

Civil Rights Movement



The Civil Rights Movement prior to 1954

Pre-1900

- Opposition to slavery in colonial days
- Abolition movement and Civil War
- Legalized racism after Reconstruction
- 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* allowed the segregation of African Americans and whites.

1900-1930s

- Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois
- Founding of the NAACP in 1909
- African Americans suffered worse than others during the Great Depression.
- Roosevelt unwilling to push too hard for greater African American rights.

1940s

- A. Philip Randolph forced a federal ban against discrimination in defense work.
- 1940s founding of CORE
- President Truman desegregated the armed forces.
- Brooklyn Dodgers put an African American—Jackie Robinson—on its roster.

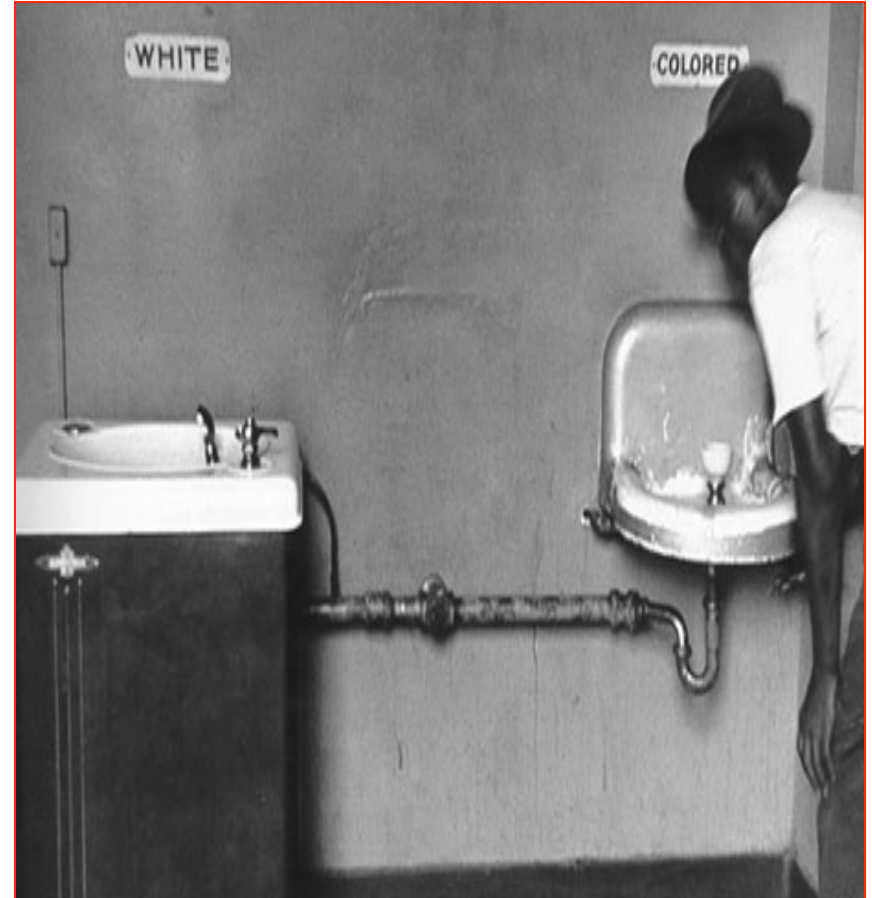


Why Did the Civil Rights Movement Take Off After 1945?

- Black equality became a significant political issue for the Democratic Party**
- WWII had been fought against racism abroad—hard to keep harboring it at home**
- Black veterans came home dedicated to change**
- Increasing number of White Americans condemned segregation**
- Discrimination in the United States hurt our propaganda battle against the Communists**

Jim Crow Era [1876-1954]

- During these years, African Americans worked tirelessly to fight for the rights of full citizenship guaranteed to them by the constitution but denied to them by the reality of everyday life.



