

## African Americans

### History & Politics

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## Colonial Era 1500-1791

- 1607 - 1776. 175 years of slavery in colonial period.
- Apart from conquistadors & slaves, some Europeans of African descent and some Africans traveled freely to the Americas in the colonial period.
- Early on, some Africans were treated like European indentured servants with limited-term indentures of 17 years, but racial differences rapidly emerged.
- In this period, status free vs. slave was the key, not race
- Free Blacks support the American revolution, fight in revolutionary army. Crispus Atticus.
- Whites argue about whether "equality" should include Blacks.

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## Founding the Racial State

- 1790 Immigration and Naturalization Act, only "Whites" can be naturalized.
- Slavery enshrined in the Constitution of 1791.
- 1808 importation of slaves ends. Henceforth, slaves are all native born.
- European Americans mobilize to strip free Africans of their citizenship rights, ban them from communities, kick them out of formerly integrated churches.
- The African-American movement begins as a defense against European-American actions.

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## 1816-1860

- Blacks 20% of the population, about 90% are slaves
- Slavery in the US as a extreme institution
- Growing international opposition to slavery
- Abolition movement in US grows
- Restrictions on free Africans in both north and south
- The 10% free Africans mobilize against these restrictions & against slavery
- Slavery divides the nation.

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## Slavery

- There had been slavery for thousands of years, but US slavery was a peculiarly capitalist and particularly inhumane institution: people as property, no rights as human beings
- Physical geography, social organization made slave rebellions & escape more difficult than in other locales
- Slave labor was a fundamental element of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century economy: Black slaves built much of the economic power of the nation, built the capital
- US Black/White racial definitions a product of slavery: child of a slave mother was a slave; "one drop rule"

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## Abolitionism: Movement to Abolish Slavery

- Militant White movement rooted principally in the northeast, but gained adherents. Violent battles between pro- and anti-slavery forces. Western "free soil" farmers did not want to compete with slave labor.
- Black participants & leaders, although also racial tensions within movement
- 20th century tendency to ignore the history of White abolitionists

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## John Brown

- **White militant radical abolitionist fought a guerilla war against slavery.**
- **1859 Harper's Ferry raid, his capture, trial and execution**
  - Bells tolled throughout the North for him, a major event of the time
  - song: John Brown's body (sung to an old camp meeting him)
  - tune used for Battle Hymn of the Republic (poem by Julia Ward Howe)

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## John Brown's Body

**John Brown's body lies a-mold'ring in the grave (3X)  
His soul goes marching on**

**He captured Harper's Ferry with his nineteen men so true  
He frightened old Virginia till she trembled through and through  
They hung him for a traitor, themselves the traitor crew  
His soul is marching on**

**John Brown died that the slave might be free, (3X)  
But his soul is marching on!**

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## Civil War 1860-1865

- **Bloody war, occupies White military forces**
- **Emancipation proclamation 1863, escaped/freed slaves join Union Army**
- **Slaves gradually being liberated join Union Army as soldiers: although 1% of northern population, were 10% of Union Army by 1865 (180,000)**
- **Ends with the victory of the North, abolition of slavery**

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## Slavery & The Civil War

- **Legally, war fought "to preserve union"**
- **Economic factors were important**
- **Northern Whites had ambivalent attitudes, opposed slavery but still thought Blacks were inferior, worried about consequences of liberation**
- **But slavery was important, shows up in the rhetoric, letters of the times.**
- **Later historians downplayed significance.**

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## Constitutional Amendments 1865

- **13<sup>th</sup>: abolishes slavery "except as punishment for a crime"**
- **14<sup>th</sup>: all persons born or naturalized in the US have rights of citizenship regardless of race, religion, national origin, or previous condition of servitude**
- **15<sup>th</sup>: right of men to vote regardless of race etc.**

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## Race, Gender and 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments

- **The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments do not apply to non-White immigrants because they are not allowed to become naturalized, but do apply to non-Whites born in the US; this becomes an important part of Asian American politics**
- **Battles over the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment split women's rights and Blacks' rights advocates**

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## 1865-1876 Reconstruction

- Union army occupies the south.
- Blacks vote. Whites who have been in Rebel army cannot. Black elected officials.
- Some reforms. Some improvement for Blacks. Some land reform (has future effects)
- Much turmoil, resistance. Attempts by Whites to re-create racial domination
- Conflicts around 15th amendment disrupt the previous coalition between feminists and supporters of African-American rights.

