**Inside the Vault**

*Meanwhile Back at the Branch...* with Professor Barbara Harris Combs

**Thursday, November 3, 2022**
How to Participate

• If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature.
• We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.

For Security and Privacy
• Your microphone is automatically muted.
• Your camera is automatically turned off.
Barbara Harris Combs, J.D., Ph.D. is a professor of sociology and criminal justice and chair of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Kennesaw State University. Combs is a humanist and interdisciplinary scholar who received her Ph.D. in sociology with a concentration in race and urban studies from Georgia State University in 2010. She also holds a J.D. from The Ohio State University and an MA in English from Xavier University (Ohio). She brings this interdisciplinary background to her study of society.
Meanwhile back at the Branch…

…In hundreds of cities the Big Protest is followed by local NAACP action.

*Meanwhile Back at the Branch…*, June 1965. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09640.161)
Break-through and Follow-through

While the Big Push was on at one place (Selma, Ala.) at one time (February-March, 1965) using one method (direct confrontation with authorities) and with one objective (the right to register and vote) a lot of Other Pushes were under way all over the nation, pressed by NAACP Branches and their members.

A Big Break-through requires Follow-through, or the break goes for nothing.

NAACP units in every section of the country were busy with follow-throughs on voter registration, employment, school desegregation, public accommodations, direct action, legislation, housing, the war on poverty — you name it, they were at work upon it, adults and youth alike.

That is the kind of organization the NAACP is. Noisy when it has to be. Smart and soft-talking when required. Busy and determined always, whether in Alabama or Alaska. And continuous, from season to season, year to year, political administration after political administration, problem after problem.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 1965, back at hundreds of local NAACP branches on the civil rights front the records tell the story:
NAACP units in every section of the country were busy with follow-throughs on voter registration, employment, school desegregation, public accommodations, direct action, legislation, housing, the war on poverty — you name it, they were at work upon it, adults and youth alike.
Public Accommodations

Armed with the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, NAACP branches and youth units made tests for compliance in places of public accommodations. Many hotels, motels, restaurants, recreation facilities, etc., voluntarily obeyed the new law. When resistance was encountered, the NAACP withdrew and instituted legal action as outlined in the Act.

1. After being refused service in a local all-white cafe, two members of the Little Rock Branch (Ark.) filed a suit against the owner.

Meanwhile Back at the Branch..., June 1965.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09640.161, page 5)
Jimmie Lee Jackson

- Jackson was born in Marion, Alabama, on December 16, 1938.
- He was a deacon and civil rights activist, and he participated in a march on February 18, 1965, in Marion to protest the arrest of a fellow activist.
- Police officers dispersed the march and followed participants to a café, where they began beating them.
- While trying to protect his mother, Jackson was shot in the stomach by the police.
- He died from his injuries 8 days later on February 26, 1965.

Meanwhile Back at the Branch... June 1965.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09640.161, page 6)

13. The NAACP in Florida and Georgia is seeking to have the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare cut off Federal funds to area hospitals that continue to discriminate against Negroes.

14. NAACP and NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund joined in filing the first complaints under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act against 12 hospitals in seven southern states, calling for an immediate investigation into the discriminatory practices of the federally-aided or administered institutions.

15. In a suit brought by the NAACP, a Federal District Court in February ordered the Orangeburg (S. C.) Regional Hospital to integrate its facilities completely.

16. Prompted by complaints of Negroes, the NAACP in March demanded that the YMCA National Council eliminate “a policy of racial exclusion” practiced by its local branches in some southern cities, or face the possibility of direct action protests.

17. In April, NAACP foiled the scheme of a Little Rock, Ark., American Legion post to reopen the city’s swimming pools on a segregated basis.

18. NAACP in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., is preparing a suit aimed at remedying the deplorable segregated hospital, jail and school facilities uncovered by an investigation.

19. The Kentucky State Conference conducted a mammoth, one-day blanket attack on discrimination in places of public accommodation in the City of Madisonville, on June 12, by sending interracial teams to test hotels, motels, restaurants and other public establishments.
School Desegregation

The NAACP’s battle against segregation in the public schools of the North and South continues across the nation. And, in order that all children may learn of the Negro’s contribution to American culture, branches have been waging a successful campaign to have Negro History taught in the public schools.

