

Civil Rights and Protest

social movements of the 1950s and 1960s



The Early Civil Rights Movement

1945-1960

Jackie Robinson



- While many aspects of American life were segregated, some progress was being made.
- In 1947 Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers and became the first African American to play baseball in the major leagues.

Truman Advocates Equality

- After WWII, President Truman pushed for legislation to improve opportunities for African Americans.
- He was met with resistance by Congress for many of his initiatives dealing with race relations (voting rights, anti-lynching).
- In response, Truman issued an executive order in 1948 effectively desegregating the military.



NAACP Challenges Segregation

- Beginning in the 1940's, the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) began challenging the constitutionality of segregation.
- The legal team was headed by Thurgood Marshall.
- Later in 1967, Marshall would be appointed the first African American to the Supreme Court.



Brown v. Board of Education

- In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional.
- The ruling overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), concluding that “separate but equal” violated the principles of the Constitution.



White Citizens Councils

- The court went even further in *Brown v. Board II* the following year (1955) to demand that schools be desegregated “with all deliberate speed.”
- Many in the South resisted the *Brown* decision and organized “White Citizens Councils” to actively protest against desegregation.



The Little Rock 9

- In 1957 a famous battle over segregation took place in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- Nine African Americans volunteered to be the first black students admitted to Central High School.
- However the governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, opposed integration and sent state troops to block the “Little Rock 9” from entering the school.



Eisenhower Responds

- When Governor Faubus refused to admit the Little Rock 9, President Eisenhower sent in federal troops to enforce the Supreme Court's decision.
- Similar to the nullification crisis of the 1830s, this episode in US history highlights the power struggle between state and federal government.
- Some claimed that federal laws to achieve social goals was tyranny, or an abuse of power by the government.



Ruby Bridges



- Remembered as the first child to attend an all-white elementary school in the South
- Her parents responded to a request from the NAACP and volunteered her to help integrate the New Orleans school system.
- In 1960, she began going to William Frantz Elementary School.
- Parents withheld their students from class and teachers refused to teach her (except one who taught her alone for a year)

Wrong Side of History?



What are people saying about her
50 years later?



What will people say about them
in 50 years?



Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s



SCLC vs. SNCC

- To support the goals of the Civil Rights Movement two distinct groups formed, but both had similar goals.

SCLC

- Southern Christian Leadership Council
- Founded by MLK
- Group of ministers who promoted nonviolent protests
- Protested predominately via boycotts

SNCC

- Students Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
- Founded by Ella Baker
- Group of students who promoted nonviolent protests
- Protested predominately via freedom rides and sit-ins.

SCLC – Montgomery Bus Boycott



- In protest to the arrest of Rosa Parks, Dr. King and the SCLC organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott in late 1955.
- Boycott crippled the public transportation service in Montgomery and eventually forced changes in policy.

SNCC and sit-ins



- To protest segregated diner counters, SNCC organized sit-ins.
- Sit-ins involved simply occupying a counter and refusing to leave.
- Sit-in demonstrations spread throughout the South in the 1960s.

