

Chapter 18

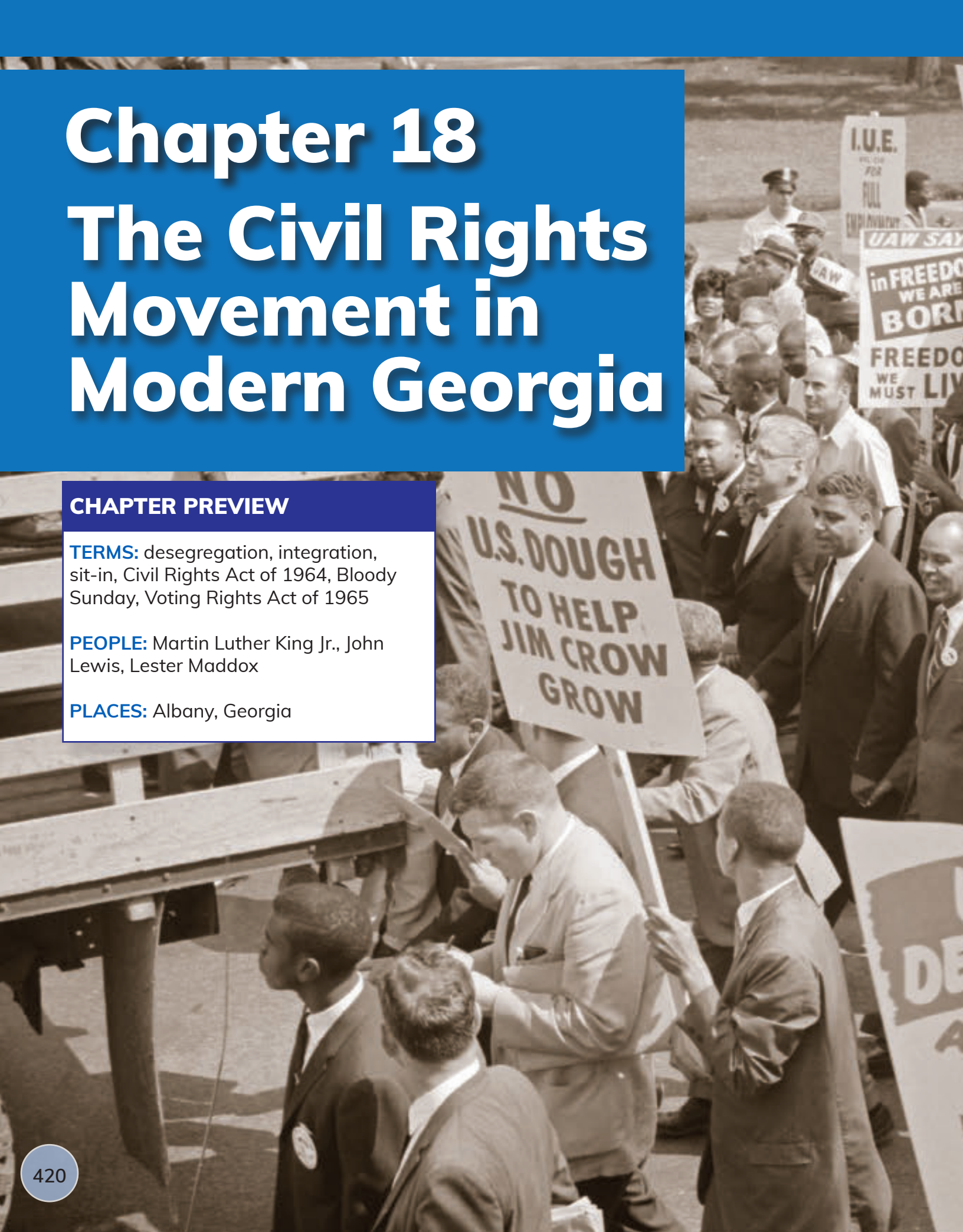
The Civil Rights Movement in Modern Georgia

CHAPTER PREVIEW

TERMS: desegregation, integration, sit-in, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Bloody Sunday, Voting Rights Act of 1965

PEOPLE: Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis, Lester Maddox

PLACES: Albany, Georgia





If you were a young teenager in Georgia in 1950, your life would be very different compared to today. For instance, many families had gardens to help meet part of their food needs. Unless you lived in Atlanta or another city, you and many of your classmates would have had chores such as milking cows, gathering eggs, or harvesting crops. Many families drew water from wells. Indoor plumbing was more common for people living in town, while those in rural areas often relied on outhouses.

Most children in Georgia wore clothing sewn by family members. Often, families passed down clothing from one child to another. New clothing and shoes were considered luxuries. You would likely have electricity in your home, but you were less likely to have a telephone. You might have seen a television, but your family probably did not own one. Radios were a common source of information and entertainment.

Families in Georgia were larger in 1950 than they are today. It was not uncommon for families to have as many as eight children, although the average woman had about four. Fathers often worked in agriculture or as factory laborers, while mothers typically stayed at home to raise the children and manage household duties. However, a change was occurring. More adults were earning a living in clerical or sales jobs, working as skilled craftsmen, and holding professional positions. Most of these roles were occupied by men, but the number of women workers was on the rise.

If you lived during this time, you would also notice the impact of Jim Crow. Schools were segregated into separate “black schools” and “white schools.” Your doctor might have had different entrances and waiting rooms for black and white patients. Water fountains, restrooms, and restaurants were also segregated. Black people and white people sat in different areas of theaters. Black passengers on a bus were expected to give up their seats at the front if a white person boarded. The concept of “separate but equal” meant that segregation was legal as long as each race was treated equally. This idea proved unachievable. For instance, black schools were often located in older buildings with fewer resources. Black teachers earned less than their white counterparts. Black workers in Atlanta earned only about 40 percent of what white workers earned.

It can be difficult to imagine, but black and white Georgians often interacted, sharing the same spaces while remaining apart. One observer noted that it was as if blacks and whites “lived in different towns together.” People of each race depended on the other, yet there was always an invisible barrier, a line that could not be crossed. If you lived in Georgia in 1950, times were different, but they were about to change.

Background: Martin Luther King Jr. and a number of national civil rights leaders, walking hand-in-hand, lead protestors in the 1963 March on Washington.

Signs of the Times

Sports

Jackie Robinson, born in Cairo, Georgia, joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. He was the first African American to play in Major League Baseball. In 1948, Alice Coachman became the first black woman in the world to win an Olympic gold medal. She cleared 5 feet, 6-1/8 inches in the high jump at the Olympic Games in London, England.

Entertainment

Several pioneering African American entertainers received recognition during the Civil Rights Era. Dorothy Dandridge was the first African American film star nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress in 1954 for *Carmen Jones*. Popular singer Nat King Cole hosted *The Nat King Cole Show* from 1956 to 1957 on NBC. It was the first nationally broadcast television show hosted by a black American. Sidney Poitier was the first black actor to win an Academy Award for Best Actor in 1963 for *Lilies of the Field*. Three of his 1967 films—*To Sir, with Love*; *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*; and *In the Heat of the Night*—also addressed race relations. Diahann Carroll had the title role in the TV series *Julia* beginning in 1968. It was the first American television show to star a black woman in a non-stereotypical role.

