

Title: Nashville Sit-Ins Source Analysis

Creator: Educators in Tennessee



NATIONAL HISTORICAL
PUBLICATIONS
& RECORDS COMMISSION

Standards

US 80: Describe the significant events in the struggle to secure civil rights for African Americans, including: Montgomery Bus Boycott; Integration of Clinton High School in Clinton, TN; Integration of Central High School in Little Rock, AR; Freedom Riders; Tent City in Fayette County, TN; Marches, demonstrations, boycotts, and **sit-ins (e.g. Nashville)**; March on Washington, DC; Birmingham bombings of 1963; Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.; Highlander Folk School

Materials

- Primary sources
- Graphic organizer

Primary Sources

1. "Negro sit-ins resumed here" article: <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/987>
2. "Transcribed dialogue between Mayor Ben West, Diane Nash, and protesters regarding desegregation of lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee.": <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/960>
3. "It reads the same on both sides" political cartoon: <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/997>
4. "Lunch counter strikes hit city" article: <https://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll18/id/995>

⇒ Included in this activity are transcriptions for each of the newspaper articles listed above. They are included to improve readability because the words on the images of the articles are small when printed on a standard-sized page. If you'd like to use the actual newspaper article, visit the links above and download on larger pager.

Activity Instructions:

- Separate the students into 4 groups, giving each group a different primary source to analyze.
- Each group should then use their assigned primary source to fill out the graphic organizer.
- When the students are finished analyzing their assigned sources, each group can share with the class what they learned about the Nashville sit-ins from their group's primary source.
- This could potentially lead into a discussion on the use of non-violent protest during the Civil Rights era as a means to effect change.

Primary Source Analysis

<p>What type of primary source are you analyzing?</p>	<p>Summarize the source in one sentence.</p>
<p>Why was this source created? What was its purpose? Who was the audience?</p>	<p>What is one thing that surprised you about this source?</p>

Negro Sit-ins Resumed Here

By DAVID HALBERSTAM

Nashville Negroes swarmed into the downtown area yesterday and resumed their protests against segregated eating facilities with sit-in demonstrations at nine restaurants.

One by one the stores closed down their counters as approximately 120 Negro students, about 10 white students and some older Negroes sat down. * * *

The demonstrations, which ended a three week truce, were comparatively peaceful.

THEY APPEARED to meet a changed policy on the part of both police and merchants. Only four Negroes were arrested. Only one brief incident of violence was reported.

The only Negroes served were a pair of light skinned students who were mistaken for whites by a waitress at Harveys.

The demonstrations which began about 2 p.m. after the youths attended a briefing session at the First Baptist church, 319 Eighth ave., N., and lasted until about 4:30 p.m. touched these places:

Woolworth's, McLellan's, Kress, Walgreen's, Harveys, Trailways terminal, Cain-Sloan, and Moon-McGrath.

Only at Moon-McGrath did the Negroes come into conflict with the law. There, at the Union street drug store, which has seen little of the protest demonstrations, four students were arrested for sitting at the counter.

They were charged with disorderly conduct and released on \$50 bail. The four were:

Miss Jean Fleming, 20, Fisk, John Robert Lewis, 20, American Baptist seminary, Dennis Foote, 22, A&I, and O. D. Hunt, 20, A&I.

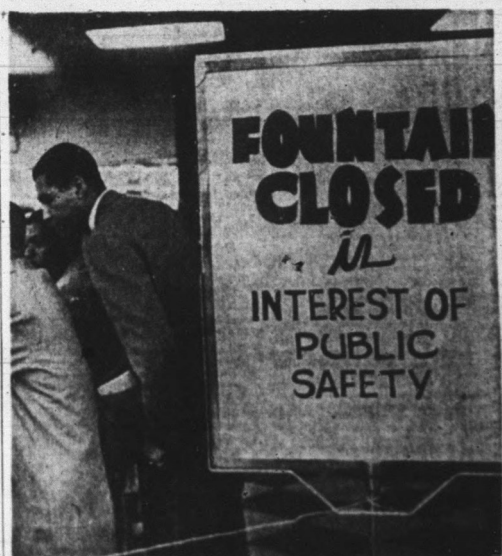
BUT OTHERWISE the Negroes received better police protection than they have on previous sit-ins when they were beaten and harassed by groups of white hoodlums.

The hoodlums were in town yesterday, hanging together in groups of four and five. But city police and detectives were in every store, moving the whites out of the aisles, and keeping them from congregating.