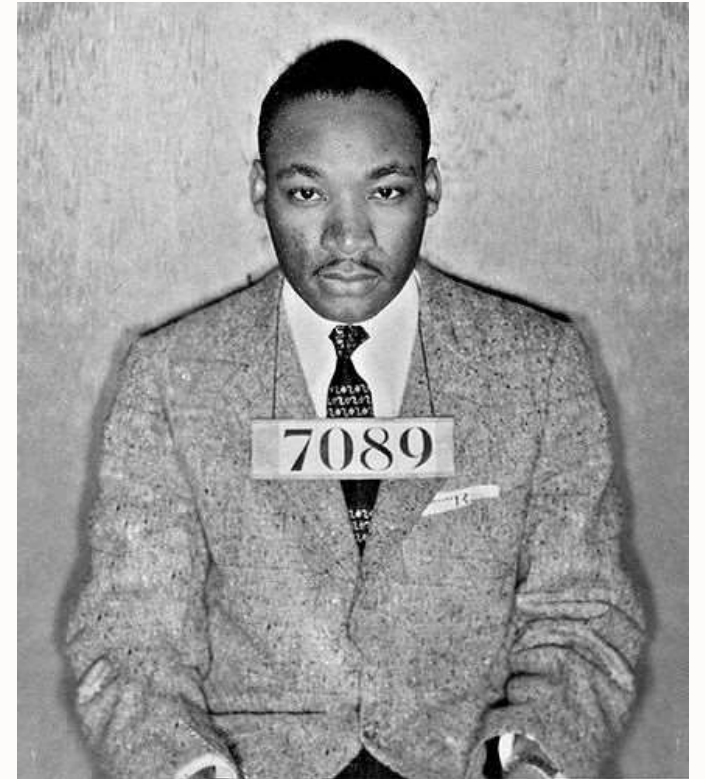
Freedom Riders



- Members of CORE & SNCC would board buses in the South and protest the practices of segregation on public transportation.
- These protests became known as freedom rides.
- CORE =Congress of Racial Equality
- Their beliefs coincided with SCLC, SNCC, & the NAACP
- Organized most of the freedom rides (SNCC organized the others)
- Men and women who were black or white participated in the integrated bus rides

MLK's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail"

- In April 1963 MLK is arrested in Birmingham for protesting.
- Letter is King's response to criticism that racism should be fought in the courts, not in the streets.
- Included the famous line: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."



MLK's "March on Washington"



- In response to support from President Kennedy on Civil Rights issues, the SCLC planned the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” in August 1963.
- On the steps of the memorial dedicated to the “Great Emancipator,” (Abraham Lincoln) MLK delivered his famous “I Have A Dream Speech”.



Civil Rights Act of 1964

- In response to the March on Washington and the death of JFK, President Johnson backed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- "No memorial oration or eulogy could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill for which he fought so long." – President Lyndon Johnson
- Act outlawed discrimination of African Americans and women in the government job sector, voting requirements and racial separation in public schools.

March on Selma

- To protest voting discrimination in the South, both SNCC and SCLC organized a nonviolent march from Selma, AL to Montgomery in March 1965.
- March turned violent when state troopers interfered to quell protest.
- Violence came to be known as “Bloody Sunday”; televised accounts of the incident only served to spread the message of the movement.



