Chapter 27
Walking into Freedom Land: The Civil Rights Movement, 1941-1973
The Emerging Civil Rights Struggle, 1941-1957

Life under Jim Crow

• 15 million AA by 1950, 10% of the population, 30%-50% many southern states, two-thirds lived in the south
• Less than 20% of blacks were allowed to vote
• Menial jobs
• Northern “defacto segregation”
• Ghettos: all black, high rent, low wages inadequate city services
• Highly educated black men with university education often worked in blue collar jobs
• In the north whites used tactics such as: police harassment, burning crosses, bombs, and mob violence to keep AA from living near them
• Federal Housing Authority and bank redlining excluded blacks from buying homes in white neighborhoods
• Racial segregation was a national, not regional, problem
Origins of the Civil Rights Movement

- An important influence was World War 2
- The urban black middle class were leaders of the movement
- Labor union leaders
- Television
  - 1957 integration of Little Rock High School

World War 2: The Beginnings

Executive Order 8802
- A. Phillip Randolph

The Double V Campaign

- Victory over fascism and victory over U.S. racism
- “hate strikes”
  - Detroit 1943 riot, whites attacked and killed 25 blacks in a local park. Riot went on 3 days, 34 people killed. Federal troops had to restore order
- Mahatma Gandhi model
- GI Bill gave AA opportunities to fight segregation
Cold War Civil Rights
• Jackie Robinson broke color line in baseball in 1947
• Over a million blacks migrated to the North after WW2
• Many white Northern liberals became allies of civil rights advocates

Civil Rights and the New Deal Coalition
• President Harry Truman supported civil rights
  • Desegregated federal agencies and armed forces
  • Abolition of poll taxes
  • Fair Employment Practices Commission
• Division of the Democratic Party in the 1960s

Race and Anticommunism
• Truman worried about the image of the U.S.
• Soviets used American racism to discredit the U.S.
• McCarthyism held the civil rights movement back
Mexican Americans and Japanese Americans

- New Mexican American middle class began to shape major cities such as L.A., San Antonio, Chicago, and El Paso
- In TX and CA Mexican Americans created new civil rights organizations
  - American GI Forum
  - CSO
  - UFW
- *Mendez v. Westminster School District*
  - NAACP’s Thurgood Marshall involved in case
- Japanese Americans filed lawsuits to regain property lost during the war. And successfully lobbied Congress to grant citizenship to them
The Legal Strategy and Brown v. Board of Education

- Thurgood Marshall and his legal team were key in overturning *Plessy v. Ferguson*

**Thurgood Marshall**

- In 1930 he enrolled at Howard University in Washington D.C.
- In 1936 Marshall won a case that forced the University of MD Law school to admit black students
- In 1950 Marshall won *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*
- In the late 1960s he was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Lyndon Johnson (the first AA to serve)

**Brown v. Board of Education (1954)**

- Linda Brown, a black elementary student in Kansas was forced to attend a distant segregated school rather than the nearby school.
- Thurgood Marshall argued that “separate but equal” denied Linda Brown equal protection by the 14th Amendment.
- “separate but equal” was overturned unanimously
• That year half a million white southerners joined “White Citizens’ Councils” to block integration

• Ku Klux Klan became more active

• “Southern Manifesto”

• President Eisenhower did not support the decision. And didn’t want to use federal power to enforce it.

• Eisenhower did, however, send 1000 federal troops to Little Rock, AK force local mobs to allow nine black students to enter all white Central High School in 1957

• Showed that southern officials had more loyalty to custom than law
Forging a Protest Movement, 1955-1965

Nonviolent Civil Disobedience

- In 1955 kidnapping, torture, and murder of black teen, Emmett Till in Mississippi, made headlines
- After a **not guilty verdict** by an all white jury, the two accused **admitted to the murder** in a magazine article
- This miscarriage of justice galvanized an entire generation of African Americans
Montgomery Bus Boycott

• In December 1955 Rosa Parks, a secretary for the NAACP sparked a bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama lasting 381 days.

• Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as leader of the protest

• In 1957 King and Reverend Ralph Abernathy founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) who teamed with the NAACP to fight for racial justice
Greensboro Sit-Ins

- In Greensboro, NC four black college students started a new civil disobedience protest, “sit-ins” at a local Woolworth five and dime store
- Others joined in the three week protest. They were taunted, food was thrown at them, and many were arrested.
- Effect:

Ella Baker and SNCC

- Ella Baker helped organized the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to facilitate student sit-ins.
- 126 cities
- Grassroots, decentralized, participatory democracy inspired many of the most vocal social movements of the 1960s.