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## Blacks/ African Americans: The White Counter-Revolution

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## The End of Reconstruction

- Compromise of 1876 ends Reconstruction to break election deadlock, elect Hayes.
- Union army leaves the south, agreement to let southerners do what they will about race. White southerners can vote again.
- "Healing" White nation by sacrificing Blacks
- Denials that the war was about slavery
- [Later, Confederate soldiers are even made eligible for US veterans' pensions with the same standing as Union soldiers]

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## 1877 - 1920 Era of Explicit Racism

- Slavery was over, but a new racial order was created
- It was created by using proxies for race, circumventing the strictures of the 14th amendment
- Origins teach you how a system was built, once in place hard to see why things are as they are

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## Black & White Conflict

- 90% of all Blacks live in rural areas, 90% in south
- most in cotton farming, dependent on landowners, subject to violent repression.
- Lynchings and KKK terrorism increase. KKK = local White authorities in sheets
- Blacks demand reparations for slavery immediately after the war. (Whites ignore.)
- Some emigrationism, 500+ actually emigrate to Liberia. Most want to stay.

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## Creating the New Racial Order

- 1880s - 1890s Southern states pass Jim Crow segregation laws.
- 1893 Plessey vs Furgeson, "Separate but Equal," US Supreme Court effectively guts the 14th amendment.
- Failure of land reform. White elites reconsolidate class privilege

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## Politics & Race

- **Democratic Party = alliance of southern White planters and northern industrialists and working class.**
- **Republicans debate 1876-1891 whether to support Black rights; abandon Black rights entirely after 1891.**
- **Populist movement threatens trans-racial alliance among southern working class; elite Whites work to disenfranchise Blacks (and working class) to eliminate threat.**

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## Black Disenfranchisement

- **No disguise, overt White efforts to disenfranchise Blacks, but accomplish racial goals without explicitly using race (which is illegal)**
- **Example: Louisiana, 130,344 Blacks registered in 1895, only 5,000 in 1898 and 1,772 in 1916.**
- **Blacks lose all political power.**
- **Poll taxes, literacy requirements, personal and periodic registration at difficult-to-reach places, White primaries. "Grandfather clause" protects Whites.**
- **Same tools in the north disenfranchise White workers, especially immigrants.**

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## 1895-1920 Virulent Racism

- **Presidents Taft and Wilson are explicit racists**
- **US Supreme Court decisions gut the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment**
- **Hundreds of African Americans are lynched (murdered) in the south.**
- **"Scientific racism" is taught in college science classrooms. This ideology distinguishes northern Aryan from southern Europeans, as well as what we now understand as "races."**
- **Explicit opposition to any form of mixing of "races."**

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## Black Resistance

- **There is resistance to Jim Crow.**
- **Bus boycotts & consumer boycotts against segregation in the cities.**
- **Petitions, speeches. Rhetoric of citizenship, equality.**
- **Northern, educated Blacks speak out for equality, citizenship. But lose 1880-1920**

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## Counter-Trends

- **Pockets of Black development**
- **Black migration (cowboys; movements into cities)**
- **Black schools, colleges**
- **Black political movements**
- **Too weak in this era to win, but set up the future (we will return to these)**

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## African American Resistance Movements

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## Dimensions of Action

1. **Degree of challenge to dominant groups: accommodationist, moderate, reformist, militant, revolutionary**
2. **Integrationism vs separatism: whether the minority group stresses equality and mixing with the dominant group, or separation and difference**

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## Conservative/Radical Dimension

- **Accommodationist = cooperating with the dominant group**
- **Moderate/Reformist= seeking change while not challenging those in power**
- **Radical/ Militant = seeking larger changes in a confrontational, aggressive manner**
- **Revolutionary= seeking to overthrow the present system, by violence if necessary**

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## Integrationist vs. Separatist

- **Integrationist = Races should mix, minorities should intermingle with majority, everyone should be treated the same (egalitarian)**
  - **Assimilationist = Minorities should adopt majority culture, blend into the larger group**
- VS**
- **Separatist = Races should be separate, minorities should keep in their own groups**
  - **Nationalist (in this context)= Minorities should have separate culture, distinct political base**