Once, lightning fast, violence struck. A white student rushed Garnett Bond, a Negro demonstrator from behind as Bond sat at the Grant's counter, hitting him

(Continued on Page 2, Column 2)

Sit-in Leader



—Staff photo by Jimmy Ellis

Student sit-in leader Rodney Powell, standing, talks with two of his companions after the lunch counter at Walgreen's drug store was closed yesterday afternoon when the sit-ins started.

"Negro Sit-ins Resumed Here":

Located in *The Nashville Tennessean*, March 26, 1960, front page

Transcription of "Negro Sit-ins Resumed Here" from the *Nashville Tennessean*, March 26, 1960, front page

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(Continued on Page 2, Column 2)

4-19-60

WEST: I AM GLAD TO MEET YOU HERE IN RESPONSE TO YOUR TELEGRAM.

I DENY AND I RESENT TO THE ~~XXXX~~ BOTTOM OF MY SOUL THE IMPLICATIONS YOU HAVE ~~MADE~~^{Real} IN THAT STATEMENT. I INTEND TO SEE THAT ORDER IS MAINTAINED ^{in this city.}

I FACED 300 TO 400 ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ WHITE SEGREGATIONISTS UP HERE IN THE CITY ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ COUNCIL CHAMBER WHEN WE DESEGREGATED THE SCHOOLS, AND I ~~XXX~~ TOLD THEM THE SAME THING I AM TELLING YOU. AS GOD IS MY HELPER, THE LAW IS GOING TO BE ENFORCED IN NASHVILLE.

I AM DOING MY BEST TO FIND THE PERSON WHO BOMBED THE HOME OF MY FRIEND, COUNCILMAN ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ LOOBY.

WE ARE GOING TO ARREST LAW VIOLATORS AND THAT GOES FOR YOU, GOO. IF YOU VIOLATE THE LAW, YOU ARE GOING TO BE ARRESTED.

YOUR LEADERS HAVE KEPT IN IN IGNORANCE ABOUT THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE CITY OF NASHVILLE. . . . BUT I CAN'T TELL THE STORE OWNERS WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO WITH THEIR PROPERTY. . . .

WE ARE ALL CHRISTIANS TOGETHER. I AM THE REV. C. T. ~~XXXXXXXXX~~ VIVIAN'S BROTHER AND HE IS MY BROTHER, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT. LET'S ALL PRAY TOGETHER.

VOICE FROM CROWD: WHAT ABOUT EATING TOGETHER?

WEST: IT ~~XXXXXX~~ DOESN'T MATTER IF THE ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ SKY FALLS, I AM GOING TO DO MY DUTY.

~~XXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ NASH: MR. MAYOR, WE WANT TO ASK YOU THIS: IT IS WRONG TO DISCRIMINATE ~~XXXXXXXX~~ SOLELY BECAUSE OF RACE?

WEST: I APPEAL TO ALL CITIZENS TO HAVE NO DISCRIMINATION, NO HATRED, NO BIAS, NO ~~XXXX~~ BIGOTRY.

NASH: WE ASK YOU TO STOP SEGREGATION AT THE LUNCH COUNTERS.

WEST: ONE OF MY FIRST ACTS AS MAYOR WAS TO DESEGREGATE THE LUNCH COUNTER AT THE NASHVILLE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT.

NASH: DO YOU RECOMMEND DESEGREGATION OF THE LUNCH COUNTERS IN THE STORES:

PAGE 1 "Transcribed dialogue between Mayor Ben West, Diane Nash, and protesters regarding desegregation of lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee.":

Located in the Fred Travis Papers, 1940-1994.

WEST: YES, YES. BUT THAT IS UP TO THE STORE OWNERS.

YOU, TOO, ^{have the power} ~~can~~ DESTROY OUR CITY. WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS IN THIS COMMUNITY.

