

Carrying the Burden: Labor Rights and Civic Responsibilities in the Memphis Sanitation Strike

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Group Website

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Process Paper

The Memphis Sanitation Strike of 1968 was a pivotal moment in both civil and labor rights, demonstrating the intersection of racial and economic justice. We chose this topic because it demonstrates the struggles of African American sanitation workers who faced perilous working conditions, low wages, and a lack of union recognition. The fight for dignity and fair treatment exemplifies the broader struggle for human rights and equality. Furthermore, the strike's legacy continues to influence modern labor movements showing that the fight for justice is ongoing. We aimed to uncover the responsibilities of leaders, organizations, and the government in ensuring that all workers receive fair treatment.

To better understand this strike, we used a combination of primary and secondary sources. We analyzed firsthand accounts from sanitation workers, speeches by Martin Luther King Jr., and newspaper articles that captured the tension and urgency of the movement. The I AM A MAN website from Wayne State University provided a series of photographs and letters that were vital in our project. The University of Memphis Digital Commons also provided many photos we used throughout our website which helps us visualize the event and their impact. Upon doing further research, we discovered that Elmore Nickleberry was the grandfather of a recent alumna from our high school, which helped put into perspective how relevant this event is and that the effects of the strike are still present today. Secondary sources such as the documentary *At the River I Stand* (1993) and the AFSCME website helped us understand the chain of events and their ultimate impact on labor rights and racial equality.

We created a website because one of our members has had previous projects using NHDWebCentral, so naturally we believed we could best showcase our strengths with this format. We structured our website to include key moments, such as the deaths of Echol Cole and Robert Walker, the march through Memphis, and the involvement of Dr. King before his assassination. We wanted to include a variety of visuals, quotes, and historical documents to bring the story to life. Our goal was to simultaneously emphasize the hardships faced by the workers and the strength of their collective action. In order to more effectively do this, we went to the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library, to look for books and find newspaper archives.

The Memphis Sanitation Strike was a turning point that demonstrated the undeniable connection between workers' rights and racial justice, as well as the responsibility of stakeholders to ensure that these conditions are satisfied. The strike improved working wages and conditions for Memphis sanitation workers, but its influence spread beyond Memphis. It vocalized the importance of

labor unions and shaped future policies protecting worker's rights. The call for justice still echoes in Memphis today, highlighting the responsibility of people to advocate for their rights, and reminding us that the fight for dignity and fair treatment in the workplace is not over.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

1000 sanitation workers march. Photograph. I AM A MAN. Memphis, 1968. Memphis. Wayne State University. <https://projects.lib.wayne.edu/iamaman/items/show/161>. Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

This photo shows 1000 sanitation workers marching for their rights and for their demands to be heard.

This image shows the camaraderie and bravery among the workers. They knew in order to cause any change they must unite together and stand together.

“Black garbage collectors in Memphis often rode this way to stay out of the rain. On February 1, 1968, two workers were killed when their truck malfunctioned and crushed them. Their deaths helped spark a strike by black sanitation workers in Memphis.” University of Memphis Libraries. <https://features.apmreports.org/arw/king/c1.html>. Retrieved on March 15, 2025.

This image shows two workers riding the back of a garbage truck, showing how dangerously susceptible the workers were to being crushed. We used this on our Home page because it depicts the circumstances that started the whole strike.

“City Collectors Strike.” Memphis Press Scimitar. February 12, 1968: 1. Storyboard Memphis. Web.

<https://storyboardmemphis.org/history/citys-garbage-collectors-strike-1968-sanitation-wo>

rkers-strike/. Retrieved on January 29, 2025.

This image has an excerpt of a newspaper article that speaks on the strike. It was used to show the media coverage of the strike in the Historical Context page.

“Community on the Move for Equality newsletter,” I Am A Man.

<https://projects.lib.wayne.edu/iamaman/items/show/165>. Retrieved on March 18, 2025.

This newsletter is a showcase of the community’s efforts to illustrate change and equality for African Americans in the community. It exemplifies the unity in the city to fight for their rights and human dignity.

Commercial Appeal. (1968). Group seeks key to strike. photograph, Memphis Tennessee .

Retrieved March 15, 2025.

This photograph is a newspaper clipping from 1968 when the strike was actually going on. It provides an insight into what strikers were thinking in Memphis. Which we used to grasp a firm understanding into the lives of strikers.

Copley, Richard L. Dignity sought in Memphis. Photograph. I AM A MAN. Memphis, 1968.

Memphis. <https://projects.lib.wayne.edu/iamaman/items/show/148>. Retrieved on January 19, 2025.

This image is a powerful exhibition of the strike’s core message, they are humans and they deserve the right to preserve their dignity and rights. This image helped us visualize the efforts made to use

the right to protest, highlighting the strong message that influenced major advocacy movements across the United States.

“Coretta Scott King, center, accompanied by the Rev. Ralph Abernathy, her children, and singer Harry Belafonte, leads a march in Memphis to honor her husband who was assassinated four days earlier” NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2018/04/08/597703360/after-mlks-death-coretta-scott-king-went-to-memphis-to-finish-his-work>. Retrieved on May 10, 2025.

