

Early Steps in the Civil Rights Movement (1940s and 1950s)

Theme: Social Structures

Learning Objective 8.G: Explain how and why the civil rights movements developed and expanded from 1945 to 1960.

Early Successes

KC-8.2.I: Seeking to fulfill Reconstruction-era promises, civil rights activists and political leaders achieved some legal and political successes in ending segregation, although progress toward racial equality was slow.

- What the movement was battling
 - _____ - state and local
 - *Plessy v. Ferguson's* "_____" ruling
 - _____ discrimination
 - _____ - loss or suppression of voting rights
 - Discrimination in _____, banking, employment
 - _____ - voter suppression, violent and economic harassment, "council schools"
 - Violence against Black Americans not prosecuted
 - _____, _____
- Early Civil Rights Activists and Leaders
 - _____ (CORE) - James Farmer
 - _____ (SCLC) - MLK Jr., Ella Baker
 - NAACP - _____, Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers
 - Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) - _____
 - Council of Negro Women - _____
 - National Urban League - _____
- Successes
 - 1947 Bayard Rustin organized _____ first Freedom Ride to test Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia
 - _____ breaks the color barrier in baseball 1947
 - _____ (1950) UT Law applicant denied, SC decided segregation in graduate programs inherently unequal
 - Montgomery Bus Boycott
 - Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, Rosa Parks
 - Boycott lasted _____, ends with SC decision

Paths to Desegregation

KC-8.2.I.B.i: The three branches of the federal government used measures including desegregation of the armed services and Brown v. Board of Education (1954) to promote greater racial equality

- Legislative Measures
 - _____ - establishes commission on Civil Rights
 - "Defanged" by _____ in Congress
- Judicial Measures
 - *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947)

#89 - 8.6 Early Steps in the Civil Rights Movement (1940s and 1950s)

APUSH

Name: _____

- _____ (1954)
 - NAACP lawyer _____
 - Separate facilities inherently unequal
- *Smith v. Allwright, Shelley v. Kraemer*
- Executive Actions
 - Truman
 - Strengthened civil rights division in _____
 - Ended segregation in armed forces and military _____
 - Eisenhower
 - Federalized AR National Guard protecting _____
 - _____
 - Integration opposed by Gov. _____

Recap

- Early activism yielded some success
- All branches of government were used to win gains
- Truman desegregated the military
- *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*

Part II

Short Answer Questions

Answer the following in AT LEAST three sentences.

1. Explain how and why the civil rights movements developed and expanded from 1945 to 1960.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)

[Source: *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). Available online via National Archives (<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=87&page=transcript>).]

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does.

In *Sweatt v. Painter*, *supra*, in finding that a segregated law school for Negroes could not provide them equal educational opportunities, this court relied in large part on “those qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness in a law school.” In *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, *supra*, the court, in requiring that a Negro admitted to a white graduate school be treated like all other students, again resorted to intangible considerations: “... His ability to study, to engage in discussions and exchange views with other students, and, in general, to learn his profession.” Such considerations apply with added force to children in grade and high schools. To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. The effect of this separation on their educational opportunities was well stated by the finding in the Kansas case by a court which nevertheless felt compelled to rule against the Negro plaintiffs:

“Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of Negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racially integrated school system.”

Whatever may have been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, this finding is amply supported by modern authority. Any language in *Plessy v. Ferguson* contrary to this finding is rejected.

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. ...

1. **Provide an Attribution for the document:**

2. **Use the document to support the thesis: “The Civil Rights movement developed and expanded greatly through the 1940s and 1950s primarily due activism against injustices of racial discrimination and segregation”**

3. Choose one of the analysis topics from HAPP and provide a 2 sentence analysis of the document.
4. Give an A-C-E response on a piece of outside evidence that is relevant to the document and topic of the thesis

Rosa Parks on Life in Montgomery, Alabama (1956-1958)

In my lifetime, I have known Negroes who were killed by whites without any arrests or investigations and with little or no publicity. It is the custom to keep such things covered up in order not to disturb what is called [letter left incomplete.]

...

I had been pushed around all my life and felt at this moment [her refusal to surrender her seat on a Montgomery City Bus] that I couldn't take it anymore. When I asked the policeman why we had to be pushed around? He said he didn't know. "The law is the law. You are under arrest." I didn't resist.

...

I want to feel the nearness of something secure. It is such a lonely feeling that I am cut off from life. I am nothing, I belong nowhere and to no one.

There is just so much hurt, disappointment and oppression one can take. The bubble of life grows larger. The line between reason and madness grows thinner. The reopening of old wounds are unthinkable painful. Time begins the healing process of wounds cut deeply by oppression. We soothe ourselves with the salve of attempted indifference, accepting the false pattern set up by the horrible restrictions of Jim Crow laws.

Let us look at Jim Crow for the criminal he is and what he had done to one life multiplied millions of times over these United States and the world.

He walks us on a tightrope from birth to the end of life's span, whether it be long or of brief duration. Little children are so conditioned early to learn their places in the segregated pattern as they take their first toddling steps and are weaned from their mother's breast.

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6. Use the document to support the thesis: "The Civil Rights movement developed and expanded greatly through the 1940s and 1950s primarily due activism against injustices of racial discrimination and segregation"
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Hernandez v. Texas (1954)

The petitioner, Pete Hernandez, was indicted for the murder of one Joe Espinosa by a grand jury in Jackson County, Texas. He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed the judgment of the trial court. Prior to the trial, the petitioner, by his counsel, offered timely motions to quash the indictment and the jury panel. He alleged that persons of Mexican descent were systematically excluded from service as jury commissioners, grand jurors, and petit jurors, although there were such persons fully qualified to serve residing in Jackson County. The petitioner asserted that exclusion of this class deprived him, as a member of the class, of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution. ...

In numerous decisions, this Court has held that it is a denial of the equal protection of the laws to try a defendant of a particular race or color under an indictment issued by a grand jury, or before a petit jury, from which all persons of his race or color have, solely because of that race or color, been excluded by the State, whether acting through its legislature, its courts, or its executive or administrative officers. Although the Court has had little occasion to rule on the question directly, it has been recognized since *Strauder v. State of West Virginia*, that the exclusion of a class of persons from jury service on grounds other than race or color may also deprive a defendant who is a member of that class of the constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws. The State of Texas would have us hold that there are only two classes—white and Negro—within the contemplation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The decisions of this Court do not support that view. And, except where the question presented involves the exclusion of persons of Mexican descent from juries, Texas courts have taken a broader view of the scope of the equal protection clause.

Throughout our history differences in race and color have defined easily identifiable groups which have at times required the aid of the courts in securing equal treatment under the laws. But community prejudices are not static, and from time to time other differences from the community norm may define other groups which need the same protection. Whether such a group exists within a community is a question of fact. When the existence of a distinct class is demonstrated, and it is further shown that the laws, as written or as applied, single out that class for different treatment not based on some reasonable classification, the guarantees of the Constitution have been violated. The Fourteenth Amendment is not directed solely against discrimination due to a “two-class theory”—that is, based upon differences between “white” and Negro.

... The exclusion of otherwise eligible persons from jury service solely because of their ancestry or national origin is discrimination prohibited by the Fourteenth Amendment. ...

[Source: *Hernandez v. Texas*, 347 U.S. 475 (1954).]

