

# The Civil Rights Movement



# Civil War Amendments

- During the early years of our nation, slavery was permitted in many areas.
- But after the Civil War things began to change, these changes became law with constitutional amendments.
  - **13<sup>th</sup> Amendment** – (1865) abolished slavery
  - **14<sup>th</sup> Amendment** – (1868) provided for equal protection under the law and gave those born here citizenship.
  - **15<sup>th</sup> Amendment** – (1870) gave former male slaves suffrage or the right to vote.

These amendments to the Constitution were the foundation of the Civil Rights Movement of the Twentieth Century.

# The Truman Years, 1945-1953

- In 1947, **Jackie Robinson**, the grandson of a slave, became the first African American to play Professional Baseball.
- “42” opened the door for many African Americans and other minorities in different fields of sports, entertainment, and business.
- The following year Pres. Truman issued an executive order that desegregated the military and ended discrimination in hiring practices by federal government.



# Brown v. Board of Education, 1954

- Civil Rights were won in large part through litigation – resolving disputes in court.
- Many of these cases were decided by the Supreme Court.
- The 1954 Supreme Court case of Brown v. Board of Education was central to the success of the Civil Rights Movement.
- After the end of the Civil War, Southern states passed laws requiring segregation of races in public places, including schools.



# Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896

- The Supreme Court decision of 'Plessy v. Ferguson' upheld the constitutionality of segregation laws.
- The Court ruled 'separate but equal' was constitutional.
- States could legally provide segregated facilities to different races, so long as they were equal in quality.
- Although schools were supposed to be equal, most schools in the South were greatly inferior to white schools.
- NAACP lawyers began challenging this doctrine in the court system.



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# Sweatt v. Painter, 1950

- **Sweatt v. Painter** was a case won by the NAACP involving the right of Herman Sweatt, an African American, to attend Law School at the University of Texas.
- UT had even created a separate law school for African Americans, just to keep Sweatt out.
- The Supreme Court ruled this separate school failed to qualify as “separate but equal”, since it isolated its students.



# NAACP Challenges 'Separate But Equal'

- In 1953, the NAACP challenged a Kansas court ruling that African American students were denied admission to an all-white school.
- The NAACP alleged that segregated schools denied African American children the **'equal protection'** of the law due them under the **14<sup>th</sup> Amendment**.
- Segregated schools were ***inherently*** inferior since it sent the message they were not good enough to be educated with others.



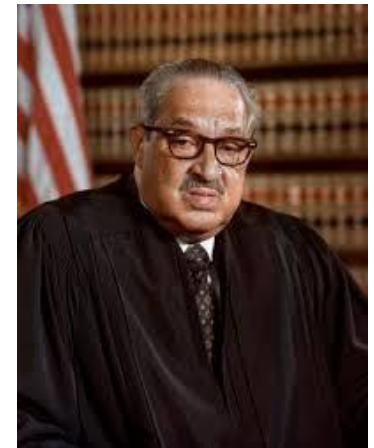
**"We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."**

# The Brown Decision

- 1954, Thurgood Marshall argued the case for the NAACP that Linda Brown, an African American girl, should be allowed to attend a white school closer to her home.
- Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote the unanimous decision for the Supreme Court.
- The **Brown v. Board of Education** decision overturned the **Plessy v. Ferguson** decision and ended legal segregation in public schools!



Linda Brown



Thurood Marshall  
became first  
African American  
on Supreme  
Court

# The Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-56

- 1955, **Rosa Parks** refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus to a white passenger.
- Alabama's 'Jim Crow' laws made this illegal and she was arrested.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led a boycott of the bus line that lasted for 13 months.
- The non-violent boycott worked and a court ruled that the bus line had violated the 'equal protection' clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.



# Civil Rights Act, 1957

- 1957, Pres. Eisenhower passed the **Civil Rights Act** to increase African American voting in the South.
- Various 'Jim Crow' laws had limited the ability of blacks to vote without paying a poll tax or passing a literacy test.
- Act created a **Civil Rights Commission** giving federal courts the power to register African American voters.
- Registration procedures were so complex that the act proved to be ineffective, but it helped set the pattern for later civil rights legislation.



# The Little Rock Nine

- Southern states delayed putting the 'Brown' decision into action.
- Arkansas Governor **Orval Fabus** ordered the Arkansas National Guard to surround Little Rock's '*Central High*' to prevent 9 African American students from enrolling.
- Pres. Eisenhower ordered federal troops to Little Rock to ensure the **Little Rock Nine** could safely attend school.
- Gov. Fabus closed the school until the courts forced its reopening.



# Southerners Resist Integration

- **Southern Democrats** in Congress banded together to use their powers to stop passage of Civil Rights laws.
- 1963, Alabama Gov. **George Wallace** stood in the doorway of University of Alabama to prevent blacks from enrolling.
- 1964, **Lester Maddox**, a white restaurant owner wielded an axe at African Americans wanting to enter his whites-only restaurant, Maddox was later elected the governor of Georgia.