This image shows Corretta Scott King leading a march after the death of her late husband. This image shows the solidarity of the city and officials after the death of Martin Luther King. His work was commemorated while bringing the strike in Memphis in a bigger spotlight as it was the reason for Dr. King’s arrival to the city.

Davis, J. (2019, June 20). An interview with the striking Memphis Sanitation Workers of 1968.

People’s World.

<https://www.peoplesworld.org/article/an-interview-with-the-striking-memphis-sanitation-workers-of-1968/>. Retrieved on March 16, 2025.

This is an interview with Memphis Sanitation workers of 1968. It displays the true accounts of sanitation workers. Which we used to find the responsibilities of these workers and how they truly were treated from their own personal account. The article is a great way to get a real hand account from these men who were a part of a bigger picture like the civil rights movement.

“End of Strike Cheered”. Memphis World. April 20 1968: 1. Rhodes University. Web.

https://www.rhodes.edu/sites/default/files/MW_v36n43_1968-04-20.pdf. Retrieved on January 25, 2025.

This newspaper article showcases the end of the strike and the elation that followed. This helped us highlight the conclusion of the strike and its effects on the strikers and how they are attempting to move past it.

Fleischer, Mark. “Garbage Truck Kills 2 Crewmen.” Storyboard Memphis. February 1, 2018.

Accessed at <https://storyboardmemphis.org/history/garbage-truck-kills-2-crewmen/>. Retrieved on December 14, 2024.

This newspaper excerpt shows the media coverage of the tragic deaths of Echol Cole and Robert Walker. This helped us understand the impact of the deaths and the anger that the workers had when realizing the conditions in which they were made to work in and how easily preventable their deaths were.

Fox 13 Memphis. “Don Stevens Reports on the Sanitation Strike,” 1968. Accessed at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVWXemjGFcU>. Retrieved on December 15, 2024.

This news report discusses the sanitation strike while it was occurring in 1968. Don Steven’s is the reporter and he highlights the meeting between mayor Henry Loeb and sanitation director Henry Blackburn. This gives insight on how the city officials of Memphis were handling the strike and what information they were giving to the people.

Fox 13 Memphis. "Mayor Henry Loeb Press Conference - MLK," June 16, 2014. Accessed at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PG4pbysJSVE>. Retrieved on January 8, 2025.

In this video mayor Henry Loeb is in a press conference discussing the sanitation workers and their grievances. This source helped us see the effects of the widespread coverage on the strike and the mayor's attempts to make a compromise whilst dismissing all the demands of the workers.

FOX13 Memphis. 2024. "Memphis Woman Recalls Marching alongside MLK Jr. during 1968

Sanitation Strike." Video. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjIa4wh_yj8.

Retrieved on January 8, 2025.

In this video a Memphis woman remembers marching with Martin Luther King alongside sanitation workers. She felt as if she could relate to their struggles as she also was in a cycle of poverty due to the color of her skin. This helped us understand the camaraderie and why the Memphis community was brought together, fighting for a common goal.

Image of the Clayborn Temple. Civil Rights Trail. Accessed at

<https://civilrightstrail.com/attraction/clayborn-temple/>. Retrieved on January 27, 2025.

This image shows a statue of remembrance for the I AM A MAN movement. This image shows how even today People are remembering those who participated in the movement and were affected. This source was used to show how after the movement the community is still actively supporting it.

“I’ve Been to the Mountaintop’ by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” 1968. AFSCME.

<https://www.afscme.org/about/history/mlk/mountaintop>. Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

This website provides us with a transcript of the final speech that Martin Luther King Jr. gave in Memphis before his assassination, in support of the sanitation strike of 1968. We used some of the powerful quotes in this speech on our website to show the eloquence Dr. King had and how it was able to move a larger audience to fight against any injustices.

Kelly, Charlie. 1968. “Striking sanitation workers and their supporters are flanked by bayonet-wielding National Guard troops and armored vehicles during a march on City Hall in Memphis, Tenn., on March 29, 1968, one day after a similar march erupted in violence, leaving one person dead and several injured.” Photograph.

<https://www.nwpb.org/2018/03/28/the-memphis-sanitation-workers-strike-kings-last-cause-for-economic-justice/>. Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

This image shows the pushback the sanitation workers received from government officials. This was helpful in seeing that despite having a reasonable cause, the government will try to go against the people, ultimately showing that in order to create change, people need to get together and become unified for their cause.

Local 1733 apology letter. 1968 Photograph. I AM A MAN

<https://projects.lib.wayne.edu/iamaman/items/show/154>. Retrieved on January 13, 2025.

This letter from the Local 1733 apologizes to the workers and urges the mayor to start negotiations with the strikers. This letter illustrates the responsibility organizations have to support advocacy efforts, while creating a call to action in hopes that the situation could be resolved as soon as possible.

“Martin Luther King is Slain in Memphis; A White is Suspected; Johnson Urges Calm”. New York Times. April 5 1968: 1. On this Day. Web. Accessed at <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/big/0404.html>. Retrieved on January 18, 2015.

The newspaper article shows the coverage of Martin Luther King’s death and the immediate effects of his death. The death of Dr. King overshadowed the strike, as the previous march that Dr. King organized led to violence. This national coverage shined a light on the strikers as violent which caused some people to turn away, however due to the striker’s resilience they were able to resolve their grievances.

