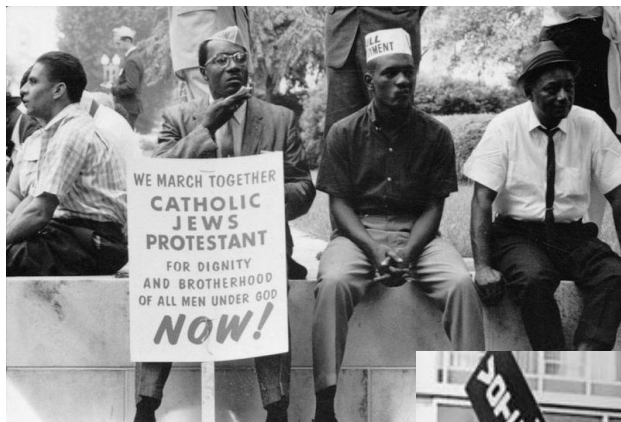




VRA@50

A Symposium on the
50th Anniversary of the
Voting Rights Act of 1965



Founded in 2000, the Center for Historical Research sponsors a variety of history related events such as Utica College's Brown Bag Talks lecture series, History Month events, commemorative "@" series, and other history-related events. It is responsible for Utica College's online archive, *The Digital History Project*, and supports the publication of our annual student research journal, *The History Project*.

For more information contact us at:

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November 14, 2015
Utica College
Utica, New York

I was beaten and jailed because I stood up for it," Congressman John L. Lewis wrote recently on his website. "The history of the right to vote in America is a history of conflict, of struggling for the right to vote. Many people died trying to protect that right."

Their resistance and sacrifice led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the culmination of the civil rights struggles of the preceding decade. The journey to vote met violent resistance from white supremacists and segregationists. In 1964, Freedom Summer, three students and civil rights workers, James Ray, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner were found murdered. Mississippi sharecropper and activist Fannie Lou Hamer, with the help of the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC), organized the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to push for African American participation in the electoral process. The act, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, followed the 1965 March from Selma to Montgomery, where John Lewis of SNCC and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. endured the nightsticks and biting dogs of "Bloody Sunday."

Fifty years later, the struggle for full voting participation goes on. "For millions like me," Congressman Lewis writes, "the struggle for the right to vote is not mere history; it is experience." As redistricting, new voter registration laws, and other measures are put into place, historians and civil rights activists continue to reflect on the struggles, impact, and legacy of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.



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The New York Council for the Humanities
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The Office of the President, Utica College

Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed at this event do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

8:30-9:00

9:00-9:20

9:30-10:30

10:30-10:50

10:50-11:50

11:50-12:30

12:30-1:20

1:30-2:20

2:30-3:20

3:30-3:50

4:00-4:40

5:00-6:00

6:00-7:30

Breakfast

Introductory Remarks:

Provost John Johnsen, Professor David Wittner
Christopher Hickman, *Tarleton State University*,
"Even Bad Ideas (Sometimes) Find Judicial Allies: Justice
Hugo Black's Jurisprudential Deviations and the
Opponents of the VRA of 1965"

Coffee break

Meeghan Kane, *Benedict College*
"Working the Act: Grassroots Organizing After VRA in
South Carolina"

Morning Wrap-up

Lunch, Library Concourse

Victoria Wolcott, *University of Buffalo*
"Voting with Their Feet: The Struggle Over Segregated
Recreation"

Jeffrey H. Bloodworth, *Gannon University*
"Race Matters: The 1982 Voting Rights Act & the Irony of
Southern Realignment"

Coffee break

Roundtable: The VRA and Its Legacy
Robbie Dancy, *NAACP, Oneida County*
Anthony Van Der Meer, *University of Massachusetts-Boston*
Moderator: Kathryn M. Silva, *Utica College*

Final Discussions and Wrap Up

Reception

