

*9-12 Women in the Civil Rights Movement*

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# *Why were women in the Civil Rights movement overlooked?*



Woman fingerprinted. Mrs. Rosa Parks, Negro seamstress, whose refusal to move to the back of a bus touched off the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala. December 1, 1955. Archived in 1956. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/94500293/>.

## **Supporting Questions**

1. Why were women in the Montgomery bus boycott overlooked?
2. Were women integral to the Black Panther Party?
3. Were the Black Panther's sexist?

## 9-12 Women in the Civil Rights Movement

Compelling Question? Why were women in the Civil Rights Movement overlooked?	
<b>Content Angle and Standards</b>	<p><b>D2.His.1.9-12.</b> Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.</p> <p><b>D2.His.2.9-12.</b> Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.</p> <p><b>D2.His.11.9-12.</b> Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.</p> <p><b>D3.1.9-12.</b> Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.</p> <p><b>D3.3.9-12.</b> Identify evidence that draws information directly and substantially from multiple sources to detect inconsistencies in evidence in order to revise or strengthen claims.</p> <p><b>D3.4.9-12.</b> Refine claims and counterclaims attending to precision, significance, and knowledge conveyed through the claim while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.</p> <p><b>D4.1.9-12.</b> Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.</p> <p><b>D4.2.9-12.</b> Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or non-linear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical).</p>
<b>Staging the Compelling Question</b>	

Supporting Question 1
Why were women in the Montgomery bus boycott overlooked?
Formative Performance Task
Students will examine and analyze a variety of primary and secondary sources about the boycott and answer the supporting question.
Featured Sources

Supporting Question 2
Were women integral to the Black Panther Party?
Formative Performance Task
Students will examine and analyze a variety of secondary sources about the BPP and answer the supporting question.
Featured Sources

Supporting Question 3
Were the Black Panther's sexist?
Formative Performance Task
Students will examine and analyze a variety of secondary sources about the BPP and answer the supporting question.
Featured Sources

**Source A: Rosie the Riveter**  
**Source B: For Every Fighter a Woman Worker**  
**Source C: For your country's sake today-- for your sake tomorrow**

**Source A: Digital History**  
**Source B: "The Rank and File Women of the Black Panther Party and Their Powerful Influence" by Janelle Harris Dixon of Smithsonian Magazine**  
**Source C: Howard Zinn**  
**Source D: What Happened To Deborah Johnson After The Killing of Black Panther Party Leader Fred Hampton?**

**Source A: The first and only woman to lead the Black Panther Party, 'I have all the guns and money'**  
**Source B: The Black Panther's Revolutionary Feminism**  
**Source C: Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle**

**Summative Performance Task**

**ARGUMENT:** [*Was women's contribution to WWII anything new?*] Construct an argument (e.g., detailed outline, poster, essay) that evaluates the need to study, remember, and/or celebrate this expedition using specific claims and relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging competing views.

**EXTENSION.** After the above lessons, consider one of the following extensions to the learning.

- Discussion:** Consider facilitating a discussion of the analysis questions. Ask students to share their response with someone, or if they already worked in a group, ask them to nominate someone to represent their group to the class as a whole. Capitalize on differences between group responses. Why did one group answer differently than another? What impacted them or stood out more?
- Four Corner Debate:** Consider a "four-corner debate." In the corners of the room tack up a piece of paper with four differing and possible answers to the inquiry question. After students complete the lesson packet, pose the question to the room at large and ask students to move to the corner of the room (or in between locations) that represent their answer. Then, ask students to explain their choice. As students discuss they are allowed to move closer or further from ideas. This is a great strategy for kinesthetic learning.
- Socratic Seminar:** Consider doing a "Socratic seminar" to extend the learning and get students to question what they still don't know or understand. Start with the inquiry's question. Students should be encouraged to answer one another's question directly, but also to answer the question with another question. This continues the conversation and gets at more rich ideas. The teacher should try to say as little as possible and let the students lead the dialog. One strategy for this is to seat students in a circle. Give each of them a cup and 2-3 tokens. When a student makes a substantive contribution to the discussion the teacher will walk over and place a token in the cup signaling that they have contributed. Students will become aware of who has spoken and who has not, and leave space for one another.
- Structured Academic Controversy:** Consider turning the lesson into a "structured academic controversy." Take the overarching question and turn it into a "debate." Students can choose or be assigned a side in the debate and use the documents provided to argue their "answer" to the overarching question. They can argue over interpretations and credibility of some documents.
- Reacting to the Past:** Consider doing some role play with your class. Reacting to the Past is an active learning pedagogy of role-playing games designed by Barnard University. In Reacting to the Past games, students are assigned character roles with specific goals and must communicate, collaborate, and compete effectively to advance their objectives. Reacting promotes engagement with big ideas, and improves intellectual and academic skills. Provide students with a set of rules about staying in character and what types of things they must know about their character. Students should be provided with a packet of role sheets with instructions on their individual goals and strategies for game play. Students can use sources and information from these activities, and can search for more details online about their individual character. Reacting roles and games do not have a fixed script or outcome. While students are obliged to adhere to the philosophical and intellectual beliefs of the historical figures they

	<p>have been assigned to play, they must devise their own means of expressing those ideas persuasively in papers, speeches, or other public presentations.</p>
<p><b>Taking Informed Action</b></p>	<p><b>UNDERSTAND</b> The way women were treated in the past often times persists into the present in how we teach about it or in societal norms that have not changed. Students can examine the way that this issue is addressed in textbooks and standards, as well as exploring the ways that the issues at play are still relevant.</p> <p><b>ASSESS</b> Students should consider <i>what should be done</i> today to correct either the portrayal of women from this period in history or the issues at play?</p> <p><b>ACT</b> Students could take informed action in one of the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find an article or book about history that misrepresents women and gender in history and write to the author or editor.</li> <li>2. Write a letter to the Secretary of Education for your state about the teaching of women and gender history.</li> <li>3. Investigate women and gender rights issues that persist and engage with the movement by attending a protest, signing a petition, or donating to the cause.</li> <li>4. Make a PSA video, blog, or social media post with the intent to persuade the audience to better understand women from history or a persistent gender rights from this inquiry.</li> </ol>

*\*Featured sources are suggested and links are provided. It may be that these links are broken and we apologize in advance for the inconvenience.*

## Overview

### Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of women’s role in the Civil Rights Movement, beginning with the Montgomery Bus Boycott and ending with an investigation of the Black Panthers, students will explore topics within these movements to determine what caused women’s centrality in these stories to be overlooked?

This inquiry highlights the following additional thematic standards from NCSS:

- **POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- **TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.
- **CULTURE:** Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.

This inquiry also highlights the following additional thematic standards from the Common Core:

- **Key Ideas and Details 1.** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- **Key Ideas and Details 3.** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **Key Ideas and Details 7.** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- **Key Ideas and Details 8.** Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information.
- **Key Ideas and Details 9.** Synthesize information from a range of sources (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) into a coherent understanding of a process, phenomenon, or concept, resolving conflicting information when possible.
- **Text Types and Purposes 8.** Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

It is important to note that this inquiry requires prerequisite knowledge of some key terms, which are defined and provided to students in the inquiries where relevant. It would be helpful if students had previously learned about these movements, perhaps learned about topics like the blinding of Isaac Woodard, the lynching of Emmet Till, the Little Rock Nine, or similar stories from the period.

In addressing the compelling question, “Were women in the Civil Rights Movement overlooked?” students will need to weigh conflicting evidence from each of selected topics in the era. In the first period, students will explore the true story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott through primary sources followed by the fictional, cartoon version that was widely distributed and centralized Martin Luther King as the figurehead for the movement. In the second period, students will look at women’s role in the Black Panther Party, reading secondary articles about their centrality. In the third period, students will examine some stories of women who led and experienced sexism within the ranks of the BPP. Finally, students will work to write an argument answering the Compelling Question.

Note: This inquiry is expected to take 4 class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (e.g., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, featured sources, writing). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their students. This inquiry lends itself to differentiation and modeling of historical thinking skills while assisting students in reading the variety of sources.

## Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question students will do three performance tasks building to a Summative Performance Task that draws on student learning throughout the full inquiry. Throughout the inquiry, students are asked to do increasingly more challenging assignments and consider contrasting sources. This will help students develop their cognitive capacity to grapple with contradictory information and rise to the challenge of the Summative Performance Task. First students are asked to analyze primary source cartoons (using and interpreting evidence). In the second task, students will compare and contrast two sources about women’s factory work during the war, while in the third they will do a similar task for women’s service work during the war period. Finally, in the Summative Performance Task and the Extension, students need to pull together all of their varying perspectives and develop an argument using evidence and arguments gathered about the sources to defend a position.

## Staging the Compelling Question

In staging the compelling question, students may or may not know about women's contributions to the Civil Rights Movement as so much of their work has been overshadowed by the heroification of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Thurgood Marshall, and more incredible men. And yet women often started, facilitated, and led these movements. Both Montgomery and the Black Panthers could in large part be considered women's movements. This inquiry is designed to reconsider the narrative.

Consider doing a moving test of prior knowledge where students move about the room to different brainstorm boards, or sheets of paper, on which stimulating keywords are written such as: Montgomery Bus Boycott, Black Panther Party, Selma March, etc. Students will write down what they know about these different terms and build on what their peers may have written.

Teachers may also consider doing a broad introduction to understand the traditionally understood causes of the Civil Rights Movement: black men returning home from WWII. And while this narrative isn't untrue, Black women had for centuries been fighting a battle for bodily integrity against white men that came to a boiling point in 1944, a decade before the Civil Rights Movement, and was foundational in the movement that followed.

The objective of these two exercises are to help students recognize the traditional telling of these stories that masculinizes history and leaves women out. Teachers should with this inquiry and others begin to introduce students to the question, where are the women? As in almost every narrative they are present.

## Supporting Question 1: Why were Black women's stories overlooked in the Montgomery bus boycott?

The first supporting question—Why were Black women's stories overlooked in the Montgomery bus boycott?—gives students some insights into the mythology and perhaps reality of women's role in the Civil Rights movement. Students will examine primary and secondary sources about women's role in this movement and determine why they were overlooked.

