WHAT CAN MARTIN LUTHER KING'S HANDWRITTEN SPEECH TELL US ABOUT PROTEST?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

A handwritten draft of Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech has been found after more than 60 years. King wrote and changed the words late at night on August 27, 1963, before the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The seven yellow pages show him testing different words and crossing out sentences. The speech was meant to be a short closing address, but King eventually spoke for about 16 minutes to more than 250,000 people. Interestingly, the handwritten draft does not include the words "I have a dream". King added that famous repeated phrase while speaking, after gospel singer Mahalia Jackson encouraged him to talk about the dream. The pages are due to be displayed before being sold at auction in January. The discovery gives people a closer look at how one of the best-known speeches in the civil rights movement was created.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The document shows that powerful speeches are often written through trial and error. King did not simply produce the final speech perfectly on the first attempt. He changed his words, responded to the crowd and improvised some of the most memorable lines. It also reminds us that ordinary-looking documents can become important evidence about the past.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"How did King's changes make the speech more powerful?"

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/the-handwritten-final-draft-of-martin-luther-king-jrs-i-have-a-dream-speech-was-considered-lost-it-turned-out-to-be-sit