



This Light of Ours

**ACTIVIST PHOTOGRAPHERS
OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

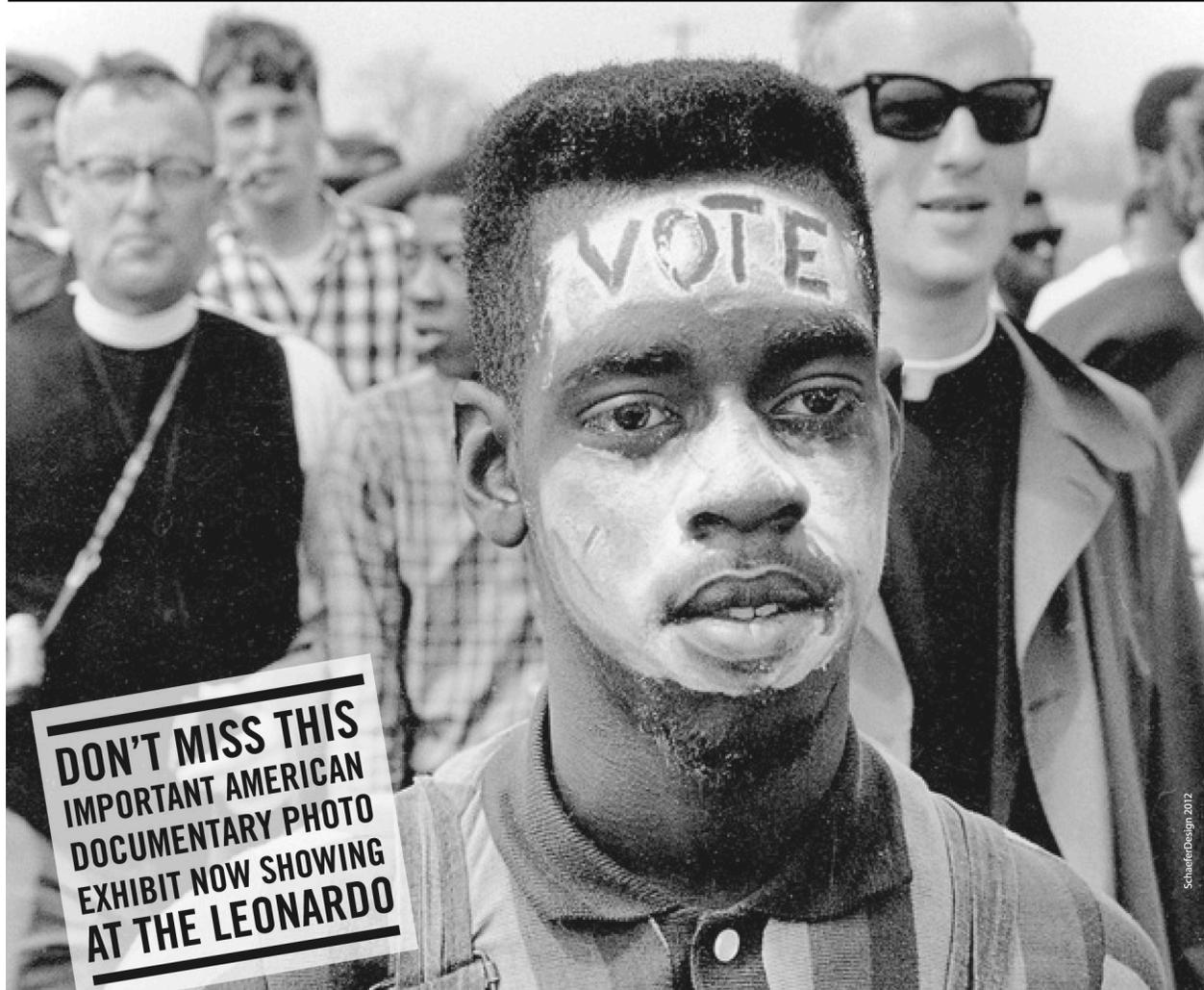


PRESENTED BY
**CENTER FOR
DOCUMENTARY
EXPRESSION
AND ART**

A Curriculum Guide

For Social Studies Teachers in Grades 4-12, and Fine Arts / Photography Teachers in Grades 7-12

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A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR GRADES 4-12

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THIS LIGHT OF OURS
ACTIVIST PHOTORAPHERS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR GRADES 4-12

CORE CURRICULUM STANDARDS/UTAH SOCIAL STUDIES

Fourth Grade, Standard II, Objective 1, Objective 2

Fifth Grade, Standard III, Objective 1, Objective 2

Fifth Grade, Standard III, Objective 2

Sixth Grade, Standard IV, Objective 1, Objective 2

Seventh Grade, Utah Studies, Standard III, Objective 3; Standard V, Objective 2

Eight Grade, US History I, Standard 2, Objective 1, Objective 2; Standard 6, Objective 4

United States History II (Ninth Grade and Above), Standard 9, Objective 1

CORE CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR PHOTOGRAPHY, GRADES 7-12

Standard II, Objectives A and B

Standard IV, Objective A and B

LETTER TO UTAH TEACHERS:

This curriculum guide is intended to help you and your students learn about the aims, presentation formats, design, content, and overarching themes of the exhibit, *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement*. Because this is an exhibit of photographs, this guide also will help you and your students examine the way individual images and sequences of images communicate, explore the concept of “Visual Literacy,” and learn about the role of documentary photography in America’s quest to form “a more perfect union.”

Primarily, though, this guide seeks to deepen comprehension of the Civil Rights Movement and its impact on American life through an array of activities teachers and students can carry out prior to, during, and following an exhibit visit.

No single exhibit can depict the Civil Rights Movement as a whole. *This Light of Ours* offers a critical, three-year slice of a story that took decades to fully unfold. It is, essentially, the story of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee’s (SNCC’s) young black and white activists who worked successfully with local people in Mississippi and Alabama in the years 1963-1966 to dismantle a racist system tolerated and abetted at all levels of government.

Sincerely,

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBIT

This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement is a major, new exhibition that presents the Civil Rights Movement through the work and voices of nine activist photographers—eight men and one woman who chose to document the national struggle against segregation and other forms of race-based disenfranchisement from within the movement. Unlike images produced by photojournalists, who covered breaking news events, these photographers lived within the movement—primarily within the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) framework—and documented its activities by focusing on the student activists and local people who together made it happen.

The core of the exhibit is a selection of 157 black-and-white photographs, representing the work of Bob Adelman, George Ballis, Bob Fitch, Bob Fletcher, Matt Herron, David Prince, Herbert Randall, Maria Varela, and Tamio Wakayama. Images are organized into four movement themes and convey SNCC’s organizing strategies, resolve in the face of violence, impact on national politics, and influence on the national consciousness. Photographers’ eye witness accounts of life inside the movement—their descriptions of how and why photos were taken and their personal revelations of the movement’s impact on their lives—are incorporated into audio guides prepared for adults and children. These guides are presented, in part, through the actual voices of the photographers and enable exhibit visitors to understand how activists experienced a quest for social justice that transformed American life.

Overall, *This Light of Ours* seeks to achieve two goals: first, expand our understanding of the Civil Rights Movement by presenting the actions and achievements of young organizers and “ordinary” people who emerged from the grassroots of local communities and fashioned a movement that changed the South and America, and second, spotlight the influence of America’s youth whose approach to organizing changed the political and social landscape of this country and left uniquely important legacies for subsequent human rights activism in the United States.

EXHIBIT PRESENTATION FORMATS

This Light of Ours is presented through four formats: (1) black-and-white photographs, (2) audio guides, (3) interpretive text (including captions), and (4) a short film. Exhibit photos and audio guides for adults and children form the immediate contact points for each visitor. Together, they offer a visual history of a portion of the movement and the insights of the photographers who witnessed these events first-hand. Interpretive text (didactic text with captions) adds another important layer of content by providing historic contexts for significant movement moments. Visitors are encouraged to read this text in order to complement and expand the story they receive through the images and the audio guides. *Utah’s Freedom Riders*, a 30-minute film by KUED-TV, culminates the display by telling the story of Utahns who joined the Southern Freedom Movement or fought racism at home. The film enriches our understanding of the display by describing challenges encountered and, to a degree, overcome by Utah activists.

AUDIO GUIDES

Audio guides for adults (ages 13 and up) and children (ages 8-12) provide the central orienting tool to the exhibit. The guides are designed to engage visitors with the movement that transformed American life and inspired human rights activities around the world. The adult

guide is 45 minutes long (with 15 minutes of additional listening options) and is narrated by Julian Bond, SNCC's communications director and, later, the NAACP's national chairman. The children's guide is 30 minutes long (with 10 minutes of additional listening options) and is narrated by Shona Tucker, Assistant Professor of Drama and Director of Theater at Vassar College in New York. New York City based writer-director Antonia Bryan produced both audio guides.

AUDIO GUIDES--INSTRUCTIONS

Audio guides are easy to use and can be accessed through a cell phone. **To begin a tour, dial 801-207-1683** and then follow the instructions. Once you are in the system, enter the audio stop numbers you see on the wall beside a photograph. Each number represents a full stop. There are 25 stops (100-125) in the adult tour and 28 stops (1-28) in the children's tour. Please do not use the cell phone's speaker mode to listen to the guide. This will disturb other visitors in the gallery. Just hold the phone to your ear or use an ear bud. If you have students who cannot access cell phones, inform The Leonardo staff prior to your visit, and they will help provide cell phones. If you experience problems during your visit, please ask a Leonardo staff member for assistance.

For all student groups, we strongly recommend that they experience the exhibit using audio guides and the selected interactive activity offered in this curriculum guide. The audio guides provide an intimate connection to the photographers, the photographs, and the movement; the curriculum guide activities provide an opportunity for close observation of the photographs, critical analysis of exhibit content, and personal engagement with American History and the Civil Rights Movement. **For students in grades 7-12, we suggest listening to the adult audio guide stops listed below** and combining them with activities suggested in the guide. Teachers should pick out activities they think will best serve their students' needs. Please make sure you start your adult tour by listening to the introduction (stop 100), followed by the following stops:

- 103, 104, and 106 in "Black Life" theme;
- 107, 109, 110, 111, and 211 in "Organizing for Freedom," 1963-64;
- 114, 214, 116, and 216 in "Organizing for Freedom," 1965-66;
- 118, 119, 120, and 220 in "State and Local Terror theme"; and
- 122, 125 in "Black Power and Meredith March Against Fear."

For students in grades 4-6, please listen to the children's audio guide introduction (stop 99), followed by following stops:

- 1,2,3,5,7,8 in "Black Life" theme;
- 10, 12, 14, 141 in "Organizing for Freedom," 1963-64;
- 16, 17, 18, in "Organizing for Freedom," 1965-66;
- 20, 22 in "State and Local Terror theme"; and
- 25, 26, 27, 28 in "Black Power and Meredith March Against Fear."

EXHIBIT DESIGN

Most of the exhibit's photographs were taken between 1963 and 1966. The images in the exhibit are presented through four interrelated themes: "Black Life," "Organizing for Freedom," "State and Local Terror," and "Black Power and the Meredith March against Fear." Maria Varela, one of the exhibit's photographers, described the show's four-part presentation format as follows:

- **The first part is what we saw,**
- **The second part is what we did,**
- **The third part is the white push back, and**
- **The fourth part shows what we aimed to accomplish.**

In the first and third themes, "Black Life" and "State and Local Terror," photographs are grouped topically. Images that convey these themes do not require a chronological presentation to have their full impact. On the other hand, in the exhibit's second and fourth themes, "Organizing for Freedom" and "Black Power and the Meredith March against Fear," images offer movement activities that occurred at a specific time and in a particular place. Overall, exhibit photographers depict the Civil Rights Movement through the perspective of young activists who were affiliated with or working for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, pronounced as Snick).

DIDACTIC OR INTERPRETIVE TEXT

Charlie Cobb, Jr., a SNCC veteran and a movement historian, wrote the exhibit's didactic text (wall text and photo captions). Cobb's writing offers an insider's view of the movement and provides visitors with a clearer understanding of movement values and goals as well as what it felt like to be on the front lines of America's third revolution (the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era count as the second revolution).

PLANNING AN EXHIBIT VISIT

Teachers in grades 7-12 who are planning an in-depth exhibit visit should allow students between 80- 90 minutes to view the images while using the adult audio guides and selecting three suggested student activities per theme; another thirty minutes should be provided to watch the exhibit film and a final 15 minutes to enable students to leave personal responses to the exhibit either on the audio guide or in the guest book. **Teachers, please encourage your students to leave their exhibit responses on the audio guide.** This will allow student messages to be heard by other visitors. Elementary school teachers in grades 4-6 who are planning an in-depth exhibit visit should allow students 50-60-minutes to view images while using the children's audio guide and selecting two suggested students activities per theme. Another 15 minutes should be allowed to enable students to leave personal responses to the exhibit either on the audio guide or in the guest book. For younger students, the concluding film may not be necessary. Watching it should be based on readiness to probe local civil rights issues.