The formative task requires students to examine primary source cartoons and analyze them for their deeper meanings and intentions. Students will use the following questions to support their learning.

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

- Have students read and examine the sources alone or with a partner.
- As they explore each source, students should respond to the guiding questions with a partner.
- After examining with depth all three images, students respond to the questions for analysis:

*Questions for Analysis:*

1. *How would you describe the women in these images? Consider their race, class, wealth, style, and demeanor.*
2. *How did government propaganda in WWII portray women's involvement?*

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources include the organizer above, a partner who may observe different details from them, and any devices that may help them understand or research words in the images they do not know. As this activity is exploratory, students need only to record their honest thoughts as they examine these images.

The following sources were selected to reflect some of the inaccurate portrayals of the movement. First students read "More Than a Seat on a Bus," an article by the groundbreaking historian Dr. Danielle McGuire who first explored this early perspective on the movement that centered women. Sources A-E are primary materials McGuire used to formulate her argument and reveal a problematic overshadowing of women's stories, with Source E revealing that Joann Robinson was literally replaced by Dr. Martin Luther King in the popular story.

- **Framing the Historical Controversy: "More Than A Seat on a Bus"**

The arrest of Mrs. Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama... We all know the popular story of what happened on that cold December day in 1955. Indeed, it has become an American myth. A soft-spoken seamstress with tired feet refused to move to the back of the bus to make room for a white man. Her spontaneous action and subsequent arrest sparked a yearlong boycott of the city's buses that brought down Jim Crow in the cradle of the Confederacy. And the path to black equality was cleared.

But that story, of Rosa Parks tiptoeing into history, both oversimplifies the deep roots of the boycott and disregards the bold actions of the many black women who made the Montgomery movement about more than a seat on a bus. In truth, the Montgomery Bus Boycott was a protest against racial and sexual violence, and Rosa Parks's arrest on December 1, 1955 was but one act in a life devoted to the protection and defense of black people generally, and black women specifically. Indeed, the bus boycott was, in many ways, the precursor to the #SayHerName twitter campaigns designed to remind us that the lives of black women matter.

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In 1997, an interviewer asked Joe Azbell, former city editor of the Montgomery Advertiser, who was the most important person in the bus boycott. Surprisingly, he did not say Rosa Parks. “Gertrude Perkins,” he said, “is not even mentioned in the history books, but she had as much to do with the bus boycott as anyone on earth.” On March 27, 1949, Perkins was on her way home from a party when two white Montgomery police officers arrested her for “public drunkenness.” They pushed her into the backseat of their patrol car, drove to a railroad embankment, dragged her behind a building, and raped her at gunpoint.

Left alone on the roadside, Perkins somehow mustered the courage to report the crime. She went directly to the Holt Street Baptist Church parsonage and woke Reverend Solomon A. Seay Sr., an outspoken minister in Montgomery. “We didn’t go to bed that morning,” he recalled. “I kept her at my house, carefully wrote down what she said and later had it notarized.” The next day, Seay escorted Perkins to the police station. City authorities called Perkins’s claim “completely false” and refused to hold a line-up or issue any warrants since, according to the mayor, it would “violate the Constitutional rights” of the police. Besides, he said, “my policemen would not do a thing like that.”

But African Americans knew better. What happened to Gertrude Perkins was no isolated incident. Montgomery’s police force had a reputation for racist and sexist brutality that went back years, and black leaders in the city were tired of it. When the authorities made clear that they would not respond to Perkins’s claims, local NAACP activists, labor leaders, and ministers formed an umbrella organization called the “Citizens Committee for Gertrude Perkins.” Rosa Parks was one of the local activists who demanded an investigation and trial, and helped maintain public protests that lasted for two months.

By 1949 Rosa Parks was an experienced anti-rape activist. The campaign on behalf of Perkins, for example, was modeled on a protest Parks helped launch several years earlier for Recy Taylor, a young black mother kidnapped and brutally raped in 1944 in the town of Abbeville, Alabama, by a group of white men who threatened to kill her if she told anyone. Taylor reported the crime anyway and the Montgomery NAACP sent Parks to Abbeville to investigate. After gathering Taylor’s testimony, Parks carried it back to Montgomery, where she and other activists launched “The Committee for Equal Justice for Mrs. Recy Taylor,” a nationwide campaign that demanded protection for black womanhood and accountability for Taylor’s assailants.

Two years after the protest on behalf of Gertrude Perkins, meanwhile, black activists rallied to defend yet another victim of white sexual violence in Montgomery. In February 1951, a white grocer named Sam Green raped a black teenager named Flossie Hardman whom he employed as a babysitter. After Hardman told her parents about the attack, they decided to press charges, and when an all-white jury returned a not-guilty verdict after five minutes of deliberation, the family reached out to community activists for help. Together, individuals such as Rufus Lewis, who organized voter registration campaigns, Rosa Parks, who was still serving as secretary of the Montgomery NAACP chapter, and members of the newly formed Women’s Political Council, launched a boycott of Green’s grocery store. After only a few weeks, African Americans delivered their own guilty verdict by driving Green’s business into the red.

By the early 1950s, then, a history of sexual assaults on black women and of the use of the boycott as a powerful weapon for justice had laid the groundwork for what was to come. Given that history, it made sense that city buses served as the flashpoint for mass protest. Other than police officers, few were as guilty of committing acts of racist violence and sexual harassment of black women as Montgomery’s bus operators, who bullied and brutalized black passengers daily. Worse, bus drivers had police power. They carried blackjacks and guns, and they assaulted and sometimes even killed African Americans who refused to abide by the racial order of Jim Crow.

In 1953 alone, African Americans filed over thirty formal complaints of abuse and mistreatment on the buses. Most came from working-class black women, mainly domestics, who made up nearly 70% of the bus ridership. They said drivers hurled nasty, sexualized insults at them, touched them inappropriately, and physically abused them. In May 1954, JoAnn Robinson, leader of the Women’s Political Council, threatened a boycott of Montgomery’s city buses, and only after months of futile efforts to get city officials to address the problem did the boycott finally come into being. Women walked rather than ride the buses, Rosa Parks said in 1956, not in support of her, but because she “was not the only person who had been mistreated and humiliated.” Other women, she said, “had gone through similarly shameful experiences, most worse than mine.”

These experiences propelled African American women into every conceivable aspect of the boycott. Women were the chief strategists and negotiators of the boycott and ran its day-to-day operation. Women helped

staff the elaborate car pool system, raised most of the local money for the movement, and filled the majority of the pews at the mass meetings, where they testified publicly about physical and sexual abuse on the buses. And of course, by walking hundreds of miles to protest their humiliation, African American women reclaimed their bodies and demanded the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Rooted in the struggle to protect and defend black womanhood from racial and sexual violence, the Montgomery Bus Boycott is impossible to understand and situate in its proper historical context without understanding the stories and saying the names of Gertrude Perkins, Flossie Hardman, Recy Taylor, and all the black women who were mistreated in Montgomery.

Today, as we celebrate the anniversary of Rosa Parks's arrest, witness the growth of the #BlackLivesMatter movement on city streets and campus quads across the country, and #SayHerName to demand an end to police violence against women of color, we should look to the past – and remember it correctly. Parks and the women who started the Montgomery bus boycott fought for more than a seat on the bus. They demanded the right to move through the world without being molested, fought against police brutality and racial and sexual violence, and insisted on the right to ownership and control of their own bodies.

*McGuire, Danielle. "More Than A Seat On The Bus." We're History. Last modified December 1, 2015.  
<http://werehistory.org/rosa-parks/>.*

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- **Featured Source A: “How Recy Taylor’s brutal rape has become a symbol of #MeToo and #TimesUp” by DeNeen L. Brown**

She was walking home from a church revival in her small Alabama town on the evening of Sept. 3, 1944, when a green Chevrolet filled with white men pulled up. Recy Taylor tried to run, but one of the men grabbed the 24-year-old black mother and forced her into the sedan. She was driven into a grove of pine trees, where, one by one, six men brutally raped her, threatening to cut her throat if she cried out, according to state records.

A few days later, news of the horrendous gang rape reached the office of the NAACP in Montgomery. The NAACP sent its best investigator to Abbeville, Ala., to find out why there had been no arrests. That investigator’s name was Rosa Parks.

More than a decade before Parks became a civil rights hero for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man, Parks led a national campaign against sexual assaults on black women... But in 1944, obtaining justice for a black woman in the segregated South was nearly impossible.

Parks was 31 when the NAACP sent her to Abbeville. She was propelled by her own experience with sexual assault. In an autobiographical sketch contained in her personal papers, she described how a white male neighbor had tried to rape her in 1931. “He offered me a drink of whiskey, which I promptly and vehemently refused,” Parks wrote. “He moved nearer to me and put his hand on my waist. I was very frightened by now.” Parks resisted. “I was ready to die but give my consent never. Never, never.” She said her boss raped her in a bank vault. Her sexual harassment case would make legal history.

In Abbeville, Parks found Taylor at her home, a cabin on a sharecropper’s plantation. Parks took notes as Taylor described the assault. After the men raped Taylor, they blindfolded her and left her on the side of a deserted road. “After they messed over and did what they were going to do me, they say, ‘We’re going to take you back. We’re going to put you out. But if you tell it, we’re going to kill you,’” Taylor, remembered in a 2011 interview with NPR’s Michel Martin when Taylor was 91.

About 3 a.m., Taylor’s father, who had been out searching for her, saw his daughter staggering along the highway. Recy Taylor’s friend, Fannie Daniel, who witnessed the abduction, had already reported the kidnapping to Will Cook, a former police chief who also owned a store. Taylor and her father reported the assault to the then-local county sheriff, Lewey Corbitt. One of the assailants, Hugo Wilson, confessed to the rape and named six other men involved: Dillard York, Billy Howerton, Herbert Lovett, Luther Lee, Joe Culpepper and Robert Gamble. None of the men were arrested.

