, which in turn led to the Alabama Bus Boycott ; Ann Moody, a young black woman who was involved in a sit-in; Fannie Lou Hamer, who attended a voter registration workshop in Mississippi for which she was arrested and beaten; Daisy Bates, an author, who recounts how her mother was killed by a group of white men remembers the pain and prejudice, and Frances Foster, who recollects when she was fourteen and going to the Pitzitz lunch counter, and after demanding to be served was hauled out and arrested. Listen and hear their stories and others like them. Imagine a different time, an unfamiliar place that wasn't so long ago.

Rosa Parks

The one thing I've known since a very young age is that everyone deserves equality no matter what color their skin is. I never could see the difference between me and a little white girl. We both played with dolls, we both wore our hair in pig tails, and we both liked to wear ruffles on our dresses. The only difference my naive mind could comprehend was the fact that white children were simply treated better than colored ones. Even though I was sometimes treated badly, I never let it change my ideas about myself. Deep in my heart I knew that I was an important part of society. That was all that mattered.

I remember once when I was a little girl, this little white boy named Franklin came up to me on my way home from school to try and start trouble with me. He was saying some pretty nasty things about me when all of a sudden, he balled up his fist and threatened to hit me! Well, I picked up a brick that was lying beside me and dared him right back. Let's just say that he thought better about what he was doing and high-tailed it up the street.

I recall another day - years and years later. I was very tired, not tired in the sense that you're thinking. I was tired of giving in! The bus driver asking me to get up and hand over my seat to another person because they were paler than me was the last straw. I refused and went to jail, but I felt one-hundred percent better about myself sitting in that cell than I could have standing in the aisle of that bus knowing that I had given in. Then I thought I was committing a simple act of self protest. The day it happened I would have never guessed the amount of activity that would take place afterwards. I also was in awe of the amount of credit that was given to me. I'm told that I was the leader in the Montgomery, Alabama Bus Boycott. I don't see how one person could have made that big of an impact, but they assured me that it was true. However nothing could have astounded me more than when Martin Luther King dedicated a speech to me on December 5, 1955. The words that he said in my behalf will stick with me forever. In my eyes, what I did wasn't all that special.

I am just a simple woman who stands up for her rights. Many would have done the same if they had been in my shoes, but for the record, I'm glad that they were on my feet.

My advice to the world is to love yourself as an individual no matter what your sex, religion, or race. There will always be little Franklins; there will always be people who expect you to give up to them unconditionally. There will always be those who think that they are superior to you, but if you believe in yourself and do what you know is right, your life can't help to be better for it. Remember, even though you are only one, you can work the miracles of hundreds.

Ann Moody

Before Emmitt Till's murder, I had known the fear of hunger, hell, and the devil. But now there was a new fear known to me -- the fear of being killed, just because I was black. Once I got food, the fear of starving would leave, but for my fear of being murdered I could find no remedy.

Everyone told me that if I was a good girl I wouldn't have to fear the devil or hell. I didn't know; however, what one had to do or not do as a Negro to escape being killed. Probably just being a Negro was enough to lose you life, I thought.

On May 7, 1955, I went into an all white restaurant and sat down. I could feel the hate from all of those pairs of eyes staring right at me. Even though I was afraid, I was going to make my point because that was why I had gone there. Nothing was said for about two minutes, and then out of the blue someone yelled, "Get out of here! We don't serve your kind around here."

I quietly got up and walked out the door. I stood outside and cried about what had just been said. They don't serve my kind? What kind was I? It wasn't fair. I was human like the rest of them. My dream is that one day the world will join together as one. My only hope for the American nation is for the blacks and whites to be one. Hopefully that day will eventually come to pass. I will keep on fighting, and will never quit until I am treated as a human not an alien. Someday, I will make my dream a reality.

Fannie Lou Hamer

I remember the day of August 31, 1962, as it was yesterday. I walked at least twenty-six miles before I reached the county courthouse. I planned on registering to become a first class citizen. Instead my plans were delayed by the police.

Not long ago after I had returned home I heard the plantation owner, Mr. Marlow, say, "Is Fannie Lou back?" Before my husband answered with a polite 'yes sir' my heart began to throb. I slowly walked out on that rugged old porch.

"Fannie Lou, have you been to the courthouse tryin' to get registered?" asked Mr. Marlow. "We ain't ready for that here in Mississippi." At this point I began to explain to Mr. Marlow that I certainly wasn't registering for him. I was registering for myself.

In 1963, I attended my first voter registration workshop in Mississippi. On my way back home I was arrested in Winona. Some people who had attended the workshop decided to get off the bus and have dinner. Two of the ladies went into the restaurant. Within seconds they came straight back out of the restaurant doors. One of the ladies, Miss Ponder, told us the chief of police was inside and ordered her out. I immediately returned to the bus and sat down. As I glanced out the window, I saw two policemen pushing Miss Ponder into the back of the police car. I stepped off the bus to see what was happening and a policeman screamed, "Get that one!" The policeman kicked me in the stomach with his large, thick soled boot as I got into the car.

