

Lesson Title: **The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement on American Policies, Laws and Procedures (1954-1972)**

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Historiography: Kaye Wise Whitehead

Grade: Middle/High School

Unit: The Civil Rights Movement 1954-1972

Lesson Duration: Two 60-minute periods

Historiography:

Three hundred and twelve years before the beginning of the modern civil rights era, which is generally accepted as the years between 1954 and the early 1970s, the first documented Black protest happened in America. Eleven Black slaves from New Netherland (later renamed New York) petitioned and won their freedom (and land) from the Council of New Netherland.¹ From there, as laws continued to be enacted that restricted the rights and freedoms of Black people in this country, Black Americans continued to organize, petition and demonstrate for their freedom. In fact, the first documented case that legally challenged segregated schools actually happened in 1849 with the *Roberts v. City of Boston* case, which argued that legalized segregation psychologically damaged Black students.² To fully understand the roots of the modern civil rights era, it is important to understand that the desire to be free--to be equal and to be unrestricted in movement and opportunity--has always been present in this country, in the hearts and minds of Black people. As a result, they effectively worked through the legal system to gain, maintain, and in many cases regain, their rights.

At the same time that they worked within the system, Black people have also openly rebelled against the establishment. The earliest account of a slave rebellion occurred in 1687 on a plantation in Virginia.³ Although the plan was discovered before it happened, the idea that Black people were beginning to plan to aggressively challenge the

system is important to note. There were, in a sense, always two movements happening within the Black community, one which worked within and the other which worked outside of the legal system. The understanding of these two “movements” helps to frame the modern civil rights discussion. It is also important to note that because of this history, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the movement for civil rights⁴ by Black people in this country began.⁵ In order to narrow the scope of the discussion, the Civil Rights Movement, in this document, begins with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision; peaks in 1960 with the advent of the Sit-In Movement, the founding of SNCC, the first voting case under the Civil Rights Act of 1957, President Eisenhower’s signing of the Voting Rights Act and Elijah Muhammad’s call for the creation of a Black State;⁶ and begins to decline around 1972 with the first National Black Political Convention.⁷ Additionally, this document seeks to evaluate the importance of some of the events that happened during the “peak period” and how they influenced the American social, political and economic system.

The years between 1960 and 1972, have their political and legal roots in the Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1868), and Fifteenth Amendments (1870) to the United States Constitution. Commonly referred to as the “Reconstruction Amendments,” they have collectively defined and outlined the legal status of Black people in this country. The Thirteenth Amendment freed the enslaved population; the Fourteenth established the basis for participation of males as citizens of the United States through the due process and equal protection of the laws and the Fifteenth extended the right to vote, to all men, irrespective of race or former condition of servitude.⁸ However, in 1870, only months after the passage of the last of these Amendments, the guarantees for Black Americans

would begin to be severely undermined by two important factors. The first was the social, political, and legal practices of Southern states which received direct and legal support from the federal government and the second was the widespread use of violence, intimidation and murder by the Southern white protective societies, with the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan being the most well-known organization.⁹

Post Reconstruction, national political concerns seemed to be directed towards reunifying the Nation, which did not always include answering the question of, “What to do with the former enslaved communities?” At the same time, the Supreme Court, which had many justices from the South, began the task of eroding the rights that had been granted to Black people through the Reconstruction Amendments. The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* “separate but equal” decision, that legally sanctioned southern practices of racial discrimination in public accommodations, has its roots in the Supreme Court’s 1883 outlawing of the 1875 Civil Rights Act and the 1873 *Slaughterhouse* cases, where the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment protected federal civil rights and not the civil rights that “heretofore belonged to the states.”¹⁰ With the *Plessy* ruling, the Supreme Court upheld segregation, and the South’s “Jim Crow Laws” continued without question.¹¹ In addition, the lynching of Black men and in some instances black women and white sympathizers, continued to occur at an average of 150.4 per year.¹²

This system of laws and social customs that reinforced racial segregation and discrimination continued to spread unimpeded in southern public schools, buildings, parks and transportation facilities as well as theaters, restaurants, and lunch counters. The result was that economic, educational and social progress of Black Americans continued to be restricted. Yet, within this environment of [institutionalized racism](#), Black

Americans continued to build church communities,¹³ establish educational institutions,¹⁴ organize legal campaigns and establish and operate national and international businesses. Many of the leadership and organizational skills honed among Black Americans would serve them later during the Civil Rights Movement, despite the policies and practices of a southern (and to a great extent, northern) white society violently resistant to the extension of equality to its Black American citizens.

