

ACTIVITY : RESPONSES TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

INSTRUCTIONS

Below are four different responses from Georgians to the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964. This activity asks students to paraphrase and condense the main arguments in each of the responses down to one sentence.

When completed students should get into small groups of 2-4 and compare their paraphrased sentences. Did they agree upon the main points of each of the original responses? If not, they should work together to further condense their individual sentences into a single group sentence for each response.

The activity can conclude with a general classroom discussion about the main arguments in each of the responses and what explains the different ways Georgians responded to the Civil Rights Act.



Pro-segregation demonstrators picketing at Governor Ernest Vandiver's mansion, Atlanta, Georgia, 14 July 1959. Source: AJCP338-044h, Atlanta Journal Constitution Photographic Archives, Special Collections and Archive, Georgia State University, Atlanta.

Paraphrase and condense the main points in Penn's response:

Letter from Anne Penn to Rose Levin, n.d. [c. 1964]

Anne Penn was a 31-year-old African American woman from Rome, Georgia. In this letter to her former employer Rose Levin, she discusses the situation in Rome following the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

Since the Civil Rights Bill have been signed this place have been in a mess and I am not ashamed to say I am scared. Maybe not for me so much but for my children, its not even safe for them to walk along the streets.

I wonder Mrs. Levin when will all this be over an[d] will the Negro man ever have complete freedom. I don't think so. There will just be fighting an killing an more fighting.

This Mr. Goldwater I don't care for either but he said something that was really true. He said the law could go so far but the rest of it had to come from the heart.

Georgia Council on Human Relations, Compliance Report - The Civil Rights Act, 15 July 1964

The Georgia Council on Human Relations (GCHR) was biracial group that worked to end racial, religious, and ethnic discrimination across the state of Georgia. It had chapters in several communities around the state, including Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, Rome, and Savannah. This a report detailed the extent to which Georgia communities were complying with the anti-segregation provisions of the Civil Rights Act.

Atlanta - Compliance is general with the exception of Heart of Atlanta Motel and Pickrick. These cases are being tried. Three whites arrested in melee at Lakewood Park when Negroes attempted to hear [George] Wallace speak.

Cedartown - Hotels and restaurants are open with exception of Wayside Inn which is reportedly not open. Police Chief W. M. Moss is doing a good job of encouraging compliance. Negroes believe he will persuade the Wayside Inn to open. Police protection has been good through the testing period. Negroes have agreed to attempt attending schools only for classes not taught in Negro schools.

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Cartersville - There has been no organized testing here, however it seems there will be compliance. There is evidence that Negroes will stay away from likely trouble spots – swimming pools, bowling alleys and pool rooms. Negroes were harassed after leaving the bowling alley.

Rome - Restaurants, Hotels, Motels, lunch counters seemed to all have agreed to open, all have not been tested. Holiday Inn is open. Mr. [Oliver W.] Holmes (African American leader in the GCHR) spent the night at the Hotel General Forrest. The bell captain took him to his room, and said, "I've waited 33 years for this moment, I've taken many whites up this elevator, but you're the first one of us." As Mr. Holmes was seated in the dining room a white man leaving said "Let me hurry up and pay this check and send \$100 to Goldwater!"

The two (one Negro and one white) swimming pools closed. After a deal with the Negro leadership the pools opened with an understanding of "no testing yet" from the Negroes. Police Chief is keeping order. Turned back a large group of white hoodlums who were starting to make trouble. A group of whites with Alabama license plate were waiting for Negroes at the movie.

Paraphrase and condense the main points in GCHR compliance report:

WSB-TV Interview with Lester Maddox, [11 August] 1964

Lester Maddox was the owner of the Pickrick, a restaurant in Atlanta. When three African American theology students attempted to eat in his restaurant after the Civil Rights Act was signed, Maddox, supported by his white customers, ran them off at gunpoint. The students sued and although the Supreme Court upheld the Civil Rights Acts as constitutional, Maddox sold his restaurant rather than be forced to integrate it. Maddox was elected as Governor of Georgia in 1967.

Reporter: Mr. Maddox how do you feel about the decision by Justice Black?

