

The civil rights movement's impact on america

[History](#), [American History](#)



During Reconstruction, there was a significant increase of African Americans holding positions very close to white people. They had the right to vote, they held public office, and they sought legislative changes. Jim Crow Laws were a collection of state and local rules that legalized racial segregation, just after all of the progress that was made for African Americans and their rights. Some states that acted like this even went as far as to limit the voting power for blacks.

These laws set a general strict rule that said all African Americans in America were separate but equal. This saying was first set by the Supreme Court in the Plessy vs. Ferguson case, a case where a train passenger by the name of Homer Plessy refused to sit in a train car for blacks. This single incident created the saying separate but equal, leading to the significant restraints that very much affected the speed at which African Americans in our country got their full, true freedom.

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The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is America's oldest and largest civil rights organization. First established in 1909 by people such as Martin Luther King Jr, W. E. B. Du Bois, Oswald Garrison Villard, and many more, it was formed in New York City by both black and white activists, in response to the spike of violence against African Americans. The organization's first major focus was actually a silent protest that they put together in 1917. Titled the Anti-Lynching Campaign, this early NAACP project protested lynching and other violence against African Americans.

It is said that some 10, 000 people participated in this silent protest, naturally making this the organization's main focus for the first few years of its life. The NAACP also had several progressive victories for what they represented. One of their first major victories was that they successfully got the Supreme Court to rule the grandfather clause unconstitutional. This little event was just the beginning of this organization and their constant fight to getting the full freedom they deserve. It is easy to say that without the NAACP; The Civil Rights Movement would not have been so successful in the upcoming years after its formation.

The Civil Rights Act was passed on July 2nd, 1964. The act created a gateway for all African Americans to a better life by taking away segregation from the country, after decades of always being treated worthlessly by the majority. Without the Civil Rights Act, we most likely would not be where we are today in regards to equality. The act was the result of many events in prior years where African Americans were segregated and treated poorly only for their skin color.

It is incredible that some African Americans were brave enough to stand their ground, because of how long before the Civil Rights Movement began where it was normal to segregate people with darker skin tones. It is events such as The Montgomery Bus Boycott and The Birmingham Church Bombing that really show what it was like to be an African American in this time period. They always had to be mindful of who is in their surroundings and not to go against anyone of more rights. That is, except in the case of Rosa Parks.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was one of the most defining moments in the civil rights movement because it showed the power and passion of the African American community. It all started on December 1st, 1955, when a woman by the name of Rosa Parks was taking a bus on her way home from her workplace at a local grocery store. Back in this time, buses were segregated, so the people riding the buses were separated into two sections, black and white. Parks was seated in the front row of the colored section when the white section became filled up with people.

It is common for colored people to stand up when something like this occurs, and since she was seated in the front row of the colored section, Parks was asked to stand up for a white man that needed a seat. She refused to stand up, even when directly instructed by the driver. This occurrence led to the removal of Parks from the bus, along with her arrest. After being bailed out by a local civil rights leader a day later, the entire city population decided to put together a boycott for all city buses. This meant that the entire city population, instead of paying for a bus ride, just walked to their daily destinations, such as work, school, or home.

This went on for a long 381 days, until the Montgomery federal court ruled that any law requiring racially segregated seating on buses directly violated the fourteenth amendment (history. com). The city appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court. These improved Montgomery buses were integrated on December 20, 1956. The event of the Montgomery Bus Boycott was one of the first and most powerful instances of The Civil Rights Movement. Without this event, The Civil Rights Movement never would have had such a great

starting point and never would have started accelerating and growing as fast as it did. This is why this event and, more importantly, the civil rights movement as a whole, is very important to our country today.

The March on Washington was a very large organized meeting that happened in the Summer of 1963. More than 200, 000 Americans came together to peacefully protest. The most notable part of the March on Washington was the speech given by Martin Luther King Jr. It was what is now known as the I Have A Dream speech. King stood up in front of the 200, 000+ people and gave what is believed to be his greatest speech yet. One of the most notable lines from the speech is as follows: I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character (King, 1963).

This line alone from the speech shows off the main idea that King wants a society in which his children will feel safe to be themselves, rather than hate themselves for who they are. The March on Washington was an event that is still very important to our country today because it shows the unity of over 200, 000 people standing up for what they believe in, which is something that our country still has some issues with.

The Birmingham Church Bombing was a terrorist attack done by the Ku Klux Klan on Sunday, September 15th, 1963, in Birmingham, Alabama. The bombing occurred at the 16th Street Baptist Church, a church that many civil rights organizers such as Martin Luther King Jr would meet. The bomb blast killed four little girls and injured fourteen others. The four girls who lost their lives include eleven-year-old Denise McNair and fourteen-year-olds Addie

Mae Collins, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley. The news of the terrorist attack created widespread national outrage. This bombing had been the third bombing in the area in eleven days.

