



# **Fifth Grade Social Studies**



## 5th Grade Social Studies Activity 3

\*There will be a short video lesson of a Knox County teacher to accompany this task available on the KCS YouTube Channel and KCS TV.

**Topic:** Tennessee and the Civil Rights Movement

**Goals:** Students will be able to explain how Tennessee contributed to the Civil Rights Movement and answer quiz questions at the end.

**Standard:**

5.50 Identify Tennessee's significant contributions to the Civil Rights Movements, including:

- Highlander Folk School
- Tent City Movement of Fayette County
- Nashville Sit-Ins
- The Clinton Twelve

**Included Text for Students to Read:**

Excerpts from Gallopade Chapter 32

**Tasks for Students to Complete:**

- Students will read the text and answer the questions at the end.
- Visit <https://civilrightstrail.com/state/tennessee/> and take a virtual field trip through Tennessee. This website is a great discovery tool that you can use to learn about Tennessee's role in the Civil Rights Movement as well as to further their understanding of the overall Civil Rights Movement itself.

**Additional Links for More Information:**

- Highlander Folk School  
<https://www.highlandercenter.org/>  
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/highlander-folk-school/>
- Nashville Sit-Ins  
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/sit-ins-nashville/>  
<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/nashville-sit-ins-1960/>
- Clinton Twelve  
<https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/clinton-desegregation-crisis/>  
<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/the-clinton-desegregation-crisis-1956/>
- Fayette County Tent Cities  
<https://www.memphis.edu/tentcity/movement/fayette-timeline-1960.php>  
<https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/tent-city-fayette-and-haywo>

## Highlander Folk School

The **Highlander Folk School** was established in 1932 in Monteagle, Tennessee. Its earliest goal was to help poor Southerners improve their lives. One tactic was to organize labor unions and train labor organizers and workers, especially coal miners.

In the 1950s, the school focused on ending racial segregation. One of the few places where it was safe for blacks and whites to work together, it trained leaders for the Civil Rights Movement. Students learned nonviolent ways to protest racism and segregation in their own communities.

Because protests often involved danger and violence, students were taught how to hold peaceful sit-ins and marches. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used these same methods in his important civil rights work. Rosa Parks, famous for protesting segregation by refusing to give up her seat on a bus, attended a workshop at Highlander. The methods of peaceful protests taught at Highlander Folk School helped many people make headway in the struggle against racial injustice across the South.



Training for the Civil Rights Movement



One important part of workshops at Highlander was the experience of blacks and whites living and working together. One black woman said it was "the first time she had dealt with white people on an equal basis."

## Nashville Sit-Ins

In the 1950s, many local drugstores across America had lunch counters where shoppers could get a quick bite to eat. In the South, African Americans could shop at stores that had a lunch counter, but they were not allowed to sit at the counter and eat.

On February 13, 1960, a group of blacks and white students in Nashville protested by going to several lunch counters trying to order food. The lunch counter workers refused to serve them. The students sat at the counters until the stores closed in the evening. White storeowners were frustrated and angry. They did not like this interference—peaceful or not—inside their stores.

The **Nashville Sit-Ins** continued. On February 27, students were punched, kicked, and even knocked off their seats. Amazingly, the students were arrested for "disorderly conduct," while their attackers were left alone. In April, students met with the Nashville mayor, who agreed that segregation was wrong. In May, lunch counters in Nashville began to serve black customers. Nashville became the first Southern city to integrate public facilities!



Civil Rights leader Diane Nash, one of the founders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, mobilized fellow college students at Fisk University to participate in the Nashville Sit-Ins. Nash got the mayor to agree that the lunch counters should indeed be desegregated.

# The Clinton Twelve

## Integrating the schools

One of the main goals of the Civil Rights Movement was to integrate public schools. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court said that segregated schools were unconstitutional. The first public school to be integrated in Tennessee was in the town of Clinton in 1956. The integration of a school was often frightening for black students due to angry protests by those who opposed integration.

The African American students who first attended Clinton High School became known as “**The Clinton Twelve**.” They walked to school together each day, hoping for safety in numbers. One day, a minister who walked with them was beaten. A couple of years later, the school was bombed with dynamite. Although no one was hurt, it was evident that many people still opposed integration.

Leaders of the Highlander Folk School tried to help with the integration of Clinton High School. They hosted summer camps for students, training sessions for teachers and administrators, and offered support for the Clinton Twelve during that very difficult first year.

# 12

# Tent City Movement of Fayette County

## Standing up for the right to vote

As late as the 1950s, African Americans in Tennessee continued to have difficulty registering to vote. To help solve this problem, African Americans in Fayette and Haywood counties organized voter registration drives. Blacks stood in long lines in the hot sun to register, and then they voted in the next election.



To punish the blacks for exercising their rights, black sharecroppers and their families in Fayette County were evicted from their homes and not allowed to buy food in local stores. A local black landowner named Shephard Towles allowed the homeless people to set up tents on his land. The area became known as “**Tent City**.” Residents of Tent City braved bad weather, lack of food and clothing, and threats of violence.

Tent City gained national attention and people began to send food and clothing to the residents. Finally, in June 1962, a federal court issued a decree to end interference with any person's right to vote.



**1.** Who was trained at the Highlander Folk School before refusing to give up a seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama?

- (A) Malcolm X
- (B) Emmett Till
- (C) Ruby Bridges
- (D) Rosa Parks

**2.** What was unique about the Highlander Folk School during the Civil Rights era?

- (A) White and black students learned to work against segregation together.
- (B) White and black students learned to work in support of the First Amendment separately.
- (C) White and black students learned to work in support of the First Amendment together.
- (D) White and black students learned to work against segregation separately.

**3.** Why are the Clinton Twelve famous?

- (A) They were students who participated in the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
- (B) They were students who integrated the first public school in Tennessee.
- (C) They were students who lived in Tent City in Fayette County.
- (D) They were students who refused to attend school until it was integrated.

**4.** What action did the Clinton Twelve take to try to stay safe?

- (A) They lived next to each other in Tent City.
- (B) They attended training workshops at the Highlander Folk School.
- (C) They walked to school together every day.
- (D) They only went places where there were other African Americans.

**5.** What was the original goal of the Highlander Folk School when it opened in the 1930s?

- (A) to train factory workers
- (B) to end racial segregation
- (C) to organize the war effort
- (D) to improve the lives of poor Southerners

**6.** Why were some African Americans evicted from their homes in Fayette County during the 1950s?

- (A) African Americans in the area voted in an election and local white people did not like it.
- (B) African Americans who were evicted did not pay their mortgages or rent.
- (C) African Americans who were evicted refused to buy food in local stores.
- (D) African Americans in the area organized a tent city and local white people did not like it.

**7.** Why did Tent City develop?

- (A) African Americans in Fayette County wanted to protest Jim Crow laws.
- (B) African Americans in Fayette County did not have enough money to find housing after being evicted from their homes.
- (C) African Americans in Fayette County wanted to end school segregation.
- (D) African Americans in Fayette County wanted to protest working conditions.

**8.** What was the outcome of the Nashville sit-ins?

- (A) Nashville businesses protested the sit-ins by closing their doors.
- (B) Nashville businesses started serving African Americans at their lunch counters.
- (C) Nashville schools forced students to end sit-ins and return to class.
- (D) Nashville schools desegregated as a result of the sit-ins.