

BROOKLYN CONNECTIONS

CIVIL RIGHTS IN BROOKLYN

PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET

Student Name

INTRODUCTORY READING

Adapted from: Murphy, Brendan. "Civil Rights Professional Development Packet for Teachers." Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

The Congress on Racial Equality (CORE)

The Congress of Racial Equality, or CORE, was a group that worked to stop unfair treatment of Black people in the United States. It started its work in 1942 and continued through the 1960s. CORE believed in using peaceful actions, not violence, to make changes. They wanted everyone to be treated equally.

CORE helped people understand that unfair treatment, or **discrimination**, was not just a problem in the southern states. It was also happening in northern states like New York. In New York City, there were different chapters of CORE, including groups in the Bronx, Harlem, the Lower East Side, Queens, and Brooklyn.

In the 1960s, Brooklyn CORE took action to show people how discrimination affected many lives. Here are five examples of how they highlighted these unfair practices both in Brooklyn and beyond.

Ebinger Baking Company

The Ebinger Baking Company started in 1898 and was known throughout Brooklyn for its tasty pastries and cakes. In some ways, it was an important part of the community, but it did not hire Black and Latino workers for jobs like sales clerks, bakers, and drivers. In 1962, Brooklyn CORE tried to talk to Ebinger's about hiring these workers, but they were not successful. Members of CORE began to protest outside the stores and stopped buying the bakery's products. When this did not get enough attention, the CORE members did a **sit-in** in front of the bakery's delivery trucks. This stopped the trucks from working and made the company think about changing its hiring practices.

Operation Cleansweep

Operation Cleansweep started on September 15, 1962. The goal was to help people understand that neighborhoods got different services depending on who lived there. Bedford-Stuyvesant is a neighborhood in Brooklyn where many Black people lived. Between the 1940s and the 1960s, more and more people moved into Bedford-Stuyvesant. However, the city did not provide enough garbage collection services for the growing population.

Bedford-Stuyvesant had garbage picked up three times a week. In contrast, other neighborhoods like Bensonhurst and Sheepshead Bay, which had mostly white residents, received garbage pick-up five times a week. For over ten years, the people in Bedford-Stuyvesant asked the New York City Department of Sanitation and the Mayor for more garbage collections, but they did not get any help.

During Operation Cleansweep, volunteers picked up the trash that was left on the streets of Bedford-Stuyvesant. They took the garbage and placed it on the steps of Brooklyn's **Borough Hall** to show how serious the problem was. The police gave out tickets for littering during the

demonstration. People standing outside Borough Hall handed out flyers that explained how neighborhoods with white people received better trash services than neighborhoods with Black people.

The Bibuld Family and the Schools

In the 1950s and 1960s, many people in Brooklyn noticed that schools in mostly Black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods were not as good as schools in white neighborhoods. Brooklyn CORE studied this and found that kids in white schools had better reading and math scores. They also had more and better books.

Brooklyn CORE tried to fix this by talking to the Board of Education, but nothing changed. So, they started planning protests and sit-ins. One family that helped was the Bibuld family. In 1962, the Bibuld children were told to go to a school called PS 282. Their parents thought it wasn't a good school. They wanted their kids to go to PS 200, a better school in a mostly white area, but the Board of Education said no.

With help from CORE, Mr. and Mrs. Bibuld took their kids to PS 200 anyway. Even though the children were not officially allowed in, the principal let them stay as guests. This was called a school "sit-in." To support the Bibulds, Brooklyn CORE held more sit-ins and protests. Around 300 people joined.

Jobs at Downstate Medical Center

In 1963, the Civil Rights Movement was happening all across the country. In New York, one big problem was that Black people were not getting fair chances at jobs. A hospital called Downstate Medical Center was being built in Brooklyn. It was supposed to bring many jobs to the community. But most of the jobs went to workers from unions that Black people could not join.

Brooklyn CORE, along with Black church leaders, decided to protest. On July 15, 1963, 14 Black ministers and over 75 church members went to the site to picket. Over the next few weeks, hundreds of people protested and many were arrested. Some lay down in front of bulldozers or climbed on cranes to stop the work. These actions got a lot of attention from the public and the news.

The March on Washington

Brooklyn CORE also helped with the March on Washington, one of the most important events in the Civil Rights Movement. They sent many people on buses and even held a walk all the way from Brooklyn to Washington, D.C.

A small group of young CORE members walked the entire 237 miles from Brooklyn to the Lincoln Memorial to fight for equality.

A CALL TO ACTION !!

C.O.R.E. CHAPTERS & CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS URGED TO SUPPORT BROOKLYN C.O.R.E.

