



INDIANA REPERTORY THEATRE

CHRISTEL DEHAAN

STUDENT MATINEE PROGRAM

at the Indiana Repertory Theatre



STUDY GUIDE FOR

FANNIE: THE MUSIC AND LIFE OF FANNIE LOU HAMER

BY CHERYL L. WEST

January 9 - February 4, 2024 | OneAmerica Mainstage



FANNIE: THE MUSIC AND LIFE OF FANNIE LOU HAMER

BY CHERYL L. WEST

THE STORY OF FANNIE: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF FANNIE LOU HAMER



Content Spotlight

Fannie contains:

mild profanity; descriptions of shooting, gun violence, racial hate crimes, sexual harassment, and physical violence; mentions lynching, rape, malnutrition, bombing, and death; references Christian theology.

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Rising from humble roots as the daughter of a Mississippi sharecropper, Fannie Lou Hamer became a leader in the struggle for voting rights at a time when Civil Rights were far from secure. Her grit and determination to keep fighting, through bad times as well as good, shows what it means to be a true revolutionary. **You'll be clapping and crying and singing along with a show that is part theatre, part gospel revival, and all inspiration.**

Recommended for students in grades 9-12

The performance will last approximately 90 minutes with no intermission.

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Fannie Lou Hamer spent the last decade of her life traveling the United States, giving speeches to rally support and raise funds for the Civil Rights movement. Her speaking engagements featured gospel songs and spirituals along with stories of her experiences as a voting rights activist, and she often encouraged her audiences to sing along. Cheryl L. West's play does the same, giving the audience many opportunities to listen to—and join in on—some traditional music-making.

We meet Fannie in 1975 in her kitchen, cooking a birthday dinner for her adopted daughter, Cookie, and singing an old African American spiritual, "Walk with Me." While she bakes a cake, her mind drifts back to the speech she gave at the Democratic National Convention in 1964—the speech that propelled her into the national spotlight. Her mind goes further back to a voting rights meeting she attended two years earlier. As an impoverished sharecropper who had been forced to drop out of school at 13 to pick cotton, she first learned that she had the right to vote at the age of 44.

Fannie moves on to tell us about her first experience attempting to register to vote: how she was given an unfair literacy test, harassed by the police, fired from her job, forced to leave her home and family, and shot at. She began working for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee as a field secretary, traveling the local dirt roads educating Black people about voting for \$10 a week.

Fannie's memories take her back to perhaps the darkest episode in her life: when she and five other Black women were arrested at a "whites-only" diner in Winona, Mississippi, and beaten by the police. Fannie suffered lifelong damage to her legs, kidneys, and eye. Eventually, when she was able to walk again, she went right back to her work.

Fannie talks about her involvement in Freedom Summer, the 1964 program where hundreds of white college students from all over the nation came to Mississippi to help register Black voters. She remembers the murder of three of those students with whom she worked: Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner. And she describes how the national outcry over their deaths helped push the adoption of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Fannie tells us about founding the Freedom Farm Cooperative in 1967, providing opportunities for poor people to grow fresh produce and raise pigs for food. She remembers her daughter Dorothy Jean, who died of complications from malnutrition. She talks about an attempt to bomb her house and another run for office. She notes how in the decade she has been working for voting rights, the number of Black citizens registered to vote in Mississippi has grown from 5% to 70%. She ends the play with a popular Civil Rights anthem, "I'm on My Way to Freedom Land."



Fannie Lou Hamer at the Freedom Farm Cooperative.

FANNIE LOU HAMER (1917-1977)

Fannie Lou Townsend was born in 1917 in Montgomery County, Mississippi, the last of 20 children of Louella and James Lee Townsend. In 1919 the family moved to Ruleville in Sunflower County. Fannie's mother was a domestic worker, and her father was a Baptist preacher. Her parents were also sharecroppers, and Fannie joined them in the fields from the age of six.

Fannie began singing in church as a child. She loved reading and poetry, and she won spelling bees in school, but after the sixth grade she had to quit to work full-time. At the age of 13, she could pick 200 to 300 pounds of cotton a day, the same as the strongest adults—despite suffering from polio, which had left her with a permanent limp. One year the family was able to save a little money and used it to buy some farm equipment and livestock, hoping to move up from sharecroppers to renters. A vindictive white neighbor poisoned their animals to “keep them in their place,” and the family's financial situation never recovered.

Because Fannie could read and write, the plantation owner eventually put her in charge of weighing and recording cotton production. In 1945, Fannie married Perry “Pap” Hamer, a tractor driver on the plantation. The couple adopted two daughters, Dorothy Jean and Vergie Ree. In 1961, during surgery to remove a uterine tumor, Fannie's doctor performed a hysterectomy without her knowledge or consent. This kind of forced sterilization was often committed against Black women in the South at the time. The practice was so common that Fannie called it a “Mississippi appendectomy.”

In 1962, at the age of 44, Hamer attended a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) meeting at William Chapel Church in Ruleville and learned for the first time that



she had the right to vote. Soon after, along with a group of 17 neighbors, she attempted to register to vote, but she failed an unfair literacy test. That evening, her boss fired her for attempting to register.

In 1963, Hamer became a SNCC field secretary, working on voter registration and welfare programs. That year, a bus returning from a meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference stopped for a break in Winona, Mississippi. Hamer and others were arrested for sitting in a “whites only” café and brutally beaten by police. Hamer needed a month to get back on her feet, and never fully recovered. For the rest of her life, she dealt with a blood clot in her eye and permanent leg and kidney damage.

Hamer helped organize Mississippi's Freedom Summer, a project to register Black voters. As vice president of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, she spoke at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, gaining national fame. She ran for the U.S. House of Representatives and was finally able to cast her first vote—for herself. Although her chances were slim—she ultimately lost—she explained to a reporter, “I'm showing people that a Negro can run for office.”

Hamer founded the Freedom Farm Cooperative in 1967, offering opportunities for Black families to grow vegetables and raise pigs, thus becoming more self-sufficient. That year she ran for political office again, but was disqualified by the local election board. When their daughter Dorothy Jean died, Fannie and Pap adopted Dorothy Jean's infant daughters, Jackie and Lenora (Cookie and Nook).

In 1971, Hamer co-founded the National Women's Political Caucus and ran for the Mississippi State Senate—losing again. The next year she was elected as a national party delegate at the Democratic National Convention. Over the years, Hamer received many honors and awards for her work, including honorary degrees from Tougaloo College, Shaw University, Columbia College, and Howard University.

In 1977, after several years of working through poor health, Fannie Lou Hamer died of complications from hypertension and breast cancer at age 59. Andrew Young, US Ambassador to the United Nations, gave the eulogy. Hamer's headstone is engraved with one of her most famous quotes: “I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.”



Fannie Lou Hamer outside the capital in Washington DC, 1965.

Fannie Lou Hamer, 1971.

KEEPING THE FAITH

BY HENRY D. GODINEZ, DIRECTOR



Preliminary model by scenic designer Collette Pollard.

In contrast to the more famous icons of the Civil Rights movement, Fannie Lou Hamer is not an instantly recognizable figure. Fannie was a simple uneducated daughter of sharecroppers who, until the age of 44, didn't even know she had the right to vote. She endured terrible prejudice and unimaginable abuse during a time of racial injustice that nearly took her life. Still, she never lost her faith in the country she loved, or in the God who made it her mission to fight for every American's right to vote.

Unflinching in her belief in the promise of American democracy, Fannie was fortified in the darkest of times by her love of music. Beaten and traumatized, she used music as a source of inspiration, joy, and comfort. Singing was at the core of her Christian faith, and an extension of her determination. Music is fundamental to the telling of her story.

Cheryl L. West's profoundly timely play is born out of another of the most challenging times in this country's history. During a global pandemic and an onslaught of divisive political posturing, hate and fear have become common currency in American society. Truth has become relative, and the bedrock of democracy is shaken and vulnerable. It is the perfect time for the story of an unshakable salt-of-the-earth woman of faith whose love for this country was anchored in the most basic democratic beliefs: That all Americans are created equal. That "a house divided cannot stand."

My hope is that folks leave this production of *Fannie* with an appreciation for how remarkable Fannie Lou Hamer was, and a realization that each and every one of us has a voice and the right to use that voice by voting. Like Fannie, we must never lose our faith in the principles of democracy that this nation stands for, even in the face of intimidation, lies, and fear.

FANNIE'S FAMILY



Fannie Lou Hamer with her husband, Perry "Pap" Hamer (1912-1992). They married in 1944. He was a tractor driver and a skilled mechanic on the plantation where she worked. It was a second marriage for both of them. Together they adopted two daughters, Dorothy Jean and Vergie Ree. Later, when Dorothy Jean died, they adopted her two infant daughters: Jackie, known as Cookie, and Lenora, called Nook.



Dorothy Jean Hamer (1945-1967). She was the daughter of a single mother who was unable to raise her when Fannie and Pap adopted her. She died of complications from anemia and malnutrition in 1967, leaving two infant daughters. Her husband was a Vietnam War veteran with injuries that left him unable to care for his daughters, so Fannie and Pap adopted them.



Vergie Ree Hamer (1953-2017). She had sustained serious burn injuries and other parental neglect before Fannie and Pap adopted her.



Fannie with Dorothy Jean's daughters: at center is Lenora, called Nook (1965-2019); at right is Jackie, known as Cookie (1966-2023). Fannie and Pap adopted them after their mother died.

FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, & FAMOUS FIGURES

Fannie Lou Hamer's story includes not only friends and colleagues from her Civil Rights work, but also famous figures of the time and back into history.



HARRIET TUBMAN (c. 1820-1913) was born into slavery in Maryland. She escaped to Philadelphia in 1849, then immediately returned to Maryland to rescue her family. She eventually guided more than 70 enslaved persons to freedom using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. Traveling by night and in extreme secrecy, Tubman (or “Moses,” as she was called) “never lost a passenger,” as she later put it at women’s suffrage meetings. During the Civil War, Tubman worked for the Union Army as an armed scout and spy. The first woman to lead an armed expedition in the war, she guided the Combahee River Raid, liberating more than seven hundred enslaved persons. After the war, she retired to the family home in Auburn, New York, where she cared for her aging parents and was active in the women’s suffrage movement.



