

Louisiana from 1940 to 1972: Politics, War, and Civil Rights



Andrew Jackson Higgins was born in Nebraska in 1886 but moved to the South in his early twenties to work in the lumber industry. By the time he was twenty-four, Higgins had become the manager of a lumber business with headquarters in New Orleans. Six years later, in 1922, he established his own firm, calling it Higgins Lumber and Export Company. Because his business required boats of various sizes to remove and transport lumber, Higgins set up a shipyard to maintain the boats his company purchased. Over time, he also became interested in boat design.

Higgins began to design boats that would work in Louisiana's watery environment. One of the earliest designs was called the Eureka Boat. Its main *innovation* (new idea, method, or device) was to enclose the propeller within a hollow space in the boat's hull. This made it easier for the boat to cross the shallow waters and marshes of coastal Louisiana. Higgins also designed boats with superior speed, easy handling, and a special *bow* (the front of a boat) that made it simple to drive them onto beaches and riverbanks and then return them to the water.

Chapter Preview

People

Sam Houston Jones, Jimmie Davis, Robert Kennon, John J. McKeithen, Lyndon B. Johnson, Adolf Hitler, Harry S. Truman, Alexander Pierre Tureaud, Leander Perez

Places

Mandeville; Grayson; Columbia; Bogalusa; Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

Terms

civil service system, sales tax, consecutive, reparations, isolationists, maneuvers, rationing, victory garden, war matériel, GI Bill, boycott, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965



When his lumber company went out of business, Higgins turned all of his energies to his boat building, founding Higgins Industries in 1930. Higgins's boats were extremely popular in Louisiana, but he had a harder time convincing the U.S. Navy of their value.

In the middle of the Great Depression, the nation devoted few resources to its military, and the Navy often preferred boats of its own design. However, as European nations began to expand and modernize their militaries in preparation for a possible war, the United States slowly moved in that direction as well. After Higgins's designs outperformed several of the Navy's designs in side-by-side tests in 1938, Higgins became a key supplier to the U.S. military. By 1944, more than half of the nation's naval fleet was made up of boats designed and built by Higgins Industries.

This success pumped millions of dollars into Louisiana's economy, especially in New Orleans where Higgins Industries had 20,000 employees working at seven different sites in the early 1940s. In consultation with the military, Higgins added a drop-down rear gate to one of his landing craft designs so that troops could get off quickly during military operations. The resulting boat, known as Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel (LCVP), came simply to be called the Higgins Boat. Looking back over the role the Higgins Boat played in the United States victory in World War II, Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had been a high-ranking general in that war, said, "Andrew Higgins was the man who won the war for us."

In this chapter, we will examine the political environment in Louisiana in the years between 1940 and 1972. You will also learn about World War II and the effects it had on the people and economy of Louisiana. Finally, we will see how, in the aftermath of that war, the *quest* (search) for racial equality and civil rights gained momentum and brought profound change to the state.

Background and Top Right: Higgins Boats were used for the D-Day invasion of Normandy in France.
Opposite Page, Top Left: Andrew Jackson Higgins.

Signs of the Times



U.S. Expansion

In 1959, Alaska and Hawaii became our 49th and 50th states.

Exploration

The age of space exploration began in 1957 when the U.S.S.R. launched Sputnik 1, the first satellite to orbit Earth. In 1958, the U.S. launched Explorer 1, our first satellite in orbit. Russian Yuri Gagarin became the first man in outer space when he orbited Earth in April of 1961. Alan Shepard became the first American astronaut in outer space in May of 1961.



Entertainment

Tennessee Williams's 1947 play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, set in New Orleans, was made into a movie in 1951. Elvis Presley's 1958 movie *King Creole* was set and filmed in New Orleans. Presley later called his part in *King Creole* the favorite of his many movie roles. *Mary Poppins* (1964) and *The Sound of Music* (1965) were popular movies with young people and adults alike.

Music

The 1940s was the decade of "big band music," led by bandleaders like Duke Ellington. The 1950s saw the arrival of rock and roll. Among the many hits of New Orleans native Fats Domino were "Blueberry Hill" (1956) and "Walkin' to New Orleans" (1960). The Beatles "invaded" the U.S. early in 1964 and played at City Park Stadium in New Orleans on September 16 of that year. Their one request while in New Orleans was to meet Fats Domino!



Literature

Robert Penn Warren, who had taught at LSU, won a 1947 Pulitzer Prize for his novel *All the King's Men*, which was inspired by the life and death of Huey Long. Harper Lee of Alabama won a Pulitzer Prize in 1961 for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Rachel Carson's 1962 book *Silent Spring*, about the dangers of the pesticide DDT, helped set the stage for the environmental movement. In 1963, Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* became a favorite with children.

Food

In 1955, Ray Kroc opened his first McDonald's restaurant in Des Plaines, Illinois, ushering in the age of fast food. Also in the 1950s, frozen TV dinners became popular.



Architecture

The Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri, opened in 1967. At 630 feet, it is the tallest man-made monument in the country.

In 1972, One Shell Square, currently the tallest building in Louisiana, was completed. At 51 stories and 697 feet in height, it is taller than Driskill Mountain, the state's tallest peak!



Timeline

1940-1972

1940 - Sam Houston Jones defeated Earl Long to become governor

Jimmie Davis recorded "You Are My Sunshine"

1941 - Largest of Louisiana Maneuvers took place in central Louisiana

1942 - Pro-Long faction regained seats in legislature
A. P. Tureaud filed his first teacher salary equalization lawsuit

1944 - Jimmie Davis defeated Earl Long to become governor

1947 - Movie *Louisiana*, starring Jimmie Davis, premiered in Shreveport

1948 - Earl Long elected governor



1952 - Robert Kennon elected governor

1953 - Baton Rouge bus boycott

1956 - Earl Long elected to 2nd term as governor

1959 - Earl Long's strange behavior led to his hospitalization

1960 - Earl Long won nomination to U.S. Congress; died shortly thereafter

Jimmie Davis elected to 2nd term as governor
New Orleans public schools began to integrate

1964 - John McKeithen elected to 1st of 2 terms as governor

1967 - Civil rights march from Bogalusa to Baton Rouge

1940

1950

1960

1970

Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought U.S. into WWII - **1941**