As Parks interviewed Taylor, Corbitt kept driving by the house, according to the book “At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance.” The sheriff finally burst into Taylor’s house, demanding that Parks leave. “I don’t want any troublemakers here in Abbeville,” he said. “If you don’t go, I’ll lock you up.”

Parks returned to Montgomery, where she promptly launched the Alabama Committee for Equal Justice for Mrs. Recy Taylor. The committee flooded the South with fliers “decrying white attacks on black women,” according to the Chicago Defender.

By October 1944, Taylor’s rape was making headlines across the country. The Chicago Defender’s headline, “Victim of White Alabama Rapists,” ran above a now-famous photo of Taylor sitting on a sofa, dressed in a hat and checkered blazer with her daughter, Jayce, on her lap and her husband, Willie Guy Taylor, beside her.

In the story, the Defender’s staff correspondent Fred Atwater reported that the lawyer representing the suspects in the case had offered \$600 to Willie Guy Taylor to silence his wife. “N----- — ain’t \$600 enough for raping your wife,” the story quoted the lawyer saying. The six defendants were willing to pay \$100 each “if Recy Taylor would forget.”



On Oct. 9, 1944, a grand jury refused to indict the men. Outraged, Parks urged people to write protest letters to then-Alabama Gov. Chauncey Sparks. Hundreds of letters of outrage began pouring into the governor's office.

Parks sent a letter of her own on Alabama Committee for Equal Justice letterhead to the governor: "As a citizen of Alabama, I urge you to use your high office to reconvene the Henry County Grand Jury at the earliest possible moment," Parks wrote. "Alabamians are depending upon you to see that all obstacles, which are preventing justice in this case, be removed. I know that you will not fail to let the people of Alabama know that there is equal justice for all of our citizens." The letter was signed: "Respectfully yours, Rosa L. Parks, 22 Mill St., Montgomery, Ala."

In response, Sparks ordered another investigation of the rape. On Feb. 14, 1945, a Henry County grand jury refused to indict the suspects for a second time. The men were never prosecuted. Six years ago, Alabama lawmakers finally issued an apology for what Taylor had endured. "That we acknowledge the lack of prosecution for crimes committed against Recy Taylor by the government of the State of Alabama," the resolution read. "That we declare such failure to act was, and is, morally abhorrent and repugnant, and that we do hereby express profound regret for the role played by the government of the State of Alabama in failing to prosecute the crimes." Parks died in 2005. Taylor remained a symbol of racial injustice and sexual violence against black women until her death.

*Brown, DeNeen L. "How Recy Taylor's brutal rape has become a symbol of #MeToo and #TimesUp." Washington Post. Last modified January 30, 2018.*  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/11/27/the-gang-rape-was-horrific-the-naacp-sent-rosa-parks-to-investigate-it/>.

#### Source

1. *When was the document written and why?*

#### Document

2. *What happened to Recy Taylor?*

#### Analysis

3. *Why was her story important?*

- **Featured Source B: Jo Ann Robinson Letter to Mayor of Montgomery**

*This letter from the Women's Political Council to the Mayor of Montgomery, Alabama, threatens a bus boycott by the city's African Americans if demands for fair treatment are not met.*

Dear Sir:

The Women's Political Council is very grateful to you and the City Commissioners for the hearing you allowed our representative during the month of March, 1954, when the "city-bus-fare-increase case" was being reviewed. There were several things the Council asked for:

1. A city law that would make it possible for Negroes to sit from back toward front, and whites from front toward back until all the seats are taken.
2. That Negroes not be asked or forced to pay fare at front and go to the rear of the bus to enter.
3. That busses stop at every corner in residential sections occupied by Negroes as they do in communities where whites reside.

We are happy to report that busses have begun stopping at more corners now in some sections where Negroes live than previously. However, the same practices in seating and boarding the bus continue.

Mayor Gayle, three-fourths of the riders of these public conveyances are Negroes. If Negroes did not patronize them, they could not possibly operate.

More and more of our people are already arranging with neighbors and friends to ride to keep from being insulted and humiliated by bus drivers...

Please consider this plea, and if possible, act favorably upon it, for even now plans are being made to ride less, or not at all, on our busses. We do not want this.

Respectfully yours,

The Women's Political Council, Jo Ann Robinson, President

*Robinson, Jo Ann. "African-American Women Threaten a Bus Boycott in Montgomery." HERB: Resources for Teachers. Last modified <https://herb.ashp.cuny.edu/items/show/693>.*

*Source*

1. *Who is Jo Ann Robinson?*

*Document*

2. *Why does she want to boycott the busses?*

*Analysis*

3. *Why is the date of this document significant?*

- **Featured Source C: Rosa Parks Arrested**



*Woman fingerprinted. Mrs. Rosa Parks, Negro seamstress, whose refusal to move to the back of a bus touched off the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala. December 1, 1955. Archived in 1956. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/94500293/>.*

*Source*

1. *Why was this photo taken?*

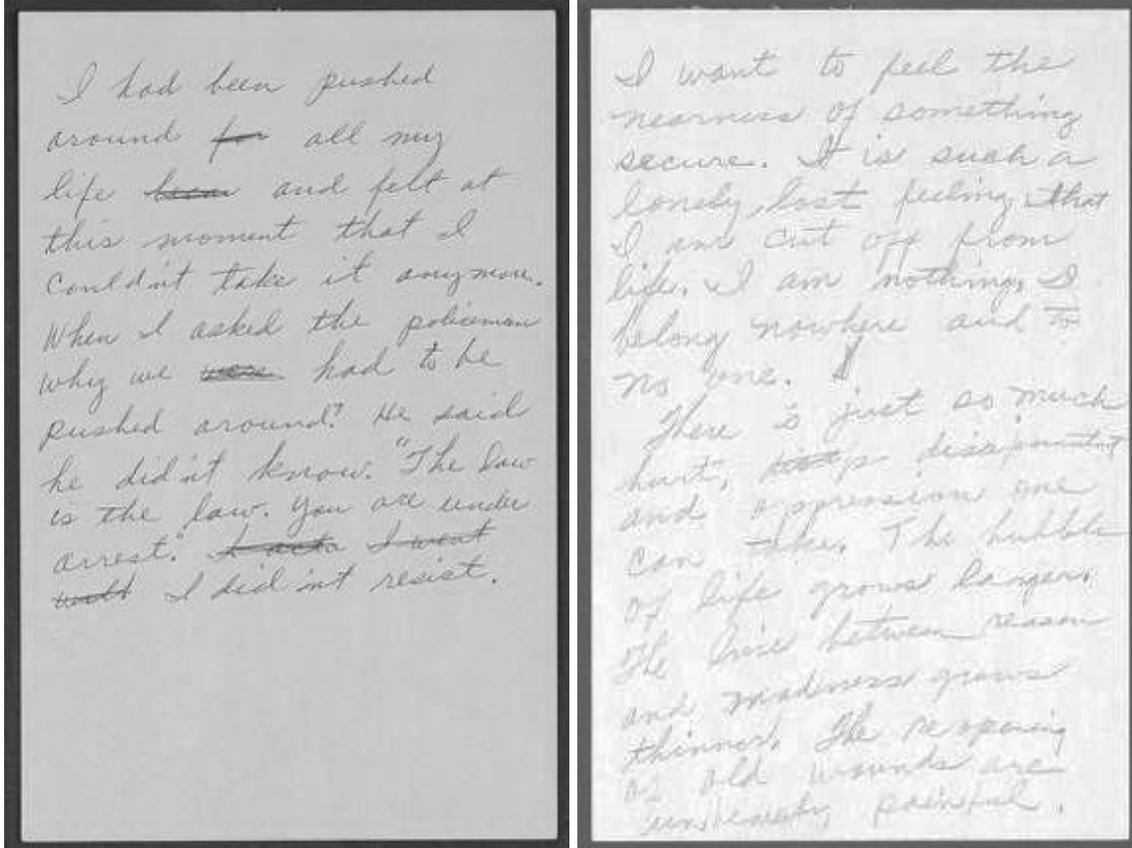
*Document*

2. *Describe Park's demeanor.*

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- **Featured Source D: Reflections After Arrest**

The following reflections were written shortly afterward.



Parks, Rosa. Rosa Parks Papers: Writings, Notes, and Statements, 1956 to 1998; Drafts of early writings; Accounts of her arrest and the subsequent boycott, as well as general reflections on race relations in the South, 1956-, undated; Folder 2. - 1998, 1956. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss859430226/>.

Source

1. What is Park's point of view?

Document

2. For what reasons does Parks say she refused to move?

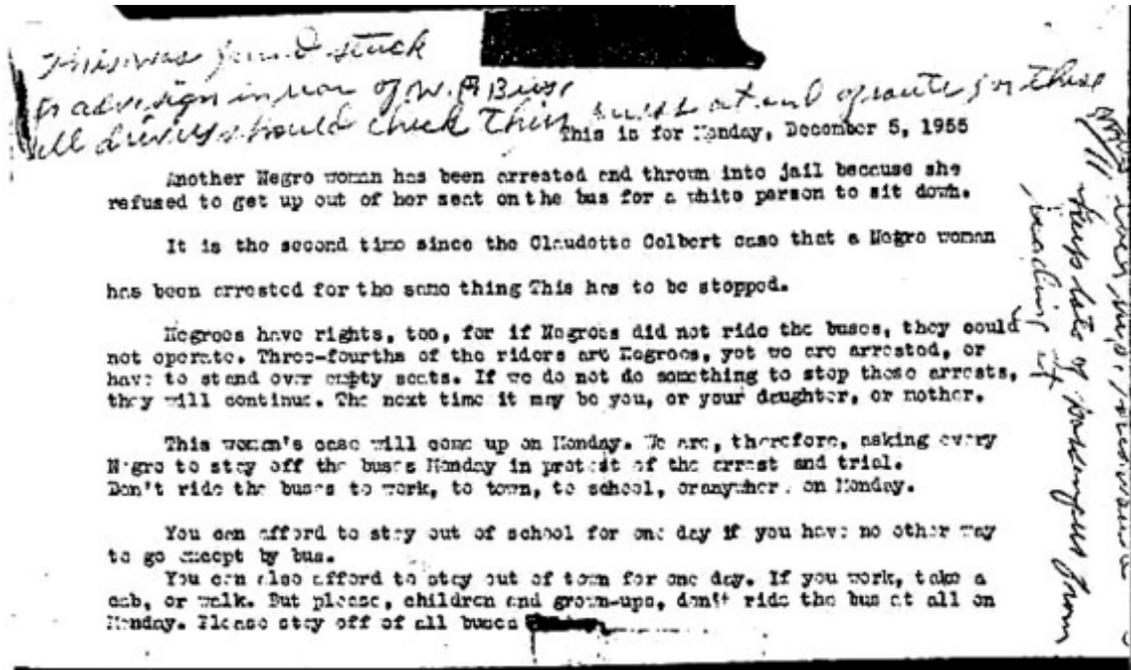
Analysis

3. Is this the story often told? Why might the story have changed?

- **Featured Source E: Leaflet**

This leaflet was created by Jo Ann Robinson and others shortly after Parks was arrested.