EMMETT TILL (1941-1955) was a 14-year-old African American boy who was abducted, tortured, and lynched in Mississippi in 1955 for speaking to a white woman in her family’s grocery store. His death and highly publicized funeral became a catalyst for conversation about segregation in the Jim Crow South. Till has become posthumously recognized as a significant figure of the Civil Rights movement.



JOHN F. KENNEDY (1917-1963) was President of the United States from 1961 until his assassination in 1963. After serving as a Naval commander during World War II, he represented Massachusetts as a Representative and a Senator. He was the first President to have been born in the 20th century and the youngest elected to the office, at the age of 43. He was the first Catholic and the first Irish American president, and he is the only president to have won a Pulitzer Prize. Kennedy first proposed Civil Rights legislation in June 1963, but it was not passed until July 1964, seven months after his assassination.



LYNDON B. JOHNSON (1908-1973) served as president of the United States from 1963 to 1969. He became president after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, under whom he had served as vice president from 1961 to 1963. In 1964, Johnson was elected to a full term as president in a landslide. A Democrat from Texas, Johnson had previously served as a U.S. representative and senator. Despite his disdain for Hamer, Johnson was a strong proponent of the Civil Rights movement, supporting the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



HUBERT HUMPHREY (1911-1978) was a Minnesota senator from 1949 to 1964 and again from 1971 to 1978. At the end of the 1964 Democratic Convention, President Johnson chose him as his running mate, and Humphrey served as vice president of the United States from 1965 to 1969. As a senator he was a major leader of modern liberalism in the United States, but as vice president, he supported the controversial Vietnam War.



JUNE JOHNSON (1947-2009) was born in Greenwood, Mississippi, about 30 miles southeast of Ruleville. Her parents hosted visiting SNCC workers for many years, and June began attending SNCC meetings in her early teens. In 1962, at the age of 15, she was arrested and beaten with Fannie in Winona, Mississippi. In the 1970s, she continued her Civil Rights work while employed as a paralegal in Mississippi. In the 1980s, she moved to Washington DC and began to focus her career on children’s advocacy.



DOROTHY COTTON (1930-2018) was the administrative assistant of Wyatt T. Walker, Martin Luther King Jr.’s chief of staff when he founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957. She soon became the organization’s Educational Director, running the SCLC’s Citizenship Education Program, which helped Black people register to vote. She was arguably the highest ranked female member of the SCLC.



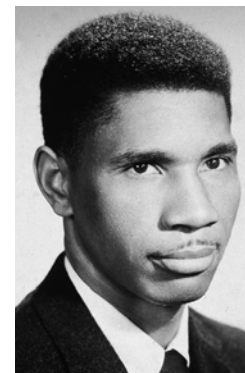
ANDREW YOUNG JR. (born 1932) began his career as a pastor, becoming an early leader in the Civil Rights movement, serving as executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and a close confidant to Martin Luther King Jr. Young served as a U.S. Congressman from Georgia (1973-1977), United States Ambassador to the United Nations (1977-1979), and Mayor of Atlanta (1981-1989). Since leaving office, Young has founded and served in many organizations working on issues of public policy and political lobbying. In 1977, he gave the eulogy at Fannie Lou Hamer’s funeral.



JAMES BEVEL (1936-2008) participated in the Nashville sit-ins and helped found SNCC. He worked for the desegregation of theatres and buses, as well as leading voting rights initiatives in Mississippi. In 1962, he joined Martin Luther King Jr. as co-leader of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.



LAWRENCE GUYOT (1939-2012) was a field secretary for SNCC and traveled around Mississippi working on voter registration. When he went to Winona to post bail for Fannie and her colleagues, he was thrown in jail and beaten. He later served as chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.



MEDGAR EVERS (1925-1963) was an African-American Civil Rights activist from Mississippi involved in efforts to overturn segregation at the University of Mississippi. After returning from overseas military service in World War II and completing his secondary education, he became active in the Civil Rights movement, serving as a field secretary for the NAACP. In 1963 he was assassinated in his own driveway by Byron De La Beckwith, a member of the White Citizens’ Council. As a veteran, Evers was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. De La Beckwith was not convicted of the murder until 1994. Medgar Evers’s murder and the resulting trials inspired Civil Rights protests, as well as numerous works of art, music, and film.



JOHN LEWIS (1940-2020) participated in the 1960 Nashville sit-ins and the Freedom Rides. He was the chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee from 1963 to 1966, and was one of the “Big Six” leaders of groups who organized the 1963 March on Washington. In 1965, he led the first of three Selma to Montgomery marches across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. A Democrat, he served in the United States House of Representatives for Georgia’s 5th congressional district from 1987 until his death in 2020. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011.

FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, & FAMOUS FIGURES CONT.



JULIAN BOND (1940–2015) helped establish the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee while he was a student at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1971, he co-founded the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, and served as its first president for nearly a decade. He served four terms in the Georgia House of Representatives and six terms in the Georgia State Senate. From 1998 to 2010, he was chairman of the NAACP.



CHARLES "MAC" McLAURIN (born 1941) moved to Sunflower County in 1962 as local project director for SNCC. He formed a close and trusted partnership with Hamer, becoming her "right-hand man." He was one of her fellow Freedom Democratic Party convention delegates, and he served as her campaign manager when she ran for Congress in 1964. He continued organizing with her around political and economic issues through the 1970s, helping her start Freedom Farm Cooperative. He worked as the Assistant Public Works Director in Indianola until his retirement.



VICTOR McTEER (born 1949) was a lawyer who, in his first case, called Fannie Lou Hamer as a witness to testify as "a sociologist from the Black point of view" in defense of three Black school teachers who had been fired in Drew, Mississippi, because they were unwed mothers. He argued this case all the way to the US Supreme Court—at the age of 25—and won. He spent his career as a Civil Rights attorney in Mississippi, pursuing cases involving voting rights, employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and Constitutional law.



HARRY BELAFONTE (1927–2023) was a singer, actor, and Civil Rights activist who popularized calypso music with international audiences in the 1950s and 1960s. He recorded and performed in many genres, including blues, folk, gospel, show tunes, and American standards, winning numerous awards for his work. He was a close confidant of Martin Luther King Jr. and was very active in the Civil Rights movement. In 1964 he organized a trip to Guinea for a dozen Civil Rights activists, including Hamer. While in Africa, the American group met with government officials as well as local Civil Rights activists, exchanging ideas and strengthening ties.



BETTY FRIEDAN (1921–2006) was a feminist writer and activist, a leading figure in the women's movement. Her 1963 book *The Feminine Mystique* is often credited with sparking the second wave of American feminism in the 20th century. In 1966, Friedan co-founded and was elected the first president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), which aimed to bring women "into the mainstream of American society now [in] fully equal partnership with men." In 1971, Friedan joined other leading feminists to establish the National Women's Political Caucus.

SHARECROPPING



Sharecropping became widespread in the South after the Civil War. Southern plantation owners still had a great deal of land, but they no longer had enslaved people to work the land, and they had no liquid assets to pay for labor. Formerly enslaved people, with no land or other assets of their own, needed a means to support their families. Sharecropping developed as an arrangement in which a landowner allowed a tenant to use the land in return for a share of the crops produced on that land. Through sharecropping, large plantations were subdivided into plots that were worked by individual families. Initially, sharecroppers were almost all Black, but eventually poor white farmers were integrated into the system as well.

Sharecroppers grew cotton, tobacco, rice, sugar, and other cash crops, receiving half of the parcel's output. The system was very unfair. Sharecroppers often acquired their farming tools and all other goods from the landowner they were contracted with, and in turn they were often required to sell their portion of the crop back to the landowner, thus being subjected to manipulated prices for everything they bought and sold. Sharecroppers were often saddled with unpayable debt, allowing plantation owners to force sharecroppers to remain on the land until their debt was paid. In Mississippi, by 1900, 85% of all Black farmers were tenants or sharecroppers. Practices like this helped maintain the status quo and keep Black sharecroppers, essentially, enslaved.

Sharecropping increased during the Great Depression but declined in the late 1930s and early 1940s as the mechanization of farm work became more economical. Many sharecroppers were forced off the farms and migrated to cities to work in factories.

INTERACTIVE CIVIL RIGHTS TIMELINE

When we hear the term *Civil Rights*, many of us often think exclusively of African Americans. But *Civil Rights* is a broad term that covers people of all races, genders, & sexualities. Scan the QR code to learn more about each moment in history.



1817 American Colonization Society is formed

1833 American Anti-Slavery Society, led by William Lloyd Garrison, is organized

1837 first meeting of the Antislavery Convention of American Women – first independent women’s political organization; also inter-racial

1857 Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court says no Blacks, whether free or not, have citizenship rights

1820 Missouri Compromise

1863 Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln

1865 13th Amendment ratified—slavery abolished

1865 Reconstruction begins (through 1877)

1868 14th Amendment ratified—equal protection under the law

1790 Petition from the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery to the First Congress – first abolitionist society in the US, and first time anyone petitioned the US Government to end slavery

1787 Northwest Ordinance bans slavery in the territory that will become Indiana

1688 Germantown (now Philadelphia) Protest – first organized protest against slavery in the American colonies

1777 Vermont becomes first state to abolish slavery. It also gave Black men full voting rights

1946 The integration of the NFL

1939 Marian Anderson sings at Lincoln Memorial

1936 Blues legend Robert Johnson makes his first recording

Jesse Owens wins at Berlin Olympics

1920 19th Amendment ratified – women get the right to vote

1870 15th Amendment ratified—right to vote

1875 Civil Rights Act of 1875 (ruled unconstitutional in 1883)

1876 First Jim Crow laws

1888 First Black-owned banks

1896 Plessey v. Ferguson—separate but equal ruled constitutional

1947 Jackie Robinson breaks the color line in Major League Baseball

1948 President Harry Truman desegregates the armed forces

1954 Brown v. Board of Education—separate but equal ruled unconstitutional

1955 Montgomery, Alabama begins year-long bus boycott

A. Phillip Randolph, father of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, becomes a VP of the AFL-CIO’s Executive Council

Death of Emmett Till

1957 Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) founded; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. elected president

Civil Rights Act of 1957

Nine Black students integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas

1910 Madam C. J. Walker moves to Indianapolis & builds her hair care factory and training school becoming the first self-made female millionaire in the US

1909 NAACP founded

Latino Civil Rights Movement

The Women’s Rights Movement 60s and 70s

1960-1970 Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement

Gay Rights Movement

1968 Shirley Chisholm is the first African-American woman elected to Congress.

1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike

Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated

1968 Dr. King’s speech, “I Have Been to the Mountaintop”

1965 Voting Rights Act is signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson

1960 Lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro, Nashville, and elsewhere

1963 Medgar Evers killed on his front porch

1963 March on Washington—Dr. King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech

1964 Civil Rights Act of 1964 | Affirmative Action

KEY: 1600-1800s 1900s

CIVIL RIGHTS GLOSSARY

During the play, Fannie Lou Hamer mentions a number of events and organizations that have been important in the Civil Rights Movement.