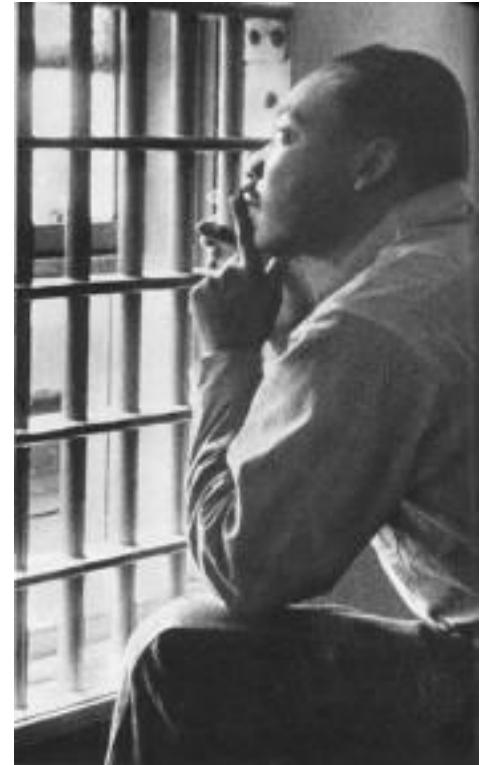
# Sit-ins and Freedom Rides, 1960-61

- 1960, four African American students, the **Greensboro Four**, held a sit-in at a “Whites-Only” lunch counter in North Carolina.
- The non-violent sit-ins spread!
- 1961, interracial groups rode buses in Freedom Rides in the South to stop segregation.
- As a result of these non-violent protests lunch counters were desegregated and the federal government was forced to help.



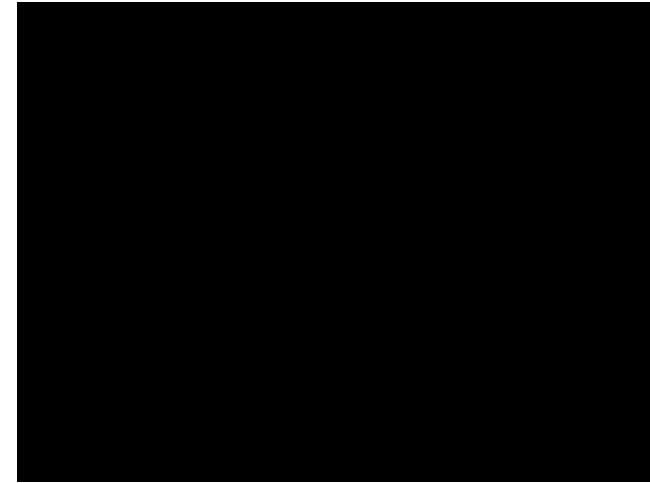
# MLK's 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail'

- MLK was emerging as the leader of the Civil Rights Movement with **non-violence** to resist unjust laws.
- King's followed in Gandhi's steps in practicing **civil disobedience** saying *'everyone has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws'*.
- When MLK led a march in Birmingham, Alabama he was arrested and jailed.
- In a "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" MLK explained why blacks could no longer wait patiently for their rights.



# The March on Washington, 1963

- 1963, to gain support for a Civil Rights bill that was before Congress MLK led a '**March on Washington**'.
- It would be the largest demonstration of human rights in history.
- It was here that King gave his famous '**I Have a Dream**' speech.
- King would later meet with JFK.
- A few months later JFK was killed, but there was a new willingness in Congress to pass legislation for Civil Rights.



# Civil Rights Act of 1964

- 1963, JFK is assassinated and LBJ becomes the president.
- As President, LBJ pushed through new legislation on civil rights.
- 1964, the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** is signed into law by LBJ.
- The law would –

*prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, or ethnic background in hotels, restaurants, and all places of employment doing business with the federal government.*



# The Struggle for Voting Rights

- 1964, **Twenty-Fourth Amendment** - eliminated poll taxes in federal elections. (Can't charge to vote)
- 1965, **Selma Marches** – MLK led marches in Selma, Alabama to demand voting rights for African Americans, but demonstrators were attacked by the police.
- 1965, **Voting Rights Act of 1965** - LBJ signed bill into law that that ended poll taxes and led to an increase in number of black voters.



	March 1965			November 1988		
	Black	White	Gap	Black	White	Gap
Alabama	19.3	69.2	49.9	68.4	75.0	6.6
Georgia	27.4	62.6	35.2	56.8	63.9	7.1
Louisiana	31.6	80.5	48.9	77.1	75.1	-2.0
Mississippi	6.7	69.9	63.2	74.2	80.5	6.3
North Carolina	46.8	96.8	50.0	58.2	65.6	7.4
South Carolina	37.3	75.7	38.4	56.7	61.8	5.1
Virginia	38.3	61.1	22.8	63.8	68.5	4.7

# Affirmative Action, 1965

- 1965, LBJ signs Executive Order requiring employers with the federal government to take positive steps to increase minority employees, later women were added.
- **Affirmative Action** programs increased number of minorities in colleges and businesses, but some said this was a form of reverse discrimination.
- In “*Regents of U. of California v. Bakke*”, the Supreme Court upheld affirmative action, but not use of racial quotas.



Alan Bakke

# Billy Graham

- One outspoken supporter of civil rights was Billy Graham.
- Billy Graham a Christian preacher and spiritual advisor to several presidents.
- Graham became an opponent of segregation and had even paid to get MLK out of jail.
- Graham advised Eisenhower to send troops to protect the Little Rock Nine.

