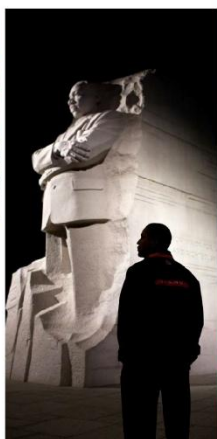




W e r e t h e
CIVIL RIGHTS
M O V E M E N T S
of the post-war decades
S U C C E S S F U L ?



16



EXPLORING AMERICA'S HISTORY THROUGH COMPELLING QUESTIONS

UNIT 16: THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS



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UNIT 16:

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS

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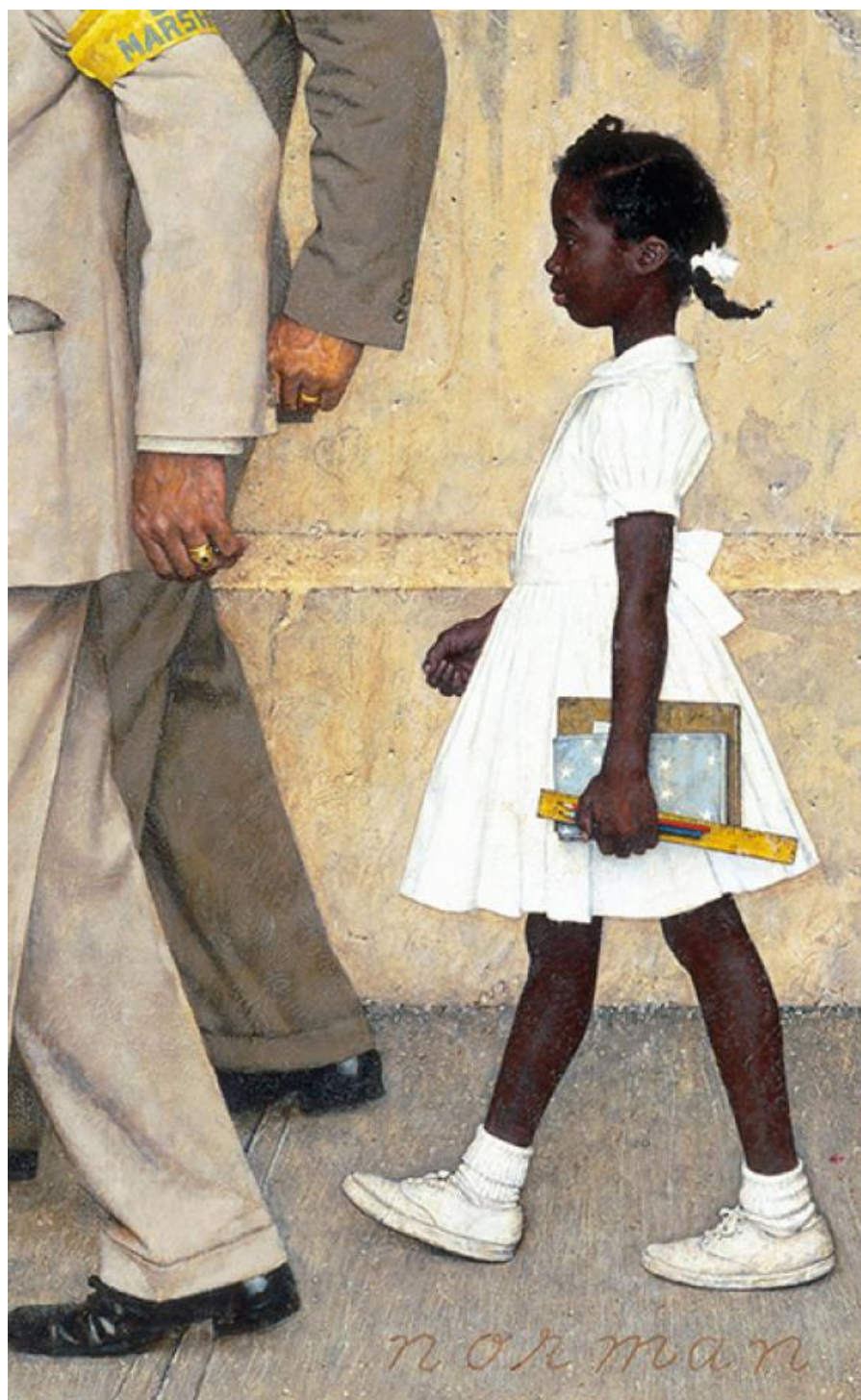
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QUESTION 1:

HOW DID INDIVIDUALS ADVANCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of the Civil Rights Movement, change happened because a few people chose to do what was right, even though it was often hard. The days of the great marches led by famous people like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were still in the future, so it was individual presidents, business leaders, judges, and students who made a difference by choosing to be fair instead of being prejudiced. They made decisions that were not popular, and sometimes even dangerous.

What made these people do what they did? Why did they decide to put their lives on the line and make other people angry so that they could make change happen? Why did they look at injustice and decide that it was up to them to make change? How was it that a few Americans, sometimes only children, got rid of unfair laws and discrimination that had been around for years and years? What was special about them that helped them be successful?

How did these individual people push the Civil Rights Movement forward?



A LONG STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

The Civil Rights Movement of marches, boycotts, and great speeches by leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. that many Americans know about did not suddenly happen. In fact, African Americans had been working for many years to get the same rights as White Americans.

As amazing as it may seem, slavery has been present in the United States longer than it has not. The first slaves were brought to the Virginia Colony in 1619, and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution did not end slavery until after the Civil War in 1865. That's a total of 246 years! Slavery has been in America 100 years more than it has not. So, it would be wrong to think that the control of millions of people because of their skin color did not have a huge impact on our country.

After the Civil War ended in 1865, three amendments to the Constitution were approved. They ended slavery, gave citizenship to Americans of all races, and gave the right to vote to all men. Together, these three major changes could have been the start of a totally new way of life in the South. However, in 1877 the government decided to bring soldiers home who had been in the South trying to protect former slaves and force White Southerners to change their way of thinking. White leaders in the South took power back and created a system of rules and laws which put them back in control.

The social order of the Old South returned. African Americans were at the bottom of society. They lived in the worst areas of town and had the worst jobs, or lived as hired farmers, living on the farm and always having to pay rent to the White person who owned the land. African Americans could not eat in the same restaurant as White people, swim in the same swimming pools, drink from the same water fountains, or go to the same schools. They could not vote, run for office, and could not change their



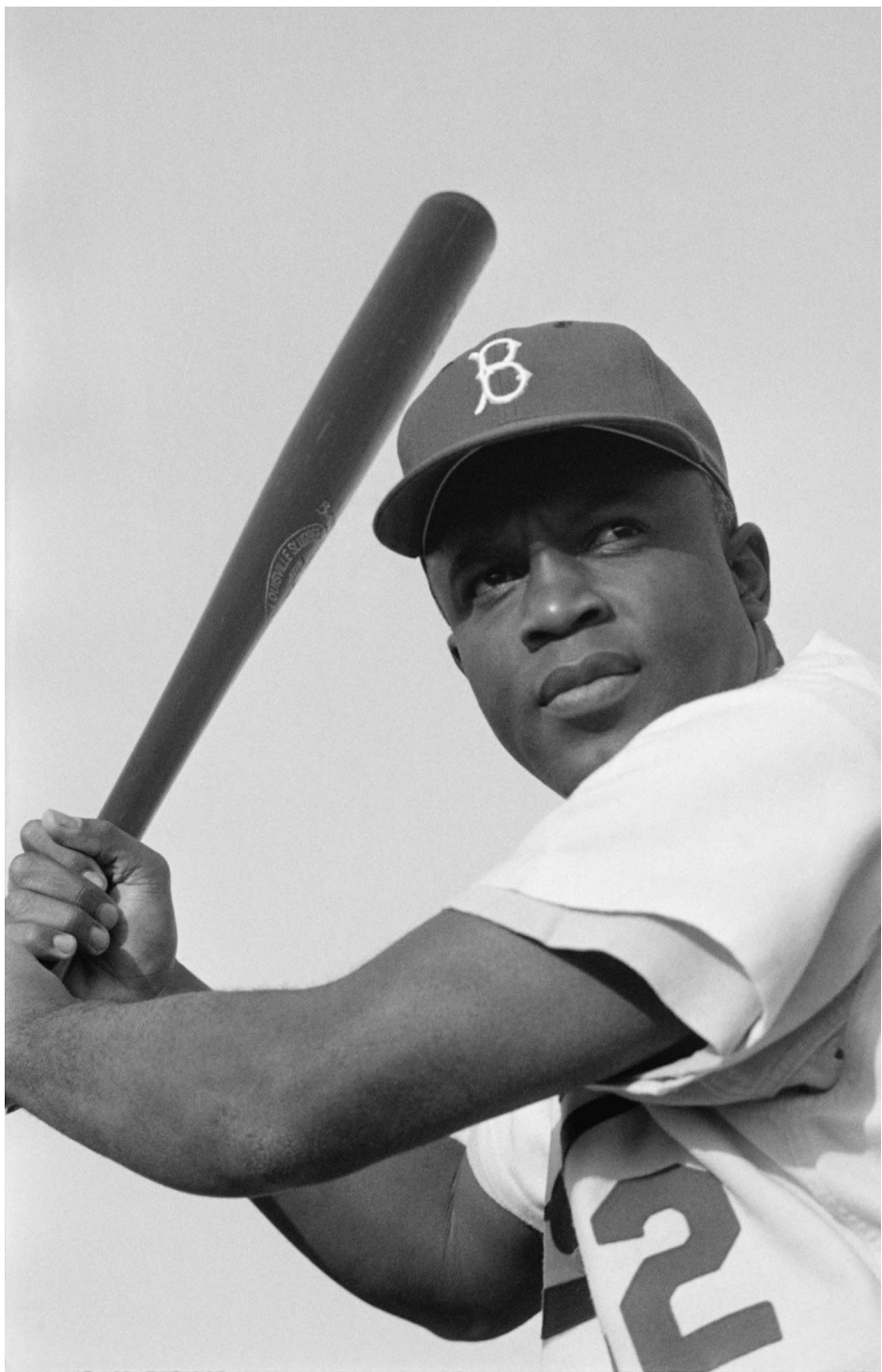
position in life. African Americans were treated like second-class citizens. It was everywhere, in jobs, schools, government, and even language. For example, White people were used to calling all African American men “boy,” no matter how old they were. This new system became called **Jim Crow**.

At first, well-known African American leaders tried to improve the lives of their people through education. Booker T. Washington, for example, opened the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, but he was afraid that trying to ask for equality would lead to more violence and problems for African Americans.

Things changed in the 1900s when the Great Migration brought thousands of African Americans to the cities of the North. New leaders in these northern cities began talking about equal rights in public. Among the most famous was W. E. B. Du Bois who started the Niagara Movement. Through the work of Du Bois and great writers like Langston Hughes, the Harlem Renaissance led to the idea of the New Negro, and the real fight for equality was born. With a new feeling of pride and knowing what needed to be done, African American leaders created the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the early 1900s to fight for their rights in court.

During World War II, another important leader fought for equal rights. A. Philip Randolph, the head of the union of railroad porters, convinced President Franklin Roosevelt to make discrimination illegal at any companies that sold things to the government or army.

When World War II finished, it had been almost a century since slavery had ended. A lot of good had been done, but there was still much more to do.



CIVIL RIGHTS AFTER WORLD WAR II

After World War II, America tried to show the world that countries with free democratic governments were better than countries with dictators and communism. But the Jim Crow system of segregation in the South, and prejudice in other parts of the country showed that even though we said that we were free, millions of Americans didn't have basic rights. In fact, the leaders of the Soviet Union and communist China threw this in our face every time American politicians said that the Soviet Union and China did not let their people have human rights.

One of the first changes to take place after World War II came in the world of sports. In 1947, the owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team decided to put **Jackie Robinson** on the field and broke Major League Baseball's color barrier. Until then, the many talented African American baseball players had to play in the Negro Leagues. As African American fans rushed to see the Dodgers play, other baseball teams followed suit and let African Americans join their own teams.

Another bold move in the early post-war era, was the full integration of the military. In 1948 President Harry Truman's **Executive Order 9981** ended segregation in the military. No longer would there be Whites-Only or Blacks-Only units in the army or air force.

But baseball and the military were pretty easy to integrate compared to what most people experienced every day in the South. Nothing showed how dangerous the fight for civil rights was more than the murder of **Emmitt Till**. Till was born and raised in Chicago, and he understood racism, but Emmitt did not grow up learning the harsh rules of the Jim Crow South. While visiting family in Mississippi in 1955, he spoke to 21-year-old Carolyn Bryant, the White owner of a small grocery store. Exactly what happened at the store is not known, but Whites in the area



thought that Till had been flirting with Bryant. Several nights later, Bryant's husband and his half-brother went to the house where Till was staying and took him. They beat him up, shot him and threw him in the Tallahatchie River.

Three days later, Till's body was found and returned to Chicago where his mother insisted on a public funeral with an open casket so the world would know what had been done to her son. Photographs of Till's beaten body were published in magazines and newspapers. When people learned about what had happened to Emmitt Till, they started to support the civil rights movement. When an all-White jury in Mississippi decided the men who murdered Till were innocent, the whole country could see how much White power was built into the society of the South. They could also see how Whites used violence and fear to keep African Americans from having equality.

BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION

One of the first areas of success for Civil Rights activists was in the courts. In 1896 the **Plessy v. Ferguson** Supreme Court decision said that segregated schools were legal, so long as they were equal. But segregated schools were never equal. Teachers in White schools were paid more, school buildings for White students were nicer, and more money for teaching supplies was given to White schools. States normally spent 10 to 20 times as much money on the education of White students as they spent on African American students.

In the 1950s, the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**, led by lawyer **Thurgood Marshall**, went to court against the segregated public schools of the South, saying that the "**separate but equal**" law had not been followed. In 1954, in the famous **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka** case, the Supreme Court said that "Separate facilities are inherently unequal." Chief Justice **Earl Warren** wrote the Court's



decision, and all nine members of the Supreme Court agreed. The Supreme Court had sent a clear message that schools had to integrate.

School leaders in the North followed the Court's decision, but Whites in the South were angry. The Court had not said they had to integrate right away, but had said that school leaders had to follow their decision "with all deliberate speed." Ten years after Brown, fewer than 10% of southern public schools had integrated. Instead of opening their schools to African Americans, many White leaders just closed their schools. In one county in Virginia, for example, the White county government stopped sending money to schools. Instead, they gave tax money for students to attend private schools. Then they closed the public schools and turned them into private schools that took only White students. Since the schools were private, they didn't have to follow the Supreme Court's order. So, despite the Supreme Court's decision, it took the work of many brave Americans to actually integrate America's schools.

THE LITTLE ROCK NINE

Three years after the Supreme Court that segregated schools were against the law, a face-off took place in Little Rock, Arkansas. In 1957, nine African American students tried to attend the all-White Central High School. When it was clear that White mobs were going to violently stop the students, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus called up the Arkansas National Guard to stop the students, known as the **Little Rock Nine**, from going to the school. Then a federal judge declared that stopping the students was illegal. Faubus sent the National Guard soldiers home. When the students tried again to go to the school, they were taken in through a back door. Word of this spread, and a thousand angry White people charged the school. As the police tried to keep the crowd under control, other worried people rushed the students to safety.



Amazed Americans watched on television as violent, White Southerners harassing polite African American children trying to get an education. Television was new in the 1950s, and it had a powerful effect on how people thought and felt about the news. President Eisenhower was forced to act. Eisenhower did not really want to get involved in the civil rights movement, but he was afraid that the Brown decision could lead to a stand-off between the federal government in Washington, DC and state governments. Eisenhower did not believe the individual states had the right to go against the Supreme Court. He ordered the soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division into Little Rock and took control of the Arkansas National Guard so that the governor couldn't use them to stop the students from attending school. It was the first time federal soldiers were sent to the South since the days of Reconstruction after the Civil War. For the next few months, the African American students went to school with army soldiers protecting them.

The next year, Little Rock city leaders closed the schools. But a year later, the schools were open again. This time both African American and White children attended school together. It was a victory for the Little Rock Nine and for African American students everywhere.

RUBY BRIDGES

Yet another challenge to segregation was made by a little girl. In early 1960, **Ruby Bridges** was one of six African American children in New Orleans who passed the test to decide if they could go to the all-White William Frantz Elementary School. In the end, only Bridges chose to attend, and US Marshals had to go with her to class every day to protect her from the crowds of angry Whites who didn't want their children at the same school as African Americans.



Bridges later said, "Driving up I could see the crowd, but living in New Orleans, I actually thought it was Mardi Gras. There was a large crowd of people outside of the school. They were throwing things and shouting, and that sort of goes on in New Orleans at Mardi Gras." Former United States Deputy Marshal Charles Burks later recalled, "She showed a lot of courage. She never cried. She just marched along like a little soldier, and we were all very, very proud of her."