Teachers in grades 7-12 who are planning a more compact exhibit visit should allow students between 60-70 minutes to view the images while using the adult audio guides and selecting two suggested student activities per theme. Viewing the film will be optional and fifteen minutes should be provided to leave personal responses to the exhibit either on the audio guide or in the

guest book. Elementary school teachers in grades 4-6 who are planning a more streamlined visit should allow students 45-minutes to view images while using audio guides and selecting one activity per theme. Another 15 minutes should be allowed to enable students to leave personal responses to the exhibit either on the audio guide or in the guest book.

We suggest that all students bring a pen or pencil and a small notebook in which to do exhibit-related writing exercises, and (as mentioned earlier) a fully charged cell phone with ear buds if possible. Please do not have students bring cameras or use their cell phones as cameras.

Photographing exhibit images for any purpose is prohibited!

PHOTOGRAPHS

In each exhibit theme, **photos are presented in three sizes (16” x 21”; 21” x 28”; 28” x 38”) and in groupings of approximately four to eleven images.** The three sizes are used to create a visual rhythm and narrative and to highlight image content. **Image groupings show (1) interrelated photos and (2) photo essays** (sequences of images that tell a story). For example, in the “Black Life” theme, interrelated images show Mississippi Delta life; Delta geography and landscape; children’s lives alongside a one room, rural school; and work life under segregation. We call these images “interrelated” because they communicate by offering overlapping perspectives on a subject.

In “Organizing for Freedom,” on the other hand, the exhibit’s second and largest section, groupings function more like photo essays. Each essay is part of a larger “organizing” story—for example, there’s the story of training summer volunteers; the story of Mississippi Freedom Schools; and the story of voter registration. Photo essays present a visual narrative.

All groupings can be identified by the way images are hung. In an interrelated group or a photo essay, images will usually be the same size, and they’ll be presented in a simple geometric pattern (rectangle, triangle, or straight line).

Activity One—Why Are Some Images Enlarged? As students walk through the exhibit’s first theme, inform them that images are presented in three sizes and in image groupings. Ask them to identify a large size (28” x 38”) image in this theme (for example, in the first section of the “Black Life” theme, the image of the two boys playing at being super heroes is presented in the largest format), and then ask students why they think *this* image was enlarged? Matt Herron, the exhibit’s curator, said it was enlarged to emphasize the vitality of the people and to show that segregation had not destroyed their spirits. Charlie Cobb, the exhibit’s historical consultant, liked the image because it suggested that black family life was intact. These children were healthy. Ask your students what this image says to them? This exercise indicates that the show’s layout conveys meaning.



Activity Two—How To Spot A Photo Essay? Remind students that they can spot a photo essay by the fact that *it tells a story*—that is, the image sequence has a beginning, middle, and end. To continue to deepen appreciation of the exhibit’s format, select a photo essay and discuss how it works. An early



example is the four images that conclude the “Black Life” section. The first of the four images shows people gathered to go to church; the second presents a close-up of the minister speaking; the third image portrays the congregation itself; and the fourth and final image offers a group portrait—young men and boys standing outside the church.

Activity Three—How To Understand A Photo Essay? Gather your students in front of the images and then ask them to look closely at each image and to describe what’s in it. In this process, students will begin to understand *how* a photographer tells a story. For example, the first image is an “establishing” shot; it provides a context (tells us the “where” and “what” of the story). The second image engages us with the church experience. Why did the photographer create a close-up of the minister? Does it matter that the close-up shot conveys movement and is blurred? In the third image, the photographer depicts the congregation. What do we notice in this shot? Men and women are seated separately. They are well dressed. There also is a lone white person in the congregation. In the final image, after the service, we’re back outside the church. Why is this final shot so interesting and, at the same time, a good conclusion? Adult audio guide stop 106 (discussed in activity four) will provide the photographer’s explanation.



Activity Four—Exploring the Idea of Visual Literacy After the students have explored the story in the images, listen to how photographer Matt Herron describes the images in audio guide stop (number 106). Notice how he adds content based on what he heard from the people there. Although the detail he adds is not visually present in the photos, it enriches our understanding of the images and further explains the photographer’s interest in the people. The key to having students enjoy this activity is providing time to let them describe what they see and contemplate what they hear. There are no “wrong” or “right” answers here. There is only learning to examine how photographs communicate—this is also called visual literacy.



VISUAL LITRACY (A PRIMER)

Visual art is a language. Those familiar with the language can appreciate those who use that language. All visual art uses the same building blocks. These elements are the equivalents of a vocabulary in a written language. They are what we see when we look at something. The vocabulary is simple. When we look at a photograph, we can see:

- **Shape** refers to the shape or form of a person, animal, or object;
- **Space** is the opposite of shape;
- **Light & Color** includes *Value* (lightness and darkness), *Contrast* (the range and tone of the lights and darks), *Hue* (the actual color), *Saturation* (how intense the color is), and *Quality* (direct, reflected, and diffused are terms that refer to characteristics of the light source);
- **Texture** reveals both surface characteristics and underlying structure of forms;

- **Lines** are the edges between space and shapes. Lines are also expressions of energy. Vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and curved lines convey different messages and contain different energy. In photography, the most important line is the edge of the viewfinder. It marks what is in and out of the picture. It tells us: “This is what the photographer thought was important and wants me to look at.”

Design, or order out of chaos, organizes the visual vocabulary into meaningful combinations. It can also be described as bringing unity out of diversity. Design gives power and impact to any visual statement. There are three fundamental tools or principles used in design:

- **Balance** denotes a state of equilibrium. In art, it means the visual vocabulary is used to produce a pleasing or integrated whole. There are different categories of balance: symmetrical, asymmetrical, and radial.
- **Rhythm** refers to patterns of movement through space (alternation, repetition, syncopation, etc.) In photography, rhythm applies to the movement of the viewer’s eye across a page.
- **Dominant / Subordinate** relates to the most important theme, purpose, or idea of a photograph, and to the relationship of shapes and space within the photograph. Once dominant elements and ideas are selected, everything else must support that element or be taken out of the photograph. Unnecessary subordinate elements will cause the photograph to feel cluttered, unbalanced, and unclear.

Activity Five—Exploring the Idea of Visual Literacy As you look at the photo of the boys outside the church, consider how the photographer uses shape, space, light, texture, and lines. Ask yourself how does he achieve balance? How is your eye directed through the photograph? What are dominant and subordinate visual elements in the photograph? What would you change about the photograph if you were making the picture?

Activity Six—Exploring the Idea of Visual Literacy Another part of visual literacy is exploring how images move us. What are the bigger messages of the activist photographers? How were they trying to change America? What about images we see today? How are they affecting us?

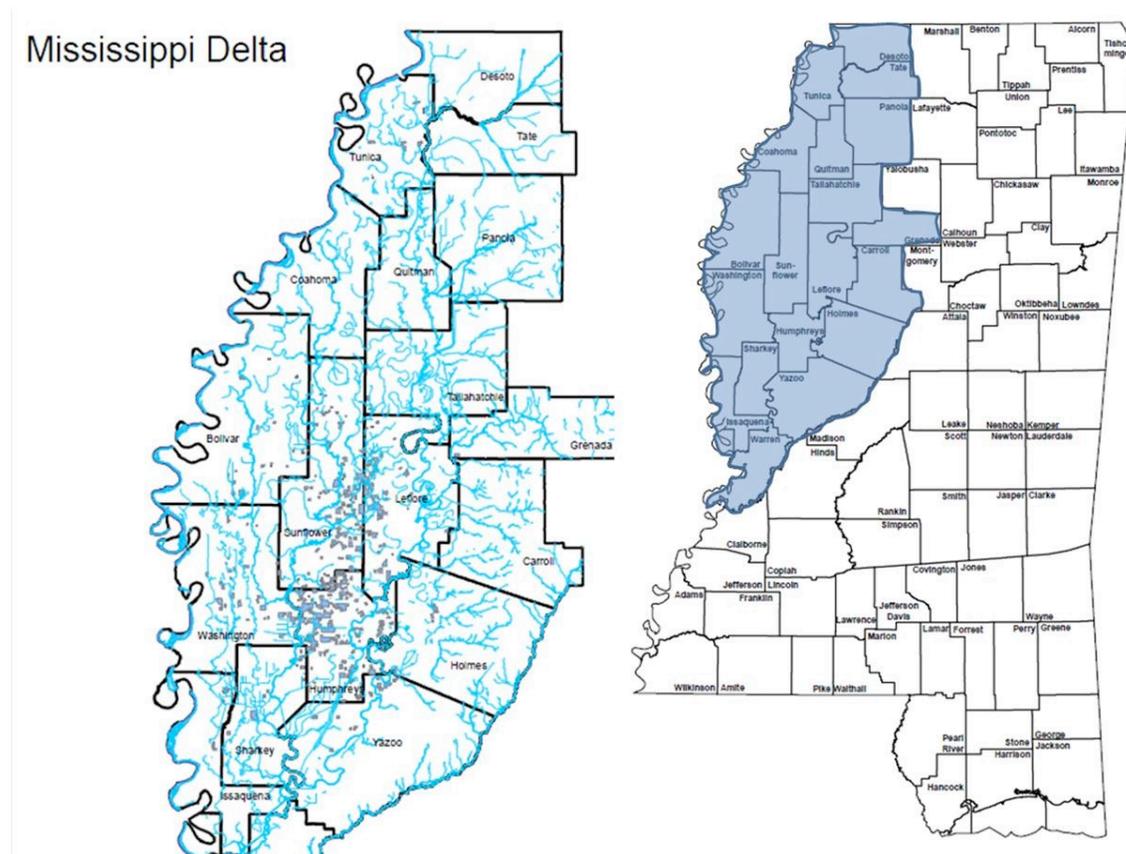
Activity Seven—Additional Explorations of Visual Literacy: In addition to the above activities, advise advanced photography and creative writing students to jot down comments photographers make on *how* they took an image and *what* they experienced while taking it. These comments will reveal what photographers sought to accomplish and what they felt they achieved. The comments also will inform students of the stimuli that prompted an image. On occasion, the stimulus was the story in a face, something unexpectedly beautiful, or a painfully unjust condition. Gathering these comments will map how the photographers worked.

Back in your classroom, discuss these comments and their implications. Comments will convey the practical and aesthetic motivations of making photographs while revealing what it was like for photographers to participate in a demanding and dangerous social movement. You may also want to buy a copy of the 256-page exhibit publication, titled *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement*. The book contains nearly all of the exhibit’s photos, plus essays by Julian Bond, Matt Herron, Clayborne Carson, and six full-length

interviews with the activist photographers conducted by the book’s editor Leslie Kelen. Having the book will allow you and your students to discuss the images and the process of photographing in the Civil Rights Movement in greater depth and detail.

Activity Eight—Explorations of Photographic Styles Kent Miles, CDEA’s Coordinator of Exhibits and Collections, has created an easy to follow primer on the “styles” of the exhibit’s nine photographers. This primer can be found in the “Supplement” section of this guide and offers an excellent opportunity for advanced and beginning photography students to discuss the relationship between a photographer’s “style” and the image he/she creates. Miles shows that the elements of style —structure, design, mood, and message—are a part of each image, and what we call style reflects the ways in which a photographer uses those elements.

FIRST EXHIBIT THEME: BLACK LIFE



“**Black Life,**” the exhibit’s first theme, conveys the circumstances of “ordinary” people in the states of Mississippi and Alabama, with supporting images from Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. Although a few of the theme’s images present people in cities (e.g., Atlanta, Georgia, and Jackson, Mississippi), the majority show life in small, rural communities on the Mississippi Delta or in Alabama’s Lowndes County. In photographer Maria Varela’s words, students will encounter “**what we [photographers] saw.**” To orient students to this section, remind them that these images (as well as *all* the show’s images) present not only *what* photographers saw, but *how* they saw it—that is, how they photographed it.

A SOCIAL MOVEMENT THAT'S FULLY UNDERWAY

The images in *This Light of Ours* take us into a social movement that is fully underway. Even if we conservatively set the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement in 1954 and 1955 with, respectively, two events—(1) the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision declaring segregation in schools unconstitutional and (2) the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott's challenge of Jim Crow practices on Montgomery's city buses—we are still by 1963 (the date of the exhibit's earliest images), nine or eight years down the road. By 1963, for example, the crises at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, had taken place; the 1960 sit-ins out of which SNCC was founded had rocked the South; the 1961 Freedom Rides had affected the nation and the Kennedy administration; SNCC organizers, who entered Mississippi communities as early as 1961, had been working for several years to build voter registration campaigns; and Rev. Martin Luther King had become a major movement figure, addressing the nation at the August 1963 March on Washington, DC.