In 1954, after a series of local and state cases had been argued by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.,¹⁵ the Supreme Court in the *Brown*¹⁶ decision ruled that segregated public schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment. As a direct response to the ruling, a number of white-only groups were organized with the intention of “maintaining a decent southern way of life... that placed Black people in subordinate roles.”¹⁷ One year later, the Supreme Court, in what is commonly called the *Brown II* decision, (the second part of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision), rejected the NAACP’s plan to integrate instantly and totally and instead adopted the Justice Department’s “go slow” approach. This plan to allow integration to happen “with all deliberate speed” translated into the enactment of 145 laws to prevent desegregation. Six months later in Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks, a quiet seamstress and secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP),¹⁸ refused to give up her bus seat to a white man and was arrested for violating the city’s segregation ordinances. This simple act of resistance, which Peter Levy terms as the civil rights “shot heard round the world,”¹⁹ sparked a widespread, year-long Black boycott of the city’s buses. Coordinated by the Montgomery Improvement Association, the bus boycott was led by a twenty-seven year old, largely unknown minister, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This was the first time that a large-scale organized protest against segregation used nonviolent tactics²⁰ and the first time that Dr. King, who went on to become the moral voice of the Civil Rights Movement, was introduced to the world. The boycott was successful on a number of levels. It proved to the world that Black people could organize and have a direct effect on a company's profits;²¹ it proved that the walls of segregation could be broken down through hard work and determination; and it proved that nonviolence could meet violence on the front lines and win. The Association's suit, which challenged the legality of segregated seating in public transportation, was decided in 1956 when the Supreme Court ruled in *Browder v. Gayle* that segregated buses violated the Constitution. One month later, the boycott ended and Montgomery's buses were desegregated.

As early victories against legalized segregation, these events provided the foundation that the Civil Rights Movement needed to build upon. The work to openly challenge and dismantle segregation had begun and would not stop until it was done. What was becoming blatantly obvious to the Black community was that there was a difference between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation.²² In Little Rock, Arkansas, for example, it took one thousand federal troops and ten thousand National Guard members for nine Black students to integrate Central High School in the fall of 1957. This was the true face of integration... nine Black students attempting to go to school in a population of thousands.²³ This same year, civil rights activists meeting in New Orleans established the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), a new organization with the primary goal of consolidating the resources of different civil rights groups. SCLC, which elected Dr. King as their first President, quickly became one of the key civil rights

organizations.²⁴ In 1958, three months after nearly 30,000 Black and white Americans gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in support of the Voting Rights Act, President Eisenhower signed the first civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, which declared that the disenfranchisement of Black Americans was illegal.²⁵ The laws were changing, but it was painfully obvious that the deep-rooted feelings of racism and segregation were not.

In 1960, the Civil Rights Movement was galvanized by the decision of four young college students to sit down and request service at Woolworth's segregated lunch counter in downtown Greensboro, NC.²⁶ This first sit-in sparked the beginning of a grassroots movement, which was primarily led by Black students against segregated public spaces in the South. In less than two weeks, the nonviolent sit-in strategy had spread across the South.²⁷ Within a year, an estimated 70,000 students from Black or racially integrated groups had participated in or marched in support of sit-ins throughout the country. This wave of nonviolent protesting was met by escalating, oft-times violent, resistance from angry white mobs, at times openly supported by the local police, whose tactics included using water hoses, throwing acid, massive armed arrests and beatings.²⁸ It had become clear to many of the young people working with the established civil rights groups, such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), SCLC and the NAACP, that they needed their own student-led organization. With the assistance of SCLC activist Ella Baker,²⁹ they created the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). As the grassroots movement fought racism head-on, Black people continued to confront segregation either through the court system or through the Executive and Legislative branches of government. The federal government ended restrictions against Black voting in the first

voting case under the Civil Rights Act of 1957³⁰ and President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Voting Rights Act, which granted additional protection to Black people working to secure the right to vote.³¹ The year ended with the *Boynton v. Virginia* decision, where the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in bus terminals serving interstate passengers was illegal. Even with all of these victories, on the ground and within the courts, it is important to note that only 6% of the schools in the South had actually integrated.

