

# *Civil Rights Era*

## OBJECTIVES

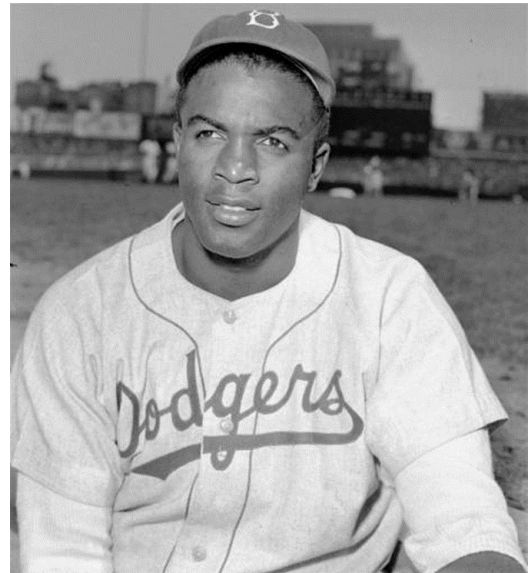
- Explain how the demand for Civil Rights was increased by African Americans.
- Explain the important strategies of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.
- Describe how the struggle for Civil Rights was intensified.
- Describe how the government responded to the Civil Rights Movement.
- Explain why the Civil Rights Movement took a new turn in the 1960's and 70's.

## Lecture #1

- President Truman was a civil rights advocate for many years prior to his presidency.
  - 1946...set up a biracial *Committee on Civil Rights* to look into race relations
  - The group reported that immediate action needed to be taken to address issues such as:
    - a federal anti-lynching law
    - abolishment of the poll tax as a voting requirement
    - establishing a permanent board to prevent discriminatory practices in hiring

### Jackie Robinson

- For years Major League Baseball had refused to let African American players to participate...they played in the Negro Leagues
- Branch Rickey, the General Manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers challenged the ban in the mid-1940's
- Jackie Robinson became the first black player to break the color line
- Robinson was from California and played football, baseball, basketball, and track at UCLA
- In 1947, Robinson was called up from the minor leagues and played so well that he won Rookie of the Year for that season
- He was voted MVP of baseball in 1949



### Emmett Till

August 24, 1955 *Emmett Till* was visiting relatives in Money, Mississippi

- He was 14 years old
- Till was reportedly flirting with a white woman – a cashier at a grocery store.
- Four days later, two white men kidnapped Till, beat him and shot him in the head.
- The men were tried for murder, but an all-white, male jury acquitted them
- Till's murder and open casket funeral galvanized the emerging Civil Rights Movement.



## Segregation

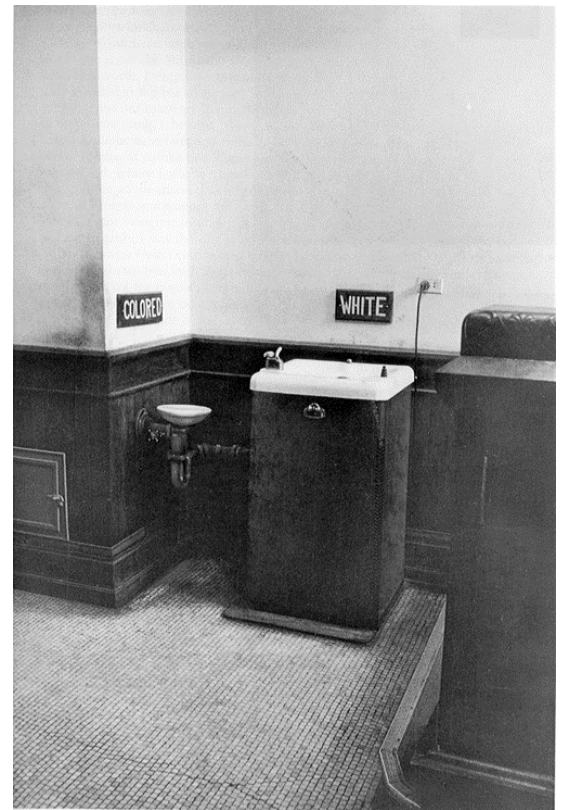
After the Civil War the Southern States segregated the races with the Jim Crow Laws

The *Separate-but-Equal Doctrine*: The Supreme Court ruled that the Laws were Constitutional if the facilities were equal

This Segregation System was enforced often times with force and fear (Ku Klux Klan)