A DIFFERENT PORTRAIT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Furthermore, in this exhibit students will see the movement through the lens of photographers working alongside SNCC activists, whose movement work comprised long-term, grass-roots-style organizing in small communities in Mississippi and other parts of the Deep South. As movement historian Charles Payne explains, **we need to learn to think of the Civil Rights Movement as conveying two traditions of activism:**

There was...the community-mobilizing tradition, focused on large-scale, relatively short-term public events. This is the tradition of Birmingham, Selma, the March on Washington, the tradition best symbolized by the work of Martin Luther King. This is [also] the movement of popular memory and the only part of the movement that has attracted [formidable] scholarly attention.

The Mississippi movement [the focus of *This Light of Ours*] reflects another tradition of Black activism, one of community organizing, a tradition with a different sense of what freedom means and therefore a greater emphasis on the long-term development of leadership in ordinary men and women...¹

In this exhibit, students will encounter the Civil Rights Movement through the eyes of photographers who were engaged in grass-roots-style activism that was largely invisible to the mainstream press. The exhibit presents, consequently, a **NEW** visual rendering of the movement. It's a portrait of "ordinary" men and women—black and white, young and older—in Mississippi and elsewhere in the Deep South at the very instant they were breaking the shackles of racism and white supremacy.

Activity Nine—The Relationship Between Photographers and Their Subjects What activist photographers chose to record and how they did it reveals the relationship between the

¹ From *I've Got The Light Of Freedom*, by Charles Payne

photographers and their subjects. Ask your students what they feel when they look at images in this section? Do the images feel casual like snapshots? Do the images bring you close to the people or keep you at a distance? Do you feel these people are helpless victims of an unjust social system or do they feel active, engaged, and purposeful?

The “Black Life” theme shows that photographers were emotionally connected to the people they photographed. We see this because they intimately covered a wide array of life in a segregated world. For example, a tight head shot of an older man starts the theme as if to say we’re going to see people “up close and personal”; this orientation is reinforced by portraits of women and men caught amidst daily activity—e.g., an older woman is seen laughing uproariously; a young man shows off a newly butchered pig’s intestines; and older men sit in front of a small town grocery store.



We also see children invent games on an Atlanta, Georgia, street as well as on a Delta, Mississippi, country road. We see people engaged in local activism; and we see people tending to their daily lives with a sweetness that belies their circumstances.



Black life ends with two groups of images—the first is shot primarily by Bob Adelman and conveys working life; the second is shot by Matt Herron and shows a rural Mississippi church in a Sunday meeting. The working shots are thought provoking for several reasons: (1) they convey life in a segregated world, and (2) **the images suggest black people’s strength, stoicism, and stealth**, or the strategies through which people survived a system designed to control their lives and curb their aspirations.



The Sunday church meeting in rural Mississippi (stop 106) has already been discussed. But the theme’s final image—a *large* portrait of boys and young men standing in a glade behind the church—can be used for another exercise. This is one of photographer Matt Herron’s “favorite” images. In it, the boys hold still—or pose—for the photographer, and yet they seem natural, self-contained. Like many of the photos in this section, this image seems to say that black people are not defined by racism’s ugliness. Their lives have a meaning and a beauty that transcends their segregated circumstances.

Activity Ten—Learning To Interpret a Photograph After seeing the final image in the “Black Life” section (as a way of encouraging discernment), ask if students share the photographer’s excitement about



this image? Ask them also if they have a favorite image in this section? Have students identify a favorite photo and jot down a few of its attributes (e.g. mood, content, detail). Students can work in pairs or alone.

Activity Eleven—Identifying the Content of a Theme Prepare an 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper and distribute the words listed on this page so they take up most of the page. Ask students to circle the words they feel best describe the people in the first theme. Ask students to add any descriptor (adjective) they feel is missing. Feel free to use the set of words provided at the end of each theme in the guide. After students experience a new theme, remind them to add new words that describe their changing perceptions.

Poor	Oppressed	Fearful
Downtrodden	Courageous	Direct
Mysterious	Unknown	Dangerous
Determined	Unappreciated	Beautiful
Haunting	Weird	Strange
Average	Human	Vulnerable
Strong	Heroic	Black
Negro	Afro American	American
Friendly	Focused	Pioneering

Ask students to add other descriptors to this list.

SECOND THEME: ORGANIZING FOR FREEDOM, PART ONE, 1963-1964

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SNCC

The exhibit’s second theme—“Organizing for Freedom”—is presented in two parts (1963-1964 and 1965-1966) and tells one big story—the story of the struggle for voting rights in Mississippi and Alabama. Unlike photos in “Black Life,” which hint of movement organizing,

this section places us *inside* SNCC's movement activities. Images show us an inventive, resilient, and broad-based social movement operating on many fronts—e.g., training activists, educating local people, registering voters, and challenging national political norms. Since the theme primarily presents the organizing activities of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and its organizational partners CORE and SCLC, background information about SNCC is important. **SNCC's history will be summarized here and augmented throughout this theme.** This history should be presented to students before an exhibit visit, and, in briefer messages or reminders, as students view the display. Also, please examine the "Supplement" for compelling pre-and post-visit video opportunities on movement and SNCC history.

SNCC (pronounced "Snick") emerged directly from the sit-ins that were carried out in the winter and early spring of 1960 by black college students in the South. The sit-ins began in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Nashville, Tennessee, in early February 1960 and showed a more confrontational turn in the movement. The sit-ins were essentially nonviolent civil disobedience (also called "direct action"). They broke segregationist laws and compelled white Americans (South and North) to face the nature and impact of the nation's racism.

From the sit-ins, **SNCC participated in the 1961 Freedom Rides** and, in the same year, started voter registration efforts in Mississippi, the state considered the nation's most viciously racist. As SNCC proceeded from direct action campaigns, focused on ending segregation in public accommodation, into voter registration work, their awareness of themselves as political innovators became stronger. By 1963, SNCC, in an effort to demonstrate that Black people wanted to participate in the political process, was carrying out both mock registration and mock voting efforts in Mississippi in open defiance of the state's political structure, which used literacy tests, personal threats, economic reprisals, and violence to prevent Black citizens from voting while claiming Black people didn't want to vote and were unqualified anyway.

WHAT WAS "FREEDOM SUMMER"?

In the first images of part one of "Organizing for Freedom," we encounter SNCC's 1964 summer project, also called "Freedom Summer." In this new project, SNCC (working through the Council of Federated Organizations, an umbrella group that brought together all civil rights organizations in Mississippi) is seen carrying out education and voting rights campaigns throughout the state. To do so, they invited a thousand college students from the nation's elite colleges (many of them Ivy League schools) to spend a summer in Mississippi. They asked student volunteers to teach in Freedom Schools, register prospective voters, and build the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

A project of this size was unprecedented in the Civil Rights Movement, yet after three years of attempting to register voters in the face of local white resistance, SNCC was ready to implement it for four reasons:

1. Although small numbers of white students had joined SNCC in the past to carry out voter registration projects, those efforts had gained little national publicity and not much federal protection. A larger contingent of white students would make it clear to the nation that the dire situation for blacks in Mississippi could not be ignored any longer;

2. Because SNCC in the past did not maintain a large group of field workers in Mississippi, it could not carry out citizen education activities *alongside* voter registration efforts. Clearly, **reducing illiteracy was a vital component of voter registration**, so a work force large enough to do both was important;
3. SNCC sought to bring a large enough group of students into Mississippi to make it difficult for police to derail voter registration by intimidating and jailing organizers; and
4. By bringing down white students from the nation’s elite schools, **SNCC hoped to gain more federal protection for black movement workers**. Mississippi police routinely harassed, arrested, and physically intimidated SNCC organizers and black residents. FBI agents assigned to the movement did nothing to stop this. SNCC hoped that the parents of summer volunteers—many of whom were physicians, attorneys, lobbyists, and corporate executives—would use their “connections” to pressure federal officials to protect their children and the black civil rights workers with whom they were allied.

TRAINING STUDENT VOLUNTEERS, WESTERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

Through the first images, “Organizing for Freedom” introduces us to the start of the 1964 Freedom Summer project. We see groups of students on the campus of the Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio, starting the second week of training sessions. **Training sessions for the summer project lasted a week, involved about 250 student volunteers per session**, and were, in the words of project historian Len Holt (*The Summer That Didn’t End: The Story of the Mississippi Civil Rights Project of 1964*) challenging and rigorous: “In charge of the training was a cadre of 80 Mississippi veterans, who had the task of making Freedom Fighters out of the eager, naïve, and frightened [white] students from the bowels of suburbia and some of the best schools in the country....

“The veterans pushed, pulled, prodded, lectured, questioned, and studied the new recruits. The volunteers were photographed, cataloged, assigned, tested, and given forms to fill out. The long schedule of the day was divided between sectional meetings (more than 20 of them, geographically designated) and general assemblies... There, instructions were given in how to protect vital organs when attacked, answer questions when arrested and develop friendly relations when greeted by a suspicious Negro community. **The volunteers were subjected to a cram course in the ways of life—and death—in Mississippi.** When the volunteers arrived in Oxford, Ohio, they were merely scared. Before they left, they were terrified. Speakers informed the volunteers: ‘There’s not even a sharp line between living and dying; it is just a thin fuzz.’”

SECOND TRAINING SESSION, WESTERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, OXFORD, OHIO

Five photos (by Herbert Randall and Tamio Wakayaman) show events inside the June training session and on the streets of Oxford, Ohio, where SNCC staff members and local people walk a picket line and call for federal protection for SNCC. A moment later, we see a large image in which volunteers with their arms around each other walk away from the camera; then we see volunteers being trained in nonviolent



resistance (in the photo two people are curled into fetal positions as they learn to protect their vital organs during a beating); finally, we see two smaller images of volunteers boarding a bus bound for Mississippi.

Activity Twelve—Where is the Symbol? Point out to students that they may occasionally see an image that has symbolic meaning or is an actual **movement symbol**. Briefly explore with them their understanding of the word symbol. The dictionary definition of the noun is as follows: “A symbol is something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance; *especially*: a visible sign of something invisible.”

In this first group, ask students which image could be used as a symbol and what would that symbol represent? Then point out that the shot of a white-and-black hand clasping is almost identical to SNCC’s organizational symbol (shown below). Explore what this symbol means to your students.



Audio guides are critical in this section. They tell the story *behind* the images. For example, in adult stop 109, photographer Herbert Randall explains that volunteers with arms around each other just learned shocking news. Three people from the first training session, who went down to Mississippi the day before to investigate the burning of a black church, were reported missing in the town of Philadelphia.



SNCC leadership informed the new volunteers of this, and then told them the three were most likely murdered. Volunteers listened in silence, then someone in the group started to sing a freedom song. Everyone joined in. After the song was finished, volunteers walked outside and instinctively put their arms around each other.

VOLUNTEERS IN MISSISSIPPI

Following the training images, we see images that were taken in Mississippi. Here, we see volunteers teaching in Freedom Schools; we see relationships forming between volunteers and local children; we also see some of the rudimentary ways volunteers lived, as in the photograph of Mario Savio, bathing by a water pump. (Please note: SNCC assigned volunteers to communities where they lived all summer. Women tended to become teachers in Freedom Schools or workers in community centers. Men canvassed to register prospective voters. Both were settled in the homes of local residents.)



In audio guide stop 110, Matt Herron evokes the remarkable impact of Freedom Schools and the summer’s transformative influence. Summer project participants as well as

movement historians have underscored this aspect of the summer, so the photo of Mario Savio washing at a backyard well is worth pointing out as an example of (1) why the summer has drawn so much attention and (2) how the summer project impacted the volunteers.

MARIO SAVIO'S TRANSFORMATION

In the fall of 1964, after Freedom Summer, Mario Savio returned to the University of California in Berkeley and became involved in the “free speech” controversy on that campus. In his book *Freedom Summer*, Stanford-based sociologist Doug McAdam examines how the summer’s activities changed the lives of hundreds of summer volunteers. He focuses on Mario Savio, because Savio became a spokesperson for Berkeley’s Free Speech Movement and because the Free Speech Movement “set the tone for an entire college generation’s confrontation with authority.”



