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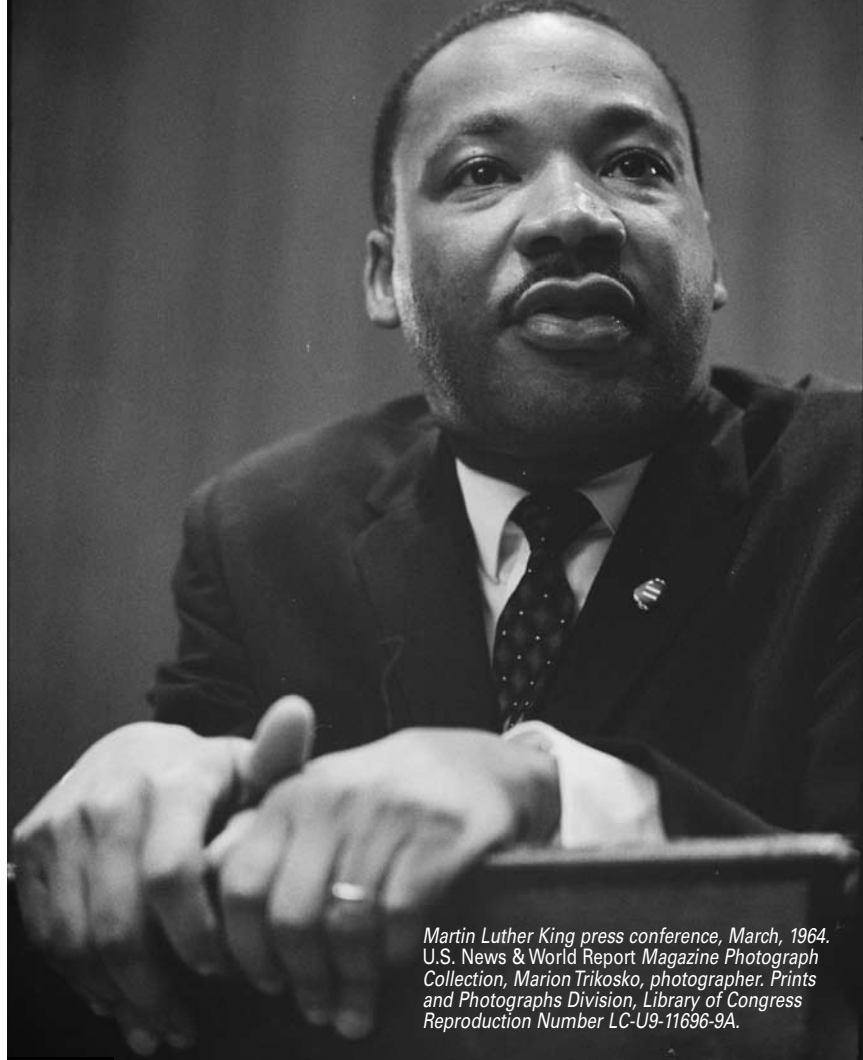
Civil Rights:

The Dream Lives On

A Hot Topics Hot Serials Supplement from



INTRODUCTION



Martin Luther King press conference, March, 1964. U.S. News & World Report Magazine Photograph Collection, Marion Trikosko, photographer. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. Reproduction Number LC-U9-11696-9A.

It's hard to say just when the civil rights movement began. Many people believe it began with the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the case called *Brown v. Board of Education*. In that ruling, which concerned the schools in Topeka, Kan., the court said that separating public school students by race was unconstitutional and had to stop "with all deliberate speed." This decision shocked the country. But many people don't know that *Brown* was the result of a multi-year effort to stop school segregation. As far back as 1849, the Boston school system was challenged for its racial policy. *Brown* was just one step in what became known as the civil rights movement. Others say the civil rights movement started with the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala., in 1955 and 1956.

Actually, though, there has been a civil rights movement since even before the United States was a country. In the 1600s, many black slaves ran away from slavery, a move toward winning their civil rights. Mennonites in Philadelphia protested against slavery in the 1660s. Many blacks brought cases to courts, challenging their slavery. Lucy Terry was a slave granted freedom by the Massachusetts legislature.

As America grew, so did the struggle for equal rights. Some states freed their slaves and granted rights to blacks. Others ended slavery but allowed laws that discriminated against blacks. After the Civil War (1860-1865), it seemed as

if the country would change its ways. The North defeated the South and slavery was ended. The new governments in the South passed laws granting more rights to blacks. But that was short-lived. Soon there was a return to slavery-like conditions. "Separate but equal" was the phrase used to describe laws that separated the races for everything, whether drinking from a waterfountain or attending school. Civil rights was not a hot topic among most Americans.

But blacks were not sitting idly by. Some moved west, looking for places to start all-black towns without racism. Others left the South and moved north, settling in cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York. Wherever they went, blacks organized and fought for their rights. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and other civil rights organizations were formed in the early 1900s. People such as Mary McLeod Bethune and Booker T. Washington founded black colleges. Black newspapers such as the *Philadelphia Tribune* and the *Chicago Defender* reported on lynching and other atrocities that black people suffered. Writers such as Langston Hughes and Richard Wright wrote about the African American experience. Political leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois and A. Phillip Randolph led marches

and wrote newspaper articles. Whites from various social and political movements wrote articles and attempted to change laws. Events like these, together, were the incubator from which

the civil rights movement was born. This newspaper section will look at a few of the key events of that time period and at the work of one man in particular — the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

DEFINITIONS

CIVIL RIGHTS. The rights of personal liberty guaranteed to U.S. citizens by the 13th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution and by acts of Congress.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. An effort to establish citizenship rights for blacks — rights that whites took for granted, such as voting and freely using public facilities.



Mary McLeod Bethune*



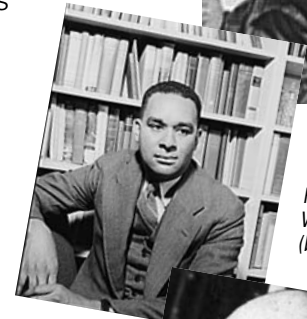
Booker T. Washington*



Langston Hughes (above) Richard Wright (left) W.E.B. DuBois (below)*



A. Phillip Randolph*



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The Movement Begins

In the 1940s, in Farmville, Virginia, black and white students were segregated. The black students were in an overcrowded building — Moton High School. In 1948, the school board decided to build three tarpaper shacks at Moton to ease the overcrowding. Barbara Rose Johns, a 16-year-old Moton student, led a strike of students to protest the conditions and to demand a new building. With the help of the local NAACP, the Moton High students filed a lawsuit to force the county to desegregate. Things in America started to change.

Brown v. Board of Education was one of the most famous decisions in Supreme Court history — partly because it reversed one of the court’s own landmark decisions. An 1896 decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, ruled that the “separate but equal” treatment was legal. The Topeka, Kan., NAACP brought the *Brown* case. The NAACP had long wanted to find cases to challenge racism and segregation. Their chapter in Topeka, Kansas combined five cases, including the Moton High School case, and challenged the idea of “separate but equal” that kept segregation going. A team of attorneys, including Thurgood Marshall (who later would become the first black justice on the U.S. Supreme Court) argued the case before the Supreme Court. In May 1954, the Court ruled unanimously that “separate but equal” in public education was unconstitutional. This was the first major victory for the budding civil rights movement. It made the

issue of segregation one that had to be addressed publicly. The problem was no longer a local issue. It was now a national issue — important all across the country.

The reaction of the whites in Prince County, Va., was the same as in many communities in the South. The Prince County school board built a new building for Moton, but rather than eliminate segregation, it closed all public schools from 1959 through 1964. White citizens and churches started “citizenship schools” and private acad-

mies rather than send their children to integrated schools. Violence flared. The Ku Klux Klan, an extremist white group, burned crosses, held rallies, and attacked blacks across the South. Other white organizations, such as the White Citizens Council, were formed. Many black leaders were attacked and/or murdered. Acts of violence were designed to scare black people to force them to stop their movement. But the movement was just gaining momentum.