AFTER MANY, MANY MONTHS OF PICKETING, BOYCOTTING AND UNSUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS, ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M., BROOKLYN C.O.R.E. WILL STAGE A MASS DEMONSTRATION AGAINST 39 OF THE EBINGER BAKING CORPORATION'S RETAIL STORES.

EBINGER BAKING CORPORATION HAS A LONG HISTORY OF BIGOTRY AND UNFAIR HIRING PRACTICES IN BROOKLYN, WHERE MANY OF THEIR STORES ARE LOCATED IN GHETTO AREAS. THIS COMPANY ALSO HAS A LONG HISTORY OF DEFYING ANY AND ALL CIVIL RIGHTS AGENCIES - AND AFTER MUCH PRESSURE, ESPECIALLY FROM THE MINISTER'S ALLIANCE OF BEDFORD-STUYVESANT, HAS RESORTED TO TOKENISM AND HIRED 2 "LIGHT-SKINNED" NEGRO SALES CLERKS.

EBINGER'S HAS REFUSED TO LIVE UP TO AN AGREEMENT MADE BETWEEN THEM, C.O.R.E. AND THE URBAN LEAGUE STATING THEREIN THAT 3 OUT OF 5 PERSONS HIRED WOULD BE NEGROES.

SINCE IT HAS BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO COME TO ANY REASONABLE AND WORKING TERMS WITH THE FIRM'S REPRESENTATIVES, WE ASK YOU TO JOIN US IN THIS MASS EFFORT TO ONCE AND FOR ALL END THE DISCRIMINATORY HIRING PRACTICES OF A FIRM EARNING THE BULK OF ITS PROFITS FROM MINORITY GROUPS, WHILE REFUSING RECOGNITION OF THEIR RIGHTS TO EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

PLEASE CONTACT MR. MAURICE FREDERICKS, PR 3-3641, OR YOUR LOCAL C.O.R.E. CHAPTER, PLEDGING YOUR TIME AND ENERGY TO BROOKLYN C.O.R.E. FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M. ON AUGUST 4.

YOURS FOR FREEDOM NOW,

BROOKLYN CONGRESS OF RACIAL EQUALITY

Document 1 - "A Call to Action." *Brooklyn Congress on Racial Equality*. Aug 1962. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

Transcript

A CALL TO ACTION

C.O.R.E CHAPTERS & CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS URGED TO SUPPORT BROOKLYN C.O.R.E

After many, many months of picketing, boycotting and unsuccessful negotiations, on Saturday, August 4, from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Brooklyn C.O.R.E will stage a mass demonstration against 39 of the Ebinger Baking Corporation's Retail Stores.

Ebinger Baking Corporation has a long history of **bigotry** and unfair hiring practices in Brooklyn, where many of their stores are located in **ghetto** areas. This company also has a long history of **defying** any and all civil rights agencies – and after much pressure, especially from the Minister's Alliance of Bedford-Stuyvesant, has restored to **tokenism** and hired 2 "light-skinned" negro sales clerks.

Glossary:

Bigotry: having or showing a strong and unfair dislike of other people, ideas, etc.

Defy: to refuse to obey

Ghetto: a part of a city in which members of a particular group or race live usually in poor conditions

Transcript: a written or typed copy

1. What is Document 1 trying to persuade its readers to do? Why?

2. What is *tokenism*? Use context clues to make an educated guess.

3. Name three tactics listed in Document 1 that CORE used to fight Ebinger's Bakery.

i.

ii.

iii.

4. Document 1 was created in 1962. How do you think CORE members distributed this leaflet – list at least two ideas:

i.

ii.



Document 2 - Adelman, Bob. *Barbara Weeks and Claire Toombs Sit in Ebinger Drive.* 1962. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library

1. Who are the two women sitting down in DOCUMENT 2? How do you know?

2. Why did they choose this location for their protest?

3. Imagine you are walking by this scene. What do you hear?

Dear Mr. Ebinger:

I have pledged not to buy at any of the Ebinger stores until you agree to hire without discrimination.

My family enjoys your products and we would like to resume our patronage of your stores as soon as possible - so please let me know when you have come to an agreement with the Ministers' Movement and with C.O.R.E.

