

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Freedom Riders National Monument



JUNIOR RANGER BOOK

Cover Art by Nikkolos Smith

WE WELCOME YOU TO THE

Freedom Riders National Monument Junior Ranger Program

Directions:

WHERE DO I GO?

Visit Freedom Riders National Monument, but first check our website for updates at www.nps.gov/frri

HOW MANY ACTIVITIES DO I NEED TO DO?

Shoot for the number that matches your age. Over 20 activities fill this booklet and the more you do, the more you learn!

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT THE BOOK?

All *italicized and bolded* words are vocabulary defined at the bottom of the page. You'll know it's a definition because of an icon that looks like this: 

All activities that you can only do at the Monument have a bus icon that looks like this:  (Look at the bottom of this page for an example!)

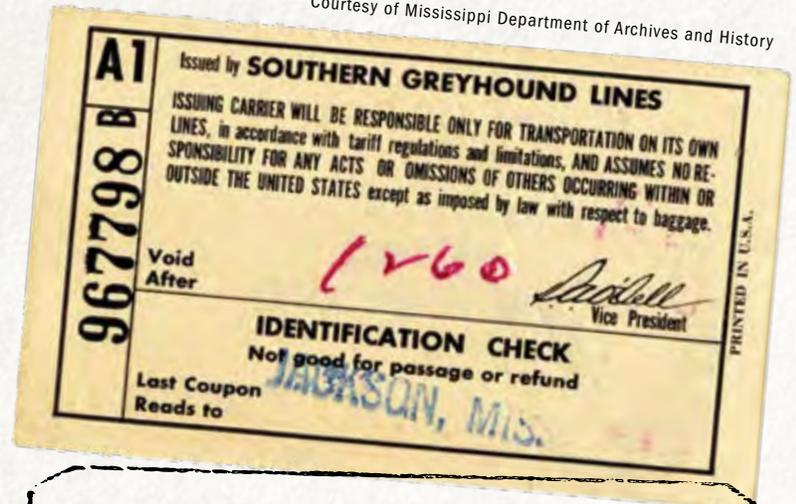
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FINISH?

About 1.5 hours. It's OK if you can't finish—just do your best!

TAKE THE PLEDGE!

Complete the Junior Ranger Pledge on the back with an adult at the Calhoun Chamber of Commerce or with a Park Ranger at the National Monument. Then ask about the Junior Ranger badge!

Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History



FAST FACTS

- Freedom Riders put themselves in harm's way to end segregation on public transportation.
- The first Freedom Rides took place from May 4, 1961–May 17, 1961. Thirteen Black and White activists participated. Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was the group that organized this ride. James Farmer, one of the co-founders of CORE, coined the term "Freedom Rides."
- This National Park site is located in Anniston, Alabama because of what happened to the Freedom Riders there.



Inspiration for the Freedom Rides came from the Journey to Reconciliation, a similar effort to desegregate transportation. **To find out the year this effort took place, read the panel titled "The Freedom Rides" at the Anniston Greyhound Bus Depot mural (1031 Gurnee Avenue).**

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SEGREGATION IN TRANSPORTATION

The Freedom Riders challenged unfair treatment of African Americans on public transportation. Up to this point in history, travel from state to state was scary, dangerous, and humiliating for African Americans. They were forced to sit on the back of the bus. They were often forced to go to the bathroom in dirty outhouses or rundown bathrooms without stall doors and soap. Sometimes there was no bathroom at all and they had to go outside. At many restaurants, they weren't allowed to sit inside with Whites. These were some of the many rules that were a part of *Jim Crow*.

The Freedom Riders planned to travel from Washington D.C. to New Orleans doing everything together. They would sit next to each other on the bus, use the same restroom, and eat side by side. Doing this put them in great danger.

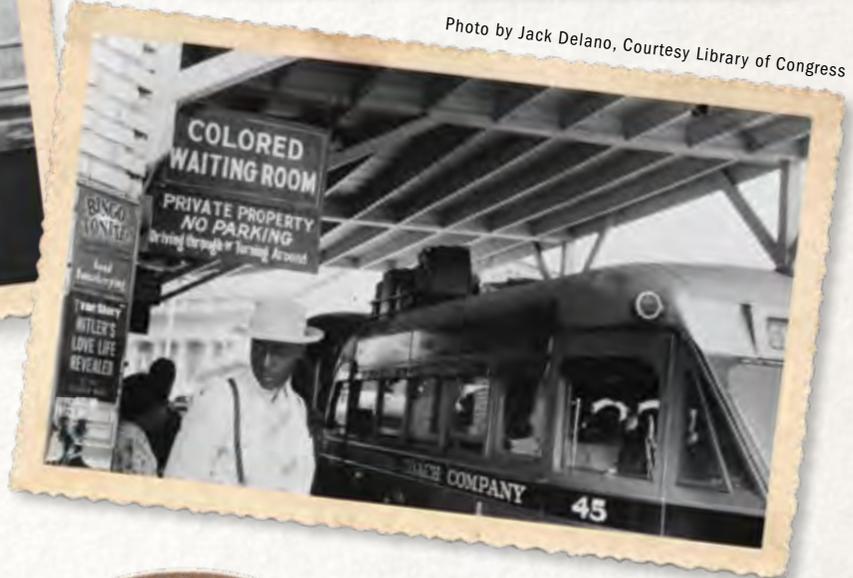
Courtesy of Birmingham Alabama Public Library Archives



Signs of Segregation
 Circle examples of racial discrimination in these images.