Meanwhile Back at the Branch..., June 1965.
(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09640.161, page 7)
"The Clansman did us much injury as a book, but most of its readers were those already prejudiced against us. It did us more injury as a play, but a great deal of what it attempted to tell could not be represented on the stage. Made into a moving picture play it can do us incalculable harm."
- James Weldon Johnson, 1915

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC05091)
The Birth of a Nation

8. In a nationwide effort urged by the New York State Conference and the National Office in February, NAACP units voiced their opposition to the film industry’s celebration of the 50th anniversary of the release of the notorious anti-Negro movie, “The Birth of a Nation.”

9. Following three days of picketing by the South Middlesex Branch in near zero weather in February, management of the Brattle Street Theatre in Cambridge, Mass., discontinued the scheduled run of “Birth of a Nation.”

10. After a meeting with representatives of Greenwich, Conn., NAACP, the manager of a local theatre cancelled a scheduled showing of “Birth of a Nation.”

11. All theatres and drive-in movies in Dodge City, Kans., upon the request of the NAACP, promised not to show “Birth of a Nation.”
Meanwhile Back at the Branch... June 1965.

(The Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09640.161, page 24)

Law Enforcement and Police Brutality

Society as a whole: political, economic, social factors

Parts of society: groups, organizations

Actions of individuals

1. NAACP protests over the shooting of 18-year-old Ollie W. Shelby of Jackson, Mississippi, while in the custody of authorities in January was followed by the firing of 21 Hinds County deputy sheriffs, including the chief criminal deputy, and a grand jury probe of the young Negro’s death.

2. Branches in Florida wired state and Federal officials demanding an investigation into the police shooting of 17-year-old Tommy Wilson of Tampa and the suspension of the police chief.

3. National Office and units throughout the nation angrily denounced Judge W. Harold Cox’s dismissal of felony indictments against 16 of 18 white men arrested in connection with the murder of the three civil rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

4. In February, New York City branches staged mass rallies to protest senseless killing of Ollie W. Shelby in Mississippi and scandalous handling of George Whitmore, Jr., case in Brooklyn, N. Y. Similar rallies protesting police brutality were conducted
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Upcoming Programs

Inside the Vault:
December 1 at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT)

- We will be joined by Charles Dew (Williams College) to discuss the South Carolina Ordinance of Secession.

January 5 at 7 p.m. ET (4 p.m. PT)

- We will be joined by Jesse Erickson (The Morgan Library and Museum) to discuss documents in the current exhibition: Fighting to Learn: Black Enfranchisement and Education in the Gilder Lehrman Collection.
Every Sunday at 2 p.m. ET (11 a.m. PT)

Upcoming Book Breaks

November

November 6, 2022 - Steve A. Steinbach and Maeva Marcus on *With Liberty and Justice for All? The Constitution in the Classroom*

*With Liberty and Justice for All? The Constitution in the Classroom* is designed to help teachers and students analyze and debate an aspect of US history that has produced intense disagreements about rights and wrongs: constitutional history. For more than two centuries, Americans have argued about what the US Constitution permits or requires (or not), and what values and ideals it enshrines (or not)—indeed, who is to be included (or not) in the very definition of “We the People.” This book provides abundant resources to explore key moments of debate about the Constitution and its meaning, focusing on fundamental questions of citizenship and rights.

Steven A. Steinbach teaches US History and American Government at the Sidwell Friends School, Washington, DC. He is a three-time recipient of the US Presidential Scholars Distinguished Teacher recognition award.

Maeva Marcus is the director of the Institute for Constitutional Studies and a research professor of law at the George Washington University Law School.

Coming Soon

November 13 - Buzz Bissinger on *The Mosquito Bowl: A Game of Life and Death in World War II*

November 20 - Bruce Ragsdale on *Washington at the Plow: The Founding Farmer and the Question of Slavery*

November 27 - Michael Mandelbaum on *The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy: Weak Power, Great Power, Superpower, Hyperpower*

December 4 - Kermit Roosevelt on *The Nation That Never Was: Reconstructing America’s Story*
Upcoming Programs

**Affiliate School Program:** Join the Gilder Lehrman Affiliate School Program and gain access to numerous classroom-ready resources today!

**MA in American History:** Registration for Spring 2023 MA in American History courses begins on November 26. Applications for admission to the program are open now!

*History Now:* The new issue of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's online journal, *History Now*, is available online. It explores important aspects of the lives of the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence.

**Voting Rights in US History:** November 12 at 9 am CT

- **TEACHERS** - Join us at the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum for a free teacher workshop on Voting Rights in US History. Attendees will receive complimentary museum admission tickets. PD credits are available.
Visit our archive page
If you enjoy *Inside the Vault*, please consider supporting this free program with a tax-deductible donation to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.