



The Civil Rights Movement

Segregation

School Desegregation

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The March on Washington

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The End of the Movement

[Segregation]

- The civil rights movement was a political, legal, and social struggle to gain full citizenship rights for African Americans.
- The civil rights movement was first and foremost a challenge to segregation, the system of laws and customs separating African Americans and whites.
- During the movement, individuals and civil rights organizations challenged segregation and discrimination with a variety of activities, including protest marches, boycotts, and refusal to abide by segregation laws.

[Segregation]

- Segregation was an attempt by many white Southerners to separate the races in every aspect of daily life.
- Segregation was often called the Jim Crow system, after a minstrel show character from the 1830s who was an African American slave who embodied negative stereotypes of African Americans.

Segregation

- Segregation became common in Southern states following the end of Reconstruction in 1877. These states began to pass local and state laws that specified certain places “For Whites Only” and others for “Colored.”



Drinking fountain on county courthouse lawn, Halifax, North Carolina;

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Segregation

- African Americans had separate schools, transportation, restaurants, and parks, many of which were poorly funded and inferior to those of whites.
- Over the next 75 years, Jim Crow signs to separate the races went up in every possible place.



Negro going in colored entrance of movie house on Saturday afternoon, Belzoni, Mississippi Delta, Mississippi

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[Segregation]

- The system of segregation also included the denial of voting rights, known as disenfranchisement.
- Between 1890 and 1910, all Southern states passed laws imposing requirements for voting. These were used to prevent African Americans from voting, in spite of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which had been designed to protect African American voting rights.

[Segregation]

- The voting requirements included the ability to read and write, which disqualified many African Americans who had not had access to education; property ownership, which excluded most African Americans, and paying a poll tax, which prevented most Southern African Americans from voting because they could not afford it.

[Segregation]

- Conditions for African Americans in the Northern states were somewhat better, though up to 1910 only ten percent of African Americans lived in the North.
- Segregated facilities were not as common in the North, but African Americans were usually denied entrance to the best hotels and restaurants.
- African Americans were usually free to vote in the North.

[Segregation]

- Perhaps the most difficult part of Northern life was the economic discrimination against African Americans. They had to compete with large numbers of recent European immigrants for job opportunities, and they almost always lost because of their race.

[Segregation]

- In the late 1800s, African Americans sued to stop separate seating in railroad cars, states' disfranchisement of voters, and denial of access to schools and restaurants.
- One of the cases against segregated rail travel was *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), in which the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that "separate but equal" accommodations were constitutional.

[Segregation]

- In order to protest segregation, African Americans created national organizations.
- The National Afro-American League was formed in 1890; W.E.B. Du Bois helped create the Niagara Movement in 1905 and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909.

[Segregation]

- In 1910, the National Urban League was created to help African Americans make the transition to urban, industrial life.
- In 1942, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was founded to challenge segregation in public accommodations in the North.

Segregation

- The NAACP became one of the most important African American organizations of the twentieth century. It relied mainly on legal strategies that challenged segregation and discrimination in the courts.



20th Annual session of the N.A.A.C.P., 6-26-29, Cleveland, Ohio

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.; LC-USZ62-111535

Segregation

- Historian and sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois was a founder and leader of the NAACP. Starting in 1910, he made powerful arguments protesting segregation as editor of the NAACP magazine *The Crisis*.

