THEME: “Leadership and Legacy in History”

AREA OF INTEREST: Civil Rights in Mississippi

TOPIC AREA: Freedom Summer

Why was a Continued disenfranchisement of

leader needed? Mississippi Blacks

(background/status quo)

LEADER: Fannie Lou Hamer

ISSUE: Speech at 1964 Democratic Convention

CONTEXT: Support from Martin Luther King, Jr. and Civil Rights Organizations (COFO, SNCC, NAACP); Speech was seen on television; Johnson needed the southern white votes for next election; Freedom Summer voter registration; Sympathetic delegates from other states

LEGACY: In 1968, a group of former MFDP delegates, calling themselves the Loyal Democrats of Mississippi succeeded in being seated as the sole Mississippi delegation to the DNC. This was a turning point in the fight for black political leadership in Mississippi. There is no denying the effect that Freedom Summer had on Mississippi's blacks. In 1964, 6.7% of Mississippi's voting-age blacks were registered to vote, 16.3% below the national average. By 1969, that number had leaped to 66.5%, 5.5% above the national average.

**THESIS:** “As 1964 saw both triumph and tragedy during Freedom Summer in Mississippi, Fannie Lou Hamer passionately spoke on behalf of seating the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the convention. Although the MFDP did not succeed at that time, her leadership was a turning point in voting rights for blacks, which resulted in a legacy of influential African Americans in Mississippi political leadership today.”

Source: http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc\_mississippi\_freedom\_democratic\_party/