George E.C. Hayes, Thurgood Marshall, and James Nabrit, congratulating each other, following Supreme Court decision declaring segregation unconstitutional, 1954. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-111236. Copyright New York World-Telegram and Sun Photograph.

Civil Rights in the NEWS

Learning standards: understanding that close observation is one tool of social scientists, writing observations

1. Throughout this section, you will read about the struggle to make equal opportunities for all people, no matter what their race. Have we achieved this? Consider African American and white relationships in your city or town today. What are your observations about what is going on around you? Write an essay telling what you think. Then, specifically focus on your local newspaper. Skim it to see whether there is equal coverage of people of all races. Write your observations of what you see.
2. What would the country be like today if the Supreme Court had ruled the opposite way in the *Brown* case and said that “separate but equal” was okay and allowed it to remain legal? Are there stories in today’s newspaper that might be different if that had happened?

And the violence, rather than halting the movement, seemed to propel it forward.

In Baton Rouge, La., T.J. Jemison started a bus boycott. It lasted 10 days and did not significantly challenge segregation, but it was a symbol of a new determination by African Americans. They were willing to come together to make their dissatisfaction public. And later, in Montgomery, Ala., that organized outrage was about to change the way the nation did things.



Headline from the Montgomery, Alabama, Bus Boycott, “5,000 at Meeting Outline Boycott; Bullet Clips Bus.” *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 6, 1955. Copyprint from microfilm. Serial and Government Publications Division. (9-3). Courtesy of the Montgomery Advertiser.*

Martin Luther King Jr.

In the mid-1950s, Martin Luther King Jr. lived in Montgomery, Ala. He had graduated from Crozier Theological Seminary and from Boston University. He studied religious concerns, but he was also interested in how religion and social change could be connected. He had read several books about Mohandas Gandhi and his nonviolent movement in India. He also read the works of Walter Rauschenbusch and Reinhold Niebuhr, two religious thinkers who talked about the "Social Gospel." That was the name given to a religious movement that stressed the need to act as

living examples of religious values, even if it meant going against the society. Their ideas gave King much to think about, and in Montgomery he put those ideas into action.

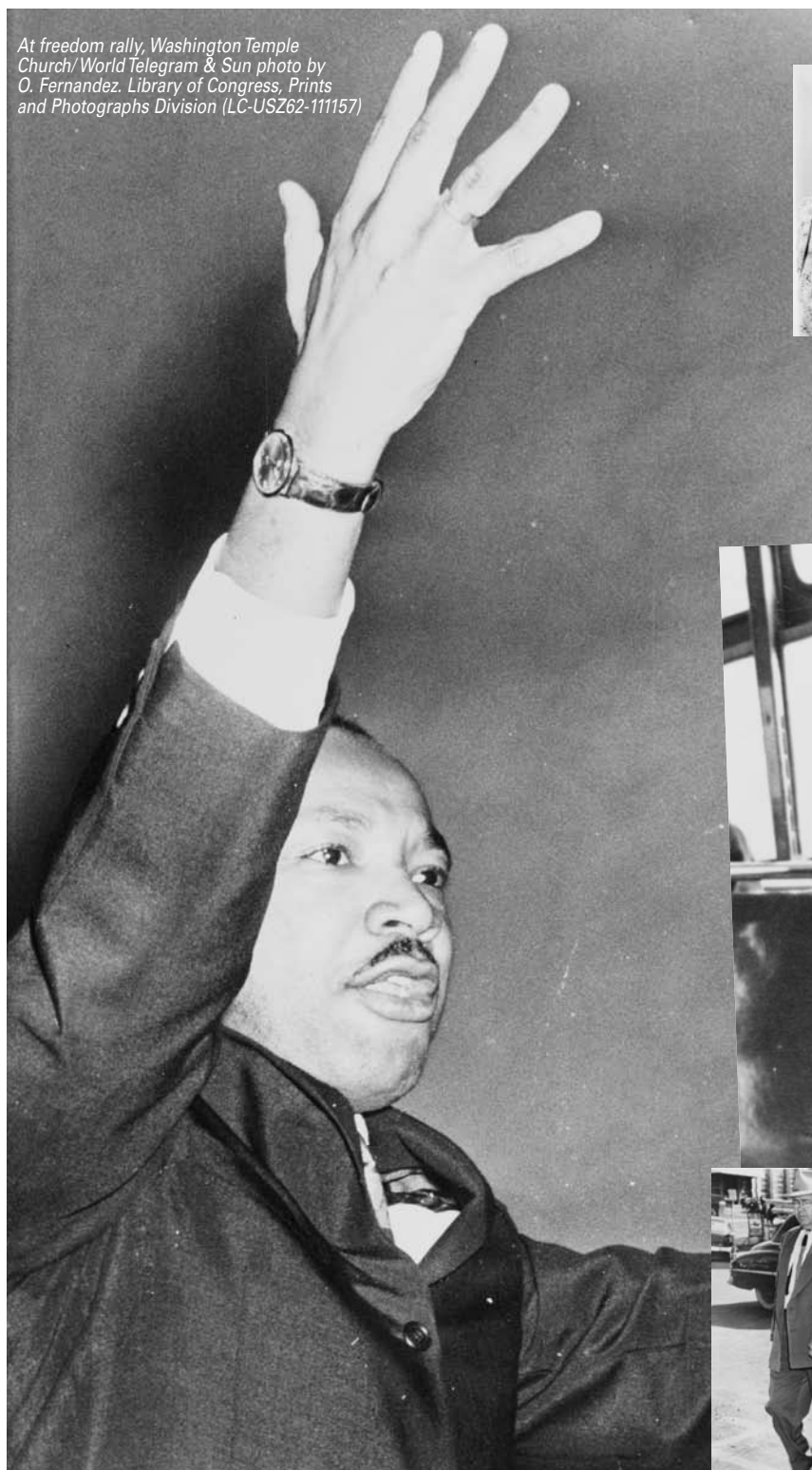
On September 5, 1954, he preached his first sermon at Dexter Baptist Church in Montgomery. He was nervous, but he had advice from his father. He made several changes that got more people involved in running the church and serving it. He demonstrated his ability to work with all members of the church, and that impressed others. He became involved in the local NAACP chapter. His work was crucial for what followed in Montgomery because his skills as a leader and organizer were being formed when he would most need them.

In Montgomery, there had been two cases of blacks being arrested for violating the "whites in the front" seating policy of Montgomery buses. The NAACP didn't fight too hard after those incidents because it believed that the people involved would not get the support such an effort would need. However, when Rosa Parks was arrested, things were different. Rosa Parks was an officer in the local NAACP. She worked as a seamstress and was dignified and well spoken. She was a perfect symbol for the protest. At first, blacks were asked not to ride the buses on the following Monday. Organizers of the protest were going to plan negotiations with the bus company. Tensions ran high with lots of different opinions about what to do. It was decided to boycott the buses for a longer time, until the racist policy was changed.

Dr. King rose and spoke to the group. He talked about the need for unity and the fact that this was a "time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression." He talked about the justice of their cause. He spoke seriously, loudly, and forcefully about how the protest would be carried out. "There will be no crosses burned at any bus stops in Montgomery. ... There will be no whites taken out of their bedrooms and murdered. Love and justice stand side by side." He spoke about the need for the protest to be determined but peaceful. A new mass movement was being born.

Above, Rosa Parks, three-quarter length portrait, seated toward front of bus, Montgomery, Alabama. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-111235). Left, Rosa Parks walks between her attorney, Charles D. Langford, and an unidentified deputy, on her way to jail, Montgomery, Alabama. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-111445).