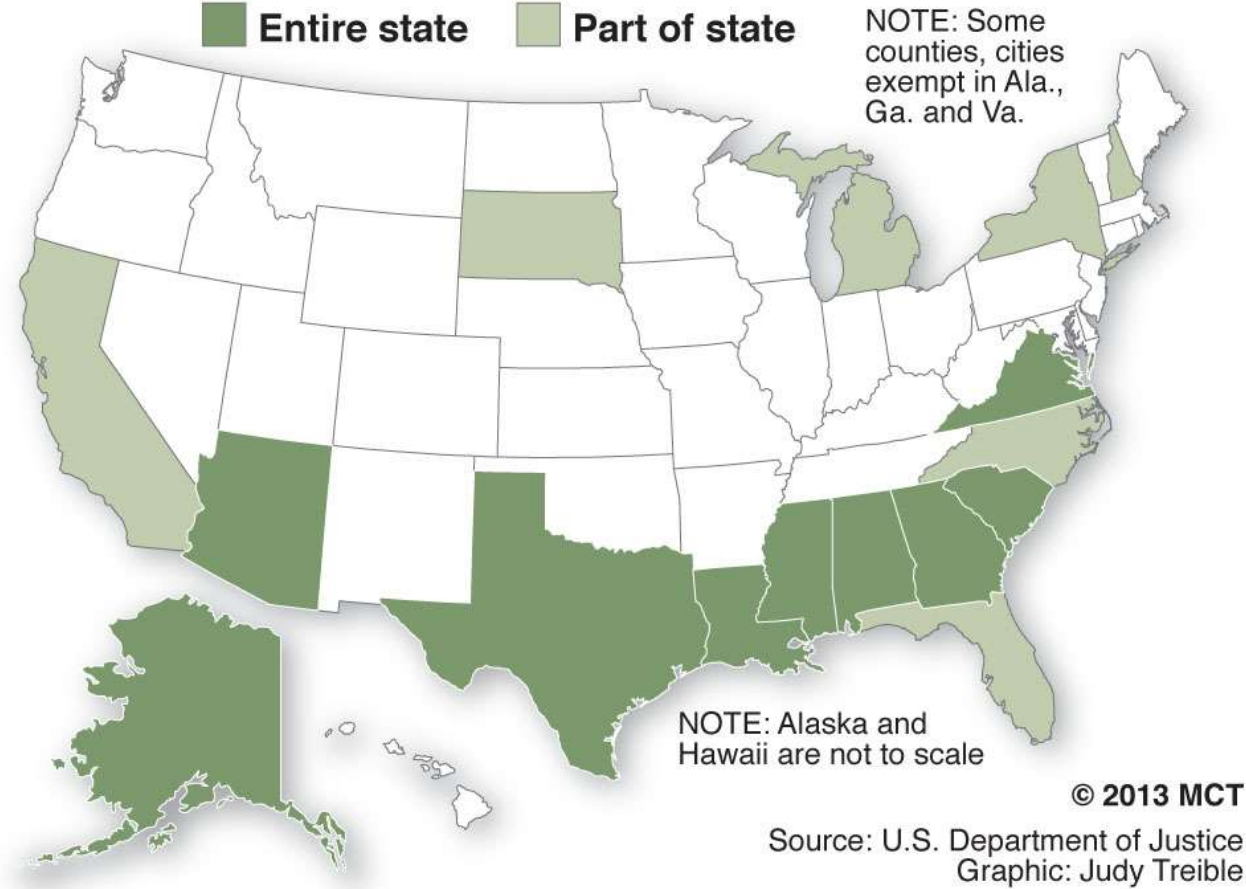


Voting Rights Act of 1965

- Signed into law in August 1965 by President Johnson.
- Act expanded on the 15th Amendment.
- Prohibited tactics that disenfranchised African American voters including literacy tests.
- Led to passage of 24th amendment to Constitution that formally outlawed the poll tax.
- The Act also called for mandated federal oversight of elections in several states (and counties) with a history of voter intimidation.
- Unless otherwise released, these specific states and counties are still required to submit any changes to voting procedures to the Justice Department to protect minority voting rights.

Voting Rights Act states

States with a history of discriminatory voting practices that are subject to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act; states require federal approval for any changes in voting laws.



Malcolm X Supports Violence



- In sharp contrast to the non-violent protests of SNCC and SCLC, Malcolm X believed blacks should use violence to profess black supremacy.
- Believed in strict separation of races.
- Preacher for the Nation of Islam.
- After changing his views on Civil Rights, Malcolm X was assassinated by members of the Nation of Islam in 1965.

Emergence of the Black Panthers

- Black Panther Party –group formed in Oakland in 1966 to battle discrimination against Black Americans by the government
- Group was militant; used violence to accomplish many of the goals
- Black Panthers protested use of black soldiers in Vietnam War



Racial Riots Sweep the Nation

- In response to Civil Rights progress and the influence of the Black Panthers, violent clashes between protestors and police occur throughout the nation
- Most famous of these were riots in Watts neighborhood of LA, Detroit, MI and Newark, NJ



MLK Assassinated



- April 1968 – While in Memphis, MLK is assassinated outside the Lorraine Hotel by James Earl Ray.
- “Free at last, God Almighty I’m free at last.”
- Despite his death, King’s message lives on today.
- In 1983, President Reagan signed a bill establishing the MLK federal holiday celebrated every January.