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Robinson, Jo Ann Gibson, Announcement- Another Negro Woman has been Arrested, December 2, 1955.  
<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/about-papers-project/research-and-editorial-process>.

Source

1. Who is Jo Ann Robinson?

Document

2. What is the plan?

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- **Featured Source F: Jo Ann Robinson Interview**

*This interview was recorded in 1979, over a decade after the boycott and King's assassination.*

[INTERVIEWER 1:] WHEN YOU LOOK BACK IN HISTORY, IT LOOKS LIKE THE BOYCOTT WAS A SPONTANEOUS ACT PROVOKED BY THE ARREST OF ROSA PARKS. WAS IT?

[Jo Ann Robinson:] It was a spontaneous act from those persons who were not members of the Women's Political Council. But we had worked for at least three years getting that thing organized. The night that the, the night of the evening that Rosa Parks was arrested, Fred Gray called me and told me she was arrested, she had somebody going her bail, but her case would be on Monday, and I as President of the main body of the Women's Political Council got on the phone and I called all the officers of the three chapters. I called as many of the men who had supported us as possible and I told them that Rosa Parks had been arrested and she would be tried. They said, you have the plans, put them into operation. I called every person who was in every school and everyplace where we had planned to be at that ho—have somebody at that school or wherever it was at a certain time that I would be there with materials for them to disseminate. I didn't go to bed that night. I cut those stencils. I ran off thirty-five thousand copies of the little fo—foyer that you have. And I, I distributed them...

[INTERVIEWER 1:] THE MINISTERS WERE MEETING AT THE SAME TIME?

[Jo Ann Robinson:] The ministers—not at 10:00. The ministers were meeting that afternoon, or sometime during the day... And after we had circulated those thirty-five thousand cut circulars, then we went by the church...we took them to the ministers. And it was there that they learned there was to be a boycott and they agreed to meet at Dr. King's Church, Dexter Avenue, that night to decide what should be done about the boycott after the first day. You see the Women's Council planned it only for Monday, and it was left up to the men to take over after we had forced them really to decide whether or not it had been successful enough to continue, and how long it was to be continued... Monday night, the ministers held their meeting at Holt Street Baptist church, and they voted unanimously to continue the boycott. And instead of it lasting one day as the Women's Council had planned it, it lasted for thirteen months.

[INTERVIEWER 1:] WHAT KEPT IT GOING?

[Jo Ann Robinson:] The spirit, the desire, the injustices that had been endured by thousands of people through the years. I think that people were fed up, they had reached the point that they knew there was no return—that they had to do it or die. And that's what kept it going. It was the sheer spirit for freedom, for the feeling of being a man and a woman...

[INTERVIEWER 1:] THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME MOMENTS IN THOSE THIRTEEN MONTHS WHEN THE PRESSURE TO BREAK WAS ENORMOUS.

[Jo Ann Robinson:] Well, I never reached a point where I was sorry. I reached a point where I was scared. They broke—the police broke out my picture window. They, they, the man next door trailed them downtown and Mr. Sellers, who was the Police Commissioner asked that man if he wanted to live when he followed the police and told them that they had broken out my window. And when the man said yes, he wanted to live, he said, well you go home and shut your mouth. They got away with it. They broke my window. And not too long after that... my car—it was the new Chrysler... I heard a noise on the side where my car was, and I went and looked out the window in the dark, and there were two policemen scattering something on the top of my car... The next morning my car was eaten up with acid... I will say, that after that, it was reported to the Governor, and Mr. Folsom then put a State Highway Patrolman on my house, just as he had Dr. King, Rev. Abernathy and Mr. Nixon, and that patrol car guarded my house until the boycott was over... That there were many whites who were with us all the way...

[INTERVIEWER 1:] E.D. NIXON.

[Jo Ann Robinson:] E.D. Nixon was one of the few black men who was not afraid in Montgomery.

[INTERVIEWER 1:] MARTIN KING, 26 YEARS OLD.

[Jo Ann Robinson:] The only thing I can say to describe Dr. King is that he was dynamite. He was one of the most intellectually trained people I have ever talked with in my life... And when they asked him at that meeting at Holt Street that Monday night if he would be willing to serve as President, at first he hinged because he was just out of graduate school and he admitted that he just didn't know what it was all about. But they insisted upon him and he took it...

[INTERVIEWER 1:] WHAT DID IT MEAN, JO ANN? WHAT DID IT MEAN?

[Jo Ann Robinson:] What did it mean? It meant that blacks feel like human beings now. They feel like citizens. Life now is worth living in Montgomery—

*Robinson, Jo Ann. "Jo Ann Robinson Interview with MAVIS." Blackside, Inc. Washington University in St. Louis. August 2, 1979. <http://repository.wustl.edu/concern/videos/37720f54k>.*

*Source*

1. *How do you think time impacted the reliability of this source?*

*Document*

2. *According to Robinson, what role did the male ministers like King play in the planning of the boycott?*

● **Featured Source G: Comic Book**

This comic book was produced by Black activists shortly after the bus boycott ended to teach young people how to use the "Montgomery Model" and peaceful protest in future cases around the country.

"Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story." US: Fellowship of Reconciliation, 1957.



Source

1. When was this comic published?

Document

2. What does this comic say happened to cause the bus boycott?

3. According to the comic, what role do women play in the boycott?

**Questions for Analysis**

1. Why do you think the comic removed women like Recy Taylor, Gertrude Perkins, and organizers like JoAnn Robinson from the story?

## Supporting Question 2 : Were women integral to the Black Panther Party?

The second supporting question— Were women integral to the Black Panther Party?-- really drives at the role women played in the movement and asks students to think about whether the movement could have existed without the labor of Black women.

The formative task asks students to read textbook overviews of events related to the Black Panther Party and contrast them with recent articles on women in the movement.

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

- Have students read and examine Source A and Source B alone or with a partner.
- As they read, ask students to annotate for key ideas.
- Students can record the claims they identify in the organizer provided noting evidence that confirms claims related to the Supporting Question.
- Students respond to some guiding questions to help them examine the sources with more depth.
- Students respond to the overarching question.

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources include working with a peer and reading with them to support one another for understanding. The organizer is also a great tool to help students hone in on key ideas.

The following sources were selected to show students that women did play a major role in WWII, but it was not the shift it is made out to be in traditional texts and the experiences of women differed greatly by class and race.

Evidence women were integral	Evidence women were in the background

● **Featured Source A: History Textbook**

At the same time that such civil rights leaders as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. fought for racial integration, other black leaders emphasized separatism and identification with Africa. Black Nationalist sentiment was not new. During the early 19th century, black leaders such as Paul Cuffe and Martin Delaney, convinced that blacks could never achieve true equality in the United States, advocated migration overseas. At the turn of the century, Booker T. Washington and his followers emphasized racial solidarity, economic self-sufficiency, and black self-help. Also, at the end of World War I, millions of black Americans were attracted by Marcus Garvey's call to drop the fight for equality in America and instead "plant the banner of freedom on the great continent of Africa."

One of the most important expressions of the separatist impulse during the 1960s was the rise of the Black Muslims, which attracted 100,000 members. Founded in 1931, in the depths of the depression, the Nation of Islam drew its appeal from among the growing numbers of urban blacks living in poverty. The Black Muslims elevated racial separatism into a religious doctrine and declared that whites were doomed to destruction. "The white devil's

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day is over," Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad cried. "He was given six thousand years to rule ... He's already used up most trapping and murdering the black nations by the hundreds of thousands. Now he's worried, worried about the black man getting his revenge." Unless whites acceded to the Muslim demand for a separate territory for themselves, Muhammad said, "Your entire race will be destroyed and removed from this earth by Almighty God. And those black men who are still trying to integrate will inevitably be destroyed along with the whites."

The Black Muslims did more than vent anger and frustration. The organization was also a vehicle of black uplift and self-help. The Black Muslims called upon black Americans to "wake up, clean up, and stand up" in order to achieve true freedom and independence. To root out any behavior that conformed to racist stereotypes, the Muslims forbade eating pork and cornbread, drinking alcohol, and smoking cigarettes. Muslims also emphasized the creation of black businesses.

The most controversial exponent of Black Nationalism was Malcolm X. The son of a Baptist minister who had been an organizer for Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association, he was born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, and grew up in Lansing, Michigan. A reformed drug addict and criminal, Malcolm X learned about the Black Muslims in a high security prison. After his release from prison in 1952, he adopted the name Malcolm X to replace "the white slave-master name which had been imposed upon my paternal forebears by some blue-eyed devil." He quickly became one of the Black Muslims' most eloquent speakers, denouncing alcohol, tobacco, and extramarital sex.

Condemned by some whites as a demagogue for such statements as "If ballots won't work, bullets will," Malcolm X gained widespread public notoriety by attacking the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a "chump" and an Uncle Tom, by advocating self-defense against white violence, and by emphasizing black political power.