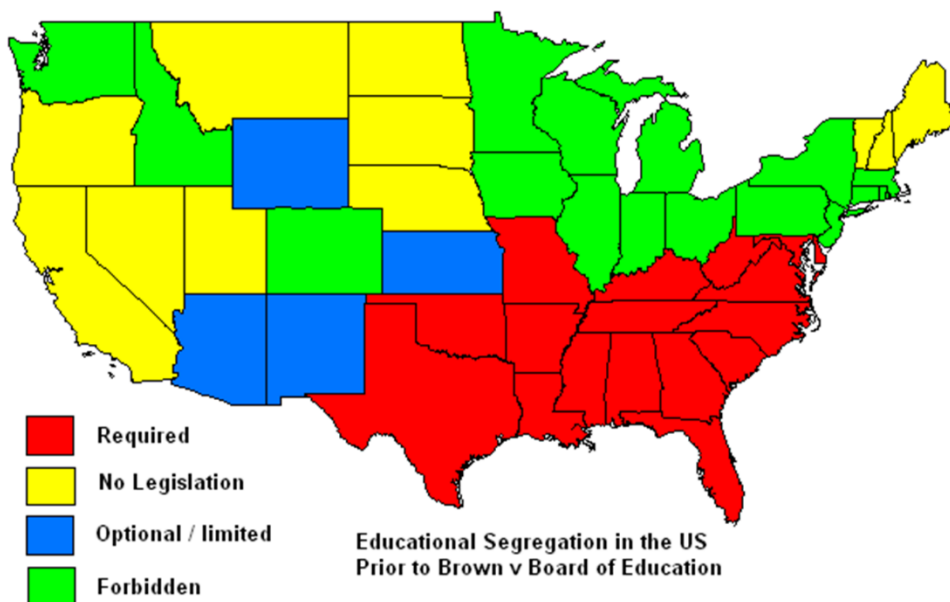
*De Jure segregation* - by law  
(The South)

*De Facto segregation* - by custom or habit (The North)



## NAACP...National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

- One of the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States
- It was founded in 1909 as an *interracial* organization, one with both African Americans and white Americans as members
- It worked to *secure full legal equality for all Americans* and to *remove barriers that kept them from voting*
- It also challenged the laws that prevented African Americans from exercising their full rights as citizens
- The NAACP appealed mainly to educated, middle- and upper-class African Americans and some liberal white Americans



## **Brown v. Board of Education**

For years the NAACP had tried to get the 1896 court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision overturned

- That court decision said that segregation was constitutional as long as facilities were “separate but equal”

In 1951, Oliver Brown sued the Topeka, Kansas, Board of Education to allow his 8-year-old daughter Linda to attend a white-only elementary school

- She passed the school on the way to the bus that took her to a distant school for African Americans



The case reached all the way to the Supreme Court, which issued a historic ruling on May 17, 1954

- Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP argued the case on behalf of Brown.
- The Supreme Court declared unanimously that “separate facilities are inherently unequal”
- The “separate-but-equal” doctrine was no longer permissible in Public Education – overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*
- The Court then ruled that local school boards in the United States should move to desegregate “with all deliberate speed”

## **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

*Boycott* - protest by refusing to purchase goods or services

1955...Montgomery, Alabama was the center of attention due to its segregation laws

*Rosa Parks* – an African American seamstress who worked for the NAACP

- She took a seat in the middle section of a bus where both blacks and whites usually were allowed to sit
- When a white man got on at the next stop and had no seat, the bus driver ordered Parks to give up hers
- Rosa Parks refused and was arrested at the next bus stop for violating the *segregation* laws of Birmingham.

Civil rights leaders in Montgomery met and decided to organize the Montgomery Bus Boycott

- They met at the church of a local 26-year-old Baptist minister named *Martin Luther King Jr.*

The plan called for African Americans to refuse to use the entire bus system until the bus company agreed to change its segregation policy

- 75% of bus riders were African-American



*“There comes a time when people get tired...tired of being segregated and humiliated, tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression. We have no alternative but to protest.”*

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

### **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

The first morning of the boycott, MLK walked the streets of Montgomery.

*“During the rush hours the sidewalks were crowded with laborers and domestic workers, many of them well past middle age, trudging patiently to their jobs and home again, sometimes as much as twelve miles. They knew why they walked, and the knowledge was evident in the way they carried themselves. And as I watched them I knew that there is nothing more majestic than the determined courage of individuals willing to suffer and sacrifice for their freedom and dignity.”*

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



### **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

Over the next year, 50,000 African Americans in Montgomery walked, rode bicycles, or joined car pools to avoid the city buses

- The bus company lost money but refused to change its policies until the Supreme Court ruled that bus segregation, like school segregation, was unconstitutional

The *Montgomery Bus Boycott* produced a new generation of leaders in the African American community

- It also introduced *non-violent protest* as a means of achieving equality for minority groups

### **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

#### ***HS.2 – Cause & Effect***

#### **Causes**

- *Segregation* - Blacks were forced to sit in the back of the bus.
- Rosa Parks was asked to give up her seat to a white man.

#### **Effects**

- On the Bus System?
- On the African Americans in Montgomery?
- On the Civil Rights Movement?
- On African Americans throughout the U.S.?



## Resistance in Little Rock

- Many southern white people reacted with fear and angry resistance to the new changes in atmosphere
- The worst confrontation came at Central High School on Little Rock, Arkansas
- 1957...Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus declared that he could not keep order if he had to enforce *integration*, or the bringing together of different races
- He posted Arkansas National Guard troops at the high school to turn away nine African American students
  - This was a direct challenge to the U.S. Constitution
  - President Eisenhower responded by placing the Alabama National Guard under federal control.
    - Paratroopers and other soldiers were sent to guard the “*Little Rock Nine*,” the nine students, as they went to and from school



The Little Rock Nine