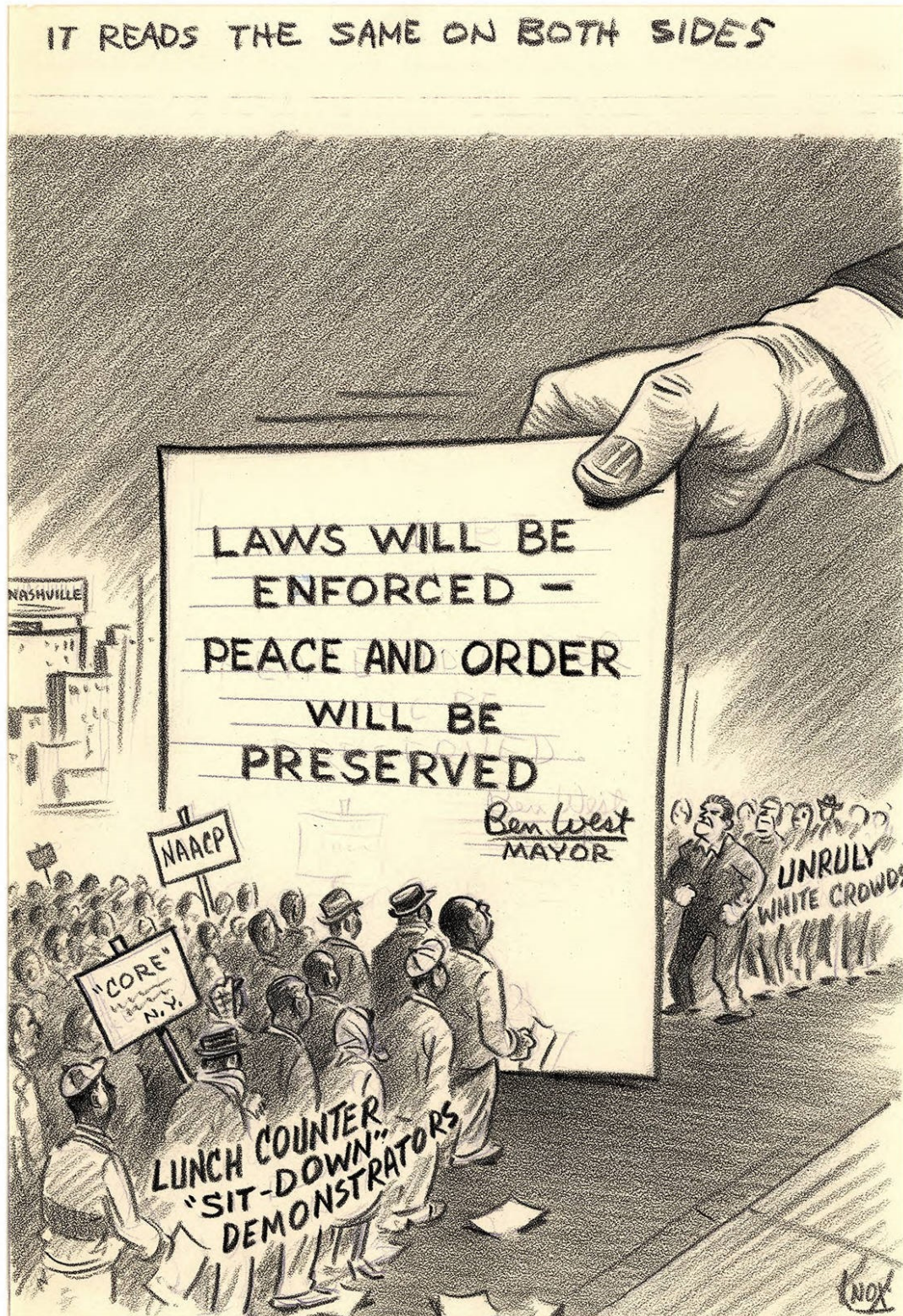
(IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION ABOUT THE LUNCH COUNTERS)

I CAN'T TELL THE MAN HOW TO RUN HIS BUSINESS. HE HAS GOT HIS RIGHTS, TOO.

Vivian: ... , leading & destroy it

PAGE 2 "Transcribed dialogue between Mayor Ben West, Diane Nash, and protesters regarding desegregation of lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee.":

Located in the Fred Travis Papers, 1940-1994.



"It reads the same on both sides" political cartoon:

Located in Jack Knox Papers 1932-1978 (THS Collection)

Lunch Counter Strikes Hit City

100 Students Appear
At 3 Variety Stores;
Demonstration Quiet

By JAMES TALLEY

An estimated 100 students—about 90 of them Negroes—went on a two-hour sitdown strike at lunch counters in three Nashville variety stores yesterday after waitresses refused to serve them.

It apparently was part of a nationwide passive resistance movement by Negroes against lunch counter segregation.

THE STUDENTS walked into Woolworth, Kress and McClellan stores all in the same block on Fifth avenue, North, about 12:40 p.m. and asked to be served lunch. Managers at Kress and McClellan immediately closed their counters. The Woolworth counter was closed about an hour later.

The students were from Fisk university, A&I university, and American Baptist Theological seminary, a Negro school on Whites Creek pike.

"We just got tired of having no place to eat when we shop downtown," said Miss Diane Nash, a Fisk junior. "So we decided to do something about it."

Miss Nash, a Negro, said the sitdown strike was intended as "a spontaneous student movement for equal recognition—not boycott."

