

When did the American Civil Rights Movement Begin?

1619

Factors Leading to the Movement

- 1896 Plessey v. Ferguson. “Separate but Equal”
- The Great Migration 1915-1970. More than 6 Million Blacks Leave the South. Defacto Racism
- Changing Role of Government: Great Depression happens. Legislation is Passed to help economy recover.
- 1935: Social Security Passed, excludes farm workers, domestic workers, & civil servants.

Civil Rights Beginnings

- 1954 Brown v. Board of Education.
- 1955 Emmitt Till Lynching in Money, Mississippi
- 1957 Little Rock School Integration Crisis
- Formation of Southern Christian Leadership Conference by Dr. Martin Luther King to assist the Movement

Dr. King

- Philosophy of non-violence was adopted from Gandhi.
- Used his position as a preacher to affect the Movement.
- Letter from a Birmingham Jail is addressed to Clergymen after he is jailed on Good Friday.
- Connection between Gospel of Freedom & Gospel of Christ carried by Paul
- 1963 – I Have a Dream at the March on Washington for Jobs & Freedom

Government Shifts

- JFK Gets Behind Civil Rights Movement by campaigning to desegregate the housing projects, which doesn't happen until 1963
- Economic Opportunity & Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Voting Rights Bill 1965
- Idea that Government is helping move the country out of segregation into a land of opportunity

Reasons for Shift in Thinking

- Malcolm X comes on the scene
- Majority of Black America still lives in poverty and doesn't see any immediate impact of the legislation
- Majority of Americans have TVs
- Broken Promises & Assassinations. Medger Evers & JFK in 1963.
- Black Panther Newspaper in 1965
- 1970 Mississippi Schools are finally desegregated
- 1968: MLK is assassinated

Malcolm X

- Comes on the scene w/ a speech from the Nation of Islam in 1959 saying the Christianity had failed the Black community.
- Unlike MLK, who mostly attacked the white community, Malcolm X attacked the black community and called them “pacifists”
- House Negro vs. Field Negro Speech
- The Ballot or the Bullet Speech.

Where does that leave us?

- Are these issues still important? You bet.
- You have to decide whether or not the ideas of the Movement are still applicable today.