Session 1: African American Civil Rights Movement

Our Common History: Fighting for the Rights of People

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African-American Civil Rights Movement

The African-American Civil Rights Movement started in the mid 1800s. The start the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The Bus Boycott started in the 1950’s.

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African Americans met to come up with a plan to fight for their rights.

Martin Luther King, jr. and Rosa Parks organized folks at the Highlander Folk School.
African-American Civil Rights Movement

- The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was important to civil rights.

- The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) started having sit-ins at restaurants to protest discrimination.

F W. Woolworth in Greensboro, NC, where the first "sit-in" for integration occurred in 1960.

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African-American Civil Rights Movement

- In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act.
- In 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act.

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Issues and Problems for the African American Movement

Freedom and Independence

One of the biggest problems African Americans faced was segregation. Some school systems had separate schools for black children. Some communities even had separate hospitals and libraries.

Black people could not stay in the same hotel as white people. Segregation limited their freedom and kept people from being full citizens. When black people started to speak up, they were arrested. Some black people who spoke up were murdered by mobs or the Ku Klux Klan.

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Another important concern for the freedom of the Civil Rights Movement was the **freedom to congregate and meet**.

In 1963, the 16th 3 Street Baptist Church in Birmingham was bombed. Many other black churches were burned to keep people from meeting about their rights.

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One of the most important problems the African-American movement worked on was **voting rights**.

Some counties and states came up with rules to make it hard for black people to register to vote. They would ask questions like how many bubbles are in a bar of soap. They would make them recite the constitution.

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Human and Legal Rights

- These counties and states did not want black people to vote because they did not want them to run for office.

- These white people did not want to share governing power with black people.

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African American Civil Rights activists had to fight against discrimination in the area of relationships and marriage. Black people could not date or get married to white people. People in mixed-race relationships were at risk for being arrested and facing other legal penalties.

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Meaningful Participation

- Being part of any community means having access to the same things and services that everyone enjoys.

- Separate programs and buildings that were set up for black people did not have the standards or quality. Black children did not get an equal education.

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Meaningful Participation

After schools started to become desegregated, some governors closed schools because they believed that it would avoid negative interaction.

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Conclusion

The civil rights movement was an empowering and also dangerous time for Black Americans. The efforts of civil rights activists got laws to end segregation.

Today in 2021, Black Americans and their allies are still fighting for equal access to voting, jobs and housing.

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