



#9557

OUT OF OBSCURITY

CALIFORNIA NEWSREEL, 1996

Grade Levels: 9-13+

41 minutes

DESCRIPTION

Historical perspective of the 1930s' civil rights movement in Alexandria, Virginia. Focuses on Sam Tucker's actions to desegregate the public library, using the first sit-in tactic in the United States. Provides viewpoints from participants and citizens of the city.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: United States History – Era 8 – The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

- ★ Standard: Understands how the New Deal addressed the Great Depression, transformed American federalism, and initiated the welfare state
 - Benchmark: Understands how the New Deal influenced the civil and political rights of diverse groups (e.g., the involvement of women and minorities in the New Deal and its impact upon them, FDR's commitment to advancing the civil and political rights of African Americans, how African Americans planted the seeds of a civil rights revolution during the 1930s, how the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 affected Native Americans, the role of John Collier in securing a "new deal" for Native Americans) (See Instructional Goal #1.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To depict how the seeds of the civil rights revolution were begun during the 1930s.
2. To introduce Samuel Tucker and the integration of the Alexandria public libraries.

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. obscurity | 11. circulation desk |
| 2. apartheid | 12. filed suit |
| 3. trumped up charges | 13. patron |
| 4. conviction | 14. integration |
| 5. appeal | 15. colored |
| 6. white supremacy | 16. reform |
| 7. God ordained | 17. orderly |
| 8. social injustice | 18. disorderly conduct |
| 9. civil disobedience | 19. ruled on the case |
| 10. segregated | 20. acquitted |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Locate the following places on a map of the United States: Virginia (Richmond and Alexandria) and Washington D.C.
2. Review the following events and people related to the history of civil rights in America. Consider Jim Crow laws and Rosa Parks.

AFTER SHOWING

► Discussion Items and Questions

1. What is the significance of the title *Out of Obscurity*?
2. What was life like for African Americans in the 1930s?
3. What was Sam Tucker's early life like? When did he become involved in pursuing civil rights? How did Tucker's life show he valued education?
4. What plans were made prior to the sit-in at the Alexandria public library?
5. What happened on the day of the sit-in? Why was the group of protesters so small? Why didn't Tucker participate in the sit-in? Why were the protesters in the library for nearly two hours?
6. What happened during the trial for those involved in the protest? What part of the Constitution did Tucker use in his defense? What were the biases of the prosecutor and the judge?
7. What minimized the media's coverage of the sit-in? How would further media coverage possibly have changed the outcome?
8. What was the city of Alexandria's solution to the library sit-in? Why was this not acceptable to Tucker? Why did he say that reading meant freedom?
9. What role did Tucker play in later civil rights events?

► Applications and Activities

1. Interview a grandparent, family member, or community member regarding remembrances of civil rights protests. Ask about the process of change and personal stories. Create a presentation of the findings.
2. Research topics to learn more about the civil rights movement. Consider the NAACP, Jim Crow laws, Rosa Parks, Brown vs. the Board of Education, and apartheid in South Africa.
3. Write a short biography of the accomplishments of Samuel Wilbert Tucker. Write a personal reflection of Tucker from the perspective of one who participated in the sit-in, the librarian, or one of the police officers.

RELATED RESOURCES



- [We Shall Overcome: A History of the Civil Rights Movement #2695](#)
- [Rosa Parks: The Path to Freedom #3654](#)
- [Philip Randolph: For Jobs and Freedom #9554](#)



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **THE VIRGINIA BLACK HISTORY ARCHIVES**



<http://www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/speccoll/vbha/vbha.html>

This site includes nearly 50 collections of published and unpublished documents dating primarily from the 20th century. Provides online access to several digitized collections.



- **SAMUEL W. TUCKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

<http://www.acps.k12.va.us/tucker/swt.htm>

In addition to a brief biography of Tucker, this site provides student essays and poetry honoring Tucker's accomplishments.

- **ALEXANDRIA BLACK HISTORY RESOURCE CENTER**

<http://oha.ci.alexandria.va.us/bhrc/>

This site includes information regarding the Museum, the Watson Reading Room, and the Alexandria African American Heritage Park.