The **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE** (usually abbreviated as NAACP) is one of the oldest and most influential Civil Rights organizations in the United States. The NAACP was founded in 1909 by a diverse group of Black, white, and Jewish people to work on behalf of the rights of African Americans. Its name is one of the last surviving official uses of the term “colored people.”

The **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NEGRO WOMEN** is a not-for-profit organization founded by Mary McLeod Bethune in 1935 with the mission to advance the opportunities and the quality of life for African American women, their families, and their communities. The organization acts as a cohesive umbrella for other African American-focused groups. With its 28 national affiliate organizations and its more than 200 community-based sections, the Council has an outreach of nearly four million women.

The **MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT** was a political and social protest campaign against the policy of racial segregation on the public transit system of Montgomery, Alabama. It was a foundational event in the Civil Rights movement. The campaign lasted from December 5, 1955—the Monday after Rosa Parks, a Black woman, was arrested for her refusal to surrender her seat to a white person—to December 20, 1956, when the federal ruling *Browder v. Gayle* took effect, leading to a Supreme Court decision that declared the Alabama and Montgomery laws that segregated buses were unconstitutional.

The **SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE** (SCLC) was founded in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1957 to coordinate and support nonviolent direct action as a method of desegregating bus systems across the South. The organization’s first president was Martin Luther King Jr.

The **STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE** (SNCC, often pronounced *snik*) developed in 1960 from student-led sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in Greensboro, North Carolina, and Nashville, Tennessee. SNCC sought to coordinate and assist direct-action challenges to the segregation and political exclusion of African Americans. From 1962, with the support of the Voter Education Project, SNCC committed to the registration and mobilization of Black voters in the Deep South. As other similar organizations rose to greater prominence, SNCC dissolved in 1968.

The **CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964** is landmark Civil Rights and labor legislation that outlaws discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It prohibits unequal application of voter registration requirements, racial segregation in schools and public accommodations, and employment discrimination. The act remains one of the most significant legislative achievements in American history.

THE EVOLUTION OF A WORD

The word negro, literally meaning “black,” was used in the 1400s by Spanish and Portuguese explorers as a simple description to refer to the Bantu peoples that they encountered in southern Africa. In the Colonial America of 1619, John Rolfe used *negars* in describing the slaves who were captured from West Africa and then shipped to the Virginia colony. Later American English spellings included *neger* and *neggar*. Etymologically, *negro*, *noir*, *nègre*, and *n****r* ultimately derive from *nigrum*, the stem of the Latin *niger* (black).

The word *n****r* was commonly used in both England and America in the seventeenth century; at that time, it was considered nothing more than an alternate pronunciation of negro. By 1825, however, both abolitionists and Black people found the word offensive and began to object to its use.

The term colored appeared in North America during the colonial era. The first twelve Census counts in the United States counted “colored” people; beginning in 1900 the census counted “negroes.” The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1909.

Eventually, the word negro returned to fashion, as some began to see the word colored as generic and demeaning. The United Negro College Fund was founded in 1944.

In the 1960s, many favored the word black. Malcolm X and others objected to the word negro because they associated it with the long history of slavery, segregation, and discrimination that treated African Americans as second class citizens, or worse. Martin Luther King Jr. used both negro and black.

While there was a brief vogue of Afro-American in the late sixties and early seventies, black continued as the favored word until the 1990s, when African American became popular.

In today’s diverse world, many different terms are used. Recently, there seems to be a drift away from African American and back to Black, now capitalized.

Some Black people today even use the word *n****r*, without irony, either to neutralize the word’s impact or as a sign of solidarity. Often when a word is employed as a slur against a certain group, members of the group will use that word among themselves to rob it of its negative power. The word *n****r* is still controversial. While it may be heard frequently in rap songs and in conversation among younger African Americans, many older African Americans are deeply offended by it. Even within generations, not everyone agrees whether the word should be used within the African American community. **Society at large, however, has condemned the word as a racial slur; its use by other races against Black people demonstrates an ignorance and hatred that should not be imitated.**

THE MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM DEMOCRATIC PARTY



The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was created in 1964 to challenge the established power of the Mississippi Democratic Party, which at the time allowed participation only by whites, when African Americans made up 40% of the state population. As one of the party’s co-founders, Fannie Lou Hamer served as vice president of a delegation of 64 who attended the 1964 Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

On August 22, 1964, Hamer spoke before the convention’s Credentials Committee, requesting that the integrated Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party delegation be seated rather than the all-white Mississippi delegation that had been elected without Black voters. President Lyndon Johnson, worried about maintaining support from white southern voters, called an impromptu press conference during Hamer’s speech to prevent it being broadcast on national television. His strategy backfired, however, when most of the networks covered her powerful speech on the evening news, giving her a much larger audience than she would have had during the day.

Although the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was not allowed to represent its constituency at the 1964 convention, Hamer’s speech propelled her into the national spotlight. She spent the rest of her life traveling widely to raise awareness and funds for Civil Rights causes.



Content Spotlight

On the next page, Fannie Lou Hamer’s 1964 DNC speech includes:

Descriptions of physical violence, abuse, and mistreatment; the use of racial slurs; intense themes of racial discrimination, threats, and the fight for Civil Rights. **Reader discretion is advised due to potentially distressing content.**

FANNIE LOU HAMER'S TESTIMONY AT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION, 1964

*Before reading or listening, please note
the Content Spotlight on the previous page.*

*Scan here to listen to
the full speech on YouTube*



Mr. Chairman, and to the Credentials Committee, my name is Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, and I live at 626 East Lafayette Street, Ruleville, Mississippi, Sunflower County, the home of Senator James O. Eastland and Senator Stennis.

It was the 31st of August in 1962 that 18 of us traveled 26 miles to the county courthouse in Indianola to try to register to become first-class citizens. We was met in Indianola by policemen, highway patrolmen, and they only allowed two of us in to take the literacy test at the time. After we had taken this test and started back to Ruleville, we was held up by the City Police and the State Highway Patrolmen and carried back to Indianola, where the bus driver was charged that day with driving a bus the wrong color.

After we paid the fine among us, we continued on to Ruleville, and Reverend Jeff Sunny carried me four miles in the rural area where I had worked as a timekeeper and sharecropper for eighteen years. I was met there by my children, that told me the plantation owner was angry because I had gone down try to register. After they told me, my husband came, and said that the plantation owner was raising Cain because I had tried to register. And before he quit talking the plantation owner came, and said, "Fannie Lou, do you know—did Pap tell you what I said?" And I said, "yes, sir."

He said, "Well, I mean that." Said, "If you don't go down and withdraw your registration, you will have to leave." Said, "Then if you go down and withdraw," said, "you still might have to go because we are not ready for that in Mississippi."

And I addressed him and told him, "I didn't try to register for you. I tried to register for myself." I had to leave that same night.

On the 10th of September, 1962, sixteen bullets was fired into the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tucker for me. That same night two girls were shot in Ruleville, Mississippi. Also Mr. Joe McDonald's house was shot in.

And June the 9th, 1963, I had attended a voter registration workshop, was returning back to Mississippi. Ten of us was traveling by the Continental Trailway bus. When we got to Winona, Mississippi, which is Montgomery County, four of the people got off to use the washroom, and two of the people—to use the restaurant—two of the people wanted to use the washroom. The four people that had gone in to use the restaurant was ordered out. During this time, I was on the bus. But when I looked through the window and saw they had rushed out, I got off of the bus to see what had happened, and one of the ladies said, "It was a State Highway Patrolman and a chief of police ordered us out."

I got back on the bus and one of the persons had used the washroom got back on the bus, too. As soon as I was seated on the bus, I saw when they began to get the five people in a highway patrolman's car. I stepped off of the bus to see what was happening and somebody screamed from the car that the five workers was in, and said, "Get that one there." And when I went to get in the car when the man told me I was under arrest, he kicked me.

I was carried to the county jail and put in the booking room. They left some of the people in the booking room and began to place us in cells. I was placed in a cell with a young woman called Miss Euvester Simpson. As I was placed in the cell, I began to hear sounds of licks and screams. I could hear the sounds of licks and horrible screams. And I could hear somebody say, "Can you say 'Yes sir, n****r?' Can you say 'Yes, sir?'" And they would say other horrible names. She would say, "Yes, I can say yes, sir."

"So well say it."

She says, "I don't know you well enough."

They beat her I don't know how long, and after a while she began to pray, and asked God to have mercy on those people.

And it wasn't too long before three white men came to my cell. One of these men was a State Highway Patrolman, and he asked me where I was from. And I told him Ruleville. He said, "We are going to check this." And they left my cell, and it wasn't too long before they came back. He said, "You are from Ruleville all right," and he used a curse word. And he said, "We going to make you wish you was dead."

