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Black History Project

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Black History Project

Marisa Riddle

Honors Senior Project

Attending Grand Valley has opened my eyes to many things and has allowed me to see the world through many different perspectives. I believe that college, in general, is a time where a lot of people realize that their perceptions of the world are just some among many diverse views. One of the greatest opportunities I have had here is the ability to take courses in African and African American studies. I learned more in my Intro to African American Studies course than I did in all twelve years of grade school history. Once I had this knowledge – about how the world really works, about the systematic mistreatment of minorities in America, about the white-dominated history books from which we learn – I felt that it was my duty to educate others. Not everyone has the chance to take the classes I did, and not everyone is going to do research on their own time to delve into the corruption of the American history education system.

I sadly realized that many people my age get their information through the easily-accessible internet, especially social media. A lot of my peers share poorly-researched articles on their Facebook pages as a way of expressing their opinions. Their friends then see these articles and take them as fact without doing any investigating of their own, and this creates a dangerous chain. It scared me to see how many people could base political opinions off of infographics and blurbs that anyone could have written. It was this that inspired my senior project. If social media is how my peers are getting their information nowadays, then I cannot prevent that. I must take advantage of it.

I created a Facebook page called Black History Project. I wrote concise, well-researched posts on true African American history. If my peers were not going to seek this information out themselves, I could provide it for them by posting it on one of the most-used social media networks. I invited my Facebook friends to Like my page so they could see the posts, and I shared Black History Project's posts on my personal Facebook page to make sure as many people saw them as possible. I wanted to create an easy way for people to get information about African American history that was accurate and significant to today's world. I wanted to show my friends the cruelty and the corruptness of the American government when it comes to African Americans throughout history. It was important to me to send a message that these past events I wrote about are not at all ancient history. On the contrary, they are mirrored in modern society.

Facebook page link: www.facebook.com/xblackhistoryprojectx

[Black History Project](#)
[February 1](#) ·

Welcome to Black History Project!

There is a gaping hole in the American history being today. There are major issues with not only what American history is taught, but also how it is taught. The master narrative has dominated since education in this country began. The white race has a history of thinking themselves superior to minorities. This has translated into the texts that students are reading in school, the way broadcast journalists report news, and how politicians create policy. African Americans are often portrayed as people who were acted upon, and not people who acted. There is a world of knowledge that so many Americans will never know unless they seek it out.

The denial of black experience throughout history is no accident. It is a calculated system. The master narrative was and is created by whites in order to continue to oppress African Americans and minimize their role in American history. History books often tell the same select stories about specific activists through African American history without fully delving into the horrific details of what these people went through. The news often portrays blacks as criminals and thugs without knowing anything about their backstory.

If the point of learning America's history is so that we are not doomed to repeat it, then our country is doomed. If people are not fully being taught about the mistreatment of African Americans in American history, then they may grow up making the same mistakes their predecessors did. The media has a huge role in how Africans and African Americans are portrayed in today's society. Many people turn to the television or the computer as their source for reliable information, but the news and the media are often controlled by the master narrative.

This page is dedicated to informing the public on the true history of blacks in America.

[Black History Project](#) added [2 new photos](#).
February 8 ·



On this day in 1968, two black South Carolina State students and one black high school student were killed and 27 more were injured in what is now known as the Orangeburg Massacre. Students gathered on South Carolina State's campus to protest the segregation at All Star Bowling Lane. Law enforcement officers came to the scene in an attempt to put out a bonfire that students had set. A banister fell and hit a patrolman, which caused him to shoot a warning shot into the air. The other officers, upon hearing this, thought they were being fired upon and shot their buckshot shotguns and revolvers into the crowd. Samuel Hammond, Henry Smith, and Delano Middleton were killed. Many others were shot in their backs and feet as they ran from the gunfire. No protesters were armed.

The next day at a press conference, Governor Robert E. McNair called the massacre "...one of the saddest days in the history of South Carolina". Nine officers were charged with using excessive force at a campus protest, but all were acquitted.