Science & Technology

Inventions that began in the 1960s include computer video games, the audio cassette, the compact disc (CD), the automated teller machine (ATM), and the bar code scanner.

Background and Inset: Olympic gold medalist Alice Coachman was born in Albany, Georgia, in 1923, and died there in 2014. At the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, she was honored as one of the 100 greatest Olympians.

Music

A record label founded in 1959 was incorporated as Motown Record Corporation in 1960. Motown—a combination of Motor and Town—referred to Detroit Michigan. From 1961 to 1971, Motown had 110 top 10 hits. Popular Motown artists of the 1960s included the Supremes, the Four Tops, and the Jackson 5.

Literature

Harper Lee won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Other popular novels of the 1960s include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Catch-22* in 1963. Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* became a favorite with children.

Transportation

Segregation across the country meant that black travelers might encounter unknown threats to their safety. Between 1936 and 1966, Victor Hugo Green published *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, which listed businesses such as hotels and gas stations that welcomed African American customers.



Figure 18.1 Timeline 1945-1970

1950

- 1948** President Truman ordered the desegregation of the U.S. military and federal government offices
- 1951** States' Rights Democratic (Dixiecrat) Party founded
- 1953** Georgia enacted a 3 percent sales tax to support education
- 1953** Georgia legislature passed laws to allow closing, rather than integrating, public schools
- 1954** Brown v. Board of Education U.S. Supreme Court ruling
- 1955** Brown II U.S. Supreme Court ruling
- 1955** The Ku Klux Klan reactivated in Georgia
- 1955** Rosa Parks arrested in Montgomery, AL, bus incident; African Americans boycotted city buses
- 1956** Georgia changed its state flag
- 1957** SCLC founded
- 1957** President Eisenhower sent U.S. troops to protect black students in Little Rock, AR
- 1958** The Temple in Atlanta bombed
- 1959** Federal court declared Georgia's transit segregation laws unconstitutional
- 1959** Federal court ordered desegregation of Atlanta public schools

1960

- 1960** Sit-ins in Greensboro, NC; Savannah; and Atlanta
- 1961** University of Georgia integrated
- 1961** Sibley Commission recommendations accepted
- 1961** First Freedom Rides
- 1961** Atlanta desegregated its public schools
- 1961** Albany Movement founded
- 1963** Dr. King's Letter from Birmingham Jail
- 1963** Medgar Evers was assassinated in Mississippi
- 1963** March on Washington; Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech
- 1963** Four girls killed in Birmingham church bombing
- 1964** Lester Maddox threatened African Americans with ax handles
- 1964** Three young activists were murdered during Mississippi Freedom Summer
- 1964** Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed
- 1964** Dr. King won the Nobel Peace Prize
- 1965** March from Selma to Montgomery; Bloody Sunday
- 1965** Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed
- 1966** Georgia General Assembly selected Lester Maddox as governor
- 1968** Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, TN

1970

SECTION 1

Georgia's Response to School Integration

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR...

- » the impact of *Brown v. Board of Education*;
- » the reason for the change in 1956 of the Georgia state flag;
- » results of the Sibley Commission;
- » terms: **desegregation, integration.**



When the United States entered World War II, African American poet Langston Hughes predicted that the war would change race relations in America. He wrote, “Pearl Harbor put Jim Crow on the run,” indicating that a nation fighting for democracy could not continue to treat its people unequally. Hughes was disappointed that the war did not lead to immediate change despite the courageous service of African Americans. However, progress was being made.

Some efforts for civil rights originated from the national government. Presidential executive orders brought about some changes, and decisions from federal district courts and the U.S. Supreme Court also shaped the movement. Although the enforcement of these changes was not always effective, by 1965, the legal framework for a more integrated society was established, marking the end of the Jim Crow era.

Harry Truman and Civil Rights

During the New Deal, African Americans benefited from jobs and programs, but no laws protected their civil rights. Things began to change under President Harry Truman. Truman had a history of opposing the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in his home state of Missouri. After World War II, he established the Committee on Civil Rights to study the challenges faced by African Americans and recommend changes.

Because passing a civil rights law through Congress was challenging, Truman acted independently. In 1948, he ordered the **desegregation** (ending the practice of segregating the races) of the U.S. military and federal government offices. This was an important step toward equality. In the South, where segregation remained legal, military bases became places where black and white soldiers lived and worked together. With Georgia hosting many military bases, this marked a significant change for the state. However, black soldiers could not dine in the same restaurants or attend the same theaters as white soldiers when they were off the military bases.

At the same time, the Democratic Party became divided over civil rights. While national Democratic leaders supported full civil rights for African Americans, many Southern Democrats strongly opposed the idea. In 1948, some Southern Democrats left the party and formed the States' Rights Democratic Party, also known as the "Dixiecrats." Although Truman was unable to pass civil rights laws, the courts began making decisions that favored civil rights during his presidency.



The NAACP and the Fight for Civil Rights

Since its founding in 1909, the NAACP, or National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, worked to challenge discrimination and segregation in the courts. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that some state and local laws violated the rights of African Americans, but many unfair practices persisted.

Though the Court had ruled in 1915 that grandfather clauses were unconstitutional, other barriers such as literacy tests and white primaries still prevented most black citizens from voting. (See Chapter 17.) In 1917, the Court ruled that laws creating separate black and white neighborhoods were illegal, yet segregation persisted as white homeowners refused to sell to African Americans.

The NAACP also focused on education, arguing that separate black schools were not equal to white schools. Courts ruled that states had to admit black students to white graduate schools if they failed to provide equal facilities. Southern states, including Georgia, attempted to improve black schools instead of ending segregation.

Opposite Page: Harry Truman was the only president elected after 1870 who did not have a college degree. **Above:** After the States' Rights Democratic Party split from the Democratic Party during their national convention, the "Dixiecrats" held a nominating convention in Birmingham, Alabama, and chose Strom Thurmond as their presidential candidate.



Above: Schools for black children such as this one in Greene County received less state funding than schools for white children. **Below:** A banner headline announced the May 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

In 1949, Governor Herman Talmadge established the Minimum Foundation Program to enhance school funding, particularly for black students. In 1951, Georgia enacted a three percent sales tax to support education. However, Talmadge and other leaders aimed to maintain school segregation. They even considered closing all public schools rather than allowing black and white students to attend together.

Brown v. Board of Education

The NAACP played a significant role in the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Thurgood Marshall, aided by Atlanta-born lawyer James Nabrit Jr., argued that segregated schools harmed black children's education and well-being.