To better understand the summer’s impact, let’s look at how McAdam’s gauges the project’s impact:

“But what of Freedom Summer? How had the summer project shaped events at Berkeley? First, the majority of Berkeley’s [21] returning volunteers took part in the [Free Speech] movement.... Moreover, two of the returning volunteers played central roles in the unfolding conflict [between administration and students]. Steven Weisman emerged as one of the principal strategists of the Free Speech forces. But it was Mario Savio, in his role as principled spokesperson for the movement, who emerged from the conflict as the first white activist ‘star’ of the Sixties. In a movement that, in best SNCC fashion, publicly eschewed leaders, it was Savio who attracted the lion’s share of media and administrative attention. It wasn’t simply his eloquence and integrity as a speaker, more significant was the catalytic role he played at the outset of the conflict and at various critical junctures in the unfolding drama....”

McAdam asks how was it that Savio, regarded as an unassuming young man before the summer, became the principal spokesman of the effort to compel Berkeley administrators to allow students to distribute Civil Rights Movement pamphlets on the school campus?

By way of an answer, McAdam quotes a fellow summer volunteer who “knew Savio before and after the summer”:

No way he ever would have...stepped forward [during the Free Speech Movement] if it hadn’t been for Mississippi. Part of it was confidence. He was really a pretty shy guy [but]...Freedom Summer tended to boost you; you felt like you had been there and you knew what you were talking about...that seemed to happen to him [Savio]... But more than that it was moral outrage...I think. Off of what he saw in McComb, [Mississippi], there was just this total commitment to the [Civil Rights] Movement...and no stupid bureaucratic rules were going to get in the way. There was this single-mindedness of purpose and moral certainty that just pushed him...and it came from Mississippi.”

McAdam concludes:

“A case can be made then, for Freedom Summer as the crucible within which much of the leadership of the Free Speech Movement was forged. Just as important as the leadership, however, was the application of tactics and ideologies learned during Freedom Summer to the events at Berkeley. Tactically, the ‘Free Speech Movement was the first example of participants in...[the Civil Rights] Movement using what they had learned on their own behalf.’”

McAdam lists the following SNCC tools that were used by the Berkeley students:

- Sit-ins,
- Catch phrases like “let the people decide,”
- Freedom Classes (as an alternative to regular university teaching),
- Freedom Songs (“We Shall Overcome”), and
- The general identification with the Civil Rights Movement.

ONE OF THE LESS OBVIOUS THEMES

One of the less obvious themes of this exhibit is how the movement altered the lives of student activists and other people. Bernice Johnson Reagon, a SNCC activist in Albany, Georgia, put it succinctly when she said: “**The Civil Rights Movement gave me the power to challenge *any* line that limits me [emphasis added].**”

Underscoring this perception, movement historian Charles Payne dubbed SNCC as the “borning organization.” He explains:

SNCC would never...receive as much publicity as some of the other civil rights Organizations did. Nevertheless, it is not too much to say that it did a great deal to invent the sixties. Bernice Reagon calls the civil rights movement the “borning struggle” of the decade, in that it was the movement that stimulated and informed those that followed it. In the same sense, SNCC may have the firmest claim of being called the borning organization. SNCC initiated the mass-based, disruptive political style we associate with the sixties, and it provided philosophical and organizational models and hands on training for people who would become leaders in the student-power movement, the anti-war movement, and the feminist movement. SNCC forced the civil rights movement to enter the most dangerous areas of the South. It pioneered the idea of young people “dropping out” for a year or two to work for social change. It pushed the proposition that merely bettering the living conditions of the oppressed was insufficient; that has to be done in conjunction with giving people a voice in the decisions that shape their lives. As SNCC learned to see beyond the lunch counter, the increasingly radical philosophies that emerged within the organization directly and indirectly encouraged a generation of scholars and activists to reconsider the ways social inequality is generated and sustained.²

² From *I've Got The Light of Freedom* by Charles Payne

Activity Thirteen: *The Movement was Nonviolent, Local Black Residents Were Not* To further explore the relationships between volunteers and local people that developed during that summer, point out the large image of two people sitting guard before a window in a newly built community library. As exhibit consultant Charlie Cobb explains in the caption: “The movement was nonviolent; the community was not.”

This image resonates with intrigue, because of the obvious danger it reveals and because it offers a vehicle to explore relationships inside the movement. In this case, a volunteer trained in nonviolence sits beside an armed local resident. They are guarding a newly built library. As the image indicates, nonviolent tactics and armed self-defense lived side-by-side.



Ask your students to consider how non-violence and self-defense could live side by side? Ask them to imagine a conversation between the two people sitting guard.

Activity Fourteen: *Letters From Mississippi* An excellent introduction to Freedom Summer is provided by the book *Letters From Mississippi: Personal Reports from civil rights volunteers of the 1964 Freedom Summer*, which presents letters written home by summer volunteers in chapters titled, “The Road to Mississippi,” “At Home In A Black World,” “That Long Walk To The Courthouse,” etc. These letters provide powerful and informative first person accounts by volunteers on all aspects of the summer project. They can be read out loud; assigned as chapters and then discussed; used as catalysts for writing assignments; or, for the more daring teacher and students, used to create dramatic readings.

Here is one letter from the chapter, “That Long Walk To The Courthouse.” It is dated July 24, 1964:

“Dear Folks,

“Last night was one of those times that are so encouraging and inspiring. We had a mass meeting in Indianola. Three weeks ago, there was no movement at all in that community. A few project workers went in and began canvassing for registration. It was decided to set up a Freedom School. Another few workers went in as staff. In that short time they had generated enough interest and enthusiasm to bring out 350 people to the meeting!

“I saw and watched faces that had been transformed with hope and courage. They were so beautiful, those faces. It is hard to put into words an experience like this. That sense of hope was so strong, so pervasive, each of us there felt with complete certainty that there can, there will, be a better world and a good life if we work for it. When James Forman [SNCC’s executive secretary] speaks, he talks ‘soul talk,’ reaching out to that part of us that is vital, that is creative, and the people respond with a radiance and a sureness that is so new to them. The word ‘new’ is very significant—it not only means change in the externals of their lives...the greatest import of ‘new’ is the emerging new value of themselves as human beings, with the right and will to act, to move, to shape their lives....

Love,
Ellen”

THE FACES OF RACISM

Voter registration—the theme’s core story—begins to unfold in the next eight images (and can be accessed in audio stop 111-211). Here, we see black people registering; summer volunteers canvassing to register people; a visiting rabbi moments after he was beaten while seeking to register people; people waiting to register; and a trio of local whites standing menacingly beside a registrar’s office. These images suggest the range of the summer’s experiences.



More importantly, through the images we’re able to identify the tactics of racist resistance: direct violence, institutional obstacles, and intimidation. Such tactics were legally backed by residency requirements, a poll tax, and the “understanding clause,” which movement historian John Dittmer said was at the heart of the legal obstacles to voting. The “understanding clause,” wrote Dittmer, “stated that a prospective voter must be able to read any section of the constitution [of Mississippi] or an alternative, be able to understand it when read to him, or to give ‘a reasonable interpretation of it.’”³

Registrars gave these “literacy” tests to prospective voters and then determined if their answers were correct. All whites passed the test. Many times they were not even tested. Ninety eight percent of blacks failed the test. The Mississippi state legislature created the literacy tests to provide local registrars the legal means to prevent black people from voting. In addition, as Matt Herron said in audio guide stop 111, a prospective voter had his or her name published in the local paper for two weeks. This process exposed an individual to a variety of reprisals, which included being fired from a job, evicted from house or apartment, fined for mysterious infractions, arrested on trumped up charges, physically threatened, or physically attacked.

Activity Fifteen: How Racism Works Encourage students to examine the eight photos in this area. Explain to them that they’re seeing the *faces of racism*, or how racism (also known as white supremacy) worked. Ask students to consider the idea of *how racism worked*. Using the eight images, ask students to identify the different ways racism worked. For example:

- **The sign in the registrar’s office (legal and institutional obstacles);**
- **The rabbi’s bleeding head (violence implicitly condoned by police);**
- **The people made to endure interminable waits just to enter the registrar’s office (legal and institutional harassment); and**
- **The menacing men (accepted public intimidation).**

³ From *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* by John Dittmer.

Racism’s faces are personal (as in the men) and institutional (as in the registrar). They are public (the men) and deliberately hidden (as in those that clubbed the rabbi and then ran away).

MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY: PUTTING MISSISSIPPI ON TRIAL

Summer activities had major goals. One goal was to create the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, also called the MFDP. Seeing the road to registration and voting blocked, SNCC and its partners built the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, a third party. Formed legally by black and white residents, MFDP sought to challenge the legitimacy of Mississippi’s Democratic Party delegates at the August 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City.

By most accounts, creating the MFDP was an extraordinary feat of organizing. In the nine Ballis images that conclude part one, we see the project’s scope and audacity. Here, MFDP members *are in the act* of challenging Mississippi’s regular Democratic delegation. In essence, **they are putting Mississippi racism on trial.**



In Ballis’ images, we see Rev. Martin Luther King, one of the witnesses presenting MFDP’s case to the convention, testifying before the credentials committee. Through such testimonies, MFDP made the case for why the convention should reject Mississippi’s racist “regulars” and replace them with their party’s legally elected 68 delegates. MFDP’s challenge was respected, but President Johnson, fearful of losing the South in the coming presidential election, pressured the credentials committee to keep the challenge from coming to the convention floor for a debate and a vote. The committee submitted to the president, and committee members kept the MFDP challenge from reaching the convention. As a compromise, MFDP was offered two “at large” convention seats, and the promise that members of the regular Mississippi delegation would be seated only after pledging to support the Democratic Party’s 1964 ticket.



In a tense vote (not presented in exhibit images), MFDP delegates rejected the president’s compromise, and Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, a strong local leader, famously stated, “We didn’t come all this way for no two votes!” MFDP succeeded in telling its story to the nation, though, and the convention adopted new rules. According to these rules, future state delegations would have to fairly represent a state’s racial and gender demographics to be seated. Historians acknowledge that this rule made the South a genuine, two-party region. In 2008, the rule also opened the door for the election of the nation’s first African American president, Barack Obama.



Activity Sixteen—How To Spot And Understand A Photo Essay? Remind students they can spot a photo essay by the fact that *it tells a story*—e.g., the image sequence has a beginning, middle, and end. An example in the second theme is the MFDP challenge in Atlantic City. Ballis’ photo essay shows the following image sequence:

- Members of the MFDP delegation arriving at the convention;
- MLK presenting their story to the credentials committee;

- MFDP delegates making their presence felt on the convention floor;
- SNCC staff and summer volunteers telling the story of the murdered civil rights workers on the boardwalk (outside the convention); and
- Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer rejecting the compromise.

Interestingly, for photographer Ballis, the MFDP’s rejection of the compromise was “the highlight” of the convention.

OUTCOMES OF ATLANTIC CITY

On the one hand, Freedom Summer and Atlantic City were a cause for celebration. SNCC had pulled off an incredible organizing feat and had successfully challenged the nation to change its moral course. Yet SNCC, as an organization, came out of the convention in disarray. Many white volunteers opted to stay with SNCC beyond the summer, and the organization wasn’t ready to absorb them. In addition, the intense, summer-long, media attention brought to the movement by the white volunteers was a reminder of the nation’s continuing rejection of black lives. So for many in SNCC, the organizing victory became a source of disillusionment. As Maria Varela observed: “People were just exhausted. And there was a lot of PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder], in my opinion, of people having been chased down highways and put in jail and, you know, lost friends.”

Movement historian Clayborne Carson explained the outcome this way:

The setback at Atlantic City was a crucial turning point for SNCC and its supporters, because it reinforced their distrust of liberal politicians unwilling to take risks on behalf of the civil rights cause.

Carson added:

Years later, John Lewis would tell me that the lesson of Atlantic City was that “when you play the game and go by the rules, you still can lose, if you don’t have the resources, if you’re going to disrupt the natural order of things.” Stokely [Carmichael] saw the setback as more evidence that black Americans could not rely on “the national conscience” or on “labor, liberal, and civil rights” allies with close ties to the national Democratic Party.

ORGANIZING FOR FREEDOM, PART TWO, 1965-1966

Activity Seventeen—What is Martin Luther King’s Role in This Exhibit? The photos of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that begin part two are a bridge to the well-known Selma to Montgomery March. They also serve to remind us that Dr. King plays a minor role in this exhibition. We see Dr. King, by and large, through a SNCC lens. Read the didactic text in this section and try to put into your own words SNCC’s perspective on Dr. King. SNCC members respect and admire Dr. King, but they know he is not the movement.

