



Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom: My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March

*Written by Lynda Blackmon Lowery as told to Elspeth Leacock and Susan Buckley
Illustrated by PJ Loughran*

Book Description

*Upper Elementary, Middle School, High School
Memoir*

This award-winning memoir provides a first-person account by Lynda Blackmon Lowery, the youngest marcher in the 1965 voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. She was jailed nine times before her fifteenth birthday and marched alongside Martin Luther King Jr., showing just how courageous young people can be. The illustrations give the text a graphic-novel feel. The concluding chapter explains the fight for voting rights and contains short biographies of those who died fighting for the cause.

Discussion Questions

This book includes a comprehensive discussion guide with supplemental materials and questions.

Utah Connection

Nettie Grimes Gregory was a native Tennessean who moved to Salt Lake City in 1913 with her husband, William, a railroad employee. They quickly adapted to life in Utah and Nettie sought to make herself useful to the community. She was especially concerned about the lack of wholesome recreation for young people living on the city's west side. She and her husband began some activities at the Calvary Baptist Church but found that the number of young people wanting to participate exceeded the capacity of the church's facilities. The answer was obvious to the Gregorlys. Their neighborhood needed

its own building with adequate space for a variety of community activities, including weddings, socials, and youth programs. William Gregory donated a small parcel of land, and...Nettie "recruited black women belonging to the Salt Lake Community Club and the Nimble Thimble Club to act as leaders in the fund-raising drive." They held dinners, bake sales, and bazaars.

In 1959 construction of the first civic building in Salt Lake City built by African Americans began. The project required 5 years to complete, but the idea had been in Nettie's heart for almost 20 years.



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Although Nettie had died of a stroke on July 6, 1964, those preparing to use the building recognized her by naming the new structure at 742 West South Temple the Nettie Gregory Center. The needs of African American youth had spurred the drive to build it, but the Gregorys always envisioned it as a place where people of all races and creeds would be welcome. Nettie was a person who believed that even young people could make an impact and difference.

Adapted from Utah History to Go:

https://historytogo.utah.gov/people/utahns_of_achievement/nettiegrimesgregory.html