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Fall

EVERYBODY'S WATCHING: The writing of the U.S. Constitution

Winter

DREAM: Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Spring

THE LAST FULL MEASURE:
The Battle of Gettysburg and The Gettysburg Address

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Teaching America's Heritage Through Story and Song

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Quill Productions Presents

DREAM

Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks,
and the Montgomery Bus Boycott



A History Musical

Book & Lyrics
Granville Wyche Burgess

Music
Stephen Lawrence

KEY CHARACTERS

Martin Luther King, Jr.,

Rosa Parks

E.D. Nixon

DESCRIPTION OF DREAM

DREAM ... is the story of the days, during the early 1950's, when young Martin Luther King, Jr. studied theology at Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. Through his reading and his experiences during this time – especially the painful experience of having to renounce his love for a white woman in order to preserve his career as a teacher in the black community – King developed and refined his theory of nonviolent resistance based on the Greek idea of “agape”, a love higher than one’s self.

Later, meeting Rosa Parks and leading the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, King’s beliefs were sorely put to the test. He had to endure threats, bombings, and jail, while convincing his followers not to answer violence with violence, but with agape. The musical excitingly dramatizes how a person can carry the beliefs and principles learned in the classroom out into the “real world”, and how that one person’s philosophy can transform the actions and feelings of an entire nation.

The story of DREAM is told with five ethnically diverse teenagers, who travel through time and space onstage with the help of their magical guide, Mr. History. During the play, Mr. History has the kids re-enact events from this formative period in King's life and thought. The story illustrates how beliefs that he formed during the years at Crozer Theological Seminary influenced King's actions throughout his life.



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

1929-1968

It was not clear from his childhood that Martin Luther King, Jr. would follow in his father’s footsteps and become a minister. Growing up in Atlanta GA, King questioned the teachings of the Christian Church. Not until his senior year at Morehouse College, where he entered at the early age of 15 but was only an average student, did he decide on attending Crozer

Theological Seminary, a northern school (Pennsylvania) with a predominantly white student body.

It was during the years at Crozer (1948 – 1951) that King became a serious biblical scholar. He acknowledged the contribution of science to our understanding of the world but valued the Bible as a source of “... mankind’s deepest devotional thoughts and aspirations, couched in language which still retains its original vigor and its moral intensity.” He became a straight A student, was elected president of the student body, and graduated as valedictorian of his class.

King believed in nonviolent resistance as a way to effect changes in society, notably regarding civil rights. It was difficult to persuade his followers that nonviolence did not mean cowardice. He also had to teach them that “... the nonviolent resister does not seek to humiliate or defeat the opponent but to win his friendship and understanding.” King wrote that “... the aftermath of violence is bitterness ... but the aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation and the creation of a beloved community.” These principles were the basis of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955.

In writing about the philosophy of nonviolence, King distinguished between three kinds of love corresponding to three different words for love in the Greek language. Eros can be thought of as a romantic love and philia as a reciprocal love between personal friends. The highest form of love, however, is agape. “It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. And when you come to love on this level you begin to love men not because they are likeable, not because they do things that attract us, but because God loves them ...”

Martin Luther King, Jr. received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and, after his death, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, one day after delivering a speech in which he said “... I’ve been to the mountaintop ... I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But ... we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.”



ROSA PARKS 1913-2005

Rosa Parks grew up in Alabama, where her father was a carpenter and her mother a teacher. She was a committed Christian, a high school graduate, and a woman well aware of the deep injustices suffered by African-Americans in the South during the years of segregation. In 1955 she was the volunteer secretary to the president of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP, E. D. Nixon. On December 1st of that year she

remained seated in the colored section of a city bus, disobeying the demand of the white bus driver to give up her seat to a white passenger, and stepped into history. Although she had technically broken no law, she was arrested, jailed, tried and convicted in the local court.

Unlike others before her who had committed the same act of civil disobedience, Parks was willing to appeal the case. She was an ideal candidate because of her good record as a citizen and her determination, supported by her husband, her mother, her church, her white employer (attorney Clifford Durr), her NAACP colleagues and the young Martin Luther King, Jr. Whether she was unusually tired physically that day or not, she was undoubtedly tired of years of segregation and degradation.

Rosa Parks is so well known for her role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and her life-long efforts promoting civil rights through nonviolent means that the US Congress awarded her a Congressional Gold Medal, calling her “the first lady of civil rights.” She also won the Presidential Medal of Freedom among many other awards.



Montgomery City Lines Bus #2857



Alabama Newspaper Headlines from 1955-1956



E.D. NIXON 1899-1987

Edgar Nixon was an African-American civil rights leader and the senior player in orchestrating the Montgomery Bus Boycott. He was president of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP and had been considering a boycott for a few years prior to 1955 along with other activists in the community in order to challenge the constitutionality of the discriminatory seating practices on city buses. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white person in December 1955 he believed he had the right candidate to take the matter all the way to the Supreme Court.