The *Brown* case was based on the argument that black children were receiving an unequal education, which violated their civil rights under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It was easy to demonstrate that, for African Americans, student funding was unequal, teacher pay was lower, and school buildings, classrooms, and textbooks were substandard. The NAACP presented research that showed that segregation harmed the psychological and social well-being of children. The NAACP argued that simply improving school buildings and equalizing funding would not be enough.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the doctrine of "separate but equal" was unconstitutional. This doctrine had originated from the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. The justices in 1954 said segregation created inequality—violating the 14th Amendment, which guarantees equal protection of the laws.

In 1955, the Court issued a second ruling, *Brown II*, instructing schools to desegregate with "all deliberate speed." This decision required the end of segregation in public schools and represented a major victory in the Civil Rights Movement. Although the court had ordered an end to segregated schools, Georgia's leaders found ways to slow the process.





Left: One reaction to the threat of integration in Georgia was the adoption of a new state flag that incorporated the Confederate battle flag in its design.

Bottom: Georgia adopted its current state flag in 2004.

The 1956 Georgia State Flag

Many people in Georgia and the South strongly opposed desegregation. Even before the Supreme Court ruling, the Georgia legislature passed a law in 1953 that allowed the state to close public schools rather than integrate them. Since private schools could remain segregated, enrollment in these schools increased as whites who could afford the tuition moved their children to private schools.

In 1956, white southern members of the U.S. Senate and House wrote the “Southern Manifesto,” attacking the *Brown* decision as being unconstitutional and an attack on the rights of states. Many vocal white politicians called for the protection of white supremacy, states’ rights, and the “Southern way of life.”

In another act of defiance, the state legislature passed a law in February 1956 changing the Georgia state flag. The head of the state Democratic Party had proposed the idea, and two state senators introduced the legislation. According to the Georgia Constitution, the legislature determined the state flag design with no public vote. Much of the new state flag featured the Confederate battle flag, known as the St. Andrew’s cross. The left section of the flag displayed the state seal on a vertical blue background. State Representative Denmark Groover stated at the time that it would show “that we in Georgia intend to uphold what we stood for....”

The flag became increasingly controversial in the 1990s, leading African Americans and business leaders to seek its change. Shortly before his death in 2001, Groover returned to the House chambers to acknowledge that opposition to desegregation had motivated the call for a flag change. He urged the legislature to adopt a new flag. Despite efforts by Governor Zell Miller to alter the flag, it was the initiative of his successor, Governor Roy Barnes, that finally resulted in a new flag. The current Georgia flag was officially adopted in 2004 when voters selected its design over that of the Barnes flag.





Above: African American students who became known as the Little Rock Nine enrolled in Little Rock Central High School in 1957. The Arkansas governor prevented them from entering the building, so President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent U.S. Army troops and federalized the Arkansas National Guard to protect the students.

More Opposition to *Brown v. Board of Education*

Governors Herman Talmadge, Marvin Griffin, and Ernest Vandiver insisted that black and white students would never attend school together in Georgia. The state legislature passed laws attempting to prevent desegregation, even declaring that the *Brown* decision did not apply in Georgia. When schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, integrated in 1957, President Eisenhower sent troops to protect black students. Meanwhile, Georgia's leaders vowed to maintain segregated schools.

In 1955, the KKK became active again in Georgia, holding rallies at Stone Mountain and committing acts of violence against civil rights supporters. Many white Georgians feared losing their way of life under segregation and were concerned about competition from black individuals for jobs. Some white leaders, particularly religious figures like Rabbi Jacob Rothschild of Atlanta, advocated for civil rights. In 1958, his synagogue was bombed due to his support for racial equality.

Governor Vandiver and the Sibley Commission

In 1959, a federal court ordered Atlanta to desegregate its public schools, and state leaders vowed to close them. A group of primarily white mothers formed HOPE, or Help Our Public Education, to oppose school closures. Atlanta's business leaders were also concerned, fearing that defying the Supreme Court and shutting down schools would harm Atlanta's reputation and discourage businesses and investors from coming to the city. Mayor William B. Hartsfield supported desegregation to safeguard the city's economy.

Georgia Governor Ernest Vandiver refused to close Georgia's schools. He established a special group called the Sibley Commission to examine the issue and gather public opinion. Attorney and banker John Sibley led the commission, traveling throughout Georgia to listen to citizens. Most white Georgians who spoke at the meetings wanted to maintain school segregation; some even favored closing schools rather than integrating them. However, urban and business leaders opposed school closures due to concerns about the economic impact.

The Sibley Commission recommended that local school boards determine whether to integrate or close their schools. In 1961, Atlanta desegregated its schools peacefully. In other cities, such as Augusta, desegregation took longer. A lawsuit called the *Acree* case compelled the courts to intervene and develop a plan for more meaningful **integration** (bringing people of different racial or other groups into society or an organization as equals). Although many in Georgia resisted desegregation, the efforts of civil rights activists, business leaders, court rulings, and the softening of Governor Vandiver's views contributed to a gradual integration of the state's public schools.



Above: Despite insisting that black and white students would not attend school together in Georgia, Governor Ernest Vandiver saw Atlanta's schools integrated during his term of office.

REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE

1. Explain the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.
2. Why was Georgia's state flag changed in 1956?
3. What was the purpose of the Sibley Commission?

Special Feature

The Desegregation of the University of Georgia

Background: The Holmes-Hunter Academic Building on the University of Georgia campus. **Inset:** Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes were met with hostility when they enrolled at UGA in January 1961. Both graduated in 1963 and went on to have distinguished careers.

The NAACP worked to integrate Georgia's public colleges by identifying talented black students who met the admission requirements. Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter were outstanding students from respected families. Holmes aspired to become a doctor, while Hunter dreamed of a career in journalism.

Despite meeting all the requirements, the University of Georgia (UGA) rejected their applications. Holmes attended Morehouse College, while Hunter went to Wayne State University in Michigan; yet they continued to reapply. The NAACP's legal team assisted in bringing their case to court.

In January 1961, a federal judge ordered UGA to admit Holmes and Hunter. Journalists and nonstudents crowded near UGA's arches to witness the event or jeer at the two new underclassmen upon their arrival on campus. While some students were indifferent, others were openly hostile toward Holmes and Hunter. In one instance, a riot erupted after a basketball game, leading to the suspension of Holmes and Hunter for safety reasons. The courts ordered UGA to readmit them and ensure their protection.

The hostilities subsided, allowing both students to concentrate on their studies. Hunter graduated with a degree in journalism and enjoyed a long career in broadcast news. Holmes became a doctor and later served as the medical director of Grady Hospital in Atlanta. Their courage contributed to ending segregation in Georgia's colleges and inspired future black students to attend the state's colleges and universities.



SECTION 2

The People's Fight for Civil Rights

AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR...

- » Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference;
- » John Lewis and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee;
- » the Albany Movement and March on Washington;
- » term: **sit-in**.