This disconnect between the law and the application of the law is exactly what James Farmer, an organizer and founding member of CORE, wanted to test when he invited volunteers to participate in the 1961 Journey of Reconciliation, which became known as the Freedom Ride. Thirteen Black and white students left Washington, D.C. on their way to New Orleans aboard public buses. The plan was that whites would sit in the back and use “Black-only” areas during the rest stops while the Black volunteers would sit in the front and use the “white-only” areas. The goal was to see how the government would respond if southern states refused to comply with the *Boynton* decision, which was also, in a sense, a test of President John F. Kennedy’s commitment to establishing civil rights. The “Freedom Riders” were first met by violence in South Carolina and it continued throughout the trip until Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy sent in the U.S. marshals to protect them.³² Four months after the rides ended, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued an order banning segregation in interstate terminal facilities. The rides, on the surface were a success, but, there was still a racial stronghold in the South that was not willing to concede.

Civil rights leaders from all of the major organizations agreed that the battle

against segregation needed a two-pronged approach. One arm would continue to focus on direct action, such as the Freedom Rides or the sit-in movement that would involve clear, public confrontations with the discriminatory social practices in southern public accommodations; the other would focus on the less visible, but equally critical, strategy of creating an educational and political base to bring about long-term social change. For both arms to be successful, they would continue to need volunteers who would be willing to literally put their lives on the line in the struggle for freedom, justice and equality for all.

James Meredith, a former Air Force veteran, answered this “call” in 1962, when he applied for admission to the all-white University of Mississippi. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. fought his battles in the courts, while Governor Ross Barnett attempted to block his admission. Even though Meredith won his case, it took 3,000 federal troops to control rioting mobs of white protesters on the day he finally entered the university. Meredith did attend “Ole Miss” and with the daily protection of federal troops became the first Black student to graduate from the school. Even with these legal and social victories (or because of them), the violent resistance to the Civil Rights Movement’s nonviolent social activism continued to grow. In 1963, in the city of Birmingham, Police Commissioner “Bull” Connor ordered his men to turn police dogs and water hoses on demonstrators, many of them teenagers and elementary school children. The continuing powerful images of the attacks, which were projected by print and broadcast media to a world wide audience, actually increased support for the Civil Rights Movement, and resulted in phone calls and numerous letters sent to President Kennedy. During this same period, Alabama’s Governor George Wallace made a

dramatic public move to stop the integration of the University of Alabama by personally standing to block the school's main door. His now infamous inauguration quote, "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever," was completely eviscerated when he publicly backed down and two students, with the protection of National Guardsmen, enrolled at the university. Later that year, Medgar Evers, a NAACP field secretary, was murdered in front of his home in Jackson, Mississippi by a member of the local Ku Klux Klan.³³

Even in the face of increased violence and terror, the nonviolent movement continued. In Washington, DC, the Civil Rights Big Six³⁴ organized the March on Washington, one of the largest peaceful gatherings in U.S. history. An estimated crowd of more than 250,000 people gathered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in a massive show of support for the nonviolent Civil Rights Movement. Dr. King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, John Lewis gave the most controversial speech of the day³⁵ and the only woman on the entire roster was singer Mahalia Jackson. The feelings of optimism, racial harmony and peaceful change lasted for about a month until the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama was bombed, killing four little Black girls. Less than three months later, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

By the following summer, Congress would pass both President Kennedy's Civil Rights Act, which prohibited discrimination in public spaces and in employment³⁶ and was hailed by many Black people as the most important piece of legislation since 1875, and the Economic Opportunity Act.³⁷ The work on the ground also continued and civil rights organizations, led by SNCC, launched a major campaign to supplement their direct action marches and protests with efforts to create a strong, long-term political base of

