Under the inspired leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., nonviolent protest became the defining feature of the civil rights movement. A brilliant strategist, King first demonstrated the efficacy of passive resistance in 1955, when he led the prolonged bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, that resulted in the dismantling of bus segregation laws. Fresh from a victory that had brought him national recognition, the charismatic young clergyman helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and took the lead in directing its civil rights initiatives. In a carefully orchestrated campaign of peaceful protest to expose and defeat racial injustice, King awakened the nation’s conscience and galvanized support for the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s. King’s words were as powerful as his deeds, and the moving and eloquent addresses that gave hope to millions continue to inspire people throughout the world.

Jack Lewis Hiller (1930- )
Gelatin silver print, 1960
Gift of Jack Lewis Hiller
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