As soon as Bridges entered the school, many White parents pulled their own children out. All the teachers except for one refused to teach while an African American child was enrolled. Only one person agreed to teach Ruby, and that was Barbara Henry from Boston, Massachusetts. For over a year Ruby was in a class all alone with just Henry as her teacher.

The Bridges family suffered for their decision to send her to William Frantz Elementary. Her father lost his job at the gas station where he worked. The grocery store the family went to would no longer let them shop there. Her grandparents, who were sharecrop farmers in Mississippi, were forced off of their land.

Ruby remembers that many others in the community, both African American and White, showed support. Some White families continued to send their children to Frantz. A neighbor gave her father a new job, and local people helped to take care of the kids, watched their house to keep it safe, and walked behind the federal marshals' car on the trips to school.

Bridges still lives in New Orleans with her husband and their four sons. She now leads the Ruby Bridges Foundation, which she started in 1999 to further "the values of tolerance, respect, and appreciation of all differences."



JAMES MEREDITH

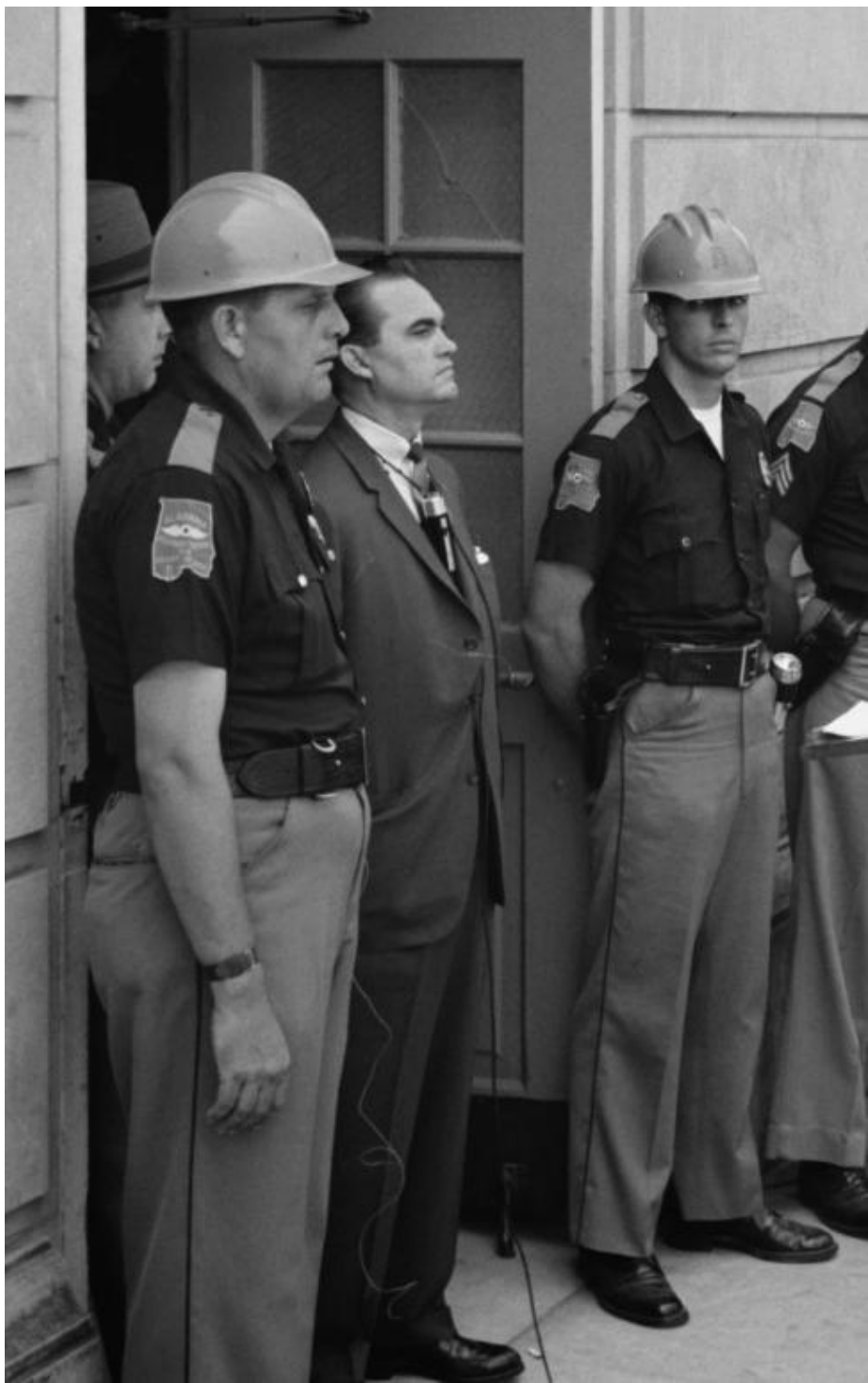
In 1961 **James Meredith** applied to the University of Mississippi. He said that it was his civil right to go to the university since it was a state school. Despite the Brown v. Board of Education decision and the fact that the university was supported by all the people who paid taxes, it still had not admitted a single African American student.

In his application, Meredith wrote, "Nobody handpicked me. I believed, and believe now, that I have a Divine Responsibility. I am familiar with the probable difficulties involved in such a move as I am undertaking and I am fully prepared to pursue it all the way to a degree from the University of Mississippi."

His application was turned down two times. With the help of Medgar Evers of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Meredith went to court. There, he argued that the school had turned him down only because he was an African American. He had a very successful record of military service and had shown that he was a good student. After many lower court cases, the Supreme Court said that their Brown decision was correct, and that Meredith had the right to be admitted to the University.

The Governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett, insisted that "no school will be integrated in Mississippi while I am your governor," and the state legislature passed a new law that kept any person from being admitted to the University "who has a crime of moral turpitude against him," or who had been convicted of any felony crime, or not given a pardon. The same day that it became law, Meredith was accused and found guilty of "false voter registration."

Clearly, Mississippi's White leaders were doing anything they could to keep Meredith from going to the university, so President John F. Kennedy decided to step in. With the help of his younger brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the president ordered



US Marshals and army soldiers to go with Meredith on his way to school. When the marshals arrived with Meredith, a mob of angry Whites came to the campus and a riot broke out. During the course of a day, over 100 US soldiers and marshals were hurt, and three people who were not soldiers or marshals were killed. The so-called **Battle of Oxford** ended the next day and Meredith was allowed into school.

Many of the University students made Meredith's life difficult. For example, they wouldn't sit near him and they made noise in his dorm at night to keep him from sleeping. But despite that, and always being isolated from other students, he graduated with a degree in political science.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

The same year Meredith graduated, three African American students became the first to attend the University of Alabama. Vivian Malone Jones, Dave McGlathery, and James Hood had all been turned down because they were African American. But they went to court and a judge ordered that they be admitted.

Alabama's Governor **George Wallace** had made a name for himself as a leader who believed in segregation, promising, "Segregation now, Segregation tomorrow, Segregation forever." When President Kennedy ordered the US Marshals to escort the students to school, Wallace made a show of standing in front of the door to keep them out. Kennedy sent in the army to force Wallace out of the way. When they arrived, Wallace gave a speech promoting his racist ideas, but he finally moved, and the students were able to enroll in the university. It is one of the most remembered standoffs in the fight to let African American students enter the schools and universities of the South.



CONCLUSION

The brave decision to let Jackie Robinson play on an all-White baseball team, and his courage in doing so, broke down old barriers in sports. President Truman ended hundreds of years of segregation in the military. The choices of individual students and their families to stand up to hate and prejudice and go to an all-White school was just as brave. Those students could have easily been killed on their way to class. Standing up for African Americans was not popular back then. Millions of White people in the South were proud to say that they were racist and wanted to keep Whites and African Americans apart. Because of that, the decisions by President Eisenhower and President Kennedy to support the students instead of the White leaders who ran those schools was brave as well.

Without these people, the later work of Dr. King, and the Civil Rights marches and protests that most Americans are familiar with, probably would not have happened. So, how did individuals advance the Civil Rights Movement?

SUMMARY

BIG IDEA: The Civil Rights Movement began slowly after WWII with the first big successes coming when the Supreme Court and then a few brave individuals ended school segregation.

African Americans have been working for their civil rights for generations. When slavery ended after the Civil War in 1865, three amendments to the Constitution were ratified that ended slavery, granted former slaves citizenship, and guaranteed voting rights to all men. However, a new system of laws was established in the South by White leaders that blocked these rights. African Americans lived as second-class citizens with no vote.

Segregation was a way of life in the South. African Americans could not eat in restaurants, go to movie theaters, or even drink from the same drinking fountains as Whites. Their children went to segregated schools and they rode in the back of city busses. This system was nicknamed Jim Crow.

In the early 1900s, African Americans had started working against this system, especially during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s.

Some progress was made in the 1940s after World War II. The first African Americans began playing for major league baseball teams. Also, President Truman desegregated the military and eliminated blacks-only units. However, when a young African American boy was murdered in the South, an all-White jury set his White killers free, and it was clear that segregation in the South would be hard to change.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were unconstitutional. This undid an older ruling. Despite their decision, most White leaders in the South refused to integrate

their schools.

In Little Rock, Arkansas, nine African American students tried to enroll in high school. When mobs of Whites were going to attack them, President Eisenhower ordered the national guard to escort them to school.

Ruby Bridges became the first African American girl to attend her school when she enrolled in kindergarten. Federal marshals had to escort her to school so she would not be hurt by White mobs.

James Meredith became the first African American to attend the University of Mississippi. President Kennedy ordered the National Guard to escort him to school. For three days there was rioting as Whites tried to keep him out.

At the University of Alabama, the governor tried to stand in the doorway and prevent African Americans from enrolling.

VOCABULARY



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Jackie Robinson: First African American baseball player to play for a major league team.

Emmitt Till: African American teenager from Chicago who was murdered by Whites in 1955 while visiting his family in Mississippi. His murder and open casket funeral brought national attention to the issue of Jim Crow segregation and racism in the South.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP): Organization dedicated to promoting African American rights through the justice system. It was established in 1909 as part of the Niagara Movement.

Thurgood Marshall: NAACP lawyer who argued the Brown v. Board of Education case and was later appointed to be the first African American justice on the Supreme Court.

Earl Warren: Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the 1950s and 1960s who pushed the Court to rule favorably on numerous cases related to civil rights.

Little Rock Nine: Group of African American students who integrated the main high school in Arkansas under the protection of the National Guard.

Ruby Bridges: African American girl who was the first to integrate Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans. She became the subject of Norman Rockwell's painting "The Problem We All Live With."

James Meredith: First African American student at the University of Mississippi.

George Wallace: Governor of Alabama during the 1960s who was a champion of segregation. His most famous line was "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."



COURT CASES

Plessy v. Ferguson: 1896 Supreme Court case in which the court declared that racially segregated schools and other public facilities were constitutional establishing the “separate but equal” doctrine. It was overturned in the Brown v. Board of Education case in 1954.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka: 1954 Supreme Court decision that ended segregated schools by overturning the Plessy v. Ferguson ruling.



EVENTS

Battle of Oxford: Rioting by White citizens and the efforts by US Marshals and army troops to keep the peace at the University of Mississippi when James Meredith became the first African American student to enroll there.



LAWS


Jim Crow: The nickname for a system of laws that enforced segregation. For example, African Americans had separate schools, rode in the backs of busses, could not drink from White drinking fountains, and could not eat in restaurants or stay in hotels, etc.

Executive Order 9981: Executive order issued by President Truman in 1948 ending racial segregation in the military.


Separate but Equal: Legal doctrine established by the Supreme Court in the Plessy v. Ferguson case that segregated schools and other public institutions were legal so long as they were equal.





 Read Online



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QUESTION 2:

HOW DID PEOPLE WORK TOGETHER TO ADVANCE THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

INTRODUCTION

Certainly, the most famous person who worked for civil rights is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and it would be foolish to say he was not important. However, it would be just as foolish to think that he could have done what he did without the help of thousands of people who left their homes, schools and jobs to march, ride, go to jail, and be attacked with him. Dr. King may have been in front of the people and spoken for them, but the people produced the energy that was needed to make change.

What brought these people together, and what did they do that made the difference? What role did their leaders play in helping them organize and keeping them together in the face of attacks and hatred?

If the last reading asked you to think about individuals, this part of history helps us think about the power of groups. How did people work together to advance the Civil Rights Movement?



THE MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

On a cold December evening in 1955, just a year after the Supreme Court had said that segregated schools were illegal, **Rosa Parks** started a revolution by sitting down. She was tired after spending the day working at a department store, and when she stepped onto the bus for the ride home, she sat in the fifth row, the first row of the colored section. In Montgomery, Alabama, when a bus became full, the seats closest to the front were given to White passengers. The bus driver told Parks and three other African Americans to move to the back of the bus. Three riders did what he said, but Parks did not.

Because Parks refused to move, she was arrested and had to pay \$10. The arrest of one woman for violating the city's bus seating rules would have probably been forgotten. But this time was different because Parks and leaders in Montgomery's African American community were fed up with the Jim Crow laws of the South and had planned for her to be arrested. They wanted to get people to fight for racial equality and needed a clear example of the unfairness of the Jim Crow system. The arrest of a hard-working woman for sitting where she wanted on the bus proved to be just what they needed to make African Americans upset enough to do something about the problem.

The leader of the protest was a little-known minister named **Martin Luther King, Jr.** King had been raised in an activist family. His father had been involved in Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa Movement in the 1920s and his mother was the daughter of one of Atlanta's most important African American ministers. As a student, King did very well. He easily moved through grade levels and went to Morehouse College at the age of 15. He went on to attend seminary, where he studied to be a Christian minister. While studying for his doctorate degree at Boston University, he met and married **Coretta Scott**. After



receiving his Ph.D. in 1955, King became minister at the Dexter Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

During his time studying, King read the works of Henry David Thoreau and Mohandas Gandhi of India. They said that the right way to make change was to use **civil disobedience** and **nonviolence**. They taught that illegal laws should be broken, and that fighting by peacefully protesting could show the world that on one side of an argument there was right, while on the other side there was evil and violence.

King and his friend **Ralph Abernathy** organized a non-violent boycott of the Montgomery city buses. The boycott was simple. The city's African Americans would not ride the buses until the bus company agreed to let them sit anywhere they wanted on the bus. Until that happened, the company would lose money as their passengers walked. Both sides thought the boycott would be short. King and the other leaders thought the company would quickly give up instead of losing money, and the White city leaders thought that no one could get all the city's African Americans to walk everywhere for more than a day or two.

The boycott's leaders had hoped for 50% of the city's African Americans to join the boycott. To their surprise, 99% of the city's African Americans refused to ride the buses. People walked to work or rode their bikes. Carpools were set up to help older people. The bus company lost a lot of money.

Montgomery leaders stopped at nothing to try to end the boycott. King and Abernathy were arrested. Four African American churches, as well as the homes of King and Abernathy, were bombed. Still, the boycott continued.

Finally, on November 23, 1956, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the boycott. Segregated bussing was declared unconstitutional or illegal. City officials agreed to obey the Court's decision. Martin



Luther King Jr. and his followers in Montgomery had proven that non-violent protest could work.

The **Montgomery Bus Boycott** led to similar events in the South and other cities. The boycott made Martin Luther King, Jr. famous all over the country and people looked to him to lead the **Civil Rights Movement**. With Ralph Abernathy, King started the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** to organize other non-violent protests against Jim Crow segregation.

THE SIT-IN MOVEMENT

On February 1, 1960, four African American students from the North Carolina Agricultural Technical College in Greensboro went to their local Woolworth's and sat at the lunch counter. The restaurant refused to serve them, which the students knew would happen since Woolworth's only served Whites. If African Americans wanted a meal, they had to order and take their food out from the back of the store. However, this time, instead of leaving, the students stayed and waited.

The people who took part in the Woolworth sit-in were determined. Their plan was simple: sit quietly and wait to be served. Often the students who joined a sit-in would be made fun of and threatened by local White customers. Sometimes Whites would throw food or ketchup at them. Angry onlookers tried to start fights. In the event of physical attack, the student would curl up into a ball on the floor and take the punishment. Any violence would go against the idea of the peaceful sit-in. When the local police came to arrest the protesters, another line of students would take the empty seats.

After six months of sit-ins, Woolworth's owners gave in and desegregated their lunch counters. As the students had guessed, they just did not want the negative publicity. The successful **Greensboro sit-in** was the start of students



participating in the civil rights movement, and, within two months, the sit-in movement had spread to 54 cities in nine states.

In the words of grassroots civil rights leader, Ella Baker, the students at Woolworth's wanted more than a hamburger, they wanted to be a part of the struggle for equality. She helped start the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)**.

The sit-ins inspired other forms of nonviolent protest where public places were segregated. Sleep-ins happened in motel lobbies, read-ins filled public libraries, wade-ins happened at public pools and beaches, and churches became the sites of pray-ins.