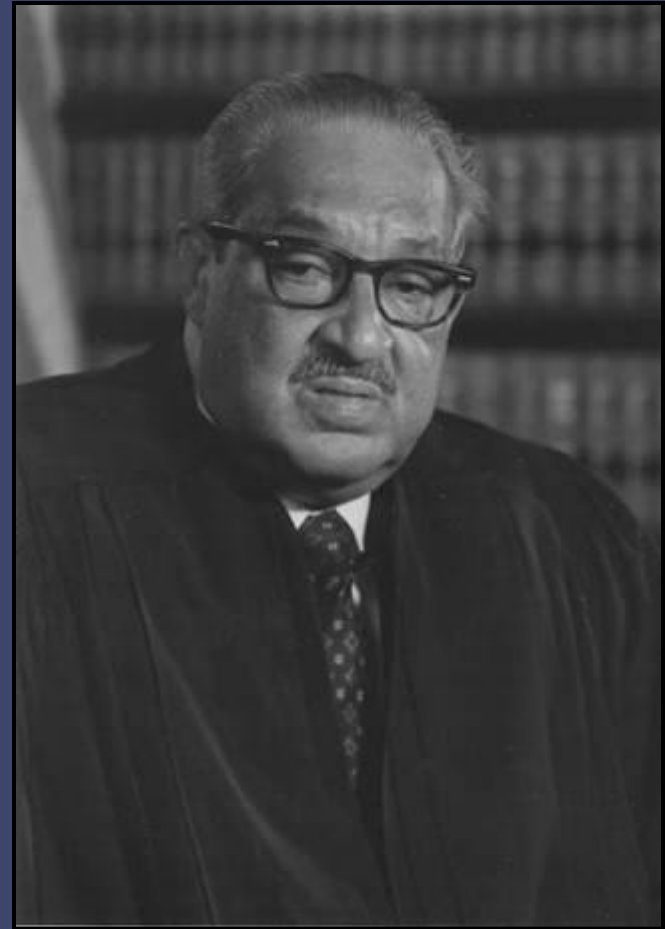


[Portrait of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois]

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School Desegregation

- After World War II, the NAACP's campaign for civil rights continued to proceed.
- Led by Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund challenged and overturned many forms of discrimination.



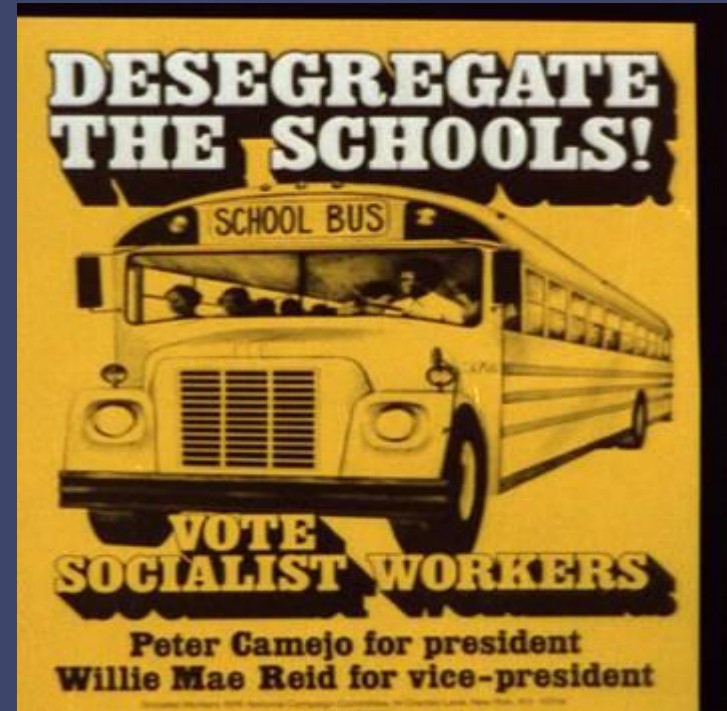
Thurgood Marshall

School Desegregation

- The main focus of the NAACP turned to equal educational opportunities.
- Marshall and the Defense Fund worked with Southern plaintiffs to challenge the *Plessy* decision, arguing that separate was inherently unequal.
- The Supreme Court of the United States heard arguments on five cases that challenged elementary and secondary school segregation.

School Desegregation

- In May 1954, the Court issued its landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, stating racially segregated education was unconstitutional and overturning the *Plessy* decision.
- White Southerners were shocked by the *Brown* decision.



Desegregate the schools! Vote Socialist Workers : Peter Camejo for president, Willie Mae Reid for vice-president.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C.; LC-USZ62-101452

[School Desegregation]

- By 1955, white opposition in the South had grown into massive resistance, using a strategy to persuade all whites to resist compliance with the desegregation orders.
- Tactics included firing school employees who showed willingness to seek integration, closing public schools rather than desegregating, and boycotting all public education that was integrated.

School Desegregation

- Virtually no schools in the South segregated their schools in the first years following the *Brown* decision.
- In Virginia, one county actually closed its public schools.
- In 1957, Governor Orval Faubus defied a federal court order to admit nine African American students to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- President Dwight Eisenhower sent federal troops to enforce desegregation.

School Desegregation

- The event was covered by the national media, and the fate of the nine students attempting to integrate the school gripped the nation.
- Not all school desegregation was as dramatic as Little Rock schools gradually desegregated.
- Often, schools were desegregated only in theory because racially segregated neighborhoods led to segregated schools.
- To overcome the problem, some school districts began busing students to schools outside their neighborhoods in the 1970s.