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## Assimilationism & Separatism

- **American Indians were subject to forced assimilation. Political movements tend to be separatist.**
- **African Americans share most culture with European Americans, have always had both impulses in their movements**
  - **Assimilationist: stress common cultural heritage, desire for citizenship, share "American values."**
  - **Separatist: stress value of own culture, look back to homeland (Africa), stress economic development, political self-determination.**
- **Separatism generally stronger among African Americans when Whites are more hostile; integration and assimilation are strong when times seem hopeful**

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## Black Integrationists & Separatists

	Assimilationist/ Integrationist	Separatist/ Nationalist
Accommodationist	today's "Black conservatives"	Booker T. Washington, some churches
Reformist	Urban League NAACP	Some community development groups
Radical/ Militant	M. L. King, Jr. W.E.B. Dubois A. Philip Randolph	Marcus Garvey Malcolm X Louis Farrakhan
Revolutionary	Class Revolution	Freedom Fighters

## Accommodationism

- **Booker T. Washington**
- **1895-1915**
- **Accommodationist self-improvement**
- **"The Atlanta Compromise" accepts segregation in exchange for economic development money**
- **"Official Black": all White money channeled through him**
- **Retrospective view of him changes with the times**

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## Militant Separatists

- Henry McNeal Turner 1890s. International Migration Society
- Marcus Garvey 1915-1925. Universal Negro Improvement Association. ("Back to Africa" movement)

Later:

- Elijah Muhammad 1920s – 1975. Nation of Islam.
- Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) 1952-1965. Nation of Islam. (Son of Malcolm Little, a Garveyite minister)
- Louis Farrakhan 1975- Nation of Islam (separatist splinter after W. Deen Muhammad led most of NOI into mainstream non-racial Islam)

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## Reparations, Migration

- Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, Black nationalist, demanded \$40 billion in reparations for slavery, preached God is Black, involved in "African Fever", organized International Migration Society for a dollar-a-month plan to pay for passage to Liberia; not feasible, but facilitated passage of 500+ to Liberia 1895-1896

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## Marcus Garvey

- Universal Negro Improvement Association, "Back to Africa" movement
  - 1-2 million followers
  - Black businesses, Black Star steamship line
  - Black religious symbols: Black Madonna, Black Jesus.
  - Ideology of moving to Africa, some negotiations with Liberia, nothing came of it
- Convicted of mail fraud in 1922; imprisoned then deported from US.
- Threats to Whites of Black Nationalism

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## Militant Integrationists

- W.E.B. DuBois. (But some cultural nationalist impulses.)  
Founds Niagra Movement 1905, then NAACP, 1909  
NAACP = National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
- Ida B. Wells-Barnett Anti-lynching campaign.  
Demonstrates that lynching is a political tool.  
Inflammatory rhetoric.
- Thomas Fortune, William Trotter and many others
- 1920s - 1940s. A. Philip Randolph. Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Strong Black union, political platform.

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## Class Issues

- Whites divided by class: elites vs. working class
- So are Blacks. Historically 10% free Blacks educated, while 90% slave were legally required to be illiterate (some slaves got illegal educations)
- Blacks tend to unity due to common oppression by Whites, but at the same time are divided by class & education

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## Class Tensions

- African American activists, generally from better-off and more educated backgrounds themselves, have ongoing dilemmas in their relation to lower-class African Americans
- On the one hand, feel common sympathy, in some cases come from similar origins
- On the other hand, feel critical of lower class lifestyles, feel "pulled down" by actions of others, feel stereotyped by Whites as "all Blacks are alike"
- Politicized lower-class Blacks feel class antagonisms, critiques of privilege, elitism of better-off Blacks

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## African American Movement 1910-2000

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## Historical Overview

- **1880-1920** Racism strong, legal status of Blacks declines, Black resistance is present but fails.
- **1920-1954** Black capacities and resources gradually increase, moderate progress
- **1954 – 1965** Civil Rights Era. Legal segregation is dismantled. Huge confrontation. “The Second American Revolution.”
- **1965-1980** Some consolidation of Black gains after battles over implementation + “White backlash”
- **1980s-2000.** Black political influence erodes. Improvement for Black middle class + decline for Black lower class.