The actions of the courts played an important role in challenging segregation and unfair voting laws. Court decisions helped enforce the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, making change possible. However, the fight for civil rights was not just led by efforts of the NAACP or the courts; it also came from ordinary citizens. Many people took action on their own, using peaceful protests to demand dignity and justice. People across the country noticed their efforts, and over time, the system of Jim Crow laws was crushed.

Below: When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus, African Americans responded by boycotting buses for 382 days until the U.S. Supreme Court ordered an end to segregated buses in Montgomery.

Bus Boycotts

In Georgia's cities, buses were important for getting around town. Many people rode public buses daily to and from work. Buses were also an economical way to travel between cities and states. Georgia law required that black riders and white riders be seated in separate areas of the bus.

By the mid-1950s, efforts to end segregation increased throughout the South. A significant event took place in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Rosa Parks, a member of the NAACP, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a crowded bus. She was arrested and jailed for violating city segregation laws, which required that she give up her seat to a white passenger. News of Parks's arrest spread quickly. In response, many African Americans boycotted the city buses, refusing to ride until they were treated equally with white riders.



Did You Know?

Dr. Benjamin Mays grew up in poverty in South Carolina, the son of formerly enslaved people and tenant farmers. He became a scholar, writer, and leader. He strongly opposed segregation and supported civil rights as long as the movement remained nonviolent and open to both black and white Americans.

Parks lost her job for participating in the boycott, and for over a year, many African Americans in Montgomery carpooled and walked instead of taking the bus. On December 20, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the end of segregated buses in Montgomery and the bus boycott ended after 382 days.

African American pastors in Atlanta, including Martin Luther King Sr. and William Holmes Borders, used their positions to meet with city leaders to improve the lives of black residents. In 1957, Borders and other black ministers organized a protest similar to Montgomery's. Six ministers boarded buses and sat at the front. When white riders exited, the bus was taken to the garage, and the ministers were arrested—just as they had planned. Their case went to court, and in 1959, a federal district court declared Georgia's transit segregation laws unconstitutional. Atlanta's black riders could no longer be forced to sit in the back or give up their seats to white passengers.

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

The Montgomery bus boycott helped bring new leaders and a clear strategy to the Civil Rights Movement. One of the most important leaders was a young Atlanta minister, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. King and other ministers, such as Reverend Ralph David Abernathy, believed in nonviolent resistance to fight segregation and the Jim Crow system. Their Christian beliefs guided their approach. King famously quoted the Bible in saying the movement would continue until “justice rolls down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.” In 1957, King and other leaders started the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and moved its headquarters to Atlanta.



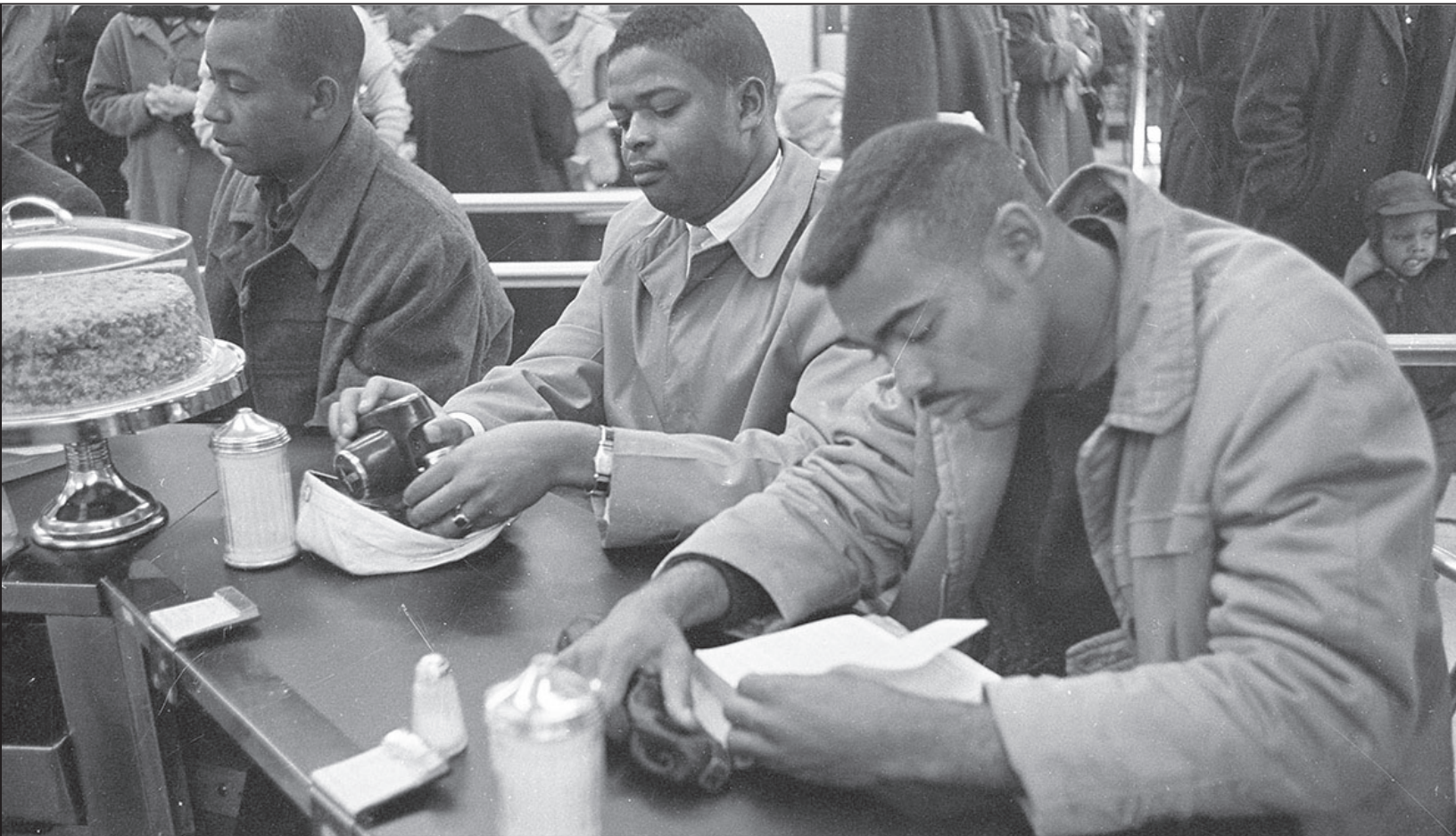
The SCLC helped plan and organize protests. They established citizenship schools that taught local African Americans how to use nonviolent methods. One of King's close aides was Reverend Andrew Young, a minister who had worked on voter registration efforts in the 1950s. He joined the SCLC staff in 1961 and became an important figure in the movement.

Many of the young leaders in the Civil Rights Movement, including King and Young, were graduates of Morehouse College in Atlanta. Their education emphasized service and leadership. One of their biggest influences was Dr. Benjamin Mays, the Morehouse president from 1940 to 1967. He was one of the most respected African Americans of his time and an advisor to U.S. presidents, including John F. Kennedy and Jimmy Carter.