I was locked in a cell with Mrs. Euvester Simpson, who also wanted to be a registered voter. I began to hear sounds of people screaming in pain. Finally, the screams ended and they dragged Miss Ponder with her blood shot eyes and swollen mouth past my cell. Her clothes were torn off her mangled body.

I remember it clearly. I was the next to be tortured. I was carried to a cell where two Negro men were waiting with blackjacks. They laid me on the bunk face down. As the chief

of police supervised, I was beaten by the first Negro until he was exhausted and my frail body was bleeding. The police chief then ordered the second Negro to beat me with his blackjack. I was wearing a long skirt, but unfortunately, it kept riding up. However, I continually tried to keep it down to shield my left side from the licks. I had polio as a child and I didn't want the blackjack to strike my crippled side. As I was trying to pull my dress down, one of the white men came over and hoisted my dress above my head . . .

I never knew what I was charged with or why this happened to me.

Daisy Bates

I was born in a small town in Arkansas situated between Negro Town and White Town. My parents named me Daisy Lee Gaston. I don't know why. I guess they just liked the name. I was an only child, and I was very happy and not ashamed to be black. I just wished sometimes that we were treated like everyone else. I never could understand why we weren't.

I remember one year on my birthday when I was still pretty young. My mother dressed me up real nice and pretty and sent me down to the butcher's shop to get some beef for my birthday dinner. I pranced into the shop so proud; I was going to buy meat from the butcher just like all of the white folks did. I wasn't in the shop for more than a minute when all of my happiness and pride was taken from me. The butcher screamed, called me nigger, and told me to get out of his shop. Of course, he went ahead and took my money, and he threw some meat at me that was wrapped in brown paper. I ran home crying. I was so embarrassed. That night I told my dad what had happened. He tried to explain to me that colored people didn't have the same rights as whites, but I didn't understand because I was too young then. All I knew was that the butcher hurt my feelings, and I laid in my bed that night praying that he would die. I prayed that things would get better, and that we would get the rights that Daddy said we didn't have. Little did I know then that things would get worse before they got better.

About a year later, I was playing with some friends and this boy who always liked to pick on me asked me if I knew what had happened to my mama. I told him that nothing was wrong with my mama. He said, "No, your real mama." I didn't know what he was talking about so I just left. Later that day I asked Early B., my cousin and best friend, what happened to my real mama. He was surprised that I knew anything about it, but he told me anyway. He told me about how a man came to our house when I was just a baby and told

Mama that Daddy had been hurt. She left me with a neighbor and went out to help Daddy. He told me how my mama never came home that day. He told me that she was murdered by a bunch of white men. He told me that my daddy found her lying in a pond. After I heard this I cried until I didn't think that my eyes had any tears left in them, but they did.

Daddy taught me many things that I have carried with me through my life. He taught me that hate will eat away at your very core. He told me not to hate anyone, even if they hated me, and to never handle a situation with violence. He wanted me to use my mind. My father's strength has stayed with me forever. His values helped me in my pursuit for equality and nonviolent protest. All of my stories are told in my book, The Long Shadows of Little Rock. It contains stories of blessings and also tales of strife. There were times in my life that I didn't even want to get out of bed, but the picture of my dead mother and the words of my father gave me the strength to go on. This is my advice to all African Americans: keep going, keep fighting, and never ever give in. Bad things will happen, but it is up to you to make good come out of them.

Frances Foster

My name is Frances Foster and I have a story to tell you, a little girl's story. When I was fourteen years old I lived in Birmingham, Alabama. One day I walked over to my best friend's house. His name was Ricky Shuttlesworth. We were all gonna get involved in the sit-ins. I remember my first experience at the local lunch counter. I had all my new birthday clothes on. My mama even saw me on television. My friend and I decided to go to Pitzitz. There was a place to purchase things, and a place to eat. I purchased some books, and went over to get something to eat. As I sat down some white lady came over to my table. She said, "I'm sorry but I can't serve you here, this is a white restaurant."

I replied, "I'm not leaving until I am served."

She repeated, "You have to go. You just can't sit here. You know better."

I said, "Why can't I? I made a purchase in the store and they accepted my money for that. I'd like to order please."

A white man came up and said, "I'm going to have to ask you to get out of here, girl. You know you all are supposed to go downstairs and eat!"

I said, "I'd like to have a menu, please. Will someone clean off the table?"

A few minutes later I saw all these cameramen and photographers. I didn't know how to act. The police came up and said, "Girl, you know you ain't supposed to be here! We're taking you down to the jail!"