← ↓ ↓

Photo by Jack Delano, Courtesy Library of Congress



Courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History, Alabama Media Group Collection

 **I Spy**

At the Anniston Greyhound Bus Depot, see if you can find the "Colored Entrance" that African Americans were forced to use. Imagine... How would you feel if people didn't allow you to walk through the front door?

Recall a time when you crossed a state border...

Boynton v. Virginia (1960), Keys. v. Carolina Coach Co. (1955), and Morgan v. Virginia (1946) were U.S. Supreme Court decisions outlawing racial discrimination for people traveling between states. Racial discrimination was still legal for those traveling within states and cities.



Jim Crow: Laws made by Southern politicians to separate Whites from Blacks and other races. The name "Jim Crow" comes from a White man who dressed up as a Black man to make fun of Black people.

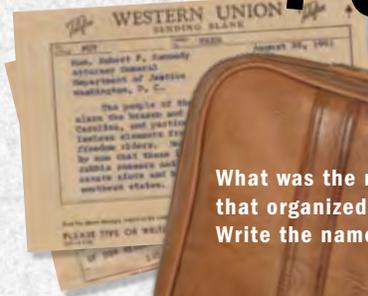
THE FIRST RIDE

MAY 4-17, 1961

Look at the map below. Outline the states where the Freedom Riders passed. Write down the names of the states, too!



Telegrams provided by Alabama Department of Archives and History



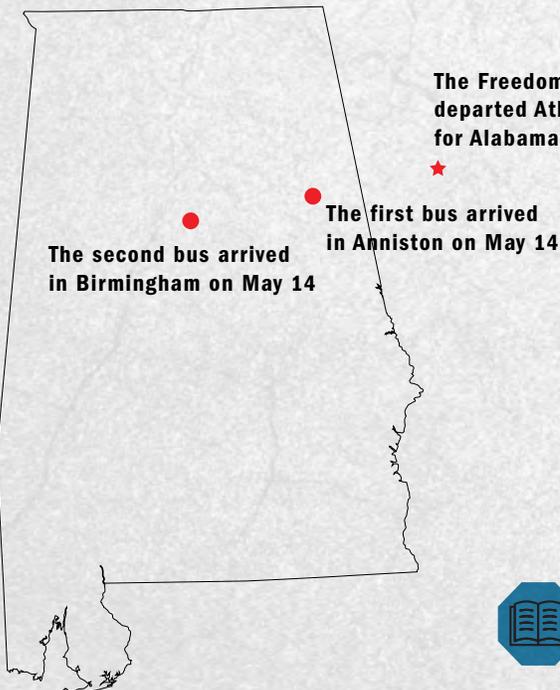
POP QUIZ!

What was the name of the group that organized the first Freedom Ride? Write the name on the suitcase!



Map the Alabama Trip

In the map of Alabama below, draw lines between the cities where the Freedom Riders stopped in the state.



Who Were They?

Go to the panel titled "Who were the Riders?" at the Anniston Greyhound Bus Depot mural. Choose two of the first Freedom Riders. Write down their name and age.

1. _____ Name _____ Age _____
2. _____ Name _____ Age _____

The Freedom Riders did not feel welcomed as they traveled. Have you ever felt this way?

Look up from this booklet and make a face that shows how this experience made you feel.



Brown v. Board of Education: A Supreme Court case where the Justices decided on May 17, 1954 that segregation in public schools was unfair and against the Constitution.

VIOLENCE IN ANNISTON

MAY 14, 1961, the Freedom Riders' journey was about to change. As the bus pulled up to the station in Anniston, AL, a mob of 200 *White supremacists* were waiting for them. The bus driver saw the hateful looks on their faces and decided to continue driving. The White mob followed, slashing the tires to stop the bus. When it could move no further, the attackers boarded the bus, beat the Freedom Riders, and tossed a firebomb through the rear window. They blocked the door, trapping the Freedom Riders inside.

Courtesy of Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the Anniston Star

AL MAY 14, 1961

Imagine you were trapped on that bus...

Close your eyes and think to yourself about each of these questions.

- What would your heartbeat feel like?
- What would you smell?
- What sounds would you hear?
- What thoughts would be in your head?



White supremacists: People who believe the White race is better than all the rest.



Visit the solar audio post in front of the Anniston Greyhound Bus Depot. Listen to Freedom Rider Hank Thomas describe what he experienced inside the burning bus.