In the eight images that begin the section “Organizing for Freedom, Part Two,” Bob Fitch shows us a multifaceted King. Here he is as an iconic leader



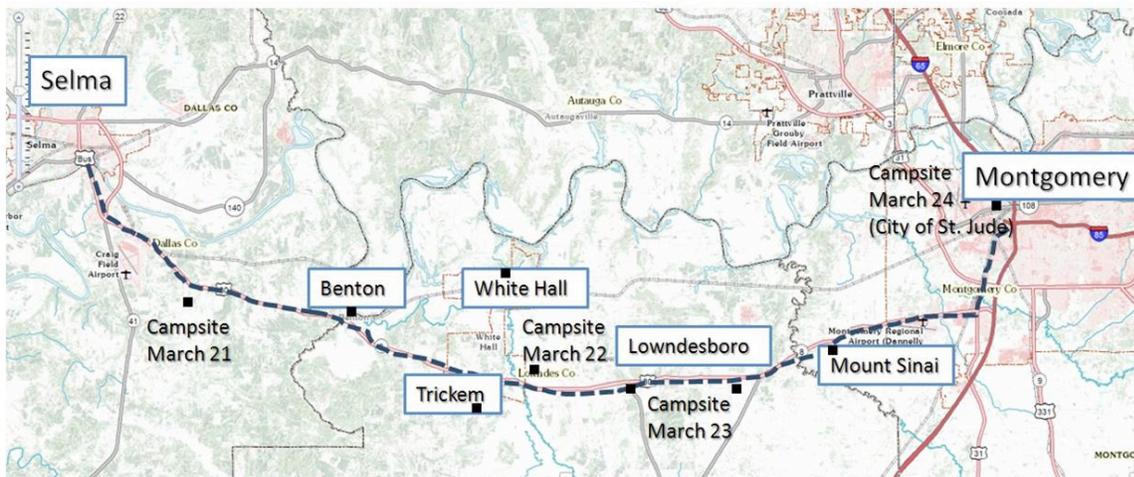
(standing in his office alongside an image of Mohandas Gandhi, a leader in India’s independence movement); as a charismatic speaker in a church he’s visiting; as a father of young children; as a movement participant (escorting young girls to an newly integrated school); and, finally, as a worn-out human rights warrior. Which photo of Dr. King do you prefer and why? Does seeing Dr. King as a partner in a more complex movement diminish his stature?

FACES OF THE MOVEMENT

The 1965 Selma to Montgomery March built on voter registration work SNCC had carried out in Selma, Alabama, during the preceding two years. In late 1964, however, the Selma effort was in disarray and losing momentum, so community leaders invited Dr. King to revive the campaign. Dr. King accepted and sent in SCLC staff. As activities began to accelerate, local police killed Jimmie Lee Jackson, a young black man participating in a night march. The killing galvanized the Selma movement, and three marches were attempted from Selma to Montgomery to protest his murder and to intensify the call for voting rights.

Alabama state troopers viciously attacked the first group of marchers. Fortunately, national TV crews on the scene filmed and broadcast the attack, provoking national outrage. Martin Luther King reached out to friends and allies across the country to plan a second march. This group also faced Alabama troopers determined to keep them from marching. Rev. King turned the marchers back rather than risk another attack. Subsequently, Rev. King’s appeal for federal protection was granted, and President Johnson federalized the Alabama National Guard and sent army personnel and the FBI to protect marchers. The third Selma to Montgomery march succeeded in going the 50 miles to the state capitol. This was the march that Matt Herron photographed.

Selma to Montgomery

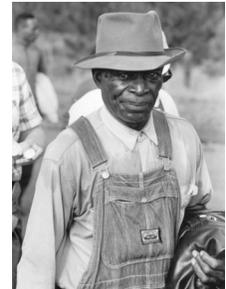


Activity Eighteen—How Did the Movement Work? Explain to students that just as we previously examined the *faces of racism* to see how white supremacy functioned, we can look at the images on this march to analyze how the movement worked. Focusing on Herron’s eleven-

image photo essay, ask your students to describe the content of the images and to convey what these *faces of the movement* are saying about the nature of the march.

In the initial image, march leaders wear leis and link their arms to convey unity of purpose; in the second (and larger) image, SNCC's John Lewis marches beside an energized Martin Luther King. Yet in all the subsequent images, we see **close-ups of "ordinary" people**. There is, for example,

- A black teenager (too young to vote) who walks with the word "vote" written on his forehead;
- A one legged man, wearing a skullcap, who marches with crutches and whose face is a mask of determination;
- A young black woman with torn shoes who raises her arms in jubilation; and
- Older local black people joyfully watching or taking the chance to openly participate.



Have your students look at the enclosed map. How many days did the march take? The map shows four days, but the march took five. It began on Sunday, March 21, and ended on Thursday, March 25, 1965. Three hundred people were allowed to march all the way. Many thousands more joined them on the final day in Selma, swelling the ranks of marchers to 30,000. ***Marching For Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary***, by **Elizabeth Partridge** is an excellent children's book (ages 10 and up) about this important event. The book describes the Selma voting rights campaign, provides excellent detail for each day of the march, focuses on the experiences of young marchers, and uses a number of exhibit images. Students in grades 5-12 can read it before or after a visit.

For now, ask your students what messages the photos provide? For photographer Matt Herron, the march revealed the critical roles "ordinary people" played in the movement. Why do you think it was so important for ordinary people to participate? What do you think it took for an "average" person to take part in the march? Keep in mind that the Selma campaign and the march helped convince President Lyndon Johnson and the United States Congress to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act into law in August 1965.

Below, three people recall what it was like to participate in the march:

Ralph Abernathy

“The final march was enjoyable and...tension filled all at the same time. We knew that victory was in sight. We had to march on one side of the highway, and the cars had to move on the other side. A great deal of profanity was yelled from the passing cars, and the old farmers came out, mostly white people, and they looked at us with utter disdain. But we knew the victory was in sight.

“We were very much aware of what was taking place in Washington [as we marched], and we were eagerly looking forward to the passage of the voting rights bill.”

John Lewis

“It was like a holy crusade, like Gandhi’s march to the sea. You didn’t get tired, you really didn’t get weary, you had to go. It was more than an ordinary march. To me there was never a march like this one before, and there hasn’t been one since. It was the sense of community moving there....”

Andrew Young

“The march from Selma to Montgomery, from my perspective, was a job. We had three hundred people to feed every day. We had to find a place to pitch tents, and we had to be concerned about security all along the road. There was absolutely nothing romantic about it. I was running back and forth, mostly with Ivanhoe Donaldson of SNCC, trying to keep the march together and solving problems from one end to the other.”⁴

Activity Nineteen—What are the Lessons of Selma? The Selma story taught Kate Lyman, an elementary school teacher in Madison, Wisconsin, “that **out of unspeakable violence and defeat can come resolution and victory.**” Out of the beating of the people on the first march, which was called “Bloody Sunday, “came renewed participation and power ... resulting in the Voting Rights Act of 1965.”

Reflecting on these images, ask your students what other lesson or lessons do they draw from the Selma-to-Montgomery march?

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

The concluding nine images in this section, taken by Maria Varela, Bob Fletcher, and Bob Fitch, present the aftermath of the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Although blacks now had the legal right to vote (the Voting Rights Act outlawed literacy tests and poll taxes), people in Alabama and elsewhere in the Deep South were still vulnerable to reprisals and intimidation. At the end of 1965, for example, in Lowndes County, Alabama, the area through which the march had come, 86 white families owned 90 percent of the land and controlled the government. Black residents worked mostly in low-level rural jobs. **Not one black resident was registered to vote.**

⁴ All three quotes are taken from *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s* by Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer.

The passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act encouraged SNCC activists to believe they could effectively fight institutional racism in “Bloody Lowndes.” Using the MFDP model, SNCC worked with Lowndes County people to build an alternative to the state Democratic Party. Stokely Carmichael spearheaded the effort, and local black residents formed the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO), which provided people a vehicle to vote in a party of their own making.

SNCC's plan was straightforward: get enough people to vote so blacks might take control of local government and redirect services to black residents, 80 percent of whom lived below the poverty line. SNCC organized registration drives, demonstrations, and political education classes in support of the black residents. Since the symbol of the Democratic Party in Alabama was the "White Cock," a rooster representing white supremacy, SNCC and local people came up with the Black Panther as a new symbol and placed it in registration forms to represent the Lowndes County Freedom Organization.



In the final images of this theme, black residents of Lowndes County fill out registration forms with the new panther symbol. We see people lined up, looking eager and ready to vote. The Lowndes County Freedom Organization entered several residents as candidates for county offices in this initial election. Although they didn't succeed and whites resorted to intimidation and violence, later candidates won office; and the goal of community control of politics spread into the wider society.



Activity Twenty—What Are The Tools of the Movement? As we leave the second theme, we can encourage students to reflect on what this theme revealed about the Civil Rights Movement. How did the movement operate? Ask students to identify the movement's tools?

Images underscored SNCC's creativity, dynamism, and ability to carry out (1) innovative and transformative education projects; (2) statewide voter registration efforts; and (3) local projects that confronted and challenged the nation's tolerance of white supremacy. The movement also formed new political coalitions, built new political parties, and expanded the nation's democracy. The movement used the following tools:

- Innovative long-term strategic thinking and planning (Mississippi Campaign).
- Intensive training sessions for volunteers (Oxford, Ohio),
- Relationship building as a tool to create cohesion (Oxford, Ohio),
- Encouraging and supporting personal initiative (Oxford, Ohio),
- Teaching for liberation (Freedom Schools),
- Boldness and candor (throughout),
- Singing for strength and unity of purpose (throughout, movement songs),
- Intergenerational cooperation and trust (Mississippi Campaign, MFDP),
- Grassroots organizing and building local leadership (Mississippi Campaign),
- Connecting local conditions and national political initiatives (MFDP),
- Challenging the national status quo ((MFDP),
- Putting racism on trial (Mississippi Campaign and MFDP),

- Facing violence directly and moving forward ((throughout), and
- Community building across racial and class lines (throughout).

Activity Twenty-One--Identifying the Content of the Theme Prepare an 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper and distribute the words listed on this page so they take up most of the page. Ask students to circle the words they feel best describes the people in this section of the exhibit. Ask them to add new words that describe their changing perceptions.

Inventive	Creative	Daring
Farsighted	Courageous	Direct
Strategic	Visionary	Dangerous
Determined	Patriotic	Assertive
Focused	Challenging	Upsetting
Extra-ordinary	Human	Vulnerable
Strong	Heroic	Black
African	African American	American
Selfless	Competitive	Pioneering

Ask students to add other descriptors to this list.

THIRD THEME: STATE AND LOCAL TERROR

EXPLORING HOW RACISM WORKS

The third theme—“**State and Local Terror**”—continues and deepens our exploration of the *faces of racism* and *how racism works*. Nothing is harder to face than the calculated usage of terror/fear—legal and extra-legal—designed to maintain the power equation that sustained white privilege and legal segregation. Photos reveal the usage and consequences of this terror—we see, for example, images of police violence and white racism alongside expressions of black pain, shock, grief, and rage. We strongly suggest students listen to adult stops 118, 119, 120 (and its counterpart 220) while selecting from the related activities offered below.

In the theme's first photo, Dave Dennis, CORE field secretary in Mississippi, delivers a eulogy at the funeral of James Chaney, one of three young civil rights workers killed by the Ku Klux Klan in Neshoba County at the start of Freedom Summer. Have students **look at the profile of Dennis' face. What emotion(s) does his face reveal?** The most obvious is outrage. But a closer look may indicate anguish and maybe grief. We encounter other emotions in the six-image sequence that documents Chaney's funeral and the memorial service for the civil rights workers. Look at Ben Chaney and Fannie Lou Chaney, respectively, James Chaney's younger brother and mother; Bob Moses, director of SNCC's summer project; and then near the end, the face of deputy sheriff Cecil Price.



This sequence of images and the story behind them summarizes the working of "state and local terror" in Mississippi. The story is as follows: Three civil rights workers—James Chaney (black), Mickey Schwerner (white), and Andrew Goodman (white)—left the first Freedom Summer training session in Oxford, Ohio, on Sunday, June 21, 1964, to investigate a church burning outside the town of Philadelphia, MS. The church was to be used in the summer as a Freedom School, so burning it was a serious issue. Shortly before 3:00pm that day, the three young men were arrested on the outskirts of Philadelphia by Neshoba County deputy sheriff Cecil Price. They were held in Sheriff Rainey's jail and released at about 10:30 that night. Outside town, Deputy Price stopped them again; this time he turned them over to a Klan mob, which, according to John Dittmer, executed them gangland style and buried them in a dam under construction in Neshoba County.

Activity Twenty-Two—Exploring the Use of Violence The killing of the civil rights workers was intended to send a message to the summer project. In fact, writes historian John Dittmer, the summer of 1964 "was the most violent since Reconstruction... [There were] thirty-five shooting incidents and sixty-five homes and other buildings burned or bombed, including thirty-five churches. One thousand movement people were arrested, and eighty-five activists suffered beatings. In addition to the Neshoba [County] lynchings, there were at least three other murders."