I said, "I'm getting my lunch. They haven't cleaned off my table, and I'd like a menu please." I was very proud to walk down those steps with my head up. We went there to show the world what they were doing to us in Birmingham. I felt I did something for my race and country.

As I went down the steps the car was waiting out front. The policeman told me to get in the car. I said, "The car is too crowded. I'm not going to wrinkle my dress."

He said, "Heifer, if you don't get in this car I'm gonna take this gun and bust you upside the head."

I said, "I am not a heifer, and if you think I'm gonna get in that car, and wrinkle up my dress you are crazy!"

Finally, the officer made someone sit on somebody's lap so I could have a seat. I went straight to juvenile hall. As I sat there, I started thinking about the results that would come out of my experience. I was very proud, and I even got to see myself on television. I was thinking about it, and I thought this is only the beginning. I knew there were a whole bunch of other girls who had the strength that I had.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Despite the efforts of Parks and others like her, segregation of schools was a major challenge for Negroes to overcome. The deep-routed southern beliefs supported the attitude that schools should be separate but equal; however, this myth was far from fact. Negro facilities were in poor condition and their locations left a great deal to be desired.

George Wallace was sworn in as Governor of Alabama on January 14, 1963. Unfortunately, he is most famous for his views of segregation. On June 11, 1963, he kept his pledge to uphold segregation by physically barring Negro students from applying at the University Alabama. The following is his recollection of the event.

George Wallace

I tried. Boy did I try. But I knew eventually it would happen. Those colored folks are just so -- willful. It is almost impossible to keep them down. I was determined to do everything possible to keep the colored in their place in society -- away from the whites. The biggest blow to my effort came back in June of '63. It had only been 6 months since I became the fourth Governor of the great state of Alabama. I remember that gorgeous day in January. I was sworn in at the same place that the great Jefferson Davis took his oath as the President of the Confederate States. I felt I was obliged to carry on the same work as that inspirational leader. When those folks in Washington said that the Niger-folk were going to be permitted to go to school with the white children, the children of those fine Alabama citizens, that was the spark. That was too much! It says in the constitution that education is a reserved right of the state. Well they were defying that very principle. I wasn't going to allow those bureaucratic bastards to do the same thing they did a hundred years before. Not without a fight.

It was June 11, 1963, if I remember correctly. How could I ever forget? I had previously arranged for the state police to aid in my effort. And what was that? We were going to bar the entrance at the University of Alabama to all the colored who wished to enter. It was a somewhat cloudy morning, but warm enough. I had assembled the men to all entrances of the school and it was beautiful. But I knew it would happen. Two colored folk came with a federal officer and demanded entrance to the school to apply for admission. Well what did I do? I first laughed. What did they think I was there for? I told them there was no way they were gettin' in. I also added that this had nothing to do with prejudice against the blacks, but was for the protection of the states' rights. "Get on outa here," I said. I felt confident that this was enough, but it wasn't. United States Deputy Attorney, General Katzenbach, ordered that we comply with the federal court order and allow those coloreds in.

"Hell no!", I thought. But just four hours later President Kennedy sent an order for the Alabama National Guard to intervene against us. What could I do? Start a war? No, I let them in. It was a sad day.

I later tried again to keep the colored out of the white schools, but it was futile. In the past years, I have told reporters the only reason I had done what I did was to make a point that states have rights. But that is only partially true. I said, one day back in my more ignorant years, "Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!"

Thirty years later I've come to realize that I was wrong. I only wish I could have been a benefit to those fighting for equality in the sixties instead of a hindrance. All that I can say is that I'm sorry.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

In Arkansas and Kansas, Elizabeth Eckford and Linda Brown fought to get into public schools. Although their accounts are different, their struggle is the same and both of them won because they stood up for what they believed.

Elizabeth Eckford

It was a beautiful day in Little Rock, Arkansas, but somehow in my mind I don't remember the beauty I saw, only the torture and humiliation I endured. It was the day I went to a high school in order to protest against segregated schools. When I got off the bus, I could hear shuffling feet behind me. When I turned around, all I could see was a crowd of white people coming toward me. They were all parents of the high school students fighting for exactly what I was fighting against. I could hear voices ringing out above the crowd, "Lynch her, lynch her!" I looked toward the friendly face of an old woman, but as I approached her, she spat in my eyes. That's when I realized that these comments and rude gestures were meant for me -- they were all for me. I don't think I have ever felt so unloved, or so inhuman as I did at that moment. A federal marshall offered to escort me into the school but I refused. I wanted to do it on my own.

I am fifty-three now and, although I am older and wiser than I was at fifteen, I still don't understand why things happened the way they did. Why is it that a white man could ridicule a black man and not be ridiculed back? Why is it that white men can't be called a nigger even if they are one? And why is it that we are treated the way we are because of our color instead of our character?