Mayor Loeb letter to strikers. 1968. Photograph. I AM A MAN. Wayne State University. <https://projects.lib.wayne.edu/iamaman/items/show/155>. Retrieved on January 13, 2025.

This letter from Mayor Loeb tells the strikers that what they are doing is illegal and that they should return to work as soon as possible since their jobs are being filled very quickly. This letter showcases the mayor’s dismissal for the true purpose of the strike, disregarding all of the demands of the strikers.

Memphis Press Scimitar. "AFL-CIO supporters of striking Memphis Sanitation workers, 1968."

1968-03. <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-swstrike/77/>. Retrieved on January 20, 2025.

This photo depicts the support from other organizations throughout the strikes. We used this in our Voices and Leaders page. The image was an example of the camaraderie in Memphis from organizations and other supporters, highlighting the responsibility to advocate for racial and economic equity.

Memphis Press Scimitar. "Marchers with "I AM A MAN" sign, Memphis, 1968." 1968-03.

<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-swstrike/21/>. Retrieved on January 15, 2025.

We used this photo in our Voices and Leaders page to show the courage and leadership shown by the workers. The tanks in the background showed the pushback from society; however it is juxtaposed with the resilience of the workers as they continue to advocate.

Memphis Press Scimitar. "Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb, 1968." 1968.

<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-swstrike/100/>. Retrieved on February 2, 2025.

This image shows the mayor of Memphis with his advisors. This image helped us see the people that are responsible for enforcing the rights of the sanitation workers.

Memphis Press Scimitar. "Strikers and Loeb." 1968-02.

<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-swstrike/31/>. Retrieved on January 25, 2025.

This photo showcased the strikers communicating to the mayor to find a compromise. This was essential in our project because it showcased the responsibilities of government officials in securing worker rights while maintaining their human dignity.

Memphis Press Scimitar. "Striking Memphis sanitation workers protest, 1968." 1968-02.

<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-swstrike/92/>. Retrieved on January 25, 2025.

This photo shows the protest the workers conducted to fight for their rights and dignity. This was effective because it showcases their bravery and dedication to their cause. It was used in our Voices and Leaders page.

"Memphis Sanitation Worker, 1968." Memphis Press Scimitar newspaper morgue, Special Collections Department, University of Memphis

Libraries, <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-mss-mpressscimitar2/143>.

Retrieved March 7, 2025.

This picture of a Memphis sanitation worker in 1968. It highlights the look of an actual Memphis sanitation worker. The image also shows how the sanitation workers were carrying trash in small trolleys, which ultimately led to the garbage to fall and dirtying the worker.

MLK marching with the Memphis sanitation workers, 1968. Photograph. Accessed at

<https://prospect.org/article/civil-rights-movement-and-politics-memory>. Retrieved on January 25, 2025.

This image shows Martin Luther King marching with the sanitation workers. The image highlights the effects of the endorsement of Dr. King and how with his approval the strike was able to gain national attention.

“‘Negroes Reply to Mayor Loeb’ - Civil Rights Collection - Dig Memphis - The Digital Archive of the Memphis Public Library & Information Center.” n.d.

<https://memphislibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p13039coll2/id/118/rec/1>. Retrieved on May 2, 2025.

In the newspaper article the African Americans reply to mayor Loeb's racist remarks. It highlights the strong racial tensions in Memphis during 1968.

Nickelberry, Elmore. “Elmore Nickelberry, Memphis Sanitation Worker on the Sanitation Workers Strike of 1968,” quoted in His Dream, Our Stories: The Legacy of the March on Washington, April 3, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KW-V8buCFm0>.

Retrieved on December 16, 2024.

This video is an interview with Elmore Nickleberry, a sanitation worker involved in the strike of 1968. He elaborates on the conditions they endured during that time and their appreciation of the arrival of

Dr. King. This connected us to the strike, since he was the grandfather of a student that used to go to our school. The fact that he was so impactful in our community helped us to choose this topic, as it showcased the responsibility of the community to fight for their rights.

“OSH Act of 1970 | Occupational Safety and Health Administration.” n.d. U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/oshact/completeoshact>. Retrieved March 12, 2025.

This is a law enacted as a result of the Memphis sanitation strike. This law is still active today so the efforts of those sanitation workers still have a profound impact on society and the wellbeing of workers in the American workforce..

Pay check stub from sanitation worker. Photograph. I AM A MAN. Memphis, 1968. Wayne State University. <https://projects.lib.wayne.edu/iamaman/items/show/146>. Retrieved on January 25, 2025.

The photo shows the paycheck of a worker earning \$137.13 for 90 hours of work, ~\$1.52 per hour. This depicts the low wages offered to workers while completing their dangerous jobs. This wage was usually all the families of their workers had to sustain their living expenses, creating a cycle of poverty.

