

The undercurrents of
protest and
discontent from many



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The Sixties split the skies. Only Civil and two world wars so neatly divided our history into a Before and After. And the Sixties were more divisive than World War II, which drew more people for the war effort. The Sixties drove people apart husbands from wives, children from parents, students from teachers, citizens from their government. Authority was strengthened by World War II.

It was challenged by the sixties. Relatively few Americans in 1960 would have predicted that the decade ahead was to be among the most turbulent of the century. Despite the growing restiveness of the nations African American population, and despite undercurrents of protest and discontent from many other groups, most Americans faced the future with optimism. The civil rights movement spawned social activism.

Among the many effects of the civil rights movement as it gained momentum in the early 1960s was its impact on Greensboro sit-ins in 1960, accelerating with the 1961 Freedom Rides, and with the Mississippi Summer project. These movements opened up some eyes to Americans so they could see what was going on in the country at this time. Most of the things that went on in the sixties dealt with the War.

The Cold war in which included the Korean War, but mostly dealt with our little rivalry the Soviet Union. There was a lot of division between people because of the War. Many people couldnt handle the thought of War. They were just scared that they had to be in a country that was involve in the War. Others thought that it was the perfect time to start their own groups. Some were Ethnic groups in which gained more power. Though much of American

history, most of the nations dominant institutions had been controlled by middle-class, Protestant, white males.

Nonetheless, throughout those same years, American society was extraordinarily diverse. It included many groups whose political economic, and social outlook was very different from those of the controlling white male population. African American, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and members of other ethnic groups were largely excluded from the mainstream of American life. Women lived within sharply defined boundaries. People in the South and the West had different interests from those in the Northeast. The Existence of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity had been the source of many conflicts and adjustments for more than three centuries.

In the 1960s, perhaps more than at any other moment in American history, that diversity erupted and helped redefine the nations life. African Americans, students and women all raised challenges to traditional practices and institutions. So did other groups who felt excluded from the centers of American life. The Counterculture rejected traditional standards and styles.

The rise of political radicalism on college campuses occurred alongside an even larger change in the character of American youth: the emergence of what became known as the counterculture. Among the conspicuous features of this was a general contempt among young people for traditional standards. Youths displayed that contempt by wearing long hair, shabby or outrageous clothing, using unconventional speech, and acting in conventional standards of behavior.

They also were attracted to drugs, particularly to weed(marijuana) and hallucinogens. In addition, they adopted a new and more permissive view of sexual behavior. Rock music was an increasingly important part of the counterculture. Lying behind these open challenges to traditional lifestyles were the outlines of a philosophy. Like members of the student left (with which it in many ways overlapped), the counterculture challenged the nature of modern American society for its hollowness and artificiality.

It called for a more natural world in which men and women would live in closer harmony with nature and would have greater freedom to vent their instincts and emotions. This was, in the end, a search for personal fulfillment. Popular phrases of the 1960s expressed something of its character. Do your own thing or if it feels good, do it. So did the communities created by the so-called hippies. Adherents of the counterculture who attempted to withdraw from the conventional world and to live among people who shared their beliefs. Such communities emerged in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco and then spread to other large cities.

The hippies