Jim Crow



- Jump Jim Crow is a song and dance from 1828 that was done in blackface by white comedian Thomas Dartmouth (T.D.) Rice.
- The Jim Crow laws were state and local laws in the United States enacted between 1876 and 1965.
- They mandated *de jure* racial segregation in all public facilities.

Racial Caste System to the 1960s

- 1. Segregation**
- 2. Disfranchisement**
- 3. Lynching**



Savagery of Lynching?



According to the Tuskegee Institute
4,742 lynchings occurred between 1882-1968.

90% of the victims were **Southern**

73% of the victims were **black**

27% of the victims were **white**

During World War II: US Armed Forces were Segregated



- The US military was segregated according to race during World War II.
- Even blood supplies were segregated for black and white troops.

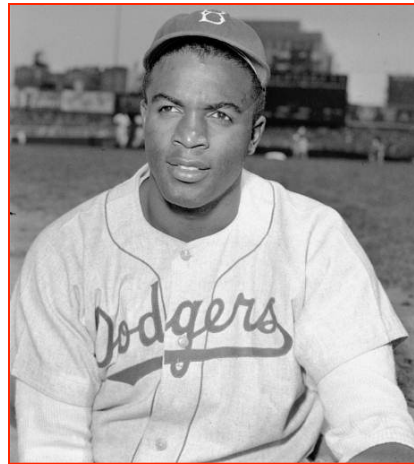
This is a cartoon by Oliver Harrington illustrating the hypocrisy of continuing segregation after World War II.



- "My Daddy said they didn't seem to mind servin' him on the Anzio beach head. . ."
Published in the Pittsburgh Courier,
April 2, 1960.

Post-World War II: Civil Rights

- 1947: Jackie Robinson broke the color line in major-league baseball
- 1948: President Harry S. Truman desegregated the armed services and convened a presidential commission on civil rights



Jackie Robinson (1947)



- **First African-American Baseball Player in the Major Leagues**
- **Career .311 hitter**
- **6 time All-Star**
- **1949 NL MVP**
- **Still owns the record for stealing home 19 times**

1948 Democratic Convention

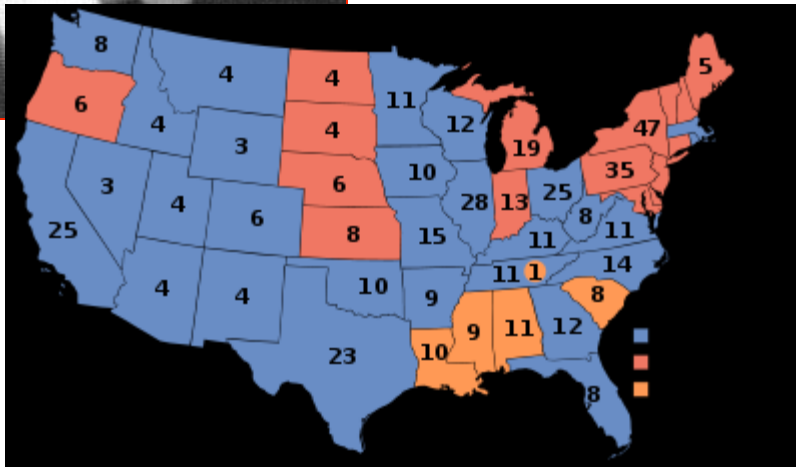
- **The Democrats were the first of the two major parties to support civil rights or citizenship rights for African Americans**
- **The Dixiecrats walked out of the convention.**



1948 Election: Strom Thurmond



- The Dixiecrats ran South Carolinian Democrat Strom Thurmond as an independent candidate for president.



He won a few Deep South states that supported racial segregation.

The Battle in the Courts



- *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)
-- “separate but equal”
facilities = legal
- *Smith v. Allwright* (1944)
- First attack = “separate is not equal”
- *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954)
-- Chief Justice Earl Warren

Citizen's Council/Till Lynching

- As segregationist White Citizens Councils spread across the South and as the lynching of Emmett Till, a black boy from Chicago visiting relatives in Mississippi, dominated the headlines, the prospects for civil rights seemed dim.