Poland, Gina Cordell, and Patrick O’Daniel. “The Memphis Country Club, incorporated in 1905, was first located in the former home of Geraldus Buntyn. The second club building,

pictured here, was built after the first burned in 1910. This facility was demolished and replaced by a new building in 1958.” Memphis Country Club. Photograph. Memphis, 1920. Memphis . Retrieved March 10, 2025

This photo depicts a country club that was in Memphis around the time of the strike. This image helped us understand the stark difference between white facilities and black facilities. We placed this photo next to the Old Folks Home in order to emphasize the difference in economic status and the difficulty to become wealthy, when the city has been systematically pushed to reinforce this dramatic difference in economic opportunities.

“Police macing crowd, Memphis, 1968” (2021). Sanitation Workers’ Strike, 1968. 56.

<https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-mss-mpressscimitar2/56>. Retrieved on May 2, 2025

This image shows police macing a crowd of African Americans who are on strike. This shows the disruption of peace in the presence of police. This highlights the strong tensions in Memphis, especially with common themes of police brutality.

Rickner, Gary J. "The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970: An Overview."

Cumb.-Samford L. Rev. 4 (1973): 525. Retrieved March 12, 2025.

This is an overview of the occupational and Health act of 1970 which was a way to smooth things over with the strikers and come to a conflict resolution. This was useful in the fact it helped to tell us what the government officials did to help end this strike.

Rugaber, Walter. "A Negro Is Killed in Memphis March." New York Times, 29 Mar. 1968.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1968/03/29/archives/a-negro-is-killed-in-memphis-march-violence-erupts-on-route-of.html>. Retrieved on March 10, 2025.

This article shows the police brutality inflicted towards strikers and supporters. The increasing tensions makes it hard for a swift decision to be made on the sanitation workers' issues.

"Sanitation workers inspect a garbage truck similar to the one in which two workers were killed on Feb. 1, 1968. Preservation and Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis." Accessed at

<https://mlk50.com/memphis-had-another-shameful-tragedy-in-1968-it-could-have-been-avoided-ef828f0f5091>. Retrieved on January 15, 2025.

In this image sanitation workers are inspecting a garbage truck that was in a similar condition in which Echol Cole and Robert Walker were killed. This image showcased the dilapidated trucks, and the article goes on to state that their deaths could have been avoided if the management listened to the report made a few months ago about the truck's conditions.

Seaman, Bernard. "Garbage Cartoon." Cartoon. I AM A MAN. AFSCME Local 1733: Memphis, Tennessee Records, 1968. Wayne State University.

<https://projects.lib.wayne.edu/iamaman/items/show/204>. Retrieved on January 27, 2025.

This cartoon depicts organized labor and civil rights groups throwing out racism and union-busting

from Memphis into a dump with smiling faces. This highlights the end of the strike and how people felt the end of the strike was an advancement for the city.

Shearin, James. "I Am a Man | Dump Your Own Trash." 1968

<https://projects.lib.wayne.edu/iamaman/items/show/149>. Retrieved on January 20, 2025.

This image shows a Memphis resident dumping out their own trash because the sanitation workers were on strike. This photo highlights the vitality of the workers and their impact on the community as they go on strike. This created a sense of urgency among the government officials in Memphis.

"Marchers On Main Street: Marchers on Main Street in Memphis after the Assassination of Dr. King,

Memphis, Tennessee, 1968, from the Portfolio I Am a Man." 1968

<https://allenartcollection.oberlin.edu/objects/2316/marchers-on-main-street-marchers-on-main-street-in-memphis>. Retrieved on May 10, 2025.

This photo is an image of the march on main, which occurred in response to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. This highlights the consolidation among the African American community during this time.

The Sanitation Crew. "Apology from Memphis Sanitation Workers to Citizens of Memphis,

1968." Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, 3 Apr. 2018,

<https://reuther.wayne.edu/node/14108>. Retrieved on March 12, 2025

The document details an apology to the citizens of Memphis, while bringing attention to the lack

of action taken by the mayor of the city to improve their wages and working conditions. They emphasize that change cannot occur until the mayor has taken accountability and initiated change.

“T.O. Jones.” n.d. Civil Rights Collection - Dig Memphis - the Digital Archive of the Memphis Public Library & Information Center.

<https://memphislibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p13039coll2/id/82/>.

Retrieved on March 12, 2025.

This a portrait of T.O Jones who was an important figure in the Sanitation Strike. The president of local 1733 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees during the Sanitation Workers’ Strike of 1968.

“Two sanitation workers riding inside their garbage truck.” Elmore & Peggy Nickleberry. Journey to Justice. (n.d.). <https://jtojhumanrights.org.uk/elmore-peggy-nickleberry/>. Retrieved on March 6, 2025

In this photograph, we see two sanitation workers in the back of a truck. Elmore Nickelberry who is very dear to our school. He is the grandfather of one of our alumni. This interview and quotes also allows us to take in different perspectives of the strike and how it impacted others in our community.

Secondary Sources:

1968, "The Sanitation Workers And Dr. King". Memphis.Edu, 2019,

<https://www.memphis.edu/benhooks/mapping-civil-rights/1968.php>. Retrieved March 7, 2025

This article provided photographs of the sanitation workers and Dr King which is a significant action during this time period.

ABC News. "Memphis March Honors MLK," April 8, 1968. Accessed at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ya2ooRFWZkk>. Retrieved on January 20, 2025.

This video provides us with clips we used in our website that emphasize the effects of the strike as well as providing some powerful words from Martin Luther King.

