

# The Civil Rights Movement

### The "American Dream"

- 1950's was a prosperous time with suburbs popping up and new cars in the driveway
- A house of one's own with a little plot of land



## But not for everyone...

Only if you were white



## Civil Rights Movement

 The civil rights movement was a struggle by African Americans in the mid-1950s to late 1960s to achieve Civil Rights equal to those of whites, including equal opportunity in employment, housing, and education, as well as the right to vote, the right of equal access to public facilities, and the right to be free of racial discrimination

## **Equal Rights**



- This movement sought to restore to African Americans the rights of citizenship guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments (right for all citizens to be treated equally and to be able to vote)
- These rights had been eroded by segregationist Jim Crow Laws in the South

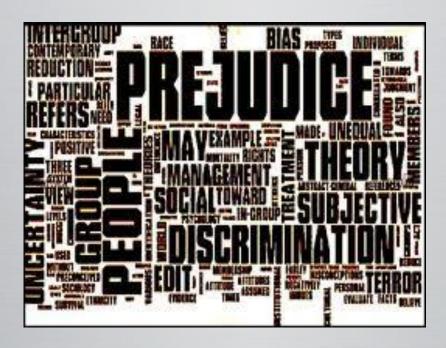
#### **Executive Order 9981**

- Signed by President Truman in 1948
- Required equality of treatment and opportunity to all people in the armed services regardless of race
- Began a gradual revolution in American society beginning of desegregation



## Racial Prejudice

• Still deeply ingrained in American life, particularly in the South



## Legal discrimination?

- Facilities were supposed to be "separate but equal"
- Schools were separate, but never equal



#### Poor Treatment in North

- After both world wars blacks migrated in large numbers from the south to work in northern factories
- Owners liked cheap labor, but many whites, fearing they would lose their jobs to them, met them with hostility



## Low paying jobs

- Blacks were restricted to simple, lowpaying jobs
- This forced them to live in ghettos



#### Brown vs. Board of Education

- In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled that separate black schools were not equal to white schools
- Schools had to be integrated
- Many white schools violently resisted and federal troops sometimes had to intervene



#### Little Rock Nine

 9 black students who were escorted by National Guard troops into Central HS in Little Rock, Ark. while white protesters shouted insults at them





#### Rosa Parks

- A black woman from Montgomery, AL who after a hard day's work sat down in a seat at the front of the bus
- Was a crime not to give up your seat to a white person
- She refused to go to the back of the bus and was arrested and jailed



## Montgomery Bus Boycott

• In response to the arrest blacks in the city refused to ride the bus if they could not ride in the front, even though most of them depended on the busses

Led by a young pastor named Martin Luther

King Jr.



## Bus Boycott

- Lasted for over a year despite losing \$ busses wouldn't change policy
- 50,000 blacks walked or rode bikes up to 12 miles a day



#### **National Attention**

- Finally Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional
- Focused national attention on MLK Jr. and more importantly on the Civil Rights Movement



#### Freedom Riders

- Despite ruling segregated public buses unconstitutional, southern states continued to ignore the law
- Black and White Civil rights activists rode interstate buses together to challenge local laws that still enforced segregation



#### Met With Violence

- Often attacked by angry white mobs in the south before being arrested by police (who often first allowed the violent attacks)
- In some places, like Birmingham, AL, police cooperated with Ku Klux Klan





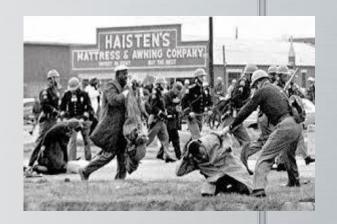
#### Racial Violence in the 60's

- A black church in Birmingham, AL was bombed killing 4 black girls
- 2 white civil rights activists are killed while trying to register black voters
- Watts riots in LA after police brutality lasted 6 days and 34 killed





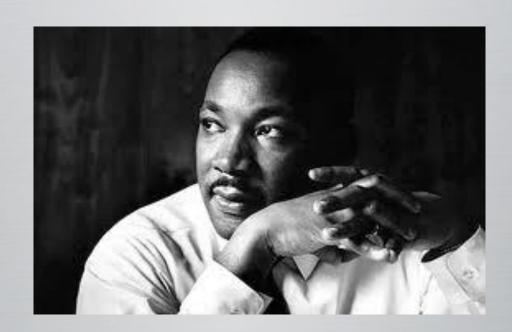
## Selma Freedom March



- Town in Alabama where racism and discrimination were strong
- Though the town had a large black population, they were kept from voting by Jim Crow laws that required them to pass a difficult test in order to vote – most could not
- "Bloody Sunday" attack by state troopers and members of Alabama posses perpetrated on peaceful protest marchers who tried to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7, 1965

## Martin Luther King Jr.

 A minister from Montgomery, AL who was the leader of the National Civil Rights
 Movement



#### Civil Disobedience

- Strategy used by MLK Jr. that he learned from Gandhi in India
- Nonviolent resistance disobey a law, but in a peaceful way
- For example, "Sit-ins" blacks would sit at a lunch counter that was reserved only for whites until the police came and arrested them



#### "I have a Dream"

 March on Washington – a huge rally for Civil Rights in D.C. in August 1963 in which MLK Jr. gave his famous speech

 Dream was to live in a country where blacks and whites could live together in harmony

and equality



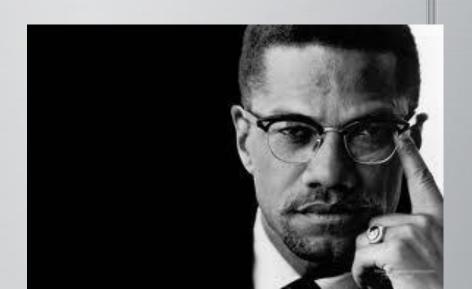
## April 4, 1968

 MLK Jr. was killed by an assassin while standing on his hotel balcony in Tennessee



#### Malcolm X

- Wanted rights for blacks as well, but not by "kissing up to the white man and begging for them"
- said blacks should be separate, not integrated - if we want respect we need to demand it from the white man
- Assassinated in 1965



#### **Black Panthers**

 A militant black political party that rejected peaceful attempts at gaining respect and wanted equality "by any means necessary"





#### Black Power

- To take pride in being black not to try to be like white people to fit in to their society
- "black is beautiful"

 African Americans should unite, take charge of their own destiny, and reject white

society

## Civil Rights Act of 1964

 Part of LBJ's Great Society, it banned segregation and discrimination in public facilities like restaurants and hotels

 Also prevented employers from hiring people based on race



Johnson Signs Civil Rights Bill Into Law in Ceremony at White Hour

Len Angeles Times (1923-Curvest Files, Int.), 1966.

#### Civil Rights Bill **Becomes Law**

#### Johnson Signs Civil Rights Bill Into Law in Ceremony at White House