

Chapter 14 Notes: The Civil Rights Era

Section 1: The Civil Rights Movement

Equality in Education

After World War II, African Americans and other supporters of civil rights challenged discrimination in the nation's public schools.

- African Americans had suffered from racism and **discrimination** since colonial times.
- They fought for equal opportunities in jobs, housing, and education and fought against **segregation**—the separation of people of different races.
- When change did not come as quickly as desired, African Americans' determination to end injustices in the United States led to the rise of the **civil** rights movement.
- In the 1950s, lawyers for the **NAACP** (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) searched for cases they could use to challenge the laws allowing the segregation of public schools.
- **Thurgood Marshall**, the chief lawyer for the NAACP, decided to challenge the idea of "separate but equal" established in 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.
- On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in ***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas***, that it was unconstitutional to separate schoolchildren by race.
- The Court also called on school authorities to make plans for **integrating**—bringing races together—in public schools.
- In 1957, Arkansas governor Orval Faubus called out the state's National Guard to prevent African Americans from entering a Little Rock high school.
 - ✓ For the first time since the Civil War, a Southern state defied the federal government.
- President Eisenhower sent hundreds of federal soldiers to Little Rock to patrol the school and protect the students.

Gains on Other Fronts

The success of the Montgomery bus boycott showed that nonviolent protest could help African Americans secure their rights.

- On the evening of December 1, 1955, **Rosa Parks**, an African American, was told to move to the rear of the bus to make room for a white passenger.
 - ✓ Parks refused, and at the next bus stop, she was taken off the bus by police, arrested for breaking the law, and fined \$10.

- Rosa Parks's arrest led African Americans in Montgomery to organize a **boycott** of the city's buses.
- At a boycott meeting, a relatively unknown Baptist minister, **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**, made an impact on the crowd with his passionate words.
- The bus boycott lasted for more than a year, but eventually the Supreme Court ruled that the Montgomery bus segregation law was unconstitutional and the boycott ended.
- With the victory in Montgomery, Dr. King became a leader of the civil rights movement.
- Dr. King used protest methods based on **civil disobedience**, or the refusal to obey laws that are considered unjust.

Section 2: Kennedy and Johnson

Kennedy and the New Frontier

John F. Kennedy's presidency appealed to many Americans who wanted change.

- In the presidential election of 1960, Republican candidate Vice President Richard M. Nixon faced Democratic candidate **John F. Kennedy**.
- Kennedy joined the United States Navy during World War II and was **assigned** to active duty in the Pacific.
- Kennedy's political career began in 1946 when he won a seat in Congress from Massachusetts.
 - ✓ Six years later, he was elected to the United States Senate.
- The turning point in the 1960 election came when the candidates took part in the first televised presidential debates, during which Nixon looked tired and sick while Kennedy appeared handsome and youthful.
- On January 20, 1961, Kennedy was sworn in as the 35th president of the United States.
- Kennedy called for a **New Frontier** of social reforms.
 - ✓ He backed federal aid for education and the poor.
 - ✓ Kennedy also supported civil rights.
- On November 22, 1963, Kennedy was shot and killed as the presidential motorcade rode through the streets of Dallas.
 - ✓ Vice President **Lyndon B. Johnson** became president.

The Great Society

The Johnson administration expanded Kennedy's domestic plans with far-reaching programs in many areas.

- President Lyndon B. Johnson outlined a set of programs known as the “**Great Society**.”
- In 1964 President Johnson declared a plan called the War on Poverty, which **consisted** of programs to help people who lived below the **poverty line**.
- The **Job Corps** trained young people seeking work.
- Among the most important laws passed under Johnson were **Medicare**—which established a health insurance program for all elderly people—and **Medicaid**—which provided health and medical assistance to low-income families.
- With Johnson's backing, Congress passed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which banned discrimination by race, gender, religion, and national origin in employment, voting, and public places.

Section 3: The Struggle Continues

The Movement Grows

New leaders and groups emerged as the civil rights movement took on new causes.