Point out to students that deputy Price is present at the memorial service for James Chaney. By August 1964 (the date of the service), SNCC's field staff knew Price was involved in the arrest and disappearance of the young men. Price still attended the memorial service. Ask your students how Deputy Price's presence at the service for James Chaney makes them feel? Discuss with students the disregard of the law shown by Mississippi police and what it says about maintaining the system of segregation.



Activity Twenty-Three—Exploring the Aftermath of the Summer's Violence For teachers who want to delve more deeply into this subject after seeing the exhibit, we recommend watching the recently released, full-length documentary film, *Neshoba*. This powerful film explores the history and changing racial attitudes of Neshoba County, Mississippi, residents (black and white), four decades after the murders of the three civil rights workers. The film captures the trial of KKK member Edgar Ray Killen, who was involved in the deaths and granted the filmmakers

"extraordinary access," believing he would be exonerated. He was not. In our opinion, the film offers a unique opportunity to explore both the persistence of racism in the U.S. and the efforts of Americans in a small community to heal themselves of its long-term impact.

Activity Twenty-Four—*Standing Up To Fear and Violence* In contrast to the first photo essay, Adelman’s audio guide comments (in adult stop 118) describe the 1963 Birmingham demonstrations and evoke a pivotal moment in the movement when young activists stood up to the South’s power structure and state terror suddenly stopped working. Ask your students; What are their experiences of standing up to things that frighten them. Have they ever done it? How did they do it? What was the consequence of doing it?



Activity Twenty-Five—*Exploring the Faces of Racism* One of the more unusual and dramatic images in this exhibit is the shot of a woman holding up a homemade sign that says: “nigger [lower case] don’t you wish you were WHITE [all upper case]”? The image was taken by Matt Herron and provides an important racist message. Please ask your students to explain the meaning of the sign in their own words—both the words and images/symbols that are used.



Combined with Mississippi politics, police violence, and the actions of the Klan, this sign explains how the culture of racism worked. The woman’s sign infers that blacks are inferior human beings to whites. In fact, by using the word “nigger” (lower case) she wants to remind black people that no matter what blacks do in the movement they can’t escape their degraded position and become “WHITE” (upper case). This statement offers an excellent opportunity for students to explore their understanding of the words “white,” and “nigger” to see what racists believe. The exercise can also lead to an investigation of racism’s biological and ideological premises and shed light on why black people in the South and North later became adamant about redefining themselves as “black” or “Afro-American.”

Activity Twenty-Six—*For Beginning and Advanced Photography Classes* In this section, images of the photographers are not inter-mixed as they were in the first and second themes. We see the work of Adelman, Herron, Varela, and Fitch in separate groupings that will allow students to study their styles. Using the four-page handout on “style” in the SUPPLEMENT section, have students explore the way description of photographers’ styles provided by Kent Miles fit or do not fit the work of Adelman, Herron, Varela, and Fitch in this section.



Activity Twenty-Seven—*Why Does Bob Fitch Take the Photo of Dr. Martin Luther King in his Coffin?* Bob Fitch took the final photo essay in this theme. The final image in the final photo essays is of Dr. King lying in his coffin. Ask your students how they feel about this photo? Would they have created such a photograph? Discuss it with them before listening to Fitch’s account (adult audio stops 120 and 220), which provide the concluding audio guide commentary in this section.

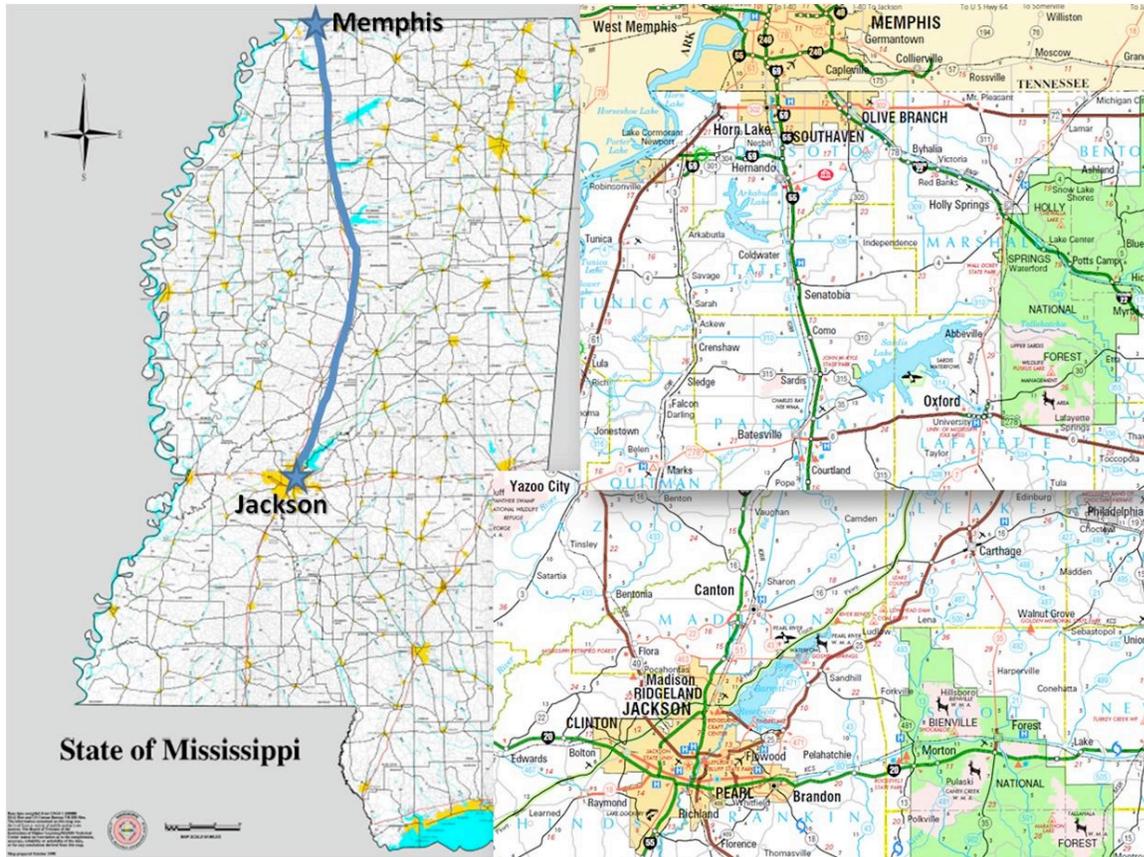
After her husband's assassination in Memphis, Tennessee, Coretta King asked Bob Fitch to join the family in Atlanta and document the funeral. Bob Fitch's account of photographing at the funeral evokes the magnitude of the loss people felt and the importance of exposing the use of terror against African Americans and resisting it. Do you think this photo helps send that message?

Activity Twenty-Eight--Identifying the Content of the Theme: Prepare an 8.5" x 11" sheet of paper and distribute the words listed on this page so they take up most of the page. Ask students to circle the word or words they feel best describes the people in this section of the exhibit. Remember to ask your students to add new words that describe their changing perceptions.

Disturbing	Oppressive	Fearful
Brutal	Calculated	Direct
Outraged	Terrifying	Dangerous
Determined	Unappreciated	Beautiful
Haunting	Weird	Evil
Average	Human	Vulnerable
Strong	Heroic	Black
African	African American	American
Transformative	Competitive	Pioneering

Ask students to add other descriptors to this list.

FOURTH THEME: BLACK POWER AND THE MEREDITH MARCH AGAINST FEAR



Reviewing images for the exhibit’s final theme, we debated about how to end the show. We discussed several options: (1) concluding the show by presenting the 1966 “Meredith March against Fear” and the emergence on the march of the “Black Power” concept, and (2) concluding the show with images of the 1968 Poor People’s Campaign. Both possibilities presented conclusions with strong contemporary relevance. The Meredith March from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, ultimately won out because of two reasons: first, we had stronger march than campaign images; second, we believed the idea of power—Black Power—that intimidated whites, caused rifts and divisions in the movement, and helped usher in the concept of “black consciousness” in American culture, was not a departure from the Civil Rights Movement as critics and some historians believed, but an inevitable and important development.

Like many movement events presented in this show, the “Meredith March against Fear” follows a protest that was temporarily halted by white violence. If we look at Freedom Summer; the Selma to Montgomery March; and even the Lowndes County campaign, we see that in each case white violence compelled the movement to take bold, creative, even unprecedented steps to face and overcome the debilitating impact of white intimidation and violence. The Meredith March operates in this same context. It’s been called the movement’s “last great march”--it definitely was the movement’s longest march.

James Meredith, the student who desegregated the University of Mississippi in 1962, started the march in Memphis on June 5, 1966, with the aim of walking 220 miles to encourage blacks in his home state of Mississippi to register and vote. In 1962 his effort to enroll in and desegregate the University of Mississippi was supported by all the major civil rights organizations. His 1966 venture was undertaken alone.

Crossing the state line from Tennessee into Mississippi, Meredith seemed embarked on a lonely and somewhat quirky personal crusade. On his second day out, an unemployed 40-year-old white man from Memphis jumped out of the bushes and fired his shotgun at Meredith, striking him in the back. An Associated Press photographer on the scene caught an image of Meredith, writhing in pain on the ground, and within hours his solitary walk became a movement cause. Movement leaders—originally believing Meredith had been killed—hurried to Memphis and discovered he was alive and well and would recuperate (later, he would even rejoin the march).



“MEREDITH MARCH” HAD TO BE CONTINUED

Dr. King came to Memphis first. He was joined by Stokely Carmichael, SNCC’s new chairman (replacing John Lewis); Floyd McKissick, CORE’s new director; Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; and Whitney Young of the Urban League. All the organizational leaders believed the “Meredith March against Fear” had to be continued. **Abandoning the march would send the wrong message to the black community and would embolden white supremacists.** SNCC’s Carmichael argued strongly, however, that if they continued Meredith’s march, things had to be very different. Unlike the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery, which brought together national white and black leadership, this march had to be “the responsibility of the black community” and had to aim at developing local black leadership.

Furthermore, as SNCC field secretary Cleve Sellers stated in the oral history collection *Voices of Freedom*, SNCC wanted to include “the Deacons for Defense, [an armed, black self-defense group from Bogalusa, Louisiana]. We wanted them to be involved in the march. [And]...we did not want a national call to be made. We wanted to keep the march indigenous to Mississippi, indigenous to the South primarily. The question of a march against fear impacted directly on people in Mississippi, and we felt that in order to make that statement they had to be involved. They had to make the step out and say I am not frightened by vigilantes and the Ku Klux Klan and the people who are going to try and oppress me and take advantage of me.”

WHICH COURSE SHOULD THE “MEREDITH MARCH” TAKE?

A vigorous debate ensued between the leaders about which course the “Meredith March against Fear” should take. Wilkins and Young wanted to repeat the successful Selma to Montgomery event, but Carmichael convinced King and McKissick to side with SNCC. This decision sent Wilkins and Young back to their organizations, and left the march under SNCC, SCLC, and CORE leadership.

WHAT WAS “BLACK POWER”?

Gaining political and economic power for black people had long been one of SNCC’s and the Civil Rights Movement’s central goals. The specific call for “Black Power,” however, emerged on the evening of June 16, when the marchers reached the town of Greenwood, Mississippi, a SNCC stronghold. Marchers (Stokely Carmichael included) were arrested earlier that day for attempting to camp at a public school contrary to city orders. That evening, after being released from jail, Stokely Carmichael vented his frustration with continuing police intimidation “by leading [the crowd in] repeated chants of ‘Black Power.’”



The media’s response to the phrase “Black Power” was negative and alarmist. They only heard in it a rejection of integration and assumed it also meant a rejection of white people and of America itself. “Power” to the media also connoted a rejection of nonviolence and the possibilities that the Civil Rights Movement would take up arms. In addition, Black Power connoted the idea of Black Nationalism, and this was taken to be a call for physical separation from white people. SNCC was seen as turning its back on earlier movement goals, and, to some degree, this was true. In his book, *On The Road To Freedom: A Guided Tour of the Civil Rights Trail*, Charlie Cobb characterized the moment as “the end of an era.”

A NEW PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT

For Stokely Carmichael and SNCC, “Black Power” announced a new phase of the movement. As a slogan and ideology, it sought to replace “Freedom Now.” It also sought to change the goals of the movement from integration and its connotations of black people melding into the mainstream white community, to the effort to build the black community’s political, social, and cultural strengths by preserving all the critical aspects of the community’s life and creating from within a new and positive identity.

In his memoir, *Ready For Revolution*, which was published posthumously, Stokely Carmichael described both what Black Power intended to prevent as well as what it sought to create:

The American “melting pot” meant us—as a people—assimilating, despite racist resistance, the culture and values of the mainstream, hoping to pass over into and be “accepted” by the white community on *their terms*. To blend in, call no attention to differences—in effect, to sneak into white acceptance. Clearly a form of cultural suicide. So that is what we said.