I was carried out of that cell into another cell where they had two Negro prisoners. The State Highway Patrolmen ordered the first Negro to take the blackjack. The first Negro prisoner ordered me, by orders from the State Highway Patrolman, for me to lay down on a bunk bed on my face, and I laid on my face. The first Negro began to beat, and I was beat by the first Negro until he was exhausted. I was holding my hands behind me at that time on my left side because I suffer from polio when I was six years old. After the first Negro had beat until he was exhausted, the State Highway Patrolman ordered the second Negro to take the blackjack. The second Negro began to beat and I began to work my feet, and the State Highway Patrolman ordered the first Negro who had beat to set on my feet to keep me from working my feet. I began to scream and one white man got up and began to beat me in my head and tell me to hush. One white man—my dress had worked up high. He walked over and pulled my dress—I pulled my dress down, and he pulled my dress back up.

I was in jail when Medgar Evers was murdered.

All of this is on account of we want to register, to become first-class citizens, and if the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America. Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our telephones off of the hooks because our lives be threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings in America?

Thank you.

THE FREEDOM SUMMER MURDERS



FREEDOM SUMMER was a volunteer campaign launched in June 1964 to register African American voters in Mississippi. More than 1,000 student volunteers from states in the North and the West worked alongside thousands of Black Mississippians. Ninety percent of the out-of-state volunteers were white, and about half were Jewish. The project also set up a network of 30 to 40 voluntary Freedom Schools, as an alternative to Mississippi's totally segregated and underfunded schools for Black students. Over the course of the summer, more than 3,500 students attended Freedom Schools, which taught subjects that the public schools avoided, such as Black history and constitutional rights.

ANDREW GOODMAN (1943-1964) was born and raised on the Upper East Side of New York City, in a racially mixed community of white, Black, and Hispanic families. The Goodmans, a Jewish family, were involved in intellectual and socially progressive activism. From the age of 14, Andrew traveled to Washington DC, West Virginia, and Europe to work on social justice issues. At Queens College, where he studied theatre and anthropology, he was a friend and classmate of Paul Simon. In June 1964, Goodman left New York to attend a Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) training session in Ohio, then traveled to Mississippi, where he met James Chaney and Michael Schwerner.

JAMES CHANEY (1943-1964) was born and raised in Meridian, Mississippi. At 15, as a Black student in a segregated high school, he and some of his classmates wore NAACP badges. They were suspended for a week. After graduating, he participated in Freedom Rides and other nonviolent demonstrations. In 1963 he joined the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Meridian and began working with Michael Schwerner.

AMERICANS must know that the true challenge of **CIVIL RIGHTS** is a challenge of **HUMAN RIGHTS**, and the future of America rests in your **VOTING RIGHTS**

*These Men Are Martyrs
To the Cause of FREEDOM!*



ANDREW GOODMAN



JAMES CHANEY



MICHAEL SCHWERNER

*In June, 1964 they lost their lives
for the RIGHT to*

REGISTER
and **VOTE**

Visit one of the convenient neighborhood stores listed on the reverse side and Register!

Special Registration Sponsored by National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

MICHAEL SCHWERNER (1939-1964) was born and raised in a Jewish family in Pelham, New York. He attended Michigan State University, intending to be a veterinarian, then transferred to Cornell University to major in rural sociology. After graduating, he began graduate school at the School of Social Work at Columbia University. In the early 1960s, he led a local Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) group on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. In 1964 he and his wife, Rita Levant Schwerner, traveled to Mississippi to work for CORE.

On June 21, 1964, Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman drove from their base in Meridian, Mississippi, 40 miles north to nearby Longsdale to investigate the destruction of Mount Zion Church, which had been burned to the ground by the Ku Klux Klan. As they were returning, they were arrested in Philadelphia, Mississippi, allegedly for speeding, escorted to the local jail, and held for several hours. Eventually they were released, but they were followed by law enforcement and others, and their car was pulled over again. The three were abducted, driven to another location, and shot at close range. The bodies were buried in an earthen dam.

The disappearance of the three men was initially investigated as a missing persons case. Their burnt-out car was found parked near a swamp three days after their disappearance. An extensive search of the area was conducted by the FBI and the Navy. By the end of the first week, all major news networks were covering the disappearance. President Johnson met with the parents of Goodman and Schwerner in the Oval Office. Walter Cronkite's broadcast of the CBS Evening News on June 25, 1964, called the disappearances "the focus of the whole country's concern." The FBI eventually offered a \$25,000 reward (equivalent to \$240,000 today), which led to the breakthrough in the case. The bodies were finally discovered six weeks after their murder.

Schwerner's widow, Rita, who also worked for CORE in Meridian, publicly expressed indignation at the way the story was handled. She said she believed that if only Chaney (who was Black) was missing, and the two white men from New York had not been killed along with him, the case would not have received nearly as much national attention. She noted that other Black Civil Rights workers who had previously been killed in the South had been ignored.

In a famous eulogy for Chaney, CORE leader Dave Dennis said: "I blame the people in Washington DC and on down in the state of Mississippi just as much as I blame those who pulled the trigger.... I'm tired of that! Another thing that makes me even tireder though, is the fact that we as people here in the state and the country are allowing it to continue to happen.... Your work is just beginning. If you go back home and sit down and take what these white men in Mississippi are doing to us ... if you take it and don't do something about it ... then God damn your souls!"

During the investigation, it emerged that members of the local White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the Neshoba County Sheriff's Office, and the Philadelphia (Mississippi) Police Department were involved in the killings. In 1967, after the State of Mississippi refused to prosecute, the United States federal government charged 18 individuals with Civil Rights violations. Seven were convicted and another pleaded guilty; they received relatively minor sentences for their actions.

In 1998, further investigations revealed the State of Mississippi's deep complicity in the murders. The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, a taxpayer-funded agency, paid spies to keep track of all northerners and suspected activists. The Commission conducted economic boycotts and intimidation against activists. An investigator collected information about the workers, including their car license number, and passed it on to the Commission. Records showed that the Commission had given the victims' car license plate number to the Sheriff of Neshoba County, who was implicated in the murders.

In 1989, on the 25th anniversary of the murders, the U.S. Congress passed a non-binding resolution honoring the three men; Senator Trent Lott and the rest of the Mississippi delegation refused to vote for it.

FANNIE, FOOD, & FELLOWSHIP

As the play opens, Fannie is making a “celebration meal” of traditional Southern cooking: smothered chicken, potatoes, fried apples, a cake, and collard greens. Greens are considered a kitchen staple of many African American kitchens. Have you ever had them? Try the recipe below!

“For every important celebration throughout the African American diaspora, there will be greens. Doesn’t matter if it’s Christmas, graduation, or Juneteenth—if it calls for a family gathering, the appearance of a big pot of leafy greens is crucial. They can be collards, turnips, mustards, and sometimes even dandelion, but whatever they are, they will be served hot, seasoned, and delicious. Collard greens originated in Greece, but the way green leafy vegetables are prepared throughout the African diaspora is a specific process that has not really changed that much since ancient times. The type of greens are determined by the climate and terrain, but the preparation remains constant, whether you are in Chicago or Sierra Leone. No wonder greens are so important to the Black food tradition: they have been a familiar friend wherever we have landed.”

—Rosalind Cummings Yeates
Flavor and Soul: A Brief History of African American Food

COLLARD GREENS

serves 4-5 people

INGREDIENTS

12 hickory-smoked bacon slices, finely chopped • 2 medium-size sweet onions, finely chopped • 3/4 lb. smoked ham, chopped • 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped • 3 (32-oz.) containers chicken broth • 3 (1-lb.) packages fresh collard greens, washed and trimmed
 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar • 1 Tbsp. sugar • 1 tsp. table salt • 3/4 tsp. pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook bacon over medium heat in a 10-qt. stockpot for 10 to 12 minutes. or until almost crisp.
2. Add onion to stockpot, and sauté 8 minutes.
3. Add garlic and ham, and sauté 1 minute.
4. Add remaining ingredients, and simmer. Stir in broth, collard greens, apple cider vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper. Reduce heat to medium-low, and cook 2 hours or until desired degree of tenderness.



—recipe courtesy of southernliving.com

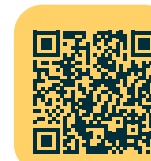
Later in her life, Fannie became a food sovereignty activist, helping to found the Freedom Farm Cooperative in 1969 (see next article). She helped provide food for those in her community, built low-income housing, and developed education programs for children. As she says in the play, “Yeah, I’m brag a little ’cause we got quite the operation ... grow a little cotton, soybeans, peas, okra, potatoes. Got a pig bank to grow our own pork. If you got a garden too, I d’clare you can feed your family and maybe your neighbor too.”



Freedom Farm Cooperative.

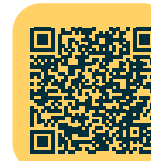
Be like Fannie and grow your love for community!

Get involved with a community garden, or plant your own in your backyard. Be sure to share your harvest with a neighbor!



Plant it Forward - Growing Places Indy:

An organization providing tools and resources for those wishing to start community or home garden spaces!



City of Indianapolis Urban Garden Program | communityINNOVATE

An organization providing tools and resources for those wishing to start community or home garden spaces!

Become an advocate for food security!



Indianapolis Hunger Relief Agency - Second Helpings

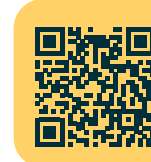
An organization that addresses food rescue, hunger relief, and culinary job training.



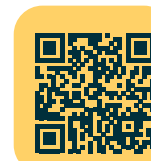
Indianapolis Indiana Food Pantries, Food Banks, Soup Kitchens

Donate, volunteer, raise awareness for those in need.