The people of Birmingham were tired of the deadly pattern, so thousands of African American protesters gathered and surrounded the scene of the bombing. This protest quickly got out of control and led to two African American men getting killed, one of them by a cop (history. com). All of this commotion forced Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to speak up about the matter, creating a sense of control for the people in the area who felt unsafe wherever they turned. The event of the Birmingham Church Bombing was just one of the many, many instances where it was clear that something had to be done about racism and segregation in our country. The Civil Rights Movement used this event to further enhance what could be done to prevent things alike from happening ever again, which makes our world today better for the African American population.

Bloody Sunday was a day in which a peaceful protest turned into a violent danger zone for anyone attending the Selma to Montgomery march. On March 7, 1965, this protest turned disastrous when police officers were attempting to stop the protesters. When the protesters refused to stop, they were beaten and teargassed, leading to many people being put into the hospital. To top it all off, the entire event was televised. This peaceful protest was being broadcasted to the televisions of people from all around the area, but it ended up being a horrific sight of innocent people being beaten and hospitalized. This event was a defining moment for the Civil Rights

Movement because it showed another instance where African Americans were punished for doing nothing apart from standing up for what is right: their freedom.

The assassination of Malcolm X all goes back to when he was 21, when he was sent to prison for theft. While in prison, he met a man named Elijah Muhammad. Muhammed was the leader of the Nation of Islam, a different African American political and religious movement. He ended up becoming a part of the Nation of Islam, becoming an active member and even changing his name to Malcolm X all for the organization. After six years of being imprisoned, Malcolm X was released and became a minister of the Nation of Islam in Harlem, New York. After more years of public speaking and leadership experience, Malcolm X decides to leave the Nation of Islam and creates Muslim Mosque Inc, another Islamic organization.

He also changed his name to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, which is quite the upgrade from Malcolm X. In 1964, El-Hajj founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity. At this point, Malcolm X has a great life of leadership and success. So naturally, his old friend, Elijah Muhammad, was getting jealous of him. Muhammed thought that he had become too powerful. This led to the worst conclusion imaginable. On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was shot to his death by members of the Nation of Islam while he was speaking at a rally for the Organization of Afro-American Unity, in New York City. Malcolm X's assassination was a defining moment in the Civil Rights Movement because he was a strong leader respected by many and was very suddenly brought to a halt, ultimately putting things into perspective for those against his cause.

On the morning of April 4th, 1968, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr was shot in the neck while standing on the balcony of a motel he was staying in at the time, the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. He was in the area along with other Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) members to lead a march of sanitation workers that were on strike. King was rushed to a nearby hospital and died about an hour later. He was constantly speaking out to the people, helping anyone that possibly needed it. He was an activist. He had speeches and marches planned for every day he could possibly take, that is how dedicated he was. The last thing everyone expected on that evening was to receive the news of the death of such a respected leader.

When news got out about the activist's assassination, over 100 surrounding cities started to riot, which ultimately caused a lot more chaos in the situation. After a two-month search for the assassin, a man by the name of James Earl Ray was sentenced to 99 years in prison for the murder of civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. There is actually a lot of controversy and conspiracy surrounding the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. James Earl Jones came out and said that he was not the assassin. This obviously does not give him a free pass home. There was some pretty sufficient evidence against James Earl Ray: Witnesses had seen him running from a boarding house near the Lorraine Motel carrying a bundle; prosecutors said he fired the fatal bullet from a bathroom in that building (history. com, 2010).

Despite this surefire evidence, many people, including direct family of King, believe that Jones was a victim of conspiracy (britannica. com). The overall impact of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. was quite the eye-opener for the people of our country.

King seemed like an unstoppable force, going where he wished and always succeeding in improving the world around him. But the moment they hear about his life being ended with a single bullet for no good reason, it makes people start to really think about the state of America. The Civil Rights Movement reached a new level when King was assassinated. This new level brought up new successes and led to more improvements that still impact our world today.

In conclusion, the Civil Rights Movement continues to be relevant in our country today because it has gradually led us to a freer and better country. The Montgomery Bus Boycott helped us first start seeing the amount of people that felt the same way about segregation: just enough to purposefully not ride a bus to their daily activities for well over a year. The March on Washington gave the people a glimpse of the thoughts of Civil Rights activist Martin Luther King Jr with his I Have A Dream speech. Bloody Sunday was a terrible event that led to the injury of many of our own citizens.

From that, we learned to not make the same mistake again when it comes to protesting and boundaries. The assassination of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr showed everyone from this time era that even the most successful of African Americans are unsafe from the dangers that string from racism. It's for these reasons that the civil rights movement continues to have had a huge impact on our country.