

# PETER B. LEVY

## Civil Rights: Uncovering Your Community's Stories

### *Author's Note from the Teacher's Edition*

I have become convinced that one of the main challenges that face teachers of the civil rights story is to make sure that students understand that many men and women, not just Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, and John F. Kennedy fought for the cause of racial equality. This challenge can be met, I believe, by emphasizing that the main lesson of the movement is that ordinary people, from the four college students who initiated the sit-down at Woolworths in Greensboro, North Carolina, to hundreds of anonymous men and women who joined the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama can and did make a difference. Thus, while it is important for students to gain a sense of who King, Marshall, and other major figures of the movement were, it is just as important for them to see the armies of ordinary people who protested for their rights.

One way that teachers can meet this challenge is to prompt their students to consider how the civil rights movement impacted their own communities. To access the past in their hometowns they can interview parents, grandparents, and other relatives. They can examine local newspapers and, in some cases, visit local sites of the struggle for racial equality. Perhaps they will even uncover some home town heroes, their own version of Rosa Parks, who fought to integrate local schools, libraries, and/or buses. By engaging students in such history projects, teachers can make the civil rights movement more relevant and give students a taste of the excitement of historical research and discovery.

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*Peter B. Levy, Program Author*

### About the Author

Peter B. Levy is a Full Professor in the Department of History at York College of Pennsylvania, where he teaches a wide variety of courses in American history. He received his B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, and his Ph.D. from Columbia University. He is the author of eight books and many articles, including; *The New Left and Labor in the 1960s*; *Civil War on Race Street: The Civil Rights Movement in Cambridge, Maryland*; and *100 Key Documents in American Democracy*. He lives in Towson, Maryland, with his wife, two children, and yellow lab.