Local Black-owned farms addressing food insecurity and food deserts in Central Indiana:

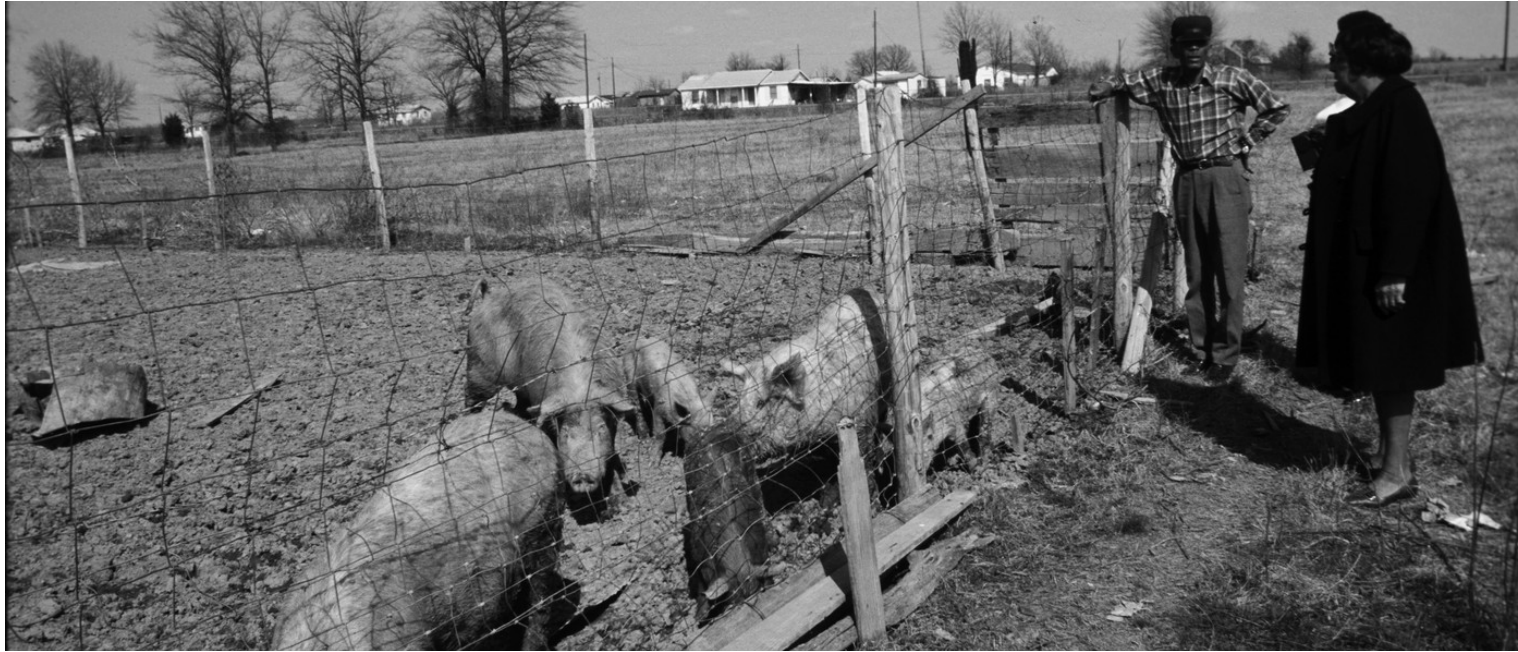


Flanner Farms' Food Justice Program



The Elephant Gardens

— THE FREEDOM FARM COOPERATIVE —



Fannie Lou Hamer founded the Freedom Farm Cooperative near Drew, Mississippi, six miles north of Ruleville, in 1969 as a rural economic development and political organizing project. This agricultural cooperative sought to uplift Black families through food provisions, such as vegetable gardens and pig-raising, and through community support, such as housing development and education. By providing food and financial services that the U.S. government systematically denied Black communities as a means of oppression, the Cooperative allowed Black families to be self-sufficient. With reliable food and housing, the community was able to more freely participate in politics and protest movements.

The Freedom Farm Cooperative began with a \$10,000 donation from Measure for Measure, a charitable organization based in Wisconsin. Hamer purchased 40 acres of prime Delta land. In 1970, with further funds from the National Council of Negro Women, Harry Belafonte, student organizations at Harvard University, and others, the co-op purchased an additional 640 acres for cultivation. The Freedom Farm's community garden yielded crops that served more than 1600 families.

The Freedom Farm Cooperative's pig bank started with a donation of 40 pigs from the National Council of Negro Women. It was the first project in the United States affiliated with Heifer International. Families who participated in the project would raise a piglet for two years, bring it back to mate at the bank, and then replenish the bank with two pigs from every litter. The other offspring could be sold or slaughtered or mated. By 1969, just two years after the program started, the pig bank had provided more than a hundred families with pigs, each of which produced more than 150 pounds of meat.

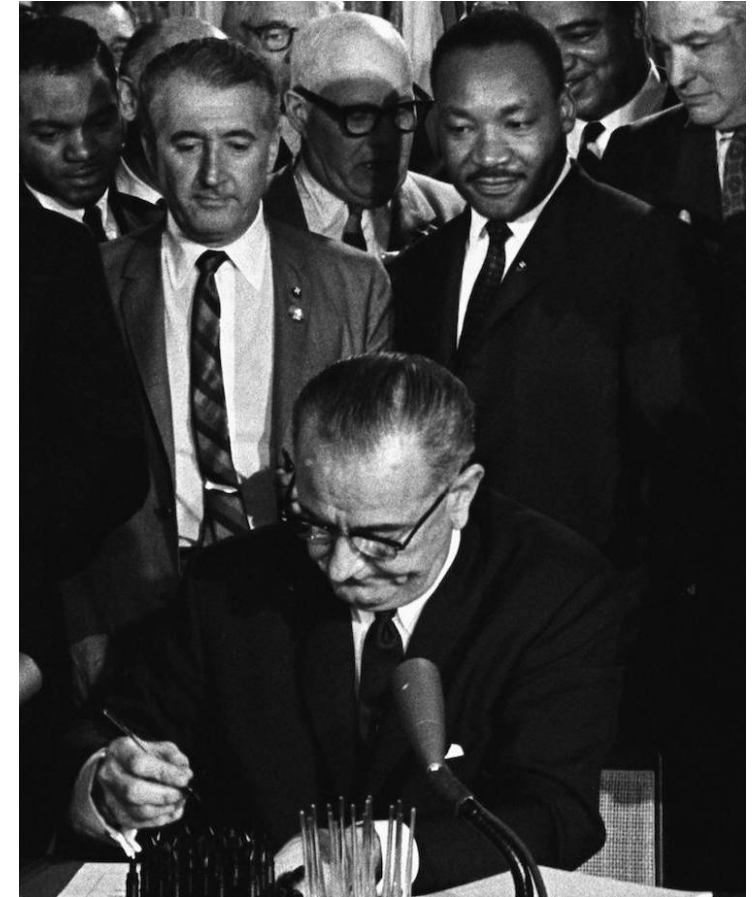
In 1972 and 1973 the Freedom Farm Cooperative was beset by a series of floods, droughts, and tornadoes that hurt its cash-crop production. Unlike local white-owned farms, Freedom Farm received no relief funds from the Mississippi state government, and tensions with the local government further restricted the cooperative's success. A general economic downturn led to shrinking donations, and with Hamer's declining health, the organization lost its public face and best fundraiser. In 1976, unable to fund its social programs and pay off its taxes, the organization was forced to close. While the Freedom Farm Cooperative lasted fewer than ten years, its legacy lives on today as a foundation for modern Black community farming projects in both rural and urban areas and for the modern food security and food justice movements.

— THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965 —

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is a landmark piece of federal legislation that prohibits racial discrimination in voting. It was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson in August 1965; Congress later amended the Act five times to expand its protections. Designed to enforce the voting rights protected by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, the Act sought to secure the right to vote for racial minorities throughout the country, especially in the South.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the Voting Rights Act is considered to be the most effective and one of the most far-reaching pieces of federal Civil Rights legislation ever enacted in the nation. Research shows that the Act successfully and massively increased voter turnout and voter registrations, in particular among Black people. The Act has also been linked to concrete outcomes, such as greater provision of public goods (e.g. public education) for areas with higher shares of Black population, more members of Congress who vote for Civil Rights-related legislation, and greater Black representation in local offices.

In 2013, the Supreme Court reinterpreted Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, substantially weakening it. In *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Court disabled the Act's Section 5, which required states with a history of racial discrimination in voting to get certification in advance, or "pre-clearance," that any election change they wanted to make would not be discriminatory. For nearly 50 years, Section 5 had assured that voting changes in several states—including Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia—were transparent, vetted, and fair to all voters regardless of race. Chief Justice John Roberts, in his *Shelby* opinion, asserted that the Section 5 requirements were no longer necessary, that times had changed since 1965. "The conditions that originally justified these measures no longer characterize voting in the covered jurisdictions," he wrote—



despite the almost daily evidence of widespread racial discrimination across the nation. In particular, the ruling held that fears of election fraud could justify such rules—even without evidence that any such fraud had occurred in the past or that the new rule would make elections safer.

Since the 2013 Supreme Court ruling, states previously covered by the preclearance requirement have repeatedly engaged in significant efforts to disenfranchise voters. Previously covered states have increased the purging of voters after *Shelby*, while the purge rates in non-*Shelby* states have stayed the same. New state laws continue to create a wave of discriminatory voting measures that were previously blocked or deterred by the law, threatening the voting rights of minority citizens across the country.



From the birth of democracy with the Ancient Greeks, only men were allowed to vote. In the United States in the late 1700s, people began talking about granting suffrage (the right to vote) to women. In 1893, New Zealand became the first nation to grant the vote to women.

A suffragist is a person advocating that the right to vote be extended to more people. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, suffragettes was a derogatory term used for women who campaigned for their right to vote. These women marched in demonstrations, interrupted political speeches, chained themselves to public buildings, were arrested for attending government meetings, and went on hunger strikes. In response, they were often attacked and sexually assaulted while facing anger and ridicule in the media. Women in the United States finally won the right to vote in 1920.

During the fight for women's suffrage, Black men and white women usually led Civil Rights organizations and set the agenda. They often excluded Black women from their organizations and activities. For example, the National American Woman Suffrage Association prevented Black women from attending their conventions. Black women often had to march separately from white women in suffrage parades. When Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony wrote the History of Woman Suffrage in the 1880s, they featured white suffragists while largely ignoring the contributions of African American suffragists.



How do I register to vote?

Everything you need to know about registering to vote in Indiana.

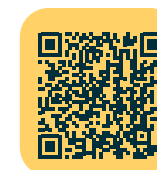


What if I'm too young to vote? How can I get involved?

A website full of ideas about how to engage with the election process.