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<http://www.blackfacts.com/>

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Black History Project

February 10 ·



Beyoncé has recently garnered more attention than usual in the wake of her political Super Bowl performance. Her backup dancers, specifically, are the topic of many controversial conversations. Many saw women wearing black berets and recognized the Black Panthers' signature look. However, it has become abundantly clear that many people are not educated on the history of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense - its origin, its mission, and the many positive and trailblazing accomplishments the Party made.

The BPP started countless community service programs throughout the country, from breakfast programs for poor schoolchildren to sickle cell anemia testing and research. The leaders of the BPP were educated college students who knew their rights and knew that black people across the U.S. were being harassed and abused by many law enforcement officers.

The public opinion of the BPP has been shaped by the media and the federal government alike, who branded them a threat in the 1960s simply because they were blacks who had the power to make a serious difference. Party members were arrested without reason and one, Fred Hampton, was killed in his sleep when the cops raided his apartment in Chicago and fired nearly 100 shots with no just cause.

To read the full article and educate yourself on how the media vilified the Black Panther Party:

<http://blackhistoryprojectx.blogspot.com/>

[#Beyonce](#) [#Superbowl](#) [#BPP](#) [#blackpantherparty](#) [#blacklivesmatter](#)

Blog post attached to the Beyoncé Superbowl post:

The Vilification of the Panthers: How media and government bias helped to shape the negative image of the Black Panther Party

Ever since the Black Panther Party for Self Defense stepped on the civil rights scene in 1966, it has been scrutinized and criticized by the government, the media, and their surrounding communities. Led by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, the Black Panther Party aimed to move away from the Civil Rights Movement and instead start preaching Black Power.¹ Their black berets, leather jackets, and guns provoked opinions of a dangerous rebel association. While many government leaders and police officers saw the Party as a threat, minorities across the country were awakened into activism. The purpose of the Party was never one centered on violence, though many did not see that due to the fact that the media and the government worked tirelessly to brand the Panthers with a negative image.² The Black Panther Party created community service initiatives in order to provide necessities to underprivileged areas and to educate blacks on their constitutional rights, as well as the rights that still needed to be attained.

Although the Panthers were making major positive changes in their individual districts across the country through their survival programs, they were often made out to be the bad guys by many media sources. Much of the coverage of the Party focused on murders and violence surrounding the movement.³ A study from 2004 shows that out of all the stories published about the Black Panther Party in *The Baltimore Press*, only one percent covered the survival programs, while 73 percent covered ambushed officers or murdered informants.⁴ This negative media attention from Baltimore and New Orleans, together with the lack of positive coverage, caused the general public's opinions toward the Panthers to be generally negative. However, *The Cleveland Press* discussed the Black Panther Party's survival programs in half of the articles they wrote about them. They also mentioned the Party's health clinic and bus program. When the Cleveland paper mentioned police raids, they did so in an unbiased manner, showing neither the police nor the Panthers in any certain light.⁵ The positive coverage of the community programs combined with the impartial journalism regarding police raids may have helped to improve Cleveland's opinion of the Black Panther Party, but this positive reporting was not a common find.

The Black Panther Party chapter in Portland was also one that suffered from negative and biased press coverage. This chapter provided a free breakfast program every day before school for five years, and they opened a free health clinic as well. They did not want to contribute to the violent image many had of the Black Panthers. Instead, they focused mainly on their survival

¹ Williamson, Joy Ann. "Chapter Six: Community Control with a Black Nationalist Twist." *Counterpoints* 237 (2005): 140.

² Hillard, David. *The Black Panther Party: service to the people programs*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008. Print.

³ Jeffries, Judson. "Local News Coverage of the Black Panther Party: An Analysis of the Baltimore, Cleveland, and New Orleans Press." *Journal of African American Studies* 7.4 (2004): 24.

⁴ Jeffries, Judson. "Local News Coverage of the Black Panther Party: An Analysis of the Baltimore, Cleveland, and New Orleans Press." *Journal of African American Studies* 7.4 (2004): 25.

