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‘Witnessing and Testifying’: Individual  
Expression and Social Change in the  
Civil Rights Movement

*Etched in Collective History*

“‘Witnessing and Testifying’: Individual Expression and Social Change in the Civil Rights Movement” explores how a generation of civil rights activists altered the nation’s view of American race relations through various forms of personal witness and public testimony. Activists redirected the nation’s gaze to the individual experience of Jim Crow and the injustice of racial segregation through direct action protest, verbal expression—oratory, poetry, song—as well as the visual arts. These forms of personal witness and public protest allowed movement leaders, organizers, and foot soldiers to draw connections between their subjective experiences and the broader political goals of the civil rights and black power movements.



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COLLECTIVE HISTORY**