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Editor's Note: Commemorating Civil Rights Activism in Arkansas

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, a direct action campaign during which black and white civil rights activists rode buses across southern state lines to test the federal rulings that desegregated interstate travel. The violence in Alabama and arrests in Mississippi gained national and international attention. In our lead article for the August issue, John A. Kirk, Chair and Donaghey Professor of History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, describes the Freedom Riders' arrival and reception in Little Rock, Arkansas. Although the riders were not met with the same kind of violence as earlier rides, their arrests pushed the city to desegregate the rest of its facilities. The article is accompanied by photographs of the Freedom Riders in Little Rock provided by Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. (One such--of Rev. Benjamin Elton Cox, one of the original Freedom Riders and leader of the Arkansas contingent--appears on the facing page.)

The Institute on Race and Ethnicity and the Department of History at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock honored the Freedom Riders with a symposium and commemorative events on July 9-10. In attendance at the symposium, "Sit-Ins, Freedom Rides, and Beyond: Direct Action and Civil Rights in 1960s Arkansas," were Freedom Riders and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members who worked on projects in Arkansas. Historians John A. Kirk and Jennifer Jensen Wallach, coeditors of the newly released *Arsnick: The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Arkansas*, served as moderators for panels in which civil rights activists discussed their experiences working in Arkansas fifty years ago. Excerpts from Dr. Wallach's interview with Bill Hansen, director of SNNC's Arkansas project, is the second feature in this issue.

Our third feature, though chronologically

first in the year's events, is the transcript of a discussion with three panelists engaged in researching, preserving, and interpreting Arkansas's past, particularly in its racial history. *Arkansas Review* invited John A. Kirk, Grif Stockley, and Spirit Trickey to the Delta Symposium XVII, held April 6-9 at Arkansas State University, to discuss the civil rights movement in Arkansas. Dr. Kirk provided the title of the panel, "Why the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement is More Important than the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War" and opened with a talk arguing that because of changing demographics and cultural values, the civil rights movement offers a "usable past" for many more southerners than the civil war does. Grif Stockley, author of several books on race relations in Arkansas, and Spirit Trickey, Park Ranger at Central High School National Historic Site, followed with talks that highlighted the intersections between their personal and professional engagement with civil rights history in Arkansas.

Along with these thematically related pieces, the August issue also includes fiction by Matthew Brock and poetry by Elizabeth Drewry. Our Delta Sources and Resources entry introduces readers to the Louisiana Book Festival, an annual upcoming event, and the book review section surveys recent books from a range of disciplines. ▲▼▲