The Murder of Emmett Till (1955)



August, 1955, a fourteen year old boy visiting his cousin in Money, Mississippi had whistled at a white woman, Carolyn Bryant in a grocery store. Emmett Till was murdered, *lynched*, by two white men, J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, that evening.

Despite their arrests, the two men were eventually acquitted by an all white jury.

New developments in 2004 allowed for the trial to be reopened, based on new evidence that suggested more people may have been involved.

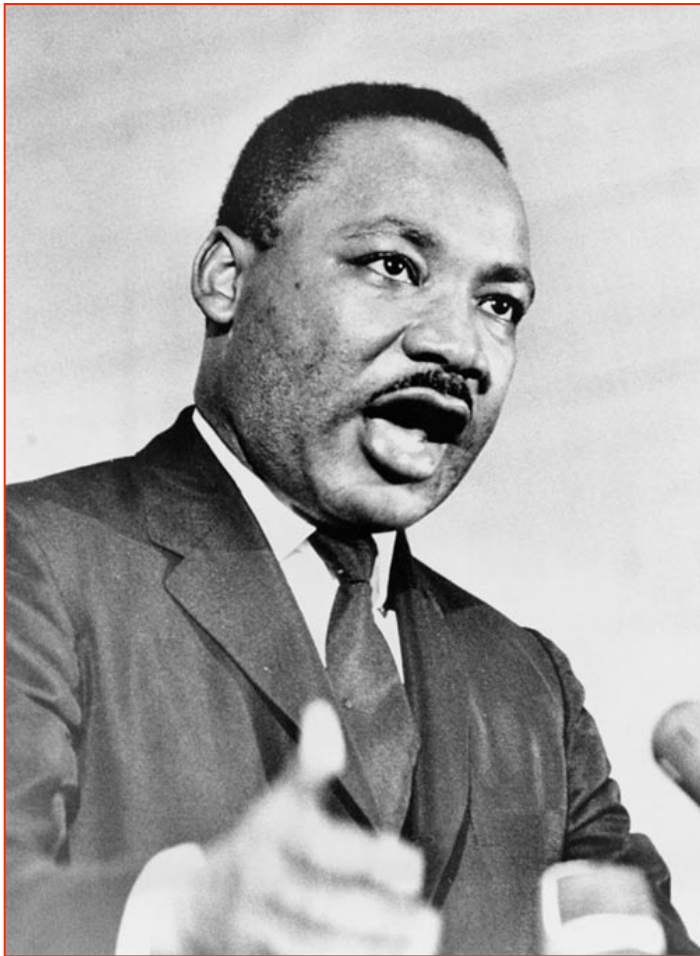


Montgomery Bus Boycott

- In Montgomery, Alabama, the arrest of Rosa Parks (1913–2005), a seamstress and NAACP activist who violated a local segregation ordinance by refusing to move to the back of a city bus, sparked a thirteen-month bus boycott that attracted national and international attention.



King and Montgomery



- **Led by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., who promoted a Gandhian strategy of nonviolent resistance, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) became the touchstone of the subsequent movement.**