Black voters in Mississippi. The campaign was known as “Freedom Summer” and was led by SNCC organizer Robert Moses. Thousands of Black and white students, many from the North, responded to SNCC’s call and converged in Mississippi for a massive voter education and registration campaign and to establish Freedom Schools across the state.³⁸ Mississippi was chosen in part because it had the lowest percentage (less than 5%) of registered Black voters of any state in the country; 90% of their sharecroppers were Black; and, because of the state’s frequent use of intimidation tactics to keep Black people from registering. Opposition to the students’ work was widespread and at times, deadly.³⁹ In addition to the voter registration drives and the creation of the Freedom Schools, another core focus of Freedom Summer was the establishment of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), an integrated delegation organized to challenge the seating of the all-white official Mississippi delegation at the 1964 Democratic Party Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Their efforts would not succeed, and an offered compromise would further divide the existing civil rights organizations.⁴⁰ As the year closed, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. became the second Black person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize⁴¹ and the Supreme Court in *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. U.S.* upheld the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Act.

The beginning of 1965 was marked by an abrupt return to violence. In New York City, El-Hajj Malik el- Shabazz (Malcolm X), a former prominent representative of the Nation of Islam, was assassinated while he spoke at a meeting of his Organization of Afro-American Unity.⁴² Weeks later, on what has been called “Bloody Sunday,” civil rights marchers in Selma, Alabama were beaten back by state troopers and sheriff deputies as they attempted to cross Edmund Pettus Bridge over the Alabama River.

Photographs of the attacks displaying unarmed marchers being beaten with cattle prods, chains and bullwhips, outraged many Americans who appealed to the federal government to intervene. Later that month, under the protection of a federalized National Guard, the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, led by Dr. and Mrs. King, Ralph J. Bunche and Ralph Abernathy, was completed. The march directly influenced the federal government's decision to expedite the passage of The Voting Rights Act of 1965, which banned literacy tests and provided for federal examiners to oversee the process.⁴³

In June of the following year, James Meredith, in his "one-man pilgrimage against fear," began walking from Memphis, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi. His march was cut short when he was shot and wounded on U.S. Highway 51. Leaders from SNCC, CORE, and the SCLC joined together and continued Meredith's 220-mile march. During the march, Stokely Carmichael, the chairperson of SNCC, coined the phrase "Black Power," which highlighted growing divisions between moderate and militant civil rights groups. This concept of "Black Power" was quickly picked up and adopted by young people who saw it as the only answer to their feelings of despair, frustration and anger.⁴⁴ The increasing differences in philosophy and strategy become more apparent when CORE later voted to support the phrase while the NAACP voted to reject it. Carmichael began to move SNCC towards a more militant, aggressive and reactive position. As the year moved to a close, Barbara Jordan became the first Black person since 1883 to be elected to the Texas Senate⁴⁵ and Constance Baker Motley, a former lawyer for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., became the first Black woman appointed as a federal judge. These successes continued to solidify the legal and legislative struggle for civil rights.

The grassroots movement, which was beginning to radically shift, took a major turn in October, 1966, when the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) was founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California. They adopted the black panther as their symbol and were often photographed wearing leather jackets, berets and carrying firearms. Influenced by the ideas of Malcolm X, this militant organization advocated black self-defense and the restructuring of American society to establish wider equality. Dr. King, among many civil rights leaders, was distressed with the rhetoric of the Black Panther Party but actually shared some of its views.⁴⁶ In common, he and the BPP saw America's racism as institutionalized and they questioned the viability of capitalism as an economic solution to the problems of the Black masses. However, deep divisions existed over the role of the "church" in the struggle and the redemptive value of the continuation of a nonviolent movement.

In 1967, Thurgood Marshall was appointed to the Supreme Court and became the first Black associate justice in U.S. history. As race riots continued to erupt around the country, Dr. King, over the objections of the NAACP and with the urging of his wife, began to publicly denounce the Vietnam War. As the country moved into 1968, it began to struggle with the weight of fighting two wars: the international war in Vietnam, and the civil war, of sorts, that was happening across the nation. Although President Lyndon Johnson continued to appoint Black people to high-level federal positions, it was still not enough to change the face and feeling of racism. This was never more obvious than with the release of the Kerner Commission Report, which stated that the nation was "moving toward two societies; one black, one white --- separate and unequal."⁴⁷ On April 4, the face of the Civil Rights Movement, in a matter of minutes, was changed forever. While

visiting Memphis, Tennessee to support striking sanitation workers, Dr. King was shot and killed by sniper James Earl Ray. News of the assassination resulted in an outpouring of shock and anger throughout the nation and the world. Within days, riots broke out in more than 120 United States cities.⁴⁸ In the eyes of the world, the nation's leading voice for nonviolent racial reconciliation was gone. Seven days later, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of race in the selling and renting of houses and apartments. Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Dr. King's former organizing partner, went on to become the leader of SCLC and to lead the Poor People's March on Washington.⁴⁹