At freedom rally, Washington Temple Church/World Telegram & Sun photo by O. Fernandez. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-111157)



Busy Being Born

The birth and the boycott were difficult. At first, black taxicab companies gave black workers rides at cheap rates to allow them to get to work. But the Montgomery City Council banned discount rates. The state Attorney General banned the activities of the NAACP in Alabama. White business people and political leaders were determined not to give in. Violence

city leaders and kept people informed. He convinced African Americans with cars to donate their time and vehicles to the boycott. Others walked to and from work rather than ride the buses. This boycott was better organized than the one in Baton Rouge. But it also benefited from another change in American life. The media had come of age.



Left, Dr. King surrounded by newsmen, 1963 photo by Ernst Haas, (LC-USZ62-123456); top, Dr. King at Gracie Mansion, NYC, NY, 1964. World Telegram & Sun photo by Dick DeMarsico, (LC-USZ62-122988); above, Pickets at the Robert E. Lee Hotel, from the NAACP collection, (LC-USZ62-121495).*



Martin Luther King, Jr., pulls up cross that was burned on lawn of his home, as his son stands next to him, Atlanta, Georgia, 1960. New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection*

flared; King's home was fire-bombed, blacks were beaten, and another reverend's home was bombed. This was about much more than who sat where on a bus. This was about the survival of a segregated society.

Montgomery's blacks founded the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to carry out the boycott. King had learned from the previous bus boycott in Baton Rouge that organization, consistent pressure, carpools, and finances would be important. He held rallies and kept people motivated. He negotiated with

Television was new at the time. Most homes in America didn't have a TV in 1953. Still, the media came to be an important part of the civil rights movement. Networks put money into national news, and the Montgomery boycott soon became a feature of many news stories. Each event – the firebombing of King's home, King's trip to New York to raise funds for the MIA, and acts of violence by whites – was reported. People in their living rooms could see what life was like for blacks in the South. Some of them sent money to support the protesters. The nation was interested in the boycott and in the nonviolence of the marchers. This, in combination with the Brown decision, meant that the issue of segregation was being examined widely and closely.



NAACP youth and student members marching with signs protesting Texas segregation laws, Houston, Texas. Visual Materials from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Records.*

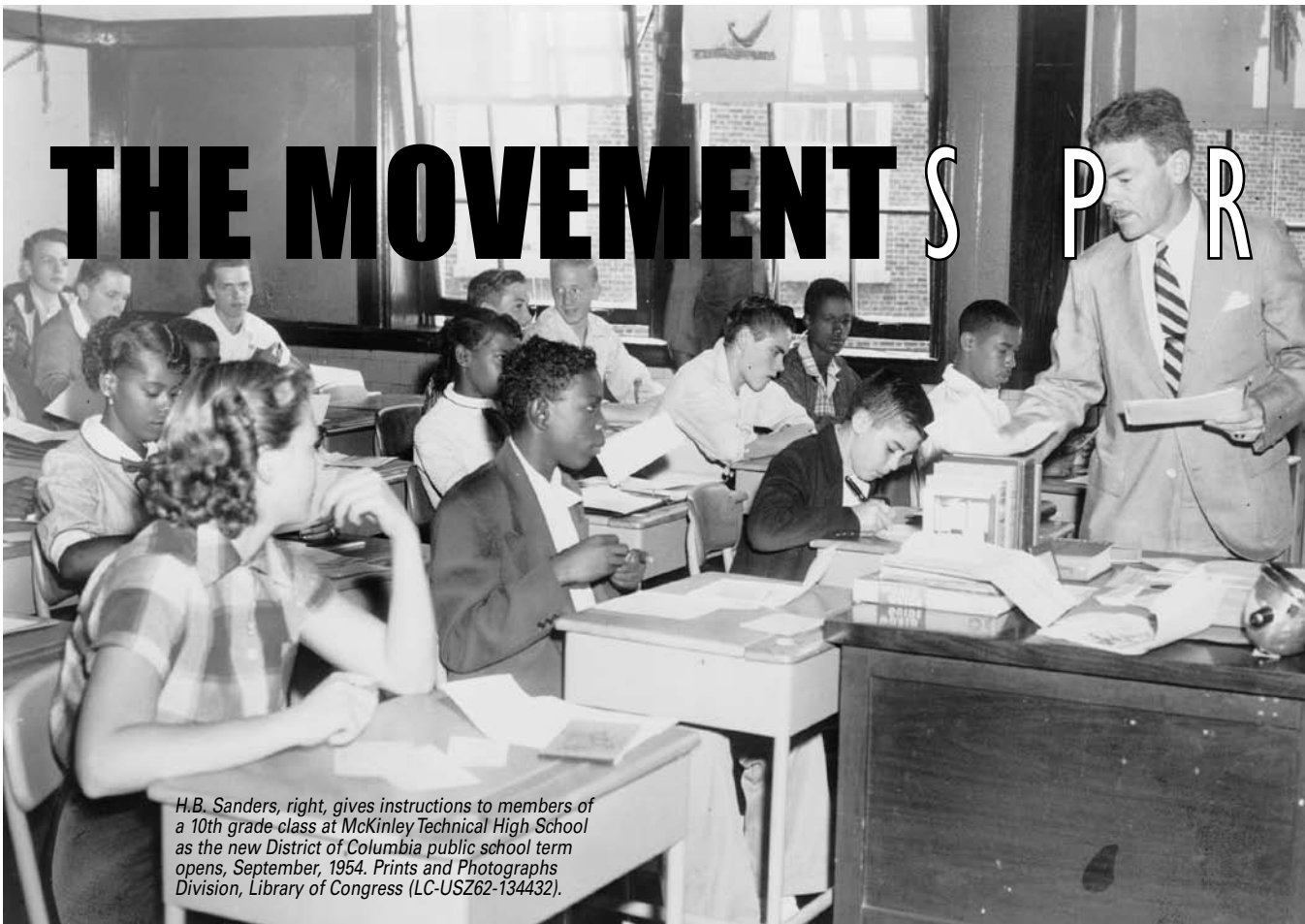
Eventually, a federal court ruled that assigning seats based on race was unconstitutional. But Montgomery's bus company was losing a lot of money from reduced ridership, and other white businesses suffered as blacks expanded the boycott to include them. With the courts against them, the bus company and the city of Montgomery accepted the federal order to desegregate the buses. Skin color no longer decided where people sat on a bus.

Civil Rights in the NEWS

Learning standards: skimming, letter writing

The media — that is, news organizations such as newspapers, television, radio, magazines, etc. — played a big part in spreading the news of the '60s so that people around the country and the world could follow what was happening and get involved if they wanted. When elected officials take a stand, the media let people know so that voters can decide whether they want to support that person again. Can you find a politician in the newspaper with whom you agree or disagree? Find one and write him or her a letter telling how you feel.

THE MOVEMENTS P R E A D S



H.B. Sanders, right, gives instructions to members of a 10th grade class at McKinley Technical High School as the new District of Columbia public school term opens, September, 1954. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress (LC-USZ62-134432).

the black students from entering all-white Central High School. This brought on a national crisis – the governor of a state was using state troops to defy a federal order.

The standoff was featured on the evening news every day. President Dwight Eisenhower negotiated with Faubus and thought they had agreed that the Guard would protect the students rather than bar their way. Instead, Faubus removed the Guard, allowing white mobs outside the school to riot. Eisenhower finally assigned U.S. Army troops to escort the students into school. Slowly, the school was integrated. Army troops stayed in Little Rock for a year, accompanying the students just about everywhere they went. While many white citizens didn't agree with the integration of their school, most stopped actively resisting it. However, in Little Rock and elsewhere across the nation, private all-white academies were formed as a way of avoiding integration.