FREEDOM RIDES

Students also took part in the 1961 **Freedom Rides** organized by the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** and SNCC. In the 1960s, most people still traveled between cities by bus, and the Supreme Court had decided that segregation was illegal on interstate buses and waiting rooms in bus terminals. But in the South, White leaders were ignoring the Court's decision. The Freedom Rides were meant to get people to realize this so they would force the bus companies to integrate. Leaving Washington, DC, the riders headed south. Sometimes Whites rode in the back while African Americans sat in the front, and at other times riders of different races would share the same bench seat.

The Freedom Riders did not have too many problems until they reached South Carolina, where a mob attacked **John Lewis**, a freedom rider who later became chairman of SNCC and eventually a congressman. The danger increased as the riders continued through Georgia into Alabama, where one of the two buses was firebombed. The second group continued to



Birmingham, where the riders were attacked by the **Ku Klux Klan** as they got off the bus at the city bus station. The last Freedom Riders continued to Mississippi, where they were arrested when they tried to desegregate the waiting rooms in the Jackson bus terminal.

Even though the Freedom Riders had to deal with a lot of violence, they were successful in achieving their goal. They got the federal government's attention. In September of 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) stepped in and issued new rules. "White" and "colored" signs came down in the terminals. Racially segregated drinking fountains, toilets, and waiting rooms were now desegregated.

ALBANY

Because of their successes in Montgomery and the Freedom Rides, student leaders from SNCC and Dr. King and the SCLC got together to try to **desegregate the city of Albany**, Georgia. There were problems from the start. The students and the older leaders from SCLC did not always agree on strategy. Dr. King was jailed, as were hundreds of other protesters and progress was slow. The White police chief in Albany sent protesters to jails across the South so that his own would not become too full. It was hard to get the attention of newspapers and television reporters because the city leaders tried not to use violence against the protesters. Eventually, the protest organizers gave up.

Some thought the Albany Movement was a failure, but historian Howard Zinn, who was at the protests in Albany, disagreed with this idea. He wrote, "Social movements may have many defeats' — failing to achieve objectives in the short run — but in the course of the struggle the strength of the old order begins to break down, the minds of people begin to change; the protesters



are defeated for a short time but not crushed, and have been lifted, heartened, by their ability to fight back.” In fact, the Albany Movement did make a difference. Civil rights leaders used what they learned in Albany when planning later civil rights protests.

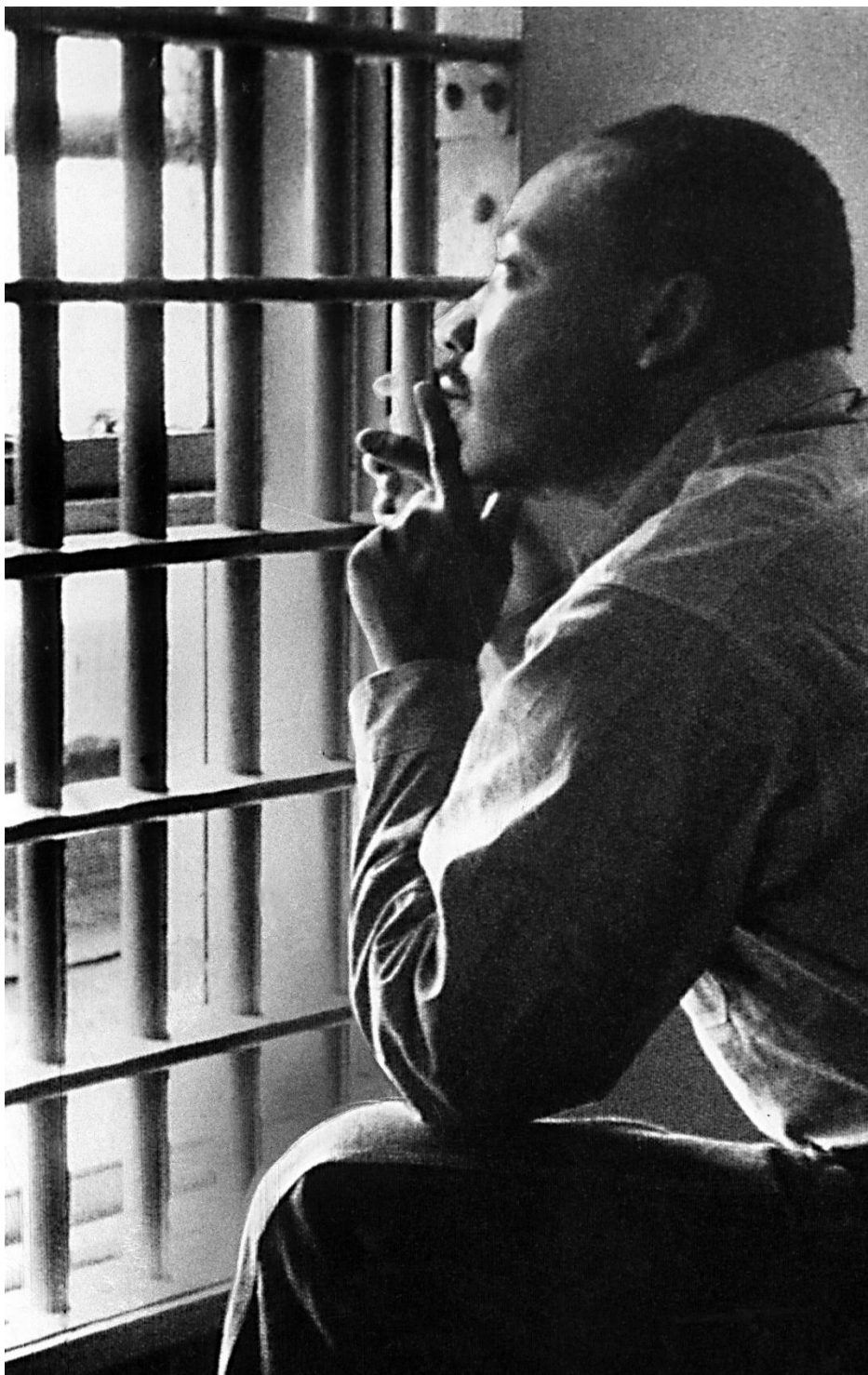
BIRMINGHAM

In 1963, SCLC **went to Birmingham**, the largest city in Alabama. Led by Dr. King, the protests started peacefully, but turned violent when the city’s White police force attacked the marchers. In the end, the city government was forced to change the city’s Jim Crow laws.

Unlike the earlier work in Albany, which focused on desegregation of the entire city, Dr. King and the civil rights leaders focused on more specific goals. They wanted to desegregate Birmingham’s downtown stores. They wanted an equal chance to be hired to work in downtown stores and for the city government. They wanted to be able to go to the city’s parks. And they wanted to be a part of a committee to help desegregate Birmingham’s public schools.

The city’s Public Safety Commissioner, **“Bull” Connor**, used police dogs and fire hoses on the young marchers. This was captured by television cameras and showed how violent the White city leaders were compared to the peaceful, nonviolent civil disobedience of the African American protestors.

While in jail in Birmingham, King wrote one of the most important letters of the Civil Rights Era. Because of the violent reactions of the White policemen of the city, some African American leaders had criticized King, telling him to stop taking direct action that led to Whites attacking marchers. Also, many Whites were openly angry that King had come to their city at all. He was an outsider, they said. In response, King wrote an **open letter**, answering each of these criticisms. His **“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”**

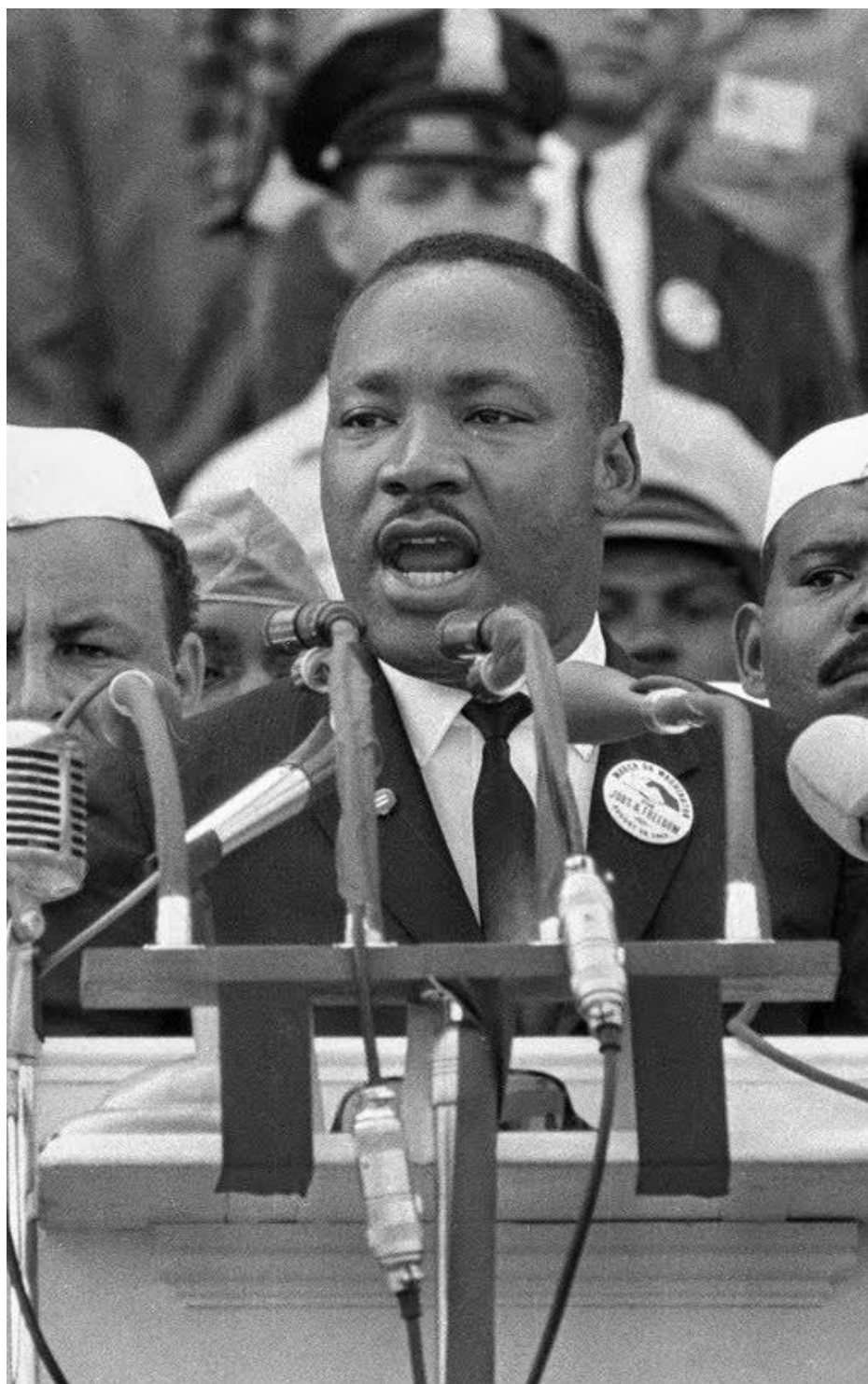


included one of King's most quoted lines: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." It was his job, he wrote, to help people when they asked him to lead their fight for justice, no matter where they were. And King asked if waiting would ever make discrimination go away. He argued that the violent response of Whites was not a reason to wait since waiting would not change the way people thought and felt about segregation.

After weeks of peaceful protest, the Birmingham campaign led to a good result. In June 1963, the Jim Crow laws Birmingham were repealed and the "Whites Only" signs were taken down. However, there was still some violence. Four months later, someone bombed the house of NAACP attorney Arthur Shores, injuring his wife. In September, the Ku Klux Klan **bombed the Birmingham 16th Street Baptist Church** on a Sunday morning and killed four young girls. Also that year, NAACP lawyer **Medgar Evers**, who had helped James Meredith become the first African American to enroll at the University of Mississippi, was shot and killed outside his home in Jackson, Mississippi. He had been organizing protests like those in Birmingham.

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

After the Birmingham campaign, the SCLC made plans for a large march in Washington, DC, to show Congress how many people wanted new civil rights laws to end segregation. This was the **March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom**, and about 200,000 to 300,000 people joined in. It was held in August 1963, on the 100th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the speakers talked to the crowd from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, with the statue of the great president behind them. The date was also the eighth anniversary of the murder of Emmett Till.



The highlight of the March was Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous **I Have a Dream** speech in which he talked about the dreams of the Civil Rights Movement, based on two great documents: The Old Testament of the Bible and the Declaration of Independence. Quoting from the Declaration, King reminded America that the Founding Fathers had written, "all men are created equal" on July 4, 1776, and that if that promise was going to be true for everyone, the country would have to do the hard work to end racism. The March marked a high point of the Civil Rights Movement and explained the goals of the movement for everyone in the country. However, it did not stop White terrorism or end White supremacy. The March on Washington did succeed in its main goal of getting the government to pass a new law. After the march, President John F. Kennedy gave his own civil rights speech and asked Congress to pass a new law to end Jim Crow segregation. After Kennedy was killed, President Lyndon Johnson worked to get Congress to pass the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**. This ended discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin and is still important today. It also ended racial segregation in schools, at the workplace, and in places that are open to the public like restaurants, stores and hotels.

FREEDOM SUMMER

With the passage of the Civil Rights Act, civil rights leaders turned their attention to the next important problem: voting. Elected leaders must do things to help voters or the voters will pick someone else in the next election. Jim Crow laws had long stopped African Americans from being able to vote. If African Americans could vote, Civil Rights leaders knew they would be able to bring about change without having to march in the streets because the elected leaders would want to win their votes.

In the past, Whites had used violence or threats to stop African Americans from voting or registering to vote in the South. For



example, African Americans who went to vote might lose their jobs or be attacked. In the summer of 1964, a group made up of the four major civil rights organizations, the NAACP, SCLC, SNCC, and CORE arranged for volunteers from all over America to come and register as many African Americans in Mississippi to vote as possible. They knew that if many people all registered to vote at once, the threats from groups like the KKK would lose their power. This event became known as **Freedom Summer**, and it was one of the most violent times of the Civil Rights Movement.

Many of Mississippi's White people did not like the outsiders who came to help register African Americans to vote. White people harassed the volunteers who came to help with Freedom Summer. Newspapers called them "unshaven and unwashed trash." State and city governments, police, White Citizens' Council, and Ku Klux Klan used arrests, arson, beatings, evictions, firing, murder, spying, and other forms of bullying and harassment to show their dislike for the project. Over the course of the ten-week project, 1,062 volunteers were arrested, 80 were attacked, 37 churches were bombed or burned, 30 homes or businesses were bombed or burned, and at least four civil rights workers were murdered.

On June 21, 1964, James Chaney, an African American as well as two Jewish White volunteers from New York City, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, were kidnapped and killed by members of the Ku Klux Klan. **Their murder**, and the search and discovery that the local White police had helped the Ku Klux Klan with the murders caused newspapers around the country to write about Freedom Summer. President Johnson sent the FBI to search for the bodies for the murdered volunteers. During the search, White-run Mississippi newspapers said that the disappearance was made up to draw attention, but the search of rivers and swamps turned up the bodies of eight other African Americans who had been murdered. Though Freedom Summer failed to register many voters, it did lead to an important result. It



helped end the Jim Crow system. Before Freedom Summer, big newspapers and television networks had not reported the attacks on African American voters in the Deep South and the dangers faced by civil rights workers. Sadly, it took the death of White volunteers from the North, to make the news media notice.

SELMA AND THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

After Freedom Summer, the leaders of the movement decided to fight for voting rights in Selma, Alabama. Nonviolent marchers demanded the right to vote, and the police responded by arresting protesters. Again, the jails filled up. Many of the marchers were students. Again, King and Abernathy were arrested.

After an Alabama state police officer shot and killed Jimmie Lee Jackson during a voting rights protest, close to 600 protesters tried to march from Selma to Montgomery, the state capital, to meet with Governor George Wallace. Led by Reverend Hosea Williams of the SCLC and John Lewis of the SNCC, the marchers were attacked by state police and sheriffs who used tear gas, clubs, and bullwhips when they tried to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge on a day remembered as **Bloody Sunday**.

Amelia Boynton, who had helped organize the march as well as marching in it, was beaten unconscious. A photograph of her lying on the road appeared on the front page of newspapers and news magazines around the world. In all, 17 marchers were hospitalized and 50 more were hurt by the police. People watching the march on television, and who saw how the police attacked the marchers, started to support the Selma Voting Rights Campaign. Finally, a federal judge ordered Alabama to allow the march to Montgomery. In the end, about 25,000 protesters marched to the steps of the Alabama capitol, where King spoke about the need for voting rights.



Public pressure grew, and within five months, Congress and President Lyndon Johnson passed a new law to end discrimination at the voting booth. The result of the Selma Movement was not that leaders in Alabama changed their laws, but that the federal government in Washington, DC passed the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**. It ended racial discrimination in voting. The law ended literacy tests, poll taxes and sent observers to watch elections and to make sure African Americans were allowed to register to vote.

