

G1. Health in Civil Rights Movements

G1:1 Caine Jordan, *The Berry Plan: Policing, Public Health, and Civil Rights in 1950s Chicago*

This paper examines the public health efforts of Leonidas Berry, a Black Chicago-based physician in the Jim Crow North, highlighting his role as coordinator of the 1950s narcotic counseling clinics of Chicago. As the head of the Cook County Physicians Association, the oldest organizations of Black doctors in Chicago, Berry, along with social organizations, press outlets, and state officials, pushed for the clinics as a response to high relapse rates following treatment at Lexington, a USPHS Hospital in Kentucky. In his activism, Berry spread the gospel about the clinics at conferences, was in contact with several North American public health officials, and helped to keep them in conversation around the city. And although Berry and clinic staff worked with police commissioners, judges, state representatives, and wardens for their continued existence, they also militated against some of the rhetoric and actions that endangered their patients and practice.

Concurrent with the mainstream civil rights movement were efforts to desegregate medical schools, hospitals, and general medical care. This paper explores the efforts of a Black physician to bring public health in the realm of addiction to a population that can be forgotten and in some cases excluded from treatment: African Americans, and in particular, young Black boys and men. In literature and current events, Berry and the clinics represent an important piece to consider. These clinics served a predominantly Black patient base, offering nuance to narratives around Black youth and public health. With the service being completely voluntary, the clinics also are part of historical and contemporary debates around voluntary vs involuntary care and management. And with state and federal law regarding “narcotics” directly affecting the clinics, they become windows into how policy can affect practice.

Learning Outcomes

- By the end of this activity, the learner will be able to understand the dynamic history of medical ideas and practices, their implications for patients and health care providers, and the need for lifelong learning.
- They will also be able to develop an historically informed sensitivity to the diversity of patients, especially including race and class.

G1:2 Emily Webster, *Health and Housing in the Northern Irish Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1972*

On 30 January, 1972, British soldiers opened fire on a crowd of protesters in the Bogside, Derry, killing fourteen people and injuring an additional twelve. The protesters had organised through a series of organisations that had emerged in the sixties to protest the unjust discrimination against (primarily Catholic) working-class people across Northern Ireland. The Bogside Massacre, or Bloody Sunday as it was more widely known, is often identified as one of the catalysing events of the Troubles, a civil conflict that erupted between Northern Irish separatists and unionists between 1968-1998, claiming the lives of more than 3000 people.

Derry residents had taken to the streets that day in support of a protest organised by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA), which, alongside the Derry Housing Action Committee (DHAC) and the Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ), had formed in the 1960s with the explicit goal of drawing attention to the dire material conditions of working-class people across Northern Ireland. While membership in these organisations crossed religious divides, their platforms focused on the plight of working-class Catholics, who had been the subject of consistent discrimination in the allocation of housing and work in the postwar era. As early as 1947, concerns related to housing, especially the relationship between tuberculosis, overcrowding, and poor housing, became a common way that the problem of discrimination in Northern Ireland was made tangible, with articles appearing nearly weekly in the Derry Journal on rates of tuberculosis in working-class communities. This talk will explore the extent to which concerns over health were used to advocate for better conditions among social justice and civil rights movements in Northern Ireland. Beginning in the postwar period, it will trace how concerns over health (and particularly tuberculosis) fuelled calls for improved housing, and what role health played in the formation of key activist organisations. Combining oral histories and archival research, I will argue that health played a key role in the alignment of the Northern Irish Civil Rights movement with international social justice movements and provided a basis on which cross-sectarian solidarity was built in the years preceding the Troubles.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop the capacity for critical thinking about the nature, ends and limits of medicine and public health
- Deepen understanding of illness and suffering
- Recognize the dynamic interrelationship between medicine and society through history

G1:3 Pratik Chakrabarti, *The Hospital in the Ward: A Documentary of Healing and Resistance*

The history of the Houston Negro Hospital established in 1927 (later known as the Riverside General Hospital), in a state deeply segregated by Jim Crow laws, is a story of a hospital, a community, and the struggle for racial justice. The first hospital dedicated to African Americans and served entirely by black doctors and nurses in a city where there were no facilities for healthcare for the African American population. The Hermann Hospital, which would grow into the Texas Medical Center, the premier health district in the country, was established in 1925 as a segregated institution. The HNH was situated in the historic Third Ward, the thriving district of the city, and the cradle of the Civil Rights movement of the city. The hospital was part of this thriving black community and was shaped by its culture and politics from its inception to its desegregation in the 1960s.

The history of the hospital is simultaneously a narrative of care and resistance. Black physicians such as Dr. Thelma Patten Law and Dr. George Patrick Alphonse Forde emerged as influential community leaders who actively contested the segregationist structures that defined the city's healthcare system. In 1931, the establishment of the Houston Negro Hospital Nursing School beside the main institution marked a pivotal moment, as it became the first facility in Houston devoted to the professional training of Black nurses.

My approach is deliberately experimental, as I am in the process of developing a documentary on the hospital on the occasion of its centennial. This paper unfolds the intertwined histories of the hospital and the Third Ward as a documentary script—where archival narrative meets the voices of former patients, community leaders, physicians, and present-day stakeholders.

Learning Outcomes

- To understand the Civil Rights Movement and its health activism as an important phase of Social Medicine