⁵ Jeffries, Judson. "Local News Coverage of the Black Panther Party: An Analysis of the Baltimore, Cleveland, and New Orleans Press." *Journal of African American Studies* 7.4 (2004): 30.

programs. This did not stop the Oregon media from finding ways to defame the Party. The most common topic talked about in articles regarding the Black Panthers was criminal activity. A 2010 study found that when it came to Oregon newspapers, “approximately half the articles' newsworthiness hinged on the criminal behavior--real, alleged, or imagined--related to the Black Panther Party.”⁶ The effect this had on the public opinion cannot be understated. The purpose of these articles was to vilify the Black Panther Party and to convey to the public “that the Panthers were a threatening, menacing group, and that there was an urgent need for the police to try to control them.”⁷

Newspapers published articles that accused members of the Black Panther Party of committing a number of crimes. By the time the public read the story, it did not matter whether the Panthers were guilty or not. The story was out there, and it made an impact on the public's perceptions of the Party – real or fabricated. “In September 1970, for instance, the *Oregonian* reported that [Kent] Ford was being charged for trespassing at a local Fred Meyer store as well as for disorderly conduct (using profane and abusive language). A municipal judge dismissed the charges in March 1971, but the media had already propagated the deprecatory rumors.”⁸ The circulation of negative, and often unsubstantiated, stories in the media diminished the efforts that the Panthers put into the movement for black rights. The newspapers are where many people got their information, and they could continue to write the master narrative because media has such a power over people. The public often trusts the media to supply them with information on current events, but “stereotypes about black people were barely hidden, and fear of and disdain for black power were subsumed under a rhetoric of law and order.”⁹ By convincing the public that the Black Panther Party was disturbing the peace and threatening society's safety, the media could create a mass opposition to the black rights cause.

The media was not the only powerful organization that had it out for the Panthers. J. Edgar Hoover, the Director of the FBI, was intent on destroying all black activist movements. Hoover introduced COINTELPRO, a string of counterintelligence programs, in order to accomplish this goal. These programs involved illegal operations that were kept secret from Congress in order to keep Hoover and the FBI in the good graces of the government and the public. Hoover chose to target the Black Panther Party not “on the basis of their violent behavior, but for their *potential* for provoking violence within the Black community.”¹⁰ The FBI was concerned with the Black Panther Party in Chicago in particular. Agents had been monitoring the apartment of Fred Hampton, the Chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Party. Hampton's apartment was a sort of headquarters for Panther members, who could eat, meet, and sleep there as they pleased. At four o'clock in the morning on December 4, 1969, police raided Fred Hampton's apartment on the West Side of Chicago. Police claimed that Panther members fired upon the police entering. However, upon inspection of the apartment, there were only bullet holes in the walls toward the Panther members, and none in the walls that would have been

⁶ Boykoff, Jules, and Martha Gies. “‘We’re going to defend ourselves’: the Portland Chapter of the Black Panther Party and the local media response.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 111.3 (2010): 292.

⁷ Boykoff, Jules, and Martha Gies. “‘We’re going to defend ourselves’: the Portland Chapter of the Black Panther Party and the local media response.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 111.3 (2010): 292.

⁸ Boykoff, Jules, and Martha Gies. “‘We’re going to defend ourselves’: the Portland Chapter of the Black Panther Party and the local media response.” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 111.3 (2010): 294.

⁹ Rhodes, Jane. *Framing the Black Panthers: The Spectacular Rise of a Black Power Icon*. New York: New York Press, 2007. Print.

¹⁰ Hoerl, Kristen and Ortiz, Erin. “Organizational Secrecy and the FBI's COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist Hate Groups Program, 1967-1971.” *Management Communication Quarterly* 29.4 (2015): 595.

shot at if the Panthers had fired at the police officers. Also, FBI firearms expert Robert Zimmers examined the shell casings at the apartment and found that a Panther gun was only fired once, while the police had fired their guns at least ninety times.¹¹ Jeffrey Haas, the attorney on behalf of the Black Panthers in *Hampton v. Hanrahan*, said that an elderly woman who had the chance to walk through Hampton's apartment after the incident had stated, "This was nuthin but a Northern lynching."¹²

The assassination of Fred Hampton and the raid of his apartment by Chicago police show how deliberate and systematic racism was. The police were eventually found guilty for the murder of Fred Hampton, but the falsification of evidence and the misinformation from the FBI and police had already imprinted on the public that the Panthers were a dangerous group. The Black Panther Party was gaining too much momentum, and so racist leaders felt that the group needed to be taken down. The opposition to the Black Panther Party did not come from fear of violence; it came from fear of blacks gaining power. By creating a narrative that the Black Panther Party was a violent and dangerous group, the media and the government could mold the public's perception of the Party.