GI Bill adopted - **1944**

President Roosevelt died; Harry S. Truman became president - **1945**
WWII ended

Executive Order 9948 ended racial segregation in the military - **1948**

Korean War began - **1950**

Dwight D. Eisenhower elected to 1st of 2 terms as president - **1952**

Korean War ended - **1953**

Brown v. Board of Education decision called for an end to school segregation - **1954**

Actions by Rosa Parks led to Montgomery, AL, bus boycott - **1955**

John F. Kennedy elected president - **1960**

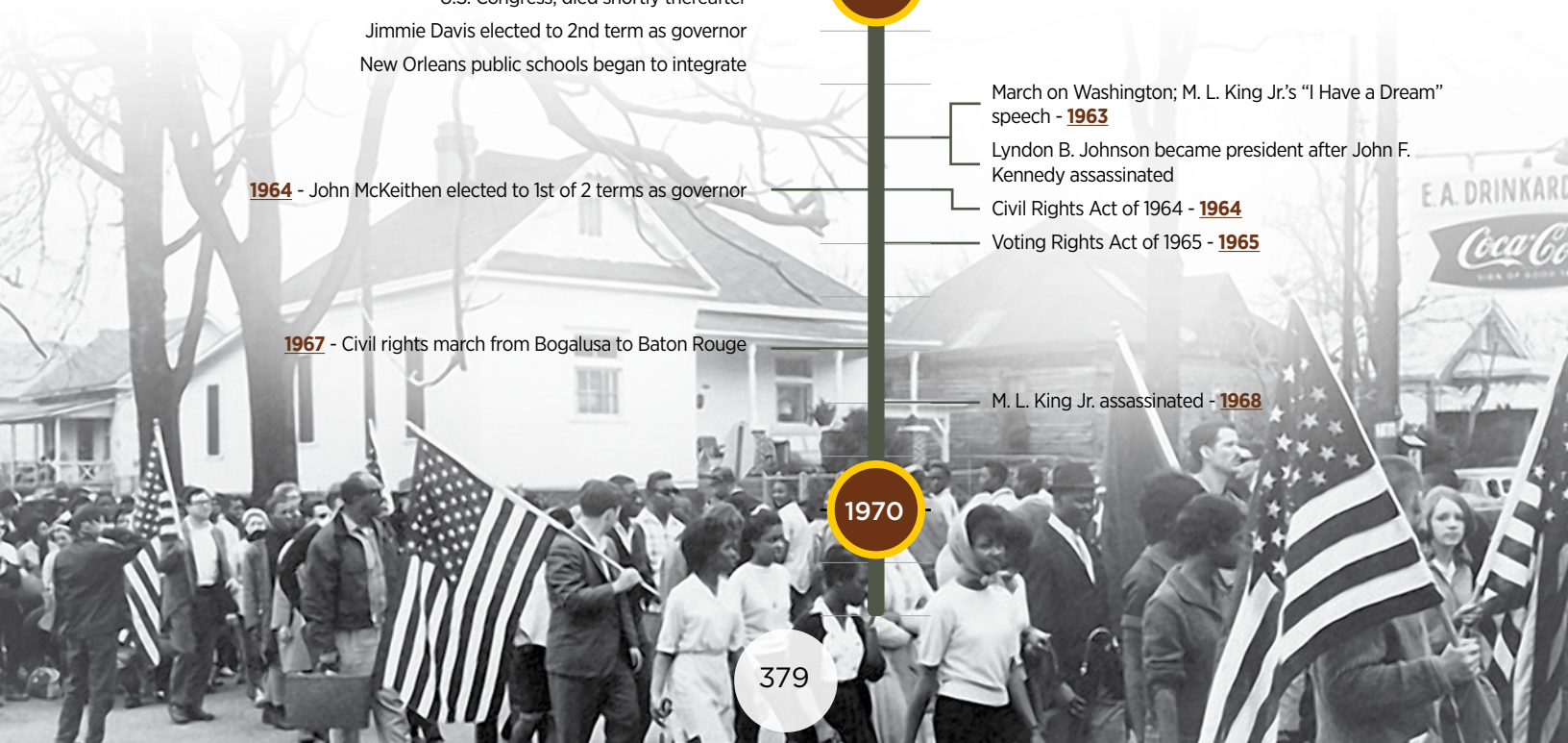
March on Washington; M. L. King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech - **1963**

Lyndon B. Johnson became president after John F. Kennedy assassinated

Civil Rights Act of 1964 - **1964**

Voting Rights Act of 1965 - **1965**

M. L. King Jr. assassinated - **1968**



Section 1

Politics: Longs and Anti-Longs

As you read, look for

- ▶ the contrasting programs of pro-Long and anti-Long governors in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s;
- ▶ how the civil service system was brought to Louisiana by Governor Jones, undone by Governor Long, and reinstated by Governor Kennon;
- ▶ the actions of Jimmie Davis and Earl Long that put Louisiana in the national spotlight;
- ▶ terms: **civil service system, sales tax, consecutive.**

After the scandals of 1939, the two main candidates for the governor's office in 1940 were Earl Long and Sam Houston Jones. Earl Long had the advantages that came with being Huey's brother and the interim governor. However, the crimes uncovered during the Louisiana Scandals made the Long political machine less popular with voters. Although Earl had not been among those charged in 1939, many people found it hard to believe that he had not known about the criminal activities of his fellow elected officials.

The Governorship of Sam Jones

The election of Sam Jones to the state's highest office reflected that view. In fact, when Jones became governor in 1940, voters also sent a majority of anti-Long legislators into both the state Senate and House. Jones had promised voters that he would continue many of the popular programs of the Longs. These included supplying free schoolbooks and continuing the popular road and infrastructure projects of the Huey Long era. However, Jones also promised to provide those services without graft and corruption.



Right: Governor Sam Jones.

The new governor also promised to reform the way state workers were hired, and he warned his supporters that there would be fewer state jobs available. Jones got rid of the deduct system and also promoted legislation that set up a civil service system. The **civil service system** was designed to ensure that state jobs went to people on the basis of their experience or qualifications for the job, rather than on the basis of political patronage. Jones also worked to undo legislation that had given most of the power in the state to the governor. In the process, however, Jones made it easier for pro-Long legislators, who regained seats in 1942, to oppose his plans. Although Jones had only partial success as a reformer, he did bring dignity and stability back to the governor's office. This was a welcome change after Huey's power-grabbing and the often outrageous behavior and the financial scandals of the Leche administration.