Draw what you think it must have looked like inside:

COURAGE UNDER FIRE

The Freedom Riders were lucky—they escaped the burning bus. But once out, the White supremacists continued to beat them up. When the mob stopped, at first no one helped them. The Freedom Riders lay in the grass, wounded and gasping for air. A White girl, Janie Forsyth, heard the commotion from her home. The Freedom Riders were begging for help. Read Janie's quote to find out what she decided to do.



Hank Thomas

Janie Forsyth

“

*When the bus couldn't roll anymore because the slashed tires were burning up, the bus driver had to pull over somewhere. He pulled into my father's parking lot for his store. When I heard the need in their voice for water, I said, 'That's something that I can do.' So I started hauling buckets of water from the house to the people gathered on our lawn. They were lying on the ground, throwing up and screaming... I wasn't so much worried about what my parents would think as what Kenneth Adams and his family would think. He, Kenneth Adams, was the bigwig in the **Ku Klux Klan.**”*

Write a Haiku

Haikus are poems that have 3 lines. The first and third line are 5 syllables. The middle line is 7 syllables. **Write a haiku about a time you found the courage to help someone in trouble.**

5 syllables

7 syllables

5 syllables



Courtesy of Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the Anniston Star

Above is a photograph of the burning Greyhound bus, with a Freedom Rider nearby. **Write one word that describes how you feel looking at this photograph:**



Ku Klux Klan: A White supremacist organization that uses violence to scare, hurt, and kill people who don't share their beliefs.

VIOLENCE

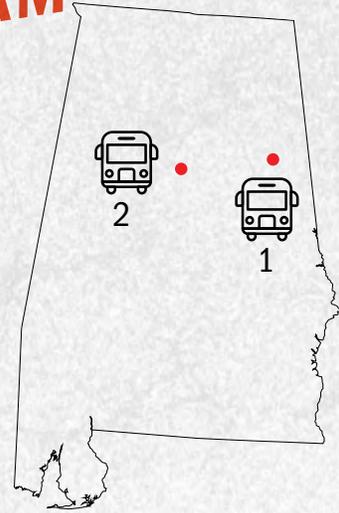
IN BIRMINGHAM

The Birmingham Police told the White supremacists where the Freedom Riders would show up. They then gave White supremacists 15 minutes to hurt activists before arriving.

Write one word below that describes how you feel hearing this:

Remember...

The Freedom Riders split into 2 buses in Atlanta. One stopped in Anniston and was burned. That same day, the other bus stopped in Birmingham. Write the name of each town in the correct location on the map.



“...BEAT 'EM
BOMB 'EM
MAIM OR
KILL 'EM...”

ASSURE EVERY KLANSMAN IN THE COUNTRY THAT NO ONE WILL BE ARRESTED IN ALABAMA FOR THAT 15 MINUTES.”



Read the panel titled “The Segregationists” at the Anniston Greyhound Bus Depot mural to find out who said the quote. Write your answer here:



Image above courtesy of FBI/Tommy Langston of the Birmingham Post-Herald
Image of James Peck Courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History, Alabama Media Group Collection



Go to the Trailways Mural at Noble and 9th St. in Anniston. Listen to Charles Person describe his experience with the mob.



The mob seriously injured Freedom Riders, such as James Peck (above), who required 50 stitches.

IT DOESN'T END HERE

No drivers were willing to bus the first Freedom Riders to New Orleans, so they flew instead. Disheartened, they feared the Rides would end... **But the Nashville Student Movement, led by Diane Nash and including members of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), decided to finish what the first group had started. 22 more volunteered to come to Alabama and finish the ride.**

Despite protection by the Alabama State Highway Patrol, the new group of Freedom Riders were again met with violence in Montgomery. As they departed for Mississippi, the National Guard was called in to protect them.

Visit the Freedom Rides Museum in Montgomery, AL to learn more.

What Would You Do?

Knowing all the violence the Freedom Riders experienced, would you be willing to participate? **Circle one:**

YES/NO



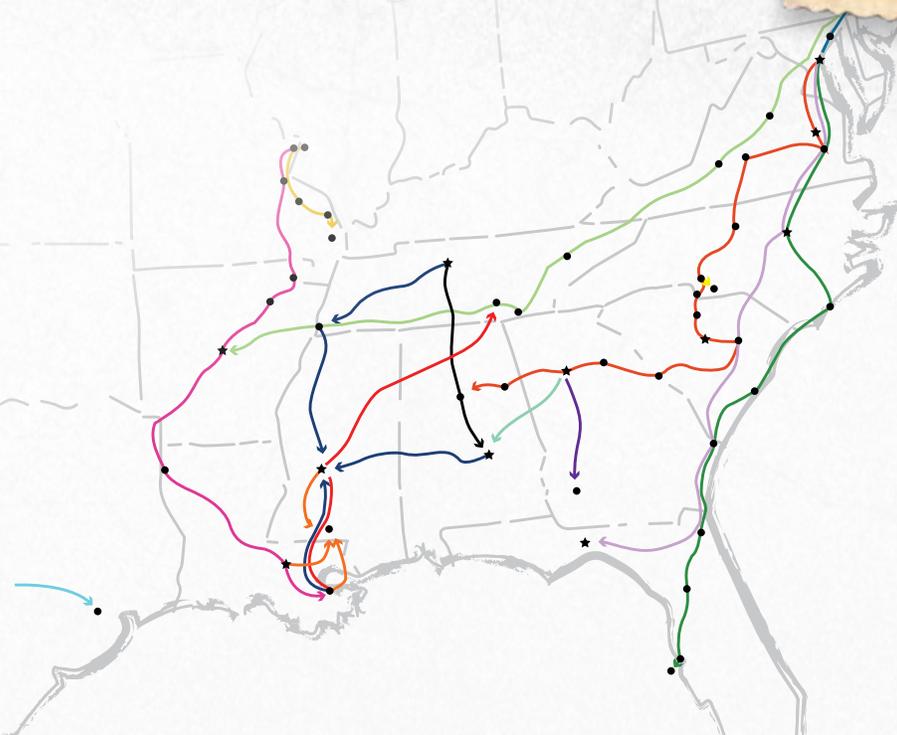
Image Courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History, Alabama Media Group Collection