- African Americans fought discrimination and racism in the North as well as in the South.
- High school and college students staged **sit-ins** throughout the nation against stores that practiced segregation.
- Civil rights activist **Ella Baker**—one of the organizers of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—was a key player in the civil rights cause.
- Members of the Congress of Racial Equality, known as Freedom Riders, took a bus trip from Washington, D.C., to New Orleans to see if the ruling against segregated bus facilities was being enforced.
- The trip went smoothly until it reached Alabama, where angry whites stoned and beat the Freedom Riders.
- The president's brother, **Robert Kennedy**, the United States attorney general, asked CORE to temporarily stop the Freedom Rides.
- The Freedom Riders met more violence in Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama, and were arrested in Jackson, Mississippi.

- In the fall of 1961, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued new regulations that banned segregation on **interstate** buses and in bus stations.
- In 1962, violence erupted when African American student **James Meredith** enrolled in the University of Mississippi.
 - ✓ Two people were killed, and federal troops remained at the university to protect him until he graduated in 1963.
- In 1963, Alabama governor **George Wallace** vowed to block the integration of the University of Alabama, but backed down when President Kennedy sent troops from the Alabama National Guard.
- In the spring of 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the SCLC targeted Birmingham, Alabama, for a desegregation protest.
- On June 11, 1963, **Medgar Evers**, the state field secretary for the NAACP, was murdered.
- Days later, the president introduced new legislation giving all Americans the right to be served in public places and barring discrimination in employment.
 - ✓ To rally support for the civil rights bill, Dr. King and the SCLC organized a massive march on Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963.
 - ✓ Congress did not pass Kennedy’s civil rights bill until after his death.
- During the “Freedom Summer” of 1964, thousands of civil rights workers spread throughout the South to help African Americans **register** to vote.
- In August 1965, Johnson signed the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**—which gave the federal government the power to force local officials to allow African Americans to register to vote—into law.

Other Voices

Some African American leaders differed with Dr. King’s strategy of nonviolent protest.

- **Malcolm X**, born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, **emerged** as an important new voice for some African Americans.
 - ✓ He criticized the civil rights goal of integration, declaring that the best way for African Americans to achieve justice was to separate themselves from whites.
- Stokely Carmichael advanced the idea of Black Power—a philosophy of racial pride that said African Americans should create their own culture and political institutions.

- The first major urban riots since the 1940s took place in the summer of 1965 in the Watts section of Los Angeles.
 - ✓ The Watts riot was the first of a series of racial disorders that hit several cities in the summers of 1965, 1966, and 1967.
- On April 4, 1968, an assassin shot and killed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., setting off riots in more than 100 cities.

Section 4: Other Groups Seek Rights

Women's Rights

The influence of the civil rights movement led many American women to organize and push for greater rights and opportunities.

- In 1963 Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, which prohibited employers from paying women less than men for the same work.
- In 1966 **feminists** created the **National Organization for Women (NOW)** to fight for equal rights for women in all **aspects** of life—jobs, education, and marriage.
- In the early 1970s, NOW began a campaign for an **Equal Rights Amendment** to the Constitution; however, not enough states ratified the amendment to make it law.
- In 1981 President Ronald Reagan appointed **Sandra Day O'Connor** as the first female justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Seeking Greater Opportunity

In the 1960s and 1970s, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and disabled Americans entered the struggle for equality.

- In the 1960s, the **Latino** (often called Hispanic) population sought equal rights.
 - ✓ Although they share the heritage of the Spanish culture and language, Latinos are a **diverse** group with different histories.
- In the early 1960s, **César Chávez** organized thousands of farmworkers into the United Farm Workers, which won higher wages and shorter working hours for many farmworkers.
- Latinos formed La Raza Unida to fight discrimination and to elect Latinos to government posts.
- As with African Americans, many Puerto Rican immigrants have faced discrimination in the job market.
- Cuban immigrants have settled all over the United States, but the largest number settled in southern Florida, where they have established a thriving community.