Jimmie Davis, the Singing Governor

Earl Long ran for governor in 1944, but was defeated again, this time by a public service commissioner from Shreveport named Jimmie Davis. Although Davis had served in a number of political positions, he was best known as an entertainer. Davis wrote and performed country-and-western songs, and was nationally known as the Singing Cowboy. Louisiana voters knew his name, liked his music, saw his record of public service, and assumed he would be a good governor. To his credit, Davis caused no scandals during his term. His critics complained that was because he spent so much time working as an entertainer out of the state. Davis did, in fact, spend a great deal of time outside Louisiana, recording and touring. He released five songs, and one of them, "There's a New Moon over my Shoulder," became a number-one hit. He also filmed a movie titled *Louisiana*, which *premiered* (had its first showing) in Shreveport in 1947. In the film, Davis played a singer who became a politician.

Lagniappe

Jimmie Davis's most popular song was "You Are My Sunshine," which he first recorded in 1940. When he ran for governor in 1944, he used it as his campaign theme, singing it during speeches and at fundraisers, often while riding his horse named "Sunshine."



Bottom Right: Governor Jimmie Davis.

Earl Long Becomes Governor

Not surprisingly, Earl Long was one of Davis's strongest critics. When he ran again in 1948, "Uncle Earl," as Long often called himself, went on the road with a band of his own. Though he did not sing, he was certainly entertaining. During his circus-like campaign appearances, Earl and his associates rolled into Louisiana cities and towns with musicians and prizes to give away. After the band played, Earl took to the stage. Before speaking, he gave away hams, turkeys, and other things he picked up from roadside farm stands. Earl sometimes claimed the peas and other produce came directly from the garden at his beloved farm outside Winnfield. Earl's Pea Patch Farm had become his unofficial headquarters in the years he was out of office. After eight years of anti-Long governors, the voters were apparently ready to give Earl and Longism another try.

Earl served his first elected term as governor between 1948 and 1952. During that time, he tried to roll back many of the reforms started by Jones. In particular, Long repealed civil service reforms and brought back patronage hiring of state employees. He also added four thousand state jobs, giving himself even more favors to *dispense* (hand out). While Long continued and in some cases expanded the social programs voters had come to expect, he was forced to raise taxes to pay for them. During this term, the state **sales tax** (a tax paid on the purchase of goods and services and collected by the seller) doubled. New taxes were passed on items that ranged from tobacco to oil and gas. Earl defended the taxes as necessary, but his attempt to reestablish the kind of absolute control over state government that Huey Long had exercised fell short. Unable to succeed himself, Earl returned to the Pea Patch Farm and waited to run again.



Above: Earl Long in his office at the State Capitol. **Right:** Earl Long was famous for his fiery speeches.



Robert Kennon's Term as Governor

In 1952, the voters elected Robert Kennon, a lawyer from Minden in Webster Parish, as governor. Kennon was a serious, dignified man who had an approach that he called “government by the civics books.” In contrast to the careless spending of the Long eras, Kennon sought to reshape state government in ways that reflected the best practices of other states. Kennon pushed for more careful accounting of state spending, and established independent boards to oversee spending in several key areas. He also worked to rebuild the state system of civil service that Earl Long had damaged. In some ways, Kennon was very modern in his approach to governing. At the same time, he sought to defend

a more traditional view on race relations. When the U.S. Supreme Court ordered states to set up systems of racially integrated schools in 1954, Kennon disagreed with the order and pledged to defend segregation.

Earl Long's Chaotic Second Term

Not yet finished with politics, Earl Long sought another term and became governor again in 1956. Although Earl wanted political power and control, his personal behavior overshadowed the accomplishments of his second term. One method Earl used to increase his power and enhance the number of voters who would support him was to put African Americans back on the voting rolls. At the time Earl entered office in 1948, African Americans constituted only 2.4 percent of registered voters. By the end of his first term, that number had increased to 12.6 percent. By the end of his second term, African Americans made up 15.6 percent of the state's registered voters. Earl expected these newly registered voters to support him and Long-endorsed candidates and policies.

Not everyone, however, was pleased with this development. Some state legislators who were committed to segregation sought ways to remove these voters from the rolls. Long fought back, and many legislative sessions were dominated by disagreements over this issue, especially in 1959. In late May, Earl spoke to legislators to defend African American voting rights. Whatever his intent, his speech quickly turned into a rambling *tirade* (outburst) filled with profanity, which gained national attention. Despite attempts by family and friends to keep him out of the spotlight, he returned to the legislature the following day and engaged in another outrageous tirade against his political opponents.



In 1926, Robert Kennon had been elected mayor of Minden when he was twenty-three years old. At that time, he was the youngest mayor in the United States.

Top Left: Governor Robert Kennon.
Below: Concerns about Earl Long's mental health after his tirades in the legislature led to his hospitalization. This photo shows him just after being committed to the state mental hospital in Mandeville.



Concerned about his mental health, his family had Earl committed to a *sanitarium* (hospital) in Galveston, Texas. While there, doctors determined that his strange behavior was caused by several small strokes. Earl begged his wife to let him return to Louisiana. She gave in, and shortly Earl was confined to the state mental hospital at Mandeville. While there, he gave rambling radio speeches that were broadcast around the state. He also fired the officials in charge of the state's hospitals and replaced them with men who were willing to certify him sane and order his release.

The issues that lay in the background of these events were serious ones that would continue to dominate politics in the years to come. But Earl's strange behavior became the thing people remembered about his final term. Despite all the chaos, Earl tried to find a way to have a **consecutive** (following without interruption) term as governor, even though state law prohibited it. When he failed to find a way around the law, he set out on a campaign for a seat in the U.S. Congress. Earl worked hard as always. After suffering a heart attack on the day of the election, he refused to go to the hospital, fearing that voters might not select him if they knew. Earl won the Democratic primary and agreed to be hospitalized the next day. He died not long after, on September 5, 1960.