The murder of Hampton did have one positive outcome – it strengthened the black community's passion for justice. This tragedy showcased how far the law enforcement would go in order to take down the Black Power movement. Almost one hundred years after the Civil War ended, blacks were still being killed without legitimate reasons in their homes and on the streets. If the point of COINTELPRO was to discourage the black movement, it did not succeed.

Many remember the Black Panther Party for their disdain for many of the corrupt and racist police officers in urban centers. Not only were the Panthers adamant about protecting African Americans from police brutality, they were also quite concerned with other factors that affected the state of the communities in which many African Americans and other minorities were living. One of the goals of the group was to create national change in poor communities, so they started programs in order to help provide services to those in need.¹³ These programs included free breakfast for schoolchildren, free health clinics, sickle-cell anemia research, and busses to prisons for family visits. Huey P. Newton called these "survival programs" because they were only meant to provide temporary solutions until the revolution forced the government to make permanent changes.¹⁴ Newton said, "We say that the survival program of the Black Panther Party is like the survival kit of a sailor stranded on a raft. It helps him to sustain himself until he can get completely out of that situation."¹⁵ In the 1960s, African Americans were not receiving overwhelming support from whites in charge, so blacks needed to create lifeboats in order to not drown in the sea of white oppression. Newton knew these programs were not a solution to the issues blacks were facing in America, but he and the Party were providing stepping stones for major change – all the government had to do was follow their footsteps.

¹¹ Haas, Jeffrey. *The assassination of Fred Hampton: how the FBI and the Chicago police murdered a Black Panther*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, Inc., 2010. Print.

¹² Haas, Jeffrey. *The assassination of Fred Hampton: how the FBI and the Chicago police murdered a Black Panther*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, Inc., 2010. Print.

¹³ Hillard, David. *The Black Panther Party: service to the people programs*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008. Print.

¹⁴ Hillard, David. *The Black Panther Party: service to the people programs*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008. Print.

¹⁵ Hillard, David. *The Black Panther Party: service to the people programs*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008. Print.

In order for the Black Panthers to accomplish anything within their communities, they had to ensure that they would not be victims of police bullying. Therefore, they started their first program which was called the Community Alert Patrol. This patrol is perhaps the most known survival program that the Panthers created.¹⁶ The Community Alert Patrol is what gave the public the impression that the Party was violent because they patrolled the streets with guns in order to monitor police conduct. The purpose of this was to make sure black people were being treated fairly and justly. The Panther members also wanted to inform the black community that they had rights and that “personal liberation had to come from within and would not be handed to them by the white power structure.”¹⁷ This survival program was necessary in order for the Party members to create any other program. They needed to first protect themselves, from violence and unjustness, in order to create an environment in which their programs would not be preyed upon by the police. The intent behind the patrols was not to make trouble. The Panthers did not want to initiate any violent encounters; they wanted to protect their people. When Huey P. Newton started the Black Panther Party he said, "I suggested that we use the panther as our symbol and call our political vehicle the Black Panther Party. The panther is a fierce animal, but he will not attack until he is backed into a corner; then he will strike out."¹⁸ Panther members wanted to be respected, and they respected those who saw the legitimacy in their fight.

