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PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS: The Sit-Ins in Downtown Atlanta

For this assignment, you will locate and analyze primary sources from the civil rights protests in the restaurants and business establishments in downtown Atlanta, and the debates surrounding these protests, in the early 1960s. You will then write a paper that uses these primary sources to create a narrative of these events, and to analyze and reflect upon the evidence.

Your performance on this assignment will be assessed based upon the thoroughness, astuteness, and insight of your analysis of these primary sources, as well as the quality of your essay's structure and prose.

STEP 1: Each student will be expected to find TEN primary sources relating to the sit-ins of 1961-1964. The publications and databases where you will find these sources will include (but not necessarily be limited to):

- *The Atlanta Constitution*
- *The Atlanta Daily World*
- *The New York Times*
- *The Georgia State University Signal*
- *The Southern Israelite*
- *The Student Voice* (SNCC)
- *Jet Magazine*
- *The Atlantic Monthly Magazine*
- The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Photographic Archives
- Lane Brothers Photographs
- The Digital Library of Georgia

STEP 2: Create a timeline. Based upon your findings, what was the chronology of events? At this stage, we will trade and compare timelines and bibliographies. You may find that someone else has found a primary source that's particularly interesting to you, or that fills in a gap in your timeline. Ask your classmate for the citation, and go find that document.

STEP 3: Select TEN documents that you find most interesting and/or useful. (Only TWO of these can be photographs.) For each document, try to answer the following questions:

- Who wrote/created it? What do you know about this person, or this group of people? Does this matter – and if so, why?
- What is the main point? Is the author making an argument? Can you summarize it in a sentence or two? What evidence does the author give to support his/her argument?

- Why was it written – what was its purpose? What effect did its author/creator intend for it to have? Does it *prescribe* actions (tell people what to do or how to respond) or *describe* actions (give an account of an event), or both?
 - Who was the intended audience? Was it a big or a small audience – how widely was it circulated? Does this matter – and if so, why?
 - Are there particular words or metaphors or images that the author/creator uses that you find particularly interesting or telling?
 - What value commitments and unspoken assumptions can you detect? Is the author/creator coming from a particular ideological position?
 - Does the document tell you about the beliefs and actions of the elite, or of the non-elite? From whose perspective?
 - What questions can this source NOT help you answer? What are its limitations?
- It's OK if you can't address all of these questions with every primary source. Also, remember that no single primary source tells the whole story.

STEP 4: Write a paper that gives a brief narrative summary of the events surrounding the protests at downtown restaurants and businesses in the early 1960s. Analyze several of your primary sources, putting them into conversation with one another. Compare and contrast them. What can we learn from these documents – not only about the events themselves, but about how different people and media institutions presented, understood, and interpreted the protests?

As you construct your narrative and analysis, consult at least two of the following secondary sources:

- Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).
- Cynthia Griggs Fleming, *Soon We Will Not Cry: The Liberation of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998).
- David J. Garrow, ed., *Atlanta, Georgia, 1960-1961: Sit-Ins and Student Activism* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson, 1989).
- Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights, 1960-1977* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006).
- Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton University Press, 2005)
- Stephen G. N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940-1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001)

All sources must be cited in footnotes (or endnotes).

You are also required to provide a complete bibliography.

Failure to cite properly will result in significant penalty to your grade.

Write between 1,500-1,700 words (5-7 pages) of analysis, not including footnotes.