Dr. King's death, along with the passage of earlier groundbreaking civil rights legislation, fundamentally changed the landscape of the struggle. By 1970, as the Black population's income and social conditions continued to dramatically improve, the Civil Rights Movement, which had led to the dismantling of laws sanctioning white supremacy and segregation in every state, had begun to move in a different direction. The days of marches and race riots, though they had not completely ended, were starting to dwindle.⁵⁰ Rev. Jesse Jackson, former SCLC member and organizer, founded People United to Save Humanity (PUSH), an organization dedicated to economic and political action. The Supreme Court ruled in the *Swan v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* case in favor of using busing to further aid in the ongoing struggle for integration. One year later, as President Richard Nixon rejected the idea of busing, the Supreme Court in the *Wright v. City of Emporia* and *Cotton v. Schotland Neck Board of Education* cases ruled that towns could not secede from their district in order to avoid integrating. This was also the year that more than eight thousand Black people met in Gary, Indiana at the National Black Political

Convention to discuss and establish an agenda and a direction for Black political and social actions. Although the event was ignored by the white media, it was considered to be a major political and cultural event within the Black community. The frustration over the state of Black America was evident at the Convention and what was most obvious, to all present, was that Black Americans had finally achieved legal equality, but their struggle for economic and social equality would continue.⁵¹

Annotated Bibliography:

Bryant, Nick. The Bystander: John F. Kennedy and the Struggle for Black Equality. New York: The Perseus Books Group, 2006.

The Bystander takes a critical look at Kennedy's handling of the civil rights struggle. Bryant, a former BBC Washington correspondent, provides a fascinating look into Kennedy's first campaign for Congress, when he targeted black voters, to his last days wooing Southern moderates in Texas.

Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience: A Chronology. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995.

The people, places, and events that created black America are presented in brief entries arranged in chronological order. Sidebar articles interspersed throughout the text analyze the demographic, social, economic, and political conditions that affected blacks—calling particular attention to the efforts of African Americans to win freedom, respect, and improved prospects for a promising future in a country that often took the most extreme measures to deny them basic rights.

Ciment, James. Atlas of African-American History. New York: Checkmark Book, 2001.

This book uses a large collection of visual tools; this atlas offers a detailed overview of the experiences and important events surrounding Americans of African descent. The atlas also provides a comprehensive historical overview of what is known as the African diaspora—the spread of African people and culture throughout the Americas.

Photographs, line graphs, charts, chronologies, box features, and maps help explore the cultural, historical, political, and social history of African Americans.

Franklin, John Hope and Alfred Moss, Jr. From Slavery to Freedom. New York: Knopf, 2000. (8th edition)

From Slavery to Freedom is the essential starting point for any research and discussion on the history of Black people in America. It exhaustively details their lives and experiences from the coast of Africa during the 17th Century up to their on-going struggle for racial equality at the end of the 20th Century.

McKissack, Patricia and Frederick. The Civil Rights Movement in America from 1865 to the Present. Chicago: Children's Press, 1987.

Approaching the Civil Rights movement from a broader perspective, historically and socially, this volume offers young adults readers a more comprehensive, yet readable narrative.

Riches, William Terence Martin. The Civil Rights Movement: Struggle and Resistance, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

Riches revised and updated text focuses on the struggle for civil rights within the Black community from 1945-2002. He specifically evaluates how Black people used the institutions created by "segregation" to overcome America's apartheid system.

Ogbar, Jeffrey. Black Power : Radical Politics and African American Identity Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

This book clearly shows how the black power movement influenced the infrastructure, objectives, goals, and strategies of the Chicano movement, the American Indian movement, and a host of others.