A survival program that all of the chapters of the Black Panther Party started was the Free Breakfast Program for children before school. These breakfasts consisted of eggs, sausage, and collard greens, and it was served to thousands of children living in low-class neighborhoods every morning. Because the government failed to supply food to those living in poverty, the Panthers took it upon themselves to provide the dietary needs to their communities. The Party members refrained from using the breakfast programs as publicity for the Black Panthers. They took advantage of the program to build relationships with the kids in the area. They sang songs, played games, and talked to the kids in order to show them that they were not a violent group, but a group who wanted to help the community.¹⁹ The Panthers knew that kids needed to be fed proper breakfasts in the morning in order to be able to pay attention and participate at school. The Party was genuinely concerned for the welfare of the children coming from low-income families. The Free Breakfast Program was just one way they were able to interact with the children in order to provide an environment where they could come together and feel a sense of community.

Just as Bobby Seale dictated that every chapter of the Party must establish a Free Breakfast Program, he also mandated that every chapter start a free health clinic. Black Panther members often witnessed and experienced the poor medical care that blacks experienced in the meager clinics that were provided in their neighborhoods. The free health clinics established by the Party members were able to recruit registered doctors and nurses that freely volunteered their services. Members of the Party were trained, and the clinics offered free high blood pressure and

¹⁶ Kirkby, Ryan J. “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised?: Community Activism and the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971.” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 41.1 (2011): 32-33.

¹⁷ Kirkby, Ryan J. “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised?: Community Activism and the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971.” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 41.1 (2011): 33.

¹⁸ Newton, Huey. "Huey Newton: quote on the Black Panther Party." *The American Mosaic: The African American Experience*. ABC-CLIO, 2015. Web.

¹⁹ Kirkby, Ryan J. “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised?: Community Activism and the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971.” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 41.1 (2011): 39.

tuberculosis tests, pre-natal healthcare, and vaccinations, among other services.²⁰ Many minorities did not go to the doctor when they were ill because they knew they would not get the proper care. Huey P. Newton hoped that the Black Panthers' free health clinics would expose the flaw in health care by showing "what the Panthers could accomplish with will and few resources and what the state did not accomplish with more."²¹ The free health clinics supplied people with health care who, without the Black Panther Party, may have never gotten proper treatment.

Within the Party's goal to supply health care, they had another mission to educate people about sickle cell anemia. Sickle cell anemia, a disease with no cure which sickles red blood cells and prevents enough oxygen from circulating through the blood, is more prevalent in African Americans than in any other ethnicity. The Panthers offered free genetic screening in order to identify whether someone had the traits of sickle cell anemia. Not only did the campaign offer genetic screening, it also incorporated education about the disease through lectures and flyers. While the Black Panthers acknowledged the disease's genetic lineage, they also spoke out about the politics and racism behind the disease's prevalence.²² Because sickle cell anemia was a predominantly African American disease, many Panthers and Panther supporters thought that the government did not pursue research of sickle cell anemia cures as zealously as diseases that primarily affected whites. Therefore, the Panthers wanted to prevent disease while also "eradicating the societal ills that enabled its persistence and exacerbated its effects."²³ The federal funding for sickle cell anemia research was lacking, and the Panthers knew that their efforts would be in vain if the government refused to supply equality in healthcare. The U.S. National Institutes of Health distributed funds unevenly among diseases common to whites and sickle cell anemia, which is common to blacks.²⁴ This showed that racism in the medical field was systematic and premeditated. The lack of resources for sickle cell anemia education and prevention did not stem from an absence of knowledge. On the contrary, those in charge of medical funding knew quite well the effects of sickle cell anemia in the African American community, but they did not want to spend their money helping blacks when they could be providing more healthcare to whites instead.

The Black Panther Party strove to provide what the government would not when it came to food, medical treatment, and education about basic human rights. The fact that blacks had not gained equality in the hundreds of years they had been on American soil did not sit well with black rights activists. It is distressing that these rights still have to be fought for today. With countless African Americans living in poverty, without proper medical care, and subjected to police brutality, it is clear why Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton felt the need to band together and start a movement.

When history repeats itself over and over again, people need to come forward in order to make amendments to the racist regime. People nowadays are still fighting against discrimination

²⁰ Kirkby, Ryan J. "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised": Community Activism and the Black Panther Party, 1966-1971." *Canadian Review of American Studies* 41.1 (2011): 43.