Other Civil Rights and Protest Movements of the 1960s

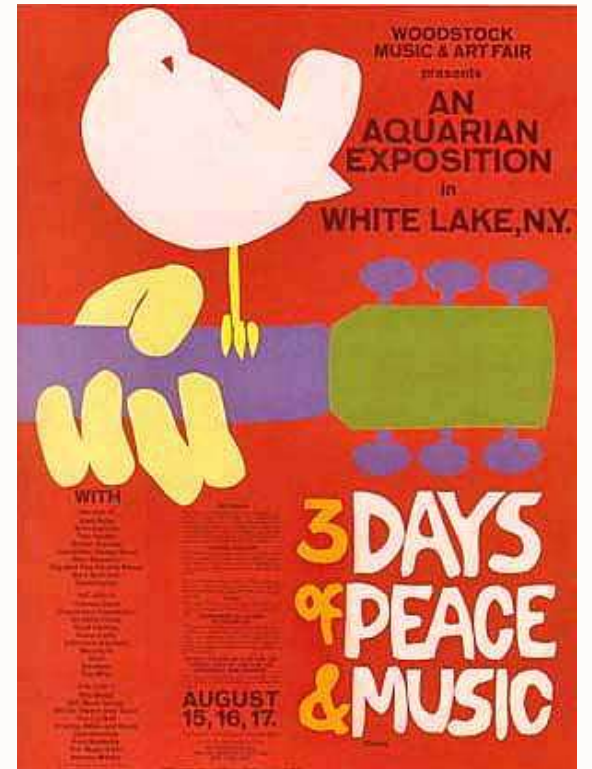


Counterculture

- By the 1950s and 1960s, the “Baby Boomer” had grown into teenagers.
- Students began to protest wrongs they saw in American social, political, and economic policy
- College students met to form the Students for a Democratic Society in 1962. The meeting resulted in the Port Huron Statement, in which the students demanded the expansion of democracy.
- Signaled the birth of the “New Left”
- Soon after the Free-Speech Movement began, staging sit-ins and teach-ins to address issues such as Civil Rights and the Vietnam War

Woodstock

- 1969 music festival on a farm in New York
- “Hippies” gathered at the concert for a three-day party that involved peace, love, and music
- Artists such as Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Arlo Guthrie performed
- “Flower children” of the Woodstock soon changed course to protest the Vietnam War with their shouts of “Make love, not war!”



Changing Gender Roles

- With the advent of the birth control pill and the beginnings of the feminist movement in the 1960s, many Americans believed that the old sexual mores of their parents were repressive.
- The National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded in 1966 by Betty Friedan
- *Feminine Mystique* (1963) was written by Betty Friedan to encourage women to leave homemaking and pursue fulfillment outside of the home



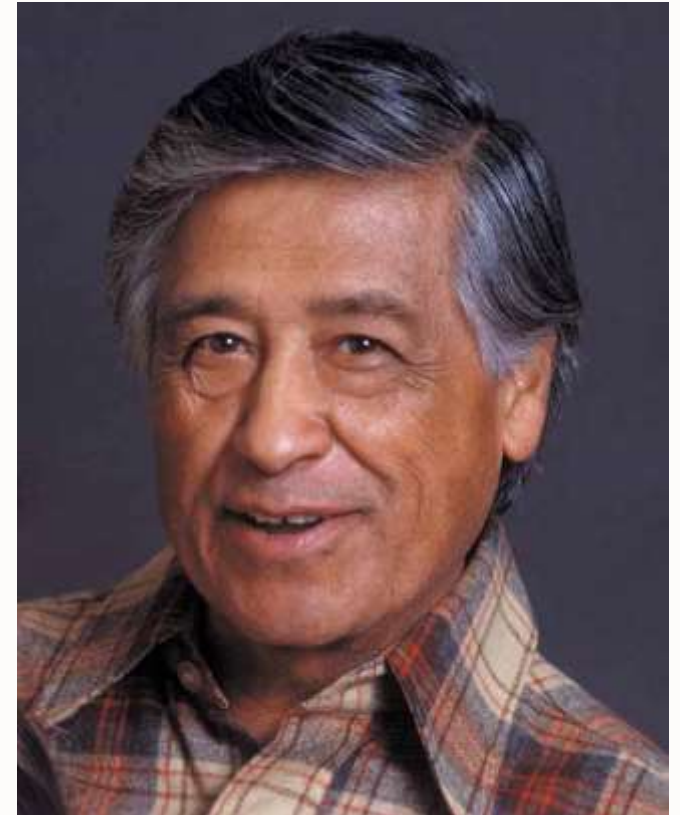
ERA



- After the Civil Rights Act of 1964, women looked to strengthen their rights by amending the Constitution
- In 1972, Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which would bar states and the federal government from discriminating on the basis of sex
- The amendment fell short of the required number of ratifying states and died in the 1980s

Cesar Chavez

- César Chávez was a Mexican American farm worker, labor leader, and civil rights activist who founded the United Farm Workers.
- His work led to numerous improvements for union laborers.
- His work focused on unskilled migrant laborers.
- He used non-violent protests like Martin Luther King, Jr.



Rachel Carson

- Rachel Carson was an American marine biologist and nature writer whose writings are credited with advancing the global environmental movement.
- Her book, *Silent Spring*, helped start the environmental movement by exposing the hazards of pesticides.
- Her work also led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
 - A government organization that works to protect the environment.



Earth Day

LOVE YOUR MOTHER...



EARTH

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- Earth Day is held on April 22 internationally.
- These are intended to inspire awareness of and appreciation for the Earth's environment.