Then we said that the solution to our problems had nothing to do with our “acceptance” by white America and less with “universal brotherhood.” Our struggle had to be about power. And since SNCC was neither crazy nor stupid, it had to be clear that we weren’t talking about overthrowing the system and black folk taking over the country—so why all this weeping and gnashing of liberal teeth? This was simply about the power to affirm our black humanity; to defend the dignity, integrity, and institutions of our culture; and to collectively organize political and economic power to begin to control and develop our

communities. It was patently not about abandoning our black communities and rejecting our black culture, but about developing the one and embracing the other.

Simply put, our goal and direction could not be about deserting our communities as refugees to the white suburbia, but toward liberating, controlling, and developing our own communities. Not about abandoning our culture and rich heritage in order to “integrate” into an American “mainstream,” then, as now, self-consciously defined as culturally “white” and Eurocentric. This was about pride, self-respect, and autonomy, in fact, part of the universal human struggle of all people everywhere for self-determination, pure and simple.⁵

Stokely Carmichael also understood and expressed in public (earlier than MLK) the perception that racism was not merely a legal impediment and an ideological problem; it was an institutional construct—national in scope—and it was institutionally maintained. Martin Luther King would also come to this public conclusion. Before his assassination King began to call for broader and more fundamental changes in American institutions.

Activity Twenty-Nine—Mapping the Meredith March The new march began on June 7 near Hernando, Mississippi. Provide your students the enclosed map on a page and have them walk through the final theme, circling on their maps the towns that are cited in the photo captions. Also inform students that the march took place on emotional and psychological planes as well.

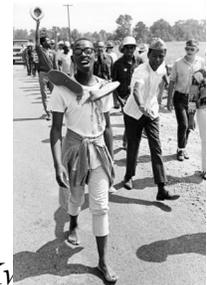
The march lasted almost three weeks or nineteen days, and on the final day King and Carmichael addressed 15,000 people in Jackson, the state capitol. Although images are not presented in a strictly chronological manner, encourage students to think of the march images as indicating stages on a journey. For example, we see early strategy meetings; we notice local people greeting march leaders; we observe the friendship between Carmichael and King; and we witness the confrontations that take place.



In this more complex mapping activity, ask students to imagine they are filmmakers telling the story of the march as a journey. Their goal is to present the moment “Black Power” is announced as one of the march’s high points. How do they build to this moment? What is the story that leads to this event? This activity aims to awaken students’ imaginations, while providing an entry to the emotional dynamic of the march.



As one website reported, “For almost three weeks, between a couple hundred and a couple thousand people walked the 220 miles to the state capitol, camping out at night under rented circus tents. Local people fed the marchers on the way. After asking that federal registrars be sent to Mississippi, civil rights leaders took groups of marchers to nearby towns to canvass, rally and



⁵ From *Ready For Revolution: The Life And Struggles Of Stokely Carmichael* (Kwame Ninsin), Stokely Carmichael and Ekwueme Michael Thelwell

bring local African Americans to be registered. The Dept. of Justice later estimated that between 2,500 and 3,000 black Mississippians were registered to vote during the march.”

Activity Thirty—Exploring the Meaning of Black Power Have your students break into groups of three-to-four people and give each group the following assignment: Having come through the exhibit, how would you describe the “power” SNCC and the movement sought? How would you describe the power the movement struggled against?

Activity Thirty-One—Exploring the Meaning of Black Power Have your students break into groups of three-to-four people and give each group the following statement taken from Leslie Kelen’s oral history interview with photographer Bob Fitch. In the statement, Fitch describes what he thinks the march and the phrase “Black Power” accomplished. Have students in each group describe in their own words what Bob Fitch is saying, and then ask them to explain why they agree or disagree with his comments.



LK: “What do you think the Meredith march overall brought about?”

BF: Well, I think it accomplished Meredith's original purpose. Instead of saying, you can walk safely through on the main roads of your own state, [or] I can walk safely, I'm going to do that, he got shot and you just twist that a little bit [to get], *We will walk with safety [laughs] and without fear on the roads of our state and not be fearful. We're coming. We're gonna do it [emphasis added].* And here we are, we're doing it.

“So that fear factor again, and time and time again, a lot of this [Civil Rights Movement] activity had to do with ripping apart this huge canopy of fear that enveloped black life in these regions. The night-time marches, the Mississippi march, the Selma march—you know, for black people [in Alabama] to march on their own capitol, which was the capitol of the confederacy [clears throat], for black people to march through the most poisonous state—Mississippi—in the nation, was to challenge that canopy of fear.

“Now, each march then had its own thematic bubbles. And as I've said before, the Mississippi Meredith march, the thematic bubble that emerged was the Black Power statement. It's the one that remains in the culture... And it was said out loud: Power. Even I find today when I go into classes in schools and colleges, nobody teaches them about power—political power, cultural power, social power. There's something in Christian Puritanism, which is the giant umbrella over our whole nation, even if you're Catholic or Jewish, that *entirely* eliminates *any* discussion of power. In the church, in the school, you just don't hear the word. The Puritan philosophy roughly is the corporate leaders say[ing], ‘That's kind of a dirty thing. Don't bother with it, we'll take care of it.’”

“So power is a word that's discussed by the empowered hierarchy, but not by the people. So to utter that out loud, nationally, in the context of racial conflict, it was like [unleashing] an ideological tsunami which remains with us today and all the movements who say it, black power, youth power, gay power, senior power, baseball player power in negotiations, labor power. And so it was to me [a way] to crack open that Puritan denial about power. [It] was a marvelous thing

that SNCC did, that Stokely Charmichael did, here in the Mississippi Meredith March. It's a great gift, a great gift."

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

The supplemental material offers you and your students a way to deepen engagement with the exhibit and the Civil Rights Movement. As we mentioned earlier, the movement took several decades to fully unfold. Below, we're suggesting several episodes from the award-winning documentary film *Eyes on the Prize: American's Civil Rights Years* as tools for deepening student understanding of the exhibit and the movement. The film episodes can be viewed and discussed before or after seeing the exhibit. Watching them before will provide you background to the exhibit, a way to grasp what preceded the full emergence of the student movement. Seeing it after viewing the exhibit will allow you and your students to examine the movement's development and to better understand its trajectory.

We're also providing a brief but rich summary of the development of documentary photography in the U.S. Documentary photographers have played a key role in social change in America, and the movement's activist photographers were part of a rich tradition. Finally, we're enclosing comments photographers made about their movement involvement. The young people whose work you saw in the display risked their safeties and, in some cases, their lives to participate in this nation's Civil and Human Rights Movement. Their comments provide insights into both their motivations and what they learned from their experiences.

Activity One (Before of After Exhibit Visit)—Montgomery Bus Boycott It is strongly suggested that students in grades 7-12 view a 20-minute segment from the film, *Eyes on the Prize: American's Civil Rights Years*. The six-episodes of this film can be purchased through PBS for less than \$50.00 and should be in every school library. The suggested segment is on the film's first disc and is part of the first episode, titled "Awakenings, 1954-1956." When placing the DVD in the drive, do not play all of "Awakenings." Instead, go into the "Scene Selections" menu, and then pick the third scene in "Awakenings." It is identified as "Rosa Parks." This 20-minute segment provides an introduction to the exhibit's first theme, "Black Life," or to the reality of segregated life in the Deep South, and the movement's first successful "mass protest."

Importantly, although the segment is called "Rosa Parks," Ms. Parks plays a small role in the story. Speakers in this section include, E.D. Nixon, Jo Ann Robinson, Coretta King, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, and many other lesser-known participants in the bus boycott. We also hear from local journalists and see news footage and interviews shot at the time of the boycott, providing white reactions and resistance to the boycott.

The "Rosa Parks" segment delineates the manner in which a Deep South community carried out an important episode of what we now call "the Civil Rights Movement." It is an amazing story to watch and discuss, because it dispels simplistic depictions of the movement that only emphasize the contributions of Ms. Parks and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. In this segment, we learn the bus boycott involved planning and organization and was significantly shaped by Montgomery community residents like E.D. Nixon and Jo Ann Robinson, people whose names most of us don't know. We also learn of the modest early demands of the boycotters and how

these demands changed. We learn how the boycott grew in purpose and scope, and we learn of the role the black churches played in providing safety and stability. We learn that the community sustained the boycott for nearly a full year, and we learn of the role of Martin Luther King, Jr., a newly arrived and eloquent 26-year old pastor.

When you and your students explore this film segment, an important question to keep in mind is: **Whose bus boycott was this?** While it is true that Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to the nation's attention through the boycott, did he "lead" it or did he give voice to a people's emerging aspirations? What is the difference?

Teachers and students viewing this segment can discuss the following:

- What was segregation in Montgomery like?
- How does the film depict Ms. Parks? Is she part of a larger "cause" or is she a singular heroine? How does ED Nixon describe Ms. Parks?
- How is word about the initial one-day boycott spread? What does this tell us about Montgomery's preparation for the boycott?
- How do black people replace riding on public buses to get to work? What does this tell us about the boycott?
- How do black people overcome their fears of white reprisals? What is the role of the church and singing in the movement?
- How does Rev. Shuttlesworth describe Martin Luther King?
- How does "white" Montgomery respond to the boycott? How does the KKK see the movement?
- Do you think mass protests like this would be effective today?
- Do you understand Jo Ann Robinson's concluding remarks, when she says,

" We felt that...we had forced the white man to give what we knew was a part of our citizenship. If you have never had the feeling that this not the other man's country and you an alien in it, but this is your country, too, then you don't know what I'm talking about. But it is a hilarious feeling that goes all over you and that makes you feel that America is a great country and we're going to do more to make it greater."

Note: watching and discussing the 20-minute segment should be done in a continuous manner. Also, remind your students that the Civil Rights Movement took place over a long period of time. *Eyes on the Prize* covers the years 1954-1965, but many movement historians date the movement from the end of World War Two to 1975, or 1945-1975.

Also, please remind your students that the movement was not sequential—there was no overarching plan of battle, with one event leading naturally and inevitably to another. The "movement" was episodic and dynamic with strategies formed by different civil rights organization and local groups seeking to meet specific challenges and to further the struggle for first class citizenship for black Americans. Although organizations worked together to a good degree, major movement strategies were not arrived at by consensus of the whole. Instead, organizations took on challenges based upon their mission, methods, and experiences. For example, the NAACP directed the long-term legal battle that in 1954 overturned the "separate but equal" ruling that supported segregation in public schools. On the other hand, direct-action-

oriented organizations like SNCC and CORE partnered on the Freedom Rides and on voter registration in Mississippi and sought ways to partner with SCLC and the NAACP. Occasionally, as in the 1964 summer project and its political aftermath, all major Civil Rights Organizations—SNCC, CORE, NAACP, and SCLC—came together in the campaign for voting rights.

Activity Two (Before or After Exhibit Visit)—Birth of the Student Movement Since SNCC’s 1964 Mississippi campaign grows out of the black student movement or the 1960 sit-ins, we suggest students view a second 20-minute segment from *Eyes on the Prize: American’s Civil Rights Years*. This segment provides a foundation for the exhibit’s second theme, “Organizing for Freedom.” The segment can be found in Episode Three, titled “Ain’t Scared Of Your Jails, 1960-1961.” Again, use the “Scene Selection” menu and select the “Direct Action” episode. This 20-minute segment will take you through the following stories: “Badge of Honor,” “Boycott,” “March to City Hall,” and “SNCC” and will introduce the 1960 Nashville, Tennessee, student movement.

Movement historians usually start the sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 1, 1960, when four black college students sat down at a Woolworth lunch counter and wouldn’t leave when refused service. *Eyes on the Prize* starts with the Nashville students whose sit-ins started after Greensboro, in part because this group of students played a larger role in forming SNCC. The Nashville sit-ins also present the story of Jim Lawson, a theology student at Vanderbilt University, who studied nonviolent civil disobedience under Ghandi’s disciples and spent the fall of 1959 training black students from Fisk, Merharry Medical College, Tennessee State University, and American Baptist Theological Seminary (all Nashville-based) in non-violent direct action techniques.

The film follows Lawson’s students through their training and into their first sit-ins in February 1960. The Nashville sit-ins are met with white vigilante violence, after which students are arrested. Similar to the Montgomery scenario, the black community imposes an economic boycott. The boycott triggers additional white violence, and the home of Z. Alexander Looby, a black attorney, is bombed. After the bombing, the black community unites, and the movement’s first “major march” is held.