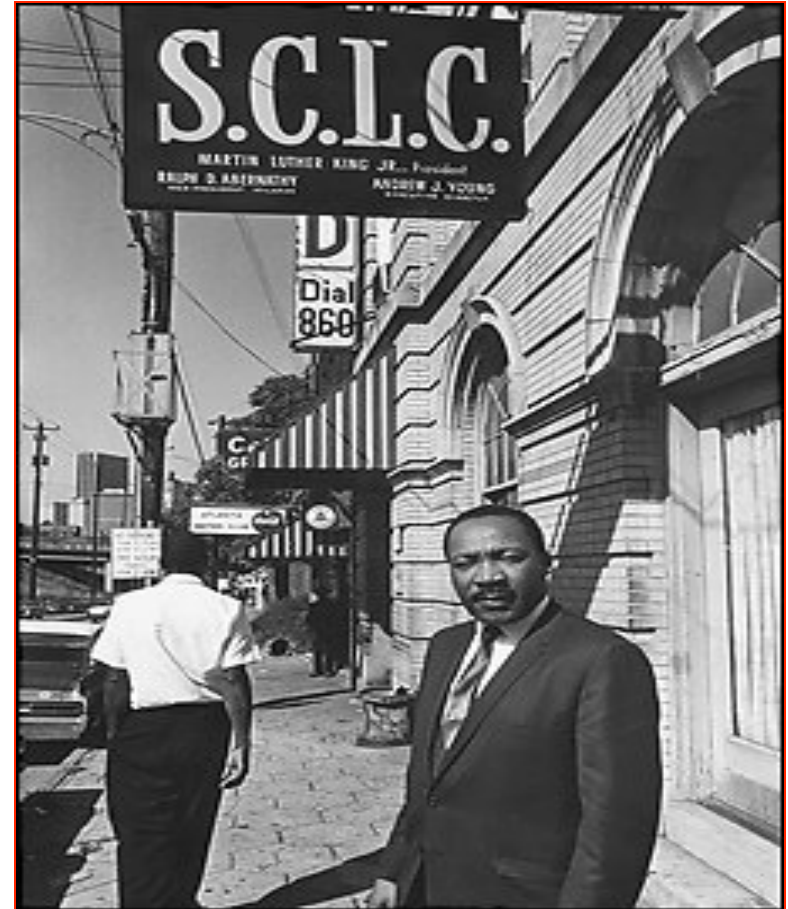
Analysis: Civil Rights

A testing ground for differing theories of racial adjustment and social change, Montgomery demonstrated:

- 1. the economic and moral vulnerability of segregation**
- 2. the inability of even moderate segregationists to compromise**
- 3. the resolute courage of many Southern blacks**
- 4. the political importance and emotional power of African-American religion**
- 5. the viability of nonviolent direct action.**

SCLC

- In 1957 the movement seemed to gain momentum, with King's formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)



IKE and Little Rock [1957]



1957 Civil Rights Act

- **1957: the passage of the first federal civil rights law since Reconstruction.**
- **It declared that the disenfranchisement of Black people was illegal; it authorized the Justice Department to seek injunctions against interference with the right to vote; and, it established the Commission on Civil Rights to investigate any interferences with the law.**



Non-Violent Protests during the Civil Rights Movement

- **Civil rights workers used several direct, nonviolent methods to confront discrimination and racism in the late 1950s and early 1960s.**
 - **Boycotts**
 - **Sit-ins**
 - **Freedom Rides**
- **Many of these non-violent tactics were based on those of Mohandas Gandhi—a leader in India’s struggle for independence from Great Britain.**
- **American civil rights leaders such as James Farmer of CORE, Martin Luther King Jr. of SCLC, and others shared Gandhi’s views.**
- **James Lawson, an African American minister, conducted workshops on nonviolent methods in Nashville and on college campuses.**

1960 Sit-In Movement



- February 1960, four black college students staged an impromptu sit-in at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina
- The movement soon spread to more than a hundred southern cities, prompting the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)



FREEDOM RIDES, 1961



- 1 May 4: Riders depart Washington, D.C.
 - 2 May 9: Riders assaulted at bus terminal in Rock Hill, SC
 - 3 May 14: Bus attacked in Anniston, AL and set on fire; some riders are beaten
 - 4 May 14: Riders severely beaten in Birmingham, AL
 - 5 May 17: Group of students set out from Nashville, TN to resume rides in Birmingham, AL
 - 6 May 20: Riders meet more violence in Montgomery, AL; federal marshals arrive and Martin Luther King, Jr. leads rally
 - 7 May 25: More than 300 riders are jailed in Jackson, MS
 - 8 New Orleans, LA, the original destination, is never reached
- ← Freedom Rides routes

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Movement** What was the planned route of the Freedom Rides? How far did the riders make it?
 - 2. Place** Which event seems most significant to you? Explain.
- See **Skills Handbook**, p. H19

1961 Freedom Rides

- In 1961, CORE sponsored a “freedom ride” testing a recent Supreme Court decision prohibiting segregation on interstate buses.
- When CORE suspended the action following white-supremacist violence in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama, SNCC activists completed the ride.