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## 1910s-1920s

- **1916-1925** Marcus Garvey. Back to Africa. Militant separatist, Black capitalist. Black religious icons.
- **1919** Bloody race riots in many cities, Whites attacking and killing Blacks.
- **1920s** NAACP under James Weldon Johnson begins the concerted campaign of lawsuits to chip away at segregation,
  - begin the path towards Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka (1954).
  - Early victories provide resources that increase Black education.

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## 1920s-1930s

- **1920s - 1940s.** A. Philip Randolph. Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Strong Black union, political platform.
- **1920s - 1930s** Blacks shift voting patterns, become potential swing voters.
  - From “knee-jerk Republicans” (holdover from 19<sup>th</sup> century, Republicans anti-slavery, Lincoln freed the slaves) to willing to vote for whomever supports them and their issues.
- **1936** Blacks play a key role in Roosevelt’s New Deal Coalition. Become significant political players.

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## 1940-1960

- **1941** threatened March on Washington, led by Randolph. Called off when FDR agrees to ban racial discrimination in war industries.
- **1942-1945** World War II. Political watershed
- **1945-1960.** Post-war politics. Communism and anti-Communism. “Hearts and Minds” Anti-colonialism, independence for African nations. US racial policies become international embarrassment.

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## What Changed between 1880 and 1960?

Major source:

Doug McAdam. Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency. University of Chicago Press, 1982.

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## The Great Migration: Rural South to Urban North & South

- **1890 Blacks are 90% rural, 90% southern. No political leverage. Economically dependent. Illiterate. Threat of numbers in southern areas leads to extreme measures to keep them suppressed.**
- **Between 1900 and 1960 Blacks Move:**
  - South to North. From 90% southern in 1900 to 60% in 1960.
  - Rural to Urban. Southern Blacks: from 9% urban in 1890 and 34% in 1930 to 58% in 1960. The 40% of Blacks in the north are virtually all urban.

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## Consequences of Urbanization

- **Voting in North. Swing votes, parts of political machines. Black Congressmen elected.**
- **Less daily domination. More able to gather, talk politically without White oversight. Positive consequence of physical segregation.**
- **Able to support independent Black professionals (ministers, morticians, barbers & hairdressers). Economic independence=political independence.**
- **Rising education, rising incomes, rising political awareness**
- **Black newspapers, magazines, news sources.**

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## Organizational Infrastructure Grows

- **Black Churches. Larger, can support full-time ministers. Autonomous Organizations, meeting places they control themselves. Social gospel movement = role of church in society.**
- **Black Colleges. Lawsuits force the equal part of separate but equal. Obtain White money. Massive growth in educated youth. Students economically independent of Whites**
- **NAACP is a White-dominated organization at the national level, but a Black grassroots organization at the local level mobilized to support & defend Blacks.**

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## Rising Political Influence

- **1865-1920 those Blacks who could vote were staunchly Republican (the anti-slavery party, Lincoln freed the slaves). But after 1880, Republicans do nothing for Black rights**
- **In 1920s, NAACP and others urge Blacks to vote for whatever party will support Black rights, proportion voting Democrat goes up**
- **In 1930s, Blacks are part of Roosevelt's New Deal coalition, get some benefits; Eleanor Roosevelt supports more strongly**

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## Rising Education

- **Growth in Black education & Black colleges a direct result of NAACP litigation in the 1920s and 1930s**
- **Court cases forced the "equal" in "separate but equal"**
- **Southern states had to pay for Black education to defend segregation (but Blacks still lagged way behind Whites)**
- **These lawsuits also laid the groundwork for 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education**

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## Hope

- **Major basis of mobilization is the belief that change is possible "cognitive liberation" (McAdam)**
- **Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954 gave Black people hope that change was possible, that the government would intervene.**
- **Blacks more positive about Whites in the Civil Rights era, believed Whites were ready to change**
- **Blacks more integrationist when Whites seem willing to change & are open to integration and power sharing, are more separatist when Whites are more racist and conservative**

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## Politics 1930-1960

- After 1930, Blacks become increasingly important “swing vote” in some northern areas, part of the New Deal coalition
- Blacks voting predominantly but not uniformly Democrat 1930-1960
- 1960 both Republicans and Democrats are backing Civil Rights AND trying to gain White southern votes.
- 1960 Close election, Kennedy vs. Nixon. Kennedy wins, Blacks seen as swing vote. Kennedy gives support to civil rights, while trying to keep White southern vote.

