

The Struggle Is Not Over! Libraries Using Primary Documents from Archives to Educate the Next Generation of users about History and Diversity

**Jacky Johnson, Western College Memorial Archives
Kwabena Sekyere, Information Services
Miami University Libraries**

Abstract

The Struggle Is Not Over! Libraries Using Primary Documents from Archives to Educate the Next Generation of users about History discusses how libraries can collaborate with their local school districts using student-led-panel discussions, field trips and primary documents in teaching diversity. It outlines how to plan such a program in terms of topics to consider, the kind of materials to use, identifying right class, sponsorship and activities to do to promote diversity and teach it.

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By

Jacky Johnson, Western College Memorial Archives

Kwabena Sekyere, Information Services

Miami University Libraries

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Summary

The Struggle Is Not Over! Libraries Using Primary Documents from Archives to Educate the Next Generation of users about History discusses how libraries can collaborate with their local school districts using student-led-panel discussions, field trips and primary documents in teaching diversity. It outlines how to plan such a program in terms of topics to consider, the kind of materials to use, identifying right class, sponsorship and activities to do to promote diversity and teach it.

Background

- Miami Libraries promotes diversity
- Promote diversity in library and outside library with our Diversity Cluster
- Educating the next generation of users about the past with the primary resources
- Having primary and secondary resources on freedom summer encouraged use the primary resources to educate the high school students about the Mississippi Summer Project

Freedom Summer

- Freedom Summer (also known as the Mississippi Summer Project) was a campaign in the United States launched in June 1964 to attempt to register to vote as many African American voters as possible in Mississippi, which up to that time had almost totally excluded black voters. The project was organized by the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a coalition of four established civil rights organizations:

Freedom Summer Cont'd

- the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), with SNCC playing the lead role. Well over 1,000 out-of-state volunteers participated in Freedom Summer alongside thousands of black Mississippians.

Freedom Summer cont'd

- Most of the volunteers were young, most of them from the North, most of them were white and many were Jewish. Two one-week orientation sessions for the volunteers were held at Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio (now part of Miami University), from June 14 to June 27.

Mississippi Summer 1964, Oxford, Ohio



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Mississippi Summer 1964, Oxford, Ohio



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Planning stages

- Identifying materials
- Identifying which group of people
- Funding or Sponsorship
- Activities

Identifying materials

- Primary document at the Western Archives
- Buildings at the western college campus (walking tour)
- National Underground Railroad Freedom Center which has some items on freedom summer and civil rights, etc
- Bibliography (books, videos, DVDs, websites) on freedom summer to help the students learn more about Freedom Summer
- Bibliography was to be given to the teacher for the students to get fore knowledge before the visits to Western Archives and National Underground National Railroad Freedom Center

Identifying which group of people to work with

- Contacted the school district - Talawanda
- School district contacted the diversity class, in our case the Talawanda High School
- Class was a taught by a history teacher
- Contacted the teacher and met with her to talk about our plan
- We invited her to the Archives to review the materials so she could incorporate the topic into her lesson plans

Funding or Sponsorship

- Organizing the activities involved in this collaboration helped us realize the need for funding
- Identified the Miami-Talawanda University Partnership Office which promotes partnership of Miami university and the local school district
- Submitted a grant proposal and was accepted

Activities

- Students' visit to the Western Archives with a talk on Freedom Summer by one of the witnesses of this historic event
- Students' trip to National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio
- A lecture at the library by Dr. Spencer Crew, CEO of National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

Talawanda High School Diversity Class visit to Freedom Center



Challenges

- Fund raising
- Organizing schedules
- Publicity
- High School students attendance at lecture byt Dr. Spence Crew because it was at night
- How to make history interesting to the audience
- Selecting an interesting scholar with a knowledge in Civil Rights History

Conclusion

- Student' experience – wrote essays to share their thoughts on the Mississippi Summer
- It educates the public
- Resources – allows us to use and share our resources
- Give people idea of what we librarians do
- Helps to teach diversity story
- Promotes history

Future

- Students'- led panel discussion in April 2008
- Students' participating in a panel discussion at the 2009 National Freedom Summer Conference, October 8-9, 2009 at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

Selected Bibliography for the class

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