CONCLUSION

Each January we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, but it was clearly the work of both the leaders and the thousands of followers who forced those in power to give African Americans their civil rights. No one could have planned the Selma Campaign, or the Montgomery Bus Boycott alone, and it would have been impossible for people to work in an organized way without talented, inspirational, and effective leadership. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, everything that was needed to make a movement seemed to come together. What happened? How did it all happen in a way that produced results? How did people work together to advance the Civil Rights Movement?

SUMMARY

BIG IDEA: The Civil Rights Movement had its greatest successes in the early 1960s with mass demonstrations, marches and when Congress passed laws that ended Jim Crow segregation and voting restrictions.

African Americans in the city of Montgomery, Alabama boycotted the city bus system for over a year to protest segregated seating on the busses. The boycott started when Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to move to the back of the bus. Martin Luther King, Jr. became famous as the leader of the boycott. Eventually they won and the city ended segregation on the busses.

Martin Luther King, Jr. believed in nonviolence and civil disobedience. He founded SCLC to organize other protests. Other groups such as SNCC and CORE also were created and used nonviolence and civil disobedience.

Students staged sit-ins at lunch counters to protest Jim Crow laws that prevented them from eating at restaurants with Whites.

Freedom riders rode busses through the South to protest segregated waiting rooms at bus stations. They were attacked in Alabama and the KKK bombed their bus. However, their protest convinced President Kennedy to call for a law to protect civil rights.

Martin Luther King, Jr. led a campaign in Albany, Georgia to desegregate the city. Large numbers of people marched and were arrested. Their effort failed, but they learned new strategies.

In Birmingham, Alabama, the White police chief ordered dogs and

fire hoses to be used against civil rights marchers. Images of police brutality convinced many Americans that segregation was wrong and that they should support the civil rights marchers.

In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a speech during a march in Washington, DC. He described a future for the United States when segregation and racism had been eliminated. He used the famous phrase "I have a dream." The march convinced Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act.

In 1964, activists tried to register many African Americans in Mississippi to vote. Their activities were called Freedom Summer, but they faced extreme violence from Whites. When the KKK killed White supporters of the Civil Rights Movement, President Johnson ordered the FBI to investigate.

In 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr. led a march from the city of Selma, Alabama to the capital of Montgomery to protest for voting rights. Police officers attacked the marchers. Finally, President Johnson ordered the National Guard to protect the marchers and the protest convinced Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act.

VOCABULARY



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Rosa Parks: African American activist in Montgomery, Alabama who was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a city bus. The event initiated the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Martin Luther King, Jr.: Leader of the African American Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. He was a minister from Montgomery, Alabama and was assassinated in 1968. He is most famously remembered for his “I Have a Dream” Speech.

Coretta Scott King: Civil rights activist and wife of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ralph Abernathy: Co-founder of the SCLC with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC): Organization formed by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy to organize civil rights demonstrations.

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC): Civil rights organization formed by African American students in 1960s. They organized sit-ins and joined in other protests.

Congress of Racial Equality (CORE): Civil rights organization that participated in the Freedom Rides and other protests.

John Lewis: Chairman of the SNCC. He helped organize the March on Washington, participated in the Bloody Sunday march and represented Georgia in the House of Representatives for more than 30 years.

Ku Klux Klan (KKK): Racist organization based in the South that terrorized African Americans after the Civil War and helped establish the system of Jim Crow. They were also anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic. The organization experienced a revival in the 1920s and again during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

“Bull” Connor: White police chief in Birmingham, Alabama who used fire hoses and police dogs to attack civil rights protesters.

Medgar Evers: African American civil rights lawyer who helped James Meredith enroll at the University of Mississippi and was later assassinated while organizing protests in the city of Jackson.



SPEECHES

I Have a Dream Speech: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s most famous speech given at the March on Washington in 1963 in which he laid out the moral aspirations of the Civil Rights Movement.



LAWS

Civil Rights Act of 1964: Law passed in 1964 that outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace, and by facilities that serve the public.

Voting Rights Act of 1965: Law passed in 1965 that eliminated restrictions on voting such as literacy tests and poll taxes.



KEY IDEAS

Nonviolence: The use of peaceful means, not force, to bring about political or social change.

Civil Disobedience: The breaking of laws to demonstrate that they are unjust.

Sit-In: A form of protest used to desegregate lunch counters in the South in the late-1950s. African American students would enter a restaurant and sit peacefully until they were served.

Open Letter: A letter that is released to the public for anyone to read.



DOCUMENTS

Letter from a Birmingham Jail: Famous letter written by Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Birmingham protests in which Dr. King responds to critics who accused him of being an outside agitator and believed he was trying to make too much change, too quickly.



EVENTS

Montgomery Bus Boycott: 1955 civil rights protest let initiated by the arrest of Rosa Parks in which African Americans refused to ride city busses until they were desegregated. It was successful and helped propel Dr. King to prominence as the leader of the Civil Rights Movement.

Civil Rights Movement: Overall term for the many protests throughout the 1950s and 1960s in which African Americans sought to advance their civil rights through protests, boycotts, sit-ins, marches, etc. Martin Luther King, Jr. was its generally accepted, although unofficial, leader.

Freedom Rides: 1961 civil rights demonstration against segregated waiting rooms at bus terminals. The protesters were attacked when they arrived in the Deep South.

Albany Campaign: Effort by SNCC and SCLC to desegregate the city of Albany, Georgia in 1961. They organized nonviolent protests and were arrested in large numbers, but ultimately failed to desegregate the city.

Birmingham Campaign: Effort by SCLC to desegregate the city of Birmingham, Alabama in 1963. They were met with fierce and violent resistance from the city's White leadership. Images of police dogs and fire hoses attacking protesters captured national attention and helped the effort succeed.

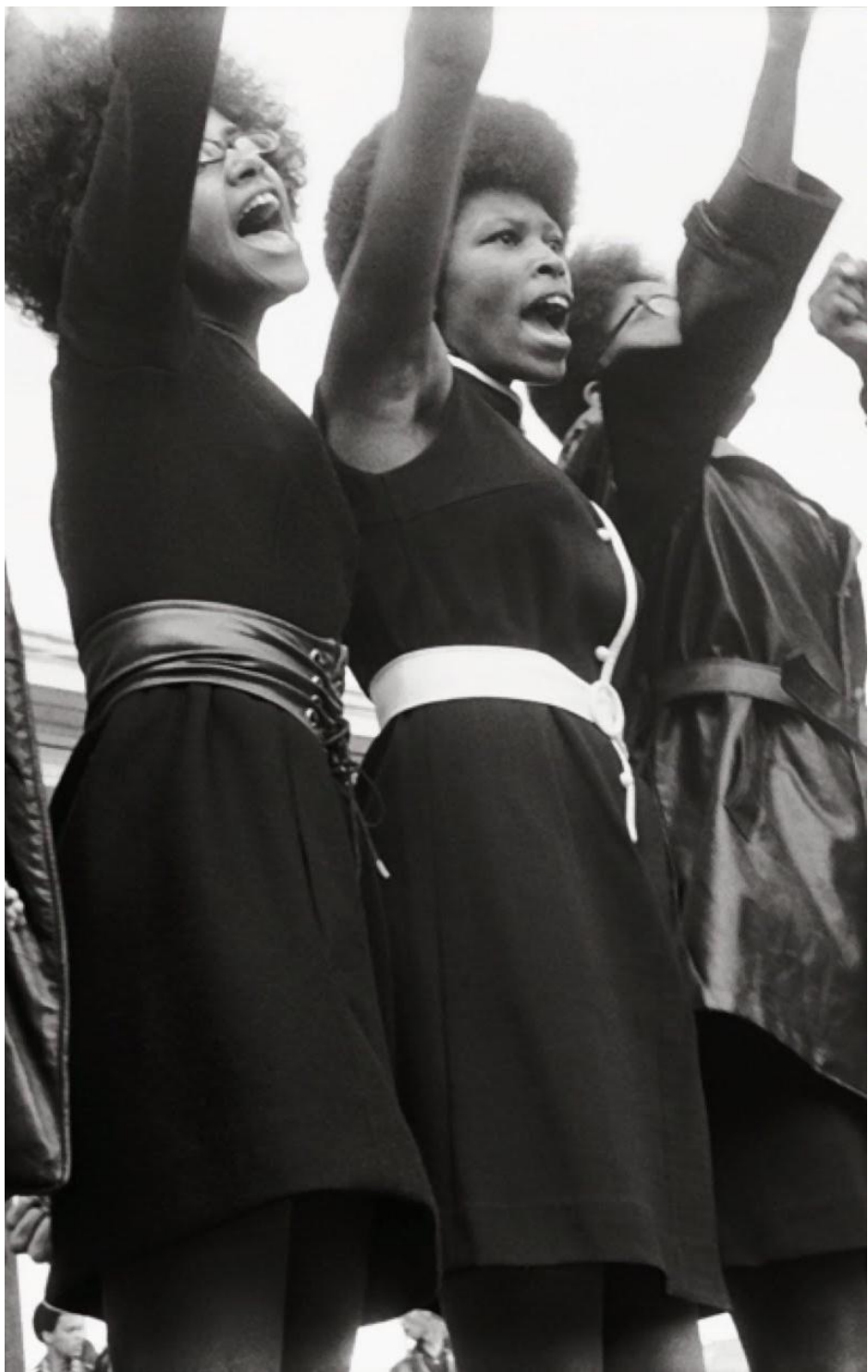
16th Street Baptist Church Bombing: Bombing of a Birmingham church by the KKK in which four African American girls were killed.

March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom: Major civil rights rally in Washington, DC in 1963 to promote the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Dr. King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech at the event.


Freedom Summer: Effort to register African Americans in Mississippi to vote during 1964. It was marked by violent resistance from the KKK.

Murder of Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner: Famous killing of civil rights workers during Freedom Summer in 1964. President Johnson ordered the FBI to investigate, and the event resulted in national awareness of the lawlessness of the KKK and injustice of the Jim Crow South's legal system.


Bloody Sunday: Attack in 1965 on civil rights marchers by White police officers as they tried to march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge between Selma and Montgomery, Alabama. They protesters were marching to demand voting rights and the attack pushed congress to pass the Voting Rights Act.





 Read Online



 Watch the Video

QUESTION 3:

WAS VIOLENCE AN INEVITABLE PART OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

INTRODUCTION

During the 1960s, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders worked for change using nonviolence. But change was slow, and as the years went by many African Americans got tired of waiting. Why was change taking so long?

Especially for young men in northern and western cities, the dream Dr. King spoke about in 1963 seemed like a promise that would never be kept. For them, leaders like Malcolm X who said that African Americans should look out for themselves and should be ready to use violence to protect their neighborhoods, seemed more in touch with their lives.

So, even though the nonviolent protests and marches gave people hope and did lead to some changes, violence began to increase. Was this always going to happen? Could the movement's leaders have done anything to stop this? Could White Americans have prevented this turn toward violence?

What do you think? Was violence always going to be part of the Civil Rights Movement?



URBAN RIOTS

On August 11, 1965, a riot broke out in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles. Police had stopped Marquette Frye, for possible drunk driving. A crowd gathered as Frye was asked to step out of his car. When the officer drew his gun, the people watching lost their temper.

Too many times the African Americans living in Watts had seen the White police officers abuse their friends and neighbors. They were tired of being turned down for jobs in Watts by White employers who lived in rich neighborhoods. They were upset about overcrowded old apartments. The Frye arrest was the match that lit their fire. What followed was five days of rioting, looting, and burning. The governor of California ordered the National Guard to bring order. When the smoke cleared, 34 people were killed and property damage was about \$40 million.

The riots in Watts in Los Angeles were not the only time frustration and anger among urban African American communities turned into violence. Sometimes called **The Long, Hot Summer**, the riots had actually started in 1964 when a White policeman in Harlem in New York City shot an African American teenager leading to a riot. In 1967, there were riots in Atlanta, Boston, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Tampa, Birmingham, Chicago, New York, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New Britain, and Rochester. The most serious riots of the summer took place in July, with the riot in Newark, New Jersey and the Twelfth Street riot in Detroit, Michigan.

President Johnson created the **Kerner Commission** to look at the causes behind the rioting. After a six-month study, the committee found that the riots started because African Americans were upset about the lack of jobs in their neighborhoods. They blamed federal and state governments for failing to pass laws or spend money to make sure there were good homes and apartments to



live in. They blamed the government for failing to provide good schools and pay for basic services. The report also criticized the news media. “The press has too long basked in a White world looking out of it, if at all, with White men’s eyes and White perspective.”

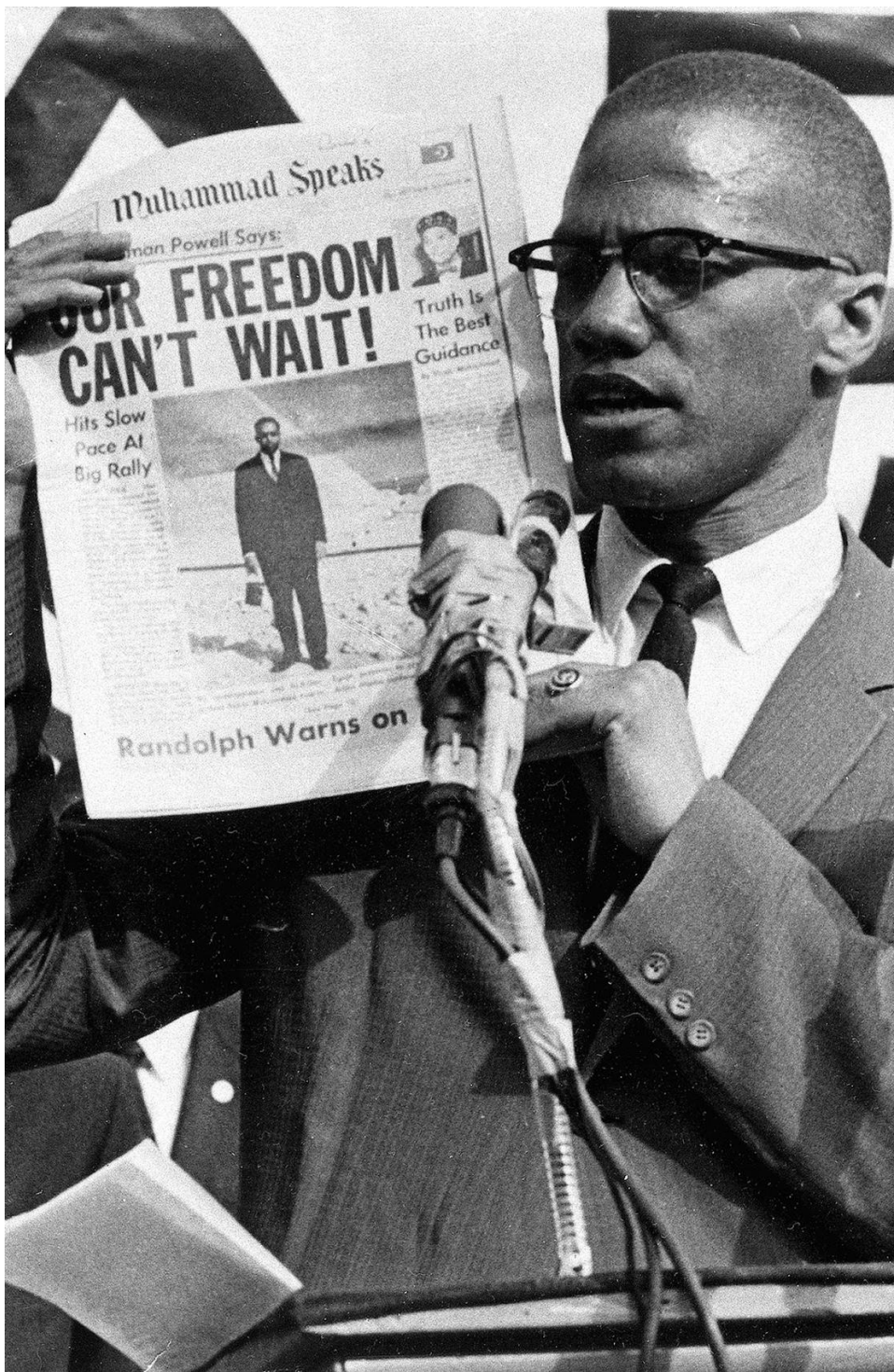
The report’s most famous passage warned, “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one White — separate and unequal.” The report said that White Americans had been creating the problem for many years by ignoring the needs of African American neighborhoods. For many years, they wrote, de facto segregation like redlining had led to segregated neighborhoods in northern and western cities and White political leaders had ignored the needs of these neighborhoods.

The members of the Kerner Commission wrote that the government needed to start new programs to provide basic services, to hire more African Americans as police officers and, most importantly, to invest billions of dollars in housing programs that would end racial segregation in the cities.