- Congress passed the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968, which protected the constitutional rights of all Native Americans.
 - ✓ Supreme Court decisions in the 1970s reaffirmed the independence of tribal governments and also confirmed Native Americans' rights to land granted in treaties.
- In 1968 a group of Native Americans set up the **American Indian Movement**, which worked for equal rights and improved living conditions.
- People with physical disabilities also sought equal treatment in the 1960s and the 1970s.
 - ✓ One law concerned the removal of barriers that prevented some people from gaining access to public facilities.
 - ✓ Another required employers to offer more opportunities for disabled people in the workplace.
 - ✓ The Education for All Handicapped Children Act asserted the right of children with disabilities to equal educational opportunity.

African Americans and Civil Rights

Changes brought about by the civil rights movement are still with us.

- *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* attacks school segregation.
- Rosa Parks inspires Montgomery bus boycott.
- Freedom rides, the Birmingham demonstrations, and the march on Washington help build support for the civil rights movement.
- The Civil Rights Act (1964) outlaws discrimination based on race, gender, and religion, and gives equal access to public facilities.
- The Voting Rights Act (1965) ensures African Americans of the right to vote.



Latino and Native American Advances

Minority groups developed new ways to improve their status in the United States.

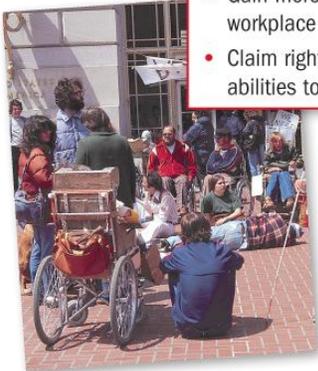
- La Raza Unida and the LULAC fight for education, employment, and government participation rights.
- César Chávez leads farm workers to gain better wages and improve working conditions.
- The Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 recognizes the laws the Native American nations make on their own lands.
- The American Indian Movement works for improved equal rights and living conditions.



Americans With Disabilities

People with disabilities sought equal rights and treatment in the 1960s and 1970s.

- Gain access to public facilities
- Gain more opportunities in the workplace
- Claim right of children with disabilities to equal education



Women Fight for Equal Rights

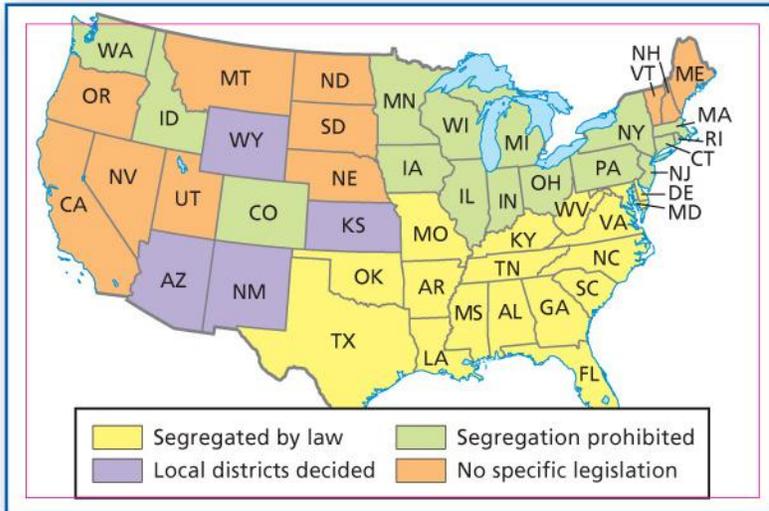
During the 1960s and 1970s, a large number of American women organized to push for greater rights and opportunities.

- Equal Pay Act (1963)
- National Organization for Women (NOW) forms
- Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) proposed but failed to pass