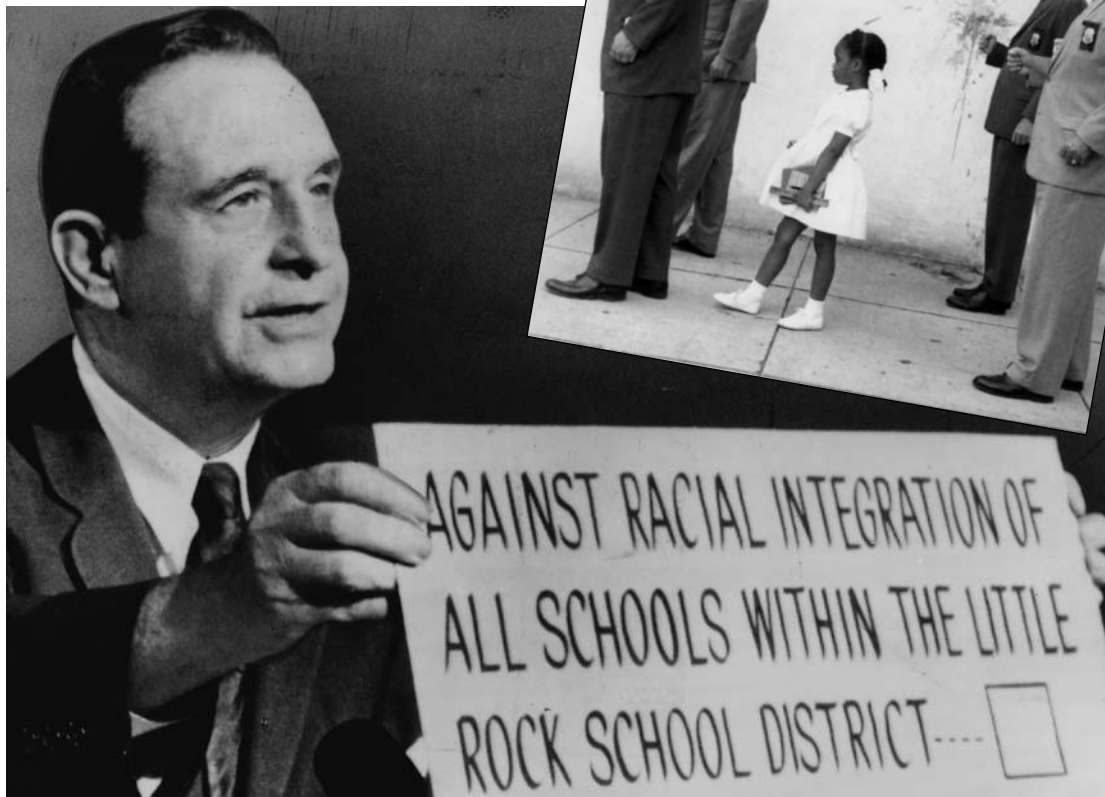
Schools in Black and White

Because the Montgomery bus boycott and the Brown Supreme Court decision happened at about the same time, the two events together led to even more challenges to racism. Whites in several states didn't want to desegregate schools. Many white politicians argued that the federal government was trying to make laws that should have been made by the states themselves. Some governors vowed that their states would not give in to "federal bullying." One of the best known of these conflicts was in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Orval Faubus was the governor of Arkansas. He

didn't want the schools in his state desegregated with blacks and whites going to school together. Little Rock, the state capital, was the battleground. The schools

were due to be integrated, and white citizens were outraged. Faubus called out the National Guard to prevent



Arkansas governor Orval Faubus, 1958, holding sign reading "Against racial integration of all schools within the Little Rock school district." New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection, (LC-USZ62-126829).*

Many schools in the South did integrate peacefully. In some districts, white and black teachers were integrated too so that the black students would have a peaceful transition. Many districts started busing black students to white schools to comply with the desegregation order. But that all took time.

Some Northern school districts were just as segregated as Southern schools. Even without segregation laws, housing patterns in the North led to segregated schools. In neighborhoods where only white people lived, the schools were all-white – and vice versa. Attempts to change this went on in the North until the 1970s. Busing could help to integrate schools, but the housing patterns were much harder to change.

Sitting In

A new wave of optimism spread across the country as people got involved in the civil rights movement. The first civil rights bill in 80 years was passed in 1957, but many people felt that it did not go far enough.

Demonstrations aimed at ending segregation in theaters, restaurants, and schools took place. And a new tactic was gaining attention – the sit-in movement.

The sit-in demonstration was simple: A group of blacks and whites would go to a whites-only establishment and sit there. Whites would taunt them, threaten them, hurl objects at them, and beat them. But they would sit there, sing songs, and take the abuse. It was part of King's nonviolent strategy.

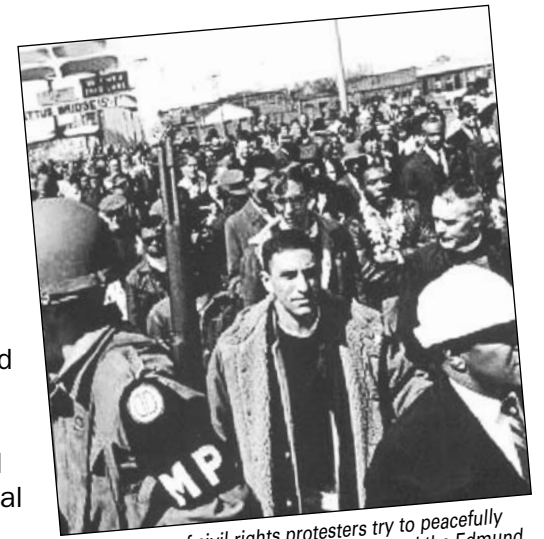
The sit-in movement had many roots. Myles Horton, a white Tennessean, had formed the Highlander Folk School years earlier. Highlander was a place where blacks and whites met and discussed their racial ideas and experiences. People who would later become prominent in the civil



the movement to other issues. He had published his first book, **Stride Toward Freedom**, and had appeared on national interview programs defending the sit-ins.

The sit-in movement spread. Cities found themselves dealing with scores of peaceful students who would not move.

Arresting them did no good. They went willingly, refused to pay fines, and sat in jail gaining more media coverage. As other events took place around the country – the presidential election in 1960, violence against blacks throughout the South, and more legal challenges to segregation in the courts – the sit-ins added to the public nature of the movement. And there was more to come. Students were about to challenge segregation for the biggest prize of all — the vote.



Left, a group of civil rights protesters try to peacefully resist arrest. Above, protesters walk toward the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma Alabama on March 9. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led a "symbolic" walk to the bridge after "Bloody Sunday," a march on March 7 where state and local lawmen attacked participants with billy clubs and tear gas and drove them back into Selma.*

Left & below, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Visual Materials from the NAACP Records.



rights movement explored ideas of nonviolence and social change. James Lawson, who worked with King, had been there. So had Septima Clark, Robert Moses, and James Bevel, people who helped the sit-in movement develop. When four freshmen students from colleges in the Greensboro, N.C., area sat in at a Woolworth's department store, the whole country watched.

Lawson and Clarke got King and members of the NAACP involved. King formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta. His presence lent a sense of seriousness to the sit-ins. He spoke to the media, raised funds, and linked

GETTING THE VOTE FOR BLACKS

In 1960, Bob Moses, a Northern black man, came to the South to work with the movement. He had a radical idea – mass voter registration. Many states prevented blacks from voting by using a literacy test. The test required potential voters to read and understand parts of the state constitution. Moses and his co-workers copied the constitutions and set up schools to teach about them. Hundreds of people, black and white, came south to teach in these "freedom schools." The sit-in movements, the court cases, and these efforts helped civil rights remain an important national issue.

Some whites got angry. Many of the black workers were jailed and attacked. Several were murdered, and all-white juries frequently found the accused not guilty. But the violence touched something in the American consciousness. How could the United States allow such violence to occur? Again, the federal government got involved, with the FBI and the Justice Department bringing federal cases against some white sheriffs and mayors. It would take years before blacks were able to vote freely, but the tide was turning and by the mid-1970s, some Southern towns and cities had black elected officials. Segregation was on the way out. Equality was on the march.

