



EXPLORING CIVIL RIGHTS

THE MOVEMENT

1955

 SCHOLASTIC



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THE MOVEMENT

1957

 SCHOLASTIC



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THE MOVEMENT

1960

 SCHOLASTIC

A photograph of Martin Luther King Jr. speaking at a large outdoor gathering, likely the March on Washington. He is in the foreground, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt, with his right arm raised in a gesture. Behind him is a massive crowd of people, many holding signs. In the background, the Washington Monument is visible against a clear sky. The scene is set on a grassy hillside with trees.

EXPLORING CIVIL RIGHTS

THE MOVEMENT

1963

 SCHOLASTIC



EXPLORING CIVIL RIGHTS

THE MOVEMENT

1965

 SCHOLASTIC

A Ku Klux Klan member is dressed in a white hood and robe to hide his identity during a parade in 1924.



INTRODUCTION

The Way It Was

In December 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery in the United States. By the early 1870s, former slaveholding states in the South created Black codes to strictly limit the freedom of their Black citizens. These restrictions were known as “**Jim Crow**” laws, and they controlled where people who used to be enslaved could live and work.

Jim Crow laws were expanded in the 1880s to keep Black citizens from voting or receiving a proper education. In many parts of the South, they were forced to use separate restaurants, schools, restrooms, parks, and other public places. This practice is known as **segregation**. Although laws said that these spaces should be “separate but equal,” facilities for Black people were almost always inferior to those assigned to white citizens.

It was not uncommon for Black citizens in the South to be kidnapped and beaten, shot, or killed for small violations of Jim Crow laws. **Lynchings** and white mob violence frequently terrorized many Black communities. Black churches were burned

down, and Black homes attacked. **Discrimination** against Black Americans also existed in the North and elsewhere in the nation, but less so than in the South at the time.

Fighting Back

Segregation, Jim Crow laws, and discrimination denied Black Americans the same **civil rights** as white Americans. In the face of **oppression** and terror, some Black Americans organized to fight inequality. The first civil rights organization in the United States was founded in 1896 as the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. In 1909, an interracial group of **activists** formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The NAACP called for an end to segregation in schools, public transportation, and other areas of daily life. The group also focused on making the American public aware of the violence against Black people.

In the following years, new civil rights groups emerged. Christian ministers, African American lawyers, and Black youth were especially important in organizing and supporting the emerging civil rights movement. The decade between 1955 and 1965 would serve as the heart of the movement, as action and long awaited progress began to take shape.



Protesters carrying a banner that says "We march with Selma!" lead 15,000 people in a march through Harlem in New York City on March 15, 1965.

1965

In this book, you'll see how in 1965, the civil rights movement was going strong. But a century of racism could not be undone overnight. Even after 10 years into the movement, the fight for true equality was far from over. You'll learn how Malcolm X became an influential figure, and how his **assassination** impacted the movement. You'll learn how demonstrators pushed for Black voting rights along the historic Selma to Montgomery March, remaining peaceful in the face of brutal police officers. And you'll see how, because of that march, the **federal** government passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, finally empowering Black citizens to have a say in the leadership of their own communities. ■

Visions of a Great Society

While the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., might have been the face of the movement in 1965, it was thousands of ordinary Black Americans and their white allies who made the movement possible.

Five years earlier, an interracial group of students had united to form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Their mission was to build on the activism inspired by sit-ins across the country, and to give young people a voice in the movement. On January 2, 1965, SNCC leaders announced to the nation where they would focus their protest efforts next: Alabama. In Selma, only a small percentage of eligible Black voters had actually been able to register. That wasn't for a lack of trying. African Americans in Selma, within Dallas County, *wanted* to register. They wanted to vote.



Young activists sing and chant during a demonstration for voter rights at the courthouse in Selma, Alabama, in February 1965. More than 400 of them were arrested and jailed.