Politics after the Long Era

In the twenty-five years since Huey's death, Longs, Longism, and opponents to it had remained at the center of the state's political system. By the time Earl died, a new set of issues, particularly those focused on racial equality and civil rights, had come to dominate the political scene. Jimmie Davis won his second term as governor in 1960 based in part on his pledge to protect segregation and defend what he and others referred to as the "southern way of life." By the time Davis's second term ended in 1964, the federal government had settled these issues in ways that made integration of schools and other public places a matter of federal, not state, law.

Below: Despite opposition, school integration took place as the result of federal laws and court decisions.



John J. McKeithen's Two Terms

In early 1964, a new governor had just been elected, and the fate of the civil rights movement was still an open question. The new governor, John J. McKeithen, was from the small town of Grayson, near Columbia in Caldwell Parish. In many ways, McKeithen represented the past. He had been a legislative floor leader under Earl Long. By the 1960s, he still believed in Longism and the kind of widespread social benefits it supported. On the other hand, McKeithen had promised to defend segregation in the state. Whether he took this position out of a strong personal belief, or as a way to gain votes, his promise became irrelevant when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed important civil rights and voting rights acts in 1964 and 1965.

Despite the passage of these laws, there was still racial unrest in the state. Governor McKeithen worked hard to bring the racial tensions to an end. He appointed a commission, with both black and white members, to help the state move peacefully from segregation to racial integration. In 1967, the governor even assigned state troopers to protect civil rights marchers who organized a march from Bogalusa to Baton Rouge. Although he had come into office a segregationist, federal legislation and fate turned McKeithen into the governor who led the state into the post-Jim Crow era.

McKeithen had other accomplishments as well. He worked hard to bring new businesses and well-paying jobs to the state. He also reformed government spending and borrowing practices. This made purchasing more uniform and saved the state large amounts of money in the process. McKeithen was so popular in his first term that the voters even approved legislation that allowed Louisiana governors to serve a second consecutive term. That new law and McKeithen's popularity led him to become the first governor in the twentieth century to serve two consecutive terms. He won his second term with 82 percent of the popular vote.

When John McKeithen left office at the beginning of 1972, the state had undergone a period of enormous change in a very short period of time. That change did not come without conflict, but McKeithen's leadership spared the people of Louisiana some of the violence that accompanied those same changes in Mississippi and Alabama.



Above: Governor John J. McKeithen.

Reviewing the Section

1. Define in sentence form: civil service system, sales tax, consecutive.
2. What was the main criticism of Jimmie Davis's first term as governor? Was the criticism justified?
3. How did Robert Kennon's view on governing differ from Earl Long's?

Section 2

World War II

As you read, look for

- ▶ the causes of World War II;
- ▶ why the United States avoided war until 1941, and the events that brought our nation into the fight;
- ▶ the importance of armed forces maneuvers to military preparedness and to Louisiana's economy;
- ▶ the participation of Louisianians both at war and at home;
- ▶ **terms:** reparations, isolationists, maneuvers, rationing, victory garden, war matériel, GI Bill.

Below: When Adolf Hitler appeared in public, he was greeted by adoring crowds, who raised right arms and shouted *Heil Hitler!* ("Hail Hitler!").



Political disputes between 1940 and 1972 focused on Long versus anti-Long policies and on issues related to segregation. However, events far beyond Louisiana and the United States also profoundly shaped the state and nation.

Causes of World War II

The economic depression that began in the United States in 1929 was part of a larger economic crash that affected other countries around the world as well. Germany suffered very badly because it had agreed to pay very high fines called reparations for the role it played in World War I. **Reparations** are materials or money paid by a country losing a war to the winners to make up for damages done in the war. Germany's economic struggles, and a feeling that their country had been blamed unfairly for the war, led people in Germany to accept the program of a military and political leader named Adolf Hitler. Hitler promised the German people economic recovery in keeping with their supposed superiority as people and a nation. Many struggling Germans took comfort in Hitler's message and offered him their support.

Hitler began his rise to power in the early 1930s. By 1934, he had declared himself Germany's sole leader or *Führer*. He also began a series of military actions designed to reclaim lands that, in his view, belonged to the larger German nation.

Neighboring European nations, particularly France and Great Britain, watched with concern. However, both nations faced severe economic problems of their own and, with the memory of World War I so fresh, were reluctant to declare war. Hitler continued his aggressive actions mostly unchallenged until German forces invaded Poland in 1939. That attack caused France and the United Kingdom to declare war on Germany. In the same period, Japan had also invaded neighboring countries in the Far East. This led to declarations of war in the Pacific region as well. Thus, by 1939, a worldwide struggle was underway. It would come to be known as World War II.

The United States Avoids War

The United States had been slow to follow France and the United Kingdom into war against Germany. Many people in our country were **isolationists** (people who want to avoid international political and economic relations). They preferred to focus national resources on solving our own economic problems. Many Americans also felt that our nation's distance from Europe made us an unlikely target for attack. Some people called this idea Fortress America. However, the United States Pacific Fleet, which was stationed at Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian Islands, was outside that geographically protected fortress. Even so, most Americans and even the nation's military leaders doubted Japan had the ability to strike the United States.

Pearl Harbor

Early on the morning of December 7, 1941, that belief was shattered when the Japanese attacked American airfields and our fleet of battleships moored at Pearl Harbor. By the time the two-hour attack was over, the ships at Pearl Harbor lay in ruins. Like the fleet itself, the desire of the United States to stay out of World War II was also crushed. The next day, December 8, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan. Three days later, Germany declared war on the United States, drawing our nation into war in both the Pacific region around Japan and on the European continent across the Atlantic.

Lagniappe

The island of Great Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) and the northeastern part of the island of Ireland (Northern Ireland), along with some smaller islands, make up the **United Kingdom** of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Below and Bottom Left: All eight battleships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet were sunk or badly damaged in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Two were total losses; six others were repaired and rejoined the fleet by the end of 1942.

Bottom Right: Headlines across the country announced the shocking news of the Japanese attack.



Lagniappe

In his speech asking Congress to declare war against Japan, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy.” It certainly was a day of *infamy* (evil behavior)—a day when more than 2,400 Americans were killed and another 1,200 were injured.



Top Left: An airborne infantry officer during maneuvers. **Bottom:** This tank alongside a column of cavalry during the Louisiana Maneuvers was a sign that horses in battle would soon be obsolete.