THE MARCH ON

The Start of

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The movement had tough years from 1960 to 1963. King was its spokesman and the pressure of that role was hard on him. Although there were other leaders and other groups, King, with his great speech-making talent and his many TV appearances, was in the spotlight more and more. He continued focusing on nonviolent resistance, which was something many Americans found intriguing. Although they were familiar with rebellions, non-violent protests – talking about “love” while challenging how things were – were new.



A police officer grabs Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. by the seat of his trousers in jailing him for leading an anti-segregation march in Birmingham Alabama. April 12, 1963. UPI Telephoto. (LC-USZ62-120213)*

A lot was happening – but not much was changing. King wrote another book. He raised money for the cause. He took part in a movement in Birmingham

where he was arrested. He was working on the book, **Letters From A Birmingham Jail**, and, while in jail, he received messages from John F. Kennedy, who would later be elected president. Civil rights workers had been murdered, as had Medgar Evers, a major leader of the Mississippi NAACP. Beatings, mass arrests, and countless marches occurred across much of the country. But segregation was still a fact in many places.



Civil rights leaders figured that something big was needed. They decided on a massive march on Washington. It was a risky proposition. The Kennedy administration, the Washington, D.C., police, and civil rights leaders themselves were afraid of rioting. But the leaders knew that the time was right for a major event. In Detroit, 125,000 people had marched peacefully with King after Medgar Evers’ murder. They decided to go ahead.

The March on Washington was held on August 28, 1963. Tens of thousands of people took part — people of different backgrounds, from all parts of the country, and of all occupa-



Civil Rights in the NEWS

Learning standard: evaluating justice in a democratic society

Martin Luther King Jr. said that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” It took a long time to convict some of the murderers during the civil rights movement. Do you think justice was served? What are the effects of a long delay in prosecution on the victims’ families, the perpetrators, and society? Can you find evidence in the newspaper of a situation involving justice? Write a summary of one story about justice.

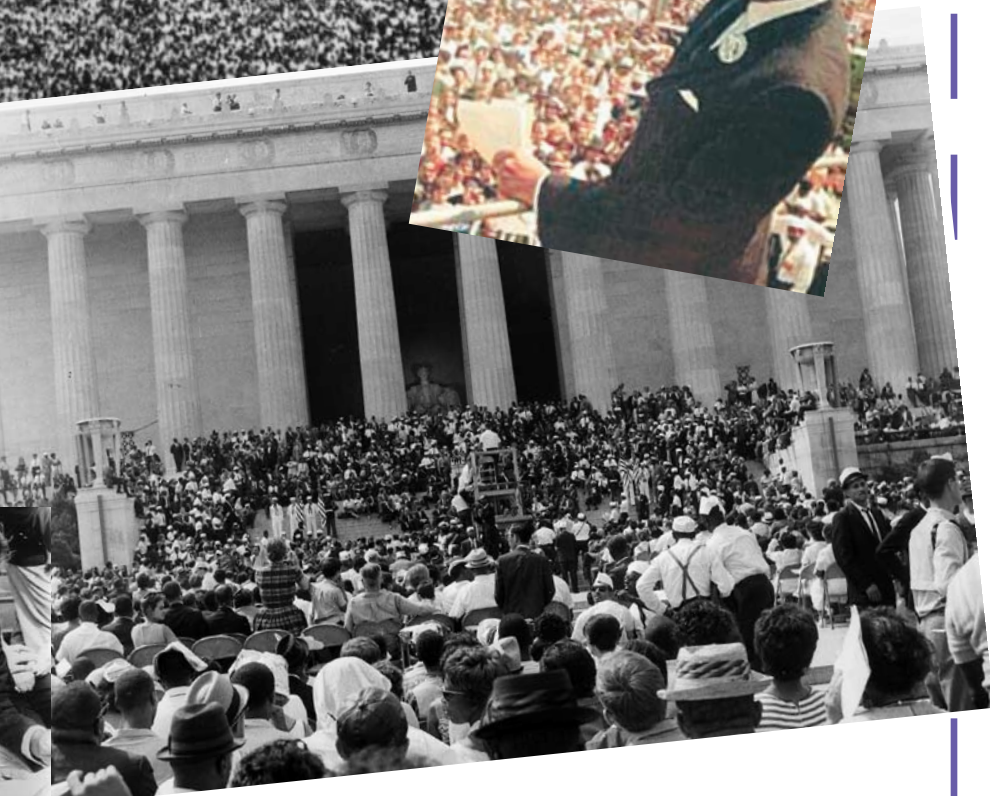
Photos from the Washingtoniana collection of the Martin Luther King Library, Washington, DC.

tions. There were labor leaders, Hollywood celebrities, folk singers, civil rights workers, students, religious leaders, and more. More than 300,000 people attended one of the largest mass meetings in the nation’s history. Labor and religious leaders spoke of

IN WASHINGTON

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the unity of their cause with the civil rights movement. Celebrities spoke of a “new day dawning.” But the day belonged to King and his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

Each speaker was to have only 7 minutes. But halfway through his 7 minutes, King began to preach. He talked about not giving in to the “valley of despair” and urged people to continue the struggle. He talked about a dream — mixing Bible quotes with quotes from the song “America.” He asked for freedom to “ring ... from the hilltops of New Hampshire ... from the Stone Mountain in Georgia.” It was a speech that moved everyone who heard it

to cheer and cry. The March on Washington succeeded. Civil rights for all were going to be reality.

The Bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church

The racially motivated bombing of Birmingham’s Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was one of the darkest days in Birmingham’s history. City authorities did very little to bring the bombers to justice. Nationally, the bombing gave the movement not just a face, but four faces – four young, innocent faces.

Between 1947 and 1965, more than 50 bombings occurred in Birmingham, resulting in the city’s nickname, “Bombingham.”

The church bombing followed heightened tensions in the city after a federal court ordered its schools to be integrated. Gov. George Wallace defied this order and urged his followers to do the same. This encouraged Birmingham’s segregationist bombers to act.

It was a quiet Sunday morning – September 15, 1963. The spring of that year had seen many ugly events, including some where police and fire fighters used dogs and fire hoses on demonstrating blacks. That day, four little black girls prepared for Sunday school in the basement of their church. In that same basement sat a bomb, placed there to protest the forced integration of Birmingham’s public schools. Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, Cynthia Wesley, and Addie Mae Collins were killed when the bomb exploded. Later that day, during the resulting riots, other black youths were murdered.

Some whites condemned the bombing. The FBI took over the investigation from local authorities that had shown no real concern for solving the crime, despite strong evidence pointing to the bombers. Even the federal authorities failed to convict anyone for the crime until 1977, when one of the bombers was convicted.

The bombing outraged the nation. The blast, along with other awful Alabama events (such as the dogs and fire hoses of 1963, the beatings of demonstrators as they began the march from Selma to Montgomery in 1964) contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the death of segregation in the South.



AFTERMATH

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON was a success, but there still would be many struggles before segregation would be wiped out. There was more violence to be endured. Not only were the four schoolchildren killed in the church bombing in Birmingham, but there were mass arrests at demonstrations in the North. And there was the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963, after which Lyndon Johnson became president. For a while, it seemed as if the country was coming apart.



Crowd listens outside radio shop at Greenwich and Dey Streets for news on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, November 1963. World Telegram & Sun photo by O. Fernandez. Prints & Photographs Division, Library of Congress (LC-USZ62-132849).

