

## Transcript of the “Civil Rights Movement in the United States” Lecture

### BACKGROUND

Slavery:

1619: Slavery introduced to America by British.

1776: "...that all man are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with unalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness" - - DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

1863 Emancipation Proclamation; Lincoln set abolition of slavery in motion

***Reconstruction Amendments** -- Passed after the Civil War; meant to protect rights of African Americans*

1865 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment: Abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime

1868 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment: Defines citizenship, grants equal protection under the law (also contains the Privileges or Immunities Clause, the Due Process Clause, the Equal Protection Clause, and deals with post-Civil War issues)

1870 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment: Prohibits the denial of suffrage (the right to vote) based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude

Discrimination:

1882: Chinese Exclusion Act

Jim Crow Laws: segregated all aspects of society

1896: *Plessy v. Ferguson* “Separate but equal” was ruled constitutional

1924: Immigration Quota Act limited immigration of certain groups

1924: Native Americans were granted US citizenship

1941: African Americans demanded and won job equality during World War II

### ***Mendez v. Westminster***

1947 Mendez challenged the school system when his children were not allowed to attend the white school

It tested new legal arguments and evidence against segregation in public schools in California (did not touch issue of "separate but equal")

Paved the way for Brown v. Board

### **BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TOPEKA**

(Five cases from: Kansas, Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina, and Washington, D.C.)

*Plessy v. Ferguson*: separate but equal

Not real equality

NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) lawsuit; lawyer Thurgood Marshall -- successful lawyer for the NAACP

1954: Supreme Court declared racial segregation in schools unconstitutional

### **MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT**

Rosa Parks' arrest sparked boycott

1955-56: MIA (Montgomery Improvement Association) continued boycott with MLK (Martin Luther King, Jr.) as leader  
17,000 African Americans; participated; won integration  
MIA joined ministers from South, founded SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference),  
MLK president

### **Desegregating Little Rock (Little Rock Crisis)**

1957: Little Rock Nine  
Encouraged by NAACP, tried to get admitted to Central High School.  
Governor sent Arkansas National Guard to prevent blacks from entering the school.  
White mob kept Elizabeth Eckford from entering  
Eisenhower: sent 101st Airborne Division of U.S. Army to protect students the rest of the year  
Ernest Green: first African American student to graduate from Central High.  
(Schools were closed the next year.)

### **GREENSBORO SIT-INS**

February 1st, 1960: Four students sat in at whites-only lunch counter in Woolworth's.  
Not served; stayed until closing.  
Greeted as heroes by their fellow students and their example was followed by 24 other students the next day.  
February 4th, 1960: Students from North Carolina Women's College joined them. They were harassed along with the men.  
Some stores closed but others finally gave in to desegregation. Protestors were arrested, but inspired other sit-ins and boycotts. Caused stores to lose 1/3 of sales.  
Woolworth's and other stores desegregated.

### **FREEDOM RIDES**

1960: Supreme Court declared segregation unconstitutional on interstate buses  
1961: CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) organized Freedom Rides from Washington, D.C. to New Orleans  
Riders faced violence and arrest (firebombing and beatings)  
JFK (Pres. Kennedy) not supportive at first; later, RFK (Attorney General Robert Kennedy) asked ICC (Interstate Commerce Commission) to issue orders for desegregation. In effect Nov. 1961. ("White" and "Colored" signs came down from bus terminals)

### **INTEGRATION OF UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**

1962: James Meredith attempted to register at University of Mississippi  
Segregationists (Governor Barnett) tried to stop him; JFK eventually sent US Marshals; riots continued, and two people were killed  
Oct. 1, 1962, he (Meredith) was admitted and in Aug. 1963 he was the first black person to graduate from "Ole Miss"

### **MARCH ON WASHINGTON**

August 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom  
Who does King reference many times?  
Lincoln; "...in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation."

What does he say about African Americans “100 years later”?  
“...we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free.”

### **MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM SUMMER**

1964 "Freedom Summer": campaign to register African Americans to vote.

Civil Rights workers were met with violence.

Three workers (James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman) were murdered;  
bodies found buried in earthen dam

Brought national attention to the issue

1965 Voting Rights Act outlawed discriminatory voter registration laws

### **CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

1963: Proposed by President Kennedy

August 28, 1963 March on Washington influenced its passage by Congress

July 2, 1964 Congress passed and Pres. Johnson signed the act

Result: Federal government outlawed segregation

### **WALKOUTS**

1968: Mexican American ("Chicano") students walk out of junior highs and high schools in Los Angeles to protest poor education

They gain national attention, political experience, and improvements in education

### **FARM WORKERS STRIKE AND BOYCOTT**

1968: Mexican American migrant farm workers strike and march for better wages and conditions in the fields

Led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta

Boycott was successful; forced growers to recognize union (United Farm Workers) and negotiate with workers for better wages and conditions