Military Preparedness and the Louisiana Maneuvers

The very poor state of military preparedness was one of the reasons the United States had delayed becoming involved in the war. The army had low numbers of forces and was behind in developing new weapons and better equipment. Even when it had new equipment, it had never tested much of it in actual battlefield conditions.

Military leaders took concrete steps to prepare their forces for a war they believed was sure to happen. They also tried to make the nation’s people and its policy makers aware of the needs of the armed forces. U.S. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall hoped that the news coverage of military **maneuvers** (a large-scale armed forces training exercise) would “rivet national attention on the weakness of its army.”

The army selected a broad area of central Louisiana to be the headquarters for large-scale military training and maneuvers in 1939. In part, Louisiana was chosen for its wide area of rural land that was sparsely populated. In addition, the difficult terrain provided a challenging environment that was a good testing ground for the army’s new tank technology. According to future general George S. Patton, if the army could maneuver its tanks through the Louisiana countryside, it could do so anywhere in the world.

Although training exercises took place every year between 1940 and 1944, the biggest war games took place in the summer and fall of 1941. Known as the Louisiana Maneuvers, these realistic war games spread out across central Louisiana and into Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas.

The maneuvers certainly gathered the publicity and attention military leaders had hoped for, but their value went far beyond the symbolic. The leadership skills of battlefield commanders were tested. This gave the army the ability to promote those who showed skill and to demote those who were found lacking. The games also allowed the military to identify problems in the ways they provided supplies and medical care to soldiers in the field. The maneuvers also helped the soldiers and their leaders develop better communication among different kinds of forces including ground troops, tank divisions, and paratroopers who jumped from planes onto battlefields.



Soldiers in Warfare

Shortly after the 1941 games ended, our nation entered the war. The Louisiana Maneuvers did much to prepare nearly 750,000 of the nation's troops for the *rigors* (harshness) of warfare they would face in Europe and the Pacific. The maneuvers also brought badly needed economic activity to our state. Millions of dollars accompanied the soldiers and equipment into Louisiana. Many rural areas had their first taste of economic prosperity since the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929.

United States troops from Louisiana and elsewhere entered the war after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Once they were trained, they traveled to faraway places and fought enemies whose languages they often could not understand. Yet their mission—to help defeat the Germans and Japanese—offered them moral *clarity* (clearness) in the face of the death and destruction of war.



Home Front Activities

On the home front, citizens also participated actively in supporting the war. People were encouraged to buy war bonds to support the nation's war effort financially. Because so many items were needed to feed and supply the troops, mandatory wartime **rationing** (limiting the consumption of scarce resources or supplies) also went into effect. Sugar and other foods could only be purchased with rationing coupons. Most rural families already had gardens in which they grew fresh vegetables, but now this became as much a patriotic duty as a rural folkway. Even people in cities dug new gardens in their yards or on nearby lots to grow their own food. These plots were named **victory gardens**. Many consumer goods also became scarce. Rubber, which was used to make shoes, was needed instead for making tires and other **war matériel** (equipment and supplies used by soldiers). Individuals were given coupons to buy only two pairs of shoes each year.

Lagniappe

In the Louisiana Maneuvers, bombers dropped large sacks of flour on targets below, while soldiers, listening to recordings of actual battlefield sounds, raced their opponents to see who could reach assigned locations most quickly.



Top Right: Maj. Gen. Omar Bradley and Lt. Gen. Lesley McNair during the Third Army Maneuvers in Louisiana. **Bottom:** Food rations for troops taking part in the Louisiana Maneuvers.

Economic Impact of the War

Both money and buying power had been scarce during the Great Depression. The war industries that developed in Louisiana brought new energy to the long-struggling economy. The state's rich oil and gas resources had already led to the development of petrochemical facilities around the state. Lake Charles was an important center for the state's petrochemical industry. Its facilities grew in size and importance as the chemicals and other products it produced were needed in the war effort.



In New Orleans, the assembly-line production of boats and even one kind of airplane provided jobs. Men had made up most of the workforce before the war, but with so many men serving overseas, new groups of people were needed to fill those jobs. In particular, women and African Americans were drawn into these manufacturing jobs in New Orleans. Even though it was unfair that workplaces were racially segregated, many African Americans did not want to give up the economic rewards of jobs in industry after the war.

Lagniappe

Children participated in the war effort by collecting gum wrappers and other scrap metal (for weapons); rubber bands, shoe heels, and old tires (for new tires and gas masks); nylon and silk stockings (for parachutes and powder bags); paper (for boxes, shell casings, etc.); and lead toothpaste tubes (for weapons).

The Costs of War

In a global sense, the war had been a great tragedy. More than 70,000,000 men and women had served in militaries across the globe. About 15,000,000 of them lost their lives in the six years of war. The numbers of civilians killed were even higher, reaching the *staggering* (shocking) number of at least 45,000,000. World War II brought on great human tragedy and suffering, yet it also gave rise to great acts of bravery, sacrifice, and courage.

The United States and Louisiana at War's End

Despite the backdrop of tragedy and loss, World War II actually had many positive effects in the United States and in Louisiana. At war's end, the United States stood as the strongest, richest nation on earth. Its armed forces, which had been so poorly prepared for war in 1940, had grown to be the strongest in the world by 1945. The United States emerged as one of the war's victorious nations and as the most powerful nation on earth.



Top Left: These catalytic oil “cracking” units turned out gasoline for the war at a refining company in Louisiana. **Right:** An African American artillery unit in World War II.

Louisiana, like other states, also benefited from the economic activity of wartime production. Jobs provided by wartime manufacturing meant that income levels rose to pre-Depression levels for the first time since 1929. The state's industrial base had also grown tremendously. Although the state remained majority rural and agricultural, even its least-industrialized sections had gained strength and population. During the war, those regions served as training areas for soldiers. After the war, they remained as sites for military bases that would support many of those rural communities for years to come.

The state's people also changed as a result of World War II. Once peace returned, many African Americans migrated to cities in the nation's more heavily industrialized states so that they could continue to earn more money with industrial work. And while many women returned eagerly to their homes as full-time mothers and wives, other women liked their wartime work experiences and continued in the paid workforce when possible.