Sadly, few listened to the Kerner Commission’s ideas. Few White politicians were comfortable spending their reputations fighting to improve conditions in mostly African American inner cities, and in the 1960s and 1970s, only a few African Americans had been elected to public office.

MALCOLM X

When Malcolm Little was growing up in Lansing, Michigan, he learned not to trust White Americans. Ku Klux Klan terrorists burned his house, and his father was murdered. After this, his mother had to take care of Malcolm and his brothers and sisters, and she started to have mental health problems. Malcolm and his siblings were split up to live in foster care or with other families. When Malcolm was in middle school, he was elected class

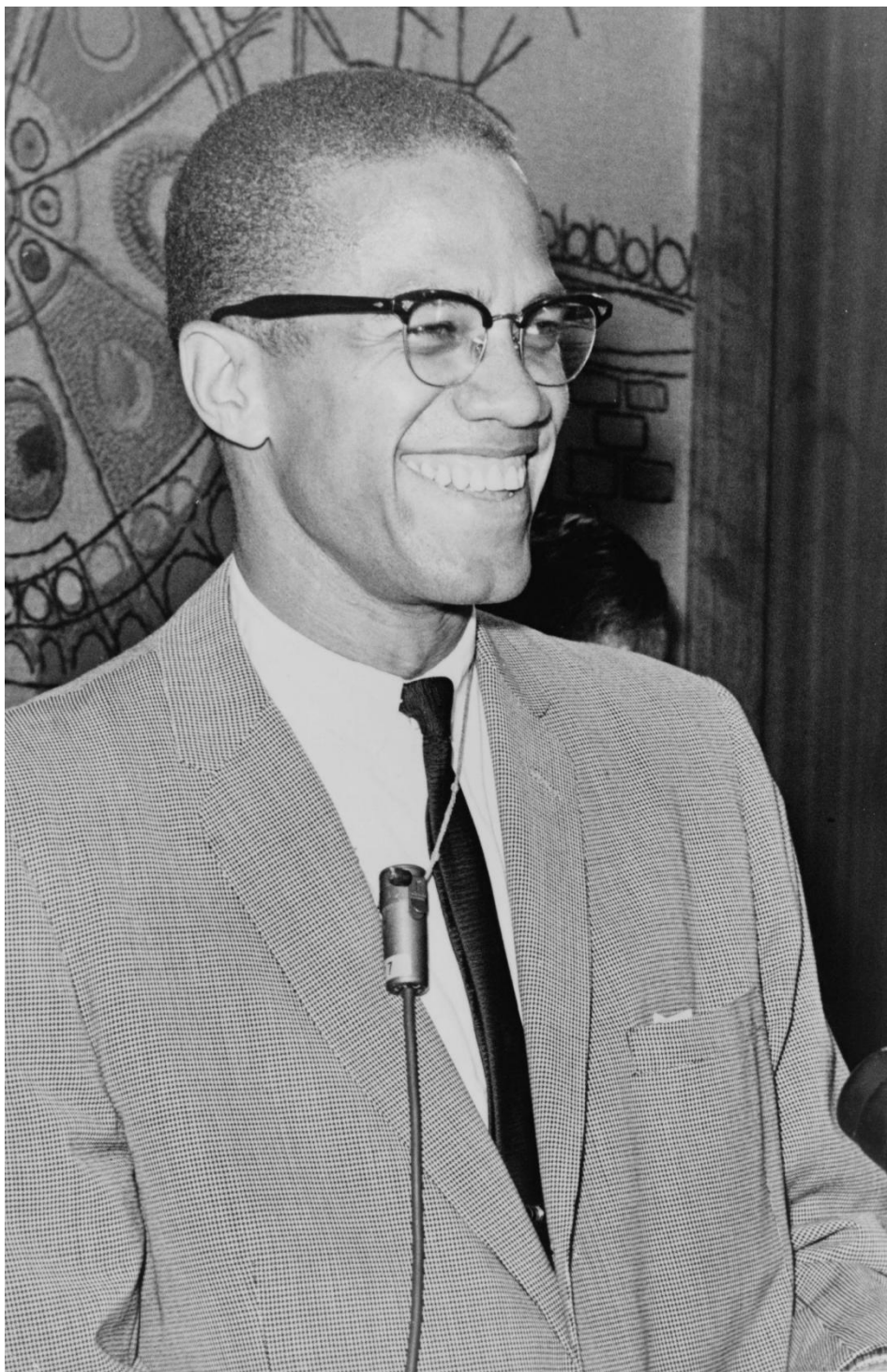


president and was one of the school's top students. But even still, his White teachers told him that he shouldn't try to become a lawyer, which was his dream, because he was African American. After moving to New York after school, he got involved in crime, was arrested and sent to jail.

The time he spent in prison changed Malcolm's life. He read and worked on his education. He learned the rich history of Black Americans that his White teachers had never taught. He learned how Whites had used Christianity to justify slavery and discrimination. Other inmates, including Elijah Muhammad, convinced Malcolm to become a Muslim and join the Nation of Islam.

When he was released from prison, he was a changed man, and he changed his name to **Malcolm X**. X for the true African family name that he never could know. Malcolm wanted to give up the name Little, which had been the name of the White family that once owned his ancestors as slaves.

Not only had Malcolm X given up his old name, but he had also given up Christianity. Islam, Malcolm's new faith, is one of the world's largest religions, but for many African Americans, Islam had added meaning. When Wallace Fard founded the **Nation of Islam** in the 1930s, he said that Christianity was a White man's faith. Although it had been founded by an Arab, Islam was practiced by many Africans and was a part of the African identity, said Fard. Like Muslims everywhere, members of the Nation of Islam read the Koran, believed in Allah as their God, and accepted Mohammed as their lead prophet. However, in America, Fard's followers mixed the religious ideas of Islam with black nationalism. Fard's followers became known as **Black Muslims**. When Fard mysteriously disappeared, **Elijah Muhammad** became the leader of the Nation of Islam.



The Nation of Islam attracted many followers, especially in prisons, where African Americans who had suffered in a White society looked for guidance. The Nation of Islam taught that its followers needed to follow a strict moral code, and that they should turn to other African Americans, and not Whites for help. Integration between Whites and Blacks was not a goal. Rather, the Nation of Islam wanted African Americans to set up their own schools, churches, and support networks. When Malcolm X joined the Nation of Islam, Elijah Muhammad saw his talents and made him a leader for the movement.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. shared his ideas about peaceful change and joining of Whites and Blacks together in society in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Malcolm X delivered a different message. He said Whites should not be trusted. He called on African Americans to be proud of their past and to set up strong communities without the help of White Americans. He believed strongly in the idea of self-defense. He said that African Americans should be able to have justice and equality and it did not matter how they got it, even if they used violence.

Malcolm X was smart, and he was an excellent speaker. His message was popular, especially for African Americans living in northern and western cities. However, in 1963, he split with the Nation of Islam after an argument with Elijah Muhammad. In 1964 he made the Hajj, a religious trip to Mecca, the city in the Middle East where Islam started.

After seeing Muslims from many parts of the world worshipping together, Malcolm started changing his ideas. He started to see the main problem as racism in American society, not just White people who society had taught to be racist. What Malcolm X, with all his talents, might have done with his new ideas is lost to history. As he led a meeting in Harlem, New York City on February 21, 1965, rival Black Muslims shot and killed him. Although his life



ended, the ideas he shared lived on in the Black Power Movement.

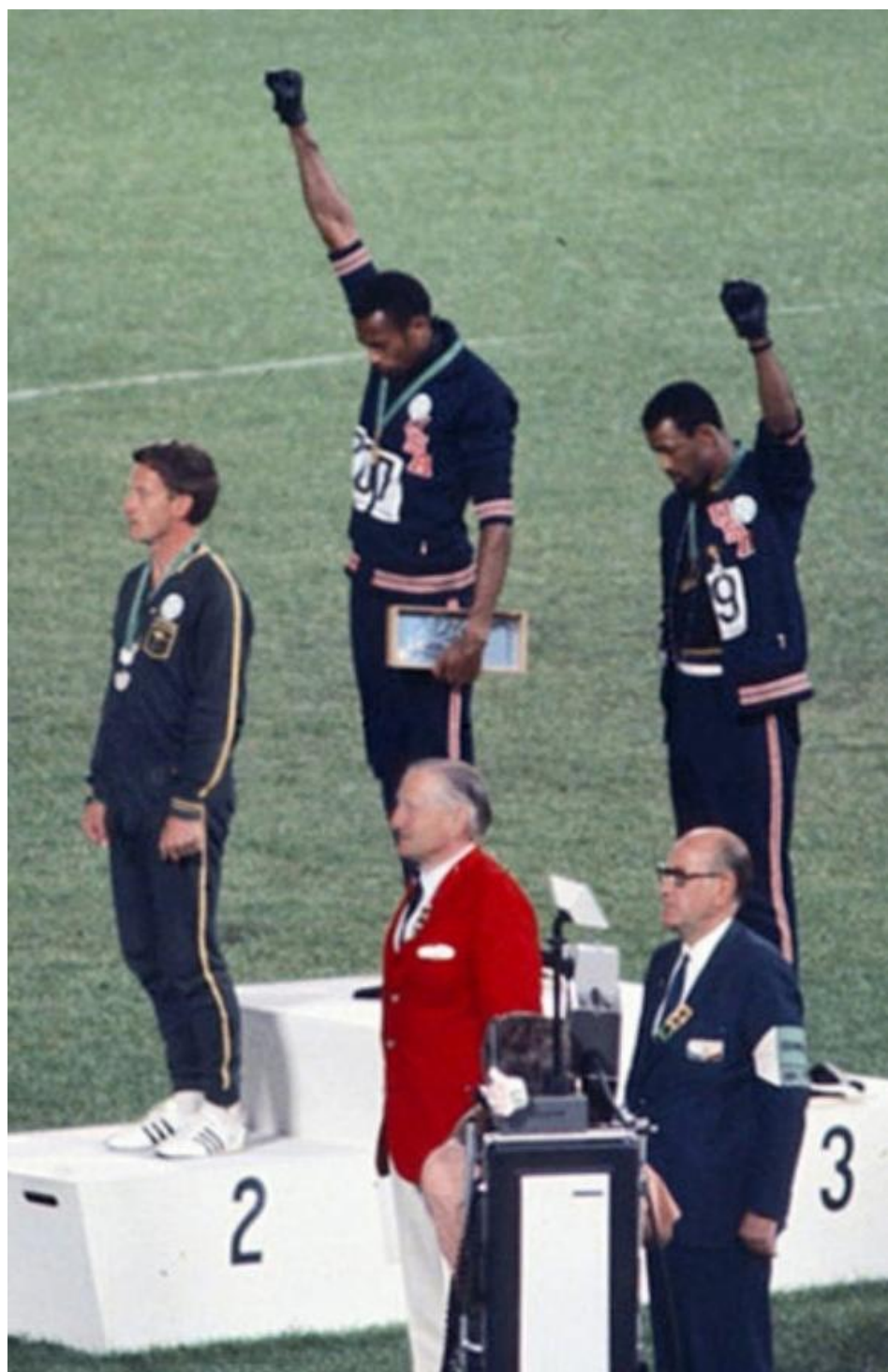
BLACK POWER

In 1966, Stokely Carmichael of the Student Non-Violence Coordinating Committee (SNCC) told a group of marchers, "What we need is **black power**." The people responded, "Black Power" and a new side of the Civil Rights Movement began.

Carmichael and some other young African American leaders liked the ideas of Malcolm X and did not think that Whites and African Americans needed to live together. Carmichael believed that African Americans needed most was pride and self-respect. Like Malcolm X, he wanted African American communities to get stronger without the help of Whites.

Chapters of SNCC and CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) stopped letting Whites join as Carmichael gave up the idea of nonviolence. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the NAACP spoke out against the idea of black power because they thought it would get in the way of their work to bring Whites and Blacks together. But black power was a powerful message in the streets of American cities. For many young African Americans, racism was everywhere. They were always afraid of White police officers, and they believed White America had created a society that kept African Americans poor. Dr. King's message of love, nonviolence, and integration into White society did not make sense to these young people.

African American students began to celebrate African American culture publicly. Young African American teenagers wore traditional African colors and clothes at their colleges. Soul singer James Brown had his audience saying, "**Say it loud, I'm black and I'm proud.**" Young African Americans yelled, "**Black Is Beautiful!** "



The Black Power movement turned popular fashion upside down. In the 1930s, skin lighteners and hair straighteners were used by popular African American women to try to look whiter. By the end of the 1960s, afro hair styles and dark skin were popular.

That same year, **Huey Newton** and **Bobby Seale** took Carmichael's idea a step further and formed the **Black Panther Party** for Self-Defense. Openly carrying guns, the Panthers decided to take control of their own neighborhoods to push back against the police. The Panthers believed in self-reliance. They served breakfast to children, organized food programs for families, opened schools, gave legal advice, gave out clothing, and started health clinics. As the Black Panthers became more popular and spread to more cities, White leaders began to worry. FBI director J. Edgar Hoover spied on the Panthers and White leaders called them terrorists because they carried guns.

For African Americans, the hypocrisy was thick. Whites proudly talked about their Second Amendment right to own guns and White members of the KKK in the South shot African Americans and got away with it. However, the moment Black Panthers carried guns and said that they would defend themselves, they were called terrorists.

For many Americans, the Black Power movement arrived in their living rooms while watching the **1968 Olympics**. During their medal ceremony in the Olympic Stadium in Mexico City, Tommie Smith and John Carlos each raised a fist in the Black Power salute during the playing of The Star-Spangled Banner. It was one of the most obvious political acts at the Olympic Games, and the first of many times African American athletes would use their moment on television to share their ideas about race in America.



THE DEATH OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

The Civil Rights Movement lost its greatest leader on the morning of April 4, 1968 when **Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot and killed** at his hotel in Memphis, Tennessee.

King had come to Memphis to support garbage workers who were on strike. The night before, he had talked about the threats he had heard both then and throughout his life. At the end of the speech, King talked about dying, but said that he was not afraid. He said, "Like anybody, I would like to live a long life; longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now." He went on to describe how he could imagine a future without racism or discrimination. Using an image from the Bible, he said, "**I've been to the mountaintop**... I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. So, I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

As news of King's murder spread, rioting broke out in cities across the country as people let out their anger. For most African Americans, the murder of Dr. King, a man of understanding and peace, was the worst kind of attack. In fact, with King's death much of the energy for the protests and marches of the Civil Rights Movement also died away. Although his followers continued to work for racial justice, the movement changed and the energy on the streets of the South, the courts, and the centers of political power began to disappear.

Dr. King is remembered as one of America's greatest people. Time magazine had named him "Man of the Year" in 1963. In 1964, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1977, after he had died, he was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award a civilian American can earn. In 1983, his birthday became



a national holiday, giving people a chance once each year to think about the ideas he spent his life working for.

NIXON'S SOUTHERN STRATEGY

The violent protests in cities that first started in the summer of 1965 led to a reaction from White Americans. Fearful White Americans began to think about “law and order” more than civil rights. In 1968, Republican **Richard Nixon** decided to run again for president and promised a return to law and order. Nixon had been vice president in the 1950s and had lost one of the closest elections in 1960 to John F. Kennedy. However, in 1968 he saw an opportunity to return to government.

Nixon spoke to northern, blue-collar workers, who he called the silent majority. These voters were afraid of the social changes taking place in the country. Some felt left behind, as the government seemed to be focused on the problems of African Americans. After years hearing about riots, they liked Nixon’s promise of law and order.

Nixon also used the **Southern Strategy** in 1968. Ever since the end of the Civil War, White southerners had voted for democrats. Lincoln had been a Republican. But Nixon’s team wanted to change this pattern. He said he was against segregation and did not want to stop African Americans from voting, he also said that southern states should be allowed to change at their own pace. He said that he didn’t want to use the army or federal government to force Whites and Blacks to integrate the way democrats Kennedy and Johnson had done. Because of Nixon’s Southern Strategy in **1968**, there was a major switch of the national parties as White Southerners switched to voting for Republicans and African Americans started to vote for Democrats. It has been that way ever since.