Nixon enlisted the help of the young Baptist minister Martin Luther King, Jr. whose ability to inspire a crowd impressed Nixon. Along with white attorney Clifford Durr (employer and mentor to Rosa Parks) and other relatively unsung heroes like Jo Ann Robinson, Nixon formed the Montgomery Improvement Association and became its treasurer while King became its president. The MIA organized the boycott, originally intended to last for one day, and continued it for more than a year, despite constant harassment and interference by white segregationists including the local police. The landmark Supreme Court decision in *Browder vs. Gayle* ended segregation on city buses in November 1956.

Test Your Civil Rights Knowledge

1. Why does Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. have the title “Dr.” in his name?
2. What was Dr. King’s nickname as a young man?
3. Where did Martin Luther King go to theological seminary?
4. Who was Rosa Parks and why was she arrested?
5. What was the Montgomery bus boycott all about?
6. Name two of the leaders of the Montgomery bus boycott.
7. In what decade did the bus boycott take place?
8. How long did the bus boycott last and how many people participated?
9. The segregation laws prevented blacks from doing many things. Name two things they could not do.
10. What is the meaning of the word “AGAPE?”

Answers:

1. He received his doctorate from Boston University
2. Mike
3. Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania
4. Rosa Parks was a black women who was arrested for civil disobedience because she refused to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery City Lines bus
5. The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a demonstration against bus segregation
6. Martin Luther King, Jr. and E.D. Nixon
7. 1950s
8. 381 days and 40,000 Black residents of Montgomery, Alabama
9. Drinking out of water fountains designated for white people and riding in the front section of a public bus
10. “AGAPE” means having love for something greater than one self.

If you were asked to share your dream for America in front of 300,000 people, what would it be?

Please share your response on our Facebook page.
<http://www.facebook.com/QuillEntertainment>



Recommended Reading from the Youth Librarian at the Greenwich Public Library

Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice / by Phillip Hoose (NON-FICTION 5/6, 7/8)

Presents the life of the Alabama teenage who played an integral but little-known role in the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-1956, once by refusing to give up a bus seat, and again, by becoming a plaintiff in the landmark civil rights case against the bus company.

Marching For Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary / by Elizabeth Partridge (NON-FICTION 5/6, 7/8)

An inspiring examination of the landmark march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965 led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., this book focuses on the children who faced terrifying violence in order to walk alongside him in their fight for freedom and the right to vote.

Mississippi Trial, 1955 / by Chris Crowe (FICTION, 7/8, HS)

A riveting fictionalized account of an actual event, as told from the perspective of a white teenage boy who discovers the evils of racism and the brutal murder of Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old African-American boy accused of flirting with a white woman, and the trial that ensued, leading to the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement.

Morning in a Different Place / by Mary Ann McGuigan (FICTION, HS)

In 1963 in the Bronx, New York, eighth-graders Fiona and Yolanda help one another face hard decisions at home despite family and social opposition to their interracial friendship, but Fiona is on her own when popular classmates start paying attention to her and give her a glimpse of both a different way of life and a new kind of hatefulness.

The Rock and the River / by Kekla Magoon (FICTION, 7/8, HS)

In 1968 Chicago, fourteen-year-old Sam Childs is caught in a conflict between his father's nonviolent approach to seeking civil rights for African Americans and that of his older brother, who has joined the Black Panther Party.

Through My Eyes: The Autobiography of Ruby Bridges / by Ruby Bridges (NON-FICTION 5/6)

Provides a first-hand factual account of the six-year-old student who made history by having been one of the first black children to attend an all-white, segregated school in the 1960s.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."²

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true. And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that: Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

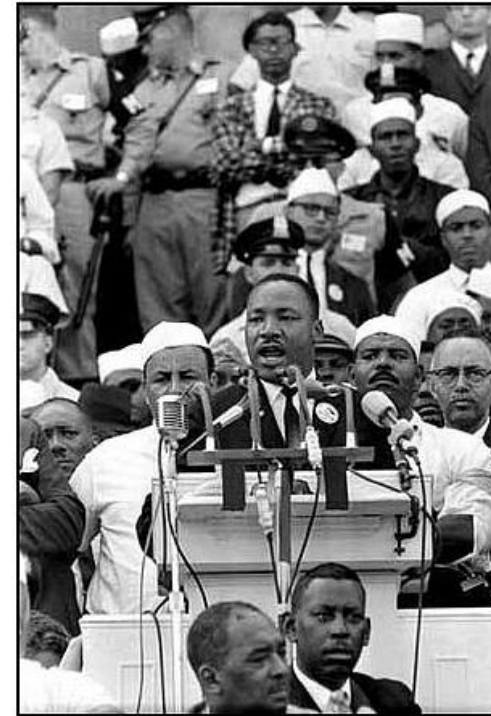
Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

Martin Luther King, Jr.

I Have a Dream

delivered 28 August 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C.



I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quick sands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."¹

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.