



# Chapter Twenty-Eight

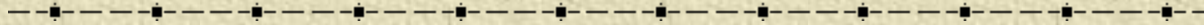
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## **The Civil Rights Movement, 1945–1966**

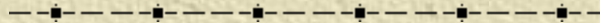
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Part One:



**Introduction**



# Chapter Focus Questions

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- ✦ What were the legal and political origins of the African-American civil rights struggle?
- ✦ What characterized Martin Luther King's rise to leadership?
- ✦ How did student protesters take direct action in the South?
- ✦ How did civil rights affect national politics?
- ✦ What were the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965?
- ✦ How did America's other minorities pursue their civil rights?



## Part Two:

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### **The Montgomery Bus Boycott: An African-American Community Challenges Segregation**

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# Montgomery, Alabama

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- ✦ In 1955, Montgomery's black community mobilized when Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat and comply with segregation laws.
- ✦ Led by Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist minister, a boycott of buses was launched.
- ✦ A network of local activists organized carpools using private cars to get people to and from work.
- ✦ Leaders endured violence and legal harassment, but won a court ruling that the segregation ordinance was unconstitutional.



Part Three:

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**Origins of the Movement**

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# Civil Rights After World War II

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- ✦ The WWII experiences of African Americans laid the foundations for the subsequent struggle.
- ✦ A mass migration to the North brought political power to African Americans working through the Democratic Party.
- ✦ The NAACP grew in numbers and its Legal Defense Fund initiated a series of lawsuits to win key rights.
- ✦ Key ways the African Americans were breaking color barriers included:
  - ✦ Jackie Robinson's entrance into major league baseball
  - ✦ Ralph Bunche's winning a Nobel Peace prize
- ✦ A new generation of jazz musicians created be-bop.

# The Segregated South

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- ✦ In the South, segregation and unequal rights were still the law of the land.
- ✦ Law and custom kept blacks as second-class citizens with no effective political rights. African Americans had learned to survive and not challenge the situation.



# Brown v. Board of Education

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- ✦ The NAACP initiated a series of court cases challenging the constitutionality of segregation.
- ✦ In *Brown v. Board of Education*, newly appointed Chief Justice Earl Warren led the court to declare that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.
- ✦ The court postponed ordering a clear timetable to implement the decision.
- ✦ Southern whites declared their intention to nullify the decision.

# Crisis in Little Rock

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- ✦ In Little Rock, Arkansas, a judge ordered integration.
- ✦ The governor ordered the National Guard to keep African-American children out of Central High.
- ✦ When the troops were withdrawn, a riot erupted, forcing President Eisenhower to send in more troops to integrate the school.



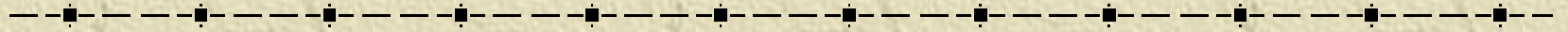
Part Four:

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**No Easy Road to Freedom,  
1957–62**

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# No Easy Road to Freedom



✦ Map: Map of the Civil Rights Movement

# Martin Luther King and the SCLC

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- ✦ Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged from the bus boycott as a prominent national figure. A well-educated son of a Baptist minister, King taught his followers nonviolent resistance, modeled after the tactics of Mohandas Gandhi.
- ✦ The civil rights movement was deeply rooted in the traditions of the African-American church.
- ✦ King founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to promote nonviolent direct action to challenge segregation.

# Sit-Ins

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- ✦ African-American college students, first in Greensboro, North Carolina, began sitting in at segregated lunch counters.
- ✦ Nonviolent sit-ins were:
  - ◆ widely supported by the African-American community
  - ◆ accompanied by community-wide boycotts of businesses that would not integrate.

# SNCC and the “Beloved Community”

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- ✦ A new spirit of militancy was evident among young people.
- ✦ 120 African American activists created the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to promote nonviolent direct challenges to segregation.
- ✦ The young activists were found at the forefront of nearly every major civil rights battle.

# The Election of 1960 and Civil Rights

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- ✦ The race issue had moved to center-stage by 1960.
- ✦ As vice president, Nixon had strongly supported civil rights.
- ✦ But Kennedy pressured a judge to release Martin Luther King, Jr. from jail.
- ✦ African-American voters provided Kennedy's margin of victory, though an unfriendly Congress ensured that little legislation would come out.
- ✦ Attorney General Robert Kennedy used the Justice Department to force compliance with desegregation orders.



# Freedom Rides

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- ✦ The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) sponsored a freedom ride of biracial teams to ride interstate buses in the South.
- ✦ The FBI and Justice Department knew of the plans but were absent when mobs firebombed a bus and severely beat the Freedom Riders.
- ✦ There was violence and no police protection at other stops.
- ✦ The Kennedy administration was forced to mediate a safe conduct for the riders, though 300 people were arrested.
- ✦ A Justice Department petition led to new rules that effectively ended segregated interstate buses.

