

The Robin Hood of the Mississippi Civil Rights and Human Rights Movements

Objectives:

Students will use the newspaper article “A fight for rights: Movement’s Robin Hood Unmasked” from *The Clarion-Ledger* by Jerry Mitchell to become more knowledgeable about the significance in the development of American constitutional democracy.

The Robin Hood of the Mississippi Civil Rights and Human Rights Movements lesson plan is adaptable for grades 8 - 12.

Curricular Connections		
Social Studies	9th Grade Mississippi Studies	4c, 5d
	U.S. History from Reconstruction to Present	2a, 2c, 4e, 7c
	African American Studies	4d, 5b, 6d
	Problems in Democracy	2b, 2c, 2d, 3a, 5d
Common Core Language Arts	Grades 6-8	RH 1, 2, 4, 8; WHST 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9
	Grades 9-10	RH 1, 2, 3, 7; WHST 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9
	Grades 11-12	RH 1, 2; WHST 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9

The Robin Hood of the Mississippi Civil Rights and Human Rights Movements

Objectives: Students will use the newspaper article “A fight for rights: Movement’s Robin Hood Unmasked” from *The Clarion-Ledger* by Jerry Mitchell to become more knowledgeable with the development of American constitutional democracy. *This lesson may be adaptable for several grade levels and specific subject matter.*

Materials: “A fight for rights: Movement’s Robin Hood Unmasked” from *The Clarion-Ledger* handout, *Robin Hood Civil Rights Movement* worksheet, dictionary or online dictionary, Internet.

Procedures:

Activity One: The Robin Hood of the Civil Rights Movement

1. Have students read through the article “A fight for rights: Movement’s Robin Hood Unmasked” by Jerry Mitchell from *The Clarion-Ledger*.
2. After reading the article have the students complete the *Robin Hood Civil Rights* worksheet using the article, dictionary, and/or Internet research.
3. Have students discuss the article and Eddie Sandifer. Discuss how he might relate to and be received in a movement other than the Civil Rights Movement and in today’s social system.

Activity Two: Student Essays

1. Divide class into groups and assign them to research either the United Farm Workers or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), two of the organizations that Sandifer wanted to support with donations.
2. Have the teams write essays present the findings to the class and lead discussions on the information they found.
 - a. What is the mission of each organization?
 - b. What is the main focus of the work of each group?
 - c. When and where were they established and how does that explain their mission?
 - d. Are these groups still active today?
 - e. Would you be interested in helping these groups with their mission? Why or Why not?
 - f. How do you think these groups have made an impact on American history and society?

Activity Three: Persuading Others to a Cause

1. Divide students into groups of 4-5.
2. Identify various local, national, or international civil rights organizations such as the UFW, NAACP, WWF, UNESCO, PETA, Greenpeace, Islamic Human Rights Commission, Southern Poverty Law Center, William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, GLAAD, UNICEF, Amnesty International, Children’s Defense Fund, ACLU, etc.
3. Using the Internet, have students research the mission, goals, and strategies of their assigned organization and complete a promotional packet representing the organization that includes any or all of the following:
 - a. website
 - b. print advertisement
 - c. commercial
 - d. newspaper article
 - e. political platform

- f. poster
4. Encourage students to view the organization through the eyes of those who are committed to its cause and remain respectful of the views of others.
 5. Allow them to share or display their completed projects with the class.

Extension Activities:

1. Have students do research on organizations that help people in need and have them write an essay on the reason that organization is deserving of assistance and what difference the class could make by helping them. As a class choose one of the organizations then plan, organize and carry out a fundraiser and donate the money made.
2. What is the difference between fact and legend and how is each constructed? Compare and contrast the story of England's Robin Hood with that of Brookhaven's Eddie Sandifer and discuss the validity of each.

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ANALYSIS

Bizarre race set to end

Cochran-McDaniel vote Tuesday

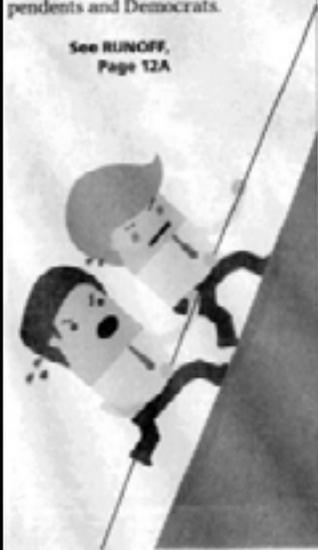
By Geoff Pender
The Clarion-Ledger

The 2014 U.S. Senate GOP primary in Mississippi will go down as one of the most bitter, mudslinging-est, bizarre political hootenannies in state history.