How can I have an impact on the world around me?

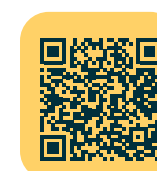


7 Ways to Get Involved

There is much to be done to make the world a better place.



What can I do when I see injustice happening?



The Five Ds of Bystander Intervention

FANNIE LOU HAMER'S SONGBOOK

There are several songs featured in *Fannie: The Life and Music of Fannie Lou Hamer*.



“Walk with Me, Lord” is not found in early collections, so its origin is unclear, but it is traditionally attributed to the African American spiritual tradition. It is frequently sung during Lent and healing or contemplative services. Fannie sang this song when she was jailed in Winona, Mississippi.

“Oh Freedom” is a post-Civil War African American freedom song. It is often associated with the Civil Rights movement. Joan Baez sang the song at the 1963 March on Washington.

“I Love Everybody” was often sung at sit-ins and other nonviolent Civil Rights demonstrations. It was sometimes used to try to de-escalate potential violence.

“This Little Light of Mine” is an African American song from the 1920s. Composer Harry Dixon Loes (1892-1965), a professor at the Moody Bible Institute, wrote a well-known arrangement of the song in the 1940s. He is often listed as its author, but he never claimed credit for the original. The song was later adapted by the Civil Rights movement, and today it is sung all over the world and found in many hymnals of different denominations. Fannie Lou Hamer often said this was her favorite song.

“I Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me ‘Round” Early versions of this song date back to the 1920s. The Dixie Jubilee Singers recorded the song in 1924. The Rev. Ralph Abernathy introduced the song at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia, in 1962 during a time of mass arrests and demonstrations. It caught on quickly and became widely used in Civil Rights demonstrations, marches, protests, and gatherings.

“We Shall Not Be Moved” is an African American spiritual, hymn, and protest song dating back to enslaved people in the early 19th century South. It was likely originally sung at revivalist camp-meetings as a jubilee—a fast-paced rhythmic song that looked forward to future happiness and delivery from tribulation. The text is based on the Bible: “He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved.”—Psalm 62:6; “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”—Psalm 1:3. The song gained popularity as a protest and union song of the Civil Rights Movement.

“Woke Up This Morning with My Mind on Freedom” was created in 1961 from the old gospel song “I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus.” Reverend Robert Wesby developed this new version of the song in the Hinds County, Mississippi, jail, after his arrest during the Freedom Rides. The song spread and soon became part of the Civil Rights movement.

“Oh Lord, You Know Just How I Feel” is a traditional gospel song that Hamer remembered from her childhood. She said that her mother would sing this song at the end of a long day working in the cotton field.

FANNIE LOU HAMER'S SONGBOOK CONT.

There are several songs featured in *Fannie: The Life and Music of Fannie Lou Hamer*.

“I’ve Been Changed” is a traditional gospel song that was the signature song of gospel singer and evangelist LaShun Pace (1961-2022).

“Keep Your Eyes on the Prize” is a folk song that became influential during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It is based on the traditional song “Keep Your Hand on the Plow.” The title of the modern song may be a reference to verses from Philippians 3 in the Bible: verse 17, “keep your eyes on those who live as we do,” and verse 14, “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

“Certainly Lord” is an African American spiritual popularized in the early 1900s. It probably originated as a call-and-response field song, with one person singing “Do you got good religion” and the rest responding “Certainly Lord!”

“This Land Is Your Land” was written in 1940 by folk singer Woody Guthrie as a critical response to Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America.” “This Land Is Your Land” has become one of America’s most famous folk songs. Although today it is often sung as a patriotic song, it was written to protest income inequity during the Great Depression. Two original verses critical of the United States are often cut in performance.

“I’m on My Way to Freedom Land,” like many other Civil Rights songs, is a modern adaptation of a traditional African American spiritual—in this case, “I’m on My Way to Canaan Land.” The name Canaan appears throughout the Bible as a place associated with the Hebrew Promised Land. The word was used in many African American spirituals, often as an Underground Railroad code word for freedom or the North.



Listen to live recordings of Fannie Lou Hamer curated by the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the album Songs My Mother Taught Me.

— FANNIE LOU HAMER & HER DISABILITY —



As a child, Fannie Lou Hamer contracted polio, which left her with a lifelong limp. Poliomyelitis is an acute viral infection spread from person to person by ingesting contaminated food or water. The virus enters the central nervous system, leading to muscle weakness and acute paralysis, most often involving the legs. Polio was one of the most dreaded childhood diseases of the 20th century. Epidemics left thousands of children and adults paralyzed. Vaccines developed by Jonas Salk in 1952 and Albert Sabin in 1962 reduced the global number of polio cases per year from many hundreds of thousands to around a thousand.



An article about Fannie's Polio diagnosis and how it impacted her life and justice work.



A lesson plan for the Indiana History Center's *You Are There 1955: Ending Polio*, a 2013 exhibit that focused on Eli Lilly and Company and Jonas Salk's polio vaccine.

A portrait of Fannie Lou Hamer by E. Lynn Coates.

INDIANA ACADEMIC STANDARDS ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Seeing *Fannie: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* at the Indiana Repertory Theatre is a great way to help make connections for students and facilitate their understanding of a text. Some key literature standards to consider on your trip would be:

READING LITERATURE

- RL.4 Build comprehension and appreciation of literary elements and themes and analyze how sensory tools impact meaning.

READING NONFICTION

- RN.4 Build understanding of nonfiction texts by verifying points and making connections between topics and ideas.

READING—VOCABULARY

- RV.1 Build and apply vocabulary using various strategies and sources.
- RV.2 Use strategies to determine and clarify words and understand their relationship.
- RV.3 Build appreciation and understanding of literature and nonfiction texts by determining or clarifying the meaning of words and their uses.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- SL.1 Develop and apply effective communication skills through speaking and active listening.
- SL.3 Develop and apply active listening and interpretation skills using various strategies.

MEDIA LITERACY

- ML.1 Develop an understanding of media and the roles and purposes of media.
- ML.2 Recognize the purpose of media and the ways in which media can have influences.

THEATRE CREATING

- TH.Cr1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

THEATRE PERFORMING

- TH.Pr.4 Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

THEATRE RESPONDING

- TH.Re.7 Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- TH.Re.8 Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- TH.Re.9 Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

THEATRE CONNECTING

- TH.Cn.10 Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- TH.Cn.11 Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.
- Many technical theatre standards.

INDIANA ACADEMIC STANDARDS ALIGNMENT GUIDE CONT.

MUSIC—GENERAL: CONNECT

- Cn.1 Connect with a varied repertoire of music by exploring the relationships between music and personal experience.
- Cn.2 Connect with a varied repertoire of music by exploring the relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
- Cn.3 Connect with a varied repertoire of music by exploring the relationships between music and history and culture.

MUSIC—GENERAL: LISTEN AND RESPOND

- Lr.5 Listen and respond to a varied repertoire of music by describing, interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating music and its elemental components.

ETHNIC STUDIES

- ES.1 Cultural Self-Awareness.
- ES.2 Cultural Histories within the United States Context and Abroad.
- ES.3 Contemporary Lived Experiences and Cultural Practices.
- ES.4 Historical and Contemporary Contributions.

LANGUAGE HISTORY

- LH.3 Build understanding of history/social studies texts, using knowledge, structural organization, and author's purpose.
- LH.4 Build understanding of history/social studies texts by synthesizing and connecting ideas and evaluating specific claims.

PSYCHOLOGY

- P.7 Students discuss the socio-cultural dimensions of behavior including topics such as conformity, obedience, perception, attitudes, and the influence of the group on the individual.

SOCIOLOGY

- S.2 Students examine the influence of culture on the individual and the way cultural transmission is accomplished. Students study the way culture defines how people in a society behave in relation to groups and to physical objects. They also learn that human behavior is learned within the society. Through the culture, individuals learn the relationships, structures, patterns and processes to be members of the society.
- S.3 Students examine the process by which people develop their human potential and learn culture. Socialization will be considered as a lifelong process of human social experience.
- S.4 Students identify how social status influences individual and group behaviors and how that status relates to the position a person occupies within a social group.
- S.5 Students learn to differentiate between the biological differences that divide the human population into male and female, and gender which is the personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being male or female. The development and changes in gender roles over time will be examined.
- S.6 Students explore the impacts of social groups on individual and group behavior. They understand that social groups are comprised of people who share some common characteristics, such as common interests, beliefs, behavior, feelings, thoughts and contact with each other.

- S.7 Students identify the effects of social institutions on individual and group behavior. They understand that social institutions are the social groups in which an individual participates, and that these institutions influence the development of the individual through the socialization process.
- S.8 Students examine the changing nature of society. They explain that social change addresses the disruption of social functions caused by numerous factors and that some changes are minor and others are major.
- S.9 Students analyze a range of social problems in today's world. Social problems result from imbalances within the social system and affect a large number of people in an adverse way.
- S.10 Students examine the role of the individual as a member of the community. They also explore both individual and collective behavior.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

- USG.1 Students identify, define, compare, and contrast ideas regarding the nature of government, politics and civic life, and explain how these ideas have influenced contemporary political and legal systems. Students also explain the importance of government, politics and civic engagement in a democratic republic, and demonstrate how citizens participate in civic and political life in their own communities.
- USG.5 Students explain the idea of citizenship in the United States, describe the roles of United States citizens, and identify and explain the rights and responsibilities of United States citizens. They also examine how citizens can participate responsibly and effectively in the civic and political life of the United States.

UNITED STATES HISTORY

- USH.4 Students examine the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the United States during the period from 1920 to 1939.
- USH.5 Students examine the causes and course of World War II, the effects of the war on United States society and culture, and the consequences for United States involvement in world affairs.
- USH.6 Students examine the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the United States during the period from 1945 to 1960.
- USH.7 Students examine the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the United States during the period from 1960 to 1980.
- USH.10 Students conduct historical research that incorporates information literacy skills such as forming appropriate research questions, evaluating information by determining its accuracy, relevance and comprehensiveness, interpreting a variety of primary and secondary sources, and presenting their findings with documentation.