Malcolm X's main message was that discrimination led many black Americans to despise themselves. "The worst crime the white man has committed," he said, "has been to teach us to hate ourselves." Self-hatred caused black Americans to lose their identity, straighten their hair, and become involved in crime, drug addiction, and alcoholism.

In March 1964 (after he violated an order from Elijah Muhammad and publicly rejoiced at the assassination of President John F. Kennedy), Malcolm X withdrew from Elijah Muhammad's organization and set up his own Organization of Afro-Americans. Less than a year later, his life ended in bloodshed. On February 21, 1965, in front of 400 followers, he was shot and killed, apparently by followers of Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad, as he prepared to give a speech in New York City.

Inspired by Malcolm X's example, young black activists increasingly challenged the traditional leadership of the Civil Rights Movement and its philosophy of nonviolence. The single greatest contributor to the growth of militancy was the violence perpetrated by white racists. One of the most publicized incidents took place in June 1964, when three civil rights workers--two whites, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, and one black, James Chaney--disappeared near Philadelphia, Mississippi. Six weeks after they were reported missing, the bodies of the men were found buried under a dam; all three had been beaten, then shot. In December, the sheriff and deputy sheriff of Neshoba County, Mississippi, along with 19 others, were arrested on charges of violating the three men's civil rights; but just six days later the charges were dropped. David Dennis, a black civil rights worker, spoke at James Chaney's funeral. He angrily declared, "I'm sick and tired of going to the funerals of black men who have been murdered by white men.... I've got vengeance in my heart."

In 1966, two key civil rights organizations--SNCC and CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality)--embraced Black Nationalism. In May, Stokely Carmichael was elected chairman of SNCC and proceeded to transform SNCC from an interracial organization committed to nonviolence and integration into an all-black organization committed to "black power." "Integration is irrelevant," declared Carmichael. "Political and economic power is what the black people have to have." Although Carmichael initially denied that "black power" implied racial separatism, he eventually called on blacks to form their own separate political organizations. In July 1966--one month after James Meredith, the black Air Force veteran who had integrated the University of Mississippi, was ambushed and shot while marching for voting rights in Mississippi--CORE also endorsed black power and repudiated nonviolence.

Of all the groups advocating racial separatism and black power, the one that received the widest publicity was the Black Panther Party. Formed in October 1966, in Oakland, California, the Black Panther party was an armed revolutionary socialist organization advocating self-determination for black ghettos. "Black men," declared one party member, "must unite to overthrow their white 'oppressors,' becoming 'like panthers--smiling, cunning,

scientific, striking by night and sparing no one!" The Black Panthers gained public notoriety by entering the gallery of the California State Assembly brandishing guns and by following police to prevent police harassment and brutality toward blacks.

Separatism and Black Nationalism attracted no more than a small minority of black Americans. Public opinion polls indicated that only about 15 percent of black Americans identified themselves as separatists and that the overwhelming majority of blacks considered Martin Luther King, Jr. their favored spokesperson. The older civil rights organizations, such as the NAACP, rejected separatism and black power, viewing it as an abandonment of the goals of nonviolence and integration.

Yet despite their relatively small following, black power advocates exerted a powerful and positive influence upon the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to giving birth to a host of community self-help organizations, supporters of black power spurred the creation of black studies programs in universities and encouraged black Americans to take pride in their racial background and to recognize that "black is beautiful." A growing number of black Americans began to wear "Afro" hairstyles and take African or Islamic surnames. Singer James Brown captured the new spirit: "Say it loud--I'm black and I'm proud."

In an effort to maintain support among more militant blacks, civil rights leaders began to address the problems of the black lower classes who lived in the nation's cities. By the mid-1960s, King had begun to move toward the political left. He said it did no good to be allowed to eat in a restaurant if you had no money to pay for a hamburger. King denounced the Vietnam War as "an enemy of the poor," described the United States as "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today," and predicted that "the bombs that [Americans] are dropping in Vietnam will explode at home in inflation and unemployment." He urged a radical redistribution of wealth and political power in the United States in order to provide medical care, jobs, and education for all of the country's people. And he spoke of the need for a second "March on Washington" by "waves of the nation's poor and disinherited," who would "stay until America responds ... [with] positive action." The time had come for radical measures "to provide jobs and income for the poor."

Mintz, S., & McNeil, S. *Black Nationalism and Black Power.* Digital History. Last modified 2018.  
[https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtid=2&psid=3331](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=2&psid=3331).

#### Source

1. What kind of resource is Digital History?

#### Document

2. What women, women's groups, or women's issues are mentioned in relation to the rise of Black Power groups?

#### Analysis

3. Do you think this movement would be one that attracted large numbers of women? Why or why not?

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● **Featured Source B: “The Rank and File Women of the Black Panther Party and Their Powerful Influence” by Janelle Harris Dixon of Smithsonian Magazine**

It’s a striking photograph: six young black women with a spectrum of complexions, faces paused in mid-exclamation, fists raised in simultaneous solidarity at a Black Panther rally. Even their afros are emphatic and resolute as they stand in tandem in Oakland’s DeFremery Park, then and now a popular gathering place for the community’s African-Americans. There, a grove of trees honors Bobby Hutton who, at just 16, had been the Panthers’ first enlisted member and at 17, died after police shot him—purportedly, as he tried to surrender.

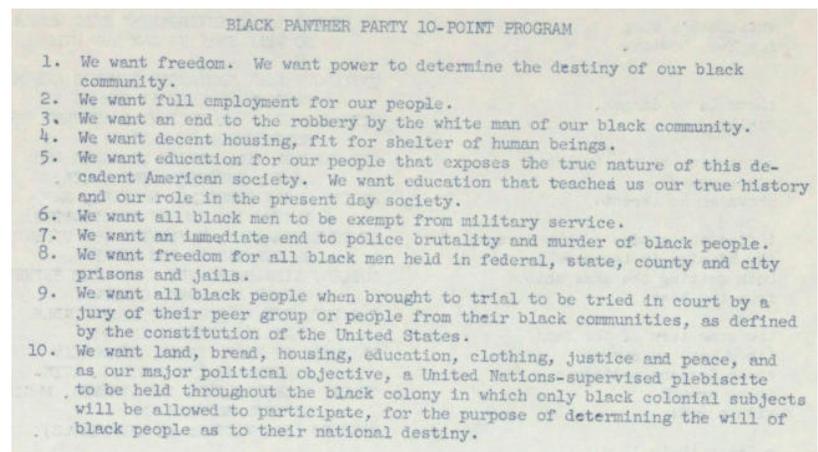
On this day, supporters assembled to demand the immediate release of Huey Newton, co-founder of the party and its national minister of defense, who was being held for assault, kidnapping and first-degree murder charges in the October 1967 death of police officer John Frey. Newton’s fate was to be decided at the superior court in overwhelmingly white Alameda County, where it seemed unlikely that a black revolutionary could get a fair trial. Of the 152 potential jurors who were interviewed, only 21 were black. All but one was systematically excluded from the selection process...



The Smithsonian’s senior curator Bill Pretzer hand-selected [the] photo to be part of the exhibition, “A Changing America: 1968 and Beyond,” now on view at the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The wall-size display confronts visitors as soon as they enter the space. “Women’s participation and the issue of gender equality ebbed and flowed within the Panthers’ history. It didn’t simply improve or get larger, or devolve and get worse, it goes up and down,” he says of the photograph’s inclusion. “I think at the time and even since, the popular public image of the Black Panther Party as a super masculine group of men who were violent and fought the authorities pervades public sentiment. This image contradicts that dramatically and effectively.”

Ask ten different people to explain what The Black Panther Party was and you’re likely to get ten wildly different answers. Originated in October 1966 by Newton and co-founder Bobby Seale, it was an organization invested in resisting government oppression and police brutality. Whether that was perceived as political or socialist or Marxist or nationalist or all of those things, it created self-determination and community-based solutions under the auspice of “power to the people.” Its membership grew ferociously from its first chapter in Oakland to more than 2,000 members by 1968, clustered in more than 30 chapters in cities across the country and eventually the world. The civil rights movement’s methodical disobedience provided a stark contrast for the party’s controversially militant, sometimes confrontational revolutionary agenda...

A month after the photo was taken, Newton was found guilty of voluntary manslaughter, and sentenced to two to 15 years, but the Free Huey movement didn’t end with his imprisonment. Buttons, banners and flyers emblazoned with the picture of a solemn Newton sitting in a wicker chair with a spear in one hand and a shotgun in the other magnetized new Party recruits—intelligent, politically and socially astute, and young. The average age of a Black Panther member was just 19. And half of them were women.



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By that time, 1968 had already been electric with shared pain and expressions of fury. In April, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated, igniting demonstrations and riots in more than 100 cities. Two months later, Robert Kennedy was similarly gunned down, and Vietnam War protests rocked the nation. At the same time in local communities across the U.S., law enforcement violence against the Black Panther Party had escalated, both in volume and viciousness.

The Ten Point Program, a platform of demands outlined by Newton and Seale, insisted on an immediate end to police brutality and the sanctioned murder of black people. Newton became the symbol of the very thing he was fighting to change—a black man centered unjustly in the crosshairs of governmental attack—and as more male members were profiled, killed and imprisoned, plucked off one-by-one as casualties of a domestic race war, black women in the party kept the work going.

“They were fighting for their lives, they were fighting for their loved one’s lives, they were fighting for their children’s lives. They were motivated by the fact that the black community was under assault and it was time to make a difference. It was time to change things,” says Angela LeBlanc-Ernest, co-founder of the Intersectional Black Panther Party History Project, a collaboration of scholars and filmmakers who collect stories, archive information and shape the narrative of women in the BPP. “So Huey Newton became the face not just of Free Huey rallies—even though, yes, they wanted him freed—but he represented this person who dared to stand up and say, ‘No. You’re not doing this to us anymore.’”