Pictured to the right are members of the second wave of Freedom Riders (*L-R*) Charles Butler, Catherine Burks-Brooks, Lucretia Collins, and Salynn McCollum at the Greyhound Station in Birmingham.

Courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History, Alabama Media Group Collection
 Button Image: Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History



Below are some of the Freedom Ride routes. Outline the states they passed through. Write down the names of the states, too.



- Little Freedom Ride, April 22, 1961
- Original CORE Freedom Ride, May 4-17, 1961
- Nashville Movement Freedom Ride, May 17-21, 1961
- Mississippi Freedom Ride, May 24-August, 1961
- Connecticut Freedom Ride, May 24-25, 1961
- Interfaith Freedom Ride, June 13-16, 1961
- Organized Labor/Professional Freedom Ride, June 13-16, 1961
- Missouri to Louisiana CORE Freedom Ride, July 8-15, 1961
- New Jersey to Arkansas CORE Freedom Ride, July 13-24, 1961
- Los Angeles to Houston Freedom Ride, August 9-11, 1961
- Monroe Freedom Ride, August, 1961
- Prayer Pilgrimage Freedom Ride, September, 1961
- Albany Freedom Rides, November-December, 1961
- McComb Freedom Rides, November-December, 1961
- Route 40 Campaign, November-December, 1961

WE KEEP RIDING

Over **400** participated in Freedom Rides through the summer and into the fall. Most of the Freedom Riders were eventually stopped and arrested in Jackson, Mississippi, and sent to one of the most dangerous of places...

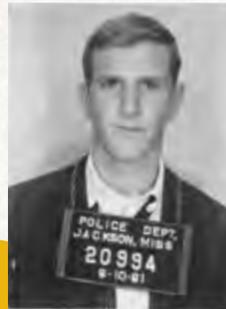
PARCHMAN PRISON.

READ BELOW EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK, **BREACH OF PEACE** BY ERIC ETHERIDGE.



I wasn't afraid. The training that we had gave everybody the conviction that 'You can kill my body, but you can't kill my soul.' That is a very strong and powerful thing."

Pauline Knight-Oforu p. 43



"I was from a relatively privileged background and thought I had a good sense of what was happening...But once I was thrown in jail in Jackson, it instantly became apparent how much I didn't know...I realized just how deficient my education had been... and with that realization came a bit of anger."

Stephen Green p. 79



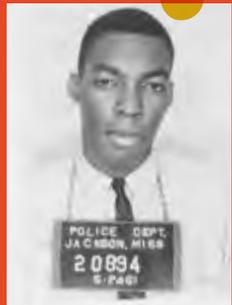
"At Parchman, they brought some kids in to sight-see us. Elementary school students, white kids....They were pointing at us just like we were animals. 'Oh, look at that one's hair.'"

Edward Johnson p. 146



"The Jackson police didn't quite know what to do with me once they arrested me, because I didn't look particularly Caucasian to them...They probably thought I was Creole. So first they put me in the black cell....And then they realized [my sister was there] and she was clearly white. So they moved me to the white cell. It really just showed you how silly it all was."

Joan Pleun p. 97



"We'd heard about Parchman. We'd heard about the number of blacks who went to Parchman and never returned...Some of the guards in Jackson would tell us, 'Y'all get up there at Parchman, they're gonna straighten you all out. And there ain't no Robert Kennedy or John Kennedy gonna do anything about it.'"

