



Why Not Every Man?: African Americans and Civil Disobedience in the Quest for the Dream

George Hendrick, Willene Hendrick

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The record of civil disobedience by African Americans, which George and Willene Hendrick recount in *Why Not Every Man?*, begins soon after slaves were brought legally to the American colonies: they began to run away. Through the years of the abolitionists, the struggle against the Fugitive Slave Act, opposition to Jim Crow laws, and the emergence of the civil rights movement, blacks continued the peaceful protest of their inequality and lack of freedom. In addition to describing these often forgotten episodes, the Hendricks show how the idea of civil disobedience, first suggested in America by Henry David Thoreau, crossed oceans to influence Mohandas K. Gandhi, whose thinking in turn attracted a young divinity student named Martin Luther King, Jr. The impact of these ideas was to be profound, forming a central tenet in Dr. King's movement against segregation and for the civil rights of black Americans. The record of civil disobedience in the service of African Americans is not without its failures, but overall it has been a powerful weapon in their quest for a share of the American dream. This is a succinct history of that story.

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