**Guided Notes: The Civil Rights Movement**

After the Civil War, formerly enslaved African Americans had their civil rights established by three amendments to the constitution. The **thirteenth amendment** officially ended slavery, the **fourteenth amendment** granted equal protection under the law, and the **fifteenth amendment** granted African Americans the right to vote. Unfortunately, however, the process of reconstruction created intense political conflict. **Southern states resisted civil rights laws** set forth by congress by enacting the **black codes**, which were laws that tried to limit the freedom of slaves.

Although Congress set forth several laws to advance the civil rights of African Americans, the **Supreme Court made many rulings that negated legal gains made during reconstruction.**

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| **Name of the Case:**  | **What the verdict stated:** |
| 1873: **Slaughterhouse Cases** | Most civil rights are ruled to be under state, rather than federal jurisdiction. This weakens the 14th amendment.  |
| 1876: **U.S. vs. Cruikshank** | State governments, not the federal government, were responsible for punishing violators of civil rights (such as members of the KKK) |
| 1876**: U.S. vs. Reese** | State can’t deny the right to vote based on race, but they can deny the right to vote based on failed literacy tests or poll taxes.  |
| 1883: **Civil Rights Cases**  | While states can’t deny the equal protection of citizens, hotels, restaurants, and other business owners are free to discriminate.  |
| 1896**: Plessy vs. Ferguson** | “**Separate but equal**” facilities were made legal. This officially legalized segregation.  |

After these Supreme Court rulings, **Jim Crow Laws** spread throughout the south. The first goal of Jim Crow laws was to **increase segregation**. This was most prevalent in the school system. **African American children could not go to the same schools as white children**. Unfortunately, the quality of education that African American children received was inferior to that of white children. Segregation also became prominent in restaurants and on buses.

Jim Crow Laws also **sought to intimidate** African Americans. In the south, many were **lynched and murdered for trying to vote**. In the Midwest, there were several race riots. Unfortunately, **because of the U.S. vs. Cruikshank** decision, many **people who were guilty** of violating the civil rights of African Americans went **unpunished**.

In 1909, African Americans in the north united and formed the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).** The NAACP tried to bring attention to the discrimination faced by African Americans. They hoped to gain full **political rights, better job opportunities, and an end to segregation**.

Several historical events helped spread the need for racial equality. African Americans soldiers who served during WWI and WWII fought alongside white soldiers to keep America safe and free, and they were no longer willing to accept segregation at home. In fact, in 1948, three years after WWII ended, **the army was legally desegregated.**

Early in the 1950’s, African Americans officially sued to **integrate,** or officially end segregation. White controlled school boards awarded new books, new buildings, and the best resources to white schools. Black children had fewer resources and were not receiving a “separate but equal” education. **Thurgood Marshall**, a lawyer for the NAACP and future Supreme Court Judge, challenged the legality and constitutionality of segregation laws. He was fighting for **Linda Brown**, an African American student who was told she could not attend her neighborhood school because it was for white students only. She was sent to a school farther away for African American children. Her father sued the board of education in hopes of allowing his daughter to attend her neighborhood school. If we recall, the fourteenth amendment establishes equal protection under the law. **The Supreme Court held that separate but equal had no place in public education**. **Plessy vs. Ferguson was therefore overturned** and the schools were directed to integrate. Many adjusted quickly. However those whose attitudes matched the old way of thinking were bitter, and did everything they could to avoid desegregation.

One counteractive tactic was to create **White Citizens Councils** to prevent desegregation. The opposition of whites to desegregation became known as **massive resistance**. Set massive resistance threatened the desegregation process in Little Rock, Arkansas. Following the Brown decision, Little Rock made plans to integrate by calling for nine African American students to enroll at Central High school. Segregationists wanted to stop this, and had Arkansas governor Orval Faubus on their side. Faubus ordered **National Guard troops** to prevent the **little rock nine** from entering their new school. For three weeks, Faubus had the National Guard outside, preventing these students from going to school. President Eisenhower had a meeting with Faubus to encourage him to follow the law, but when it was clear he wouldn’t respond to words, **Eisenhower called in the 101st Airborne Division**. Students were escorted to school by jeeps with machine guns. Paratroopers lined the streets.

**Rosa Parks** furthered the civilian cause for equal rights when she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus. Her peaceful resistance and arrest sparked a movement to end segregation. In 1955, the NAACP and several church leaders organized the **Montgomery Bus Boycott**. For **thirteen months,** African Americans refused to ride the bus, knowing that the lack of their patronage would cause business for the bus system to suffer. Many faced death threats for standing up for their beliefs. Facing this problem from an activist and a legal standpoint, the segregation law was challenged in court. In November of **1956, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was unconstitutional**. This was a huge victory for civil rights that yielded several important results. First, it ended segregation on Montgomery buses. Second, it led to the founding of the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).** The SCLC began coordinating non-violent civil rights protests throughout the south. Finally, the boycott is where Dr. Martin Luther King found his voice.

