

Black History Month

A Florida Focus

A CIVICS IN REAL LIFE SERIES: CIVICS CONNECTION SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight #1: Harry T. Moore

In the 1930s, before the emergence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. an often forgotten civil rights leader began work in the small town of Mims, in Brevard County Florida. Harry T. Moore, a school teacher and principal who would be fired for his activism, fought for civil rights around the state of Florida, ultimately laying the early groundwork for the modern Civil Rights Movement. In 1934 Harry T. Moore founded the Brevard County chapter of the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) (NAACP). As the executive secretary for the Florida NAACP, he wrote letters to protest unequal salaries for Black teachers, segregated public schools, and the [disenfranchisement](#) of Black voters. In 1945, Harry T. Moore, along with his wife Harriette, organized the Progressive Voters' League of Florida. For many years, Harry traveled the backroads of Florida building the NAACP membership and helping Blacks register to vote. His motto was "a voteless citizen is a voiceless citizen." The Moores registered over 116,000 Black voters in the Florida Democratic Party. This represented 31% of all eligible Black voters in the state, a figure that was 51% higher than any other southern state. Harry T. Moore also investigated [lynchings](#) that occurred around the state and was assisting with attempts to overturn convictions in the famous [Groveland Four](#) case prior to his death. On December 25, 1951, Harry and Harriette Moore were victims of a bombing by the Ku Klux Klan at their home in Mims, Florida. Harry died immediately and Harriette nine days later. No one was ever charged for the murders.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS

- How does Harry T. Moore exemplify a responsible citizen?
- How did his actions support the common good?
- How did the impact of the [15th amendment](#) influence the work of Harry T. Moore?



Lou Frey
Institute