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## The Civil Rights Era 1954-1969

### Events & Themes

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## 1950s

- 1954 **Brown vs. Board of Education.** Bans segregation, but allows graduate implementation.
- 1954 Emmett Till murdered. Widespread publicity among Blacks.
- 1955-56 Montgomery Bus Boycott, rise of Martin Luther King, Jr. Nation-wide publicity.
- 1950s Malcolm X preaching on the streets of Harlem.
- 1957 King founds Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)

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## White Resistance 1950s

- 1954-1970 (and continuing?) White resistance. Violence against Blacks, close public schools, mobilize organizations
- 1957. White riots at Little Rock High (Arkansas) to block small-scale integration. US Troops protect integration.
- 1954-1960s NAACP persecuted in south. Banned as “Communist.” Teachers, others fired for being members. (Same people who were members of NAACP involved in other Black organizations, involved in Black churches.)

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## The Civil Rights Advance 1960s

- 1960- Sit-ins start (SNCC = Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee)
- 1961 Freedom Rides (CORE=Congress of Racial Equality)
- 1963-65 major civil rights marches, major civil rights legislation
- 1963 March on Washington
- 1963 Kenney killed. President Johnson (a southerner) vows to be the “civil rights president.”
- 1964 Public Accommodations Act

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## Drama of Civil Rights

- Movement uses nonviolence, claims moral high ground
- Segregationists respond violently
- Confrontation leads to disruption
- Federal government, economic elites want peace, less committed to segregation.
- Disruption + moral high ground of non-violence leads “bystanders” to support the Black movement.
- However, many blame the movement for “causing” the violence by challenging people known to be violent

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## Separatism 1960s

- **Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) Elijah Muhammad.**
- **1960 TV show: “The Hate that Hate Produced.”** Expose, controversy
- **Malcolm X: most visible. Charismatic, articulate. Rejected non-violence, said Blacks should defend themselves if attacked**
- **Controversial among Blacks as well as Whites**

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## 1964

- **Freedom Summer. White college students go south. Civil rights workers killed.**
- **Battle over the Mississippi delegation to national convention. Fanny Lou Hamer “Is this America?”**
- **Johnson re-elected. The shift of the White racist vote to the Republican Party.**
- **Malcolm X travels to Mecca, embraces nonracial Islam, changes his name to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz**

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## 1965-6

- **Watts riot 1965.**
- **1963-1968 Black urban riots. Militancy. Northern/ western. Policing, poverty – not just “rights.” White fears.**
- **1965 Malcolm X assassinated**
- **1965 Selma, the last big civil rights march. Voting Rights Act**
- **1966 “Black power” Stokeley Carmichael and SNCC. Marginalization of Whites in the movement. Power rhetoric frightens Whites.**

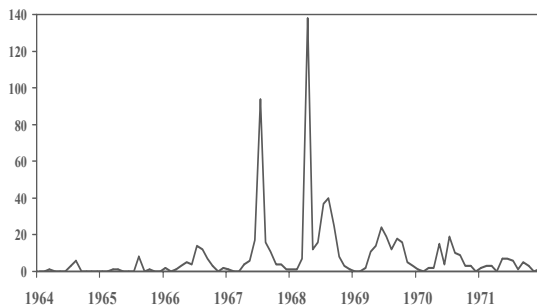
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## The End of the Civil Rights Era

- **1966-1967 King takes the movement north. Much less success. “Where Do We Go From Here?” Stresses need to address economic issues**
- **1968 ML King assassinated. Huge wave of riots.**
- **1966-1971 White students increasing involved in anti-war movement. White campus riots over the Vietnam war.**
- **1969 Nixon. “Law and order.” The beginning of the decline of Black political influence.**

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## Monthly Riot Counts 1964-1971



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## Anger and Polarization

- **White segregationists resisted even moderate reforms**
- **Non-violence as tactic (vs religious principle for MLK)**
- **Growing Black activist anger at White reactions**
- **Segregation laws a narrow goal: cannot address the economic, political, cultural deprivation of a people**
- **Riots 1963-1970: Eruptions of the Black lower classes. White responsiveness + White fear**
- **Belief in possibility of race war by late 1960s**
- **Black turn to separatism, “Black power,” “Black pride” magnifies themes long present in the culture**
- **White flight. Race-coded “law and order” & “anti-crime” rhetoric.**

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## Black Movement Since 1970

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## Politics 1964-2000

- 1964 election pits strong Civil Rights activist LB Johnson against far right conservative Goldwater. Self-conscious racists shift to Republicans, Democrats come to be viewed as the party of Blacks & civil rights.
- 1968 – 2000 Blacks vote Democratic 95%+. Republicans ignore the Black vote, seek to shore up the White vote with “race coded” appeals. Democrats take Black vote for granted, chase White votes.