Taking their cue from the Montgomery Bus Boycott**, Freedom Rides** were developed in the early 1960’s. They were protesting treatment of blacks on **interstate bus rides**. On Freedom Rides, whites sat in the back, and blacks sat up front. At stops, blacks would try and use the “white’s only” bathroom. Many people were severely beaten for this display, but they also opened the doors to change in government and society. The **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE**) often planned freedom rides. In 1961, President Kennedy had to send federal Marshalls to protect freedom riders. A few months later, the federal government issued an order to **desegregate all interstate bus facilities**.

Another energizing factor in the civil rights movement was the **sit-in**. A sit-in is where people protest and **refuse to move until demands are met**. Although sit-ins were not violent**, they solicited a violent response** from segregationists. Segregationists threw **ammonia, itching powder, and acid** onto protestors. They **yelled at them, beat them, and burned them with cigarettes**. Despite the abuse, sit-in protesters were persistent and it became an effective tactic. Many stores or restaurants that had refused to serve African Americans **eventually changed their ways**. The sit-ins also led to the formation of the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC),** which harnessed the energy and ideas that the younger generation could contribute to the civil rights movement.

By the Early 1960’s, the grassroots civil rights movement was gaining strength. Political leaders were hesitant to get involved, but the increasing number of protests made civil rights something they could no longer ignore. In **Birmingham Alabama**, Dr. King and the SCLC organized several non-violent protests and marches. They knew in advance that the authorities in Birmingham would respond with violence, but they also knew that seeing that violence throughout the country in **newspapers and television** reports would help bring about change. As demonstrators marched, police unleashed **attack dogs and fire hoses** on them, even on small children protesting with their parents. **The general public was horrified**. Eventually Birmingham leaders agreed to desegregate lunch counters, remove segregation signs, and employ more African Americans.

The Birmingham protests caused many Americans to support the passage of new laws to protect the civil rights of ALL American citizens. On August 28, 1963, approximately **250,000 people joined Dr. Martin Luther King Junior in the March on Washington**. When all were gathered that day, Dr. King made his famous **“I have a dream speech.”** The march on Washington united many people behind the cause of civil rights, and President Kennedy promised his support.

Unfortunately, **Kennedy was assassinated** as his motorcade traveled through Dallas on **November 22, 1963**. Vice President **Lyndon Baines Johnson**, knows as LBJ, was inaugurated almost immediately. He felt there would be no greater tribute to the fallen president than to honor his wishes with the passage of a civil rights bill. **The Civil Rights Act of 1964** was signed in July, **banning segregation in public places**, such as restaurants, hotels, and theaters. It also created the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission to prevent job discrimination. Segregation **was officially illegal** in the United States.

Next, efforts were turned to voting. Civil rights leaders wanted to be rid of the poll taxes and literacy tests that prevented several African Americans from voting. States ratified the **twenty fourth amendment, outlawing poll taxes**. Next, the SNCC organized a **voter registration drive** for southern blacks. It was called **Freedom Summer**. When drives were organized in Montgomery, Alabama, state troopers attacked them, and the whole incident was broadcast to the nation. President Johnson told Governor Wallace that he would no longer put up with any violence. Troops were sent to protect the SNCC so they could finish their voter registration drive. Johnson also signed the **Voting Rights Act** into law in August of 1965. It banned literacy tests and other Jim Crow based laws that kept people from voting. Johnson also sent federal officials to register African American voters.

President Johnson also tried to implement his **Great Society** program on a national level. He wanted to help the poor, women, the elderly, and minorities. He wanted to promote education, end discrimination, and protect the environment. He created **Medicare and Medicaid**, which still help the elderly and the poor to this day. He also provided federal funds for public education with the **Primary and Secondary Schools Act**, and strengthened the **Clean Water and Clean Air Acts**.

By the late 1960’s, civil rights leaders began to **disagree** about which direction to take the movement. Some wanted to continue with **nonviolent protests**, while others sought to become **more aggressive**. Those who believed in aggressive behavior sought “**black power**.” The nation of Islam, a branch of Islam founded in the United States, urged African Americans to separate and form their own group. While **Malcolm X** was not the leader of the nation of Islam, he was their most prominent figure. Malcolm X, however, began to leave the groups separatist ideals behind. On a trip to **Mecca**, he saw Muslims treating each other as equals. **He envisioned a world where all races could live together in peace.** Unfortunately, his message of peace didn’t spread far, as **he was assassinated by members of the Nation of Islam in 1965**.

**While several laws were passed that made segregation illegal, attitudes had not changed throughout the country**. Many people still openly discriminated against African Americans. In certain areas, white people could not and would **not sell property** to black people. In other areas, African Americans were **denied job opportunities** based on race. Growing frustrated with their lack of political power**, riots** broke out in several cities across the country. There were 164 riots in several cities**. On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated**, which caused widespread furor and several more riots.

The American civil rights movement sent shock waves through American society. **Many people reconsidered their views on equality and discrimination**, and many became politically astute and involved in their communities. Many other groups also took their cue from African Americans when hoping to expand their own civil rights. The **women’s movement** intensified in the 1960’s. Women sought expanded job opportunities, the ability to gain credit, own property and sign contracts, and to not be discriminated against if married or pregnant. The **National Organization for Women** was formed, with the goal of getting women good jobs with equal pay**. Native Americans and Latinos** also organized to spread awareness and support for their civil rights.