Final Report for my One Semester Sabbatical Project
“Debates Over Civil Rights: Laws and Lived Experiences,” 2004
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During my 2004 One Semester Sabbatical, I researched the historiography of the civil rights movement and began work on the book of civil rights documents I had under contract with Greenwood Press.

My purpose in researching the historiography of the civil rights movement (a literature review), was two-fold: I was seeking background for my writing and for my anticipation of taking over more and more duties for teaching civil rights history and leading activities at the Civil Rights Heritage Center, once Dr. Les Lamon retired in 2006. The modern civil rights era of the 1950s-1960s, was a new time period for me because I was trained as a historian of the Civil War and Reconstruction Era and my dissertation ended in the 1930s.

I also searched for and checked out every other book of civil rights documents that had been published to compare them to the book that I was seeking to write. This process was discouraging to me because it was hard to see how my book could be different from these others, since it would be aimed at an introductory undergraduate audience and had to feature the same basic documents to tell the story of the classic civil rights movement. I like to do original research and writing.

I drafted a chapter outline of the book for Greenwood Press, “Debates Over Civil Rights: Laws and Lived Experiences.” I also wrote the first chapter and chose at least one document to feature in each of the other chapters.

One of my assignments in writing this book was to get the permission to use each of the documents in the reader. I found that I was not well-suited to this task. Unfortunately, I found that I was simply not the right person to write this civil rights documents book and the published and I parted ways and they found another writer.

A selected bibliography of my readings follows. These readings deepened my knowledge of civil rights history and prepared me for my future work in heading the Oral History Project of the Civil Rights Heritage Center, teaching the Freedom Summer Civil Rights Study Tour, and other African American civil rights history classes, and being the Director, and later the Historian of the Civil Rights Heritage Center. I also later published a civil rights movement history article, “Race and Politics: Lessons from the Civil Rights Movement,” Indiana Journal of Political Science (Winter 2008/2009).


Branch, Taylor. Parting the Waters: America in the King years, 1954-63. New York: Simon & Schuster,


