

# Civil Rights Era

## OBJECTIVES

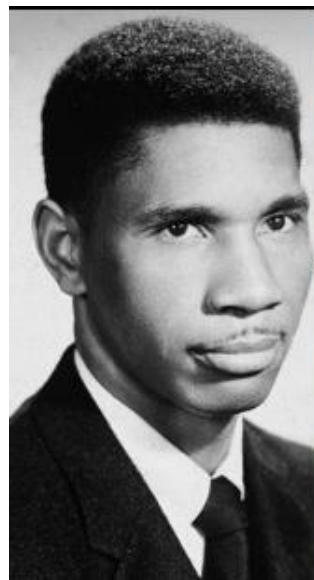
- Explain how the demand for Civil Rights was increased by African Americans.
- Explain the important strategies of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement.
- Describe how the struggle for Civil Rights was intensified.
- Describe how the government responded to the Civil Rights Movement.
- Explain why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

## Lecture #4 “The Political Response to the Civil Rights Movement”

### John F. Kennedy

- Kennedy had helped Dr. King out in Oct. 1960
  - Helped free MLK after he had been arrested in Alabama
  - This caused many black voters to switch from Nixon to Kennedy in the Presidential election
- Kennedy won the 1960 presidential election by a slim margin
  - JFK was visibly embarrassed and ashamed of the violent response to the **freedom rides** and the **clashes in Birmingham**
- During the 1960 presidential campaign, Kennedy won the support of African-American voters.
  - Kennedy had voted for civil rights measures in the Senate but did little else
  - As President, he moved slowly on civil rights issues, not wanting to anger southern Democrats.
- April, 1963 - Kennedy gave a speech on Civil Rights, literally within hours, **Medgar Evers** was murdered.
  - **Medgar Evers** was an American civil rights leader from Mississippi who was very active in the Civil Rights Movement.
  - A white supremacist was found guilty of killing Evers – it took 3 trials to reach a guilty verdict.
- In 1963, Kennedy introduced a Civil Rights Bill – but it never made it to a vote in Congress
  - It would have ended segregation in places that received federal money.





**"YOU CAN  
KILL A  
MAN, BUT  
YOU CAN'T  
KILL AN  
IDEA."**

**Medgar Evers**



Mrs. Evers and her family at the funeral of her husband.



Martin Luther King Jr. at the funeral.

## March on Washington

- Civil Rights leaders suggested a march on Washington D.C. to bring attention to Kennedy's bill
- The march took place in August, 1963
- More than 200,000 people came from all over the country
  - The gathering included famous figures from all aspects of life, such as...Sammy Davis, Jr. and Jackie Robinson
  - MLK Jr. delivered what was to become his best-known address: *"I Have a Dream"*



## Lyndon B. Johnson

- Had worked successfully to get a Civil Rights bill passed in 1957
  - Said that nothing *"could more eloquently honor President Kennedy's memory than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill."*



## Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Had an impact in many areas, including voting, schools, and jobs
- The law's major sections included these provisions:

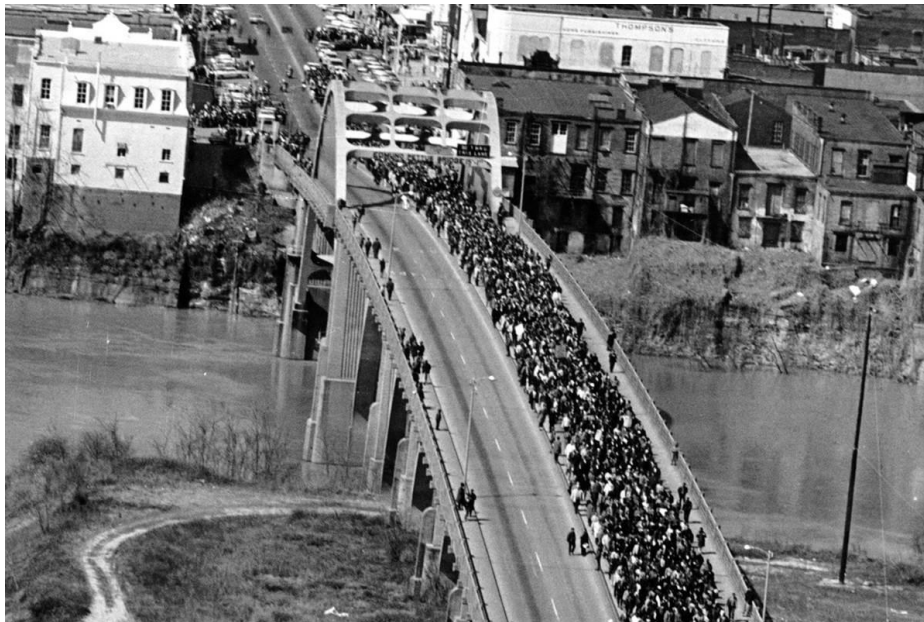
1. Banned the use of different voter registration standards for blacks and whites.