²¹ Nelson, Alondra. Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Print.

²² Nelson, Alondra. Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Print.

²³ Nelson, Alondra. Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Print.

²⁴ Nelson, Alondra. Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Print.

on college campuses, in the workplace, and within the justice system. The Black Panther Party established service programs that have paved the path for many organizations today, but government funding for many programs that provide assistance for minorities is still severely lacking. Now that studies have been done on the discriminatory coverage of the Black Panthers, it is clear how easy it is for the mass media to control the master narrative. With racist systems in place that constantly work against progression for blacks in society, it is difficult to find inspiration to create change. However, the legacy of the scholars, activists, writers, and philosophers who dedicated their efforts to the Black Panther Party has the power to ignite a flame in the oppressed population, if only they are not discouraged by the prejudice around them. The masses that have been continuously silenced by the media's overpowering narrative must make their voices loud enough that the public has no choice but to hear their story.

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[Black History Project](#)

[February 11](#) ·

Passing along this great article from Jezebel on the new history textbooks being used in Texas public schools. Racism is deliberately being taught to kids in school all over the country, so that they grow up learning things like “Slavery was bad, but it had some good aspects, too.”

<http://jezebel.com/heres-how-new-texas-public-school-textbooks-write-about-1726786557>



Here's How New Texas Public School Textbooks Write About Slavery

In 2010, the Texas Board of Education approved a revised social studies curriculum that, wrote The New York Times that year, would “put a conservative stamp on...

JEZEBEL.COM | BY BOBBY FINGER

Black History Project

February 15 ·

Did you know...

The word "ghetto" has its origins in Venice, Italy, where it referred to the small, dirty island in which Jews were restricted to live in 1516. The Jews who lived here were only allowed to come out during the day and had to return at night, when the gates to the ghetto would be locked until sunrise.

Many may remember that ghettos are where Jews were forced to live when the Nazis ruled Germany and Poland. Many died of starvation and disease while living in these fenced-in, overcrowded areas. Ghettos during this time were often a stepping stone to concentration camps, where many of these people were eventually sent.

Nowadays, a ghetto is often referred to as a poor community in which minorities reside.

Although the word's meaning has transformed with time, the word "ghetto" has always been synonymous with a place one is forced to live. In pop culture, many refer to the ghetto as somewhere you are always trying to escape from.

Are "modern ghettos" related to the ghettos that Jews were forced into in the past? Jews were looked at as outsiders and foreigners when ghettos were created in order to separate those who were "unwanted" from society. Are today's ghettos any different?

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Black History Project

February 16 ·

Tune in to PBS tonight at 9pm to watch *The Black Panthers: Vanguard Of The Revolution!*

<http://www.pbs.org/video/2365528595/>

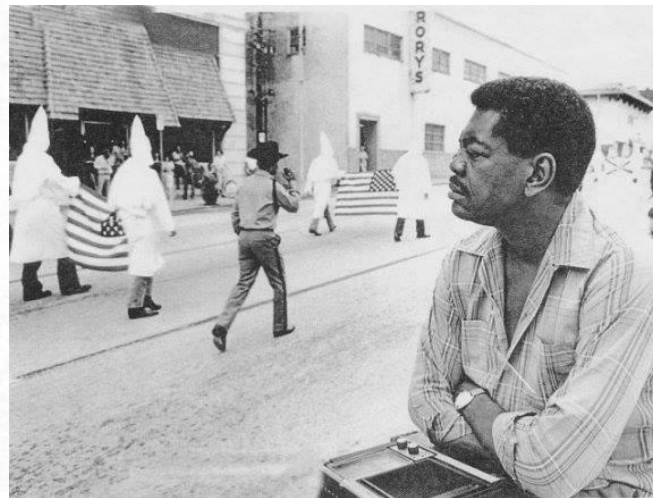
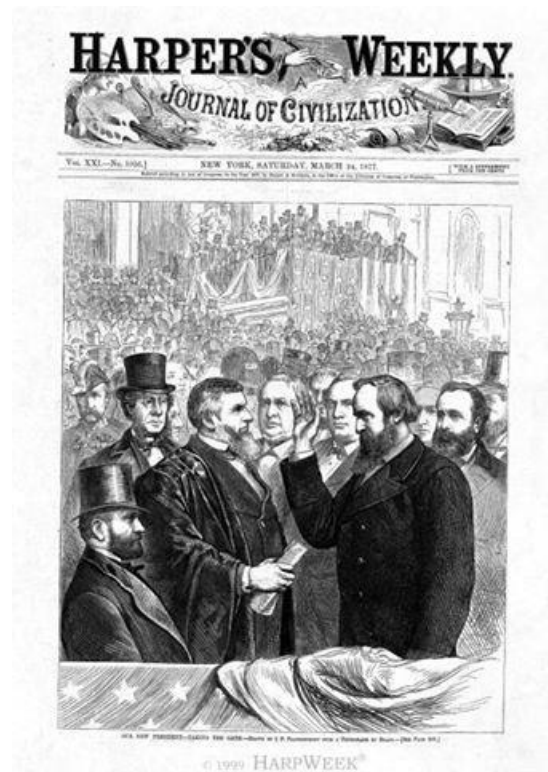