Linda Brown

Daddy was a good man. He took good care of all of us. When I was eight years old, it was he who said that I wasn't going to walk to school anymore. Back then I never understood all of the sacrifices Daddy made for me. And through it all, he never gave up on what he felt was right.

I had to walk twenty-one blocks to school. On my way I went past another school, but it was only for the white children even though it was six blocks from home. Every time I walked past it I wondered what it would be like to go to such a wonderful school. The building was beautiful and clean, unlike my school. Mine was like all other Negro schools, run down, old, and barely fit to learn in.

There were railroad tracks I crossed going to and from school everyday. My friends and I dreaded crossing them each time. One day Sissy, my dog, was killed on those tracks. Her paw got caught. I tried to pull her loose, but it was too hard. The train hit her. That was the day Daddy decided it was too dangerous for me to walk that far to school. He knew what happened to Sissy could have happened to me.

Daddy decided to try to find a way to allow me to go to the school that was closer to my home. He was joined by twelve of my friends' parents. They brought a suit against the Board of Education of Topeka in the United States District Court. It came to be known as Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka. I was so proud of Daddy. People began to see him as someone who was going to make a change for us. But they lost their case. I'll never forget the way I felt or the look on Daddy's face when the judge said we couldn't go to the white school. He slowly got out of his chair, walked over to Mama and me, looked me in the eye, and said, "Linda, I won't stop 'till the right thing is done. Don't hang your head. You're my special little girl and I love you." Daddy had that determination in his eyes. At that moment I knew that everything was going to be all right.

I couldn't believe how everyone wanted to help us. I can still picture the little room where I first met Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. He brought our case together. The court listened to what Mr. Marshall had to say to all the white people who didn't want me in their school. When the Supreme Court Justices walked out, Mr. Marshall eyed each of them one by one. I held my breath. Every muscle in Daddy's body was tense. It was finally time to hear the verdict. I couldn't believe it. We won! They said that the two schools were not equal and it was unconstitutional to have the schools segregated. I was going to go to that beautiful school I had dreamed about for all those years. The first day was hard, but we made it through. We had come so far.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thurgood Marshall was the first black member of the Supreme Court. As he encouraged and supported those like Oliver and Linda Brown, he showed black Americans they could overcome the chains of prejudice and discrimination. He graduated from Lincoln University in 1930. Specializing in civil rights cases, he was a member of the NAACP in the early 50's. He took on a case in Clarendon County, South Carolina, and overturned Plessy versus Ferguson. By doing so he contradicted the opinions of George Wallace and others like him, who felt institutions of learning should be separate but equal. He sends a message to all of us: you can change history, you can make a difference, if you only try.

Thurgood Marshall

Today, right where you are, you have the power to shape history because we can all make a difference. Many of your parents lived through the events about which I am going to discuss. They were great events. However, at the time very few people realized the tremendous impact they would have on our society. They actually changed the course of history in the United States as we knew it both politically and socially. They paved the way for you to be sitting in a classroom or wherever you may be today with the opportunity to enjoy privileges open to any other citizen regardless of race, creed, or color. We were making history. You have the power to control your destiny. However, you'll only be able to use this power if you have an awareness of your ability to affect change. This awareness of your ability comes through courage, conviction, and education.

In Clarendon County, South Carolina, in the early 1950's, the black children were separated from the white children. They called it separate but equal. It was separate, but in no way was it equal. Negro children did not have a bus to transport them to and from school. They had to walk while white children rode.

The fourteenth amendment of the Constitution of the United States affirms that each citizen is entitled to equal protection under the law. My participation with the NAACP opened a window of opportunity for my involvement. My colleagues and I had just finished a case with the University of Texas. It regarded a similar incident of educational segregation. However, at Texas we focused on an institution of higher learning, and now the battle was centering around public school transportation.

Everyone thought that no one cared about public schools and how they were operated. The NAACP was different. We fought for transportation and won. This was a turning point and cleared a path for many discrimination cases to come.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

While Marshall pleaded for blacks to make a difference, fear also played its role in suppressing the Negro society. September 23, 1955, is recorded as Black Friday. Emmitt Till left his home in Chicago to visit his relatives in Mississippi. Till joined a group of black teenagers at a store in Money, Mississippi, where he bought two cents worth of gum. On his way out the door, he reportedly whistled and said, "Bye, baby," to a white cashier., Till was later tracked down, tortured and killed by the cashier's husband. Till's murderers went on trial and were found "not guilty." The following is Mamie Bradley Till's feeling about her son's death. May God give her peace.