2. Prohibited discrimination in public accommodations, such as motels, restaurants, and gas stations, theaters, and sports arenas.

3. Allowed the withholding of federal funds from public or private programs that practice discrimination.

4. Banned discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin by employers and unions.

5. Created the ***Equal Employment Opportunity Commission*** to investigate charges of discrimination.



## Selma March

- Many black southerners still had trouble obtaining one basic right: voting
- In Selma, Alabama, police and sheriffs deputies were arresting people just for standing in line to vote
  - A protest march was organized to call attention to the issue
  - Marchers set out on a Sunday morning in March 1965 – march across a bridge
- Armed state troopers on horseback charged into the crowd with whips, clubs, and tear gas
  - In response, Pres. Johnson sent in federal National Guard units to protect the march route



### Voting Rights Act

- Congress passed the **Voting Rights Act** in 1965
  - This allowed voting registration in areas where local officials were blocking registration by African Americans
    - Also eliminated literacy tests and other barriers to voting.



### 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment

- **24<sup>th</sup> Amendment** was ratified in 1964
  - This outlawed the **poll tax**, which was still in effect in several southern states.
  - African-Americans in the South faced significant **discrimination** and could not vote for elected officials that would work to end the discrimination.
  - The **poll tax** was never a large sum of money, but it was just enough to stop poor African Americans and whites from voting.

## **Fighting for the Vote**

- **“Freedom Summer” - 1964**
  - In 1964, leaders of the major civil rights groups organized a voter registration drive in Mississippi.
  - Violence plagued Freedom Summer as volunteers were beaten, shot at, arrested, and murdered.
  - African American churches and homes were burned and firebombed.
  
- **The Democratic Convention**
  - The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) is formed with new voters.
  - The MFDP sent delegates to the 1964 Democratic National Convention
  - President Johnson offered the MFDP two of Mississippi’s 68 seats.
  - The MFDP rejected the offer, believing that it fell short of their goals.

# Civil Rights Era

1. Identify and explain the major goals of the Black Power movement.
2. Describe the role the Black Panthers played in the fight for Civil Rights.
3. Describe Malcolm X's role in the Civil Rights Movement, and how his approach might have differed than Martin Luther King, Jr.
4. Explain why violent riots erupted in many urban areas and cities during the 1960's.
5. Identify and describe the reasons why 1968 was such a tragic year in the Civil Rights Era.

## Lecture #5 – “The Civil Rights Movement Takes a New Turn in the 1960's and 1970's.”

### Emergence of Black Power

- Many black Americans were angry at the slow pace of change
  - Some questioned the passive, peaceful approach of MLK, Jr.
  - The civil rights movement was becoming deeply divided
- Young leaders rejected the ideas of both nonviolence and integration with white society
  - This resulted in more militant rhetoric and beliefs, as well as urban riots in some parts of the country

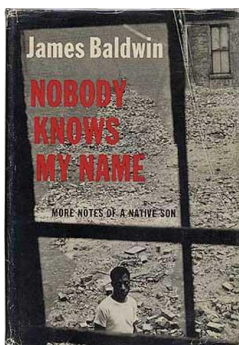


### James Baldwin

- An author who believed that generations of oppression and suffering had made black Americans stronger
  - Believed that the anger was ready to erupt
  - Wrote many powerful essays and books about this topic