Dr. King's leadership and dedication to nonviolent protest led to his winning many awards and honors. In 1964, he won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Opposite Page: After Julian Bond was refused his seat in the Georgia House, which he had won by 87 percent of the vote, Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King Jr. (center) led a protest march to the State Capitol in January 1966.

Below: Sit-ins across the South in 1960, including this one in Durham, North Carolina, led to the desegregation of restaurants.



Sit-ins Spread across the South

In February 1960, four African American students from Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina (now North Carolina A&T State University) sat at a white-only lunch counter in a Woolworth's store in Greensboro, North Carolina. When they were refused service, they remained seated in protest. More students joined and, soon, similar sit-ins spread across the South. A **sit-in** is a type of protest in which people refuse to leave a public place until their demands are met. Some sit-ins led to the integration of restaurants, while others resulted in violent attacks against protesters.



The North Carolina students inspired Savannah students. On March 16, 1960, members of the NAACP Youth Council staged sit-ins at white-only lunch counters in eight Savannah stores. Three students—Carolyn Quilloin, Ernest Robinson, and Joan Tyson—were arrested in the Azalea Room at Levy's Department Store. In response, African American leaders W. W. Law, Hosea Williams, and Eugene Gadsden organized a nearly complete boycott of city businesses. They led voter registration drives that helped elect a moderate city government under Mayor Malcolm Maclean. Sit-ins and the boycott continued until October of 1961, when Savannah repealed its city ordinance requiring segregated lunch counters.

At the same time, students in Atlanta organized sit-ins. Before the protests, an open letter was written asking the city to end segregation. A week later, over 200 students staged sit-ins at lunch counters. Negotiations between the students and city leaders failed. Sit-ins resumed in October, with the Magnolia Room, a well-known restaurant in Rich's Department Store, as a primary target. On the first day, over 50 students were arrested, but the protests continued.

Mayor William B. Hartsfield tried to find a compromise between black leaders and white business owners, but they could not agree. After a 30-day truce, protests resumed, filling the jails and hurting businesses. Finally, in 1961, leaders reached a deal to desegregate in the fall. Martin Luther King Jr. convinced students to accept the delay.

John Lewis and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Following the Greensboro sit-ins, an activist at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) helped students form Atlanta's Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Two important SNCC leaders were John Lewis and Julian Bond.

John Lewis grew up in Troy, Alabama, and was inspired by the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Dr. King. As a college student, he joined sit-ins and became a Freedom Rider in 1961. He later helped lead voter registration drives and was brutally attacked during the 1965 march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery. Lewis later moved to Atlanta, served on the city council, and was elected to Congress in 1986, where he worked for over 30 years. In 2011, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

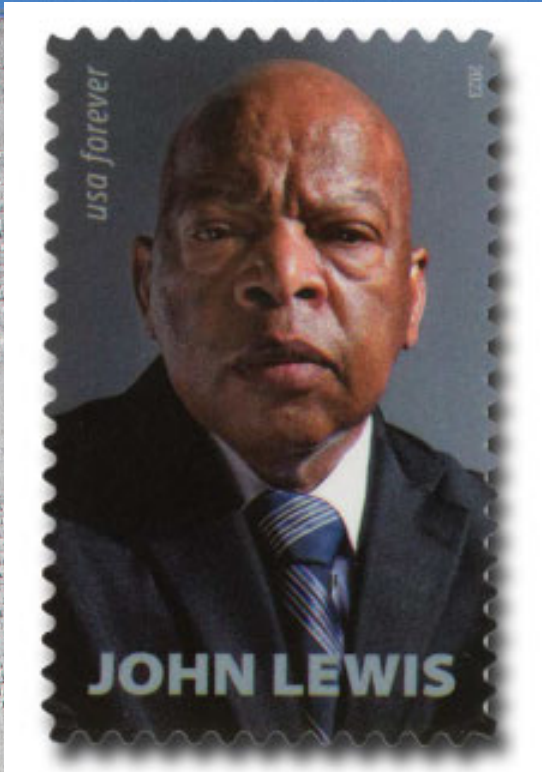
Julian Bond was a student at Morehouse College, where he founded the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights. He became SNCC's communications director, later served in the Georgia General Assembly, and was chairman of the NAACP.



Top: Signs of segregation, such as these “White Only” taxicabs in Albany, were common across the South. **Right:** Julian Bond.

Special
Feature

John Lewis



John Lewis was a courageous and important leader of the Civil Rights Movement. He was born into a sharecropper's family on February 21, 1940, in Troy, Alabama. As a child, Lewis witnessed the unfair treatment of black people in the South. He heard radio broadcasts of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words during the Montgomery Bus Boycott and wanted to join the movement.

Lewis attended American Baptist College and Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and became actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement. He was one of the original thirteen Freedom Riders—black and white activists who rode buses together into the South to protest segregation. Lewis was arrested numerous times and severely beaten, but he never gave up. He believed in peaceful protest.

John Lewis helped organize and was a featured speaker at the 1963 March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. In 1965, Lewis led a march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, demanding voting rights for African Americans. Police attacked the peaceful marchers in an event known as “Bloody Sunday.” Lewis was struck on the head and seriously injured. The violence shocked the nation and contributed to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Lewis won a seat on the Atlanta City Council in 1981 and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1986. He served as a congressman from Georgia for over 30 years, advocating for human rights and humanitarian issues. John Lewis passed away on July 17, 2020, but his legacy remains. Many remember Lewis as the “conscience of Congress” for his lifetime commitment to justice and nonviolence and his fight for civil and human rights.

Background: This Nashville, Tennessee, mural honors John Lewis. **Inset:** The U.S. Postal Service issued a “Forever” stamp to honor John Lewis in 2023.





The Freedom Rides

Even though the courts banned segregation of bus passengers, many southern states ignored the ruling. In 1961, Freedom Riders boarded buses together to challenge segregation. The activists were both black and white. The first Freedom Ride started in Washington, DC, and was bound for New Orleans. A quick look at the map shows that such a route would take riders through many segregated states. The riders passed through Georgia peacefully, but in Alabama, white mobs violently attacked them. In Anniston, Alabama, a mob slashed tires and set a bus on fire. In Birmingham, riders—including John Lewis—were severely beaten. Despite the violence, Freedom Riders continued their mission, forcing the government to enforce desegregation laws.

MAP 18.1

1961 FREEDOM RIDES

Map Skill: Which Georgia cities had bus stops on the 1961 Freedom Rides?