Williams, Juan. Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965. New York: Viking Penguin, 1987.

This book is a companion volume to the PBS Television Series, *Eyes on the Prize*, which traces the movement from the landmark 1954 *Brown v. the Board of Education* case to the march on Selma and the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

¹ The eleven blacks had completed seventeen of their eighteen years of indentured servitude and argued that they should be freed and not subject to the 1625 Virginia law that was beginning to be adopted in the colonies. This law distinguished between Black servitude and Black slavery and laid the groundwork for the harsher more substantial slave laws that took effect beginning in 1657. For complete timeline see Christian, Charles M. Black Saga: The African American Experience. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1995. pgs 9 -15.

² Benjamin Roberts' case was argued by Robert Morris, a young Black lawyer, and Charles Sumner, who later authored the Civil Rights Act of 1875. This formidable legal team broke new ground in their argument before the court. Invoking "the great principle" embodied in the Constitution of Massachusetts, they asserted that all persons, regardless of race or color, stand as equals before the law.

In April of 1850, the Supreme Judicial Court issued its ruling in *Roberts v. Boston*. Chief Justice Shaw, unmoved by impassioned oratory about freedom and equality, decided the case on narrow legal groups, ruling in favor of the right of the school committee to set education policy as it saw fit. Shaw could find no constitutional reason for abolishing Black schools. Boston's schools would remain segregated. The community was stunned. Reference: *Historic U.S. Cases 1690-1993: An Encyclopedia* New York, Copyright 1992 Garland Publishing, New York , ISBN 0-8240-4430-4; accessed via: http://www.aaregistry.com/african_american_history/1462/Roberts_vs_City_of_Boston_begins

Although they did not win, five years later, it did have a direct impact on the Massachusetts 1855 ruling

against segregated public schools. "Segregation in the United States," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2006 <http://encarta.msn.com> © 1997-2006 Microsoft Corporation

³ John Hope Franklin's book, From Slavery to Freedom, mentions the 1687 rebellion discussion, however, Black Saga does not document it. It is noted that the 1522 slave revolt in Hispaniol and the 1526 slave revolt in the San Miguel settlement (South Carolina), both predate the Virginia discussion. See Black Saga and Franklin, John Hope, Jr. and Alfred Moss, Jr. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans. New York: Alfred P. Knopf, 2004 (8th Edition) for further information.

⁴ Webster defines civil rights as "the nonpolitical rights of a citizen; *especially*: the rights of personal liberty guaranteed to United States citizens by the 13th and 14th amendments to the Constitution and by acts of Congress." <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary> (accessed July 20, 2006)

⁵ While historians may differ about the exact time frame of the Civil Rights Movement, there is general agreement that the 1954 *Brown* decision was the "beginning" of the Movement.

⁶ In addition, King was arrested in Atlanta, 61% of Black Americans were registered to vote, CORE secured an employment agreement with Bank of America and the United States Supreme Court ruled that segregation in bus terminals (restaurants, restrooms, and waiting areas) was unconstitutional in the *Boynton v. Virginia* case.

⁷ It is difficult to set and agree upon an exact year that the Movement began to decline. On the surface, it appears as if it is as easy to choose 1972 or 1973, when the Supreme Court ruled in the *Keyes v. Denver School District* case that integration must also take place in non-southern school systems. Below the surface, 1972 was selected for a number of specific reasons: this was the first year that Black income had risen substantially since 1960 (obviously as a direct result of the gains within the struggle) particularly in the South where there was 9% increase in household incomes; Benjamin L. Hooks became the first Black person to serve on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC); President Richard Nixon rejected the idea of busing to achieve school segregation; the Supreme Court ruled in the *Wright v. City of Emporia* and *Cotton v. Schotland Neck Board of Education* cases that schools could not switch school districts to avoid segregating and Barbara Jordan became the first Black woman representative to be elected to the U.S. Congress. Additionally (and in a lot of ways, most importantly), although Black people continued to struggle for equality, the way that they struggled had definitely changed. The mass mobilizations, the Marches and the number of civil arrests did decline and have not increased since then. Christian, 458-462

⁸ Women did not gain the right to vote until 1920 with the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. It must be noted that since the struggle for women's suffrage took place within the Black and white communities, the names of Sojourner Truth, Maria Stewart, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Sarah Parker Remond must be added to any discussion that includes the names of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony.