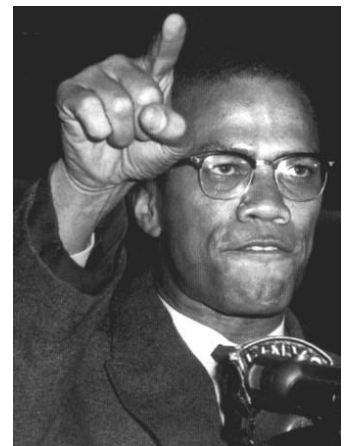
*“...the Negro's past, of...death and humiliation; fear by day and night; fear as deep as the marrow of the bone; doubt that he was worthy of life, since everyone around him denied it...”*

-James Baldwin



## Malcolm X

- A more militant leader, who emerged outside of the mainstream civil rights movement
- Real name: Malcolm Little...his father was a Baptist minister who spread the 'Back-to-Africa' message to black Americans
- Malcolm X grew up in ghettos of Detroit, Boston, and New York
  - Was arrested numerous times
  - While in prison, he joined the **Nation of Islam**...a group often called the Black Muslims, they preached black separation and self-help



- **Nation of Islam**...was founded in 1933 in Chicago by **Elijah Muhammad**
  - Taught that Allah (the Muslim name for God) would bring about a "Black Nation," a union among all nonwhite peoples
  - He taught that one of the keys to self-knowledge was knowing one's enemy: the enemy of the **Nation of Islam** was white society
  - The members of the N of I did not seek change through policies, but merely waited for Allah to create the Black Nation
    - In the meantime, they tried to lead righteous lives and become economically self-sufficient
- Malcolm Little was released from prison in 1952 and changed his name to **Malcolm X**
  - He said the other name came from slave owners
  - He spent the next 12 years as a minister of the Nation of Islam
  - He spread the ideas of **black nationalism**...a belief in a separate identity and racial unity of the African American community
- **Malcolm X** disagreed with both the tactics and goals of the civil rights movement
  - Was irritated at "*all of this non-violent, begging-the-white-man kind of dying...all of this sitting-in, sliding-in, wading-in, eating-in, diving-in, and all the rest.*"



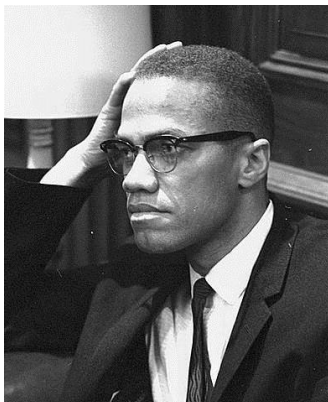


## Malcolm X

He rejected the ideas of **integration** and publicly spoke of his hatred of white society

*“No sane black man really wants integration! No sane white man really wants integration! No sane black man really believes that the white man will ever give the black man anything more than token integration. No! The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches that for the black man in America the only solution is complete separation from the white man...The American black man should be focusing on his effort toward building his own businesses, and decent homes for himself. As other ethnic groups have done, let the black people, wherever possible, however possible, patronize their own kind, hire their own kind, and start in those ways to build up the black race’s ability to do for itself. That’s the only way the American black man is ever going to get respect.”*

- **Malcolm X** and **Elijah Muhammad** disagreed on many things, however
  - Disagreed on political action
  - In 1964 **Malcolm X** left the Nation of Islam and formed his own organization called Muslim Mosque Inc.
  - In February 1965, **Malcolm X** was shot to death at a rally in New York
    - Three members of the **Nation of Islam** were charged with the murder



## Black Power Movement

- **Stokely Carmichael**...a **SNCC** leader who heard Malcolm X's message
  - He had attended Harvard and taken over the **SNCC** chapter in Washington D.C.
  - His leadership led to a more militant **SNCC**
    - After being beaten and jailed he was tired of nonviolent protest
    - Called on **SNCC** workers to carry guns and rejected white activists membership
  - Dr. King's followers sang "We Shall Overcome"...Carmichael's followers sang "We Shall Overrun"

## Black Power Movement

*"This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested, and I ain't going to jail no more!...The only way we gonna stop them white men from whuppin' us is to take over. We been saying freedom for six years – and we ain't got nothin'! What we gonna start saying now is 'black power!'"*

- Stokely Carmichael, June 1966

- Carmichael's idea of black power called on African Americans "to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community...to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and support those organizations."