Results of Sit-ins and Freedom Rides

Sit-ins

- Succeeded at getting businesses to change their policies
- Marked a shift in the civil rights movement—showed young African Americans' growing impatience with the slow pace of change
- Leaders formed the **SNCC**.

Freedom Rides

- After the savage beatings in Birmingham, bus companies refused to sell the Freedom Riders tickets and CORE disbanded the Freedom Ride.

Federal Intervention

- SNCC continued the Freedom Rides.
- Attorney General Robert Kennedy sent federal marshals to Montgomery to protect the riders.
- The Interstate Commerce Commission finally forced the integration of bus and train stations.



The Albany Movement

The Movement

- SNCC began a sit-in in Albany's bus station.
- Over 500 demonstrators were arrested.
- The federal government was informed but took no action.
- Local leaders asked Martin Luther King Jr. to lead more demonstrations and to gain more coverage for the protests.
- He agreed and was also arrested.

The Results

- The police chief had studied King's tactics and made arrangements to counter-act the nonviolent protest.
- When the press arrived, King was released.
- City officials would only deal with local leaders until King left.
- Once King left, officials would not negotiate at all.
- The nine-month movement failed.



Albany Campaign [1962]



- The nonviolent direct action strategy suffered a serious setback in Albany, Georgia, in 1962.
- Not only did Albany officials confound SCLC's efforts to fill the jails with protesters, but persistent tensions between SCLC leaders and local activists eventually convinced King to abandon the campaign.



Integration of Higher Education in the South

- **By 1960 the NAACP began to attack segregation in colleges and universities.**
- **In 1961 a court order required the University of Georgia to admit two African American students.**
 - **Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes suffered but both graduated in 1963.**
- **In 1962 James Meredith tried to enroll at the University of Mississippi.**
 - **He arrived on campus with 500 federal marshals and was met by 2,500 violent protesters.**
 - **President Kennedy went on national television to announce that he was sending in troops.**
 - **The troops ended the protest but hundreds had been injured and two killed.**
 - **A small force of marshals remained to protect Meredith until he graduated in 1963.**
- **In 1963 the governor of Alabama physically blocked Vivian Malone and James Hood from enrolling at the University of Alabama.**

Meredith and Ole' Miss

- In 1962, James Meredith's attempt to desegregate the all-white University of Mississippi provoked such violence by white supremacists that some observers feared mass civil conflict in the Deep South.



No Blacks at Univ. of Alabama?

- In 1963, George Wallace defiantly blocked a door at the University of Alabama to protest the admission of two black students, Vivian Malone and James Hood.
- Wallace stepped aside when confronted by U.S. marshalls.
- Years later, Wallace apologized to Malone, praising her strength, grace and courage as she received the Lurleen B. Wallace Award of Courage from the George Wallace Family Foundation.



1963 Birmingham Campaign



- **The Birmingham campaign was a strategic movement organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to bring attention to the unequal treatment black Americans endured in Birmingham, Alabama.**

The Birmingham Campaign

The Campaign

- Martin Luther King raised money to fight Birmingham's segregation laws.
- Volunteers began with sit-ins and marches and were quickly arrested.
- King hoped this would motivate more people to join the protests.
- White clergy attacked King's actions in a newspaper ad.
- King wrote his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."
- Fewer African Americans were willing to join and risk their jobs.

The Results

- A SCLC leader convinced King to use children for his protests.
- More than 900 children between ages six and eighteen were arrested.
- Police Chief Eugene "Bull" Connor used police and fire fighters to break up a group of about 2,500 student protesters.
- The violence of Connor's methods was all over the television news.
- Federal negotiators got the city officials to agree to many of King's demands.