⁹ Founded six days after the ratification of the 13th Amendment, the KKK was one of many secret white societies (the others include the Knights of the White Camelia, the Constitutional Union Guards, the Pale Faces, the White Brotherhood, the Council of Safety and the '76 Association) that were founded to restore white order and rule back to the South. Franklin writes that the struggle for Southern white rule was based upon the question of "home rule and who should rule at home." From Slavery to Freedom, 276

¹⁰ Christian, 243

¹¹ Jim Crow, as is well known and documented, was not a real person but a minstrel song that had been written during the 19th Century (although there has been some discussion that the actor modeled Jim Crow

after a slave that he had met). It was picked up by a newspaper and quickly became the “name” for America’s apartheid system. See <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/> for further information. (accessed July 20, 2006)

¹² These figures document the years between 1882 and 1900. Christian notes that the number began to decrease after 1900 with the a) increase in public awareness; b) fear of legal consequences and c) crusade against lynching by writers such as Ida Wells Barnett, a Black female editor and co-owner of the *Memphis Free Speech* newspaper. Black Saga, 262

¹³ The First Church of Colored Baptists was actually established in 1725 when Virginia granted Black slaves the right to have their own church in Williamsburg, VA. *Ibid*, 33

¹⁴ Ashmun Institute (later renamed Lincoln University) opened on January 1, 1854 as the first Black college chartered in the United States. *Ibid*, 157

¹⁵ Despite the shared names, the NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund are two separate organizations. The Fund is a legal aid group that argues on behalf of the NAACP and other civil rights groups. For further information, read histories of *Brown v. Board*, Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley.

¹⁶ The *Oliver Brown et al vs. the Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas* case consisted of five cases from around the country: *Belton (Bulah) v. Gebhart* from Delaware, *Bolling v. Sharpe* from Washington, DC, *Briggs v. Elliot* from South Carolina and *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* from Virginia.

¹⁷ Levy, Peter B. The Civil Rights Movement. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998. p387

¹⁸ The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded in 1908 after the publication of “The Call,” which was a document that urged Black and white leaders to start discussing racial, political, economical and social issues that were important to Black people. Dr. William E. B. DuBois, who later founded *The Crisis* magazine and who was actively involved in the Niagara Movement, served as the Director of Publicity and Research. With a membership of about 500,000, it is currently the largest civil rights organization in the United States. www.naacp.org/home (accessed August 17, 2006)

¹⁹ Levy, 13

²⁰ See NVLP’s *Evaluating Nonviolence as a Method of Change* lesson plan for further discussion.

²¹ The bus company suffered a 2/3rds loss in profits.

²² *De jure* segregation generally refers to segregation that is directly intended or mandated by law or segregation which has had the sanction of law. *De facto* segregation is segregation which is inadvertent and without assistance of school authorities and not caused by state action, but rather by social, economic and other determinates. Black, Henry Campbell. Black’s Law Dictionary. Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1990. (6th Edition) p416 & 425 or see “Segregation in the United States” at <http://encarta.msn.com> for further information.

²³ In 1958, The Little Rock Nine, as they came to be known, were awarded the NAACP’s Spingarn Medal for bravery. One year later, Ernest Green, the oldest one in the group, became the first Black person to graduate from Central High.

²⁴ SCLC was one of the key organizations that worked to secure the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill and the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

²⁵ Additionally, it authorized the Justice Department to seek injunctions against the interference with the right to vote and it established the Commission on Civil Rights to investigate interference with the law. Christian, 399

²⁶ Ezell Blair, Jr., David Richmond, Franklin McCain and Joseph McNeil were students at North Carolina A&T University. Although the managers refused to serve them and they faced mounting white resistance, they returned and sat down for five days straight.

²⁷ The actual numbers show that the sit-in movement spread to 15 different cities in five southern states.

²⁸ Christian, 405

²⁹ See NVLP's *We Shall Not Be Moved* lesson plan for further information about Baker.