## The Black Panthers

- Fall of 1966...a militant new political party was formed by activists **Bobby Seale** and **Huey Newton**
- The *Black Panthers* wanted African Americans to lead their own communities
- They demanded that the federal government rebuild the nation's ghettos to make up for years of neglect

*"Power flows from the barrel of a gun"*

-Huey Newton

- This led to a serious split in the Civil Rights movement
- More radical groups like **SNCC** and the **Black Panthers** moved away from the **NAACP** and other civil rights organizations

## Riots in the Streets

- The early civil rights movement focused on battling **de jure segregation**...racial separation created by law
- Changes in law did not address the tougher issue of **de facto segregation**...the separation created by social conditions such as poverty
  - Inner city schools were run down and poorly equipped
  - Residents of ghetto neighborhoods viewed police officers as dangerous oppressors, not upholders of justice
- A white police officer in one of those neighborhoods "was like an occupying soldier in a bitterly hostile country."  
-James Baldwin

**#BLACKLIVESMATTER** – What do you know about the modern Black Lives Matter movement?

## **Riots in the Streets**

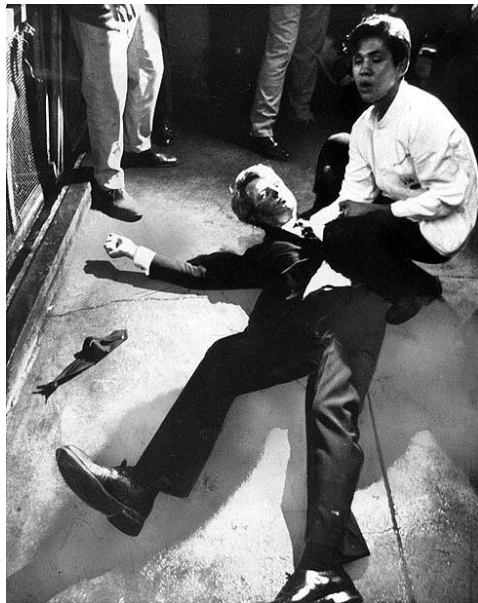
- Eventually frustration and anger boiled over into riots and looting
  - 1964...riots ravaged Rochester, NY; New York City; and several cities in New Jersey
- One of the most violent riots occurred in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Watts
- August 11, 1965...police in Watts pulled over a 21-year-old black man for drunken driving
  - At first things were peaceful and calm during the arrest
  - The suspect began resisting, however, and the police officer began swinging his riot baton
  - This angered the bystanders and touched off six days of rioting
  - Thousands of people filled the streets, burning cars and stores, stealing merchandise, and sniping at firefighters
  - When the national guard and local police finally gained control, 34 people were dead and more than a thousand were injured
- Violence spread to other cities in 1966 and 1967
  - *"Burn, baby, burn!"*
- The government set up a special National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to investigate the riots
- Dr. King blamed the riots on environmental circumstances and not racial problems.

## **Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy**

- Robert F. Kennedy was another major advocate for civil rights.
- Kennedy was shot while campaigning for the 1968 Democratic presidential nomination.
  - Sirhan Sirhan a 24 year old immigrant from Jordan was convicted of the crime.
- The nation lost an inspirational leader who many believed could have helped heal the nation's wounds – Civil Rights, Vietnam, counterculture, War on Poverty, etc...



***Kennedy giving his speech at the Ambassador Hotel in 1968.***



***Kennedy was shot shortly after his speech.***

**Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement**

*“The Civil Rights Movement called America to look at itself in a giant mirror...Do the black people who were born on this soil, who are American citizens, do they really feel that this is the land of opportunity, the land of the free?...America had to say no.”*

– Texas Rep. Barbara Jordan