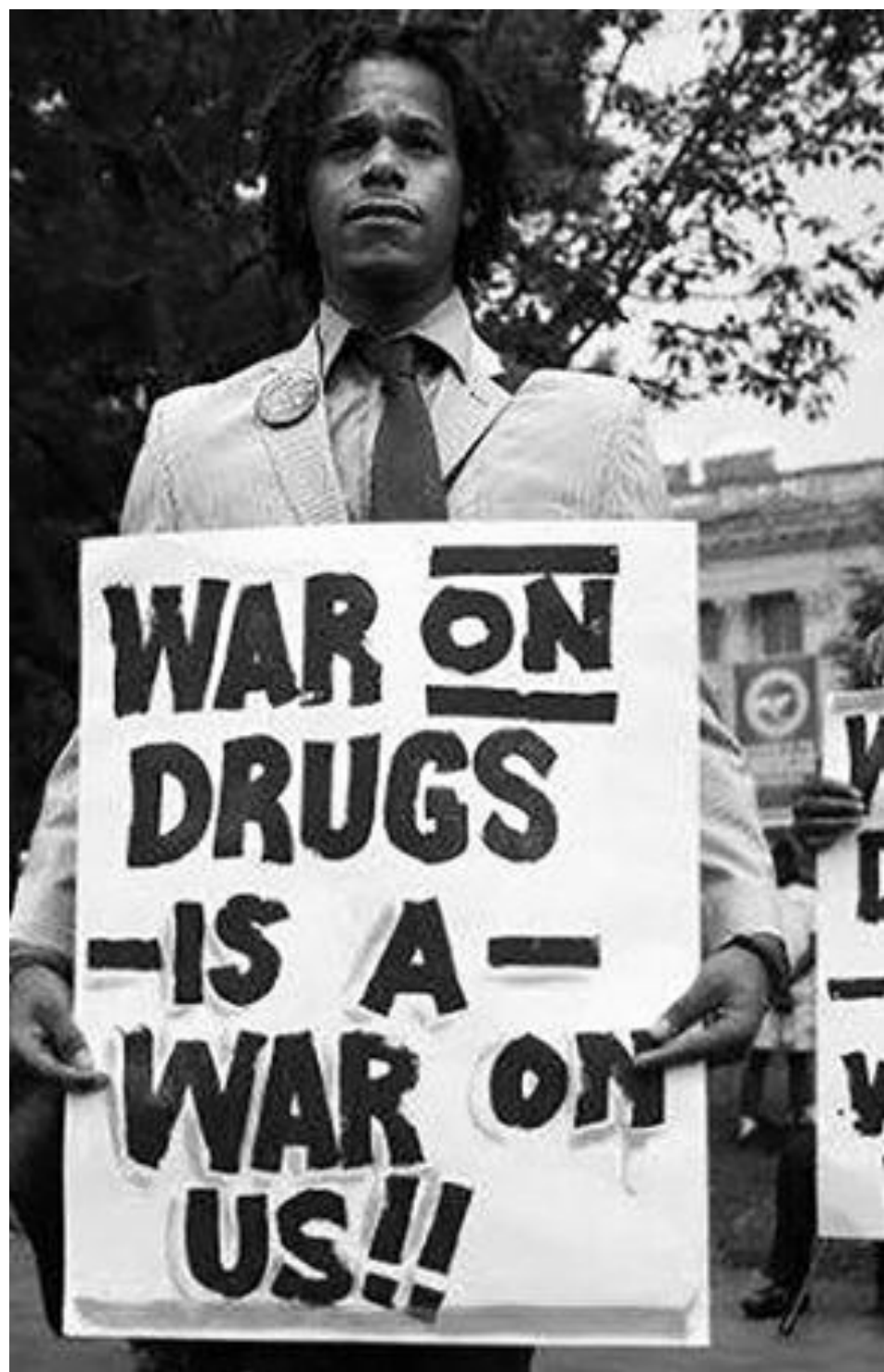
BUSSING AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Once Nixon became President, he did not focus on civil rights as much as Kennedy and Johnson. Support for civil rights was highest in the mid-1960s, when Martin Luther King, Jr. was leading marches, and the news was reporting about things in the South. With King gone, and Black Power on the rise, Nixon did not feel the same pressure to act like the presidents before him.

Since most students attended neighborhood schools, and Whites and African Americans mostly lived in separate neighborhoods, schools also were mostly divided. To create more integrated schools, some school leaders had started sending buses to bring students to schools far from where they lived. In this way, leaders could create integrated schools without forcing people to move. Nixon wanted a middle way between segregationists who wanted purely segregated schools and liberal Democrats who liked **bussing** and integration. He supported integration, but he was against the use of bussing to force integration.

Nixon wanted to keep the support of southern conservatives, many of whom had voted Republican for the first time in 1968. These southern voters did not like the Democratic Party because of Kennedy and Johnson's support for civil rights laws. Nixon, however, was not a Southerner, and still wanted to make the lives of African Americans better.

While civil rights progress slowed during his time as president, he did not try to stop the civil rights movement. In fact, Nixon created the first major federal **affirmative action** program. The program made it a rule that companies that did work for the government had to hire minority workers. This was a successful way to fight discrimination in the workplace. Although the program had been started many years before, Nixon made it much larger. Affirmative action was later in other areas of American life, including college admissions.



THE WAR ON DRUGS AND MASS INCARCERATION

As Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, crime in the United States was reaching an all-time high. While there were different reasons for the rise in crime, the most important reason had to do with the Baby Boom. Most criminals were males between 16 and 36, and there were a lot of people this age in the late 1970s because of the Baby Boomer generation. But most politicians saw just the rising number of crimes and blamed a new, cheap drug sold illegally on city streets as the main problem.

Crack cocaine, a smokable type of cocaine popular with poor addicts, was hitting the streets in the 1980s, scaring middle-class Americans. Reagan and other conservatives led a campaign to “get tough on crime” and promised the country a **war on drugs**. Programs like the “Just Say No” campaign led by First Lady Nancy Reagan gave people the idea that drug use and drug-related crime were because of people’s poor choices. “Just Say No” led people to ignore problems like addiction and poverty.

Nixon had first used the words “war on drugs” in 1971, but in the 1980s, the war on drugs took on a dark meaning, as politicians passed new laws to get tough on drug offenders and win votes. State after state switched to mandatory minimum sentences that were long and especially harsh for crimes related to the sale of drugs. The drug trade was carried out mostly by minorities in cities, so these new laws ended up affecting mostly minorities. This law-and-order movement peaked in the 1990s, when California introduced a **three-strikes law**. Named after the three strikes in baseball, the new law required life in prison for any third felony conviction, even nonviolent ones. As a result, prisons became crowded with drug offenders, and states went into debt to build more.

By 2000, the War on Drugs started to die down as the public lost interest in the problem and spending tax money on prisons made



politicians unpopular. But the damage was already done. Hundreds of thousands of people had been put in prison for drug offenses and the total number of prisoners in the country had grown 400%. The War on Drugs had been very hard on African Americans who were seven times more likely to be in prison than Whites. The effects on communities were terrible. Large numbers of young Black men were in prison and could not work, support families, or be parents.

RODNEY KING AND THE LA RIOTS

On the evening of March 3, 1991, **Rodney King** and two passengers were driving west on the freeway through Los Angeles. The California Highway Patrol tried to make a traffic stop. A high-speed chase began. When King finally stopped, the police officers arrested him and his passengers.

After King's two passengers were placed in the patrol car, five White Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officers surrounded King, who came out of the car last. They tased him, beat with their batons, and knocked him to the ground before handcuffing him. Unknown to the police and King, the whole thing was recorded on video from a nearby apartment.

The video of King being beaten by police became the focus of media attention and a call to action in Los Angeles and around the United States. The Los Angeles Times published 43 articles about it, The New York Times published 17 articles, and the Chicago Tribune published 11 articles. Eight stories appeared on ABC News, including a one-hour special on Primetime Live. In the days before the Internet and social media, this news story stayed popular mostly because there was a video, which in the days before cell phone cameras, almost never happened.

Before the release of the Rodney King video, minority leaders in Los Angeles had often complained about LAPD officers attacking

TIME

“Can we all
get along?”

Rodney King
May 1, 1992



African Americans and other minorities. It was a problem that had been noticed by the Kerner Commission 26 years before but had never been fixed. In 1991, however, the Rodney King tape was the first time there was video to prove that what they were saying was true.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney charged four police officers with assault and use of excessive force. The jury in the trial was composed of nine White members, one bi-racial man, one Hispanic, and one Asian American. On April 29, 1992, after seven days, the jury decided that all four police officers were not guilty of assault and acquitted three of the four of using excessive force. African Americans were angry. Finally, they thought, there was video evidence that proved what had happened and still, the courts had not provided justice.

Rioting began the day the decision was announced and got worse over the next two days. Most of the rioting was in South Central Los Angeles, where the population was mostly African American and Hispanic. A total of 63 people died during the riots and more than 2,000 people were hurt. About 3,600 fires were set, burning 1,100 buildings, and looting was widespread.

During the riots, Rodney King went on television and begged the police and rioters to stop. He said, "People, I just want to say, you know, **can we all just get along?** Can we get along? Can we stop making it, making it horrible for the older people and the kids? It's just not right. It's not right. It's not, it's not going to change anything. Well, we'll get our justice Please, we can get along here."

The LA Riots didn't just affect African Americans. Rioters also attacked stores owned by Koreans and other ethnic Asians that were mixed into the mostly African American neighborhoods where the riots happened. Many Korean Americans in Los Angeles call the riots Sa-I-Gu, meaning "four-two-nine" in Korean, in reference to April 29, 1992, the day the riots started. Over



2,300 mom-and-pop shops run by Korean Americans were damaged. There was also a lot of emotional damage from the riots.

In response, Korean American started to work together to improve their lives in Los Angeles. A week after the riots, in the largest Asian American protest ever held in a city, about 30,000 Korean Americans walked the streets of the Los Angeles Koreatown, calling for peace and speaking out against police violence. They wanted to protect their political rights and identity. New leaders, especially second-generation children started to work to help the Korean American community be more integrated into the city and politics.

Even though they tried, most of the local stores affected by the riots were never rebuilt. Store owners had a hard time getting loans. The memory of the riots led many bankers and businesspeople to be afraid of South Los Angeles.

THE OJ SIMPSON TRIAL

On June 12, 1994, Nicole Brown Simpson and her boyfriend Ron Goldman were found killed outside her condo in Los Angeles. Nicole Brown Simpson's ex-husband was the football star OJ Simpson and he was the most obvious suspect. Simpson did not turn himself in, and on June 17 police chased him in a white Ford Bronco. TV stations stopped showing the 1994 NBA Finals to show live footage of the chase taken from news helicopters. About a million Americans watched as OJ ran from the police. The chase and OJ's trial were among the most watched events in American history.

OJ's trial is sometimes called the **Trial of the Century** because it is so famous. It was shown on live cable television. Many people watched the months-long trial like a soap opera. When the trial ended after eleven months on October 3, 1995, 100 million



people watched or listened as the jury gave a verdict of not guilty for the two murders.

The verdict showed just how divided America still was after all the work of the Civil Rights Movement. According to a 2016 poll, 83% of White Americans and 57% of African Americans believe Simpson was guilty. Many people thought that it was wrong that OJ was found not guilty. For many White Americans, a murderer went free because of mistakes by the police and prosecutors and because Simpson had the money to hire the very best lawyers. However, for many African Americans, after years of the Jim Crow system of the South, and the disappointment of the Rodney King trial, the OJ Simpson verdict was a cause for celebration as one of their own had finally beaten the White man's criminal justice system.

CONCLUSION

The Kerner Commission pointed out the source of African American frustration, although anyone who lived in the ghettos of America's great cities could have explained the causes of the violence that marked the later part of the Civil Rights Movement. Lack of jobs, abuse by police, discrimination, and being ignored by the government were problems that Dr. King and other leaders tried to fix. However, for the young African American men and women of the late-1960s and in the years that followed, nonviolence was simply too slow or didn't work. And being human, sometimes anger turned into violence.

Should Americans in the early 1960s have seen that the Civil Rights Movement would take this turn? Should those who held up Dr. King as the model of a good protester have known that his influence would not reach to every corner of every city? Should we, as people, know ourselves better? What do you think? Was violence an inevitable part of the Civil Rights Movement?

SUMMARY

BIG IDEA: In the later 1960s African Americans grew impatient with the slow pace of change and riots and violent confrontations became more common. With the death of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 the Civil Rights Movement lost much of its energy. Events in the 1980s and 1990s showed just how much work was still left undone.

African Americans in northern and western cities had suffered for decades. Their neighborhoods were poor and they had few job opportunities. Although they did not live in the South, their children attended poor schools and they faced discrimination when looking for jobs. Frustration boiled over in the 1960s and there were riots in cities such as Detroit, Los Angeles, and Newark.

A government commission studied the riots to understand what caused them and to make recommendations to prevent future riots. In the end, however, elected leaders did not implement the commission's recommendations.

Malcolm X was a leader of the Nation of Islam, an organization of African American Muslims. He believed that African Americans and Whites could not live together and that the best way to improve their lives was to become self-reliant. After he went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and left the Nation of Islam, he began preaching a more inclusive message, but was killed by members of the Nation of Islam.

Some African Americans started to advocate Black Power in the later 1960s. They wanted African Americans to become self-reliant and to be proud. Some rejected nonviolence. One group,

the Black Panthers, carried guns and promised to defend their neighborhoods from White police officers. The Black Power movement scared many Whites.

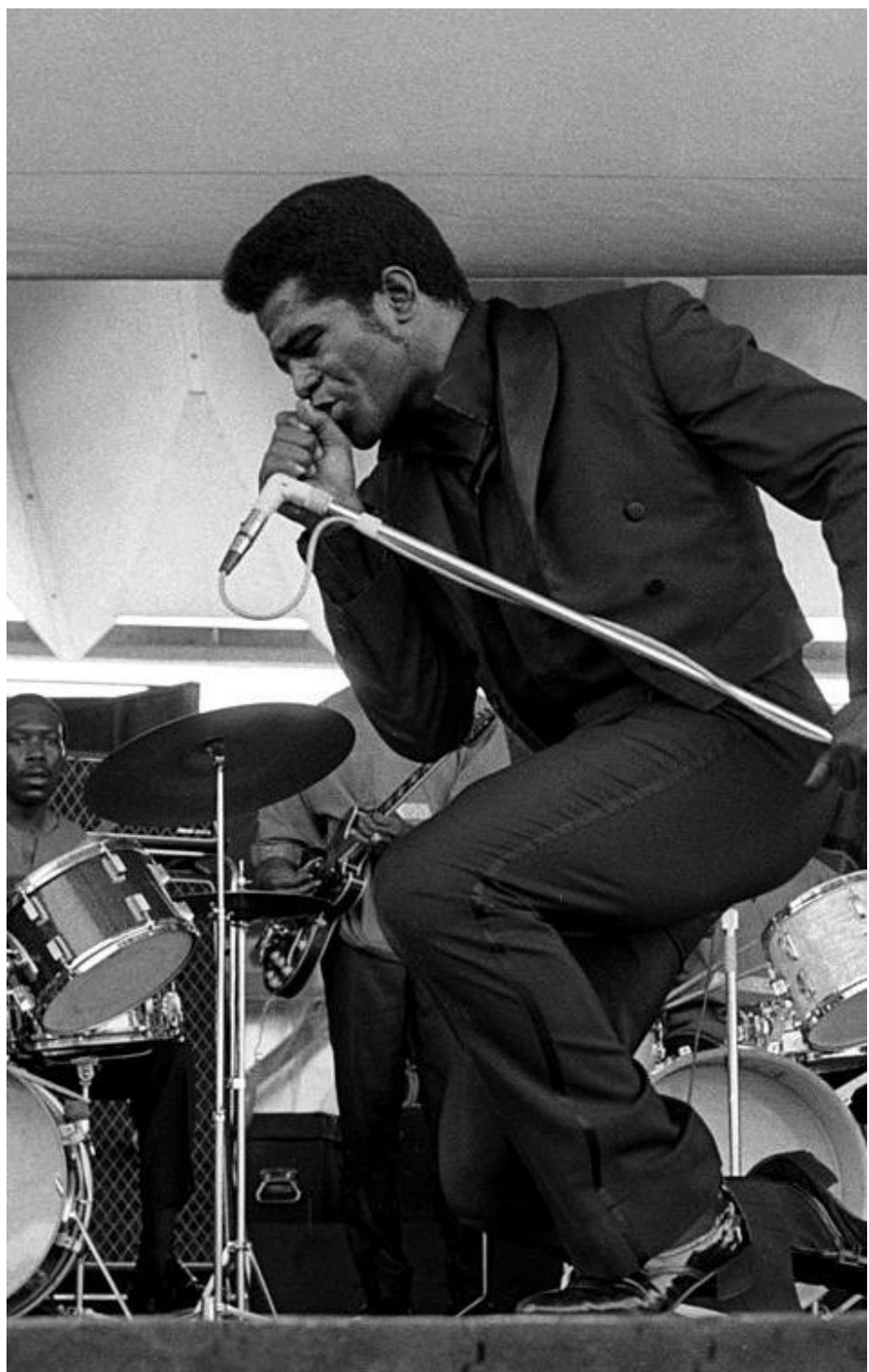
In 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed. Riots broke out in many cities as the news spread. King is remembered as one of America's greatest leaders.

President Richard Nixon won election in 1968 by promising Whites in the South that he would not use the power of the federal government to promote civil rights. This was different from Democrats Kennedy and Johnson who had promoted new civil rights laws and had used the courts and National Guard to enforce civil rights. Nixon was not totally opposed to civil rights. He opposed bussing but promoted affirmative action.

In the 1980s, drug use increased and politicians promised to crack down. They past strict laws and people arrested for selling and possessing drugs ended up in jail with long sentences. These laws affected African American neighborhoods much more so than Whites.

