

History Snapshots

Ethel Hyer (1915?-1980)

Lesson Topic

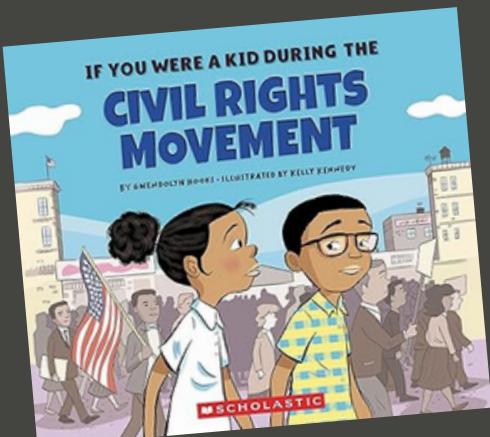
Civil Rights and Social Change

Georgia Standards

SS8H11 Evaluate the role of Georgia in the modern civil rights movement.

Lesson Picture Book

If You Were a Kid During the Civil Rights Movement
by Gwendolyn Hooks



Ethel Hyer, First Woman to Lead Rome NAACP

The Civil Rights movement was accomplished in large places and small, by the famous and those from everyday walks of life. Ethel Hyer, like many women in the 1950s and 60s, served her community of Rome in a variety of religious, civic, and social organizations. She attended Spellman College and was a member for 65 years of Thankful Baptist Church. She was also a trailblazer. Hyer was the first female president of the Rome Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a position she held for 15 years. For her service on behalf of human equality, Hyer was honored by the city of Rome in 1973 and given the key to the city. She represents the untold number of Georgians who served as foot soldiers of a movement that would not have succeeded without them.

Materials

- Ethel Hyer, Circa 1960. GHS 2117 Ethel Hyer family papers.
- NAACP Membership Card, 1965. Ethel Hyer Family Papers, GHS 2117.
- "A Grim Reminder" NAACP Flyer, circa mid or late 1960s. Ethel Hyer Family Papers, GHS 2117.
- Key to the City of Rome, Georgia, 1973. Ethel Hyer family papers, GHS 2117-AF-058-001.

GHS Primary Sources



Lesson Introduction

Begin the lesson by reviewing key civic vocabulary with the class:

- Civil rights – rights that guarantee equal social opportunities and protection under the law
- Activist – a person who works to bring about political or social change
- Community leadership – service and advocacy within a local community

Pose the following question to the class:

- What does it mean to stand up for fairness or equality?
- Do social movements only succeed because of famous leaders?
- What roles might everyday people play in creating change?

During class discussion, record student responses on a T-chart labeled:

- Famous Leaders
- Everyday Community Members

Explain that today's lesson will focus on a local leader whose work helped move the Civil Rights Movement forward.

Direct Instruction

Utilizing the Ethel Hyer Primary Source Set, introduce Ethel Hyer.

The teacher will highlight:

- Where Ethel Hyer lived and served.
- Her role as the first female president of the Rome NAACP chapter
- How long she served in leadership
- Her involvement in religious, civic, and social organizations
- Why she was honored with the Key to the City in 1973

Guide students through a discussion on how leadership does not always happen on a national stage and how local activism is essential to social change.

Guided Practice

Divide students into groups of five. Provide each group with:

- The Ethel Hyer Primary Source Set
- *If You Were a Kid During the Civil Rights Movement* by Gwendolyn Hooks

Have each group analyze the materials and complete a 3-2-1 written response:

- 3 important or interesting facts about Ethel Hyer
- 2 things that surprised you from the primary sources
- 1 major takeaway about how everyday people contribute to social movements

Each group will present their findings to the class, referencing at least one primary source in their explanation.

Independent Practice

Students will complete a ticket-out-the-door journal response:

- Describe how Ethel Hyer contributed to the Civil Rights Movement in her community.
- Why are local leaders and "everyday people" important to the success of social movements?
- How can individuals today make a difference in their own communities?