Very truly yours,

Name:

Address:

Document 3 - *Pledge Card*. August 1962. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

Glossary:

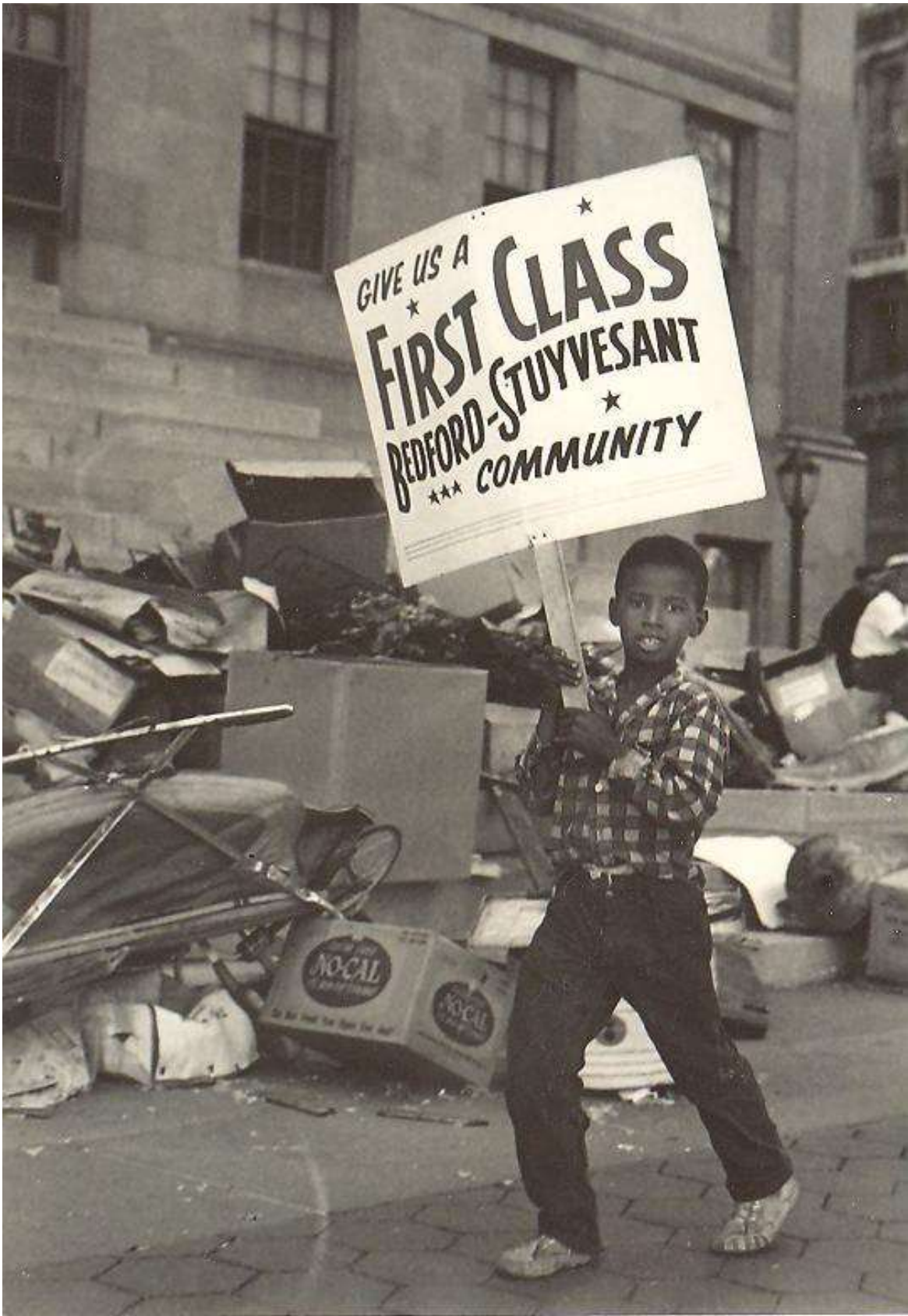
Patronage: support that is given to a business, library, etc., by buying its goods or using its services

1. What is a pledge? Use context clues to make an educated guess.

2. What is the owner of this card pledging to do?

3. Why is there no name signed at the bottom of DOCUMENT 3?

4. How do you think DOCUMENT 3 was used? Do you think it was worked?



Document 4 - Adelman, Bob. Bernard Hall: *Telling It Like It Is. Operation Cleansweep. 1962.* Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Who is the boy pictured in DOCUMENT 4? How do you know?

2. List three things you observe in the background of this photograph:

i.

ii.

iii.

3. What do you think it means to have a "First Class" community?

4. Do you think this young boy's protest was effective? Why or why not?

FELLOW FREEDOM FIGHTERS

A NEGRO FAMILY WILL GO TO

JAIL

Just as Mississippi is trying to kick James Meredith out of a "white" school, The City of New York is trying to keep the Bibuld children out of a "white" school. It also threatens to TAKE THE CHILDREN AWAY FROM THEIR PARENTS, AND THROW BOTH MOTHER AND FATHER INTO JAIL.