1963 March on Washington

- **The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was a large political rally that took place in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech advocating racial harmony at the Lincoln Memorial during the march.**



The death of four black children in a Birmingham church bombing

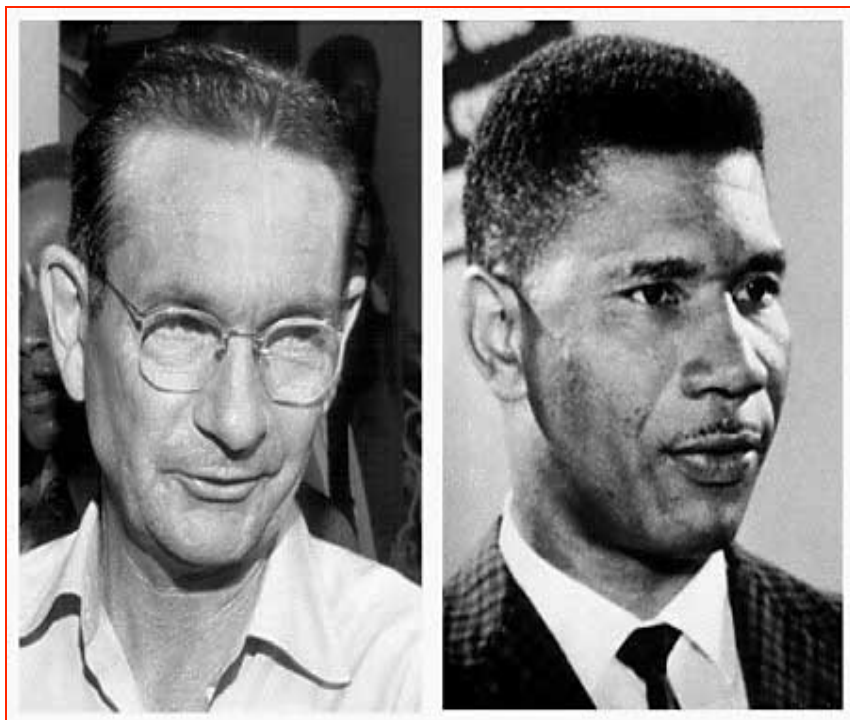
- **The 16th Street Baptist Church bombing was a racially motivated terrorist attack on September 15, 1963, by members of a Ku Klux Klan group in Birmingham, Alabama in the United States.**



Primary suspects:

- **Robert Edward Chambliss**, also known as "Dynamite Bob," was initially charged with the murders, but there was no conviction at first. He was convicted of the four murders and sentenced to several terms of life imprisonment. Chambliss died in prison in 1985.
- The FBI in 2000 assisted the state authorities in bringing charges against
- **Bobby Frank Cherry** and **Thomas Edwin Blanton, Jr.** Blanton was convicted in 2001 and Cherry in 2002 by state juries of all four murders and both were sentenced to life in prison. Cherry died in prison in 2004. Blanton is currently incarcerated.
- **Herman Frank Cash**, a fourth primary suspect, died in 1994 without being charged.
- At the time, FBI agent Rob Langford, then head of the Birmingham FBI office, had reopened the investigation into the bombing after a 1993 meeting with leaders of the Birmingham black community.

Medger Evers



- **In 1963, white supremacist Byron de la Beckwith murdered Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers.**

Civil Rights Act of 1964

President Kennedy

- The events in Alabama convinced President Kennedy to act on civil rights issues.
- Kennedy announced that he would ask for legislation to finally end segregation in public accommodations.



Medgar Evers

- **Medgar Evers**, the head of the NAACP in Mississippi, was shot dead in his front yard.
- Ku Klux Klan member Byron De La Beckwith was tried for the crime but all-white juries failed to convict.



March on Washington

- On August 28, 1963, the largest civil rights demonstration ever held in the United States took place in Washington.
- More than 200,000 people marched and listened to Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.



JFK to LBJ on Civil Rights

- **Following President Kennedy's assassination in November, Lyndon B. Johnson used his legislative skills and the image of a martyred president to push through a civil rights act that outlawed state-supported racial discrimination**