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME). "I Am A Man: Dr. King & the Memphis Sanitation Strike." April 4, 2008.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBDgH435oaU>. Retrieved on December 15, 2024.

This video showcased the impact of the Sanitation Workers' Strike and how the leadership of the workers and organizations helped with advancing with their overarching goal of receiving better working conditions, recognition of their union, and preserving their dignity. We used clips of this video to showcase what workers and protestors believed in and their point of view during the strike and marches.

AFSCME. "1968 AFSCME Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike Chronology." AFSCME and Dr. King. Accessed at <https://www.afscme.org/union/history/mlk/1968-af>. Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

This is a timeline of the events of the strike that we used to contextualize and organize our website. It was helpful to grasp how each event led to another and how their resilience led to positive change for the workers.

AFSCME. 2008. "AFSCME - Martin Luther King Documentary 'I Am a Man' Memphis Sanitation Strike." Video. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1xHuYyp4eI>. Retrieved on January 20, 2025

This video spoke on the battle for dignity and equality in the sanitation strike. It provided us with clips that we used in our website to showcase some of the workers' feelings during the time of the strike.

A Time of Crisis: The Sanitation Strike." Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/time-crisis-sanitation-strike>. Retrieved on March 10, 2025

This source helps to highlight the effects of the sanitation strike and how this is still relevant even today.

Azzam, Mohammad. 2013. "Robert F Kennedy Announcing the Death of Martin Luther King - RFK's Greatest Speech." Video. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoKzCff8Zb> Retrieved on January 7, 2025.

The video depicts Robert F Kennedy announcing the death of Martin Luther King Jr.. This helped us visualize the severity and profound impact and influence Dr. King had and how it was able to shed light on the strike and its demands.

Bausum, Ann, and Jim Lawson, 2012. Marching to the Mountaintop: How Poverty, Labor Fights and Civil Rights Set the Stage for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Hours. National Geographic Children's Books (First Edition). Retrieved December 9, 2024

This book talked about the time Dr. King had in Memphis and what he stood for. This book gave us vital information about the strike and Dr. King's involvement in the national coverage following his arrival.

Benjamin L. Hooks Institute. 2020. "1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike | Civil Rights: Stories to Inspire Change." Video. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozEr2L8lkXs>. Retrieved on December 15, 2024.

In this video, a University of Memphis senior spoke about the sanitation strike. This video helped us decide on our topic because it sparked our interest in understanding the responsibilities of the government and workers to ensure the rights of people.

Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change. "1968, The Sanitation Workers and Dr. King."
n.d. The University of Memphis.

<https://www.memphis.edu/benhooks/mapping-civil-rights/1968.php>. Retrieved on December 15, 2024.

This article helped us understand the strike and Dr. Martin Luther King's involvement. It was crucial in our research as it showed the events that occurred when Dr. King arrived and how his death changed the striker's circumstances.

"Black Lives Matter - I Am A Man Mural Motif Poster by Jeanpaul Ferro | Society6." n.d.

https://society6.com/a/products/black-lives-matter-i-am-a-man-mural-motif_poster?sku=s6-16788008p66a213v756. Retrieved on March 10, 2025.

This is a poster showing the Black Lives Matter movement in comparison to the I am a man movement. It's an indicator that this still is important to our lives today and how old movements set precedents to other movements.

Bettmann, 2024. "Memphis Sanitation Stock Photos, High-Res Pictures, and Images - Getty Images." <https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/search/2/image?phrase=memphis+sanitation>. Retrieved on January 27, 2025.

This collection of photographs show the powerful message that came with the strike. We used this website to collect other images that illustrate the resilience of the workers and how it influenced other movements like the Fight for 15 and the BLM movement.

Cecelski, David. 2019. "The Rocky Mount Sanitation Workers' Strike." David Cecelski.

September 30.

<https://davidcecelski.com/2019/09/30/the-rocky-mount-sanitation-workers-strike/>.

Retrieved March 15, 2025.

This article touches on another strike that happened in the Rocky Mountains. They used the Memphis Sanitation strike as a precedent for their own strike. It shows how influential the Memphis Sanitation strike was.

CITY TV 19, 2019. "Sanitation Strike Documentary 090619." Video. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWMgKZCdyks>. Retrieved on January 20, 2025.

This is a documentary on the sanitation strike of 1968. This gave us a new perspective of the events of the strike and helped us understand how the topic connected with the idea of rights and responsibilities.

Cordell, G., & O'Daniel, P. (2006). Historic Photos of Memphis. Turner Pub. Co.

This is a book that we used to gain more insight on the History of Memphis which happens to include the sanitation strike. It is mainly a picture book which we used throughout our website.

Daily Dose Documentary. 2023. "Memphis Sanitation Strike." Video. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2m6ESaEMEo>. Retrieved December 15, 2024.

In this video the lives of sanitation workers are highlighted and attention is drawn to their pay and conditions. The video helped to give insight on what the workers faced and causes of the strike.

Desmond-Harris, Jenée. 2016. "The Poor People's Campaign: The Little-Known Protest MLK Was Planning When He Died." Vox,
<https://www.vox.com/2015/1/18/7548453/poor-peoples-campaign-mlk>. Retrieved on December 15, 2024.