Mamie Bradley Till

Have you ever sent a loved son on vacation and had him returned to you in a pine box, so horribly battered and water-logged that someone needs to tell you this sickening sight is your son who was lynched? Two months ago, I had a nice six-room apartment in Chicago. I had a good job. I had a son. When something happened to Negroes in the South, I said, "That's their business, not mine." Now I know how wrong I was. The death of my son has shown me that what happens to any of us, anywhere in the world, had better be the business of all of us. Oh God, God, my only boy . . . Darling, you have not died in vain. Your life has been sacrificed for something. Let the body be held; let the whole nation see what they done to my boy. My only boy . . . I guess those two men were saying Bo don't deserve to survive. If we in America have reached that point in our desperate culture when we must murder children, no matter for what reason or what color, we don't deserve to survive and probably won't. You know what? The police didn't even know it was my boy till they saw that ring -- the ring his daddy gave him when he was a little boy. Oh God . . . the ring. Every night when I get ready to go to sleep, I get out that ring and hold it in my hand and say a silent prayer. Then I put the ring back on the dresser next to his picture. His face in my mind is less faded than his face on my dresser. But his picture will fade. His memory, however, is all that's left for me to hold on to. . .

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Whites also got involved in civil rights issues. You may not be familiar with any of their names, but the countless numbers of white individuals who stood up for racial equality is endless. Maureen Murphy, Sharon Burger and Jane Stembridge all got involved to promote equality in their own way. Jill and Kelley, although fictitious, represent the dawn of an age that was so real and transforming it will never be forgotten -- the Black Power Salute of 1968 and the March on Washington were I delivered the "I Have A Dream" speech in 1963. Listen and hear their beliefs and triumphs.

Maureen Murphy

There has always been this part of me -- where this part stems, I don't know, perhaps just because I'm a human being that is against racial discrimination. I know it's strange, since I'm from a white Mississippi family, but changes do need to be made, and I'm not about to sit back and watch white supremacists revel in their advantages. What I see is a great deal of ignorance. Blunt ignorance, and unless someone steps forward and says, "Hey, wait a minute, this is not right, there's a problem here," this ignorance is going to inflate and spread and there will be no end to prejudice. What I want to know is why? Why is it so hard to see something from the other side, to study an issue with an open mind? Being who I am, with my beliefs, I can't help but be aware of this . . . mindblock, the inability to empathize.

There is this constant fear, I'm scared for myself, for my own well-being. I would be lying to say I wasn't. You know there's nowhere really to turn, nowhere to run to find protection. As a civil rights worker, you carry no weapons. People commit acts of madness when faced with us. They see us as a threat, a disturbance to their security. I am repeatedly harassed. These harassments vary, and some are extremely intense. I remember this one woman. She tried to run us down -- just this housewife in a station wagon, and her children were right there in the car with her! She was . . . I guess not really insane, but determined to get us. I remember her approaching us from the opposite side of the road, swerving. It was just another Negro girl and myself, and we were waiting along the side of the road for a ride. You see, sometimes, groups of us are dropped off in the middle of nowhere with no promise of transportation. And this car comes flying toward us at an incredible speed. I recognized the woman -- she had shot at us earlier that day. The only thing that saved us was a fence to our left. We leapt over it in desperation for a better escape route. I think it's difficult for some people to realize the helplessness you feel in such a position. There's no one to turn

to -- even authorities are against us -- you're all alone. It doesn't matter to them what you're struggling with, all they see is a white liberal, and this is strong enough to provoke the prejudice.

I've fought for this since high school, through college, and to the present day it's been a tremendous struggle. But I'm not going to get discouraged. Until I can turn around the twisted views of those against us, I will continue to fight. Despite the feelings of helplessness, I am determined to work toward a solution, no matter what it requires.

Sharon Burger

I was born in Mishawaka, Indiana, and after high school I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my life. I tried the same old thing everyone else was trying, college. I attended Indiana University on and off for three years. Thank God I had understanding parents. They supported me in every crazy decision I made.

My parents were always there for me. I was their only child and they did a great job in raising me. They were very careful not to teach me prejudice. I guess that's where all the hate comes from, being taught in the homes. They were teaching me good, like telling me "nigger" was a bad and awful word, but they really didn't try to instill a good, strong, liberal attitude either. They didn't seem to teach me to know that I had a responsibility for the racism in our world. They thought it was everyone else's problem.

It didn't hit me until high school that racism was so close in my generation. Everyone was involved. When I was in college racism was the only interesting thing for me. I studied hard and I made a lot of Negro friends. The friends I made really had an impact on me later in life.

College didn't do a darn thing in helping me decide why I was on this earth or what was my soul purpose. For a while, I became depressed and lifeless. I had so many questions and no suitable answers. This feeling of suicidal listlessness fit my behavior pretty well. I found that I had no interest in the world or national events or news of any kind.