Hank Thomas p. 26

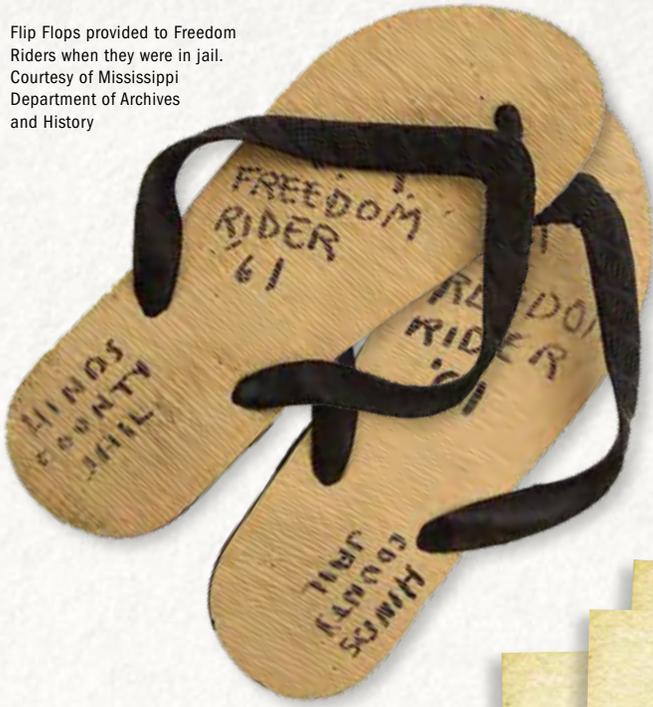
Why do you think prison may have been a dangerous place for the Freedom Riders?

Mug shots courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Getting into the police vehicle photo Courtesy of Alabama Department of Archives and History, Alabama Media Group Collection



Flip Flops provided to Freedom Riders when they were in jail. Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History



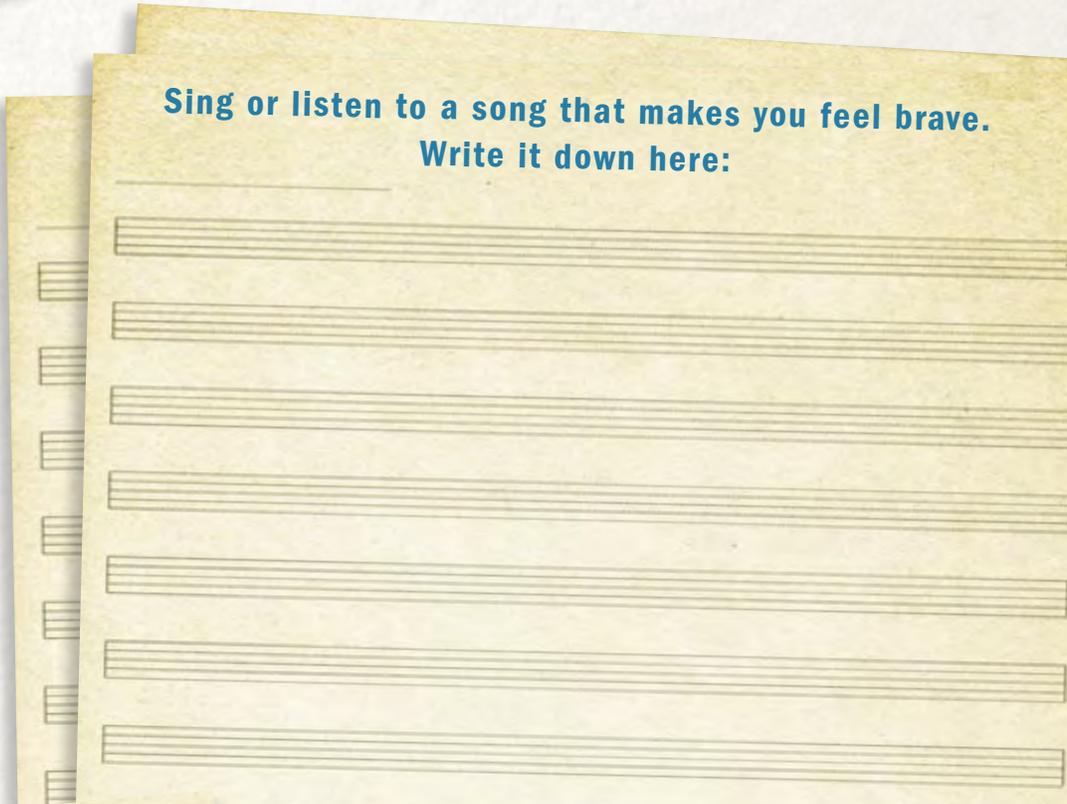
The Freedom Riders sang to stay positive. The guards threatened to take things away, like their mattress and toothbrush, if they didn't stop.

Go to page 4. What was your second most important item to bring on the Freedom Rides?

Given the options below, what would you do? **Circle one.**

1. Keep the item, and stop singing.
2. Allow the prison guards to take this item, and keep singing.

**Sing or listen to a song that makes you feel brave.
Write it down here:**



The Freedom Riders learned to sing with their mouths closed after their toothbrushes were taken, to keep their breath to themselves!