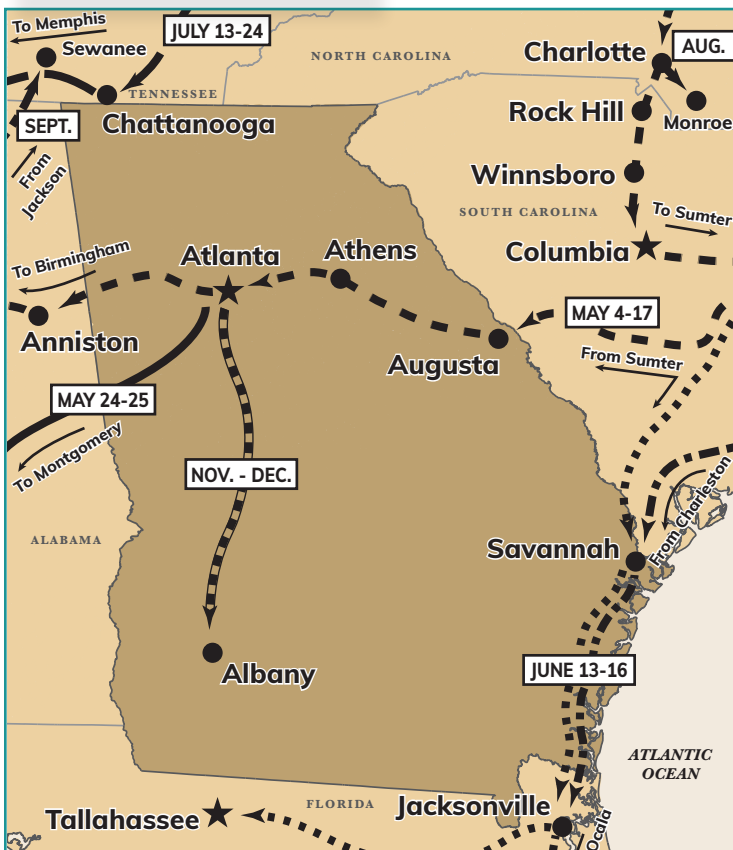
The Albany Movement

In 1961, a major effort to end segregation began in Albany, Georgia. In this rural area, most black residents depended on white employers, making protests risky. However, Albany had a strong middle-class black community. Local citizens joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), aiming to register African Americans to vote. That November, a group known as the Albany Movement was formed. Protest marches for equal rights led to the arrest of hundreds.

Martin Luther King Jr. and his team arrived in December to support the Albany Movement and were arrested. King's presence and arrest brought national attention to the situation. When he returned in 1962, he chose to serve jail time instead of paying a fine and being released quickly. However, King and others were released against their will when an anonymous person paid their fines.

The Albany Movement slowed down in the fall of 1962. The Albany chief of police continued arresting marchers until hundreds were jailed in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Although the Albany Movement did not result in the immediate change many hoped for, it helped empower black citizens. More African Americans registered to vote, and segregation laws in the city eventually ended.

Top: This Greyhound bus carrying Freedom Riders was set ablaze by a mob outside of Anniston, Alabama, on May 14, 1961. None of the passengers were injured.



Special Feature

The Leesburg Stockade Girls

In July 1963, fifteen African American girls from Americus were arrested for peacefully protesting segregation. They tried to buy movie tickets at the local theater's front entrance instead of going to the "Colored" ticket window in the back alley. The girls, aged between twelve and fifteen, were young participants in a protest organized by the SNCC.

After their arrest, they were secretly taken twenty miles away to an old Civil War-era jail in Leesburg, which was known as the Leesburg Stockade. There were no beds, no working toilets, and very little food or clean water available. The girls remained there until mid-September, and their families had no idea where they were.

The girls were never taken to see a judge or permitted to meet with a lawyer. This treatment violated their *habeas corpus* rights—a legal rule that states that individuals have the right to appear before a judge and be informed of the reasons for their detention. Instead, the girls were held unlawfully without any charges or a court hearing.

Ironically, the girls' detention coincided with the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which took place on August 28, 1963. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech at that historic event, calling for racial justice and equality.

The girls' story might have remained hidden, but a photographer for the SNCC named Danny Lyon found them and took photos of the girls behind bars. When the pictures were published, people across the country were shocked and angry. Soon after, the girls were quietly released without any explanation.

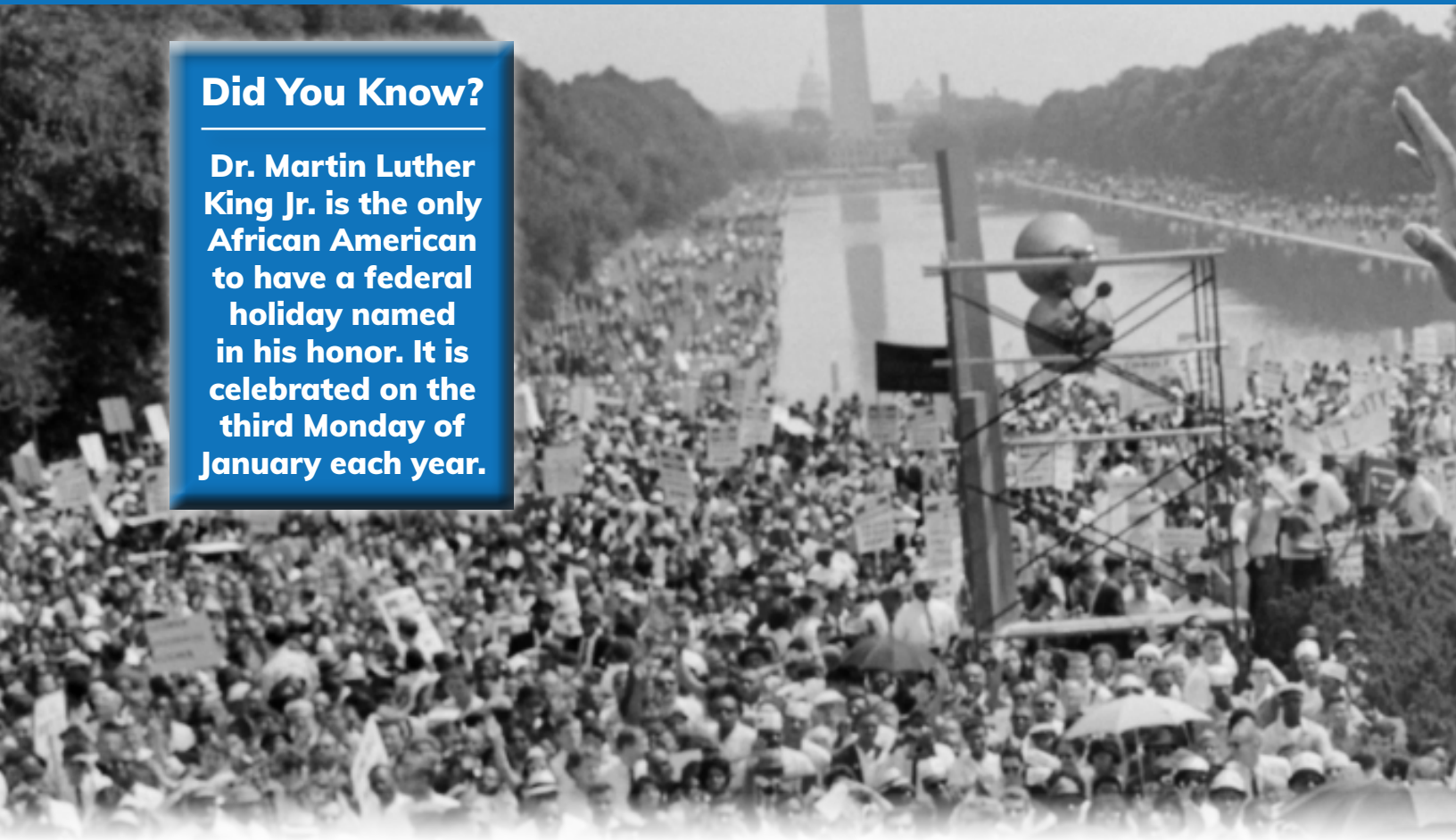
Even though they were young, the Leesburg Stockade Girls displayed remarkable courage. Today, they are honored as heroes who stood up for what was right.