³⁰ This case specifically ended restrictions in Fayette County, Tennessee. See The Civil Rights Reader: Basic Documents of the Civil Rights Movement, ed. Leon Friedman. New York: Walker and Company, 1968. pgs 231-236 for full text.

³¹ In addition, if the government found that a state or district was depriving Black people of the right to vote, it could enfranchise the entire area and/or appoint voting referees who could register Black people to vote. Ibid, 4-5

³² There were actually two Freedom Rides. The first ended on May 17 after the riders disbanded and flew from Alabama to New Orleans and the second included organizers and volunteers from CORE, the Nashville Student Movement, SNCC and SCLC and finally ended on May 28. Friedman, 51-60

³³ As an aside, Medgar Evers was buried at Arlington National Cemetery, an honor that was bestowed on him for his work to fight for America's ideals. Christian, 417

³⁴ The members of the "Big Six" were Dr. King, SCLC; James Farmer, CORE; John Lewis, SNCC; A. Philip Randolph, Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters; Roy Wilkins, NAACP; and Whitney Young, National Urban League. In addition, Dr. Dorothy I. Height, National Council of Negro Women, was involved (see NVLP's *We Shall Not Be Moved* lesson plan for further information on Dr. Height).

³⁵ See Peter Levy's The Civil Rights Movement for further discussion. p22

³⁶ The Bill was pushed through and signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, in the presence of a number of civil rights leaders.

³⁷ This one-billion dollar act provided funds for Head Start (daycare centers), Upward Bound (college preparatory program) and college work-study programs. Christian, 420

³⁸ The Freedom Schools were designed to teach confidence, voter literacy and political organization skills as well as academic skills. http://www.educationanddemocracy.org/FSCfiles/A_02_Introduction.htm (accessed July 28, 2006)

³⁹ Volunteers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner were murdered in Mississippi by members of the local Ku Klux Klan.

⁴⁰ The offered compromise included the Mississippi all-white delegation swearing loyalty to the party and offering two “at-large” seats to MFDP representatives. The split occurred when Dr. King, James Farmer and Roy Wilkins argued for the compromise and the representatives from SNCC, including Fannie Lou Hamer (see NVLP’s *We Shall Not Be Moved* lesson plan for further information), argued against and ultimately voted not to accept it.

⁴¹ Ralph Bunche was the first in 1950, when he was honored for his mediation work during the 1948 Arab-Israeli dispute. He went on to become the undersecretary of the United Nations.

⁴² Malcolm X’s biography, which was co-written by Roots author, Alex Haley, was published in 1964 and became an instant classic. He founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity on June 28, 1964, three months after he broke ties with Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. For further insight, see the Malcolm X Project website at www.columbia.edu/cu/ccbh (accessed August 18, 2006).

⁴³ Additionally, it gave the U.S. attorney general the power to bring suits testing the constitutionality of poll taxes and extended protection, under civil and criminal law, to qualified persons seeking to vote. Christian, 426 As an aside, on July 13, 2006, after heated debate and southern resistance, the House voted to renew the Voting Rights Act of 1965, renaming it The Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act (H.R. 9), and to send the measure on to the Senate. President George W. Bush later signed the Act on July 27, 2006. One of the major proponents of the renewal was Georgia Democratic Representative John Lewis, the former SNCC leader, who was beaten during the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Lewis stated that the Voting Rights Act was “good and necessary in 1965 and is still good and necessary in 2006.”

⁴⁴ Carmichael later described “Black Power” as “a call for Black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community.” Additionally, it was a call for Black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead and support their own organizations and to reject the racist institutions of this society and its values. Christian, 429

⁴⁵ In 1967, Shirley Chisholm became the first Black woman elected to the Congress and five years later, she became the first Black woman to run for President of the United States.

⁴⁶ Christian, p30

⁴⁷ The Commission was led by former Illinois governor, Otto Kerner, and they concluded that white racism was the principal reason that so many race riots were occurring across the nation. Ibid, 440

⁴⁸ Ibid, 440

⁴⁹ On April 28, 1968, one thousand participants, led by Rev. Abernathy marched in Washington, DC for the Poor People’s Campaign.

⁵⁰ Race riots occurred in Michigan, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Connecticut. Additionally, student violence happened at Ohio State University and Jackson State University.

⁵¹ Christian, 460