Freedom Rider Toothbrush Song

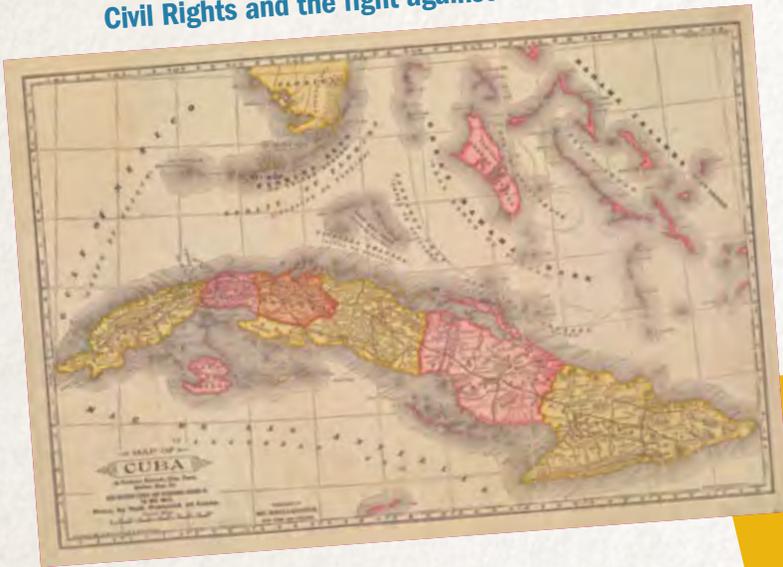
You can take our toothbrush, oh yes
 You can take our toothbrush, oh yes
 You can take our toothbrush
 You can take our toothbrush
 You can take our toothbrush, oh yes

WHILE THE WORLD WATCHES



Courtesy of Library of Congress

Civil Rights and the fight against Communism



Courtesy of Library of Congress



Communism: A philosophy of government and economics where the whole community owns things like land, factories, and machines and is supposed to share the wealth created. A **communist** is a person, institution, or government that supports or believes in these principles.

Across the world, newspapers reported on the Freedom Rides. Only a month before, international headlines featured another story about the U.S.—a failed attempt to overthrow a **communist** dictator in Cuba.

The U.S. said this dictator threatened freedom and democracy. Many countries pointed out the contradiction between protecting freedom and democracy abroad, but denying it to citizens at home.

April 17, the U.S. invades Cuba. It is called the Bay of Pigs Invasion.

Read the excerpts from President Kennedy's Address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D.C. on April 20, 1961 and answer the questions below.

On that unhappy island, as in so many other arenas of the contest for freedom, the news has grown worse...It is not the first time that Communist tanks have rolled over gallant men and women fighting to redeem the independence of their homeland. Nor is it by any means the final episode in the eternal struggle of liberty against tyranny... it is clear that [the United States], in concert with all the free nations of this hemisphere, must take an ever closer and more realistic look at the menace of external Communist intervention and domination in Cuba...The evidence is clear—and the hour is late. We and our Latin friends will have to face the fact that we cannot postpone any longer the real issue of survival of freedom in this hemisphere itself...Together we must build a hemisphere where freedom can flourish...

What contradictions might other countries have noticed between the U.S. treatment of Cuba and the Freedom Riders?

Why would the opinion of these countries matter to the U.S. so much at this point in history?

Can you think of other situations where unfair treatment changes when people learn about it? Write them down here.

WE SHALL OVERCOME

There are three branches of government in the United States: Judicial, Executive, and Legislative. The Supreme Court (part of the Judicial branch) ruled segregation unconstitutional in 1954, but nothing changed. So a member of the Executive Branch, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, pushed the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to make new regulations. Cooperation between the branches made it more possible to enforce the rules.

The point of the Freedom Rides was to test the Supreme Court rulings allowing for integrated travel—and the test failed.

What were the names of these Supreme Court cases? (Hint: they're on page 2!)



President Barack Obama and Congressman John Lewis exchange a hug during the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. Official White House Photo by Pete Souza.

What Happened to the Freedom Riders?

Rides are over but challenges remained.



My mother sent me a letter, after the Freedom Rides. My mother said, 'Son, you can't come home now.' It was two and a half years before I could go home to see my family. My parents had to take the phone out of their house [because of death threats against us]."

William Harbour, p. 34, from *Breach of Peace* by Eric Etheridge



John Lewis (1940 – 2020)

Despite these struggles, Freedom Riders went on to become leaders of their communities. They became teachers, professors, ministers, lawyers, journalists, and politicians. John Lewis, a Freedom Rider and civil rights activist, went on to become a congressperson. Many continued advocating for equality.

Mug shots courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History

The ICC's new regulations went into effect on November 1, 1961. Slowly, the "White" and "Colored" signs came down.

If it weren't for the Freedom Riders, things might have stayed the same. While the Freedom Riders campaigned, a baby was born. This baby, named Barack Obama, would go on to become the first Black president of the United States.

Because of the courage of civil rights activists who stood up for racial equality, an African American would one day sit behind the President's desk.

Close your eyes and imagine what might be different in the United States if courageous people like Freedom Riders had not stood up for civil rights?

Freedom Riders continued to make positive contributions in their communities through their careers, activism, and personal interests. Draw a picture of how you'd like to contribute when you're an adult. What job would you like to have? What would you work to improve? How would you help others?

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL WITH SKIN COLOR?

Why did White supremacists think the way they did? Let's go back in time to understand.