When and Where

School Segregation, 1950

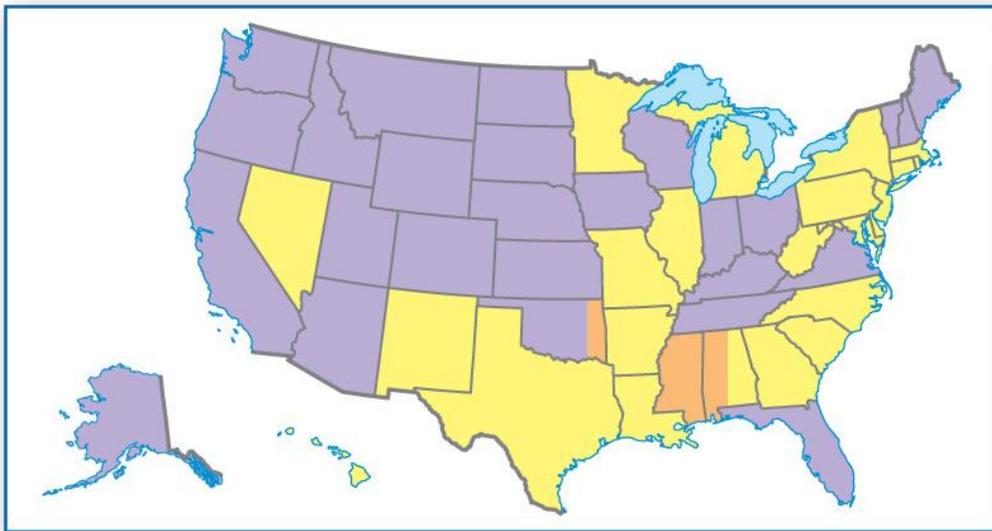


Regional Differences

School segregation was treated differently in various parts of the United States.

By the Numbers

Election of 1960



Candidates	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Political Party
Kennedy	303	34,227,096	Democrat
Nixon	219	34,107,646	Republican
Byrd	15	None	Independent

The Struggle for Civil Rights, 1954-1965



Sit-in at a lunch counter ▶

★ **May 1954**
Brown decision declares segregated schools unconstitutional

★ **Sept. 1957**
Federal troops escort African American students to desegregate Little Rock's Central High School

★ **December 1955**
Rosa Parks is arrested and Montgomery bus boycott begins



Rosa Parks ▶

★ **Feb. 1960**
Sit-in movement spreads after students stage sit-in at North Carolina lunch counter

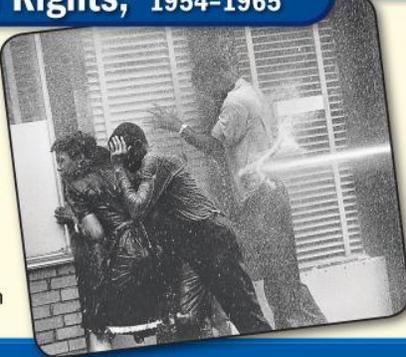
★ **May 1961**
Freedom Riders brave violence to desegregate interstate bus travel

The Struggle for Civil Rights, 1954-1965

Birmingham police use hoses to force civil rights protestors to stop their marches. ▶

★ **Sept. 1962**
James Meredith tries to register at University of Mississippi

★ **Aug. 1963**
King delivers "I Have a Dream" speech during March on Washington



★ **March 1965**
King leads march in Selma, Alabama, to build support for new voting rights law

★ **May 1963**
Police use force to stop Birmingham marchers

★ **July 1964**
President Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law

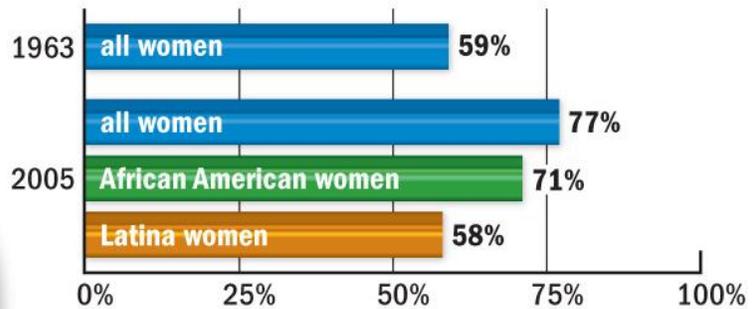
★ **Aug. 1965**
Congress passes Voting Rights Act of 1965



◀ National Guard escorts Freedom Riders

By the Numbers Women's Pay

Unequal Pay When the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963, full-time working women were paid 59 cents an hour on average for every dollar received by men. How do these figures compare some 40 years later?



Percentage of Income Compared to That of Men

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey