



Window on America

Вікно в Америку

Civil Rights in the United States

Window on America Center
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Chizhevsky

Country Study Series

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Introduction

- Civil rights are rights that a nation's inhabitants enjoy by law.
- The term is broader than “political rights,” which are held usually only by a citizen.
- Unlike “natural rights,” civil rights have a legal as well as a philosophical basis.
- In the United States civil rights are usually thought of in terms of the specific rights guaranteed in the Constitution: freedom of religion, of speech, and of the press, and the rights to due process of law and to equal protection under the law.



Overview of Civil Rights in the U.S.

- Since the time of the Civil War, the primary focus of debate concerning civil rights in the United States has been influenced by the struggles of former slaves and their descendents.
- The first legislative attempts to assure Black Americans an equal political and legal status were the Civil Rights Acts of 1866, 1870, 1871, and 1875.
- In the 1960s women began to organize around the issue of their civil rights.
- Since the 1970s a number of gay-rights groups have worked, mainly on the local and state levels, for legislation that prevents discrimination in housing and employment.
- In a further extension of civil-rights protection, the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) barred discrimination against disabled persons in employment and provided for improved access to public facilities.



Focus of this Presentation

- Although the Civil Rights Movement encompasses a number of groups, in this presentation, we will focus on the struggle for equal rights for Black Americans.
- This presentation provides a broad overview of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Because so many events occurred during this time, it is not possible to discuss them all.



History of the Civil Rights Movement

- Although the Civil Rights Movement is best known for gaining momentum in the 1960s, it began long before then.
- The first slaves were brought to Virginia in 1619, just 12 years after the founding of Jamestown.
- They were initially regarded as indentured servants who could earn their freedom.
- However, by the 1660s, however, as the demand for plantation labor in the Southern colonies grew, the institution of slavery began to harden around them, and Africans were brought to America in shackles for a lifetime of involuntary servitude.



History of the Civil Rights Movement

- The sharpest criticism of slavery was not the behavior of individual masters and overseers toward the slaves, but slavery's fundamental violation of every human being's inalienable right to be free.
- In December of 1865, Congress ratified the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which abolished slavery.
- The 15th Amendment, ratified in 1870 by state legislatures, provided that "The rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude."
 - In other words, it granted Black Americans the right to vote.
- In 1873 the Supreme Court found that the Fourteenth Amendment (citizenship rights not to be abridged) conferred no new privileges or immunities to protect African Americans from state power.

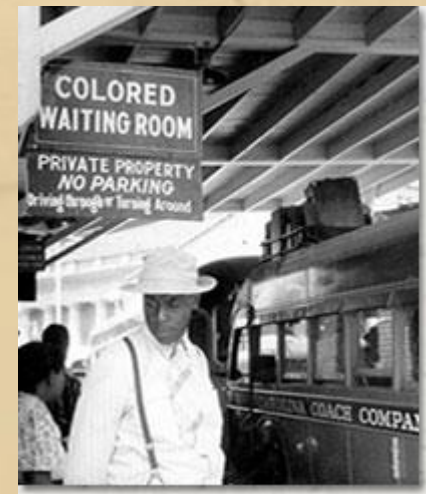
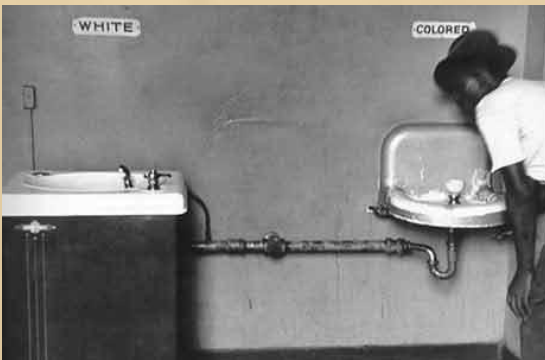
13th Amendment

Section 1: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

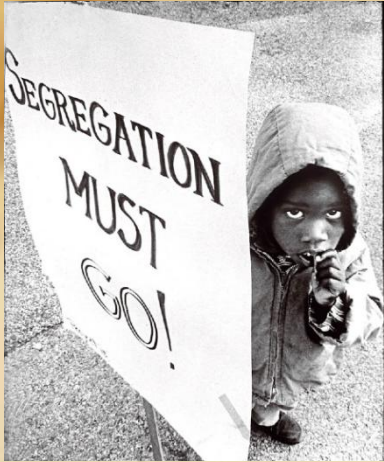
Section 2: The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

History of the Civil Rights Movement

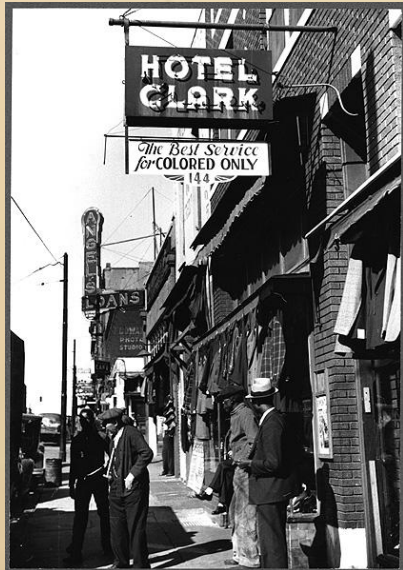
- In 1883, the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment did not prevent individuals, as opposed to states, from practicing discrimination.
- In 1896, the Supreme Court decided Plessy v. Ferguson. In this decision, the Court found that "separate but equal" public accommodations for African Americans, such as trains and restaurants, did not violate their rights.
 - This decision served as the organizing legal justification for racial segregation for over 50 years.
- Soon the principle of segregation by race extended into every area of Southern life, from railroads to restaurants, hotels, hospitals and schools.
- Any area of life that was not segregated by law was segregated by custom and practice. The society of the South enforced a rigid social segregation of blacks from whites, and tolerated ongoing racial violence.



History of the Civil Rights Movement



- By the 1950s, Black Americans they had challenged discrimination in the military services and in the work force, and they had made limited gains.
- Blacks in the South enjoyed few, if any, civil and political rights.
- More than 1 million black soldiers fought in World War II, but those who came from the South could not vote.
- Blacks who tried to register faced the likelihood of beatings, loss of job, loss of credit or eviction from their land. Lynchings still occurred, and laws enforced segregation of the races in street cars, trains, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, recreational facilities and employment.



Photograph from Bettmann/Corbis

Civil Rights Timeline



- 1783 -- Massachusetts outlaws slavery within its borders
- 1808 -- Importation of slaves banned; illegal slave trade continues.
- 1857 -- Dred Scott Supreme Court decision rules that slaves do not become free when taken into a free state, that Congress cannot bar slavery from a territory, and that blacks cannot become citizens.
- 1861 -- Confederate States of America formed; Civil War begins.
- 1863 -- President Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation freeing “all slaves in areas still in rebellion.”
- 1865 -- Civil War ends; 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery, added to the Constitution.
- 1868 -- 14th Amendment conferring citizenship added to Constitution.
- 1870 -- 15th Amendment barring racial discrimination in voting added to Constitution.
- 1896 -- Supreme Court approves “separate but equal” segregation doctrine.
- 1954 -- U.S. Supreme Court declares school segregation unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling.
- 1955 -- Rosa Parks refuses to move to the back of a Montgomery, Alabama, bus as required by city ordinance; boycott follows and bus segregation ordinance is declared unconstitutional.
 - Federal Interstate Commerce Commission bans segregation on interstate trains and buses.

Civil Rights Timeline



- 1957 -- Arkansas Gov. Orval Rubus uses National Guard to block nine Black students from attending a Little Rock High School; following a court order, President Eisenhower sends in federal troops to ensure compliance.
- 1960 -- Four Black college students begin sit-ins at lunch counter of a Greensboro, North Carolina, restaurant where Black patrons are not served.
- 1961 -- Freedom Rides begin from Washington, D.C., into Southern states.
- 1962 -- The Supreme Court rules that segregation is unconstitutional in all transportation facilities.
 - The Department of Defense orders full integration of military reserve units, the National Guard excluded.
- 1963 -- Civil rights leader Medgar Evers is killed by a sniper's bullet.
 - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers "I Have a Dream" speech to hundreds of thousands at the March on Washington.
 - Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, leaves four young black girls dead.
- 1965 -- March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to demand protection for voting rights; two civil rights workers slain earlier in the year in Selma.
 - Malcolm X assassinated.
- 1967 -- Thurgood Marshall first African American to be named to the Supreme Court.
- 1968 -- Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee

Brown v. Board of Education

- In the early 1950's, racial segregation in public schools was the norm across America. Although all the schools in a given district were supposed to be equal, most black schools were far inferior to their white counterparts.
- Brown v. Board of Education was a collection of cases that was the culmination of years of legal groundwork laid by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in its work to end segregation.
- In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that "separate facilities are inherently unequal," and decreed that the "separate but equal" doctrine could no longer be used in public schools.
 - A year later, the Supreme Court demanded that local school boards move "with all deliberate speed" to implement the decision.
- The decision did not abolish segregation in other public areas, such as restaurants and restrooms, nor did it require desegregation of public schools by a specific time.
 - It did, however, declare the permissive or mandatory segregation that existed in 21 states unconstitutional.
- President Eisenhower ordered the desegregation of Washington, D.C., schools to serve as a model for the rest of the country, and sought to end discrimination in other areas as well.
- Brown v. Board of Education was one of the most pivotal opinions ever rendered by the Supreme Court. This landmark decision highlights the U.S. Supreme Court's role in affecting changes in national and social policy.



The Little Rock Nine

- Although *Brown v. Board of Education* outlawed segregation in schools, many school systems defied the law by intimidating and threatening black students.
- The Little Rock Nine, as they later came to be called, were the first black teenagers to attend all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.
- On the first day of school, the governor of Arkansas ordered the state's National Guard to block the Black students from entering the school. When a federal court ordered the troops to leave, the students came to school, only to encounter aggressive taunts.
- Every morning on their way to school angry crowds of whites taunted and insulted the Little Rock Nine—they even received death threats.
- As scared as they were, the students wouldn't give up, and several went on to graduate from Central High. Nine Black teenagers challenged a racist system and defeated it.



The Montgomery Bus Boycott

- On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a 42-year-old Black seamstress who was also Secretary of the state chapter of the NAACP, sat down in the front of a bus in a section reserved by law and custom for Whites.
- Ordered to move to the back, she refused. Police came and arrested her for violating the segregation statutes.
- Black leaders, who had been waiting for just such a case, organized a boycott of the bus system.
- When the boycott began, no one expected it to last for very long.
- Whites tried to end the [boycott](#) in every way possible – by dividing the Black community, through violence, and using the law. Nothing worked.
- Despite all the pressures to end the boycott, African Americans continued to stay off the buses.
- On November 13, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court declared segregation on buses unconstitutional.
- Blacks returned to the buses on December 21, 1956, over a year after the boycott began.
- Although the gains of the Montgomery Bus Boycott were small compared with later gains, the boycott was important start to the movement.



Sit-Ins

- Sit-ins were an integral part of the non-violent strategy of civil disobedience and mass protests.
- The basic plan of the sit-ins was that a group of students would go to a lunch counter and ask to be served. If they were, they would move on to the next lunch counter. If they were not, they would not move until they had been. If they were arrested, a new group would take their place.
- While at the sit-ins, students would be dressed up in their best Sunday clothing, and always remained nonviolent and respectful.
- The first organized lunch-counter sit-in to integrate segregated establishments began in July 1958 in Wichita, Kansas.
- On February 27, 1960, sit-in students in Nashville were attacked by a group of white teenagers.



Sit-Ins



- By August 1961, the sit-ins had attracted over 70,000 participants and generated over 3,000 arrests.
- When Northern students heard of the movement, they decided to help their Southern counterparts by picketing local branches of chain stores that were segregated in the South.
- They continued in some areas of the South until and even after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 declared segregation at lunch counters unlawful.



- The technique of the sit-ins was used to integrate other public facilities, such as movie theaters, and the student group that rose out of the sit-ins continued to be involved in the civil rights movement for many years.
- Perhaps most importantly, the sit-ins marked a change in the civil rights movement. They showed that nonviolent direct action and youth could be very useful weapons in the war against segregation.

Freedom Rides

- Even after Supreme Court rulings that declared segregation on buses and trains unconstitutional, Black Americans were still being treated unfairly.
- Freedom Rides were designed to test the laws against segregation to see if they worked. A group of Blacks and Whites would board buses heading for the south. The African Americans would sit in the front and the Whites would sit in the back.
- At rest stops the Blacks went into the Whites-only areas and the Whites went into the Blacks-only areas. Freedom Riders expected trouble from White southerners who were against desegregation.
- The first Freedom Ride left Washington, D.C. on May 4, 1961. Seven African Americans and six Whites traveled south on two buses.
- On May 14, 1961, the Freedom Riders split up into two groups to travel through Alabama.
- The first group was met by a mob of about 200 angry people in Anniston. The mob stoned the bus and slashed the tires. The bus managed to get away, but when it stopped about six miles out of town to change the tires, it was firebombed.
- The other group was greeted by a mob in Birmingham, and the Riders were severely beaten.
- Despite the violence, the Freedom Riders were determined to continue.



Freedom Rides

- The bus company did not want to risk losing another bus to a bombing, and its drivers did not want to risk their lives. After two days of unsuccessful negotiations, the Freedom Riders flew to New Orleans.
- At that point, a group of Nashville sit-in students decided to go to Birmingham and continue the Freedom Ride.
- The Birmingham police arrested the Nashville Freedom Riders and drove the Riders back to Tennessee, dumping them by the side of the highway at the state line. After they got a ride back to Nashville, 100 miles away, they went right back to Birmingham.
- More Freedom Riders arrived in Jackson to continue the Freedom Ride, and they were arrested too. Freedom Riders continued to arrive in the South, and by the end of the summer, more than 300 had been arrested.



- The Freedom Riders never made it to New Orleans. Many spent their summer in jail. But their efforts were not in vain.
- They forced the Kennedy administration to take a stand on civil rights, which was the intent of the Freedom Ride in the first place.
- The Freedom Riders may not have finished their trip, but they made an important and lasting contribution to the civil rights movement.

Birmingham Campaign

- In the early 1960s, Birmingham was one of the most racially divided cities in the United States, as African American citizens faced legal and economic disparities and violent retribution when they attempted to bring attention to their problems.
- The Birmingham Campaign was a strategic movement organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to bring attention to the unequal treatment Black Americans endured in Birmingham, Alabama.
- Protests in Birmingham began with a boycott to pressure business leaders to provide employment opportunities to people of all races, and end segregation in public facilities, restaurants, and stores.
- On May 2, 1963 children, ranging in age from six to eighteen, gathered together at a local church and headed for downtown, singing “We Shall Overcome.” They were arrested and placed in police vans.
- Another group left the church, and they were also put in vans. Another group left, and another. Soon the police began putting protesters in school buses because there were no more vans.
- Three hours later, the jails were full with the 959 children that had been arrested.
- The next day, over a thousand more children stayed out of school and protested.



Birmingham Campaign

- The police chief, who had no space left in his jails, brought firefighters out and ordered them to turn hoses on the children.
- The firefighters turned powerful hoses on the children. The hoses shot streams of water strong enough to break bones. The force of the water rolled the protesters down the street.
- The police chief had also mobilized K-9 forces, who attacked protesters trying to enter the church.
- Pictures of the confrontation between the children and the police shocked the nation. The entire country was watching Birmingham.
- Because the jails were filled, the police did not know what to do. Finally, the Birmingham business community, fearing damage to downtown stores, agreed to integrate lunch counters and hire more blacks, over the objections of city officials.
- The Birmingham campaign was a model of direct action protest, as it effectively shut down the city. By attracting media attention to the adverse treatment of Black Americans, it brought national force to bear on the issue of segregation.



The March on Washington

- The March on Washington was designed to highlight the problem of the widening economic gap between Black and White Americans.
- To show that the new civil rights bill proposed by [President Kennedy](#) had widespread support, civil rights groups united to organize a [March on Washington](#).
- Organizers hoped to draw a crowd of 100,000, but instead over 250,000 people from around the nation, arriving in more than thirty special trains and 2,000 chartered buses, descended on Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963.
- There, they heard speeches and songs from numerous activists, artists, and civil rights leaders. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered the closing address, his famous "[I Have a Dream](#)" speech.
- The March on Washington was the first protest march to be telecast exclusively on national television.
- There was no violence.
- The March on Washington was one of the most successful movements in American history.



1963 Birmingham Bombing

- The Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham was used as a meeting-place for civil rights leaders.
- On Sunday, 15th September, 1963, a white man was seen getting out of a car and placing a box under the steps of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church.
- Soon afterwards, at 10.22 a.m., the bomb exploded killing four girls who had been attending Sunday school classes at the church.
- Twenty-three other people were also hurt by the blast.
- Civil rights activists blamed George Wallace, the Governor of Alabama, for the killings. Only a week before the bombing he had told the New York Times that to stop integration Alabama needed a “few first-class funerals.”
- A witness identified Robert Chambliss, a member of the Ku Klux Klan, as the man who placed the bomb under the steps of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church.
 - He was arrested and charged with murder and possessing a box of 122 sticks of dynamite without a permit. On 8th October, 1963, Chambliss was found not guilty of murder and received a hundred-dollar fine and a six-month jail sentence for having the dynamite.
- In November, 1977 Chambliss was tried once again for the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing.
 - Now aged 73, Chambliss was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. Chambliss died in an Alabama prison on 29th October, 1985.



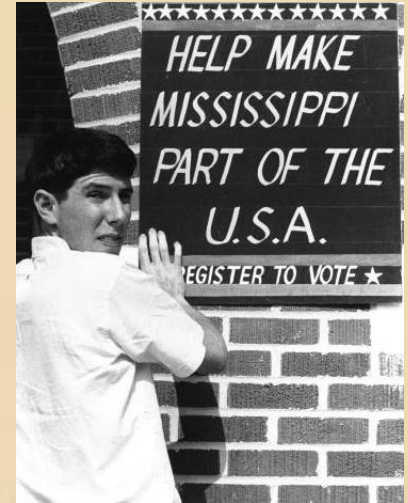
Freedom Summer

- Freedom Summer was launched in June 1964 to attempt to register as many African American voters as possible in Mississippi, which up to that time had almost totally excluded Black voters.
- The project also set up dozens of Freedom Schools and Freedom Houses in small towns throughout Mississippi to aid the local Black population.
- More than 1,000 out-of-state volunteers participated in Freedom Summer alongside thousands of black Mississippians.
 - Most of the volunteers were young, most of them from the North, 90 percent were white and many were Jewish.
- Organizers focused on Mississippi because it had the lowest percentage of African Americans registered to vote in the country; in 1962 only 6.7% of eligible black voters were registered.
 - White officials in the South systematically kept Black Americans from being able to vote by charging them expensive poll taxes, forcing them to take difficult literacy tests, making the application process inconvenient, harassing would-be voters economically, and carrying out arson, battery, and lynching.



Freedom Summer

- Over the course of the ten-week project:
 - four civil rights workers were killed (one in a head-on collision);
 - at least three Black people were murdered because of their support for the civil rights movement;
 - four people were critically wounded;
 - eighty Freedom Summer workers were beaten;
 - one-thousand and sixty-two people were arrested (volunteers and locals);
 - thirty-seven churches were bombed or burned; and
 - thirty Black homes or businesses were bombed or burned.
- In addition to voter registration project also established a network 30 to 40 voluntary summer schools – called “Freedom Schools” – as an alternative to Mississippi's totally segregated and underfunded school system.
- Over the course of the summer, more than 3,500 students attended Freedom Schools which taught subjects that the public schools avoided such as Black History and Constitutional Rights.
- Though Freedom Summer failed to register many voters, it had a significant effect on the course of the Civil Rights Movement. It helped break down the decades of isolation and repression



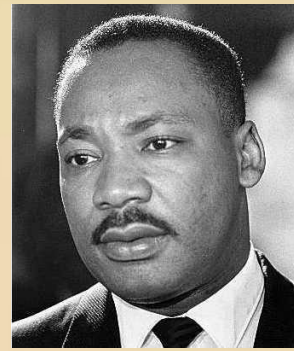
Selma to Montgomery Marches

- Despite a succession of federal court rulings designed to open the polls to African Americans in the 1960s, Black Alabamians in huge numbers were not registered to vote due to the power of local voter registrars to erect obstacles.
- The Selma to Montgomery marches were three marches in 1965 that marked the political and emotional peak of the American civil rights movement.
- The first march took place on March 7, 1965 — “[Bloody Sunday](#)” — when 600 civil rights marchers were attacked by state and local police with billy clubs and tear gas.
- Television networks broadcast the attacks of “Bloody Sunday” nationwide, creating outrage at the police, and sympathy for the marchers.
- Alabama police turned back a second march, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. and other religious leaders, on March 9th.
- Only the third march, which began on March 21 and lasted five days, made it to Montgomery, 51 miles (82 km) away.
- The route is memorialized as the [Selma To Montgomery Voting Rights Trail](#), a U.S. National Historic Trail.



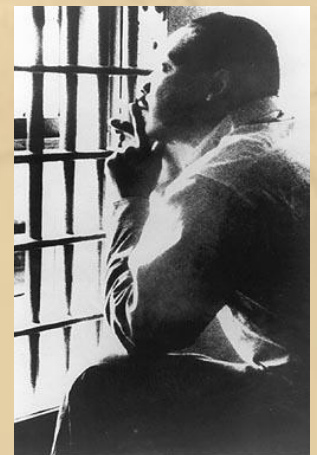
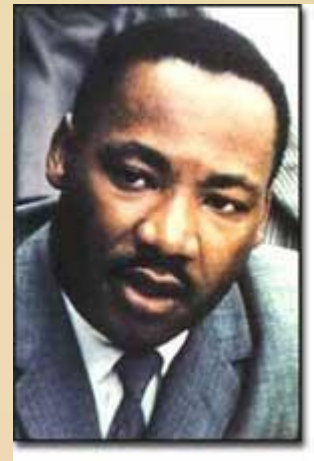
Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Born in January, 1929.
- Best known for being an iconic figure in the advancement of civil rights in the United States and around the world, using nonviolent methods following the teachings of [Mahatma Gandhi](#).
- Led the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott and helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957, serving as its first president. King's efforts led to the 1963 March on Washington, where King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.
- There, he expanded American values to include the vision of a color blind society, and established his reputation as one of the greatest orators in American history.
- In 1964, King became the youngest person to receive the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) for his work to end racial segregation and
- Assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.
- Posthumously awarded the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#) in 1977 and [Congressional Gold Medal](#) in 2004; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was established as a U.S. federal holiday in 1986.



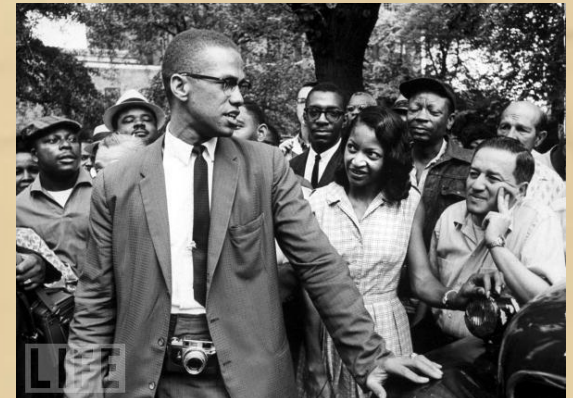
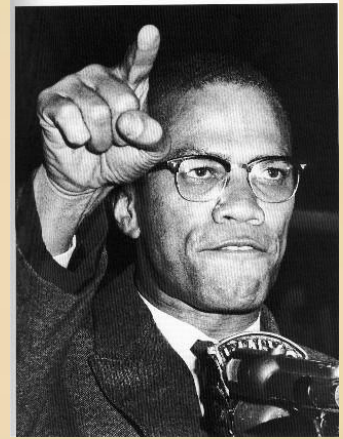
Martin Luther King, Jr.

- It was not because he became the leader of the civil rights movement that made Martin Luther King, Jr. so extraordinary—it was the way in which he led the movement.
- King advocated civil disobedience, the non-violent resistance against unjust laws: “Non-violence is a powerful and just weapon which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it.”
- Civil rights activists organized demonstrations, marches, boycotts, strikes, and voter-registration drives, and refused to obey laws that they knew were wrong and unjust.
- These peaceful forms of protest were often met with vicious threats, arrests, beatings, and worse.
- King emphasized how important it was that the civil rights movement did not sink to the level of the racists and hate mongers they fought against: “Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred,” he urged. “We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline.”
- King’s philosophy of “tough-mindedness and tenderheartedness” was not only highly effective, but it gave the civil rights movement an inspiring moral authority and grace.



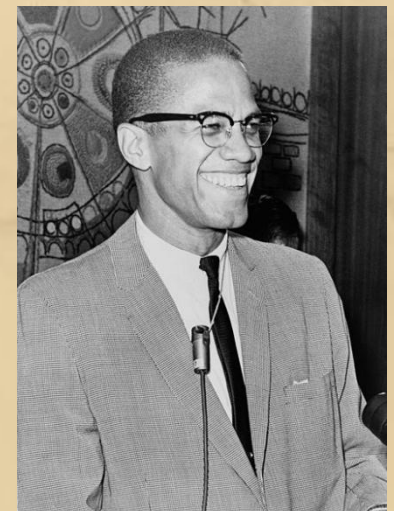
Malcolm X

- African-American Muslim minister, public speaker, and human rights activist.
- Born in May 1925
- To his admirers, he was a courageous advocate for the rights of African Americans, a man who indicted White America in the harshest terms for its crimes against Black Americans.
- His detractors accused him of preaching racism, black supremacy, anti-Semitism, and violence.
- He has been called one of the greatest and most influential African Americans in history, and in 1998, Time magazine named The Autobiography of Malcolm X one of the ten most influential nonfiction books of the 20th century.
- The burning of his house by the Ku Klux Klan resulted in the murder of his father. His mother later suffered a nervous breakdown and his family was split up.
- After living in a series of foster homes, Malcolm X became involved in a number of criminal activities in Boston and New York.
- In 1946, Malcolm X was sentenced to eight to ten years in prison.



Malcolm X

- While in prison, Malcolm X became a member of the [Nation of Islam](#), and after his parole in 1952 he became one of the Nation's leaders and chief spokesmen. For nearly a dozen years, he was the public face of the controversial group.
- After quitting the organization in March 1964, he then became a Sunni Muslim and made a pilgrimage to Mecca, after which he disavowed racism.
- He subsequently traveled extensively throughout Africa and the Middle East and founded Muslim Mosque, Inc., a religious organization, and the secular Pan-Africanist Organization of Afro-American Unity.
- Less than a year after he left the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X was assassinated by three members of the group while giving a speech in New York.



Differences between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X

- Both men ultimately became icons of contemporary African-American culture and had a great influence on Black Americans.
- Malcolm X and Martin Luther King are both remembered as leaders who fought for a difference in Black America. Both tried to bring hope to Black Americans. They also tried to instill power and strength within the Black community so it could rise above all the hatred that surrounded them, but both of them had very different ways of promoting their message.
- Both men spread their message through powerful, hard-hitting speeches.
- Both men believed that if African Americans were to attain freedom, they first needed to achieve self-respect.
- Martin Luther King believed in nonviolence; he had a highly religious background and was inspired by Gandhi in his belief that campaigning should be passive. He believed that equality of race in America would only be achieved through peaceful demonstrations and arguments, rather than simply returning white violence with violence.
- Malcolm X however had a very contrasting philosophy. He quickly made it very clear that he rejected the nonviolent emphasis of the mainstream civil rights movement, and instead made public his beliefs that self-defense against white aggression and oppression was a legitimate weapon. This attitude was in many ways more popular than King's philosophies as it seemed to have more promise of direct actions and therefore visible results, when compared to King's passive approach.
- Even though they were different in addressing their messages about black respect and pride, they both had the same goal in mind. That goal was to achieve equality between all races.



Medgar Evers

- Most visible civil rights leader in the state of Mississippi.
- Born in July, 1925.
- Served in U.S. Army during World War II.
- In 1954, applied and was denied admission to the University of Mississippi Law School.
- Moved to the state capital of Jackson and became the first state field secretary of the NAACP in Mississippi.
- As state field secretary, Evers recruited members throughout Mississippi and organized voter-registration efforts, demonstrations, and economic boycotts of white-owned companies that practiced discrimination.
- Evers also worked to investigate crimes perpetrated against blacks, most notably the lynching of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old African-American boy who had allegedly been killed for talking to a White woman.
- He and his family were subjected to numerous threats and violent actions over the years, including a firebombing of their house in May 1963. At 12:40 a.m. on June 12, 1963, Evers was shot in the back in the driveway of his home in Jackson. He died less than a hour later at a nearby hospital.
- The national outrage over Evers' murder increased support for legislation that would become the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Considered to be the most important piece of modern civil rights legislation.
- The bill was called for by President John F. Kennedy in his civil rights speech of June 11, 1963, in which he asked for legislation “giving all Americans the right to be served in facilities which are open to the public—hotels, restaurants, theaters, retail stores, and similar establishments,” as well as “greater protection for the right to vote.”
- The Act outlawed major forms of discrimination against Blacks and women, including racial segregation.
- It also ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace and by facilities that served the general public (“public accommodations”).



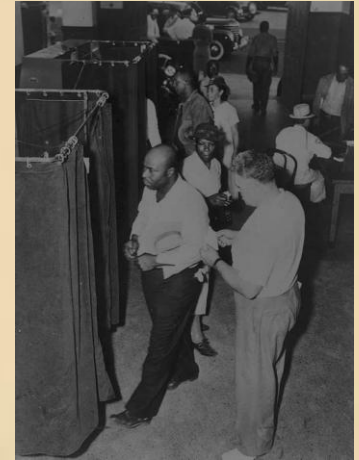
Civil Rights Act of 1964

Important provisions of the Civil Rights Act:

- **Title I** - Barred unequal application of voter registration requirements.
- **Title II** - Outlawed discrimination in hotels, motels, restaurants, theaters, and all other public accommodations engaged in interstate commerce; exempted private clubs without defining the term "private."
- **Title III** - Prohibited state and municipal governments from denying access to public facilities on grounds of race, religion, gender, or ethnicity.
- **Title IV** - Encouraged the desegregation of public schools and authorized the U.S. Attorney General to file suits to enforce said act.
- **Title VI** - Prevents discrimination by government agencies that receive federal funds. If an agency is found in violation of Title VI, that agency can lose its federal funding.
- **Title VII** - prohibits discrimination by covered employers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.
 - Title VII also prohibits discrimination against an individual because of his or her association with another individual of a particular race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. An employer cannot discriminate against a person because of his interracial association with another, such as by an interracial marriage.
- **Title IX** made it easier to move civil rights cases from state courts with segregationist judges and all-white juries to federal court. This was of crucial importance to civil rights activists who could not get a fair trial in state courts.

Voting Rights Act of 1965

- Landmark piece of national legislation that outlawed discriminatory voting practices.
- The Act prohibits states from imposing any “voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure ... to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.”
- Specifically, Congress intended the Act to outlaw the practice of requiring otherwise qualified voters to pass literacy tests in order to register to vote, a means by which Southern states had prevented African-Americans from voting.
- The Act also established extensive federal oversight of elections administration, providing that states with a history of discriminatory voting practices could not implement any change affecting voting without first obtaining the approval of the Department of Justice
 - Although the [15th Amendment](#) to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed the right to vote, many states had found ways -- whether by a poll tax or a literacy test -- to circumvent the law.
 - [The Civil Rights Act of 1957](#), the first such measure in 82 years authorized federal intervention in cases where African Americans were denied the chance to vote. Yet loopholes remained, and so activists pushed successfully for the [Civil Rights Act of 1960](#), which provided stiffer penalties for interfering with voting, but still stopped short of authorizing federal officials to register Black Americans.