Incumbent Sen. Thad Cochran faces a runoff with challenger state Sen. Chris McDaniel, after neither garnered more than 50 percent of the vote on June 3. McDaniel led by less than 1,500 of the 319,000 votes cast.

McDaniel has tea party support and a base fired up by anti-Washington sentiment. Cochran has the support of the state's GOP establishment, and he's trying to pull in some independents and Democrats.

See **RUNOFF**,
Page 12A



Activist Eddie Sandifer is shown in this 1976 photograph taken by an unknown photographer. SPECIAL TO THE CLARION-LEDGER



A fight for rights

Movement's 'Robin Hood' unmasked

By Jerry Mitchell
The Clarion-Ledger

In the dead of one night in 1963, he slipped to the front of a jewelry store in Brookhaven and smashed the window with a glass Coke bottle.

He crawled inside and shined his flashlight on the display cases, stuffing as many jewels as he could into a bag.

When his watch said two minutes were up, he crawled back out and hopped into his still running getaway car.

The driver hit the gas, crossing the railroad tracks in time to beat the train.

Police tried to pursue, but by the time they reached the tracks, the train was blocking their way.

The burglary was one in a series, carried out in Mississippi to raise money for the civil rights movement and similar causes.

Now, a half century later, The Clarion-Ledger has discovered the identity of the man described as a "Robin Hood for the civil rights movement."

See **SANDIFER**, Page 12A



ONLINE

Eddie Sandifer's memories of being "Robin Hood" and other videos, photo galleries and interactive graphics at clarionledger.com



INSIDE

Special report on Freedom Summer Perspectives, 16

FROM THE FRONT

METRO/STATE

Sandifer

Continued from Page 1A

His name? Eddie Sandifer.

For most of his life, Sandifer has taken care of others.

In 1955, this native of a rural Louisiana town near where Arkansas and Texas touch began working at a nursing home in Jackson, caring for patients.

He said he became one of the first licensed nursing home administrators in Mississippi.

This son of a fire-and-brimstone preacher also remained passionate about gay rights.

Although he blasted gays from the pulpit, his father never criticized his behavior, Sandifer said.

After the Korean War began, the Army drafted him. Because he had made no secret of being gay, the Army forced him to stay stateside.

In 1958, he traveled to New York to attend the National Convention for the Mattachine Society, established to promote gay rights.

When the hotel refused to allow African-Americans to join the convention, he said the society threatened to picket. The hotel changed its stance.

In Mississippi, he met with NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers, asking about having the NAACP and the Mattachine Society meet together.

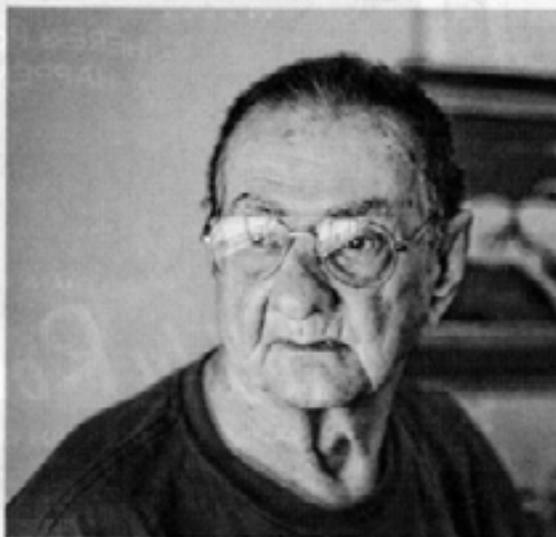
He said Evers was reticent.

On the way out, he said he handed a \$5 contribution to the NAACP to Evers' secretary.

When she said she would make out a receipt to him, he told her not to bother.

Sandifer knew the grassroots civil rights organizations desperately needed money. So did the United Farm Workers and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. So did gay rights groups.