Watch Full Episodes Online of Independent Lens on
PBS | *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of The...*

New film by acclaimed documentarian Stanley Nelson about the rise and fall of...

WWW.PBS.ORG | BY PBS

[Black History Project](#) added [3 new photos](#).
[February 18](#) ·



[#ThrowbackThursday](#)

The Compromise of 1877 and the start of Jim Crow

In America there is a history of the government turning its back on its black citizens. The Compromise of 1877 is no exception. The 1876 presidential election between Rutherford B. Hayes (Republican) and Samuel J. Tilden (Democrat) resulted in Tilden winning, but the votes were disputed in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina because of possible fraud and threats against Republican voters. Democrat and Republican members of Congress met to debate who should be elected, while Republican party members aligned with Hayes met with southern Democrats in secret. These secret meetings resulted in the Democrats promising to let Hayes take the presidency if the Republicans promised to withdraw their troops out of the South. These Republican troops were placed in the South following the Civil War to ensure the safety and civil rights of African Americans and to facilitate with the Reconstruction of the south. When it came time for a decision to be made about the presidency, Hayes was granted the position. He agreed to remove federal troops from the south and appoint a Democrat to his Cabinet, and southern Democrats agreed to safeguard the civil and political rights of African Americans. The southerners' promise was not kept. Instead, legislators in the south created Jim Crow laws that would not be overruled until the mid 1960s. The Compromise of 1877 gave Democrats power in southern states to create segregation in schools, busses, restaurants, and more. It ended the period of Reconstruction and initiated the reign of Jim Crow.

This "compromise" was exactly what the south needed in order to establish a system of racism and discrimination without interference from the federal government. Jim Crow laws were enforced using violence. The KKK thrived, lynchings were legal, and many questioned whether slavery was really over. By stepping aside, the government allowed southern states to literally get away with murder.

[#blackhistorymonth](#) [#compromiseof1877](#) [#blacklivesmatter](#)

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Black History Project

February 25 ·



#ThrowbackThursday

Sammy Younge Junior was a Navy veteran who served during the Cuban Missile Crisis. After being medically discharged for kidney surgery, he worked in the Tuskegee Veteran's Hospital and was a civil rights activist, participating in marches for voting rights in Alabama.

On January 3, 1966, Sammy demanded to use the "whites only" bathroom at a Standard Oil Gas Station in Macon County, Alabama. He was shot and killed by white 67-year-old gas station attendant Marvin Segrest. Sammy was twenty one years old.

Although the crime was committed in January, Marvin Segrest was not charged until November of that year. Despite Macon County being primarily populated by African Americans, Segrest was tried by an all-white jury and was acquitted in just over an hour.