Thomas Jefferson, third President of the U.S., claimed that African Americans “are inferior to the Whites in the endowments of both body and mind.”

- Notes on the State of Virginia, 1785

These beliefs helped White Americans accept the terrible treatment of African Americans. Plantation owners became millionaires off the free labor of the enslaved. Though slavery in America ended after the Civil War in 1865, racist beliefs continued. These racist beliefs influenced the development of Jim Crow laws and other discriminatory policies that prevented African Americans from receiving a good education, good job, fair housing, and enjoying basic things like sitting at a lunch counter. The legacy of these unfair rules is still visible today.



During this time, many other types of protests were taking place. For example, sit-ins at diner counters shone a light on racial injustice in restaurants, where African Americans were often forced to stand or eat outside. These types of protests showed the power of ordinary people taking collective, direct action.



Portrait of Thomas Jefferson
courtesy of Library of Congress

Decode the Truth

Despite these unfair beliefs and policies, many African Americans achieved great success in their professions. **Unscramble the names below to learn about a few National Park sites founded to honor their contributions.**

Gamige L. Klewar

— — — — —
This person was the first African American woman to found and be President of a bank. She was also a newspaper editor, and stood for equality in the face of Jim Crow laws. Go to Richmond, Virginia to visit the National Park site named in her honor.

Photo courtesy of National Park Service Collections



Clasher Gunoy

— — — — —
Born to enslaved parents, this person rose to become the third African American graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and the first African American to become a National Park Service superintendent. Go to Wilberforce, OH to visit the National Park site named in his honor.

Photo courtesy of National Park Service Collections



Answers: 1. Maggie L. Walker – to learn more, visit Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site 2. Charles Young – to learn more, visit Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument

DID YOU KNOW

Analysis of the human genome revealed that all humans are 99.9% the same.

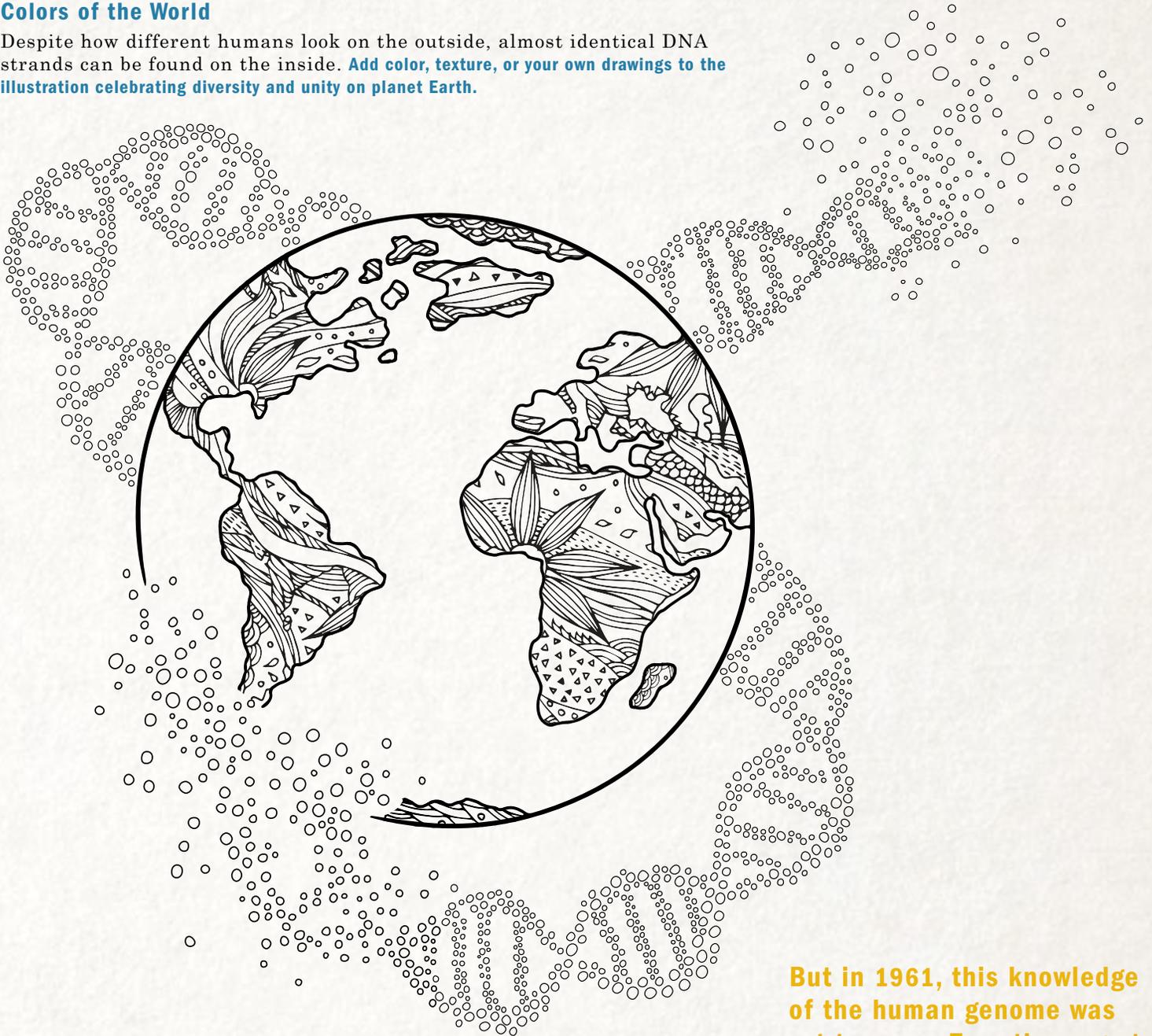
In the year 2001, scientists studying the human *genome* made an incredible discovery. This discovery would forever change how we understand race.