Background: The Leesburg Stockade Girls.

Did You Know?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is the only African American to have a federal holiday named in his honor. It is celebrated on the third Monday of January each year.



The March on Washington

In 1963, the Civil Rights Movement continued to grow in the South. After learning from the challenges in Albany, King and other civil rights leaders focused on Birmingham, Alabama. Americans watching the television news saw shocking images of peaceful protesters being attacked by police dogs and knocked down by powerful fire hoses. More than 3,000 people, including Dr. King himself, were arrested. Even children were put in jail. While in jail, Dr. King wrote his famous “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” urging white Americans to recognize the injustice of segregation.

These events prompted President John F. Kennedy to support a civil rights bill in Congress, asserting it was time for the nation to uphold its promise of equality. Many southern lawmakers, including Georgia’s senators and congressmen, strongly opposed the bill. In response, civil rights leaders organized the March on Washington in August 1963. Approximately 250,000 people, both black and white, gathered in Washington, DC, for a powerful demonstration. The event began at the Washington Monument and concluded at the Lincoln Memorial. It featured prayers, music, and speeches advocating for racial justice. Famous singers performed, and religious leaders from various faiths spoke in support of the movement. Representatives from all five major civil rights organizations delivered addresses. Speakers also included white supporters of the movement, such as a prominent labor leader, Protestant and Catholic clergy, and Jewish rabbis.



The highlight of the day was Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. As a powerful speaker and gifted writer, he delivered one of the most renowned speeches in American history. He spoke about the struggles of African Americans and called for justice and equality. He urged individuals to reject hatred and bitterness, envisioning a day when people of all races could live together peacefully. In his speech, King references Georgia twice. He stated, "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood." Ultimately, he called for freedom to ring across the nation, proclaiming, "Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia." This was significant because Stone Mountain was recognized as a major gathering place for the Ku Klux Klan.

Despite the hopeful tone of King's "I Have a Dream Speech," three weeks later, white supremacists exploded a bomb at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Four young girls, Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley, were killed in the blast. The bombing increased pressure for federal action on civil rights legislation.

REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE

1. How did Martin Luther King Jr. and the SCLC work for change?
2. What was John Lewis's role in the Civil Rights Movement?
3. What was the effect of the Albany Movement?
4. What was the purpose of the March on Washington?

Top: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, during the March on Washington on August 28, 1963.

Special Feature

Music of the Movement

One of the tools of the civil rights movement was music. Songs bolstered the protesters' hopes and courage and brought a sense of solidarity. Many of the movement's songs came from the long tradition of African American spirituals and church music.

In December 1962, SNCC field secretary Cordell Reagon formed the Freedom Singers. He and Charles Neblett of Illinois teamed with Rutha Harris and Bernice Johnson of Albany. The group toured the country singing "freedom songs" to raise money for SNCC. In August 1963, the group sang at the March on Washington. In 1995, Rutha Harris brought back the songs of the movement when she founded the Albany Civil Rights Institute Freedom Singers, which still performs at the Albany Civil Rights Institute.

Throughout the civil rights struggle, songs remained important. Words in familiar songs were often adapted to fit the movement. For example, in the song "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round," the word "nobody" was replaced by "segregation," then "injustice," "Jim Crow," and "jailhouse."

Songs often focused on the goal of the movement—freedom. "I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on freedom" and "Oh, Freedom" are two examples. Folk singer Joan Baez sang "Oh, Freedom" as the first song performed at the 1963 March on Washington. Music such as "We shall not be moved" inspired protesters to stay the course in spite of threats, beatings, and arrests.

In the early 1900s, James Weldon Johnson had written a poem entitled "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which his brother John Rosamond Johnson set to music. The uplifting song became known as the "Negro National Anthem" and was an important song in the movement.

However, the anthem of the movement, and for protest movements before and after, was "We Shall Overcome." This song was sung on marches, in jails, and at almost all gatherings, often by large crowds with hands and arms locked together. These songs were powerful and unifying, helping the civil rights workers keep their "eyes on the prize."



SECTION 3

Results of Federal Civil Rights Laws



AS YOU READ, LOOK FOR...

- » the purpose of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- » the purpose of the Voting Rights Act of 1965;
- » the election of Lester Maddox as governor;
- » terms: **Civil Rights Act of 1964, Bloody Sunday, Voting Rights Act of 1965.**

Lester Maddox became a symbol of southern resistance to civil rights. His fight against integration showed how deeply racism and opposition to equality were rooted in parts of the South. Despite his efforts, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 remained in place and played a major role in ending legal segregation across the country. Over time, Georgia and the rest of the South moved toward racial equality. Still, Maddox's actions served as a reminder of the fierce resistance to change and racism present during the Civil Rights Movement.

Violence toward Activists

In many parts of the South, resistance to civil rights continued by attempting to prevent civil rights by action. Violence against activists continued. In 1963, Medgar Evers, the NAACP field secretary in Mississippi, was assassinated. Two trials of his alleged killer ended in hung juries. However, in 1994, new evidence led to another trial, and a jury of multiple races found him guilty. He died in prison in 2001.

During the Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964, three young men, African American James Chaney and two white activists, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, were murdered while helping black citizens register to vote.

Opposite Page: Rutha Harris (center front) and the Freedom Singers. **Right:** This life-size bronze statue of Medgar Evers is situated in front of a city library along a street in Jackson, Mississippi, both of which were renamed for him.





Top: Opposition to President John F. Kennedy's civil rights bill, mostly by southern members of Congress, led civil rights groups to take their message to the nation's capital. The March on Washington was organized by a coalition of civil rights organizations.

Opposite Page: Two days after Bloody Sunday, Dr. and Mrs. Martin Luther King Jr. are seen with the children of Dr. Ralph David Abernathy and Pastor James Reeb (left) during their march to the Alabama capitol. Reeb and two other ministers were later attacked, resulting in Reeb's death from his injuries.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Before the civil rights bill could move through Congress, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. His vice president, Lyndon B. Johnson, became president and worked diligently to pass the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**. This law made segregation in public places illegal. Restaurants, hotels, libraries, theaters, and other public spaces could no longer refuse service to an individual based on race.