But from where? His salary at the nursing home was mea-



Eddie Sandifer of Jackson has spent much of his life advocating for gay rights and civil rights. JOE ELLISTHE CLARION-LEDGER

ger at best. He needed a quicker way.

After closing time one day, he stared inside the window of a jewelry store and noticed many items left in the display cases.

How easy it would be to break a window and grab them, he thought. But to do so, he would need to be fast. Very fast.

Before burglarizing the jewelry store in Brookhaven in 1964, Sandifer spent time there.

He timed how long it took him to drive from the police station to the store. He timed how long it took to drive from the store to the railroad tracks. He figured out exactly when the train ran through town.

About a week after first checking out Brookhaven, Sandifer returned. "Nobody ever knew I was gone at night," he said.

He and his driver returned in an inconspicuous black car he borrowed, he said. "There was nothing to make it stand out."

But when he smashed the window, "all hell broke loose," he said.

He and his driver made it across the tracks in time. The police didn't.

"All the noise, and they never caught me," he said.

Brookhaven proved to be his last because this time he got caught trying to sell the jewels.

In all, he served 16 months in prison, getting out just in time to help take care of his father, who was ill.

Although the statute of limitations has long passed, he remains hesitant to talk about the other stores he burglarized. "Somewhere between Memphis and the Mississippi Gulf Coast," he said.

In all, there were six jewelry stores, "and that was it," he said. "After that, I went to Parchman."

The nursing home where Sandifer worked hired him back as administrator.

He continued giving to civil rights organizations and other causes, this time from the full-time salary he received.

Upset by the mistreatment of the elderly, he started the Jackson branch of the Gray Panthers and challenged federal agency officials.

Moved by his words, some recruited him to help found the Coalition for Nursing Home Reform, he said. "There were certain major chains buying up nursing homes, and they had bad reputations."

Once again, Sandifer began driving in the dead of night into rural areas of Mississippi, this time to rescue those suffering from a new disease, AIDS.

"I'd have to go to places and bring them out — so the neighbors wouldn't know anything," said Sandifer, who began heading the Mississippi Gay Alliance in the 1970s. "I'd have to find housing for them when they came home to die."

Sometimes there were serious threats, he said. "They'd have to move out of a community to keep their houses from being burned down."

In 1987, the alliance began the Sandifer House, which had a dozen beds for AIDS and HIV patients, he said.

The patients included male and female, black and white, he said. "I had files on over 600 people with HIV, most of them in Mississippi. They came from Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas."

The house operated until 1992 when funding ran out.

Two years later, Sandifer became part of the Southern AIDS Commission, now known as the Southern Health Commission.

"When Eddie first started working for me, he told me he would give me 10 years before he retired," recalled Alonzo Dukes, who heads the commission. "Now it's been 20, and he still hasn't retired."

He praised Sandifer as a great pioneer for the civil rights movement, for human rights, and for HIV and AIDS patients.

"He's made so many sacrifices, paid so much out of his

own pocket," he said. "I wouldn't trade him for anything."

Now 84, Sandifer is just as broke as he's always been — someone who continues to give money away to causes he believes in.

"Everything I wear is hand me down, except my socks," he laughed.

Although he's not on salary anymore for the Southern Health Commission, he continues to help HIV patients and believes more should be done to assist them with food and rent.

Each day, he works out of his south Jackson house that needs fixing up. "I've got my office," he said. "I'm going to be working till I'm gone."

He has been driven to work for others since he was young, he said. "If I saw something wrong, I tried to correct it."

Informed about Sandifer's role as a "Robin Hood," civil rights leader Dave Dennis, who helped direct Mississippi's Freedom Summer, told The Clarion-Ledger, "I knew about a lot of stuff back then, but I didn't know that."

Human rights activist Bill Chandler has long respected and admired Sandifer, who was always hard working and willing to help, he said. "He has always been one of my favorite people."

He knew nothing about Sandifer being a "Robin Hood."

Dukes had heard something along those lines, but had never questioned him about it.

He said one thing is certain: "Eddie always puts the needs of others before his own."

Sandifer believes his work speaks for itself.

He plans to be cremated, but said if he did have a headstone, this is what it should say: "He did his best."

