

Texas After World War II

Lesson 1: Civil Rights and Equal Rights

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why does conflict develop?

Terms to Know

lawsuit legal action in which a person charges that someone has injured him or her in some way

integrate to include people of all races

boycott to refuse to buy or use particular goods or services as a form of protest

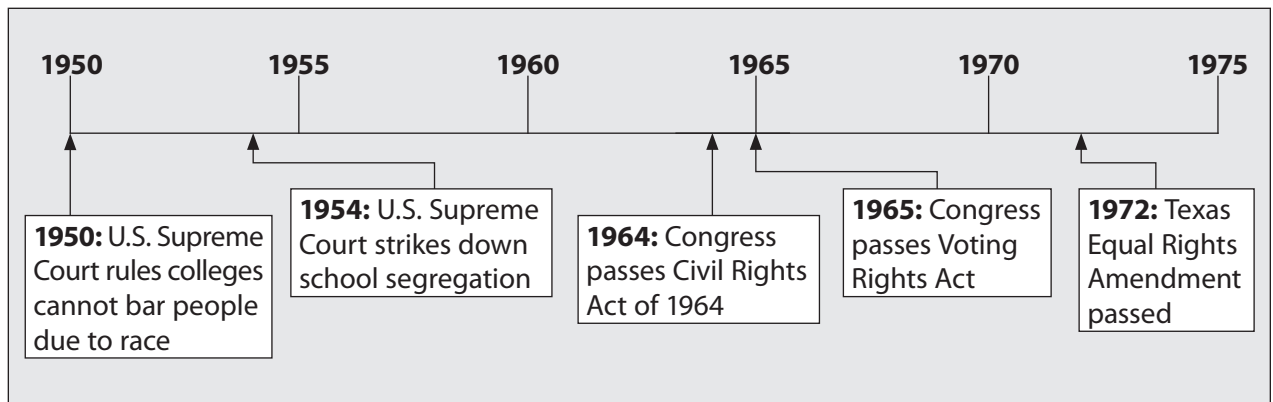
nonviolent protest a form of action in favor of a cause that involves marches, boycotts, and possibly deliberately breaking the law to highlight opposition to that law

sit-in a form of protest in which activists sit down inside or in front of a business to interfere with its normal work

Freedom Ride an integrated bus ride that went through segregated areas to draw attention to civil rights

literacy test an exam to show whether or not a person can read or write

When did it happen?



African Americans Challenge Segregation

Guiding Question *How did African Americans challenge segregation in Texas?*

In the 1940s, African Americans began to challenge unfair laws. Two challenges started in Texas. African American Lonnie Smith filed a **lawsuit**, or legal action, against the Democrats' "white primary." In 1944 the U.S. Supreme Court said, in *Smith v. Allwright*, that African Americans had to be allowed to vote in the primary.

AbC Defining

1. What is a *lawsuit*?

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Lesson 1: Civil Rights and Equal Rights, *continued*

Defining

2. What is the meaning of *boycott*?

Marking the Text

3. Circle the name of the founder of CORE, and underline the group's goal and one of its tactics.

Analyzing

4. Why did Farmer start the Freedom Rides?

Reading Progress Check

5. How did African Americans attain greater civil rights during the 1950s and 1960s?

The other Texas challenge was *Sweatt v. Painter*. Heman M. Sweatt was denied admission to a Texas law school because of his race. Sweatt sued the school. In 1950 the Supreme Court ruled in his favor.

In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that separate schools are not equal. The local schools in the country had to **integrate**, or accept students of all races.

African Americans in Montgomery, Alabama, led by Martin Luther King, Jr., **boycotted**, or refused to use, city buses to protest discrimination. The year-long boycott led the U.S. Supreme Court to declare segregated buses unconstitutional. King urged African Americans to adopt **nonviolent protest**, such as marches and boycotts, in the fight for equal rights.

Texan James L. Farmer, Jr. founded the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to win entry to public facilities for African Americans. This group used tactics of nonviolent protest such as **sit-ins** to protest segregation. Activists took seats in white sections of segregated lunch counters and refused to leave unless they were served.

In 1960 the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was illegal on buses that traveled between states. It also outlawed segregation at bus stations where these buses stopped. Farmer knew that this ruling was not being followed in the South. In 1961 he organized **Freedom Rides**. In these protests, whites and African Americans traveled on interstate buses into the South. The plan was to break state segregation laws so that the U.S. government would have to enforce the Court's decision.

President Lyndon B. Johnson, a Texan, pushed two major civil rights laws through Congress:

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination based on race, sex, religion, and national origin. After the passage of this law, integration began to move at a much faster pace.
- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 made **literacy tests** illegal. If necessary, federal officials could take over voter registration.

After the Voting Rights Act passed, the number of African American voters in Texas increased. White politicians campaigned for their support. Many African Americans were elected to local and state offices.