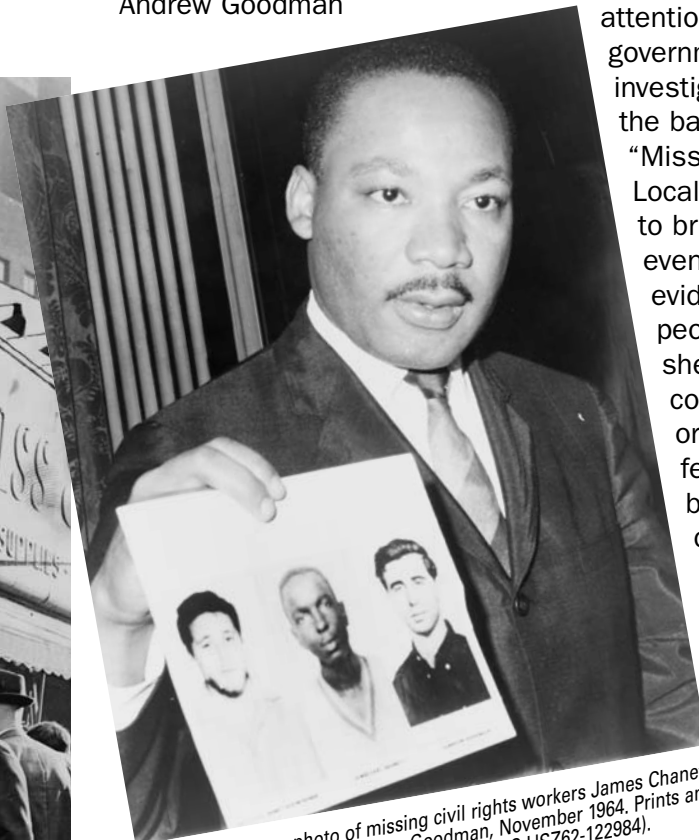
Mississippi Burns during Freedom Summer

It was the summer of 1964, later called the “Freedom Summer,” and there was tension all around Philadelphia, Miss. A voter registration drive there brought many college students from the North to register blacks to vote. There was violence. Workers had been beaten and Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, a headquarters for the workers, had been burned. James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman



Learning standards: understanding the destructive power of hatred, comparing and contrasting Hate, which played a big part in the civil rights movement, is destructive. Do any articles in today's newspaper involve hatred? Compare the role that hatred has played in the civil rights movement with the role of hatred in today's news. Identify ways in which the stories are similar and ways in which they are different.

The murder of the three men captured the nation's attention. The federal government launched an investigation that became the basis for the film, “Mississippi Burning.” Local authorities refused to bring murder charges, even though there was evidence that local people, including the sheriff, either knew who committed the crimes or were involved. The federal government brought charges of civil rights violations and won several convictions, but the murderer of the three remained unknown.



Dr. King holding a photo of missing civil rights workers James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman, November 1964. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress (LC-USZ62-122984).

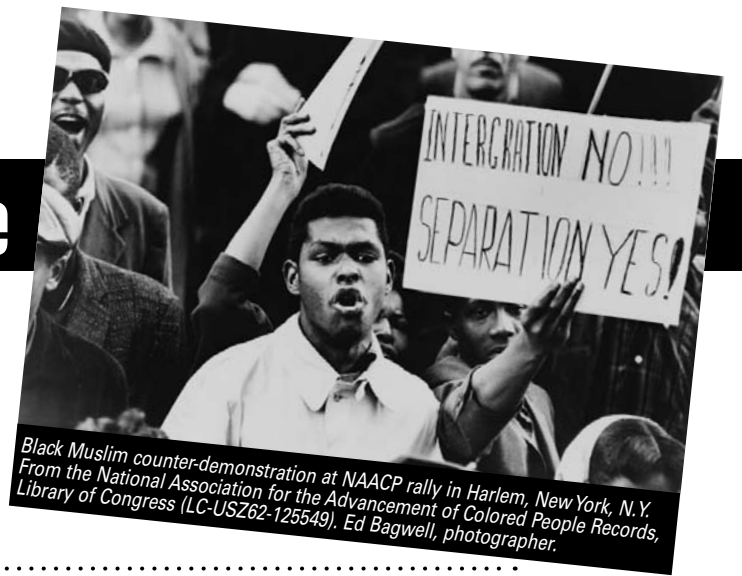
were three of the civil rights workers. Chaney was black, Schwerner and Goodman white. They had been arrested on charges of speeding and were taken to jail. After their release, they disappeared. The local Ku Klux Klan leader ordered their deaths. Six weeks later, their bodies were found. They had been beaten and shot to death.

But then there was a break in the case. On January 6, 2005,

Edgar Ray Killen, a 79-year-old preacher, was charged in the murder. Evidence given in secret by people who knew details of the murder linked Killen to the acts. He pleaded not guilty and had a trial. Finally, 41 years after the murders, the jury came back with a guilty verdict and Edgar Ray Killen was convicted of manslaughter.

Other Leaders On the Move

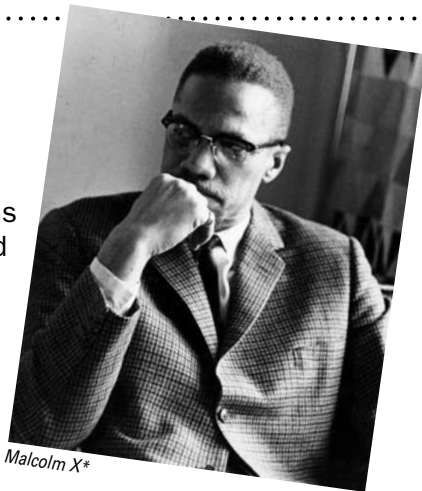
In the mid-1960s, blacks began to sense that it was possible to change the racial patterns of the United States. The big question: What was the best way to hurry that change along? Many continued to believe in the nonviolent ways of King. But others thought that King's way was too slow or not forceful enough. These people wanted things changed as quickly as possible. Two of those people were Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael.



Black Muslim counter-demonstration at NAACP rally in Harlem, New York, N.Y. From the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Records, Library of Congress (LC-USZ62-125549). Ed Bagwell, photographer.

Malcolm X

Malcolm X was born Malcolm Little. He had been in trouble with the law for much of his life. He was in jail in Michigan when he learned of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. The Nation of Islam, called the Black Muslims, was a group that preached total separation of blacks and whites. It called for blacks to adopt what they saw as a "Muslim" lifestyle of dedication to service and discipline. Malcolm X did, and he quickly became a leader in the group. His ability to organize people and speak well before the cameras and his total dedication to the cause made him the most well-known Black Muslim.



Malcolm X*

Stokely Carmichael

Stokely Carmichael first became known as a SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) volunteer during the voting registration drives in the South. A West Indian by birth, he had come to New York and was very taken with the struggle of blacks in America. In the South, he witnessed much of the brutality associated with the movement, and he became dissatisfied with its nonviolent approach. He thought that blacks should arm themselves for self-defense,

and he began to talk of a separate black movement. He is credited with starting the phrase "Black Power," by which he meant that blacks needed to build their own organizations, conduct their own movement for freedom, and use violence if necessary. This made him popular with many younger blacks who were impatient with the slow change in the United States.

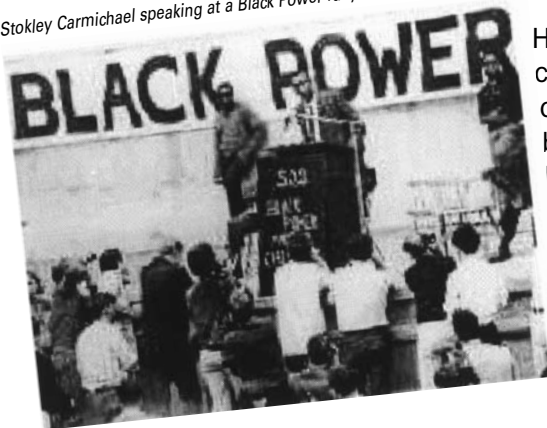


Stokely Carmichael

He gave many speeches around the country in which he seemed to be arguing for an overthrow of the American system.