Returning soldiers also needed employment. Some jobs were made available when wartime workers left. Other returning soldiers took advantage of a new federal law adopted in 1944 called the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Known more commonly as the **GI Bill**, this legislation made an educational scholarship available to anyone who had served in uniform during the war. The ability to receive advanced technical training or to obtain a college degree gave many returning veterans new skills. These skills helped them readjust to civilian life and achieve economic and professional success in postwar America.

African American soldiers who had served were also eligible for GI Bill benefits. They were not always able to enter schools of their choice because many colleges and universities were still segregated. Many African American veterans returned with a new kind of restlessness and discontent. They had fought for the freedom of people abroad, but returned to places where Jim Crow laws and segregation made them second-class citizens. This aspect of postwar life brought new energy to the African American quest for equal citizenship rights.



Reviewing the Section

1. Define in sentence form: rationing, victory garden, GI Bill.
2. What were some of the reasons the United States stayed out of World War II for several years? Why did we finally enter the war?
3. Why was central Louisiana chosen as the place for military maneuvers beginning in 1939?

Top Right: An African American soldier working on an army truck.

Special Feature

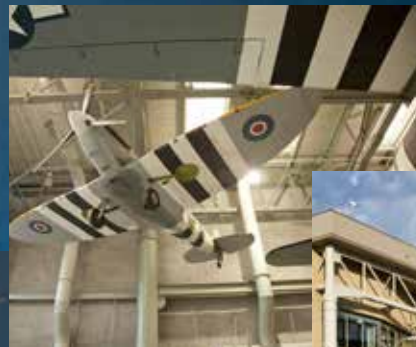
Sacrifice and Courage Celebrated at the National World War II Museum

Have you ever wondered what it was like to live through the events of World War II? The National World War II Museum, located in New Orleans, makes it possible for you to experience a bit of that heroic era. The museum was founded in 2000 by Stephen E. Ambrose, a long-time professor of history at the University of New Orleans and the author of many books about World War II, including *Band of Brothers*. The National World War II Museum features exhibits on the Pacific and European war zones, Higgins Boats, D-Day, and more.

In the U.S. Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center, you can learn about the contributions of Americans, both as soldiers and on the home front, during World War II. The pavilion includes an exhibit called The Final Mission: The USS *Tang* Submarine Experience. The “Experience” allows museum visitors to relive the fifth and final battle of the real USS *Tang* on October 25, 1944. As a visitor touring the exhibit, you become part of a crew and are given a task to perform during the battle.

The Louisiana Memorial Pavilion focuses on D-Day and other *amphibious* (carried out by both land and sea forces) operations of the war. This makes sense because the Higgins Boats were developed and produced in Louisiana. In addition to exhibits on the amphibious landings, there are two movies you can watch: *Price for Peace* and *D-Day Remembered*.

There are several other exhibits to visit. At the John E. Kushner Restoration Pavilion, you can see *archivists* (people who collect and store historic materials) at work restoring and preserving artifacts from World War II. There is a 4D theater that features *Beyond All Boundaries*, narrated by Tom Hanks. Two new exhibit halls are under development. One new exhibit will provide an overview of the war in the Pacific and in Europe. The other new exhibit will focus on the Holocaust and what the war means to us now. Why do you think a museum like this is important for our state and our country?



Section 3

Civil Rights

As you read, look for

- ▶ how the armed forces led the way in ending segregation in the United States;
- ▶ the accomplishments of Louisiana civil rights attorney Alexander Pierre Tureaud;
- ▶ partial victory for African Americans in the Baton Rouge bus boycott;
- ▶ why progress in school integration was slow in southern states;
- ▶ important federal legislation passed during Lyndon B. Johnson's terms as president;
- ▶ terms: **boycott**, **Brown v. Board of Education**, **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, **Voting Rights Act of 1965**.

People tend to think that the civil rights movement in the United States began because of the social changes brought on by World War II. But it is more accurate to say that a longer-term movement received a new spark of energy and commitment in the years after 1945. African Americans had been trying to achieve an equal place in American life from the end of the Civil War forward. However, after the *Plessy* “separate-but-equal” decision in 1896, there was an era of segregation and inequality in the nation, and especially in the states of the former Confederacy.

Civil Rights in the Military

These kinds of inequalities were especially noticeable when people of different races had to work closely and cooperatively to achieve a military victory. Not surprisingly then, the nation's armed services were among the first places where segregation came to an end. On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9948, which was intended to end racial segregation in the military. The order began by noting: “It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.”

Below: African Americans in the 332nd Fighter Group. **Bottom:** African American sailors in New Orleans, 1943.



Top Right: A. P. Tureaud. **Bottom:** The first African American bus boycott in America occurred in Baton Rouge.

Lagniappe

Howard University is a historically black private college in Washington, DC, founded in 1867. Its many distinguished graduates include A. P. Tureaud, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Toni Morrison.

Civil Rights in Louisiana

Although change took place slowly in the military, longer-term legal quests for social equality gained momentum after President Truman's order. In Louisiana, local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had been challenging segregation laws in the courts. Until the late 1930s, however, even the NAACP had relied on white lawyers, believing that they would be more effective advocates in the South's Jim Crow judicial systems.

The Influence of A. P. Tureaud

Not all NAACP members agreed with this policy. One of them was a Louisiana-born man named Alexander Pierre Tureaud. Tureaud was born in 1899 but left Louisiana as a young man to seek opportunity elsewhere. After a decade living in other places, Tureaud returned to his hometown of New Orleans after earning a law degree from Howard University. As an African American lawyer, Tureaud used only his first initials, A. P., even with his closest associates. This would keep people from referring to him by his first name, as whites commonly did when speaking to people of color in this era in the Jim Crow South.



Over time, A. P. Tureaud became the most prominent civil rights attorney in the state. From the 1940s until his death in 1972, Tureaud served as the chief lawyer for most of the civil rights cases filed in Louisiana. Although he lost many cases, his perseverance and commitment ultimately led to many legal victories. His representation resulted in a court order that required the state to pay its African American teachers at the same level as its white teachers. Tureaud also fought long and hard to achieve integration of the state's public colleges and universities. He also filed suits that helped to end segregation on means of public transportation, like buses and streetcars.