However Robert Bruce, assistant manager at Woolworth, said "seven or eight" of the students—including a white boy—entered the store Friday and counted the seats at the two lunch counters.

PAUL LAPARD, one of the white Fisk students in the group, said the waitresses and managers at each store "were courteous, but not particularly nice."

At McClellan's several clerks began sitting down in front of the store's two lunch counters, apparently to keep the students from filling the seats. They later gave up this attempt.

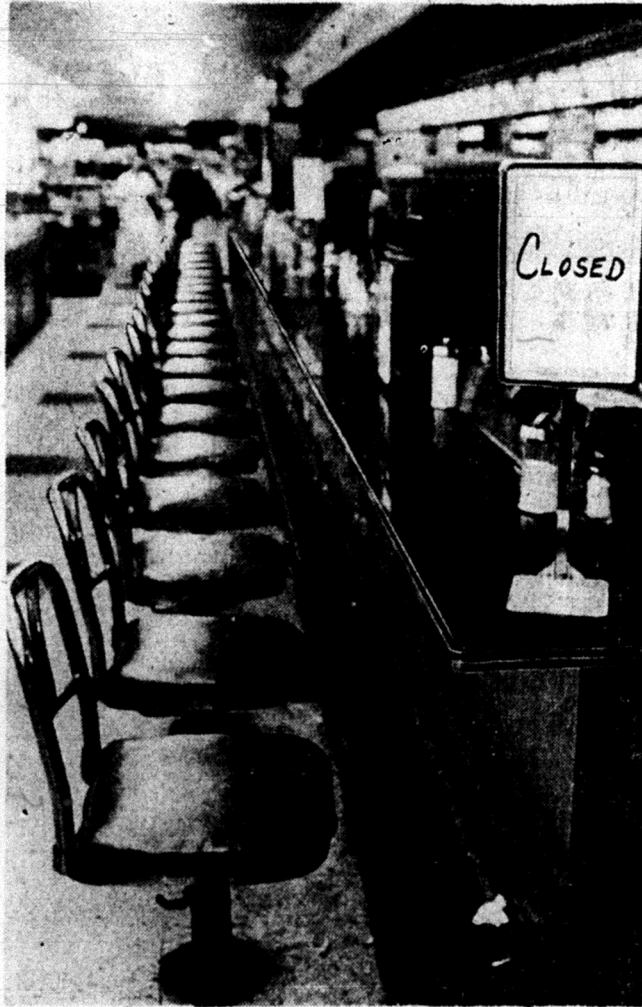
The demonstration was orderly. There were no incidents. Some of the students wandered about the stores, purchasing candy and other items, then returned to the counters. Some read books; others studied their school homework.

Carl May, another Negro student leader, said the idea for the sitdown strike originated Wednesday at Fisk and later spread to A&I and the seminary "like a snowball rolling."

He said there was no "planned" picketing of the stores.

SEVERAL CITY detectives were on hand before the demonstration broke up about 2:40 p.m. Before the students left four uniformed policemen arrived, visited each store, and told the managers authorities could not stop the demon-

Counter Punch



—Staff photo by Jimmy Ellis

An empty row of lunch counter seats at Woolworth's variety store—that is the scene minutes after scores of Negro students abandoned their sit-down strike. The counter was closed and they were refused service.

stration unless there were incidents.

May said he expects the demonstrators to be back at the stores Monday—"and maybe every day" this week.

John Nye, one of the white students, said the group has given thought to "visiting" several other Nashville department stores. The three stores involved yesterday were all nationally-owned.

"We are primarily concentrating on national places," Nye said, "but we may go to the local places too."

Lapard said the idea for the demonstration came from the demonstrations in North and South Carolina.

NEGROES IN Rock Hill, S.C., sought counter service Friday at the Woolworth store there. The demonstration was peaceful except for one egg-throwing incident and

heckling and jeering by several white students. That lunch counter was closed after Negroes arrived.

Negroes in New York's Harlem demonstrated yesterday. Support for the movement from churches and anti-discrimination organizations also was bolstering the efforts of a North Carolina Negro attorney who said yesterday he would take the case of 41 arrested demonstrators to the U.S. Supreme court if necessary.

Z. Alexander Looby, a Negro attorney and Nashville leader for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said the NAACP "definitely had nothing" to do with the demonstration here.

Most of the young students sat with their coats on. They braved a heavy snowstorm to make the trek downtown.

"Lunch Counter Strike Hits City":

Located in *The Nashville Tennessean*, February 14, 1960, page 10-A

(Part 1) Transcription of “Lunch Counter Strikes Hit City” from the *Nashville Tennessean*, February 14, 1960, page 10-A

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