In 1991, Rodney King was beaten by Los Angeles police when he was arrested. The attack was captured on video, however, the police officers were acquitted when they were put on trial. When the verdict was announced, a long riot broke out.

In 1995, football star OJ Simpson was put on trial in Los Angeles for murder. He was also acquitted. The OJ Trial was a media obsession. Many African Americans celebrated the outcome even though they believed he was guilty since it seemed like the first time one of their own could win in the justice system that had been biased toward Whites for so long.



VOCABULARY



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Kerner Commission: Government commission appointed by President Johnson to study the urban riots of the late-1960. They found racism, lack of job opportunities, and poor education and social services as the root cause, but little was done to resolve the issues.

Malcolm X: Civil rights leader and spokesman for the Nation of Islam. He advocated African American self-reliance and was assassinated in 1965.

Nation of Islam: Organization of African American Muslims in the United States. It was led by Elijah Muhammad.

Black Muslims: Members of the Nation of Islam.

Elijah Muhammad: Leader of the Nation of Islam from 1934-1975. He and Malcolm X disagreed openly, leading to Malcolm X leaving the Nation of Islam.

Stokely Carmichael: Leader of SNCC who advocated for Black Power.

James Brown: African American soul singer and founder of funk music. His famous song "Say It Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud" was a hit during the Black Power era.

Huey Newton: Along with Bobby Seale, co-founder of the Black Panther Party.

Bobby Seale: Along with Huey Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party.

Black Panther Party: African American political organization founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in the late 1960s. They carried guns in an effort to protect African Americans from police and government violence.

Richard Nixon: Republican president elected in 1968. He gained the support of White Southerners by promising to reduce the involvement of the federal government in implementing civil rights laws in the South.

Rodney King: African American man beaten by Los Angeles police officers during an arrest in 1991. The beating was filmed and when the officers were found not guilty, the LA Riots ensued. He is famous for saying, "Can we all just get along?"

OJ Simpson: Heisman Trophy winning running back who was accused and found not guilty of murdering his ex-wife and her boyfriend in 1995. His trial showed how racially divided the nation remained after the Civil Rights Movement.



KEY IDEAS

Black is Beautiful: Phrase that captured the self-pride element of the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Black Power: Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s which emphasized African American self-reliance. It deemphasized the nonviolent protests led by Martin Luther King, Jr. and was embraced by more militant, younger activists such as members of the Black Panther Party.

Southern Strategy: President Nixon's strategy to gain the support of White southern voters by promising to limit the use of federal power to implement civil rights changes. Because of this, White Southerners have mostly supported Republicans, while African Americans have mostly supported Democrats.



EVENTS

The Long, Hot Summer: Nickname for a series of urban riots that took place in African American neighborhoods of major northern and western cities between 1964 and 1968. The cause of the riots was studied by the Kerner Commission.

Black Power Salute at the 1968 Olympics: Famous political statement made by Tommie Smith and John Carlos, two African American runners, who raised closed fists during the National Anthem after winning medals the 1968 Olympics.

Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Killing of Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. His death was followed by rioting in most major cities.

1968 Presidential Election: Watershed election in American history in which the coalitions that supported each party shifted. Due to Nixon's

Southern Strategy, White Southerners switched to the Republican Party and African Americans switched to the Democratic Party.

War on Drugs: Nickname for a collection of programs and laws passed in the 1980s to fight the spread of crime related to the use and sale of drugs. It especially was known for the passage of strict sentencing laws that resulted in overcrowding of jails.

1992 Los Angeles Riots: Urban riots that followed the not guilty verdict in the beating of Rodney King by officers of the LAPD.

Trial of the Century: The highly publicized trial of OJ Simpson in 1995 for the murder of his ex-wife and her boyfriend. He was found not guilty. The trial revealed how racially divided the nation remained.



SPEECHES

I've Been to the Mountaintop: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s last speech on April 3, 1968 in Memphis, Tennessee. In it he seemed to predict his own death.

Can we all just get along?: Famous question posed by Rodney King during the 1992 Los Angeles Riots.



LAWS & GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS


Bussing: Government policy of transporting students from one area of a town to another to attend school in order to create integrated school populations when neighborhoods were mostly segregated.

Affirmative Action: Government program in which certain numbers of minorities are hired in order to match the racial makeup of the surrounding population.

Three Strikes Laws: Nickname for state laws passed during the 1980s and 1990s that called for lifetime sentences for drug offenders convicted for their third time. It resulted in jails filling up with non-violent criminals and the social destruction of some neighborhoods.





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QUESTION 4:

WHAT MAKES A MOVEMENT SUCCESSFUL?

INTRODUCTION

The African American fight for equal rights was the most visible of the battles for civil rights that took place in the years after World War II. However, other minority groups also worked to win equal rights and respect. Mexican Americans, Native Americans, disabled Americans, and homosexual Americans all found ways to improve their lives.

Like the African American Civil Rights Movement in the South, some of these movements had great leaders, marches, new laws, and creative protests. Some were violent, while others used nonviolence. Some were successful, while others ended without meeting their goals.

In the end, we can look at these movements as a group and think about what made them similar and different, and also why some succeeded while others did not.

What do you think? What makes a movement successful?



THE MEXICAN AMERICAN FIGHT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Like the African American movement, the Mexican American civil rights movement first had victories in the courts. In 1947, in **Mendez v. Westminster**, a court in California ruled that segregating students of Hispanic descent was unconstitutional. In 1954, the same year as *Brown v. Board of Education*, Mexican Americans won in **Hernandez v. Texas**, when the Supreme Court said that the Fourteenth Amendment protection of equality applied to all groups in the United States, including Hispanics.

These court cases were important, but the most famous fight for equal rights by Mexican Americans was led by **Cesar Chavez** and **Dolores Huerta**. They organized migrant farmworkers in California. In 1962, Chavez and Huerta started the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). In 1965, Filipino grape pickers led by Filipino American **Larry Itliong** went on strike to try to get better working conditions for farmworkers in California's Central Valley. The Filipino Americans and Mexican Americans who picked everyone's food worked for almost no money, had no health care, and could not send their children to school. Working in the fields was hard, and in many places, there were no bathrooms and men, women and children had no choice but to relieve themselves in front of the other workers in the fields.

Chavez, Huerta and the Mexican American farmworkers voted to join the Filipino workers on strike and the two unions joined together and became the **United Farm Workers**. The farm workers under Chavez used many of the same ideas that the African Americans were using in the South. For example, they used marches to get people to notice the problems they faced. In 1966, Chavez led the farm workers on a march 300-miles from Delano, California to the state's capital of Sacramento.

STOP FORCED STERILIZATION

¡ALTO A ESTERILIZACIÓN FORZADA!



PUBLIC HEARINGS ON STERILIZATION -
FEB 12TH AT 10AM STATE BUILDING, 350 McALLISTER ST SF
RALLY AT NOON SAT FEB 12 CIVIC CENTER

FOR INFORMATION CALL 385-0771 - STERILIZATION ABUSE AND INFORMED CONSENT RIGHTS PROJECT - San Francisco State University

They wanted to make the growers who owned the farms and the state government treat them better. The farmworkers also got the support of the powerful AFL-CIO union.

However, the strike by the farmworkers was not working, so they changed their strategy. In the end, it was a boycott of California grapes that made the difference. Farmworkers convinced many Americans to stop buying grapes grown in California and grape sales went down year after year. The **Delano Grape Strike and Boycott** finally ended in 1970 when California growers agreed to work with the union. The farmworkers had been on strike for eight years. Most had lost everything but felt that it had been worth it to be treated fairly.

The mirror of the Black Power movement among Mexican Americans was the Chicano Movement. Chicano activists wanted more power for Mexican Americans in government. They wanted better schools where their culture and languages were respected, and they wanted land that had been taken from them at the end of the Mexican American War in 1848. One of the leaders, **Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales**, launched the Crusade for Justice in Denver in 1965, to provide jobs, legal services, and healthcare for Mexican Americans. They started **La Raza Unida**, a political party that gave young Hispanics an alternative to voting for White candidates from the two main political parties. Another leader, **Reies López Tijerina**, fought for years to get back lands that Hispanics lost to Whites. He also helped lead the Poor People’s March on Washington in 1967.

Some female Chicano activists worked on things that mattered to Chicana women. They formed the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional. Some doctors had been sterilizing Hispanic women to stop them from having children, but the consent forms were only in English, so the women didn’t know what they were signing. The Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional went to court and in the case **Madrigal v. Quilligan**, they won, so consent

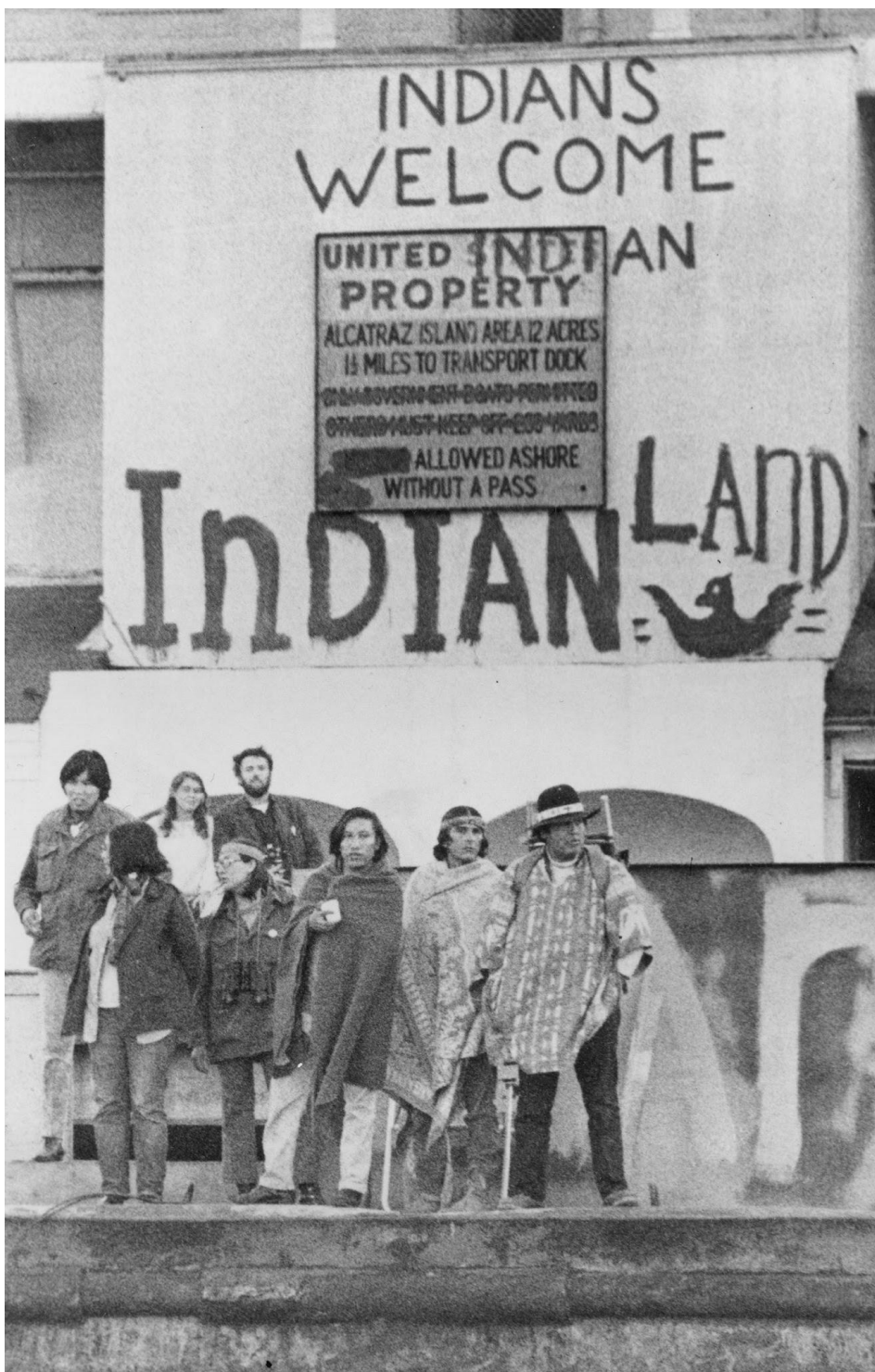


forms would be printed in both English and Spanish. Many government documents are now in both English and Spanish because of the work of these Chicano women.

The Chicano Movement was important in the growing sense of identity and pride. Part of that identity is based on the history of the American Southwest as the first home of the Mexican people. This idea was shared by Aberto Baltazar Urista Heredia who used the name **Aztlán** to talk about the lands of Northern Mexico that were taken by the United States at the end of the Mexican American War. Some people thought that the southwestern United States was the original home of the Aztec people. They felt that Mexican Americans moving into Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and California are returning home rather than immigrating. The idea of Aztlán became a symbol for Chicano activists who thought they had a legal right to the land.

Like the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, the Chicano Movement was pushed forward by the work of artists and writers. Chicano artists tried to show their cultural identity by mixing Mexican, American and indigenous cultures. For example, the Virgin of Guadalupe, an important figure in Mexican culture, is used by Chicano artists as a symbol of both hope in times of suffering, and strength, particularly when showing a regular woman or showing someone fighting back. One of the most celebrated holidays in Mexican culture is the Day of the Dead and the symbols of the holiday have been mixed into the Chicano Movement. Chicano art uses ideas from the famous Mexican painters such as Diego Rivera and José Orozco, and also uses ideas from pre-Columbian art, where history was shown on the walls of pyramids.

A favorite topic of Chicano artists is life in the barrios of Western cities. People in these Spanish-speaking neighborhoods have lived a hard life for a long time. Chicano artists have also used



graffiti as a way to share their political ideas, history, culture and religion.

THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT

The story of the first people of North America is long and sad. Because of diseases from Europe, Asia and Africa, about 90% of all Native Americans died. Over the years, Native Americans lost their land in many failed wars and broken treaties. In the late 1800s, the last groups of Native Americans were forced onto reservations as their old way of life was destroyed. The government wanted to force them to join White society, but their lives were hard because they were poor and because of bad schools, racism, and the fact that most Native Americans did not want to give up their culture.

In the 1930s, laws called the Indian New Deal were passed which stopped the effort to destroy Native culture. This was a good step in the right direction, but it did not fix the problems on the reservations. In 1970, the average Native American lived 46 years, but the average American lived for 69 years. The suicide rate was twice as high as the overall country, and the infant mortality rate was the highest in the country. Half of all Native Americans lived on reservations, where 50% had no jobs. For Native Americans who lived in cities, 20% were poor.

In 1968, a group of Indian activists, including **Dennis Banks** and **George Mitchell** met in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and formed the **American Indian Movement (AIM)**.

A year later, another group of Native American activists landed on **Alcatraz Island**, an old prison, in San Francisco Bay. They said they were going to build a Native American cultural center, including a history museum, a nature center, and a church. Supporters gave them food and other supplies and famous people visited Alcatraz to help get attention. More people came to



the island until, at one point, there were almost 400 people there. From the beginning, the federal government tried to get them to leave since the island belonged to the federal government. The Native Americans argued that the land should belong to them based on an old treaty from 1851. After 19 months, the government got the protesters to leave by cutting off all water and electricity. The occupation of Alcatraz is seen by many as a success because it got attention and people started talking about the problems Native Americans were having.

The next big demonstration came in 1972 when AIM members and other groups traveled from California to Washington, DC in a journey they called the **Trail of Broken Treaties**. There, they occupied the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The group gave a list of demands, which included better housing, education, and more jobs in Native communities, new treaties, the return of lands, and protections for Native religions and culture. Because of the Trail of Broken Treaties demonstration, Congress passed The **Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975**. This law changed how tribes get government money. Instead of the government deciding how to spend money at the reservations, it is now given to tribes as grants which they could then use as they thought was best. It was an important step in giving Native Americans control over their own lives.

The most famous thing AIM did was to **take control of the town of Wounded Knee**, South Dakota in February 1973. They took control of the small store and church and said the town was no longer part of the United States. Wounded Knee was important to AIM since the Army had killed hundreds of Native Americans there in 1890. Armed only with rifles, AIM members faced off with marshals, FBI agents and police with machine guns, helicopters, and army trucks. The police and FBI surrounded the town for 71 days. Two police officers were hurt, and two Native Americans were killed. Finally, older Native American leaders told the young



AIM members to give up so that more people would not get hurt. Both sides agreed to put down their guns and the AIM members began to leave the town.

Two AIM leaders, Dennis Banks and **Russell Means**, were arrested and put on trial, but charges were dropped when the judge decided that the government lawyers had broken rules about fairness during the trial.

By this time, President Nixon had already tried to fix some of the problems that AIM and other Native Americans had brought up. The government gave some land back to Native Americans, spent more money on healthcare, legal services, housing, schools and jobs. They had also hired more Native Americans to work for the government at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The most important result of the fight at Wounded Knee, however, was more pride among Native Americans and that more people learned about problems Native Americans were facing.