The Baton Rouge Bus Boycott

Although lawyers like Tureaud were critically important in the civil rights struggle, they did not act alone. Individuals also joined together and made brave decisions, whether it was to serve as a *plaintiff* (the person filing a lawsuit) in a civil rights case, or to act with other community members to end discrimination. In 1953, for example, African Americans in Baton Rouge staged a boycott of the city-run buses to protest their unequal treatment. A **boycott** is a protest in which people refuse to buy certain goods or use certain services until specific conditions are met. African American passengers were required to sit or stand in the back of the bus, even when no white passengers were on board.



They also felt drivers treated them rudely. In response, they decided to protest their treatment by boycotting the buses altogether. Because most of them did not have cars, members of the community established a free ride system to help boycotters get to and from work and to places they could not reach by walking. Within three weeks, the city was forced to negotiate. The boycotters and the city reached a compromise that resulted in better treatment and more access to seats on buses rather than having to stand even though seats were available. Their victory, though limited, provided a model upon which other civil rights protestors around the country could build.

The Slow Process of Integrating Schools

Civil rights supporters also achieved a major victory in 1954. In that year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* (a case specifically focused on the desegregation of public schools but that also overturned the “separate-but-equal” provisions of the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case). The *Brown* decision ordered that states and local school districts should begin to integrate their schools with “all deliberate speed.” However, since there was no specific timetable, opponents of school integration slowed the process as much as they could. Not until 1960 did public schools in New Orleans begin to integrate. When they did, those who opposed racial mixing protested *vehemently* (strongly). White parents removed their children from the two schools that were integrated in the city’s Ninth Ward. Even parents who wished to leave their children in the newly integrated schools found themselves the targets of threats and intimidation.

Parents who opposed integration were offered assistance in removing their children from schools in Orleans Parish. Under the direction of Leander Perez, St. Bernard Parish sent buses to the Orleans Parish line to transport students to the whites-only schools in St. Bernard set up specifically to accommodate them.

This strategy of fighting back against the new federal requirement to desegregate public facilities was given the name “massive resistance.” Those who believed strongly that integration was wrong organized into groups called White Citizens’ Councils. Although their hostility to integration was strong and widespread, eventually the weight of federal legislation pushed southern states to accept federal court decisions.

Lagniappe

The Baton Rouge bus boycott was the first civil rights bus boycott in the nation. It took place more than two years before the famous Montgomery, Alabama, boycott inspired by the actions of Rosa Parks.

Below: Thurgood Marshall was the NAACP lawyer who argued the *Brown* case before the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1967, he became the first African American justice on the Supreme Court.



Special Feature

Ruby Bridges: A Hero of Integration

Take a look around your classroom. Chances are your classmates come from different ethnic backgrounds, races, and religions. Before the 1960s, however, children of different races were not allowed to attend school together in Louisiana. Ruby Bridges was one of the first black children to attend an integrated school in the state. As a six-year-old first grader, Ruby became a symbol for the civil rights movement and a role model for other students in the South.

Ruby Bridges was born in 1954, the same year of the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The court called for integration of all schools. In the spring of 1960, it was announced that schools in New Orleans would be integrated in the fall. In order for African American children to be allowed to attend an integrated school, they were required to take an intelligence test and their families had to submit to an extensive background check. These were two things white children were not required to do. Ruby was one of six black children chosen to attend an integrated school in the fall of 1960 and the only one attending William Frantz Public School in the Ninth Ward.

As a result of delays from the school system, Ruby did not begin her first grade school year until Monday, November 14, 1960. On that first day, Ruby and her mother were driven to school by federal law enforcement officials called marshals. As Ruby and her mother exited the car, they were met by angry people protesting integration. These protests would eventually turn into riots throughout New Orleans. Norman Rockwell's 1963 painting, *The Problem We All Live With*, famously depicts Ruby's walk to school, escorted by federal marshals. Initially some white children remained at Ruby's school, but they were not in her class. By January of 1961, Ruby was the only student at her school. Nevertheless, she attended school every day and learned from her teacher, Mrs. Barbara Henry. The following school year was much different for Ruby as more children, both white and African American, attended her school.

Ruby became a symbol of the civil rights movement. Every day she kept her head up and calmly went to school, regardless of protestors and their angry words. What do you think was the biggest challenge Ruby faced?



Above: Ruby Bridges stands with President Barack Obama in front of the painting that depicted her brave walk to William Frantz Public School. The painting was on display outside the White House Oval Office during 2011 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Ruby's first year at the school.

Middle: Angry protestors taunted Ruby Bridges on her arrival at school.

Bottom: Norman Rockwell's *The Problem We All Live With*.

President Johnson and Civil Rights

President Lyndon B. Johnson, a former U.S. senator and vice president from Texas, had become president after the assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Johnson had spent much of his career as a supporter of segregation, so it surprised many that he signed two of the most important pieces of federal civil rights legislation adopted in the twentieth century. The first, known as the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, required that people be given equal access to public facilities throughout the nation regardless of their race. The law also outlawed discrimination in employment, forcing most public agencies to integrate their workforces after 1964. The following year, President Johnson signed the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**. This legislation required southern states to allow African Americans to return to the voting rolls. It also outlawed poll taxes as one of the devices that kept poor and minority voters off the rolls. If state governments refused to comply, the federal government could appoint its own registrars to assure equal access to the ballot without consideration of race. These two pieces of legislation led to profound shifts in society and in politics, especially in southern states like Louisiana.



Below: President Lyndon Johnson used many pens to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Some of the distinguished onlookers, including Martin Luther King Jr. standing behind the president, received the pens as souvenirs.

Changes Come to Louisiana

In 1960, Jimmie Davis had been elected to a second term as governor, largely on the strength of his promise to support and defend segregation. By 1964, the federal government passed legislation outlawing segregation. In the aftermath, Louisiana began to make widespread changes. The state integrated schools and public facilities and returned blacks to the voting rolls. Between 1964 and 1972, Governor McKeithen worked to reduce the bad feelings and violence that took place during the long struggle to create a more racially integrated state. The return of large numbers of African Americans to the voting rolls after 1965 reshaped Louisiana's electorate and its politics in the decades that followed. By the early 1970s, a candidate named Edwin Edwards enthusiastically pursued the votes of African Americans. His success in doing so, and in becoming governor, had a profound influence on the more recent history of the state. It is to those decades that we now turn.