Maddox: Well, I am shocked and I am hurt that there would be further thinking or opinions along the lines that I must surrender as a free American citizen to the ungodly and communistic and unconstitutional Civil Rights Act of 1964. That Lyndon Johnson had previously said that such legislation would bring about a police state in America. Now he has fathered such legislation, he has brought it about and I'm living right in the middle of police state, and I am saddened and hurt, as I stated. Don't think it is so important to Lester Maddox and the Pickwick as it is to all of America that every citizen regardless of race, color, or creed, has now become a pawn of the political aspirations of people who know that they have placed our country and our people in this state....

Reporter: If a test should come tomorrow by Negroes what actions...

Maddox: I can't say exactly say what will take place tomorrow unless I know what I am going to do. I can this...

Reporter: What you might do with the Pickwick should it be forced to close?

Maddox: Oh, no sir, not too much thought to that because the U.S. Constitution doesn't say that I have to integrate or segregate or that I've got to sell or I've got to go into a private club or any of those things. The United States Constitution gives me private property rights and rights as a citizen and it gives me the further assurances that neither me nor any other person regardless of he be Negro or white must be subjected to involuntary servitude. And this bill says that I've got to subject myself, become subservient to, the communistic-inspired racial agitators. And I stand on the Constitution that that is in violation of my constitutional rights as an American.

Paraphrase and condense the main points in Maddox's response:

Speech by Frances Pauley to the Hungry Club, 6 October 1965

Frances Pauley was the Director of the Georgia Council on Human Relations. On October 6, 1964 she made the following speech, which talked about the impact that the Civil Rights Act had on those Georgians who supported the end of racial segregation

During the months that preceded the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, we followed the various amendments and discussions in the Congress. We worried about the weakness of the Bill. We certainly worried about the enforcement of it.... During this time we did not fully appreciate the positive effect it would have.

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I remember June 1964, talking to the operator of the Holiday Inn in Jesup, Georgia and asking him 'What will you do when the law passes?' He answered "It never will pass." Generally throughout the state the segregationists still believed that [Senator Herman] Talmadge and [Senator Richard] Russell could save them. Many times we heard, "It will never happen here. Maybe in Atlanta or even Savannah - but not here!"

But July 2nd did come. Suddenly there was a wonderful feeling of relief. We had a law behind us. We could continue to go to the restaurant owner and say "It is right for you to treat all men - won't you consider changing your policy?" Now we could add, "IT IS THE LAW." Many of our members had a new feeling of security in working for the open society....

Today the Negro is on the threshold of the freedom that is now his by law. It is still denied him by violence and by the ingenuity and craftiness of the segregationist. But this too will pass. Perhaps then Georgia, finding no further alternatives, will broaden its policies and embrace a truly democratic society.

Paraphrase and condense the main points in Pauley's response:

Small Group's paraphrased and condensed sentences -

Penn Letter:

Georgia Council on Human Relations Compliance Report:

Lester Maddox Interview:

Frances Pauley Speech:

Sources: Letter from Anne Penn to Rose Levin, n.d. [c. 1964], Jule and Rose Esserman Levin Family Papers, Cuba Family Archives for Southern Jewish History, The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, Atlanta, GA; Georgia Council on Human Relations, Compliance Report - The Civil Rights Act, 15 July 1964 and Speech by Frances Pauley to Hungry Club, 6 October 1964, Frances Freeborn Pauley Papers, 1919-1992, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA; WSB-TV, Maddox Will Refuse to Serve "Communitic Inspired Racial Agitators" at the Pickrick Restaurant to Preserve His Aligence [sic] to God, 1964, wsbn31716, WSB-TV newsfilm collection, reel 0710, 16:54/26:54, Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection, The University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, GA.

ANSWER KEY

Activity : Responses to the Civil Rights Movement

Possible Responses Include:

- Anne Penn - Fear and concern about backlash against African Americans following passage of the Civil Rights Act.
- Georgia Council on Human Relations - Believes good progress is being made to integrate public facilities and accommodations now that Civil Rights Act has been enacted.
- Lester Maddox - Upset and angry at the idea of being either forced to close his restaurant or integrate it.
- Frances Pauley - Civil Rights Act gave her hope and optimism that integration would be accomplished more quickly.

Further Information on the Civil Rights Movement in Rome, Georgia is available at:
<https://sites.berry.edu/civilrights/>