Carmichael eventually left the United States and went to Africa, where he continued to attack what he saw as the "twin evils" – white power in the United States and the power of the American business system. As changes occurred in American life, his message found fewer followers. Eventually, he faded from the news. He died of cancer in 1998 in the African country of Guinea. He was a controversial figure and, to many, the symbol of black outrage. But despite his actions and beliefs, Stokely Carmichael reminded many white Americans that many blacks were unwilling to wait for "gradual improvement" and that many of them were angry and considering violence as an option.

Stokely Carmichael speaking at a Black Power rally.



He called some nonviolent civil rights workers hopeless dreamers and fools because he saw no way blacks and whites could work together for justice. Malcolm X journeyed to Saudi Arabia. There his ideas began to change.

He saw Muslims of all colors and ethnic groups united in worship. He began to question many of Elijah Muhammad's teachings. He thought perhaps the anti-white stand of the Black Muslims was wrong. His changing beliefs eventually led to his break from the Black Muslims, and he started his own organization in New York City. He had just begun putting the new organization together when he was gunned down while giving a speech. He was 39 years old. For many African Americans, his death came too soon. He remains a powerful symbol to many blacks today who admire his dedication to justice and his pride in being a black man.

Civil Rights in the NEWS

Learning standard: understanding the use of symbols to convey messages

Symbols are a powerful tool to call people to action. Think about some of the symbols throughout history — the fist of the Black Power movement, the Nazi swastika, the cross, the Star of David, the AIDS ribbon, etc. Also consider commercial symbols and logos, such as the Nike swoosh or the McDonald's arches. Find symbols in the newspaper and add them to the list. Discuss what these symbols have in common. Then design a symbol that represents something you care deeply about.

King Continues the Work

After the success of the March on Washington, King decided to keep going. As freedom schools and voter registration drives continued, he traveled the country and the world speaking of the movement. He branched out, linking his ideas about civil rights to larger issues, such as the Vietnam War and the troubles of poor people. This was risky, and King did lose some support because of those issues. But he kept working.

There were triumphs, too. The anger over the violence led Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Freedom Summer brought hundreds of new civil rights workers into the South to register voters and to teach. More and more blacks were demanding an end to segregation in housing and other aspects of their life. In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was passed. Across the North, cities slowly changed housing codes and other laws that discriminated. Congress was debating an "Open Housing Act" that would end discrimination in housing.

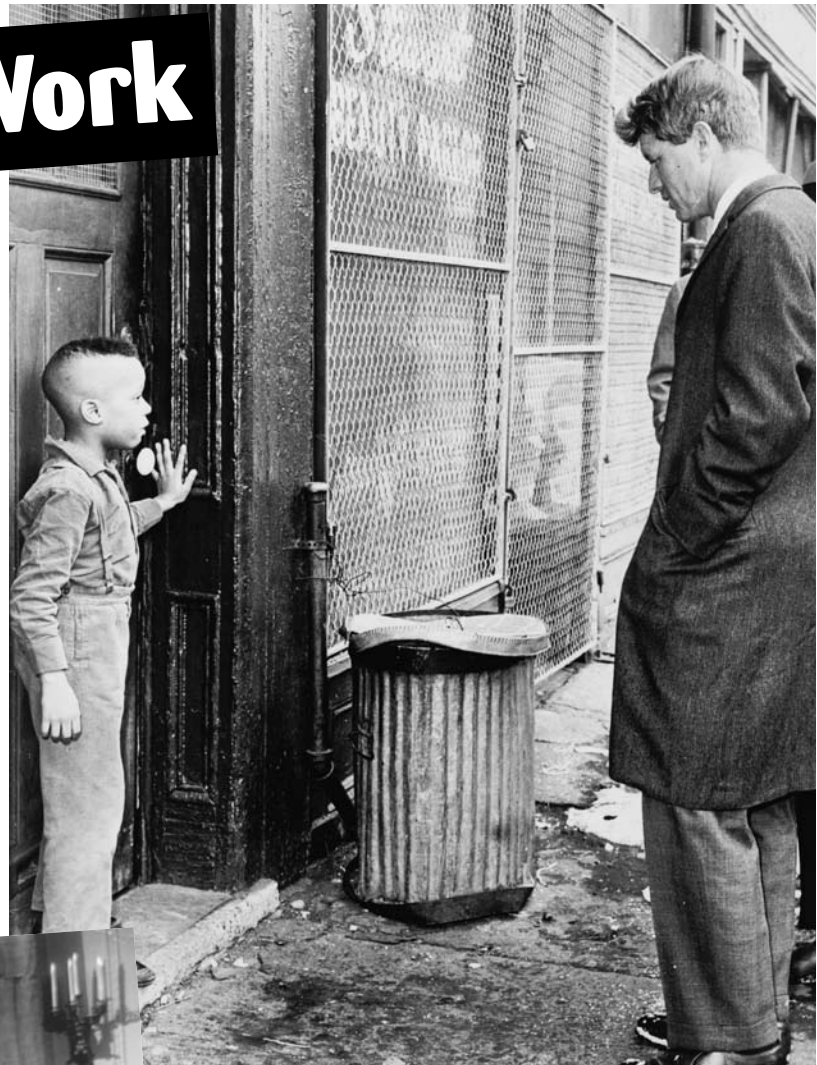
King experienced some personal triumphs as well. He was on the cover of Time magazine and, in 1964, he became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. He met with the President. In some ways, his message was being recognized.

But by 1967 "Black Power" had become the cry of new student groups that did not embrace King's idea of an integrated, nonviolent movement.

Groups such as the Black Panthers talked about armed defense. There were protests against the Vietnam War that turned violent, and several political groups had come out in favor of violent revolution. Even one of King's marches turned violent, something that had never happened before.

King was troubled by the violence. He continued to argue that issues of the war, civil rights, and economic justice were connected. He criticized the war as a waste of resources that could be better spent at home. He spoke about housing discrimination, slum neighborhoods, and the poverty of much of black America. This made many of his former supporters angry, but he spoke out anyway. He took part in a housing demonstration in Chicago, spoke at anti-war rallies, and thought of organizing a "Poor People's Campaign" to highlight problems of poverty.

President Lyndon Johnson had made wiping out poverty a goal of his administration, and King felt that the time was right to address the issue. He introduced his "Poor People's Campaign" with an announcement that he would lead another "March on Washington," this one to try to collect money to fight poverty. He also got involved with sanitation workers striking in Memphis, Tenn.



Senator Robert Kennedy discusses school with young Ricky Taggart of 733 Gates Ave./World Telegram & Sun photo by Dick DeMarsico. LC-USZ62-133361*

The sanitation workers, mostly black, had been on strike for a while. For King, this was a situation that illustrated the issues of economic and racial justice. He traveled to Memphis, met with strike leaders, and led a march. He also spoke at a church rally and gave a speech that seemed to predict his own death. He spoke of having been to "the mountaintop," referred to the "promised land," and said, "I may not get there with you." It was one of his most powerful sermons.

On April 4, 1968, while King was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, a shot rang out. King fell. Aides rushed to help him. King was taken to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead. The most influential black American of the previous 20 years had been killed by an assassin's bullet. The police arrested a man named James Earl Ray, who was convicted of the crime. He later claimed his innocence, and many people still say the crime has not been solved.

Shock and anger filled the nation's black communities. Many communities broke out in riots, which went against what King had believed. Neighborhoods burned, cars were overturned, and stores were looted. It was a sad time. The man who had preached nonviolence and had helped change a nation was gone, and it seemed that his dream for nonviolence had died with him.



Lyndon Baines Johnson signing the Civil Rights Bill, April 11, 1968. (LC-USZ62-95480)*

Music and the Movement



More than 300,000 people attended the March on Washington in 1963. That number is huge and the sounds they made echoed all

over Washington, D.C. But it wasn't the sound of a large, rowdy crowd. It was the sound of voices raised in powerful and purposeful song. People swayed back and forth, clapped their hands, and raised their voices to the sky. This music was part of the glue that held the civil rights movement together. The bond was forged, not only by politics and determination, but also by song.