Reviewing the Section

1. Define in sentence form: boycott, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Civil Rights Act of 1964.
2. Why did desegregation come earlier to the military forces than to civilian life?
3. Name some of the achievements of A. P. Tureaud.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary

Section 1: Longs and Anti-Longs

- The two main candidates in the 1940 election were Sam Jones and Earl Long, who was Huey Long's brother and the interim governor. The Louisiana Scandals had made Longism less popular, so Jones and a majority of anti-Long legislators were elected.
- Governor Jones had promised to continue popular programs and eliminate graft, corruption, and patronage. He eliminated the deduct system, supported the creation of a civil service system, and reversed legislation that had given most of the power in the state to the governor.
- In 1944, Jimmie Davis, a popular country-and-western singer, was elected governor. Davis spent much of his term out of state working in the entertainment industry.
- In 1948, Earl Long was elected governor. He attempted to reverse many of the reforms that Jones began. He repealed civil service reforms, added state jobs, continued social programs, and raised taxes to pay for them.
- Robert Kennon was elected governor in 1952. He called his approach "government by the civics books." He pushed for more careful accounting of state spending and reestablished the civil service system. Kennon also held more traditional views on race and pledged to uphold segregation.
- Earl Long won a second term in 1956. One of Long's accomplishments during both his terms was to increase the number of African American voters. This became a source of great contention between Long and the legislature.
- Following two outbursts in the legislature, Earl Long was committed to a sanitarium in Galveston because of his unusual behavior. Eventually, he was moved to a state mental hospital in Louisiana, and he obtained his release.
- Because state law prevented Earl Long from serving consecutive terms as governor, he ran for U.S. Congress. He suffered a heart attack on the day he won the Democratic primary, and he died not long after.

- In 1964, John J McKeithen, a believer in Longism and supporter of segregation, was inaugurated as governor. Federal civil rights legislation made McKeithen's stance on segregation irrelevant. He appointed a commission to help the state integrate peacefully, leading the state out of the Jim Crow era. He also brought new businesses and jobs to the state and improved spending and borrowing practices.
- McKeithen was so popular that the law was changed so governors could serve a second consecutive term. He was reelected with 82 percent of the popular vote.

Section 2: World War II

- In 1939, World War II began, but most Americans did not want to enter the conflict. This view changed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The following day, the United States declared war on Japan.
- To prepare for a war that military leaders believed was inevitable, a headquarters for military training and maneuvers was set up in central Louisiana in 1939. In the fall of 1941, the Louisiana Maneuvers, a huge military training exercise, was held. These maneuvers did much to prepare the U.S. military for war.
- On the home front, citizens supported the war effort by purchasing war bonds and observing rationing rules. In New Orleans, women and African Americans were drawn to manufacturing jobs that produced goods for the war effort.

Section 3: Civil Rights

- In July of 1948, President Truman ended segregation in the military. Following Truman's order, legal quests for integration gained momentum.
- A. P. Tureaud, an African American born in Louisiana, had left the state to seek better opportunities. Later, he returned to New Orleans after receiving a law degree from Howard University and became a prominent and successful civil rights lawyer.
- In 1953, African Americans in Baton Rouge staged the nation's first bus boycott to protest unequal treatment. After three weeks, city officials agreed to negotiations, and a compromise was reached that resulted in better treatment and greater access to seating on busses. The boycott also provided a model that other protestors would follow.

- Although the (1954) U.S. Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* mandated that schools be integrated, it was not until 1960 that public schools in New Orleans began to integrate. This process brought about “massive resistance” from people opposed to integration.
- The 1964 Civil Rights Act required equal access to public facilities and outlawed discrimination in employment. The 1965 Voting Rights Act required southern states to allow African Americans to return to the voting rolls and outlawed the poll tax. Both pieces of federal legislation brought great change to Louisiana.

Activities for Learning

Understanding the Facts

1. What promises did Sam Jones make in his successful 1940 campaign for governor?
2. Which Louisiana governor was known as the “Singing Cowboy”?
3. In order to fund expanded social programs, what did Governor Earl Long have to do?
4. What unusual behavior led Earl Long’s family to place him in a sanitarium?
5. What did Governor John J. McKeithen do to reduce racial tensions in the state?
6. Which nation did Germany invade in 1939 starting World War II?
7. What attack brought the United States into World War II? When did this attack occur?
8. Which states were used for the Louisiana Maneuvers?
9. List three items that were rationed during World War II.
10. What Louisiana industry expanded in support of the war effort?
11. What law provided an educational scholarship to those soldiers returning home after the war?
12. What did President Truman’s “Executive Order 9948” do?
13. Who was the most prominent civil rights attorney in Louisiana?
14. In which city did African Americans stage a successful bus boycott?
15. Which federal law gave equal access to public facilities regardless of race?

Developing Critical Thinking

1. Why did Robert Kennon describe his approach to governing as “government by the civics books”?
2. Why did Earl Long’s effort to increase the number of African Americans on the voting rolls create tensions with the state legislature?

Writing across the Curriculum

You are selling war bonds to citizens to support the war effort or you are a member of the Rationing Board. Write a song that will especially appeal to Louisiana citizens to purchase war bonds or ration items needed for the war effort.

Exploring Louisiana on the Internet

Go to www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/history/spotlight_september.html and read more about Ruby Bridges’s experience as one of the first black children to attend an integrated school in Louisiana. List five obstacles Ruby overcame to complete her first-grade year.

Building 21st-Century Skills: Interpreting Tables

Tables present numerical information in a brief, compact manner. They are especially useful when comparing actual numbers, dates, or amounts. When you first encounter a table, be sure to read the title and inspect the categories designated for the rows and columns. This should help you interpret the data. Examine the table (based on U.S. Census data) below and answer the following questions:

Louisiana Population with a High School Diploma

Race	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
Black	3.2%	5.2%	10.4%	20.2%	40.5%
White	25.3%	30.0%	41.0%	49.9%	63.7%

1. In 1940, what percentage of Louisiana’s white population had a high school diploma?
2. In 1960, what was the difference between the percentage of whites that held a high school diploma in Louisiana as compared to blacks?
3. What was the percentage increase for Louisiana’s black population with a high school diploma from 1950 to 1980?
4. What event from this chapter might help explain the dramatic increase in blacks with a high school diploma?