This article talks about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign. This helped us understand what he stood for and the reasons why he chose to endorse the striking sanitation workers, and his ultimate arrival to Memphis.

Digital Library of Georgia. "Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike." Civil Rights Digital Library: Documenting America's Struggle for Racial Equality. Accessed at
<https://www.biography.com/activists/martin-luther-king-jr>. Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

This article describes the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and why he came to Memphis. This article helped us understand how the events of the strike and the tension between whites and blacks came to a boiling point that led to the assassination of Dr. King.

Elliott, Debbie. "When MLK Was Killed, He Was in Memphis Fighting for Economic Justice."
NPR, NPR, 28 Mar. 2018, <https://www.npr.org/2018/03/28/597308044/the-memphis-sanitation-workers-strike-kings-last-cause-for-economic-justice>. Retrieved on March 11, 2025.

This article is a coverage of MLK's death which shows he died for the cause of getting justice. It helped us understand the role of Martin Luther King and why his death left a profound impact on the future of the nation.

Estes, S. (2006). *I am a man!: Race, manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement*. The University of North Carolina Press. Retrieved on March 12, 2025.

This book was very useful in aiding to explain the civil rights movement while , more so focusing on the I AM A MAN movement that arose from the sanitation strike. Furthermore, it is very informative on the civil rights movement which heavily influenced the strike.

Fox, Sylvan. "MEMPHIS IS BESET BY RACIAL TENSION." 18 Mar. 1968,
<https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=histhp>.
Retrieved on March 12, 2025.

This article shows Memphis being set aback by the racial tension that is shown during this time period. This helps us understand the historical context of the time of the strike.

Gailani, Matthew. "I Am a Man' Dr. King and the Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike."
Tennessee State Museum - Nashville Attractions, 1 September 2020.
<https://tnmuseum.org/junior-curators/posts/i-am-a-man-dr-king-and-the-memphis-sanitation-workers-strike>. Retrieved on March 12, 2025.

This digital exhibit helped us visualize the strike and its impact on Tennessee and United States history. It also provided us with a digitized sign from the strike which was insightful and interesting to see, since the photographs of the time were not that clear.

“Henry Loeb” Alchetron, the Free Social Encyclopedia. (n.d.). Accessed at

<https://alchetron.com/Henry-Loeb>. Retrieved on March 7, 2025.

This article provides pictures of Mayor Loeb and gives us insight into his character. This was crucial to our project, as it helped us understand the historical context of the period.

Honey, Michael. December 2008. “The Popular Front in the American South: The View from Memphis.” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 30, [International Labor and Working-Class, Inc., Cambridge University Press], ,

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27671648>. Retrieved on March 6, 2025.

This book helped us contextualize the racial tensions during the 1960s in Memphis. This was helpful in creating our historical context.

“I Am a Man.” Learning For Justice,

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/texts/i-am-a-man>. Retrieved on March 12, 2025.

This image provides a visual representation of the sheer amount of strikers and supporters that attended the marches. This was helpful in our interpretation of the support gained from a

national audience as well as the strong sense of community within the African American citizens of Memphis.

I AM a MAN.” The Uncommon District. February 19, 2021

<https://theuncommondistrict.com/2021/02/i-am-a-man/>. Retrieved March 12, 2025.

In this article we see the history of the I am a man movement which was a very empowering slogan used by the Men who were protesting the actions that the city and Mayor Loeb was taking. These men were not given equal opportunities which were highlighted in this article.

Jackson, H. E. (2004). 65 dark days in '68: Reflections, Memphis sanitation strike. The King's Press. Retrieved on March 2, 2025.

This book helped us contextualize the strike and understand the struggles of the sanitation workers. This was useful in understanding the conditions and providing more insight into the organization of the strike.

Kennedy, Randall, 2015. “The Civil Rights Movement and the Politics of Memory.” The American Prospect. Accessed at <https://prospect.org/justice/civil-rights-movement-politics-memory/>. Retrieved on January 20, 2025.

This article analyzes the Civil Rights movement as a whole from a modern day perspective. The author included a number of photographs and quotes that helped enhance our website.

Laiola, Sarah Whitcomb. "From Float to Flicker: Information Processing, Racial Semiotics, and Anti-Racist Protest, from "I am a Man" to "Black Lives Matter"." *Criticism* 60, no. 2 (2018): 247-268. Retrieved March 10, 2025.

This is an article done by Sarah Whitcomb that shows how America has changed from the I Am A Man movement to the Black lives matter movement. It shows how similar America is to what it used to be yet how far we have come.

"Martin Luther King Lorraine Hotel," 2016. Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fp6eoKvAwuc>. Retrieved on January 14, 2025.

This video depicts the Lorraine Hotel and has some of Dr. King's words playing in the background. This visual shows us the end of his life and it evoked a sense of urgency among people fighting for equal rights during the Civil Rights movement and smaller movements like the sanitation strike of 1968.

McNeir, Kevin. "Memphis 1968 Sanitation Workers Honored by the NAACP." *The Washington Informer*, January 17, 2019. Accessed at <https://washingtoninformer.com/memphis-1968-sanitation-workers-honored-by-naacp/>. Retrieved on January 4, 2025.

