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**Democratic Party and the Convention
of 1964 - III**

Lead: The slipping fortunes of the Democratic Party in 1990s can be seen in part to result from its decision to champion black civil rights. This trend was confirmed at Atlantic City in August 1964.

Intro. : *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: When he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Lyndon Johnson, told one of his aides, Joseph Califano, “I think we’ve delivered the South to the Republican Party for your

lifetime and mine.” While his accurate prediction was decades off the mark, the process that led to that Democratic Party implosion was confirmed at the quadrennial party gathering in Atlantic City that summer. One of the persons responsible for the party’s moral triumph, but steady political decline, was a soft-spoken, intellectual schoolteacher from New York named Bob Moses.

When Moses arrived in McComb County, Mississippi in the summer of 1961, he was there not to directly challenge segregation, but rather, to register African Americans to vote. The local members of the organization for which he worked,

SNCC, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, had convinced him that once blacks got the vote, they would have the power to end overt racism in the south. It was dangerous work, but by the summer of 1964 his efforts were paying off.

One of his most successful tactics was to organize a series of mock elections to convince many fearful and hesitant blacks that they could, in fact, vote. In addition, that summer SNCC brought in a thousand white students to Mississippi to help with voter registration. The Ku Klux Klan struck back. Churches and homes were burned, shootings abounded and six activists were murdered.

Nevertheless, the effort produced a huge black vote supportive of an alternative slate of delegates from to the Democratic Convention. Next time: the compromise no one wanted.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

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