It was one day in 1963 when I was reading a woman's magazine, which was mostly all I did, when I ran across an article entitled, "The Congress of Racial Equality." This amazing article seemed to end my period of worthlessness and confusion. I had finally made a major decision in life, something I had never done before. That one thing was important to me and that one thing had some personal meaning to me. That one thing was that everyone ought

to have an equal shot at life. Everyone ought to have an opportunity to be whoever they were going to be and do whatever they were going to do.

I kept reading articles and people's amazing stories of racial heroism and the movements that aided their successes. That's when I accidentally came across an article about CORE. I started wondering if I could help, could I do something like that or could I actually help to a point of change? These questions led my curiosity to fill out an application for CORE. I wanted to try.

CORE's response came later and they wanted me to work as a volunteer for the summer. They called and asked me to be in Plaquemine, Louisiana, on a certain date and with enough money to support myself throughout the summer. It took hard work and many days of searching, but I finally found financial aid and then I was set for my summer adventure to find myself.

In the summer of 1964, I arrived in Plaquemine. There were thirty-six summer volunteers. We were trained for three weeks and this training was intense. Their procedures taught us to be alert at all times, to be aware in all situations, and to be ready. I never expected so much importance in this job.

I learned that I would be sent to Pointe Coupee Parish, about 60 miles from Plaquemine, and that I would stay with Sergeant Caufield.

This family was fabulous. I respected that man and his endless efforts greatly. He helped me through the tough times of voter registration. There were so many people to reach out to and so little time. Teaching the minute details of the proper way to fill out the registration forms was time consuming and required patience of great lengths. Being a teacher, in a sense, gave me a feeling of accomplishment. I was actually helping the world by teaching classes and going door-to-door spreading voter registration's knowledge.

I didn't feel like my part was very large, or that I did very much, but overall I had helped to educate my world of the importance of human love towards one another and equality.

Jane Stembridge

I was originally a student at Virginia when I first got involved with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. I quickly gained a reputation as an intelligent, reliable member and soon progressed to become the first paid secretary of the SNCC. I transferred to a Freedom School in southeastern Mississippi shortly before the explosive disappearances of one black and two white civil rights workers, Andy Goodman, James Chaney, and Mickey Schwerner in July of 1964. The three had been on their way to Philadelphia, located in Central Mississippi, to view a burned down church when they disappeared. We were desperately hoping that they would turn up unharmed, but we knew, deep down, that there wasn't much of a chance of that happening. We were scared, too. "That could have just as easily been me!" I remember thinking.

It was in the middle of July when I ran into my old friend, Danny Lyon, a white photographer for the SNCC. Together, we decided to go to the Neshoba County Fair, just for fun, to escape the chaos surrounding the workers' disappearances. Philadelphia is in Neshoba County, and the local speculation was that the sheriff of Neshoba County and his 'boys' were responsible for the workers' disappearances. Despite that, Danny and I piled into his Oldsmobile on that hot July day anticipating a relaxing day at the county fair. If we had only known . . .

We arrived at the fair, which was crowded with people and excitement. Danny had brought his camera, as usual, and he began taking pictures as soon as we got there. I strolled around the fair, leaving Danny to concentrate on his pictures. After a few minutes, I ran into him. He was taking pictures of a ball-tossing booth from various angles. He finally looked up and glanced around him. It had grown unusually quiet and many of the people were staring bluntly at Danny and his camera. A brief look of apprehension and panic crossed his face. He ducked his head and moments later disappeared into the crowd. After

a few minutes, he reappeared, motioning that he was ready to go. I quickly followed him. When we were almost to the exit, a group of men emerged from the crowd. I saw the flash of a badge reflecting the sun, and a bolt of terror ripped through me. The sheriff and his boys. They surrounded Danny menacingly, completely ignoring me. The next few minutes were such a blur. I do remember, though, vividly, so vividly, one of the boys drawling, "What happened to those boys is gonna happen to you." The 'boys' were still listed as 'missing'. After they had the film, Danny and I walked quietly to his car, never looking back. I felt light-headed and faintly sick to my stomach. Danny and I didn't speak until we had put twenty miles between us and the Neshoba County Fair. It turned out that Danny had been ready for the Sheriff and his boys. He had replaced the roll of film he had been using with a blank roll.

That day, I saw something I had only read about before. It was like my entire conception of human evil and corruption had been gray my whole life. That day, I saw it in black and white.

Several weeks later, the missing workers' bodies were found. I wasn't surprised, of course, to hear they were dead. I was relieved that the whole nightmare was finally over. I had a learning experience that hot summer of 1964. I got my first glimpse at the gruesome side of human nature, and that's something I'm gonna take with me to my grave.