Maiesha McQueen plays the title role in the IRT production of *Fannie: The Music and Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*. The actress is shown here as Celie in *The Color Purple* at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before Seeing the Play

1. Have you ever heard of Fannie Lou Hamer? If so, what do you know about her?
2. What were some of the main issues & events in the Civil Rights movement of the mid-20th century?
3. What does the term “democracy” mean? How is voting important to democracy?

After Seeing the Play

1. Discuss the history and implications of sharecropping. Do some research on the topic first, if needed. How did the system help people? How did it hurt people?
2. Why were literacy tests instituted as a voting registration requirement? How did they affect marginalized groups of people? What laws are being enacted today that have a similar effect?
3. How have race relations in America changed since the 1960s? How have they remained the same?
4. How did gender roles and stereotypes play a part in the Civil Rights movement?
5. How did religion play a part in Fannie’s life?
6. How do you think Fannie and other freedom workers were able to get back to work after jail stays and beatings from the police? Why did they not give up?
7. How did the music in the play impact the storytelling? How did you feel when you were asked to sing along?



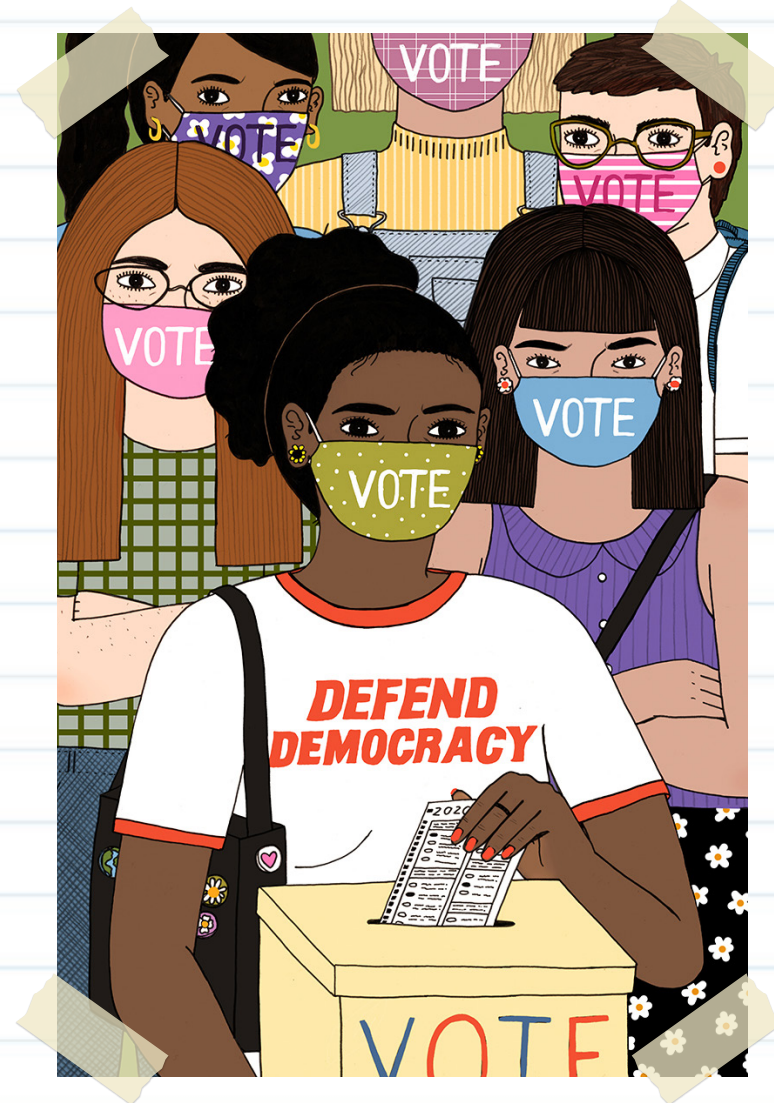
WRITING PROMPTS

1. Imagine that you are a citizen in the 1960s who wants to protect the rights of all people to vote. Write a letter to your senator or representative using ethos, pathos, and logos in your persuasive argument.
2. Use your voice. Find an issue or prospective bill/law that is important to you, and write a letter to one of your representatives at the local, state, or federal level. When you are finished, ask a teacher or parent to help you send it to them.
3. Write a speech that you could give at a school assembly about the importance of voting.
4. Write a review of the play. A well-rounded review includes your opinion of the theatrical aspects—scenery, lights, costumes, sound, staging, acting—as well as your impressions of the script and the impact of the story and/or themes and the overall production. What moments made an impression? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors’ performances of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? **To share your reviews with others, send to: education@irtlive.com**



ACTIVITIES

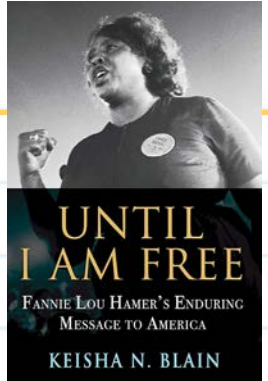
1. Design a sign that might have been seen at one of Fannie Lou Hamer's protest events.
2. Research the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and make a timeline of important events that they participated in or contributed to.
3. When Fannie worked for SNCC, she was paid \$10 a week & said that "nobody wanted to hire Pap" because of her work with voting rights. She asked, "Can you imagine a family of four living off of forty dollars a month?" \$40 in 1963 is the equivalent to making almost \$400 a month now. Make a budget of all of the expenses that a family might need to live today & see if your family could live on just \$400 a month.
4. Organize a march, petition, or online campaign for a cause that is important to you.
5. If Fannie Lou Hamer and Malala Yousafzai (or another activist) were to meet today, what would they say to each other? Using dialogue form, write an imaginary conversation they might have. What would they talk about? What would they have in common? How would they disagree with each other?
6. Look at the list of songs from the show on pages 28 and 29. Listen to Fannie Lou Hamer's recordings or other recordings. What emotions do they evoke outside of the story? As a class, sing along with the recordings. How does singing the songs feel different from just listening to them?
7. Create a playlist for your life. Choose a few key events and/or themes that you would want to talk about in telling your life story. Then choose songs that that would go with each event or subject.



RESOURCES

Books:

- This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* by Kay Mills
- Until I Am Free* by Keisha N. Blain
- For Freedom's Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* by Chana Kai Lee
- The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer: To Tell It like It Is* edited by Maegan Parker Brooks & Davis W. Houck
- My Soul Is Rested: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement in the Deep South* by Howell Raines
- Walk with Me: A Biography of Fannie Lou Hamer* by Kate Clifford Larson
- Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, & Insisted on Equality for All* by Martha S. Jones
- How to Kill a City: Gentrification, Inequality, and the Fight for the Neighborhood* by Peter Moskowitz
- We Are Not Yet Equal: Understanding Our Racial Divide* by Carol Anderson
- The Black Butterfly* by Lawrence T. Brown
- The Color of Wealth: The Story behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide* by Meizhu Lui, Barbara Robles, Betsy Leondar-Wright, Rose Brewer, Rebecca Adamson
- Say It Louder!: Black Voters, White Narratives, and Saving Our Democracy* by Tiffany D. Cross
- The Lines between Us: Two Families & a Quest to Cross Baltimore's Racial Divide* by Lawrence Lanahan
- Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul* by Eddie S. Glaude Jr.
- Let My People Vote: My Battle to Restore the Civil Rights of Returning Citizens* by Desmond Meade
- The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* by Richard Rothstein
- Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- The Black Cabinet: The Untold Story of African Americans & Politics During the Age of Roosevelt* by Jill Watts
- What You Need to Know about Voting and Why* by Kim Wehle
- Stolen Justice: The Struggle for African American Voting Rights* by Lawrence Goldstone
- Lifting as We Climb: Black Women's Battle for the Ballot Box* by Evette Dionne
- One Person, No Vote: How Not All Voters Are Treated Equally* by Carol Anderson and Tonya Bolden
- The Voting Booth* by Brandy Colbert
- Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March* by Lynda Blackmon Lowery as told to Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley



RESOURCES CONT.

Movies:



A Place of Rage, 1991 NR

Freedom Song, 2000 NR

500 Years Later, 2005 NR

Sing Your Song, 2011 NR

Freedom Summer, 2014 PG

Selma, 2014 PG-13

The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution, 2015 NR

13th, 2016 NR

This Little Light of Mine: The Legacy of Fannie Lou Hamer, 2018 NR

Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America, 2021 PG-13

Fannie, 2022 NR

GLOSSARY

darkies A derogatory slur for Black people.

de facto *De facto* (Latin: “in fact”) describes practices that exist in reality, whether or not they are officially recognized by laws or other formal norms: practiced, but not necessarily defined by law. The term is commonly used to refer to what happens in practice, in contrast with *de jure* (“by law”), which refers to things that happen according to official law, regardless of whether the practice exists in reality.

Dixiecrats In 1948, President Harry S. Truman, the leader of the Democratic Party, ordered integration of the military and proposed other actions intended to address the Civil Rights of African Americans. Many pro-segregation southern white politicians objected to this course and organized themselves as a breakaway faction, the States’ Rights Democratic Party, often referred to as Dixiecrats. They fielded a presidential candidate in 1948, but after losing in the election, most members eventually moved to the Republican Party. Although the States’ Rights Democratic Party faded away, the term Dixiecrat continued to be used for conservative southern Democrats.

Food Stamps The Food Stamp Program was the original name for what is now called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a federal government program that provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income people to help them maintain adequate nutrition and health.

integration Racial integration includes desegregation (the process of ending systematic racial segregation), leveling barriers to association, creating equal opportunity regardless of race, and the development of a culture that draws on diverse traditions, rather than merely bringing a racial minority into the majority culture. Desegregation is largely a legal matter; integration is largely a social matter.