The relationship between Native Americans and the government continues to be hard. Many Native Americans still do not trust the government. One member of AIM, **Leonard Peltier** has become a symbol of this lack of trust. In 1977, he was sent to jail for the shooting of two FBI officers. But the trial was not normal, and some Native Americans want to “Free Leonard Peltier” because they think he did not do it.

Today, many Native Americans are working to stop sports teams from using their names because of how this leads people to stereotype Native Americans. Many schools and college teams have recently stopped using Native American names, logos, and mascots. Some tribes said it was ok for a team to use their name, such as the Seminole Tribe’s saying ok to the teams of Florida State University. Among professional teams, the NBA’s Golden State Warriors stopped using Native American logos in 1971. The



NFL's Washington Redskins and the MLB's Cleveland Indians both changed their names.

Laws give tribes the right to run casinos on reservation lands even in states where gambling is illegal. This is supposed to help tribes raise money. Although many Native American tribes have casinos, it is not clear if this is a good or bad thing. Some tribes feel that casinos destroy culture from the inside out and refuse to open casinos.

Sadly, even today Native Americans have a hard time with poverty. Crime, alcoholism, drug use, poor schools, and lack of money all make life on reservations hard. 1 in 3 Native women have suffered rape or attempted rape, more than twice the national rate, and in recent years, more and more teenage Native Americans have committed suicide because of the problems they face.

DISABILITY RIGHTS

In 1989, Congress and President H. W. Bush worked to write the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Although it may at first seem simple to write a law to help people with disabilities, in fact, the law has not always been popular. This is because it requires public places to be made accessible. Included under the law are churches, private schools, motels, and restaurants. For many of these places, it is very expensive to add wheelchair ramps, lifts in swimming pools, or elevators. So, many churches and business owners did not want the ADA to become a law.

When Congress was getting ready to vote on the ADA, disability rights activists with physical disabilities got together in front of the Capitol Building, put down their crutches, wheelchairs, and powerchairs and crawled and pulled their bodies up all 100 of the Capitol's front steps. As the activists did so, many of them yelled



“ADA Now”, and “Vote Now”. One girl, Jennifer Keelan, a second grader with cerebral palsy, became famous when news channels showed the video of her pulling herself up the steps. This direct action is reported to have gotten more senators to support the law. There might have been enough members of Congress to pass the ADA even without the **Capitol Crawl** of 1990, but it is seen by some disability activists as a final push that convinced Congress to vote “yes.”

Certainly, there were friends in Congress who wanted to pass the ADA. Senator Tom Harkin wrote the final version of the law. Harkin gave part of his speech about it in sign language, saying it was so his deaf brother could understand.

Since it became law, the ADA has led to some problems. Disabled rights activists have started many court cases to force businesses and other people to follow the ADA’s rules. For example, new buildings need to be built with ramps and wheelchair accessible bathrooms. Some court cases have been about company websites that are hard for blind people to use. The ADA is probably here to stay, but it is still a new law and most people still do not understand all the problems disabled Americans face.

GAY RIGHTS

For most of our country’s history, most Americans did not think homosexuality was ok and in most states, it was against the law. However, after World War II, gay communities got started in many cities, especially San Francisco and New York City, and a movement grew to get rid of these laws and change people’s minds.

The Red Scare of the early 1950s hurt many Americans, especially gays and lesbians. In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, which stopped homosexuals from working in the government or military. Some people were



worried that Soviet spies might be able to blackmail homosexuals and get them to give away government secrets. Only a few people ever lost their jobs because they were actually communist, but many lost their jobs because they were homosexual. Not only did they lose their jobs, but also they were forced out of the closet. In 2004, historian David Johnson wrote about this time in history and called it the **Lavender Scare**.

The start of the modern gay rights movement took place in New York City. Early in the morning of June 28, 1969, police raided a gay bar called the **Stonewall Inn**. This kind of raid was common, but this time things turned out differently. As the police got ready to arrest many of the customers, especially transsexuals and crossdressers who were often the targets of police harassment, a crowd began to gather. Angry about the way the police were acting, the crowd attacked. Beer bottles and bricks were thrown. The police tried to protect themselves inside the bar and waited for more police to arrive. The riot continued for several hours and started again the next night. Inspired by what happened at the Stonewall Inn, various gay rights groups united to protest discrimination, homophobia, and violence against gay people, and to work for gay pride.

With a call for homosexual men and women to come out, gay and lesbian communities started to get involved in politics. Gay rights activists tried to get the American Psychiatric Association (APA) to change its policy and say that homosexuality was not a mental illness. Because the APA had said being gay or lesbian was a mental illness, gay or lesbians often lost their jobs or custody of their children in court if they came out. By 1974, the APA had changed its official position.

More people began to change their mind about homosexuality being bad. In 1974 Kathy Kozachenko became the first openly lesbian woman elected to public office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In



1977, **Harvey Milk** became California's first openly gay elected man.

While the Stonewall Inn fight may have gotten the homosexual community to fight for equal treatment, it was a health crisis in the 1980s that really united them. In the early 1980s, doctors noticed something new. Young gay men in large cities were dying from a rare cancer. Because the disease was seen almost only in male homosexuals, it was first called Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID). But other people other than gay men, like drug users who shared needles, were dying from the disease also, so the disease was renamed **Autoimmune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)**. Since AIDS first appeared among gay men, most heterosexuals didn't worry about the growing health crisis in the gay community. They thought they were safe from it, even though this was not true. The government also did not worry about the disease, and leaders did not spend money to look for a cure.

Sadly, the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, was not well understood and AIDS killed many people in the gay community and all around the world before leaders finally decided to act. Even after it was clear that heterosexuals could get HIV, most people still thought it was a disease that was only part of the gay community. This was most often true for political and religious conservatives. In fact, the Religious Right thought it as a form of punishment from God against gay men.

With little help coming from the government, the gay community organized its own fight against AIDS. In 1982, New York City men organized a volunteer information hotline, gave advice and legal help, and raised money for people with HIV and AIDS. Larry Kramer, one of the original members, started the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) in 1983. ACT UP marched on Wall Street, outside the headquarters of the Food and Drug Administration, and inside the New York Stock Exchange to call attention to the crisis and get leaders to take action. One of the



images used by the group, a pink triangle with the words Silence=Death, got the attention of the news and became the symbol of the AIDS crisis.

One of the most powerful images of the gay rights movement and the fight against AIDS has been the **AIDS Memorial Quilt**. Cleve Jones came up with the idea for the quilt in 1985. Jones had people write the names of loved ones that were lost to AIDS on signs, and then they taped the signs to a wall. All the signs taped to the building looked like a giant quilt and Jones was inspired to expand the project. At that time, many people who died of AIDS did not have funerals. Sometimes family members were ashamed and also, many funeral homes and cemeteries would not deal with the bodies of people who had died from the disease. Lacking a memorial service or grave site, The Quilt became an opportunity for families to remember and celebrate their loved ones' lives. The first showing of The Quilt was in 1987 on the National Mall in Washington, DC. The Quilt has since been shown around the world.

By the 1990s, the gay rights movement was beginning to find support in government. In January 1993, Bill Clinton had just become president and he wanted to let homosexuals serve in the military again. But to get conservatives to agree, he proposed a new rule called **Don't Ask, Don't Tell**. Under this policy, people in the military would not be asked their sexual orientation and, if they were homosexual, they were not to talk about it or they would have to leave the military. This did not make anyone happy. Homosexuals wanted to serve in the military openly and conservatives wanted them out. Don't Ask, Don't Tell continued until 2011 when the military leaders, President Barack Obama and Congress all voted to end the policy and allow gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military.

President Bill Clinton also gave in to conservatives when he signed the **Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)**. DOMA said



marriage could only be between a man and woman and said that gay or lesbian couples could not get federal benefits. It also let states ignore same-sex marriages from other states. When Clinton signed the law, he was against same-sex marriage. Like many democratic leaders, he later changed his mind about same-sex marriage. On other topics Clinton was more open to change. He gave gay and lesbian men and women to important jobs in government and said that discrimination against people with AIDS was wrong.

As the 2000s began, state governments began to go against DOMA. Vermont became the first state to agree to **civil unions**, a legal agreement between two people that gave them the same rights as married couples. In this way, homosexual couples could own things together, adopt children, have next-of-kin access in cases of medical care, as well as get money in the case of separation. For many, this was seen as a step forward and other states followed Vermont's lead. Yet for many couples, a civil union would never mean the same as being married.

The first 20 years of the 2000s saw a big change in the way Americans thought about same-sex marriage. Famous people in the African American civil rights movement, including Coretta Scott King, John Lewis, Julian Bond, and Mildred Loving publicly said they supported same-sex marriage. In May 2011, a poll found that for the first time more than 50% of all Americans liked the idea of same-sex marriage. In June 2013, the Supreme Court said that DOMA was unconstitutional in the case of *United States v. Windsor*. Finally in June 2015, the Supreme Court said that gay and lesbian couples have the same right to get married as anyone else in the case of **Obergefell v. Hodges** and same-sex marriage became legal in all 50 states.

In the same way that people became more accepting of same-sex marriage, there was more acceptance of homosexuality in general. Gay and lesbian actors started playing positive roles on



television and movies. Athletes have come out and been accepted by teammates and fans. There are now Senators and Representatives in the Congress who are open about being homosexual. Most businesses also have rules to protect their gay and lesbian employees and customers from discrimination.

CONCLUSION

The movements that were inspired by and followed the African American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s were all different.

For the Mexican American farm workers of California, they did many of the same things as the African Americans. They marched and boycotted. They also had good leaders. However, they mostly worked to fix problems at their jobs and not bigger problems like voting rights or problems with the police.

The American Indian Movement was very different. They carried guns and took over land and buildings and started fights with the government. Sometimes these fights were solved, but sadly, not always. Similar to the African American community, the Native Americans found a sense of pride in their work, but only won in court or got the government to change.

Disabled Americans had a big victory with the Americans with Disabilities Act but have had to go to court many times to get businesses to follow the law.

Most recently, homosexual Americans went through a long fight to be treated equally. Through protests, marches, and the courts, and in the face of health crisis and prejudice, in just the past few years they have had important victories at the national level.



What things led to these changes, and what things held these movements back? What combination of leadership, timing, method, and public support worked?

What do you think? What makes a movement successful?

SUMMARY

BIG IDEA: Other groups were inspired by the African Civil Rights Movement and worked to improve their own standing in society. Hispanics, disabled and LGBTQ Americans all worked successfully to advance their rights. While these movements were mostly peaceful, the American Indian Movement included violent confrontations with government.

Hispanic Americans had won important victories in the court system in the 1940s and 1950s similar to victories won by African Americans. However, the biggest victories were because of the work of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers in California. They led a strike and boycott against grape growers and eventually won using nonviolence.

The Chicano Movement was a broader nationwide effort to promote Hispanic rights, identity and pride. It included organizing political groups, fighting for rights in the courts, and new music and art.

Native American activists formed AIM in 1968 to campaign for their rights. AIM occupied Alcatraz Island, led a march to Washington, DC where they occupied the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and also led a standoff at Wounded Knee. In each of these cases, their movement was more violent than the African American and Hispanic efforts. However, laws were passed that gave Native American tribes more control over their land and finances, and the movement led to an increased sense of pride.

Disability rights activists worked to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They succeeded in 1990 and now business and organizations have to ensure that their buildings and services

are accessible to people with disabilities. There is still some opposition to the law from groups who believe the requirements (such as installing elevators) are too expensive.

The gay rights movement started in 1968 when police raided a gay bar in New York City and the customers fought back. The movement gained momentum due to the AIDS crisis in the 1980s when the disease first spread among gay men.

During the Red Scare of the 1950s, a law was passed to prohibit homosexuals from working for the government. In the 1990s, President Clinton implemented “don’t ask, don’t tell” which allowed homosexual Americans to serve in the military so long as they did not reveal their sexual orientation. This policy did not end until 2011. Today homosexual Americans can serve openly in the military and government.

Also during the 1990s, Americans started to debate gay marriage. Some states began allowing gay marriage while others banned it. A federal law allowed states to ignore gay marriages passed in other states. Eventually in 2015, the Supreme Court ruled that gay marriage was a constitutional right.

VOCABULARY



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

- Cesar Chavez:** Leader of the United Farm Workers and champion of the rights of Hispanic farm workers
- Dolores Huerta:** Co-founder of the National Farm Workers Association and champion of the rights of Hispanic farm workers.
- Larry Itliong:** Leader of the Filipino farm workers in California who merged his union with the Hispanic farm workers union led by Cesar Chavez to form the United Farm Workers.
- United Farm Workers:** Union of Filipino and Hispanic farm workers in California led by Cesar Chavez.
- Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales:** Mexican American boxer, poet, and one of the first political activists of the Chicano Movement.
- La Raza Unida:** Chicano political organization that was founded in the early 1970s and became prominent throughout Texas and Southern California where its members ran for office in local elections.
- Reies López Tijerina:** Chicano political activist who helped Hispanics reclaim lands their families had lost when the United States took the Southwest from Mexico in the 1840s.
- Dennis Banks:** Native American activist and co-founder of the American Indian Movement (AIM) along with George Mitchell.
- George Mitchell:** Native American activist and co-founder of the American Indian Movement (AIM) along with Dennis Banks.
- American Indian Movement (AIM):** Native American political organization founded in 1968. They organized various protests including the occupation of Alcatraz Island, Trail of Broken Treaties and occupation of Wounded Knee.
- Russell Means:** American Indian Movement activist and one of the leaders of the Wounded Knee occupation. He went on to a career in Hollywood but continued to advocate for Native American rights.
- Leonard Peltier:** Native American activist and AIM member who was convicted in 1977 of the murder of two FBI agents. He has become a symbol of the conflict between Native Americans and the federal government.

Harvey Milk: First openly gay man elected to a public office in the United States. He served on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors until he was murdered.



KEY IDEAS

Aztlán: Mythical name for the lands of Northern Mexico that were annexed by the United States at the end of the Mexican-American War. The idea of Aztlán has been used to develop a sense of communal identity by Chicano activists.

Civil Union: A legal agreement between homosexual partners that served as a substitute for marriage in some states. It granted the same legal rights as marriage without the title.



COURT CASES

Mendez v. Westminster: 1947 court case that ended segregated schools for Hispanic students.

Hernandez v. Texas: 1954 Supreme Court case in which the court concluded that Fourteenth Amendment protections should be extended to all ethnic groups. Specifically in this case, Hernandez argued that he should not be tried by an all-White jury.

Madrigal v. Quilligan: Court case in which Spanish-speaking women had been sterilized after signing documents they could not read. The case resulted in forms being published in multiple languages.

Obergefell v. Hodges: 2015 Supreme Court case that declared gay marriage constitutional in all 50 states.



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

AIDS: Illness caused by HIV that was first detected in the 1980s and mistakenly believed to infect only gay men. It devastated the gay community and because the federal government was slow to respond to the growing crisis, sparked organization and activism in the gay community.



EVENTS

Delano Grape Strike and Boycott: Major strike and boycott during the 1960s in California by the United Farm Workers to win guarantees of humane treatment of workers and better pay.

Chicano Movement: Movement of Hispanic Americans beginning in the 1960s that focused on civil rights. It involved the development of political institutions and was marked by an increased sense of community pride as well as a flowering of artistic expression and literature.

Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Political occupation of an island in San Francisco by members of AIM in 1969-1970.

Trail of Broken Treaties: Pilgrimage from California to Washington, DC in 1972 organized by AIM and other Native American activists. Once in DC, they occupied the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and presented a list of demands to be read by President Nixon.

Occupation of Wounded Knee: Violent 71-day standoff between AIM activists and the federal government in 1973.

Capitol Crawl: Protest in 1990 in which disabled Americans crawled up the steps of the Capitol Building in Washington, DC without their wheelchairs, canes, etc. to push for passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Lavender Scare: Persecution of homosexual federal employees during the early 1950s that coincided with the hunt for communists.

Stonewall Inn Riots: Violent confrontation between New York City police and gay men at a bar in 1969. The event sparked the modern gay rights movement.

AIDS Memorial Quilt: Collection of sewn memorials to Americans who died from AIDS and AIDS-related illnesses. It was first displayed in full in Washington, DC on the National Mall.



LAWS & POLICIES

Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975: Law passed in 1975 that gave federal money to Native American tribes in the form of grants that the tribes could spend as they wished. It was an important step in allowing Native Americans great self-government.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): 1990 law that guaranteed protections to people with disabilities, including signage in Braille, wheelchair ramps, access lifts, handicapped parking spaces, etc.


Don't Ask, Don't Tell: Policy adopted by the Clinton Administration in the 1990s that allowed homosexual Americans to serve in the military so long as they didn't reveal their sexual orientation. In turn, the military would not actively try to find out their orientation. It ended the days of an open ban on service.

Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA): Law passed in 1996 that defined marriage as between one man and one woman. It prohibited the federal government from recognizing gay marriages and allowed states to ignore gay marriages issued in other states. It was overturned in 2015.




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