The Black Power Salute
Jill

It's one thing to say that you've seen the world's fastest man. But it's another thing to see him openly revolt against this country. I heard there was trouble with the Black American athletes. Well there was even trouble at school with blacks and civil rights. I remember it was bright out and very hot. I was pressed against other cheering fans. We were all ready to yell our support to our heroes. We were applauding our best representatives. The most memorable event to me was the 200 meter dash. John Carlos and Tommie Smith were in for the United States. They both made it to the finals, but both had injuries. Carlos hurt his back and Smith pulled his groin muscle. Smith had his leg wrapped in ice for at least two hours. These men were not only expected to do well, but to protest for the civil rights. The only revolting they did so far was wearing black socks. This didn't bother me because I supported their cause. In the finals Smith got first for a gold and Carlos got third for a bronze. It was so exciting I screamed my throat raw. Carlos was in front, but Smith pulled in front with a record time of 19.8 seconds. Peter Norman from Australia came in second with the time of 20.0 seconds flat. Oh well, I guess as long as we got the gold medal. Now here's the amazing part, if that wasn't too amazing, when the men were on the victory stand, Carlos and Smith had on black socks but no shoes. Also, Smith had on a black scarf and a black glove on his right hand. Carlos had a black glove on his left hand. No one knew what the two men were going to do. Everyone started to ask the people around them if they knew what was going on. I was just like the others asking, but no one knew. Well all soon found out as American's "National Anthem" began to play. Both men raised up their glove hand first and bowed their head, refusing to look up at the flag. I found out later on television what it all symbolized with and interview with Tommie Smith by Howard Cosell. Smith's scarf was black pride, his right hand meant power in black America. Carlos's left hand symbolized unity in black America. Together they formed an arch of unity

and power. The shoeless feet was poverty in racist America. The lowered head was in remembrance of all the fallen warriors in Black Liberation. Overall, they wanted to regain black dignity. I couldn't believe how brave these men were to openly stand up and defy everything for what they believed in. Both men, Smith and Carlos, were suspended form the Olympic team and given 48 hours to leave Mexico. Some people were outraged, others supported the suspension and expulsion completely. I think they knew it would happen but did it anyway to make the world more aware, and I know they did.

March on Washington
Kelley

August 28, 1963, was the turning point of my life, after that day I saw the world in a different light. I began to see people for who they were, not what they were, to judge them on their personality and not their race or the stereotypes about them. It was the day that I went to Washington D. C. to listen to Martin Luther King speak in the March on Washington.

It was a beautiful day and after that speech I also realized that I was surrounded by beautiful people. I was a white college student who was going to the rally just to aggravate my parents. I didn't think that there would be that many people, but I was wrong. I was one of over 200,000 people there, of all other colors, race, and religion, who came from all over the country to hear Dr. King speak. The Mall, the area between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial was over flowing with people who wanted to get closer to Dr. King, to be a part of history, and most important of all to help change the way that people looked at equal rights.

The protest wasn't at all what I expected, instead of people yelling and waving signs, they were holding hands and singing old slave spirituals. No one knew that this would be the largest peaceful demonstration in history and they probably wouldn't have cared if they had. Everyone else was there because they believed what this demonstration stood for and that made me feel terrible. Sure, I had a few black friends and I didn't think that it was fair that they weren't treated equally, but what could I do about it? I was just one person and I wasn't even black. I started to leave because I felt too out of place, but a young black girl and her grandmother came over to me and took my hand. I guess they must have read my mind because they called me sister and asked me to join them. How could I refuse? I suddenly could feel the hope and the love in the air and I felt I had to be part of it. But all that was nothing compared to what was to come. As Dr. King stepped to the center of the Lincoln Memorial I knew that I was about to witness something great.

Dr. King gave his "I HAVE A DREAM" speech that day and I will never forget his words. When he spoke the famous lines:

"Even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply routed in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.' . . . I have a dream that our little children will one day live in a country where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

This became my dream too as I looked into the faces of the people around and saw the tears running down their faces and the look in their eyes that said they hoped with all their hearts that the dream would come true.

I knew at that moment I could make a difference, I could be their friend, I could stand by them and hold their hands, and proudly call them my brother or sister. It wouldn't be much but I realized that someone had to do something and this would be a start. I would be setting an example to other members of the white community and I would be doing it because I believed in the cause, not to aggravate my parents.

Dr. King told his congregation: "All men are created equal. Not some men. Not white men. All men. America, rise up and come home." At the end of that historic day, my life changed, and I knew that the road ahead of me might get rough but I was where I belonged. I had come home.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

My reputation for fighting against violence had extended the borders of Montgomery, Alabama and the boycott to integrate the Montgomery public transportation system in 1955.

The day I arrived for my first time in Memphis is something I'll never forget. Upon my arrival at Memphis, I could not believe my eyes at the display of unity, confidence, and determination of the welcoming crowd of over 15,000 people waiting for me. It was clear that these people needed leadership and guidance.