The outcry around Newton’s case elevated him to near-martyr status in a revolution that seemed more feasible almost daily. The immediate gratification of confrontation and self-made justice were attractive, particularly compared to the \_\_\_\_\_ nonviolent demonstrations that were too humiliating, too obsequious, too slow to produce results for many coming of age in the tumult for basic civil and human rights. The Black Panther Party became a source of tactical empowerment, Huey Newton became a folkloric hero and his imprisonment became a cause célèbre.

“It’s time to pick up the gun. Off the pig!” the five women sang in unison. With fists punched into the air above them, they shouted, “Free Huey!” to the crowd.

“Free Huey!” the crowd shouted back.

The women in the photo—Delores Henderson, Joyce Lee, Mary Ann Carlton, Joyce Means and Paula Hill—are not names that are widely recollected in the retelling of the Black Panthers’ legacy. They represent a segment of the party who often worked 17, 18, 19-hour days to actualize its vision. History calls them the “rank and file,” members who didn’t individually dominate headlines or generate media sound bites, but they were the soul of daily operations who executed the public-facing strategies and later, the community survival programs.

Some rallied, some handled administrative duties, some worked armed security, some served as organizers. Some worked on production, design and distribution of the newspaper, *The Black Panther*, an exhausting, near 24-hour operation masterminded by artist Emory Douglas. All sacrificed something of themselves and their personal well-being as BPP members. They moved the organization forward as they navigated the complexity of internal conflict, misogyny and mistreatment, and dichotomous ideologies that pitted armed revolution against community organizing. Whatever their role, they showed up to empower people who looked and lived like them.

“There was no one way to be a Black Panther Party woman. They came from all walks of life, and they entered and exited the party at different times,” says LeBlanc-Ernest. “There was a cultural moment happening and the women in that photo reflect its youthfulness and willingness to make a difference. If you look at the stance they’re taking, their fists in the air, there’s a unity and uniformity.”

Delores Henderson, pictured third from the left in the black and white dress, was 17-years-old and just graduated from Grant Union High School in Del Paso Heights when she learned about the Sacramento chapter founded by captain Charles Brunson and his wife and BPP communications secretary, Margo Rose. Unlike many of her fellow members—“comrades,” as she calls them—who were full-time college students, Henderson had just started a new 9-to-5 job at Pacific Bell. She was a working woman with a set schedule. Still, she was curious about the Panthers. When her friend Joyce Lee said, “Let’s go see what they’re talking about,” Henderson agreed.

“I liked what they said. I wasn’t having good feelings with white people in Sacramento. I was eight or nine when we moved there from Portland, Oregon, and as soon as I started school, I was being called a black ghost,” she

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remembers, along with other racial epithets. “People said, ‘don’t let them call you that,’ so I was fighting almost every day, getting into trouble. When I got older, I realized that Sacramento—and I’ll say it to this day—is the most prejudiced place I have ever been. It was absolutely horrible.”

She and Lee joined in 1968 to be part of the hands-on effort to lessen the daily stresses of being black. On workdays when she couldn’t be there, Henderson donated money to help buy supplies that would serve the record numbers of students in the Panther’s before-school breakfast program at Oak Park United Church of Christ. Her weekends were dedicated to whatever her chapter needed her to do: sell newspapers, attend events, go to the firing range and learn self-defense techniques in case of combat. Her involvement in the Party wasn’t something she hid, but it wasn’t something she advertised either.

Once, after she patrolled the funeral for George Jackson, an activist and fellow Party member assassinated while serving a year-to-life sentence for armed robbery, a Pacific Bell co-worker came to her, excited. “She said, ‘I saw you on TV!’ I shook my head. ‘Uh-uh. You didn’t see me. You made a mistake,’” laughs Henderson, now 68, retired and living in Krum, Texas, 45 miles outside of Dallas. Black women have historically established a definitive separation between their work selves and their authentic selves, and Henderson’s involvement in the most militant black group of its time made that duality even more essential.

Like the anatomy of any other organization, each section of the Black Panther Party demanded a different skill set. How did they get thousands of people to come to their rallies in an era well before the connectivity of social media? They hit the streets, canvassed neighborhoods, talked to residents, shared what’s going on, listened to their questions and concerns. They organized across multiple chapters, some members coming from as far as San Diego nearly 500 miles away. It was a study in how to market an event when the phrase social media still meant face-to-face conversation and putting information squarely in folks’ hands.

On the day of the Oakland rally, Henderson piled into a car in Oak Park and roadtripped the 90 minute-drive with her fellow chapter members. It was a peaceful atmosphere with food, music and people of all races, she remembers, and she stood shoulder-to-shoulder with a line of other women all dressed in individualized interpretations of the Panther’s signature all-black clothing. A rally was a political stirring as much as it was a community event, and Sharon Pinkney and Shirley Finney, two of the chapter’s first female members, addressed an eager audience alongside Brunson. When he finished, Henderson says, Brunson told Bobby Seale that some sisters from Sacramento wanted to say something.

Seale furrowed. “What the f\*\*\* are they gonna do?” he said, half-asking, half-dismissing. Reluctantly, he allowed them to step forward and sing. “We were so scared. If you look at the other pictures, we were standing stiff at attention,” Henderson says.

She guesses they were on stage for about 20 minutes. They’d rallied the crowd in their own way and conveyed the central message in their own voices. When they walked off, Seale conceded. “OK, that wasn’t bad,” he said. “More power to the sisters.” In that small, isolated instance, they needed to prove themselves and they did.

Their applied passion hit its target in a far-reaching impact. Newton’s conviction was overturned by the California Court of Appeals in May 1970, citing several mistakes, most notably the presiding judge’s failure to properly instruct jurors. After nearly two years in California Men’s Colony in San Luis Obispo, Newton walked out of the same courthouse where he’d been led away. He was a free man released on \$50,000 bail. When he strode outside, he stripped off his gray, prison-issue shirt and shouted to the supporters who’d been gathering in front of the building since the early morning: “You have the power and the power is with the people.”

...In 1970, police teargassed, raided and riddled the Sacramento BPP headquarters with bullets. No one was killed, but the office was destroyed, donations for the breakfast program were ruined and membership splintered to other chapters...

The movement to free Huey was an extension of the work Black women have always done—regenerating hope when hopelessness is easier, giving the best parts of themselves for the greater good, organizing collective resources for the betterment and future of whichever family, community, entity or group they thrust their power behind.

“When I say that women ran the Black Panther Party, I’m not bragging. It wasn’t fun, it wasn’t cute. It was dangerous and it was scary,” says Huggins. “The work that women did held the Black Panther Party together. If

Huey were alive, he would say that. Bobby Seale is still alive and he says that all the time. There's nobody that would refute it. It was a fact.”

*Dixon, Janelle Harris. “The Rank and File Women of the Black Panther Party and Their Powerful Influence.”  
Smithsonian Magazine. March 4, 2019.*

[https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/rank-and-file-women-black-panther-party-their-powerful-influence-180971591/.](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/rank-and-file-women-black-panther-party-their-powerful-influence-180971591/)

*Source*

1. Is the Smithsonian a reliable source? Why or why not?

*Document*

2. What is different about this article’s portrayal of the role of women?

*Analysis*

3. Why do you think the two texts would differ so greatly on the role of women?



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She'd also seen the BPP's charismatic rising young star, Fred Hampton, appear on local late-night TV. But attending that meeting made it clear that she had to be a part of Hampton's movement, and his life. Their relationship and life on the frontlines of Chicago's BPP are depicted in the film "Judas and the Black Messiah," out Friday in theaters and on HBO Max.

"I was just really impressed with Fred. He had a really good knowledge of history. He seemed to really be sincere, believing in what he was doing. And their ideas at the time were in agreement with what I believed in and thought in terms of Black people's struggle," she recalled in the interview. "I said, 'Wow, these are some bad brothers and sisters, and I want to be a part of that.'"

So she introduced herself to Hampton and soon they were a doting couple. As Hampton rose to national prominence and worked to create alliances with the city's other emerging leftist groups, she began working on multiple BPP initiatives. These included its well-regarded free breakfast program, the Spurgeon "Jake" Winters Free People's Medical Care Center, for which she canvassed door-to-door and solicited doctors to volunteer time, and the Panthers' free prison busing program for families of the incarcerated.

"Whatever people were willing to give, it was acceptable to us," she told Rockefeller. "You did not have to be a Black Panther to give something to the community. And everybody had a talent or something that they can give back."

On Dec. 4, 1969, Njeri, then 19, was engaged to Hampton and nine months pregnant when a group of law enforcement officers stormed into his apartment on Chicago's West Side to execute a search warrant for illegal guns. She woke to bullets whizzing past her and Hampton, but he was still out cold — and had possibly been drugged by an FBI informant who had infiltrated the BPP's top brass. She recalls straddling his body to protect him from the barrage of bullets, which only momentarily stopped when another person in the apartment yelled, "Stop shooting, stop shooting, we have a pregnant woman, pregnant sister in here!"

Njeri was eventually dragged into the kitchen by the officers as other BPP members who were staying in the apartment that night were bleeding out. By several accounts, the officers then entered the bedroom and shot Hampton dead, point-blank.

"I heard a voice come from the area, I guess from the dining room area, which was, the kitchen was off from that area," she recalled. "And someone said, 'He's barely alive, he'll barely make it.' The shooting, I heard some shooting start again. Not much. Just a little shooting, and someone said, 'He's good and dead now.'"

After the deadly raid, Njeri was arrested and jailed at the local police station. From there she called Bobby Rush, co-founder of the Illinois Black Panthers chapter, who was the one to inform her that her Hampton had indeed been killed. After she was charged with two counts of attempted murder and aggravated assault, an outpouring of support helped her and the others arrested in the raid post \$100,000 bail. Njeri was released first, as she was about to give birth and under extreme stress. Fred Hampton, Jr. was born on Dec. 29, 1969.

The raid, dubbed the "Massacre on Monroe," sparked outrage across the city, and conflicting reports of what actually happened that morning went on for months. The survivors of the attack decided that they would not participate in the grand jury inquest into the events that morning as they felt justice would not be served, Njeri recalled.