Each one of us evolved in the last 100,000 years from the tribes that migrated out of Africa.

For centuries, those in power justified the oppression of Black people by claiming they were inferior. The lie of difference between the races, used to the advantage of those in power, has finally and officially been proven wrong.

Colors of the World

Despite how different humans look on the outside, almost identical DNA strands can be found on the inside. **Add color, texture, or your own drawings to the illustration celebrating diversity and unity on planet Earth.**



Genome: The entire genetic code of an organism. This includes all of the organism's genes and the DNA code that they are made of. In humans, that's over 20,000 genes! Genes are sections of DNA that code for something specific, like your eye or hair color.

But in 1961, this knowledge of the human genome was yet to come. Turn the page to learn how civil rights activists pursued racial equality in the 1960s.

AFTER THE FREEDOM RIDES: CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE 1960s

Many civil rights efforts came before, and many came after. This list includes a few of the major milestones of the 1960s.



President Lyndon Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, preventing employment discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin.



Also known as the Mississippi Summer Project. Volunteers flocked to Mississippi to register African American voters, who had for years been barred from voting booths.



The Selma-to-Montgomery Marches were organized in Alabama to end voter registration discrimination. The marches took place along the 54 miles that separated Selma and Montgomery. To learn more, visit the [Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail](#).



This day went on to be known as "Bloody Sunday." Here's why: the Selma-to-Montgomery marchers were attacked by police and White segregationists.



IT'S NOT OVER

The fight for racial equality continues to this day. The civil rights movement has also inspired the pursuit of equality among women, LGBTQ+, differently-abled, and others.



PROJECT "C"
APRIL-MAY
1963

Led by Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., this effort sought to end racial discrimination in **Birmingham, AL. Visit Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument** to learn more.

JUNE
11
1963

Governor of Alabama and segregationist, George Wallace, stands in the doorway of the University of Alabama to block two Black students from registering. To learn more about school desegregation, visit **Little Rock Central High National Historic Site**.

SEPTEMBER
15
1963

Four little girls are killed when White supremacists explode a bomb at the **16th St. Baptist Church** in downtown Birmingham. Visit the church to learn more.

AUGUST
28
1963

March on Washington where Dr. King gives his famous, "I Have a Dream" speech. **Visit the National Mall and Memorial Parks** to learn more.

AUGUST
6
1965

Partially in response to marches such as the ones mentioned before, President Lyndon Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act of 1965, prohibiting literacy tests as a voting requirement.

APRIL
4
1968

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated on the balcony of his hotel room in Memphis, TN. To learn more about Dr. King and his legacy, visit **Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site**.

SPRING
1968

The Poor People's March was an effort to demand human rights and economic justice for America's poor. Dr. King served as one of the major organizers, having focused much of the advocacy of his last years on the common struggles of poor people across races.

APRIL
10
1968

African Americans and other minorities were prevented by those in power from living in the better parts of town. If they tried to move into these areas, they were met with hostility and violence. In the days following Dr. King's assassination, the Fair Housing Act of 1968 was signed into law to ensure housing equality.

LETTER TO A FREEDOM RIDER

If I could use one word to describe you, it would be:

An important thing I want you to know about me is:

When I heard you were fighting to end unfair laws,
I thought:

One thing I learned about the Freedom Rides that
surprised me was:

Something you've inspired me to do is:



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INTERVIEW AN ADULT

Speak to an adult born before 1955 and ask them the following:

What did your family think of the Freedom Rides?

Reflecting on the Freedom Rides, what is your advice for younger people like me?

What's an experience of segregation you remember?

Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History



CONGRATULATIONS!

Before you go...

there's one more thing. Find a Park Ranger/Certifying Adult to help you do the Junior Ranger Pledge!

As a Junior Ranger, I promise to remember the story of the Freedom Riders. When I return home, I will share what I have learned with my friends and family. I will teach others how the Freedom Riders helped make our country a more safe and just place for all.

Write down one thing you learned that you plan to teach others when you return home:



Courtesy of Mississippi Department of Archives and History



FREEDOM RIDERS JUNIOR RANGER CERTIFICATE

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Freedom Riders National Monument



THIS CERTIFIES THAT

Has successfully met the requirements to become a Junior Ranger of

FREEDOM RIDERS NATIONAL MONUMENT
ANNISTON, AL

Park Ranger/Certifying Adult

Date