All the black citizens of Memphis seemed to need was a leader, someone who could show them that all of their beliefs and striking had not gone in vain. That evening I told those people the following, "I want you all to stay home from work. I want tremendous work stoppage, and all of you, and your families and children, will join me and I will lead you in a march through the center of Memphis." The crowd's response was so uplifting I knew that I was on the verge of something huge.

Ten days later on March 28, the march was set, it quickly got out of hand, one black killed, sixty beaten, and three hundred arrested. All of my emphasis on non-violence had gone in the exact opposite direction.

I couldn't let this incident destroy what I had been working so hard to accomplish. So on April 3, I held a press conference to all the citizens of Memphis, telling them that there would be a non-violent march on April 8th. I let them know that everyone was welcome so that the white people could see the unity among blacks of the city and so that they could see that blacks were serious about striking for job security and descent wages. I spoke of the difficult days ahead and that how we are all going to destroy one another if we do not learn to live together in peace and love.

Although we were all striving for the same goal, there were many ideas on how to gain civil rights and equality. Malcolm X took a different approach.

Malcolm X

Was it enough brothers and sisters that the white man used our ancestors as slaves? NO! Now we can not even walk down the street or go to the market without being threatened or beaten. What kind of satisfaction does the white man get from beating the African race? I can't tell you the answer my friends because it is not known to me? The white man claims that he hates all African Americans, then why are they raping our beautiful black queens? This is scandalous!

Tell me one good reason the white man has for hating the black. You can't give me one can you? That is all right because there is no cause for their prejudices! They are simply scared of something that is different from them. They hate differences with every ounce of their being. I say that we go on hating them right back. They've left us with no other choice!!! Don't get me wrong brothers and sisters, I'm not against every white man that comes through that door. You shouldn't be either. It's the white man who is bringing us down that I'm against!

I want you to think about something that the great Muhammed told me. "Did you ever think that the black prisoner," he said, "symbolized white society's crime of keeping black men oppressed and deprived, ignorant and unable to get a decent job, and turning them into criminals?" When you think about it, it makes you angry doesn't it? I know it shot venom all through my veins. However, Muhammed told me to have courage; he made me realize that giving up and accepting the way it is isn't an option for African Americans. No matter what happens, we must cling to each other.

Brothers and sisters you are giving me odd looks. Don't you think that you have the power to change things? Well I'm here to tell you that you do! I believe that it would be almost impossible to find another black man in America that has lived farther down in the mud of human society than I have. There is not a man who has been more ignorant than I

have been, but you see, only after you have seen the deepest darkest pits of despair can you find the light. It is only after extreme grief that the greatest joy can come; it is only after slavery and prison that the sweetest appreciation of freedom is born. We can't give in now! We have gained so much, but there is still so much more we can conquer.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Peace is really what all of us deserve. A peace with ourselves and with one another. It is hard for some to push back pride and open the door for equality. For others it is easy, and for most minorities it is a necessity. It is long past time to change, to grow and to stand. This interval of time may not have been so rocky if everyone would have been as laid back and open-minded as John Lennon. Listen as he tells a lesson we should all be fortunate enough to embrace.

John Lennon

How do I feel about the recent civil rights movements? Well yea, I guess I've thought about it, but I'm not quite sure how I feel. At this point in my life, I strongly feel that I personally do not judge anyone upon their race. It's a sick concept, but I am aware that it does go on. Humanity has always had to have someone to smack around on, whether it be Celts, kikes, or niggers, it doesn't matter. Those who feel inferior themselves, must have something or someone to beat around to make them feel like top dog. This has been going on for ages,.

Down in the southern U. S. these days, racial oppression is extremely bad. Down there, blacks get treated like utter dirt. It's crazy, you've got these psycho paranoid KKK idiots controlling the law, the church, hell even the minds of the citizens, and for what purpose -- to keep people who are racially different from them under their thumb. Those fools even burned our albums for simply making a joke about their neurotic fundamentalism.

The oppressed, on the other hand, will only take being treated like dirt for so long before they take action. I think that right now not only is the right time for the oppressed to demand their basic human rights, but it also seems as if right now is the destined time. It seems as if everything is really happening now. All sorts of freedoms are being demanded: artistic freedom, sexual freedom, and religious freedom. Everything is changing; it truly is a time of revolution.

I am not going to say that I agree with violent forms of protest that are occurring. However, I understand that violence may be the only solution. I have always felt that it is much better to reason with someone and to talk things out before you try to bash his head in, and if they don't listen there are still many other ways to get you freedoms and rights non-violently. Remember, peace brothers . . . peace sisters . . . peace everyone . . . for whites and for blacks.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Peace brothers . . . peace sisters . . . peace everyone . . .

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