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The Sit Ins of North Carolina

Would you stick up for what is right even if you could go to jail for it? The Greensboro Four did. The way they got that name is that they did protest in Greensboro, North Carolina. They got the four because there were four of them David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair Jr. and Joseph McNeil. The four of them were North Carolina Agriculture and Technology College students . The way they helped is that they did nonviolent protest at all white lunch counters. They knew that they could go to jail, but that never stopped them. They knew something had to be done, so they did it.

People did a lot to make segregation better and some did a lot to make it worse. The Greensboro Four made it better by doing nonviolent protests by sitting at the all white lunch counter, these protests were called sit ins. They got their nonviolent protests ideas from a famous nonviolent protest creator Mohandas Gandhi. They first did a sit in on Monday, February 1st, 1960. They went to F.W. Woolworth's Five and a Dime store purchase some small items so they wouldn't look like trouble. Then they went and sat at the all white counter and kindly ask to be served. Their request was denied so they sat there till Woolworths closed.

When they came back they recruited some more students to come with them, they also called the local news station. A white man named Ralph Johns helped the four students get the word out and by Thursday, February 4th they had over 300 students participate in the protests. Each day the word spread and by the end of February sit ins had spread to over 33 cities and at the end of March over 55 cities and 13 states.

The sit ins continued at Woolworths and on April 21st, 1960 the Greensboro Four were arrested along with 45 others. After the four were arrested another kid named William Thomas led the high schoolers in the sit ins. Once summer break started sit ins went down. So Woolworths let four of their African American employees (Geneva Tisdale, Susie Morrison, Anetha Jones, and Charles Best) eat at the all white counter. Finally on July 26th, 1960 Woolworth desegregated their counter. By August of 1961 over 70,000 people participated including whites and over 3,000 arrested.

Greensboro four was not the first to start sit ins, in fact a group called CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) they did a first sit in on January 20th, 1955 in Baltimore, Maryland. Another group that was a big help was the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). During the sit ins an African American nonviolent protest group was created and was specifically for African American students, they were called the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee) This group organized sit ins and other nonviolent protests, they also organized the news stations, that is how sit ins spread so fast.

The idea of sit ins was spread so fast due to the communication of the four and Ralph Johns with the local paper and the news. The paper got all the county while the news got it everywhere else including Nashville, Tennessee where more violent protests occurred.

I would be able to help with nonviolent protests especially sit ins because I would not have to have the fear of getting hurt or even killed. I could invite colored people to join me at an all white counter or even go to the owner of Woolworths and complain to him. I would even send letters to the president to ask him to try to pass a law to stop segregation. I would set my goal to be like Ralph Johns and the other white people who helped.

David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair Jr. and Joseph McNeil were all very brave men because the thought of jail didn't stop them from protesting. With the help of Mohands Gandhi nonviolent protest ideas and Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and all the other people who helped in the Civil Rights Movement. Their actions changed the world because without them the world would still be segregated.