YOU CAN

HELP

MASS DEMONSTRATION

MONDAY — FEBRUARY 4th 8⁰⁰_{a.m.} - 4³⁰_{p.m.}

BOARD OF EDUCATION -- 110 LIVINGSTON STREET
BROOKLYN, BOROUGH HALL STATION -- ALL TRAINS

SIT INS 24 HOURS A DAY CONTINUOUS SINCE

JANUARY, '27 ROOM 1012

Brooklyn CORE 272 Van Buren St GL 3-2731

Document 5 - "Fellow Freedom Fighters." *Brooklyn CORE*. 4 Feb 196-. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. To who is DOCUMENT 5 addressed?

2. Name two locations you might hang a flyer like this up to get people’s attention:

i.

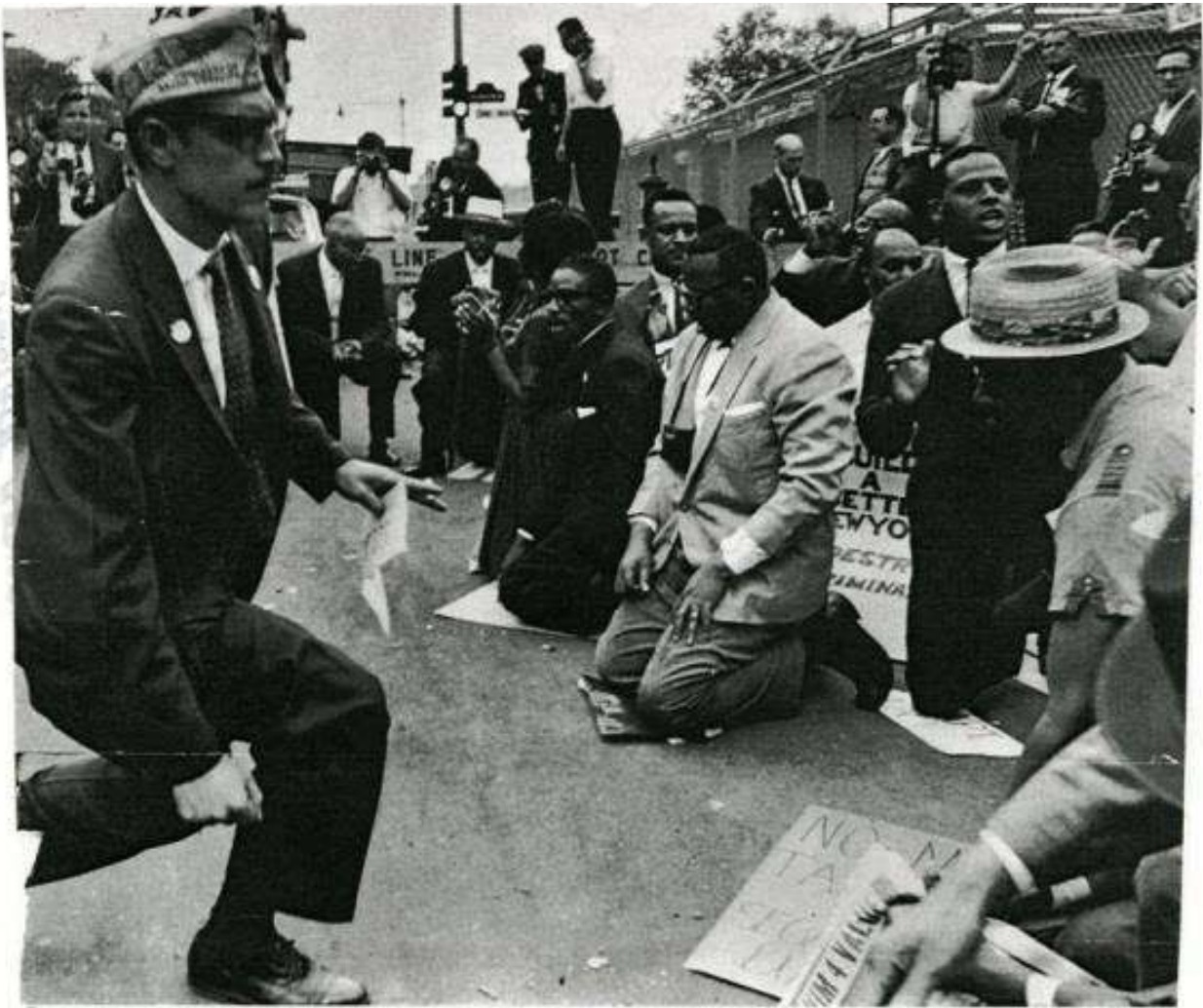
ii.