School Desegregation

- As desegregation continued, the membership of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) grew.
- The KKK used violence or threats against anyone who was suspected of favoring desegregation or African American civil rights.
- Ku Klux Klan terror, including intimidation and murder, was widespread in the South during the 1950s and 1960s, though Klan activities were not always reported in the media.

[The Montgomery Bus Boycott]

- Despite threats and violence, the civil rights movement quickly moved beyond school desegregation to challenge segregation in other areas.
- In December 1955, Rosa Parks, a member of the Montgomery, Alabama, branch of the NAACP, was told to give up her seat on a city bus to a white person.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

- When Parks refused to move, she was arrested.
- The local NAACP, led by Edgar D. Nixon, recognized that the arrest of Parks might rally local African Americans to protest segregated buses.



Woman fingerprinted. Mrs. **Rosa Parks**, Negro seamstress, whose refusal to move to the back of a bus touched off the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C.; LC-USZ62-109643

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

- Montgomery's African American community had long been angry about their mistreatment on city buses where white drivers were rude and abusive.
- The community had previously considered a boycott of the buses and overnight one was organized.
- The bus boycott was an immediate success, with almost unanimous support from the African Americans in Montgomery.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

- The boycott lasted for more than a year, expressing to the nation the determination of African Americans in the South to end segregation.
- In November 1956, a federal court ordered Montgomery's buses desegregated and the boycott ended in victory.

[The Montgomery Bus Boycott]

- A Baptist minister named Martin Luther King, Jr., was president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, the organization that directed the boycott.
- His involvement in the protest made him a national figure. Through his eloquent appeals to Christian brotherhood and American idealism he attracted people both inside and outside the South.

Bellwork: 12/1/2014

- Study for your reading notes and vocab quiz!

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

- King became the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) when it was founded in 1957.
- The SCLC complemented the NAACP's legal strategy by encouraging the use of nonviolent, direct action to protest segregation. These activities included marches, demonstrations, and boycotts.
- The harsh white response to African Americans' direct action eventually forced the federal government to confront the issue of racism in the South.

Sit-Ins

- On February 1, 1960, four African American college students from North Carolina A&T University began protesting racial segregation in restaurants by sitting at “White Only” lunch counters and waiting to be served.



Sit-ins in a Nashville store

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs
Division Washington, D.C.; LC-USZ62-126236

[Sit-Ins]

- This was not a new form of protest, but the response to the sit-ins spread throughout North Carolina, and within weeks sit-ins were taking place in cities across the South.
- Many restaurants were desegregated in response to the sit-ins.
- This form of protest demonstrated clearly to African Americans and whites alike that young African Americans were determined to reject segregation.

[Sit-Ins]

- In April 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded in Raleigh, North Carolina, to help organize and direct the student sit-in movement.
- King encouraged SNCC's creation, but the most important early advisor to the students was Ella Baker, who worked for both the NAACP and SCLC.

Sit-Ins

- Baker believed that SNCC civil rights activities should be based in individual African American communities.
- SNCC adopted Baker's approach and focused on making changes in local communities, rather than striving for national change.



[Ella Baker, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing slightly left]

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.; LC-USZ62-110575

Freedom Riders

- After the sit-in movement, some SNCC members participated in the 1961 Freedom Rides organized by CORE.
- The Freedom Riders, both African American and white, traveled around the South in buses to test the effectiveness of a 1960 U.S. Supreme Court decision declaring segregation illegal in bus stations open to interstate travel.

Freedom Riders

- The Freedom Rides began in Washington, D.C. Except for some violence in Rock Hill, South Carolina, the trip was peaceful until the buses reached Alabama, where violence erupted.
- In Anniston, Alabama, one bus was burned and some riders were beaten.
- In Birmingham, a mob attacked the riders when they got off the bus.
- The riders suffered even more severe beatings in Montgomery.

Freedom Riders

- The violence brought national attention to the Freedom Riders and fierce condemnation of Alabama officials for allowing the brutality to occur.
- The administration of President John F. Kennedy stepped in to protect the Freedom Riders when it was clear that Alabama officials would not guarantee their safe travel.

Freedom Riders

- The riders continued on to Jackson, Mississippi, where they were arrested and imprisoned at the state penitentiary, ending the protest.
- The Freedom Rides did result in the desegregation of some bus stations, but more importantly they caught the attention of the American public.

Desegregating Southern Universities

- In 1962, James Meredith—an African American—applied for admission to the University of Mississippi.
- The university attempted to block Meredith's admission, and he filed suit.
- After working through the state courts, Meredith was successful when a federal court ordered the university to desegregate and accept Meredith as a student.