This picture highlights a Memphis sanitation worker of 1968 being honored. He is honored by the NAACP. His honor shows how important the strike actually is to African Americans. We used this to show how sanitation workers were important to the overall movement of civil rights.

“Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike.” n.d. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/memphis-sanitation-workers-strike>.

Retrieved on January 16, 2025.

This article describes the sanitation strike of 1968. It was useful for us to understand and grasp the intentions of the strike.

Progressives for a Democratic Republic. “Cleophus Smith Recounts the 1968 Sanitation Workers Strike in Memphis,” April 7, 2018. Accessed at https://youtu.be/E-WdMaX_zZw?si=eqnxsHUkoVCpPjYD. Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

This video is an interview with Cleophus Smith, a former sanitation worker and AFSCME in which he describes his conditions and how it was like marching alongside Dr. King. This provided us an insight of what the conditions were and how the workers came together in solidarity for better conditions.

Sainz, Adrian. 2024. “Elmore Nickleberry, a Memphis Sanitation Worker Who Marched with Martin Luther King, Has Died at 92 | AP News.” AP News. January 12. <https://apnews.com/article/elmore-nickleberry-dead-memphis-sanitation-workers-mlk-8f076c4e5a762a9c32544424e4bc104c>. Retrieved on December 15, 2024.

This news article informs readers that a Sanitation worker who was a part of the march with Dr. King

had died at 92. His death shows how recent this was and how our society has changed in such a short amount of time. This was used to justify how the cause is still relevant being that it was very long ago.

Sanitation Workers Remember King's Last Stand.” NPR, NPR, 4 Apr. 2008,

[https://www.npr.org/2008/04/04/89361277/sanitation-workers-remember-kings-last](https://www.npr.org/2008/04/04/89361277/sanitation-workers-remember-kings-last-stand)

[stand](https://www.npr.org/2008/04/04/89361277/sanitation-workers-remember-kings-last-stand). Retrieved on March 8, 2025

The sanitation workers are remembering and mourning the death of Dr. King who worked to gain equal treatment for them. Dr. King was a very impactful person to the I Am A Man movement and those who were able to meet him during the strike mourn his death to truly show how impactful he was.

“Sanitation Workers’ Strike (E-125).” 2023. NC DNCR. December 14.

<https://www.dncr.nc.gov/blog/2023/12/14/sanitation-workers-strike-e-125>. Retrieved

March 12, 2025.

This is a news blog that highlights the Sanitation Workers’ Strike which we used to inform ourselves on what the strike actually was and how it was really impactful to individuals outside of the ones who lived through it.

Stench Raised Today Is Becoming Sanitation Workers Gain. (1968). photograph, Memphis

Tennessee . Retrieved March 15, 2025.

This is another photograph of a newspaper article that highlights actual successes of the strikers and how they were actually gaining from the strike. Which is a whole new outlook on the strike compared to what White news articles were saying.

Sullivan, Justin. Activists Demonstrate For Raising The Minimum Wage To 15 Dollars. 2018.

Photograph. 211 Memphis Sanitation Stock Photos and High-Res Pictures.

[https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/fast-food-workers-and-union-members-carry-signs-as-they-news-photo/917517252?adppopup=true.](https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/fast-food-workers-and-union-members-carry-signs-as-they-news-photo/917517252?adppopup=true) \ Retrieved January 20, 2025.

This image shows protesters from the Fight for 15 holding a sign that says “STILL FIGHTING (FIGHT FOR 15)FOR THE DREAM” with a photo of the 1968 strike in the background. This shows the impact of the strike and how advocacy movements are inspired by the work done from the strike and shows that there is still work to be done.

Thackeray, A. 2020. “Chronology of the 1968 AFSCME Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike.”

UNAC/UHCP. January 17.

<https://unacuhcp.org/chronology-of-the-1968-afscme-memphis-sanitation-workers-strike> / Retrieved January 10, 2025.

This timeline lists the events of the Memphis strike of 1968 in order. This was able to help us visualize the chain of events and how the workers were able to organize themselves to create a successful strike.

Teamsters Local 728. "At the River I Stand." California Newsreel, April 3, 2018. Accessed at

<https://youtu.be/o8hrnnTqaho?si=3hPDHgSIZQkgmTY3>. Retrieved on December 15, 2024.

This video shows a speech of Dr. King. This speech was a significant point for the I AM A MAN movement. This video was used to grasp what effects Dr. King had on the movement and his influences.

The Crusader News Group. 2018. "The 50th Anniversary of the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." The Chicago Crusader.

<https://chicagocrusader.com/the-50th-anniversary-of-the-assassination-of-dr-martin-luther-king-jr/>. Retrieved January 20, 2025.

This article describes the effects of the death of Martin Luther King's death and why he came to Memphis. This helped us see the reasons for King's arrival to Memphis and how the strike was aligned with his Poor People's Campaign.

The Root. "1300 Men: The Memphis Strike '68." The Root and Striking Voices, February 4, 2018. Accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IATVvnUHtfk&t=214s>.

Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

This video tells the story of the 1300 men who went on strike because of their poor treatment. It gives visual accounts of what happened and gives a first hand account from men like J.L. McClain and Russell Walton. These accounts showed how poorly the men were treated and why the strike even happened.