Freedom Rides

- In 1961 the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized Freedom Rides
- Testing Supreme Court rulings
- Attacked by Klansmen
- State authorities refused to intervene
- Bus bombed
- President Kennedy discouraged Freedom Rides
- Attorney General Robert Kennedy dispatched federal marshals
Legislating Civil Rights, 1963-1965

• The first civil rights bill came in 1875 during Reconstruction.
• For 90 years, southern Democrats blocked new legislation.

The Battle for Birmingham 1963

• MLK called for a march in Birmingham, AL. Why?
• The city commissioner ordered police to use violence on the protesters.
• TV
• President Kennedy finally acted after the University of Alabama barred two black students.
• He denounced racism on national TV and promised a new civil rights bill.
• That night Medgar Evers was assassinated the same night.
The March on Washington and the Civil Rights Act

- A. Philip Randolph organized the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom”
- “I Have a Dream”
- Southern senators continued to block Kennedy’s legislation
- Birmingham, AL church bombed, killing 4 girls
- Two months later, Kennedy was assassinated
- Lyndon Johnson made civil rights a priority
- 1964 Civil Rights Act
  - Employment, schools, public accommodations

Freedom Summer

- 1964 protests in Mississippi attracted thousands of volunteers, including one thousand white college students from the North
- Only 1200 black voters registered
- Four civil rights leaders were murdered
- Thirty seven black churches bombed or burned
Selma and the Voting Rights Act 1965

- March from Selma, AL to Montgomery to protest the murder of a voting rights activist.
- Violent opposition was captured on TV; “Bloody Sunday”
- Voting Rights Act
- 24th Amendment
- From 1960 to 1971, black registration went up from ___ to ____.
- From 1960s to the 1980s many conservatives switched to the Republican party
Beyond Civil Rights, 1966-1973

• Some young black leaders grew impatient with slow reform and resistance of whites. Others believed black poverty and economics was the most important objective.

Black Nationalism

• Pride in community or total separatism or right to shape one’s own destiny without the help of white people
  • Marcus Garvey 1920s

• Nation of Islam became leaders of black nationalism in the 1960s
  • Viewed white people as “devils”

Malcolm X

• Preached philosophy of militant separatism
• Spokesman for Nation of Islam
• Little interest in changing the minds of white America
• Strengthening black community
• Broke with the Nation of Islam in 1964
• What changed after pilgrimage to Mecca?
• Assassinated in 1965 by three Black Muslims
Black Power
- Build economic and political power in their own communities
- Attention to the poverty and social injustice
- Open jobs in police, fire department, construction and transportation
- Stop police brutality
- African clothing, natural hair styles, and interest in black history, art, and literature

Black Panther Party
- Founded in Oakland in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale
- Militant self-defense organization
- Protecting AA from police violence
- Opposed Vietnam War
- Community programs
  - Free breakfast for children
  - Testing for sickle cell
- Clashed with police officers
- FBI began disruption party activities
**Young Lords**

- Inspired by the Black Panthers, **Puerto Ricans** focused on improving neighborhood conditions

**The New Urban Politics**

- By Mid 1960s black residents neared 50% of the population in several major cities
  - Atlanta, Detroit, Cleveland, Washington
- Gary, IN and Cleveland, elected the first black mayors of large cities
- By the end of the century, black elected officials had become common in major U.S. cities
Poverty and Urban Violence

• Riots in the 1960s as a result of police brutality forced America to investigate the underlying problems in the black community
  • Watts, Harlem, L.A.

• Kerner Commission Report concluded that poverty and frustration with social undermining of black people led to most of the racial problems

• President Lyndon Johnson was criticized for prioritizing the Vietnam War over the fight against poverty at home

• Assassination of MLK on April 4, 1968 led to hundreds of riots in major cities

• Black leaders condemned the rioting, though they understood its origins in poverty and deprivation
Rise of the Chicano Movement

- Mexican Americans Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta formed the United Farm Workers (UFW), a union of migrant workers
  - Goals:

- Younger Mexican Americans grew impatient with Civil Rights and modeled after the Black Panthers and demonstrated more aggressive protests
  - Chicano Movement
  - La Raza Unida

The American Indian Movement

- Inspired by Black Power and Chicano movements, American Indians also formed groups to address their issues in the U.S.
  - Unemployment, housing, disease, and access to education
- Effort to unite Indians and celebrate individual tribal culture was the biggest challenge
- The militant Indian of All Tribes (IAT) and American Indian Movement (AIM) attracted more attention in the larger society.
- In the 1960s protests attracted widespread mainstream media coverage and spurred government action