# The Albany Movement: The Limits of Protest

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- ✦ Where the federal government was not present, segregationists could triumph.
- ✦ In Albany, Georgia, local authorities kept white mobs from running wild and kept police brutality down to a minimum.
- ✦ Martin Luther King, Jr. was twice arrested, but Albany remained segregated.
- ✦ When the federal government intervened, as it did in the University of Mississippi, integration could take place.



Part Five:

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**The Movement at High Tide**

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# Birmingham

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- ✦ In conjunction with the SCLC, local activists in Birmingham, Alabama, planned a large desegregation campaign.
- ✦ Demonstrators, including Martin Luther King, Jr., filled the city's jails.
- ✦ King drafted his *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*.
- ✦ A TV audience saw water cannons and snarling dogs break up a children's march.
- ✦ A settlement was negotiated that desegregated businesses.
- ✦ Birmingham changed the nature of the civil rights movement by bringing in black unemployed and working poor for the first time.

# JFK and the March on Washington

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- ✦ The shifting public consensus led President Kennedy to appeal for civil rights legislation.
- ✦ A. Philip Randolph's old idea of a march on Washington was revived.
- ✦ The march presented a unified call for change and held up the dream of universal freedom and brotherhood.

# LBJ and the Civil Rights Act of 1964

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- ✦ The assassination of John Kennedy threw a cloud over the movement as the new president, Lyndon Baines Johnson, had never been a good friend to civil rights.
- ✦ LBJ used his skills as a political insider to push through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that put a virtual end to Jim Crow.

# Mississippi Freedom Summer

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- ✦ In 1964, civil rights activists targeted Mississippi for a “freedom summer” that saw 900 volunteers come to open up this closed society.
- ✦ Two white activists and a local black activist were quickly killed.
- ✦ Tensions developed between white volunteers and black movement veterans.
- ✦ The project riveted national attention on Mississippi.
- ✦ With an overwhelming Democratic victory in the 1964 elections, movement leaders pushed for federal legislation to protect the right to vote.

# Malcolm X and Black Consciousness

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- ✦ Many younger civil rights activists were drawn to the vision of Malcolm X, who:
  - ◆ ridiculed integrationist goals
  - ◆ urged black audiences to take pride in their African heritage
  - ◆ break free from white domination
- ✦ He broke with the Nation of Islam, made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and returned to America with changed views.
- ✦ He sought common ground with the civil rights movement, but was murdered in 1965.
- ✦ Even in death, he continued to point to a new black consciousness.



# Selma

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- ✦ In Selma, Alabama, whites had kept blacks off the voting lists and brutally responded to protests.
- ✦ A planned march to Montgomery ended when police beat marchers.
- ✦ Just when it appeared the Selma campaign would fade, a white gang attacked a group of Northern whites who had come to help out, one of whom died.
- ✦ President Johnson addressed the nation and thoroughly identified himself with the civil rights cause, declaring “we *shall* overcome.”
- ✦ The march went forward.

# The Voting Rights Act of 1965

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- ✦ In August 1965, LBJ signed the Voting Rights Act that authorized federal supervision of voter registration in the South.
- ✦ Map: Impact of the Voting Rights Act, 1965



## Part Six:

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# **Civil Rights Beyond Black and White**

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# Mexican Americans & Mexican Immigrants

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- ✦ Mexican Americans formed groups to fight for their rights and used the courts to challenge discrimination.
- ✦ Legal and illegal Mexican migration increased dramatically during and after WWII. During the 1950s, efforts to round up undocumented immigrants led to a denial of basic civil rights and a distrust of Anglos.

# Puerto Ricans

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- ✦ Although Puerto Rican communities had been forming since the 1920s, the great migration came after WWII.
- ✦ Despite being citizens, Puerto Ricans faced both economic and cultural discrimination.
- ✦ In the 1960s and 1970s, the decline in manufacturing jobs and urban decay severely hit them.

# Indian Peoples

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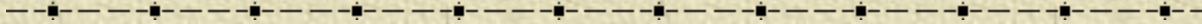
- ✦ During the 1950s, Congress passed a series of termination bills that ended tribal rights in return for cash payments and division of tribal assets.
- ✦ Indian activists challenged government policies leading to court decisions that reasserted the principle of tribal sovereignty.
- ✦ Reservation Indians remained trapped in poverty.
- ✦ Indians who had left the reservation lost much of their tribal identities.
- ✦ Urban Indian groups arose and focused on civil instead of tribal rights.

# Asian Americans

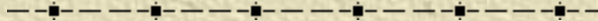
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- ✦ During the 1950s, Congress removed the old ban against Japanese immigration and naturalization.
- ✦ In 1965, a new immigration law increased opportunities for Asians to immigrate to the United States.
- ✦ As a result, the demographics of the Asian-American population drastically changed.

# Part Seven:

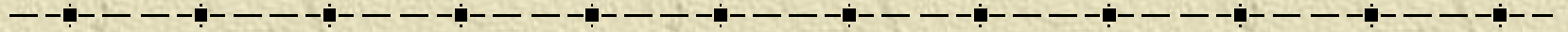


# Conclusion





# The Civil Rights Movement, 1945–1966



## ✦ Media: Chronology