"At some point, some officer of the court brought in this big plastic bag with the blankets from the bed that Fred and I were in," she said. "It had blood on it. And he just sat the bag down in front of me. And I remember thinking, these people are not going to drive me crazy. I'm not going to focus on this. But that was like, 'You don't have to feel any guilt about not participating in this: you're doing the right thing.'"

By May 1970, after ballistic tests and forensics negated the state's case, charges were dropped against the BPP members. It was also revealed that the raid was carried out by a team involved in the illegal FBI operation, COINTELPRO, that targeted, surveilled, and discredited leftist political groups. A protracted civil case against the Justice Department, Cook County and the city of Chicago went on for the next 12 years, and a settlement of \$47 million was awarded to the families of Hampton and the BPP's Mark Clark, who was also killed in the raid. The survivors received a \$1.82 million settlement — which did not concede wrongdoing on the part of the government, a Justice Department attorney said at the time.

Njeri has since continued to dedicate her life to the cause. She has served as the president of the National People's Democratic Uhuru Movement, an interracial organization dedicated to self-determination for Black

Americans. And in 1991, her book, "My Life with the Black Panther Party," which recounts her experiences as well as the deadly raid and its aftermath, was released by Burning Spear Publications.

Njeri also served as the chairperson of the December 4th Committee, which fights to defend and maintain the legacy of the BPP, and she does speaking appearances to discuss Hampton's legacy and continue the fight for social justice. And she continues her lifelong commitment to serving communities in need, coordinating clothing and fresh vegetable drives with the Prisoners of Conscience Committee, a "revolutionary organization" launched by her son while he was in prison after a conviction for aggravated arson, which allegedly took place in the aftermath of the Rodney King verdict in 1992.

Fred Hampton Jr., who was paroled in 2001, says that as he was raised on Chicago's south side, he was instilled with the language and principles of his father's movement. Now, he's also the chairman of the Black Panther Party Cubs.

"All through my life, my mother always taught me what my father did, the courageous stands he took," he said in a 1998 interview with the Chicago Reader.

For Njeri, it has been the memory of her fiancé and the struggle for social justice after his killing that she says drives her to continue in the movement.

"I used to say that if I gave up, the ghost of Chairman Fred would haunt me to this day," she told ABC News in 2019. "Because we're still not free. Power to the people has not become a reality."

*Dolak, Kevin. "What Happened To Deborah Johnson After The Killing of Black Panther Party Leader Fred Hampton?" True Crime Buzz. Last modified February 11, 2021.*

<https://www.oxygen.com/true-crime-buzz/akua-njeri-nee-deborah-johnson-carried-on-fred-hamptons-legacy>.

#### Source

1. Is this source more or less reliable than Howard Zinn? Why?

#### Document

2. According to this document, what role did women play the night of the raid?

#### Analysis

3. Why do you think the two texts would differ so greatly on the role of women?

## Supporting Question 3: Were Black Panthers sexist?

The third supporting question—Were Black Panthers sexist?-- digs at the controversial history of this party in their treatment of Black women within the movement.

The formative task asks students to seek evidence about sexism within the Black Panther Party and take a position based on that evidence.

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

- Have students read and examine Source A and Source B alone or with a partner.
- As they read, ask students to annotate for key ideas and “claims” made about sexism.
- Students can record sentences or ideas that show the Panthers were or were not sexist in the middle columns.
- After students finish the two middle columns on the organizer, they should look back at the evidence. Which information is most persuasive? Mark that #8. Which evidence is least persuasive? Mark that #1.
- Students respond to the guiding and Compelling questions.

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources include working with a peer and reading with them to support one another for understanding. The organizer is also a great tool to help students hone in on key ideas.

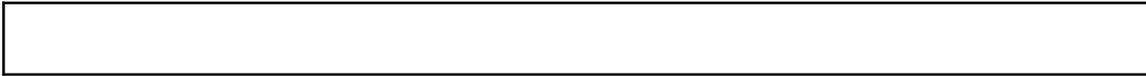
The following sources were selected to show students that women in the movement experienced some challenges and this could perhaps be why their contributions are overlooked, then again, the fact that these articles exist is evidence they weren’t. Students will have to decide.

<i>Rank</i>	<b>Evidence they were sexist</b>	<b>Evidence they supported Black women</b>	<i>Rank</i>


**Questions for Analysis**

1. Add up the rank on each side. Which side weighed more? Why do you think it worked out that way?

2. In conclusion, were the Black Panthers sexist?



- **Featured Source A: The first and only woman to lead the Black Panther Party, ‘I have all the guns and money’**

At her command, the Black Panthers been summoned to Oakland, Calif. It was August and Elaine Brown was taking over as chair of the Panther Party, the only female leader of the revolutionary organization. It was a pivotal for a woman in the black power movement.

Surrounded on stage that day by the Panthers’ security squad, Brown looked out into audience of party members and with two sentences took her place in history.

“I have all the guns and the money. I can withstand challenge from without and from within,” Brown told the party, according to her 1992 memoir, "A Taste of Power: A Black Woman’s Story.”

She warned against a coup. “If you are such an individual, you’d better run — and fast. I am, as your chairman, the leader of this party as of this moment. My leadership cannot be challenged. I will lead our party both above ground and underground. I will lead the party not only in furthering our goals but also in defending the party by any and all means.”

The group answered with a chorus of right on’s, she wrote, including a declaration of support from “Larry, a body guard who held a .45 automatic pistol under his jacket.”

**The Black Panther Party**

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense had been founded on Oct. 15, 1966, by Huey Newton, a law student, and Bobby Seale to protect black communities from police brutality, according to a 1996 Washington Post article.

Former Black Panther David Hilliard said the party called for universal health care, education, decent housing, free medical care and transportation for seniors. “We did not practice racist ideology,” Hilliard said. “The system was discriminatory and violent. Our slogan became revolution and survival, pending transformation of society; survival pending revolution.”

The Panthers required members to attend political education classes, follow the party’s disciplinary rules and memorize the 10-point party platform that called for “land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace,” according to a University of California at Berkeley report.

The party, which at its height had more than 2,000 members in chapters throughout the country, created free school breakfast programs and provided sickle-cell anemia testing, legal aid and adult education. But its militancy made it a target of law enforcement officials. On June 15, 1969, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover declared that “the Black Panther Party, without question, represents the greatest threat to internal security of the country.” Hoover created a secret agency to destroy the party with a mission to “expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize” party members, according to FBI records. By 1970, many of the party’s leaders had been imprisoned or killed in gun battles with police.



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How Brown became a leader

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Brown inherited a party, she wrote, that “was the target of the most violent aggression of the police forces of America.” Brown had been chosen to lead the Panthers by founder Newton before he went into exile in Cuba to avoid charges of killing a 17-year-old prostitute. (His trial would later end in a hung jury.) The two had previously been lovers. For the Panthers, choosing a woman to lead the party was in itself revolutionary. No woman had led the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference or the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. During her tenure, Brown installed women in key administrative positions, which evoked outrage from some men. In her book, Brown recalled an exchange: “ ‘I hear we can’t call them bitches no more,’ one Brother actually stated to me in the middle of an extraordinarily hectic day. ‘No, [expletive],’ I reasoned unendearingly, ‘you may not call them bitches “no more.” ’ ”

In 1977, a few months after Newton returned from exile in Cuba, he approved the beating of Regina Davis, who was administrator of the Black Panthers’ school, for a minor transgression. Brown wrote in her memoir that after Davis was hospitalized with a broken jaw from the beating, Brown felt she could no longer stay in the party. “The beating of Regina would be taken as a clear signal that the words ‘Panther’ and ‘comrade’ had taken on gender connotations,” Brown wrote, “denoting an inferiority in the female half of us.” Brown confronted Newton about the beating, but he refused to back down. Brown decided to resign. She hastily packed her belongings and left Oakland for Los Angeles...

“It’s been 50 years since I joined the Black Panther Party,” said Brown, who continues to work for social justice and criminal justice reform. The country, she said, “has taken many steps backward,” including its high incarceration rate of black people. “I’m struggling along to try to create some kind of change in the abysmal condition we continue to find ourselves in. That is where I’m coming from.”

*Brown, Deneen L. “The first and only woman to lead the Black Panther Party: ‘I have all the guns and money.’” The Lily News. Last modified January 12, 2018.*

*<https://www.thelily.com/the-first-and-only-woman-to-lead-the-black-panther-party/>.*

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- **Featured Source B: The Black Panther's Revolutionary Feminism**

...From media coverage to popular memory, most representations of the Black Panther Party have largely focused on its male leaders, the founders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, and the minister of information, Eldridge Cleaver. And yet, the group that began in Oakland in 1964 as the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, with its main organizing efforts targeting disaffected young African-American men in cities, was over two-thirds women by the end of the 1960s.

...[T]he party struggled with these founding gender contradictions. As women increasingly reached all levels of the organization, male leaders had mixed responses to their push for equality.

The party's media strategy continued to valorize the images of its revolutionary men. By the beginning of the next decade, however, Newton began incorporating demands for gender and sexual equality as part of the party's platform... his personal actions toward women might have violently contradicted his progressive philosophy.

Like their male counterparts, young women joined the Black Panthers because they believed in its platform of armed self-defense to end police brutality and state violence. They also saw themselves as "vanguards," militant advocates for the economic and political equality of African-Americans here at home and allies of the Communist movements in Cuba, China, Mozambique and Vietnam.

But, like so many others of their generation, black women actively sought organizations that challenged gender stereotypes in the larger society. And because many of these women were committed to eradicating racist as well as sexist attitudes, some found what they were looking for in the Panthers.

"I would say that the women who were drawn to the Black Panther Party were all feminists," said Ericka Huggins, the widow of the slain Panther leader John Huggins and the first woman to open a Black Panther Party chapter, in New Haven, where she served as deputy chairwoman. She went on to clarify in a phone interview: "Not in the way that feminism is looked at today, in which you have to go step by step in order to claim yourself as a feminist. But we generally believed in the political, social, economic and sexual equality of women and girls."