This march brings the students to the steps of city hall, where Diane Nash, a sit-in leader, confronts Nashville’s mayor with the question: **is segregation just or unjust**. This segment shows a number of vital and little-known historical developments: (1) the 1960 student movement started on historically black college campuses in the South, (2) the new “direct action” tactics used by students was disruptive, dynamic, and enormously effective, and (3) the students began the “jail no bail” strategy, which helped transform their fear of the police.

Please use the film to discuss the following with your students:

- Students trained in the use of direct action techniques to break segregation laws. How does Diane Nash describe the effects of segregation?
- The film shows “direct action” techniques being used by college students. Direct action means using nonviolent techniques to break segregation laws. In the Montgomery Bus

Boycott, protestors refused to ride buses. **What are the similarities and differences between the two methods?**

- Direct action tactics have been called “civil disobedience.” What major American writer encouraged its usage? How did local University of Utah student Tim DeChristopher use it recently? See his civil disobedience at <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/26/opinion/la-oe-yarrow-oil-leases-20110726>
- When students in other cities heard of the sit-ins, large numbers joined in and the student movement spreads to seventy cities across the South. **What does the rapid spread of this tactic signify to you?**
- Students who participate in the sit-ins opt to go to jail rather than pay fines. Their rallying cry is “Jail, no Bail.” Why do students like John Lewis consider going to jail “a badge of honor”? Who wears a “badge” as a symbol of his/her office? What do you think the badge represented to blacks in segregated communities?
- Students who confront organized oppression—beatings followed by arrests—often emerge as grassroots leaders. What do you think such students are learning? John Lewis, who participated in the Nashville sit-ins, became SNCC’s chairman. Look up his biography on Google.
- Rev. C.T. Vivian describes the first “major march” of the movement in terms of numbers, street presence, and the awe the march inspires in local whites. What does he want you to understand from this description?
- In April 1960, students who had carried out the sit-ins met on the campus of Shaw University, in Raleigh, North Carolina, and founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC became the movement’s most radical and creative organization and the only one run entirely by young activists.

Activity Three (After an Exhibit Visit)—U.S. Constitution and Voting Rights For a deeper understanding of Mississippi’s voting rights campaign, inform students of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the US Constitution. The former was adopted on July 9, 1868, and is known as one of the Reconstruction Amendments. It states: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” The Amendment adds that, “The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.”

The 15th amendment to the US Constitution, another Reconstruction Amendment that was ratified on February 3, 1870, reads: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” And: “The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

Discuss with students that despite these constitutional guarantees, Mississippi’s literacy tests, intimidation tactics, outright violence and reprisals, systematically denied African Americans the right to vote. The denial was calculated to disenfranchise African Americans. As author Sally Belfrage, a 1964 summer volunteer pointed out in her account of the summer project in her book

Freedom Summer, “While 190,000 Negroes were registered in 1890 [during the reconstruction era in Mississippi] (70,000 higher than the white registrants), the number had been reduced to 20,000 in 1963”--about 2% of the total number of black people who were eligible to vote.

Discuss the Mississippi situation as a way of helping students understand the difference between personal bias and institutional racism. This distinction leads to a deeper understanding of the goals and methods of the Civil Rights Movement.

DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL REFORM IN AMERICA

In *This Light of Ours: Activist Photographers of the Civil Rights Movement*, we encounter the work of nine activist photographers and, through them, the historic movement they documented. In previous periods of American life, documentary photographers also provided images to help expose unjust conditions in the nation and to support efforts to pass new legislation. For example, the work of writer and photojournalist Jacob Riis in New York City in the late 1880s and early 1890s revealed the overcrowding in the city’s tenements and led Teddy Roosevelt, the head of New York City’s police board, to shut down the “police lodging houses” where people had been routinely crammed. Riis’ 1890 publication, *How The Other Half Lives*, helped rewrite and enforce New York’s Tenement Law, which had been passed in 1867, but had never been enforced. Historian Vicki Goldberg credits Riis with developing “the documentary method,” which combined images and text to send a powerful social justice message. In the following century, Goldberg points out, every successful documentary photographer and social reformer used this method.

A decade after Riis, sociologist Lewis Hine began taking photographs of immigrants arriving from Europe as well as of young children, aged 10-16, who worked in textile mills in the South. Hine’s work was the main tool used by reformers to write a bill for a national child labor law that was introduced into Congress in 1906. The bill did not become law until in 1938, but Hine’s work led the nation to be more aware of the routine abuse of children by American industry.

In the 1930s, Farm Security Administration photographers provided Americans a portrait of the conditions of the dust bowl and the dislocations the nation suffered during the great Depression when unemployment rose to over 30%. Farm Security Administration photographers not only left a unique record of American life at a time of national crises, but they also functioned as an arm of the federal government and helped President Roosevelt create progressive legislation.

“This Light of Ours” presents us with a similar scenario. The “activist” photographers whose images we see in this exhibition joined the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s to support the struggle of African American to gain their civil and human rights. Activist photographers enthusiastically participated in and supported the movement and used their photographs to tell the story of SNCC’s organizing campaigns and to present the nation at a moral crossroad.

EXHIBIT PHOTOGRAPHERS (OVERVIEW AND THEIR COMMENTS)

Activist photographers came to the movement from all parts of the United States—even from Canada. The nine in this show do not convey all the activist photographers in the movement.

There were at least half a dozen more whose images could have been added. Photographers in this show provide, however, a fair representation of the diversity of people who carried out this work and their skill levels. Two of the nine photographers in the show are African American; the others are from Japanese, Jewish, Greek, Irish, Chicano-Latino, and WASP backgrounds. As a group they're all college educated. Five of the nine received professional training and were exploring careers as professional photographers; the remaining four became photographers as a result of on-the-job-training in the movement. Their aesthetic skills and orientations emerged out of necessity, curiosity, and an interest in image making. Seven of the nine worked for or were closely affiliated with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); the other two worked for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), led Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Of all the major civil rights organization working in the Deep South, SNCC was the only one that provided funds to support photographers and to use photography as an integral part of their communications effort to the nation.

Here is how some photographers described their motivation for joining, their roles as photographers, and their experiences of working in the Civil Rights Movement:

Matt Herron

My wife and I went down to Mississippi in 1963 to put our shoulders to the wheel of civil rights, with a personal mission to advance the cause of nonviolence. The movement was small and embattled, and we had no idea it would ever be as successful as it was. But we knew that this was a historic change, and I was always aware I was photographing history.

George “Elfie” Ballis

When I started photographing, I thought: I'm gonna expose the terrible conditions [black] people live under, and then the society will change it. That was my mindset. It changed quickly! I realized very shortly that my job was *not* to expose these conditions. My job was to celebrate the power of these people and amplify it with my camera. That became my vision of what I was doing. And when I looked through the camera I didn't see them any more, I saw us. I was no longer working on their issues, I was working on our issues. We are all in this together.

Maria Varela

SNCC believed—and acted on the belief and developed organizing techniques around the belief—that ordinary people can and should speak for themselves and should represent themselves. Therefore, the elite should not be speaking for the so-called downtrodden. They speak for themselves with more truth, facts, and realism than any interpreter. That's what we believed. And we were scrupulous in trying to act on that belief in the way we operated. And this infused my photography.

Matt Herron

I was a photographer who was offering his professional services, and I was willing to put my body on the line. And there were no barriers in those days between anyone who was there in the

cause of civil rights. I don't know the exact analogy, but I always thought we were on the front lines; we were in danger; we cleaved to each other; we sang together; we hugged each other. It was the only time in my life when I lived in a truly integrated, loving society. We referred to it as "The Beloved Community." It was a golden moment, and I'll never experience it again.

Tamio Wakayama

I am just so damn fortunate and really so privileged. I lucked out. At a critical point in my life, at that age in a person's life when he wants to explore and to find himself, there was this incredible thing called SNCC and the black Civil Rights Movement that I became a part of. I will be eternally grateful to my brothers and sisters in the movement who welcomed me, and who together we went through this *amazing* experience that altered us and that transformed America and the world.

Bob Fletcher

Courtland Cox was one of the intellectuals within SNCC, one of the policy and strategy people. I remember one day Courtland saying, "You know, it's time for us to stop thinking of ourselves as victims, because that's not who we are. We have to start looking at ourselves as people who are capable of changing the things that influence our lives." I thought about that and I thought, "How do we do that?" And then I got it, and I began photographing from that viewpoint.

As Dr. Charles Payne eloquently observed: "Ordinary people who learn to believe in themselves are capable of extraordinary acts, or better, of acts that seem extraordinary to us precisely because we have such an impoverished sense of the capabilities of ordinary people."

Activity Four (After an Exhibit Visit)——Explorations of Photographic Styles Kent Miles, CDEA's Coordinator of Exhibits and Collections, has created an easy to follow primer on the "styles" of the exhibit's nine photographers. This primer offers an excellent opportunity for advanced as well as beginning photography students to discuss the relationship between a photographer's style and the image he or she creates. Miles shows that the components or elements of style—structure, design, mood, and message—are a part of each image, and what we call style reflects the ways in which a photographer uses those elements.

THIS LIGHT OF OURS

ACTIVIST PHOTOGRAPHERS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

CHARACTERISTICS OF PHOTOGRAPHER STYLES BY KENT MILES

The word “style” denotes the way a photographer organizes the structure, design, mood, and message of his/her images. Style will determine when, how, and what a photographer chooses to photograph. A photographer’s style also will determine which of the many images that are made will be used and seen.

Looking closely at the images of the nine photographers whose work appears in *This Light of Ours*, we can see characteristic styles begin to emerge:



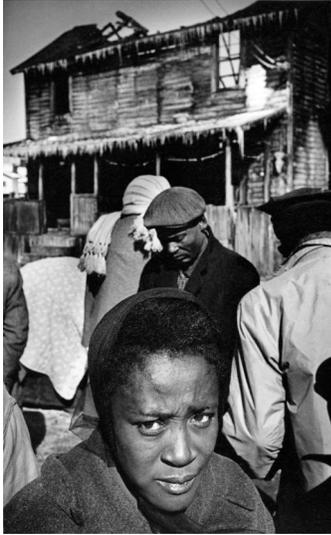
Bob Adelman

Bob Adelman’s work displays the most consciously aesthetic sense of the picture as something intended to be looked at. His photographs are graphically well designed and iconic. It would be difficult to re-crop his images and improve the visual impact of the work. Adelman is committed to portraying the story of the Civil Rights Movement and is deeply sympathetic to it, but he maintains a professional reservation towards the individuals he photographs.



George Ballis

George Ballis is able to find and present the significance of the individual in the crowd. His emotional commitment to the Civil Rights Movement determines what he photographs and how he photographs it. It is clear that he champions the movement’s methods and goals, which are amplified by his sensitive selection of circumstances and people to photograph. He consistently looks to create emotional impact in his images.



Bob Fitch

Bob Fitch has a narrative style, but much of his purpose is achieved through portraiture. His photographs reveal a close affinity to his subjects, particularly in his images of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his family. Bob uses photography as the dominant vehicle in telling the Civil Rights Movement's story. Very little text would be required to get a sense of the people and the events he covers. You can also tell that he likes and respects the people he is working with, and he is able to be close to them without being intrusive.



Bob Fletcher

Bob Fletcher's style reveals a gentle and unobtrusive approach to making photographs. His foremost connection is to the black people of the South, and his photographs enable him to approach their lives in a subtle and sensitive way. He compassionately tells the story of rural southern life and provides a context for the story of the Civil Rights Movement.



Matt Herron

Matt Herron's work shows a concern for conveying significant events. Whether the event is a march, demonstration, or rural church meeting, his photographs tell the story of what is happening and why it is important. He is a champion of the Civil Rights Movement and wants his work to be used to promote the cause, but he has a clear understanding of the kinds of images a magazine or newspaper will want to publish. His images show that he's promoting a cause as well as doing a job.



Dave Prince

We do not have enough surviving images from Dave Prince to make a fair evaluation of style.



Herb Randall

In the work of Herb Randall, one feels that the camera is used to discover the meaning of what he sees. Randall is more emotionally reserved than the other photographers, and there is a feeling of respectful distance between him and the people he photographs. His images seem unrushed and thoughtful.



Maria Varela

In Maria Varela's photographs, the camera is used to bear witness to human events and circumstances. Her pictures indicate that she's committed to the movement and the people it serves, and she is willing to get close to them. Varela's images were often used as illustration for a written narrative. Her photographs are well designed, but not self-consciously so, and they allow the viewer to understand her testimony.



Tamio Wakayama

Tamio Wakayama's work gives us a lyrical vision of people and places. His images, even of antagonists, are gentle and humane. There is a sense of hope in his photographs. His work seems connected in attitude to the work of Bob Fletcher and Maria Varela, yet his images are his own. His images are well designed and tell the story of being in the Civil Rights Movement. They also reveal his understanding of the impact that a well-crafted finished print can make upon the viewer.