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## 1970s Part 1

- **Implementation struggles.** White resistance changes form.
- **Black political organizations** become part of the “system.”
- **Affirmative action policies** are initiated
- **Cultural nationalism** grows: Black (Afro-American) studies departments; Kwanza invented
- **Black progress:** reduced poverty, increased education, increased college enrollment.

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## 1970s Part 2

- **“White backlash.”** Anti-busing riots: Boston, Louisville. Rhetoric of “neighborhood schools” & racial attacks.
- **Generally difficult economic times:** stagflation, gas lines. Political left declines, White activists involved in environmentalism, anti-nuclear.
- **“War on drugs”** begins, Black imprisonment climbs.
- **White working class,** not Blacks, are the swing votes.
- **Split in Nation of Islam 1975:** most follow W. Deen Muhammad into mainstream non-racial Islam; Louis Farrakhan leads separatist splinter)

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## 1980s Part 1

- **Reaganism.** Conservatives strike back. Huge cuts in welfare, college scholarship programs, low-income housing, other social programs. Large tax cuts, S&L bailout create deficits.
- **The effective end of federal support for affirmative action.** Whites even use MLK’s equality rhetoric against Blacks.
- **Recessions.** “When White America has a cold, Black America has pneumonia.” Economic disaster in segregated Black urban areas: unemployment, poverty, hunger, infant mortality, segregation, crime all rise.

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## 1980s part 2

- **Black high school graduation** continues to rise, but Black college enrollments drop.
- **White flight.** Limited progress in school integration begins to reverse. By end of the decade, schools are as segregated in 1990 as in 1960. (Trend continues in the 1990s.)
- **Race coded use of crime as a political issue:** “Willie Horton” 1988.
- **Politicized “drug war”** leads to massive incarceration of African Americans.

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### 1990s Economics

- Early 1990s recession followed by long period of boom.
- Late 1990s low unemployment, growing wealth of the top 20% (especially top 1%) of the population.
- Declining real incomes since the 1970s of the bottom 60%, especially the bottom 40%, with only a slight rise at the end of the decade. Rise in homelessness of families, particularly of Black families.
- Dismantling of the last vestiges of a social welfare system. There is no “safety net” for the poor, few supports for the “working poor.”
- Growing self-segregation of the affluent: well-off people rarely even see non-affluent people. More economic segregation than in any prior period.

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### 1990s Race

- Growing Black middle class, college educated. Largely segregated in Black middle class areas, as Whites flee even non-poor Blacks.
- Declining economic well-being of Black lower class.
- Simultaneous growth of integrated, non-racist consciousness among Whites AND of renewed “respectability” of overtly racist images, jokes, language.
- Explicit White racist movements growing.

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### 1990s Events

- 1992 Rodney King beating & trial. Major shift in the anger of the Black middle class.
- 1992 Clinton elected.
- 1995 Million Man March. Louis Farrakahn and the Black masses.
- Growing Afrocentrism, separatism among middle class Black families. Kwanza celebrations spread. (Note: Most Blacks are Christian; Kwanza is a cultural celebration, not religious.)
- 1995 OJ Simpson trial.
- 1995. Oklahoma City bombing by White right-wing anti-government terrorist.

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### Some Themes of the 1990s

- Continuing increases in anti-crime rhetoric, building more prisons.
- Movement against “social promotion” harms Black students’ educational progress.
- Lack of political unity among Black movement organizations.

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### The 2000s

- Close election dramatizes problems of voter registration, unequal voting procedures, disenfranchisement of felons.
- WTC attack of 9/11/2001 – “war.” Implications for African Americans unclear.
- Economic downturn – consequences for African Americans?
- Attacks on Affirmative Action in college admissions (the last place where it still exists)

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