3. Name two tactics DOCUMENT 5 uses to capture its reader’s attention:

i.

ii.

4. Summarize the issue this flyer is drawing attention to in your own words:



Document 6 - *All Together Now, Kneel for Freedom*. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Who are the people on their knees in DOCUMENT 6? Use observations as evidence to back your inference.

2. Who are the people standing up in the background of DOCUMENT 6? Use observations as evidence to back your inference.

3. Why do you think the protestors would “Kneel for Freedom?”



RELAX AND RESIST

Policewomen spent hours last week bearing limp white and Negro women demonstrators from truck entrances at Brooklyn's Downstate Medical Center to paddy wagons (far left). Pickets—representing CORE, the Urban League and the N.A.A.C.P.—continued singing in the wagons, and one (left) insisted on remaining relaxed. When at one point police, shorthanded, resorted to dragging unresisting demonstrators (above), they were immediately charged with brutality. From then on all were carried, regardless of bulk. Some pickets made things even tougher by binding themselves together with steel chains, forcing police to separate them with bolt cutters.

Glossary:

Bear: holding

Paddy Wagon: police vehicle or van

Shorthanded: having fewer than the usual number of people available

1. Describe what you see in DOCUMENT 7:

2. What does the tactic "Relax and Resist" refer to in the caption for this photograph?

3. Why would a protestor want to go limp, as depicted in the photograph?

4. Do you think this strategy would work today? Why or why not?



Document 8 - Assorted Buttons. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Read the messages on each button in DOCUMENT 8. List two things they show or tell us:

i.

ii.

2. People often wear buttons to draw attention to an issue. Why do you think buttons an effective way to communicate a message?

3. Imagine who owned these buttons in the 1960s. Where do you think he or she would have collected them? Where would they have worn them?

4. What issue would you make a protest button for today? Write a slogan for it below:

Issue:

Slogan:

AUG-16-63

THE NEW YORK TIMES,



Associated Press

BEGIN WALK TO WASHINGTON: Members of Brooklyn Chapter of Congress of Racial Equality set out to participate in Aug. 28 march on Washington, a demonstration in support of Administration's civil rights bill. The group started at Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn, where they had been demonstrating against discrimination in hiring.

Document 9 – "Begin Walk to Washington." *The New York Times*, 16 August 1963.

1. What type of document is DOCUMENT 9?

2. Who are the individuals pictured in this article?

3. What are they doing, according to the caption?

4. Where are they starting and where will they end up?

An Appeal to You from

JAMES FARMER
Congress of Racial Equality

JOHN LEWIS
Student Non-violent
Coordinating Committee

ROY WILKINS
National Association for the
Advancement of Colored People

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

A. PHILIP RANDOLPH
Negro American Labor Council

WHITNEY YOUNG
National Urban League

to MARCH on
WASHINGTON

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 28, 1963

America faces a crisis . . .

Millions of Negroes are denied freedom . . .

Millions of citizens, black and white, are unemployed . . .

We demand:

- Meaningful Civil Rights Laws
- Massive Federal Works Program
- Full and Fair Employment
- Decent Housing
- The Right to Vote
- Adequate Integrated Education

In our community, groups and individuals are mobilizing for the August 28th demonstration. For information regarding your participation, call the local Coordinating Committee for the

**MARCH ON WASHINGTON
FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM**

1417 You Street, N.W.

ADams 2-2320

CO-CHAIRMEN

Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, Coordinator
Joseph A. Beavers
E. Charles Brown

Edward A. Hailles
Julius W. Hobson
Sterling Tucker

Document 10 – *March on Washington for Jobs.* 28 August 1963.

1. When did the March on Washington take place?

2. List three things the marchers are demanding:

i.

ii.

iii.

3. If you had to pick only one demand, which would you choose? Why?

GLOSSARY

Borough Hall: Brooklyn's City Hall located in Downtown Brooklyn

Contingent: a group of people that have something in common

Decade: a period of ten years

Discrimination: treating some people better than others

Diversify: To make different, not all the same

Effective: successful

Enroll: to sign up

Fixture: something that is permanent or fixed

Garner: to gain or earn

Inferior: low or lower in position

Interracial: of, involving, or for members of different racial groups

Sit-in: a kind of protest where people stay in one place and refuse to leave until their demands are met