The University of Georgia. "Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike - Civil Rights Digital Library."

Digital Library of Georgia. n.d. https://crdl.usg.edu/events/memphis_sanitation_strike/.

Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

This article shows the events of the Strike and what happened. This article was used to provide a more in depth idea of what was happening during the strike and provides a clear overview.

"Elmore Nickleberry, Memphis Sanitation Worker Who Went on Strike in 1968, Dies at 92 |

Local-1463." 2024. *Local-1463*. January 3.

<https://wfse.org/local-1463/news/elmore-nickleberry-memphis-sanitation-worker-who-went-s-trike-1968-dies-92>. Retrieved May 12, 2025.

This article gave us important information about Elmore Nickleberry which provided insight on how the workers were treated. This also showcased his long lasting impact on Memphis.

Thomas, Wendi C. "Memphis Had Another Shameful Tragedy in 1968. It Could Have Been

Avoided." MLK50, <https://mlk50.com/2018/02/01/memphis-had-another>

[shameful-tragedy-in-1968-itcould-have-been-avoided/](https://mlk50.com/2018/02/01/memphis-had-another-shameful-tragedy-in-1968-itcould-have-been-avoided/). Retrieved on March 4, 2025.

The article goes on to detail the deaths of Echole Cole and Robert Walker, showing how the strike still must continue as a result of the negligence of the city officials and sanitation supervisors.

TODAY, 2017. "Surviving Memphis Sanitation Workers from 1968 Strike Awarded \$70k Grants |

Sunday TODAY.” Video. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR4L0rKO18I>. Retrieved January 12, 2025.

Today News station covers the news that a 70k grant is awarded to living workers that were in the sanitation strike. This was used to help identify how in recent times the strike workers are getting repaid and viewed by our society.

Voices of the Civil Rights Movement. 2021. “The Memphis Sanitation Workers’ Strike of 1968.”

Video. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm0gnlUHFg0>. Retrieved on January 10, 2025.

In this video a man who was a part of the strike is highlighting his experience during the strike. This was used as a first hand account for the lives of sanitation strikers.

Watts, Micaela, and Micaela Watts. 2024. “Memphis Activists Take It to the Streets as City

Commemorates MLK50 This Week.” MLK50: Justice Through Journalism. May 28.

<https://mlk50.com/2018/04/01/memphis-activists-take-it-to-the-streets-as-city-commemorates-mlk50-this-week/>. Retrieved on January 6, 2025

In this image a Memphis man is protesting against confederate statues in public parks. He is using the precedent of the sanitation strike to fuel his protest. This is an example of how even today the movement is still a big influence for African Americans.

“Workers, Black Lives Activists Join Forces to Continue Dr. King’s Poor People’s Campaign.”

2017 Facing South.

<https://www.facingsouth.org/2017/03/workers-black-lives-activists-join-forces-continue-dr-kings-poor-peoples-campaign>. Retrieved on March 8, 2025.

Even today people still use the campaign from the I am A Man movement even today in their lives which we see in articles it touches on movements like the “\$15 movement” and “I am a woman” movement.

Savali, Kirsten West. 2020. “Episode 1: Our Video Series Shares Never-Been-Told Stories of the Memphis Sanitation Workers.” The Root, July 14.

<https://www.theroot.com/watch-our-video-series-shares-never-been-told-stories-1822048270>. Retrieved February 22, 2025.

This video series shares the story of Sanitation workers and the problems they faced. We used this to inform ourselves on the lives of sanitation workers during this time and how their lives were impacted.

Savali, Kirsten West. 2020. “EPISODE 4: Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Memphis Sanitation Workers Go on Strike.” The Root, July 14, 2018.

<https://www.theroot.com/watch-sick-and-tired-of-being-sick-and-tired-memphis-1823060762>. Retrieved on March 6, 2025.

This video has detailed accounts of the strike from participants, family, and strike organizers. We were able to understand different perspectives and experiences of the strike, which showed us the increasing tensions of the time of the strike.

Sellers, Barney, "Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb, 1968" (2021). Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike, 1968. 14. <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/speccoll-swstrike/14>. Retrieved on May 2, 2025.

This article shows the response of the Mayor which impacted the strike significantly. This helped us contextualize the period by providing a visual representation of an opposing power during the Memphis Sanitation Strike.

Thomas, Wendi C. "Memphis Had Another Shameful Tragedy in 1968. It Could Have Been Avoided." MLK50, <https://mlk50.com/2018/02/01/memphis-had-another-shameful-tragedy-in-1968-itcould-have-been-avoided/>. Retrieved on May 3, 2025.

In this article, another death is caused due to the malfunctioning of a truck, this time something was different, it became the ignition for the Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike. It also provided photographs which we tried to incorporate into our presentation.

Yellin, Kirsten West Savali Emily. 2020. "EPISODE 10: The Memphis Sanitation Strike Ends." The Root, July 14. <https://www.theroot.com/watch-the-memphis-sanitation-strike-ends-1825346757>.

Retrieved on February 20, 2025.

This is a video that provides the revolution of the Sanitation Strike. It highlights what happened after the strike and how this was a great achievement in the African American community.