

# [Prejudice, 1950′-1960’s](https://assignbuster.com/prejudice-1950-1960s/)

Prejudice: 1950’s and 60’s The story of African Americans dealing with racism and oppression during the 1950’s and 60’s is not a story unheard by anyone.

It is a common story that we hear early in life. It was a real life event that many African Americans had to deal with for many years, and still do today. This was and is no way for anyone to live, and African Americans knew it was time for them to be treated like human beings. Many events led up to the Civil Rights movement, including the story of Emmett Till.

Prejudice had to come to an end and equal rights to a beginning. The social behavior of people in the 1950’s and 60’s was so much different than it is today although it is not hard to find prejudice in our everyday life. Here is a a brief background of the 1950’s and 60’s starting with the murder of Emmett Till. This murder was noted as one of the leading events that sparked the Civil Rights Movement in 1955. Some more highlights of the civil rights movement from the 1950’s to 60’s include Rosa Parks, later that same year as Emmett Till, she refused to give up her seat at the front of the “ colored section” of the city bust to a white passenger, defying a southern tradition at that time.

This act sparked the Montgomery bus boycott, which lasted for more than a year until the buses were desegregated on Dec. 21, 1956. In 1957 Nine black students were blocked from entering the school on the orders of the current Governor Orval Faubus. President Eisenhower sent federal troops and the National Guard to intervene on behalf of the students, who become known as the “ Little Rock Nine. ” In 1960 Four black students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College begin a sit-in at a segregated Woolworth’s lunch counter.

Although they are refused service, they are allowed to stay at the counter. The event triggers many similar nonviolent protests throughout the South. Six months later the original four protesters are served lunch at the same Woolworth’s counter. Student sit-ins would be effective throughout the Deep South in integrating parks, swimming pools, theaters, libraries, and other public facilities. In 1962 James Meredith becomes the first black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi. Violence and riots surrounding the incident cause President Kennedy to send 5, 000 federal troops.

Blacks begin a march to Montgomery in support of voting rights but are stopped at the Pettus Bridge by a police blockade. Fifty marchers are hospitalized after police use tear gas, whips, and clubs against them. The incident is dubbed “ Bloody Sunday” by the media. The march is considered the catalyst for pushing through the voting rights act five months later. The events listed above are just a few of the many hundreds of movements made during the time that African Americans started their civil rights movement.

They are all examples of how the African Americans had to break the trend. The social behavior of people in the 1950’s and 60’s was so much different than it is today. I full believe that prejudice is learned and that nobody is born prejudice. Actually in my opinion one of the most important parts of social psychology is influence. The 50’s and 60’s were the years that influence ruled the minds of many. So many white Americans were racist during this time not because of how they truly felt but the influence that others had on their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards others.

If you weren’t with them, you were against them. It was very simple that to be accepted you had to agree, and who wouldn’t agree if it really had no direct bearing on your life. That is probably the main reason why most whites followed these barbaric rules of the time. In the north it was becoming more and more evident that blacks were equal, nothing different then the simple color of their skin. I believe that a lot of prejudices are started at a young age where our main stereotypes are learned. Stereotypes are beliefs and expectations that we have concerning what members are like of a particular group.

We don’t test these stereotypes, we just accept them. We learn them as fact, and they became fact in our own minds. Later in life, when our beliefs are threatened, we behave automatically out of these earlier stereotyped learning’s. This being the reason for the behaviors before and during the 1950’s and 60’s. It had been so many years of slavery before then and the feeling towards the African Americans was not just going to change.

It took so many years to “ flush” these stereotypes from the common beliefs because as a young child you were continually exposed to these prejudices and it was normal for you to treat African Americans the way that they were, and likewise it was understood as an African American that you were not equal. It took the courage of a few to stand-up, a few people that stood up against influence and decided it was time for a change. In a good view, the influence from others sparked the Civil Rights Movement. As I stated earlier, Emmitt Till’s murder sparked the movement.

The effort his mother put into getting the word out and the news of his murder influenced others to stand up for a change. It’s not hard to understand exactly why the general public, and particularly the southern states, took so long to break their racism towards African Americans in the 1950’s and 60’s. In fact there are still people today who are racist towards them. Everyone has come across some kind of prejudice in their life. Most racism is based on category memberships, including age, occupation, gender, religion, language spoken and accent, sexual orientation, or body weight.

Even though it’s cruel, it’s degrading, it’s senseless, and it’s dangerous it is learned even still today. In short it shouldn’t exist, yet it does: against the homeless, the elderly, the handicapped, those who look different, feel different, the dreamers, even those who try to help. Without the 1950’s and 60’s, things today would be very much different. These events did not rid prejudice beliefs, but gave the general public the ability to put an end to them.

Most prejudice feeling today are kept to oneself. Knowing that you would be ridiculed for being prejudice helps so much in equal rights.