In her forthcoming book, "What You've Got Is a Revolution," the historian Ashley Farmer describes how Panther women would go on to shape the internal and sometimes internecine debates about gender equality and racial militancy in their women's groups, in the Panther newspaper and elsewhere. At the same time, they often led and sustained the organization's most successful community programs — the Free Breakfast for School Children Program, the Liberation Schools and the People's Free Medical Centers — long past the Panthers' prime.

"I think the hidden discussions within the party were about what it meant to be a new black man and new black woman, and that eventually led to new narratives about gender roles," said Tracye Matthews, the associate director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture at the University of Chicago.

What was progressive about the Panthers' practices of equality — like having men cook in the breakfast programs and arming women to fight — also fostered tension. "They were constantly forced to confront how their theory of equality played out in real life and in the context of real oppression," Ms. Matthews concluded...

"I don't think that the police in San Francisco and Oakland took women that seriously as leaders because of their own chauvinism," said Kathleen Cleaver, the Panthers' first communications secretary and the former wife of Eldridge Cleaver. As a result, "many of the men in the party ended up being arrested, going into exile or underground, or dead."

In response to this void, the Panthers' fluctuating gender philosophy became strategic practice as the organization relied on those who remained: the women who continued to steer the party and its community programs.

*Tillet, Salamishah. "The Black Panther's Revolutionary Feminism." The New York Times. Last modified October 2, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/04/movies/the-panthers-revolutionary-feminism.html>.*

- **Featured Source C: Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle**

As women became a vital membership core within the organization, complaints about sexism became more prevalent. Panther women struggled against gender inequality without overtly identifying with the larger feminist movement... They utilized the language of social justice, and increasingly Marxist rhetoric, to fight against female subordination. Panther Roberta Alexander wrote an article in The Black Panther charging that... the

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organization thought more about “the contradictions between the women and the men, between the sisters and the brothers,” than about the “pigs.” ... Panther rhetoric increasingly promoted gender equality. Many Panther women struggled to bridge the distance between BPP rhetoric and reality.

Many Panther leaders acknowledged that sexism within the organization existed but argued that it was less virulent than in the larger American society and could be adequately addressed within the Panther organizational structure. Seale argued that in response to men who were violent towards women, demanded sexual favors, or used verbal intimidation, the Panthers had initiated dialogue on gender discrimination, enforced punishments, and adopted such rules as “Do not take liberties with women,” one of the “8 Points of Attention” that every Panther had to memorize. Kathleen Cleaver noted that the source of sexism within the BPP was rooted in American society: “When women suffered hostility, abuse, neglect, and assault—this was not something arising from the policies and structures of the Black Panther Party, something absent from the world—that’s what was going on in the world.” Cleaver argued that the Panthers uniquely “put a woman in a position when such treatment occurred to contest it.” Douglas concurred, noting that the Panthers provided a structure of accountability and a suggested code of conduct. He argued that there were “mechanisms in place” to “deal with” situations such as people in leadership or in the rank-and-file “who couldn’t take orders from women. Or who didn’t want to because of their ego.”

...The bravery of some Panther women in the face of political repression directly challenged ideas of male supremacy within the organization... By 1969, many Panther leaders nationwide were either imprisoned, in exile, or underground; the FBI was investigating every single chapter and twelve hundred members to “obtain evidence of possible violations of federal and local laws”; and the BPP was heavily infiltrated by spies and provocateurs. The arrest of Ericka Huggins after her husband, John Huggins, and another Panther, Bunchy Carter, were killed in a well-publicized shooting on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles, opened a dialogue about gender and repression. An open letter in *The Black Panther* written by Eldridge Cleaver... challenged Panther women to speak out in the face of discrimination, arguing that they had “a duty and the right to do whatever they want to do in order to see to it that they are not relegated to an inferior business position, and that they’re not treated as though they are not equal members of the Party and equal in all regards.”

...Sexual freedom, informally embraced by the Panthers, was often mediated by rank, personality, and, most importantly, gender. Some Panther women found the organization to be a place where they could celebrate and explore their sexuality. According to one Panther woman: “[Sexuality] was a very low-key thing in the Party. It was just natural that women had women lovers and men lovers at the same time. We all were sexually allowed whatever was our wish. Now, it wasn’t like we were going to put this in the Party newspaper because we didn’t feel it was necessary to make a political statement on the way that we lived. But we lived in a very open and collective and free realm.”<sup>48</sup> Women, however, often faced restrictions on their sexual behavior. Some heterosexual male Panthers expected and demanded sexual favors from women. Earlier in the BPP’s history, Eldridge Cleaver condoned the utilization of women’s bodies as a reward for male political behavior and dubbed it “pussy power,” much like the antiwar movement’s popular refrain “women say yes to men who say no [to the draft].” While some women were uncritical of this designation, others felt coerced by it. One Panther woman castigated some male comrades for the “abuse and misuse” of Party women under the guise of sexual freedom. “Whithin [sic] past months a comrade slopped into bed with me and began to disrobe me and have sex, to which I firmly objected and he did finally give up. But this same comrade barely speaks to me or trys [sic] to take me out or anything like that. Its [sic] not as if this happens daily, but it happens too much. Incidents like this that dont [sic] get reported and are just thought of casually perpetuate all of the terrible misconceptions of the Black Panther woman.”

Spencer, Robyn Ceanne. “Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle: Revolutionary Black Womanhood and the Black Panther Party in the Bay Area, California.” *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 1 (2008): 90–113. doi:10.1353/JOWH.2008.0006.

## Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined primary and secondary sources about women who participated in the Civil Rights Movement. They have uncovered some evidence about why women may or may not have been overlooked. They also now know that women were central to the movement, whether that has been in their previous learning.

Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understanding and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students will write an argument about women’s true role during WWII and whether it was in fact a new phenomenon.

Students’ arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- Women were not overlooked because these articles have recently been written about them.
- Women were overlooked because the movements were sexist to exclude their contributions.
- Women were overlooked because the movements needed to heroify their male leaders.
- Women were overlooked because they often served in roles behind the scenes.

To support students in their writing they can use this provided organizer for a body paragraph. The organizer refers to the HAPPY acronym: Historical Context, Audience, Point of View, Purpose and why is this significant?

First Argument	
Write a topic sentence that summarizes the paragraph and tells how this proves the thesis	<i>(Repeat the first part of your thesis)</i>
Provide background information here. <b>Cite anyone you paraphrase or quote!</b>	<i>When...</i>
What textual evidence proves this? Describe 1 or 2 HAPP elements about the source of your evidence.	
What textual evidence proves this? Insert a short quote here.	

<p>What makes this quote credible, valid, or helpful in providing insights to this issue?</p>	<p><i>The quote revealed...</i></p>
<p>Who disagrees or disputes a piece of your argument?</p> <p>Describe 1 or 2 HAPP elements about the source of your evidence.</p>	<p><i>Others claimed that...</i></p>
<p>What textual evidence do you have?</p> <p>Insert a short quote here.</p>	
<p>What makes this quote seem untrue, inaccurate, or only partly true?</p>	<p><i>While it may be true that _____, it was clear that...</i></p>

To extend their arguments, once students have written or formed an argument, consider doing one of the following extension activities:

1. **Discussion:** Consider facilitating a discussion of the analysis questions. Ask students to share their response with someone, or if they already worked in a group, ask them to nominate someone to represent their group to the class as a whole. Capitalize on differences between group responses. Why did one group answer differently than another? What impacted them or stood out more?
2. **Four Corner Debate:** Consider a "four-corner debate." In the corners of the room tack up a piece of paper with four differing and possible answers to the inquiry question. After students complete the lesson packet, pose the question to the room at large and ask students to move to the corner of the room (or in between locations) that represent their answer. Then, ask students to explain their choice. As students discuss they are allowed to move closer or further from ideas. This is a great strategy for kinesthetic learning.
3. **Socratic Seminar:** Consider doing a "Socratic seminar" to extend the learning and get students to question what they still don't know or understand. Start with the inquiry's question. Students should be encouraged to answer one another's question directly, but also to answer the question with another question. This continues the conversation and gets at more rich ideas. The teacher should try to say as little as possible and let the students lead the dialog. One strategy for this is to seat students in a circle. Give each of them a cup and 2-3 tokens. When a student makes a substantive contribution to the discussion the teacher will walk over and place a token in the cup signaling that they have contributed. Students will become aware of who has spoken and who has not, and leave space for one another.
4. **Structured Academic Controversy:** Consider turning the lesson into a "structured academic controversy." Take the overarching question and turn it into a "debate." Students can choose or be assigned a side in the debate and use the documents provided to argue their "answer" to the overarching question. They can argue over interpretations and credibility of some documents.
5. **Reacting to the Past:** Consider doing some role play with your class. Reacting to the Past is an active learning pedagogy of role-playing games designed by Barnard University. In Reacting to the Past games, students are assigned character roles with specific goals and must communicate, collaborate, and compete effectively to advance their objectives. Reacting promotes engagement with big ideas, and improves intellectual and academic skills. Provide

students with a set of rules about staying in character and what types of things they must know about their character. Students should be provided with a packet of role sheets with instructions on their individual goals and strategies for game play. Students can use sources and information from these activities, and can search for more details online about their individual character. Reacting roles and games do not have a fixed script or outcome. While students are obliged to adhere to the philosophical and intellectual beliefs of the historical figures they have been assigned to play, they must devise their own means of expressing those ideas persuasively in papers, speeches, or other public presentations.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by doing one of the following suggested action activities:

1. Find an article or book about history that misrepresents women and gender in history and write to the author or editor.
2. Write a letter to the Secretary of Education for your state about the teaching of women and gender history.
3. Investigate women and gender rights issues that persist and engage with the movement by attending a protest, signing a petition, or donating to the cause.
4. Make a PSA video, blog, or social media post with the intent to persuade the audience to better understand women from history or a persistent gender rights from this inquiry.