Contact Jerry Mitchell at (601) 963-7064 or jmitchell@jackson.gannett.com. Follow @jmitchellnews on Twitter.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Robin Hood Civil Rights Movement

Use this worksheet to analyze the article “The Robin Hood of the Civil Rights Movement” by Jerry Mitchell from The Clarion-Ledger. Analyze the questions and answer them in your own words as you discuss the following topics:

1. Define human rights. _____

2. a. Define respect. _____

b. Define disrespect. _____

3. Who was the original Robin Hood? _____

4. Why is Eddie Sandifer called the Robin Hood of the civil rights and human rights movements? _____

5. What did Eddie Sandifer do to help the civil rights and human rights movements? _____

6. What is the definition of pioneer? _____

7. How did Eddie Sandifer become a pioneer of these movements? _____

8. Could he be called an outlaw? Why or why not? _____

9. a. Is it acceptable to steal or take something away from a person you think is not worthy and give the item to those you think are more worthy? Why or why not? _____

b. If you steal something from a person or business, are you showing them respect? Explain. _____

10. Consider the statement 'Does the end result justify the means?' in relation to Eddie Sandifer. Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Why or why not? _____

11. Analyze and discuss the other ways Eddie Sandifer could have gotten donations for his two causes. If you had been in a similar situation, what would you have done and why? _____

Name: KEY Date: _____

Robin Hood Civil Rights Movement

Use this worksheet to analyze the article “The Robin Hood of the Civil Rights Movement” by Jerry Mitchell from The Clarion-Ledger. Analyze the questions and answer them in your own words as you discuss the following topics:

1. Define human rights. The rights of personal liberty guaranteed to U.S. citizens by the 13th and 14th amendments to the Constitution and by acts of Congress.

2. a. Define respect. To have reference or regard for a person or thing/or anti-abuse and misuse.

- b. Define disrespect. It’s the opposite of respect, which would be to not hold in regard or to misuse and abuse.

3. Who was the original Robin Hood? A legendary British outlaw famed for robbing the rich and giving to the poor to balance living standards making everyone equal.

4. Why is Eddie Sandifer called the Robin Hood of the civil rights and human rights movements? He burglarized and took expensive jewelry and gave it to civil and human rights movements and causes so they would have the money they needed to carry on their activities. He wanted to make the blacks equal to whites and the gays equal to straight people. Then he wanted to aid the HIV positive people. Then he wanted better conditions and treatment of those in nursing homes.

5. What did Eddie Sandifer do to help the civil rights and human rights movements? He broke into six jewelry stores and took expensive items and then sold them and gave the money to the organizations he deemed in need of money to succeed.

6. What is the definition of pioneer? To originate/ begin or to take part in a new development/or to be the first with a new thought or do something that has not been done before.

7. How did Eddie Sandifer become a pioneer of these two movements? He became an activist because he wanted these rights to be successful in bettering the lives of the people involved.

8. Could he be called an outlaw? Why or why not? _____

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**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY LESSON PLANS
TEACHER EVALUATION**

COMPLETE BOTH SIDES AND PLEASE MAIL OR FAX TO THE ADDRESS ON THE NEXT PAGE. THANK YOU!

TEACHER NAME _____

SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS _____

EMAIL (OPTIONAL) _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS _____ GRADE LEVEL _____

LESSON TITLE *The Robin Hood of the Mississippi Civil Rights and Human Rights Movements*

1. In your opinion, did this unit elicit better than average student response; if so, how?
2. Which segments of the unit exceeded your students' attention span?
3. Will this unit be of assistance to you in developing future classroom activities; if so, how?
4. How did this unit add to your earlier teaching on the same subject?
5. Would this teaching unit be handier to use as a:
___multi-day unit ___multi-week unit ___other
6. Were the activities and lessons appropriate for your students? How?

Please rate the following lesson materials and activities by circling the appropriate number.

4=excellent, 3=good, 2=average, 1=inadequate

<u>Directions and Notes</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Curricular Connections</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Student Worksheets</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Interactive Activities</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Historic Images</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity One: The Robin Hood of the Civil Rights Movement</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity Two: Student Essays</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity Three: Persuading Others to a Cause</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Extension Activities</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Overall Lesson</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

We would appreciate any additional comments on this teaching unit and any suggestions for improvement. Comments may be entered in the space below.

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