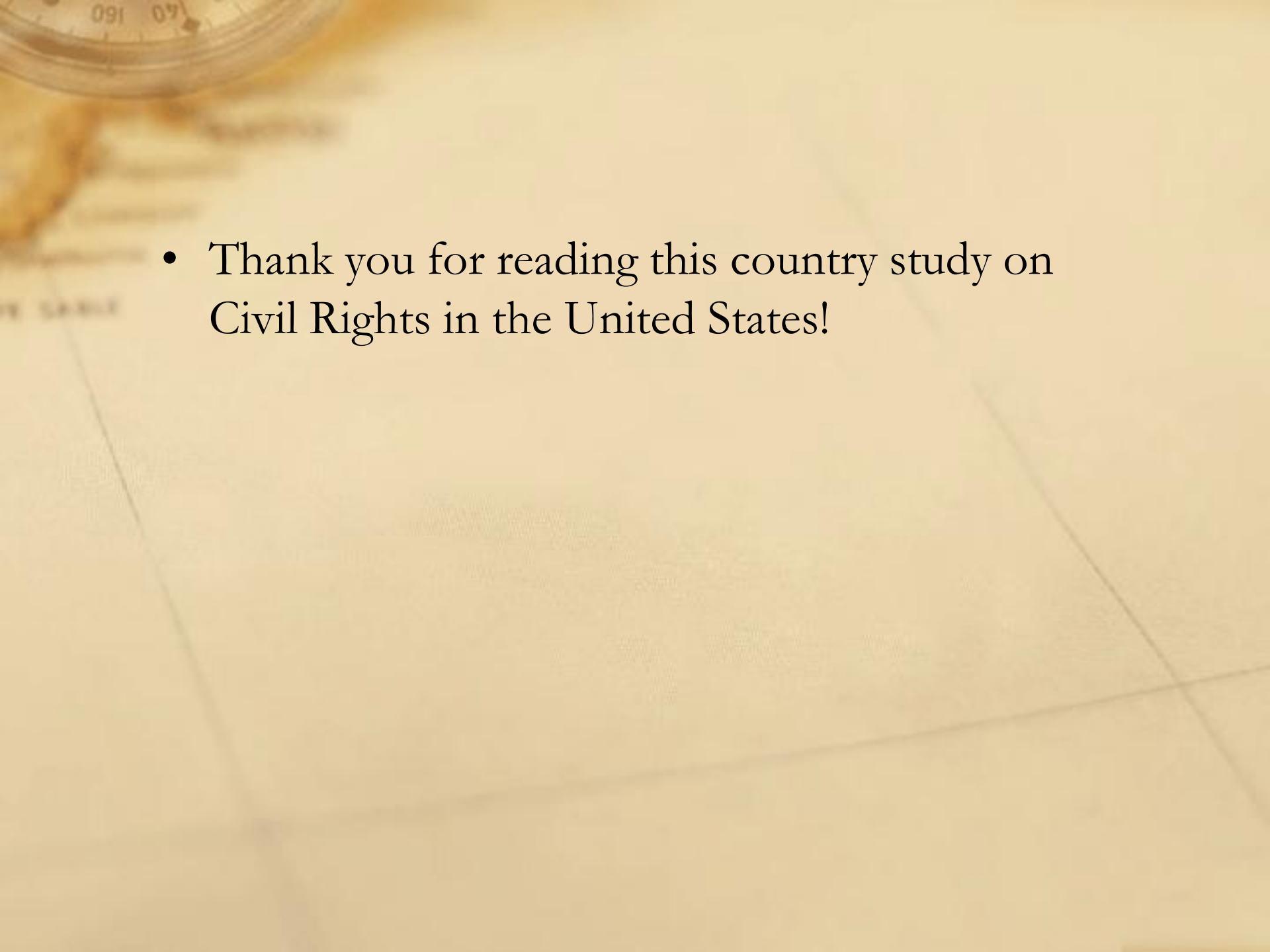
Civil Rights Act of 1968

- Meant as a follow-up to Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Provided for the equal opportunity to buy or lease housing.
- Title VIII of the Act is also known as the Fair Housing Act (of 1968).
- From 1966-1967, Congress regularly considered the fair housing bill, but failed to garner a strong enough majority for its passage.
- However, when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson utilized this national tragedy to urge for the bill's speedy Congressional approval.



Civil Rights in the 21st Century

- Today, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's is looked back upon both with pride and disgrace.
 - Pride, because after nearly 350 years, African Americans were finally granted rights entitled to them as human beings, the same rights White Americans had enjoyed in this country since its commencement.
 - Disgrace, because of not only the disgusting and lamentable amount of time it took to rid this country, as best possible, of racism, intolerance, hatred, and ignorance, thereby providing Blacks with these rights, but also because of the perilous journey African Americans were forced to endure just to be granted basic human rights and liberties.
- Since the achievements of this period, Americans have continued to strive to ensure that all citizens' civil rights are protected. We have made progress as relates to women, people with disabilities, and other groups.
- One current civil rights struggle is around homosexuals and their civil rights.
 - Because of the heavily religious background of the U.S., this does not appear to be a fight that will be quickly or easily won.
- Another current argument is about immigrants.

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- Thank you for reading this country study on Civil Rights in the United States!