The songs of the civil rights movement were based on black religious and oral traditions. Many of the songs were gospel and church songs that had been changed to reflect the ongoing struggle. "I Shall Not Be Moved," a song about an individual's determination to stay faithful to his religion, became "We Shall Not Be Moved," a song about not giving up in the face of police dogs, racist sheriffs, and the Ku Klux Klan. Likewise, the most famous song of the era, "We Shall Overcome," was originally a gospel song about one person's statement of faith. It became a powerful statement of the civil rights movement's determination. In the 1960s, that song could be heard wherever groups of blacks and whites who believed in change were gathered. And it spread the movement faster than the news.

In the early days of the movement, these songs were



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addressing a crowd on a street in Lakeview, N.Y., May, 1965. New York World-Telegram & Sun Collection. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LC-USZ62-111162).

sung and chanted at mass meetings and demonstrations. Sometimes, before a rally or march, participants would gather at a church to organize, and the music brought the people together. Many times, groups would be arrested, and, while being taken to jail, they would burst out in one of the "freedom songs," as they came to be known. Even in jail, the singing continued, giving strength to the marchers and letting them know that they were all in the struggle together. This became one of the highlights of the movement. Songs have been a part of protest movements since ancient times, but as **Newsweek** magazine said in 1964, "History has never known a protest movement so

rich in song as the civil rights movement. Or a movement in which songs are so important." Songs gave the civil-rights workers inspiration and strength.

As the movement gained national attention, people far away from the actual struggle picked up the songs. TV news and radio shows gave all of America a sound that announced that change was in the air. The message was even heard overseas. Movements in other countries adopted songs such as "We Shall Overcome" and "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around" to inspire their members. Popular American music was affected too. These songs inspired folk-singers and others to write songs about world conditions,

some of which actually made it to the top of the popular music charts. America was singing a new song.

Today, we can hear echoes of these songs in the music of many popular artists, from U2 to Eminem to Kanye West to Wyclef Jean to Lauryn Hill. When a musician writes and sings about conditions in the world today, he or she is following in the footsteps of a powerful and glorious tradition. The civil rights movement depended on people who were willing to march, sign petitions, register to vote, and stand up to brutality. Singing became another important piece of the movement. Such is the power of music to stir the soul to action.

Civil Rights in the NEWS

Learning standard: creating poetry from prose

Songwriters often look at current events when writing lyrics. Try your hand at writing a poem based on a story in the newspaper. Choose a story that is "rich" — that is, one that includes some vivid and descriptive words. Then collect some of those words and fashion them into a blank-verse poem, based on the story they appeared in.

THE FIRST BLACK PRESIDENT

What has happened in the years since King's assassination? A great deal. Segregation is dead, wiped out by laws and different attitudes. The number of middle- and upper-class blacks has increased. Blacks and whites work side by side in many occupations. These are all things that were impossible when Barbara Johns led students out of Moton High.

A new generation of African American leaders emerged to carry Dr. King's dream forward. Foremost among them, Barack Obama, who was elected President of the United States

in November, 2008. Obama, son of a white American mother and black African father, grew up in Hawaii, Indonesia, and Kansas. He went to Occidental College in Los Angeles, where he got involved in politics. He transferred to Columbia University in New York. He worked in Harlem as a community organizer, and then moved to Chicago and worked for a church-based group in a poor com-



munity. Obama realized that big changes come from changing laws and political situations. He was accepted at Harvard Law School. He was a great student and the first African American elected president of the *Harvard Law Review*, a special journal, or magazine.

Obama could have made a fortune as a lawyer. He chose to go back to Chicago and work for a small law firm that focused on civil rights. They stood up for poor people who had problems finding places to live or work. It wasn't glamorous. It didn't pay much. It was exactly what Obama wanted to do.

Then, Obama served several years in the Illinois State Legislature. He had organized voter registration drives and spoke up for reform of campaign laws. He surprised many people then by being able to successfully gain support from white working class neighborhoods. Then, he was overwhelmingly elected to the United States Senate, representing Illinois. He had promised to work for policies that would continue King's ideas – people of different backgrounds working together to improve life for all.

A Dream Realized?



Photos courtesy Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. visiting refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan, 2004, in his role as a member of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee.

Although the highest achieving, Obama wasn't the only African American leader to emerge. Another is **Jesse Jackson Jr.**, the son of Jesse Jackson, a friend and co-worker of Dr. King's. The elder Jackson started an organization called the Rainbow Coalition. His son's first experiences were with that organization. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1995, where he has been a voice for poor and minority people. By representing his community in Congress, Jesse Jr. is carrying on the tradition of both Dr. King and his own father.

Barbara Lee

is a member of the House of Representatives from California. An outspoken voice for minority concerns, Ms. Lee also sits on several important international committees in Congress. Her first political experience was in the California State Assembly, where she gained recognition for her ability to work with people with different political

opinions. She describes her job as intended to "promote international security through world peace." She is definitely following the path laid out by Dr. King.

Governor Deval Patrick

of Massachusetts was elected in 2006. He grew up in modest circumstances and was the first in his family to attend college. He went to Harvard and graduated with honors. Later he served under President Bill Clinton in the nation's top civil rights post.



Governor Deval Patrick of Massachusetts



Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Democrat, California.

Photo by Nathan Britton

Does the election of an African American president mean the "dream" of civil rights for all has been realized? Maybe. But, maybe the dream has taken a giant leap but still needs to move forward. It was never about one single achievement, but, rather, equal opportunity for all – in jobs, in housing, in life.

The civil rights movement of the 20th century forced the nation to look at itself and to try to act, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, as one that believes that "all men are created equal." In the 21st century, the nation acted on that belief. Now, many Americans continue to work for an America in which all citizens have the opportunity to go as far as their talents can take them.

Civil Rights in the NEWS

Learning standards: comparing, contrasting
Are Americans working for a country in which all citizens have equal opportunity? Find someone in the newspaper who is helping that cause and someone who is hurting the cause. Create a T-chart comparing the two people and their actions.

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU LEARN MORE



BOOKS

Oh, Freedom! Kids Talk About the Civil Rights Movement With the People Who Made it Happen

By Casey King and Linda Barrett Osborne, foreword by Rosa Parks, portraits by Joe Brooks; Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

Interviews by young people with participants in the civil rights movement accompany essays that describe the history of efforts to make equality a reality for African Americans.

The New African American Urban History

By Kenneth W. Goings and Raymond A. Mohl [editors], Sage Publications, 1996.

This collection of essays covers: 1) the transplanted social customs of rural blacks to the North, 2) the experience of newly urbanized blacks as household wage laborers, 3) black working-class opposition in the Jim Crow South, and 4) overviews of black Americans as city dwellers from the early to late 20th century.

Freedom's Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories

By Ellen Levine.

Inspiring accounts of courage, the stories of children who contributed to the movement.

Now Is Your Time: The African-American Struggle for Freedom

By Walter Dean Myers. Harper Collins, 1991.

The Civil Rights Movement

By Peter B. Levy, Greenwood Press, 1998.

This one-stop reference is ideal for student research of the civil rights movement.

LINKS

The Southern Poverty Law Center

www.splcenter.org/

The Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project

<http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/>

Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement

www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/index.htm

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

www.bcri.org/index.html

Civil Rights Museum

www.civilrightsmuseum.org

Note: Because of the changing nature of the Internet, some of these sites may no longer be accessible.

EXTENSIONS

This newspaper section covered the work of just a few people in the struggle for equality for all. There were many others. Go online to find out more about the contributions of each of these people.

- Ralph Abernathy
- Oliver Brown
- Eldridge Cleaver
- Medgar Evers
- Fannie Lou Hamer
- Viola Greg Liuzzo
- Thurgood Marshall
- James Meredith
- Huey P. Newton
- A. Philip Randolph
- Bobby Seale
- Fred Shuttlesworth
- Emmett Till

Finally, a discussion question: Does racism still exist? Explain your thoughts in a journal entry.