Desegregating Southern Universities

- The Governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett, defied the court order and tried to prevent Meredith from enrolling.
- In response, the administration of President Kennedy intervened to uphold the court order. Kennedy sent federal troops to protect Meredith when he went to enroll.
- During his first night on campus, a riot broke out when whites began to harass the federal marshals.
- In the end, two people were killed and several hundred were wounded.

Desegregating Southern Universities

- In 1963, the governor of Alabama, George C. Wallace, threatened a similar stand, trying to block the desegregation of the University of Alabama. The Kennedy administration responded with the full power of the federal government, including the U.S. Army.
- The confrontations with Barnett and Wallace pushed President Kennedy into a full commitment to end segregation.
- In June 1963, Kennedy proposed civil rights legislation.

[The March on Washington]

- National civil rights leaders decided to keep pressure on both the Kennedy administration and Congress to pass the civil rights legislation. The leaders planned a March on Washington to take place in August 1963.
- This idea was a revival of A. Phillip Randolph's planned 1941 march, which had resulted in a commitment to fair employment during World War II.

The March on Washington

- Randolph was present at the march in 1963, along with the leaders of the NAACP, CORE, SCLC, the Urban League, and SNCC.



Roy Wilkins with a few of the 250,000 participants on the Mall heading for the Lincoln Memorial in the NAACP march on Washington on August 28, 1963]

[The March on Washington]

- Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered a moving address to an audience of more than 200,000 people.
- His “I Have a Dream” speech—delivered in front of the giant statue of Abraham Lincoln—became famous for the way in which it expressed the ideals of the civil rights movement.
- After President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963, the new president, Lyndon Johnson, strongly urged the passage of the civil rights legislation as a tribute to Kennedy’s memory.

[The March on Washington]

- Over fierce opposition from Southern legislators, Johnson pushed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 through Congress.
- It prohibited segregation in public accommodations and discrimination in education and employment. It also gave the executive branch of government the power to enforce the act's provisions.

Voter Registration

- Starting in 1961, SNCC and CORE organized voter registration campaigns in the predominantly African American counties of Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia.



[NAACP photograph showing people waiting in line for voter registration, at Antioch Baptist Church]

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs
Division Washington, D.C.; LC-USZ62-122260

Voter Registration

- SNCC concentrated on voter registration because leaders believed that voting was a way to empower African Americans so that they could change racist policies in the South.
- SNCC members worked to teach African Americans necessary skills, such as reading, writing, and the correct answers to the voter registration application.

Voter Registration

- These activities caused violent reactions from Mississippi's white supremacists.
- In June 1963, Medgar Evers, the NAACP Mississippi field secretary, was shot and killed in front of his home.
- In 1964, SNCC workers organized the Mississippi Summer Project to register African Americans to vote in the state, wanting to focus national attention on the state's racism.

Voter Registration

- SNCC recruited Northern college students, teachers, artists, and clergy to work on the project. They believed the participation of these people would make the country concerned about discrimination and violence in Mississippi.
- The project did receive national attention, especially after three participants—two of whom were white—disappeared in June and were later found murdered and buried near Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Voter Registration

- By the end of the summer, the project had helped thousands of African Americans attempt to register, and about one thousand actually became registered voters.
- In early 1965, SCLC members employed a direct-action technique in a voting-rights protest initiated by SNCC in Selma, Alabama.
- When protests at the local courthouse were unsuccessful, protesters began to march to Montgomery, the state capital.

Voter Registration

- As marchers were leaving Selma, mounted police beat and tear-gassed them.
- Televised scenes of the violence, called Bloody Sunday, shocked many Americans, and the resulting outrage led to a commitment to continue the Selma March.



A small band of Negro teenagers **march** singing and clapping their hands for a short distance, Selma, Alabama.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division
Washington, D.C.; LC-USZ62-127739

Voter Registration

- King and SCLC members led hundreds of people on a five-day, fifty-mile march to Montgomery.
- The Selma March drummed up broad national support for a law to protect Southern African Americans' right to vote.
- President Johnson persuaded Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which suspended the use of literacy and other voter qualification tests in voter registration.

Voter Registration

- Over the next three years, almost one million more African Americans in the South registered to vote.
- By 1968, African American voters had having a significant impact on Southern politics.
- During the 1970s, African Americans were seeking and winning public offices in majority African American electoral districts.

[The End of the Movement]

- For many people the civil rights movement ended with the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968.
- Others believe it was over after the Selma March, because there have not been any significant changes since then.
- Still others argue the movement continues today because the goal of full equality has not yet been achieved.