Jim Crow Originally, Jump Jim Crow was a character created by the white performer Thomas Rice (1808-1860) who wore dark makeup (burnt cork or shoe polish) to appear Black. This character was simple-minded and buffoonish, perpetuating negative stereotypes of African Americans. In 1876, laws that came to be known as the Jim Crow laws were established in the South to segregate all public facilities. The term “separate but equal” was used as justification for the policies, although in reality white facilities were far superior to those of Blacks.

literacy test Proponents of tests to prove an applicant’s ability to read and understand English claimed that the exams ensured an educated and informed electorate. In practice they were used to disqualify immigrants and the poor, who had less education. In the South they were used to prevent African Americans from registering to vote. The Voting Rights Act ended the use of literacy tests in the South in 1965 and the rest of the country in 1970.

lynching Lynching is the deliberate killing of a person by a group without the lawful authority granted by a judicial proceeding. Between 1882 and 1968, more than 4700 people were lynched in the United States, often by hanging, and more than 70% of them were African Americans. Most of these lynchings occurred in the South, but racially motivated lynchings also occurred in the Midwest and border states.

GLOSSARY CONT.

Ku Klux Klan Ku Klux Klan (KKK) is the name of several past and present organizations in the United States that have advocated white supremacy, anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, racism, homophobia, anti-Communism, and anti-immigration. These organizations have often used terrorism, violence, and acts of intimidation, such as cross burning and lynching, to oppress African Americans and other social or ethnic groups. At its peak in the early 1920s, the organization included about 15% of the nation's eligible population, approximately 4 to 5 million men. (At that time, Indiana had the largest KKK organization nationally. In 1925, the Indiana governor and half of the General Assembly were members.) Today, it is estimated that there are as many as 150 Klan chapters with up to 8,000 members nationwide. These groups, with operations in separated small local units, are considered extreme hate groups. The modern KKK has been repudiated by almost all mainstream media, political, and religious leaders.

sock-it-to-me-cake A yellow butter cake with a pecan streusel ribbon and a vanilla glaze. It is a popular southern recipe. The name comes from Aretha Franklin's use of the phrase in her 1967 hit "Respect."

Southern Baptist Churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist denomination are evangelical in doctrine and practice, emphasizing the significance of the individual conversion experience, which is affirmed by the person having complete immersion in water for a believer's baptism.

Trail of Tears The Trail of Tears was a series of forced removals of Native Americans, from their ancestral homelands in the southeastern United States, to areas that had been designated by the United States government as Indian Territory, usually west of the Mississippi River. These forced removals were carried out by government authorities following the passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830. The relocated peoples suffered from exposure, disease, and starvation while en route to their new designated reservations, and many died before reaching their destinations.

urban renewal ... urban removal Gentrification is a controversial topic in urban politics and planning. While the influx of more affluent residents and businesses often increases the economic value of a neighborhood, it can force out the area's less affluent residents, leading to community resentment, loss of affordable resources, homelessness, and loss of social and ethnic diversity.

Vietnam War The Vietnam War lasted from 1959 to 1975. The war was fought between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the United States-supported Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). At various stages the conflict involved clashes between small units patrolling the mountains and jungles, amphibious operations, guerrilla attacks on villages and cities, large-scale conventional battles, and massive aerial bombing attacks. Opposition to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War began on college campuses but grew to include a wide and varied cross-section of Americans from all walks of life. Almost all U.S. military personnel departed after the Paris Peace Accords of 1973. The last American troops left the country in 1975. The war ended with the defeat of the South Vietnamese forces, and unification of Vietnam under the communist government of the North.

THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE



You, the audience, are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Please leave mobile phones, cameras, and other electronic devices at home or switch them off in your bag. While texting might seem private, the light and motion can be distracting for those nearby and on stage. Please wait to text until intermission or after the show.

For student matinees, you are welcome to enjoy food and drinks in the lobby areas. Concessions are sold during intermission.

When you notice the house lights dimming and going out, it is a gentle signal to settle into your seats before the start of the play.

While the play unfolds, please refrain from chatting with your neighbors. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. Your focus on the play helps ensure an uninterrupted experience for both the audience and the actors.

For the safety of everyone in the room, please remain in your seat and keep all hands, feet, and other items to yourself and away from the actors onstage or in the aisles.

To minimize disruptions, please remind yourself to use the restroom before the show. You don't want to miss any exciting moments!

We encourage you to express your emotions during the play: laugh, cry, sigh, gasp! The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Lastly, please remain at your seat and join in the applause during curtain call. This is a moment to show your appreciation for the performance, and it allows the actors a chance to express their gratitude for your attention.

Thank you for being part of our theatre community, and enjoy the show!

STUDENT MATINEE ARRIVAL & PARKING INFORMATION

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

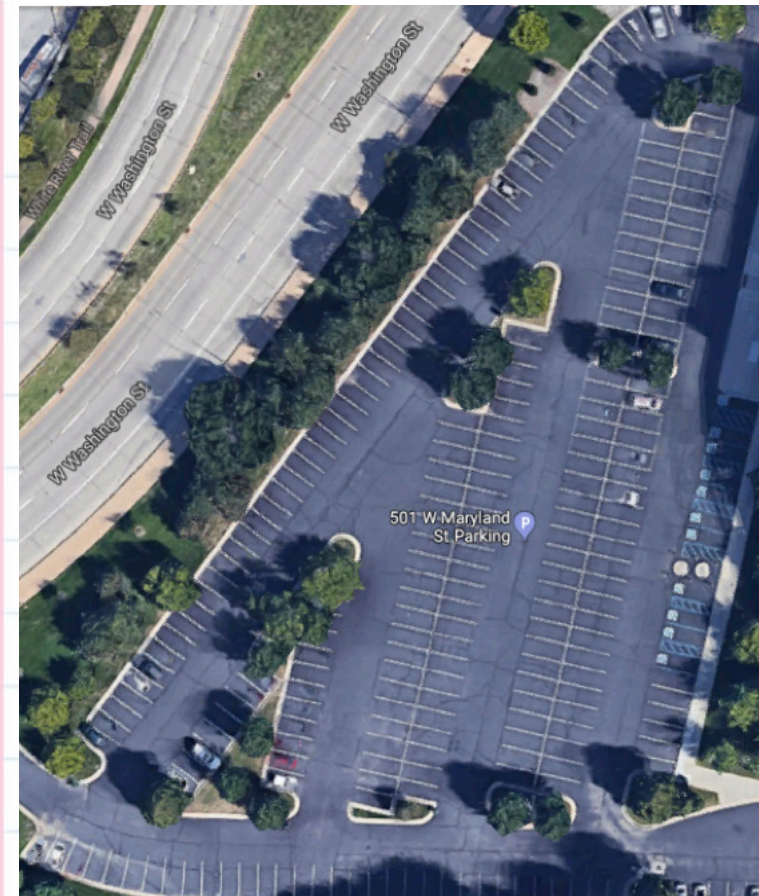
- IRT is located one-half block west of Circle Centre Mall on Washington Street, between northbound Illinois Street and southbound Capitol Avenue
- The physical address of IRT is 140 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204.
- Buses should unload and load directly in front of the theatre. (Do not block the entrance to Embassy Suites garage.) Please plan to arrive 20-30 minutes before your performance is scheduled to begin.
- You will be greeted at the curb by an IRT Staff Member and directed to the correct entrance.
- For shows on the IRT Upperstage, students and teachers will take the stairs to the 4th floor.
- The teacher named on the reservation should check in with the IRT Education staff member stationed in the lobby.
- Your group will be ushered to your assigned seats.
- Students and chaperones should follow instructions of all IRT Staff for your safety.

LATE ARRIVAL

- If you believe that you are going to be late, please contact the IRT Main Office at 317.635.5277. Provide the receptionist with a phone number and the name of the school so that Education staff may be in contact with you.
- You can contact IRT Education (education@irtlive.com) with non-emergency information on the day of the show.

PARKING

- Buses may park for free at Victory Field unless they are having an event - we will inform you if that is the case. The House Manager will give you a parking pass for each bus when you arrive. It should be displayed in the windshield.
- Continue east on Washington Street past the JW Marriott and turn left across Maryland Street into the Victory Field lot.
- **PLEASE NOTE that Victory Field no longer has public restroom spaces available. We apologize for any inconvenience.**
- See the map on the next page for full details.
- Additional parking options are located on the next page.
- **While IRT will make every effort to communicate parking information in advance, it is the responsibility of schools and drivers to make alternate arrangements.**



VICTORY FIELD PARKING MAP

Victory Field parking lot is located on the West side of the stadium. From IRT, continue west on Washington Street past the JW Marriott. Turn left on Schumacher Way, and cross Maryland Street into the Victory Field lot.

Some buses may need to double park in the lot. The image is of the Victory Field parking lot.

PLEASE NOTE that Victory Field no longer has public restrooms available to drivers. This is a change from years past. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you,
Indianapolis Indians and
Indiana Repertory Theatre

ADDITIONAL PARKING OPTIONS

In the event that Victory Field is unavailable for free parking, here are some other potential options. **While IRT will make every effort to communicate parking info in advance, it is the responsibility of schools and drivers to make alternate arrangements.**

White River State Park: Paid surface parking is located on Washington Street, across from Victory Field. May require advance notice; event rates may apply. (Approximately .6 mi from IRT.)



Indianapolis Zoo: Paid parking is available on Washington Street, west of White River State Park. First come, first served. (Approximately 1.2 mi from IRT.)



Downtown Indy: Explore all available parking options at the Downtown Indy website. Buses are welcome to utilize street parking if all used spaces are paid.

CAR AND VAN PARKING OPTIONS

CIRCLE CENTRE MALL PARKING

Ask a Theatre employee for a voucher that will reduce your parking fee by \$6. This voucher is available at select garages when attending an IRT show. This is only valid during the IRT's season.

Addresses for the Circle Centre Mall Garages:

RED GARAGE | 28 West Washington Street or 48 West Maryland Street
BLUE GARAGE | 26 West Georgia Street

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

IndyGo's Red Line, the city's rapid bus transit system, connects Broad Ripple and Fountain Square to the heart of downtown and other neighborhoods in Indianapolis. With buses running every 10-20 minutes and a stop directly next to the IRT on Capitol Avenue, the Red Line provides another convenient option for your transportation to the Theatre.

To plan your trip or for more information about the Red Line and other nearby routes, visit IndyGo.net or call IndyGo Customer Service at 317-635-3344.