This may seem like ancient history, but in reality this murder happened just 50 years ago. The justice system has historically failed black Americans. For a long time in many parts of the country, fighting for equality was synonymous with having a death wish. In today's society, blacks still struggle for equal treatment. Whites still get acquitted after murdering unarmed black citizens. Education is power when it comes to civil activism. Sammy Younge Junior's story is not taught to kids in school, so we must take it upon ourselves to research our past and educate those around us. It is not an accidental oversight that these events are not often talked about. It is calculated in order to keep the masses uneducated about not only the history of violence against African Americans, but also the failure and negligence of the U.S. government.

[#blacklivesmatter](#) [#blackhistory](#) [#blackhistorymonth](#) [#sayhername](#) [#sayhisname](#) [#tbt](#)

Sources:

<http://www.blackpast.org/.../younge-samuel-sammy-leamon-jr-19...>

<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1669>

Black History Project

March 4 at 9:43am ·



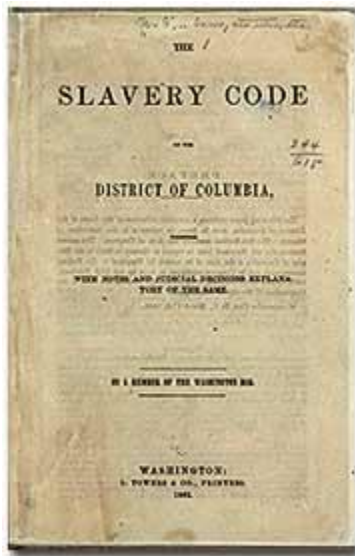
Check this out: New York Times posts previously unpublished photographs of black history from their archives.

<http://www.nytimes.com/.../dr-martin-luther-king-jr-portrait-...>

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Black History Project

March 18 at 10:29am ·



After the American Revolution and the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, it was decided that in order to become a citizen of the United States, one needed to be able to read and write English. These requirements are still part of the Naturalization Test today.

The slavery era's slave codes made it illegal for enslaved African Americans to learn how to read or write, and it was also illegal for a free person to teach a slave. These laws were put in place to ensure that blacks could not become citizens and therefore could not have any power. Many know the hardships African Americans faced when trying to secretly learn how to read during slavery, but not many realize what a powerful force education is. Slaves and abolitionists put their lives at risk in order to provide and obtain education because they knew education = power. Education led to citizenship, which led to having a say in government through the power of voting.

One of the most important things to note about racism in America is that it is systemic. It consists of laws and guidelines put in place to ensure the oppression of minorities. It is crucial to note that the forbidding of African Americans to read and write was to guarantee that blacks could not have a say in the state of the country. During slavery, there were many places in the South where blacks outnumbered whites. By preventing blacks from gaining citizenship, they could not influence government, they could not own property, they were incapable of changing the world around them.

[#blackhistory](#) [#slavery](#) [#declarationofindependence](#) [#blacklivesmatter](#) [#blackrights](#)
[#africanamericanhistory](#)

Sources:

<http://www.ushistory.org/us/images/00034514.jpg>

[Black History Project](#)

[March 21 at 10:02pm](#) ·

Check out this video on the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission. Learn about how the Brown vs. Board of Education decision influenced the Mississippi governor and other political leaders to form an organization to eradicate civil rights activists from the state.

The State Sovereignty Commission employed former FBI agents to spy on citizens who were suspected civil rights activists, which caused them to lose their jobs, their homes, and their lives. Ross Barnett, who became governor in 1960, is now compared by some to Hitler for his ability to rally and recruit the most racist citizens of the state. The Commission worked with the KKK, who lit houses on fire, shot at people, and even killed three young men with the Commission's and the Governor's knowledge.

"When the Supreme Court decision came down, it was characterized by some of the political leaders in the state as being a day of infamy. There was a concern that if segregation ended somehow the sun really wouldn't come up in the morning."

- William Winter, former Mississippi governor, on the Brown vs. Board of Education decision

[#blackhistory](#) [#civilrights](#) [#africanamericanhistory](#) [#blacklivesmatter](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sz0JFELRwko>



MISSISSIPPI STATE SECRETS AND DR. J. HORACE GEMANY

Mississippi reveals dark secrets of a racist time...This graphic yet inspiring video depicts how Mississippi's government funded the "White Citizens' Council..."

M.YOUTUBE.COM