

0. "WE SHALL OVERCOME" - Story Preface

1. LIFE in JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

2. JIM CROW in MISSISSIPPI

3. EMMETT TILL VISITS MISSISSIPPI

4. EMMETT TILL DIES in MISSISSIPPI

5. BLACK MAIDS and WHITE CHILDREN

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7. "FREEDOM SUMMER"

8. "WE SHALL OVERCOME"



The FBI issued a poster asking for information regarding the three missing "Freedom Summer" workers. Andy Goodman, James Chaney and Mickey Schwerner were in Mississippi, trying to help African-Americans register so they could vote in the upcoming 1964 November elections.

"Freedom Summer" took place in 1964, a national election year (with Barry Goldwater challenging Lyndon Johnson for the presidency). To help register more Mississippi voters, college students from around the country descended on the State. They were mightily resented by many white Mississippians.

Andy Goodman was one of those students. Studying at Queens College, in New York City, Goodman had been recruited by Michael ("Mickey") Schwerner who (with his wife, Rita) was already hard at work in the Delta. Mickey had become a close friend of James Chaney, a black man from Meridian.

Schwerner and Chaney invited Goodman to travel with them to Meridian. It was Andy's first day in Mississippi, and he was excited to team-up with more experienced activists. Events, however, took a very wrong turn for him and his companions as they made their way through Neshoba County.

Traveling in Mickey's car - on June 21st, 1964 - the three men were on the outskirts of a town called Philadelphia when they were stopped by deputy sheriff Cecil Price around 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Mickey could not have known that the "State Sovereignty Commission" had previously circulated a description of him, his car (a blue Ford station wagon) and its license number.

Although he was not wanted for a crime, Schwerner was an out-of-state (from New York) civil-rights worker. Incarcerated for some hours, in Sheriff Lawrence Rainey's jail, the three men were released about 10:30 the evening of their arrest.

Ten miles from the jail, as the colleagues traveled south of town, Cecil Price stopped them again. This time, however, it wasn't just Deputy Price who had words with the civil-rights workers.

A murderous group of klansmen killed all three, then hid their bodies in an under-construction earthen dam in a remote part of Neshoba County. According to a three-page contemporary investigation report, by H.L. Hopkins (who was working for the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission):

The FBI evidently believes that the plot to kill Schwerner was formulated over a period of several weeks and that Chaney and Goodman just happened to be along when he was murdered.

After an intensive search, their remains were finally located - thanks to a paid informant - on the 4th of August. Mississippi officials attempted to control autopsies of the three bodies, denying access to pathologists representing the families.

Despite the violence of "Freedom Summer" - 1,000 arrests, 80 beatings, 3 additional murders, 35 shootings and 65 bombed or burned-out buildings (including 35 churches) - civil-rights workers kept their focus.

Often singing "We Shall Overcome," they spread-out across Mississippi - visiting cotton-field workers, sharecroppers, domestics and a host of other people - thereby helping many African-Americans to become registered voters.

Student-activists did more than focus on registration mechanics, however. They also gave people of color hope for a better life by showing them how to escape from the limiting aspects of white society's stereotypical expectations.

The same song - "We Shall Overcome" - became the rallying cry of an entire movement dedicated to restoring the constitutionally guaranteed civil rights of all Americans, including "the help" who worked in Southern

homes (including those in, and around, Jackson).

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/-WE-SHALL-OVERCOME-The-Help>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/-WE-SHALL-OVERCOME-The-Help>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Is the Meaning of “We Shall Overcome?”

What does "We shall overcome" mean to you?

Have you ever had a situation, in your life, which you absolutely had to overcome? How did you overcome it?

The title of Kathryn Stockton’s book, and the film on which it is based, is called “The Help.” We automatically think that the title refers to the African-American domestics whose narratives are the core of the story. But ... the title could also refer to other things in the book/film. Identify one such thing and explain how it fits within the title.

Media Stream



Rita Schwerner

Photo of Rita Schwerner, online courtesy Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Rita-Schwerner>



Cecil Ray Price - Deputy Sheriff

Photo of Cecil Ray Price, online courtesy Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Cecil-Ray-Price-Deputy-Sheriff>



Sheriff Lawrence Rainey

Image of Sheriff Lawrence Rainey - at his arraignment for the murders of Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman - online, courtesy Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Sheriff-Lawrence-Rainey>



"WE SHALL OVERCOME"

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/-WE-SHALL-OVERCOME->



Freedom Summer in Mississippi - 1964

Clip from "Eyes on the Prize," online courtesy PBS. Copyright, PBS, all rights reserved. Provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Freedom-Summer-in-Mississippi-1964>



Freedom Summer - Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Freedom-Summer-Schwerner-Chaney-and-Goodman>



"We Shall Overcome" - Mahalia Jackson

Clip of Mahalia Jackson, singing "We Shall Overcome," during her 1971 European Tour, online courtesy YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/-We-Shall-Overcome-Mahalia-Jackson>

Trailer - "The Help"

Preview clip online, courtesy Touchstone Pictures.

Director:

Tate Taylor

Producers:

Chris Columbus
Michael Barnathan
Brunson Green

Screenplay:

Tate Taylor

Based on:

The Help by Kathryn Stockett

Starring:

Viola David
Emma Stone
Bryce Dallas Howard
Octavia Spencer
Jessica Chastain
Sissy Spacek
Mike Vogel
Allison Janney
Chris Lowell

Musical Score:

Thomas Newman

Cinematographer:

Stephen Goldblatt

Studios:

DreamWorks Pictures
Reliance Entertainment
Participant Media
Imagination
1492 Pictures

Distributor:

Touchstone Pictures

Release Date:

August 10, 2011

Run time:

146 minutes

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Trailer-The-Help->



The Help - Behind the Scenes in Jackson

Behind-the-scenes clip - for the filming of "The Help" - online, courtesy Newsocracy's Channel at YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Help-Behind-the-Scenes-in-Jackson>