The act was far-reaching. Employers could no longer refuse to hire someone just because of race or sex. The act also helped African Americans and other minorities have an equal chance to vote by banning unfair rules that kept them from voting. It also prohibited discrimination in government-funded programs and workplaces and created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The EEOC enforces laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or age in hiring, promoting, firing, setting wages, testing, training, and apprenticeships.

Bloody Sunday and the 1965 Voting Rights Act

In February 1965, an Alabama state trooper shot and killed Jimmie Lee Jackson during a civil rights demonstration. Civil rights leaders wanted to draw national attention to the injustice of Jackson's death and the ongoing violations of civil rights in the state. They organized a march of over fifty miles from Selma to the state capital in Montgomery.

On March 7, 1965, about 600 civil rights supporters gathered in Selma to begin the journey. Hosea Williams of the SCLC led the demonstration and John Lewis, chairman of the SNCC, was at his side. Some 150 state troopers and sheriff's deputies stopped the marchers as they were leaving Selma at the end of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The officers brutally attacked the marchers with tear gas, clubs, and whips.

Lewis suffered a skull fracture and was one of nearly sixty individuals sent to the hospital with injuries. The violence was broadcast on national television and reported in newspapers across the country. This shocking incident, which became known as **Bloody Sunday**, led to increased public support for the Civil Rights Movement. One result of Bloody Sunday was the passage of the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**. Congress enacted this federal law to eliminate racial discrimination in voting. The law prohibited discriminatory voting practices, granted the federal government oversight of elections in states with a history of discrimination, and led to a significant increase in black voter registration and participation in the political process.



The Election of Governor Lester Maddox

One strong opponent of civil rights in Georgia was Lester Maddox, the owner of the Pickrick Restaurant near Georgia Tech in Atlanta. He opened the diner in 1947 and became well known for his segregationist beliefs. While other Atlanta businesses began integrating in the early 1960s, Maddox refused and became a symbol of resistance to the new law. Though the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had made segregation in public businesses illegal, he still refused to serve black customers.

When three black civil rights workers attempted to dine at his restaurant, Maddox and his supporters drove them away with ax handles, which were nicknamed "Pickrick drumsticks." This violent act sent a clear message that he would not serve black customers. Photos of the incident were featured in



Top: Lester Maddox was sworn in as Georgia's governor in 1967 after being chosen by the General Assembly.

Opposite Page, Top: Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee.

Opposite Page, Bottom: A bronze statue of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was unveiled at the Georgia State Capitol on August 28, 2017.

newspapers nationwide, embarrassing Atlanta's business leaders who wished to portray the city as progressive and racially tolerant. Although many Atlanta businesses had begun to integrate, Maddox stood firm in his refusal, establishing himself as one of Georgia's most visible opponents of civil rights.

Instead of following the law, Maddox went to court, arguing that being forced to integrate his restaurant was unconstitutional. He lost the case, as the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 required that businesses serving the public must provide services to all individuals regardless of their race. Rather than serve black customers, Maddox closed the Pickrick Restaurant in protest. He preferred to lose his business than obey the new law. Soon after, he brought his segregationist views into politics.

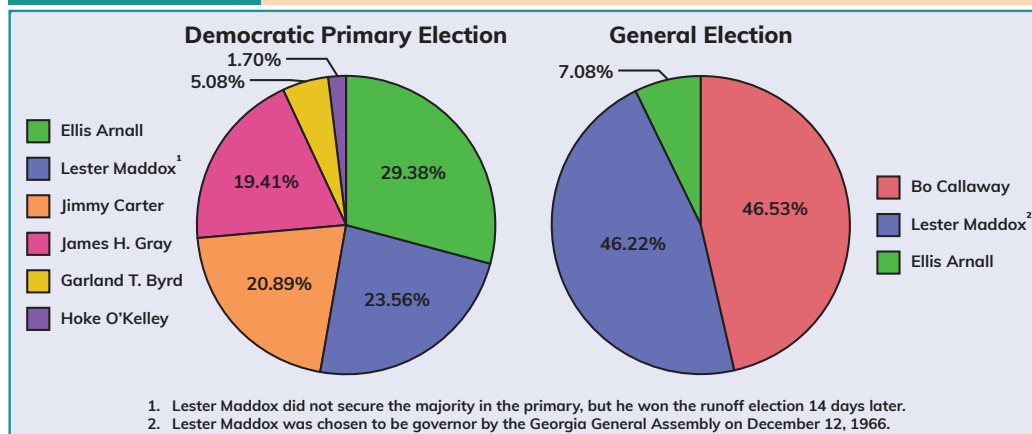
Although Maddox lost his restaurant, his opposition to civil rights gained him political support among white voters who resisted integration. Maddox decided to run for governor against the more moderate and experienced former governor, Ellis Arnall.

Arnall received the most votes in the primary election, with Maddox coming in second. However, neither candidate secured the fifty percent majority needed to win. A runoff election was held between the two men, and this time, Maddox defeated Arnall. Winning that primary usually guaranteed a win in the general election. However, Bo Callaway, a Republican, had significant support. There was a possibility he could become the first Republican governor in Georgia in the 20th century.

In the general election, Callaway received more votes than Maddox. However, thousands of voters wrote Ellis Arnall's name on their ballots instead of voting for either Maddox or Callaway. As a result, neither Maddox nor Callaway secured a majority of the popular vote. The state constitution required the General Assembly to choose the governor, and the Democratic-controlled General Assembly selected the Democrat, Lester Maddox.

Maddox served as governor from 1967 to 1971. Despite his reputation for racist views, he surprised many of his supporters by appointing several African Americans to government positions. However, he remained an outspoken opponent of civil rights and used his time in office to resist federal policies that promoted integration.

Figure 18.2 Election for Governor, 1966





The Assassination of Dr. King

In the years following the passage of the Voting Rights Act, Dr. King and the SCLC aimed to eliminate poverty among individuals of all races. They planned a Poor People's Campaign in November 1967, culminating in a major Washington, DC, demonstration during the summer of 1968. King sought to include both black and white people living in poverty, as well as Native Americans and Hispanic Americans from rural and urban communities.

King's plans for a Poor People's March were interrupted in the spring of 1968 by a trip to Memphis, Tennessee, to support a strike by the city's sanitation workers. On April 4, 1968, while King was on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, a sniper shot and killed him. The assassin was arrested and later sentenced to prison.

The shock of the tragic murder of Dr. King was felt around the world. King's funeral on April 9, 1968, in Atlanta, drew over 300,000 mourners. A private service occurred at Ebenezer Baptist Church, where he and his father were pastors. Following that, tens of thousands participated in a procession to a public service at Morehouse College, where King had graduated. Numerous dignitaries, including President Lyndon Johnson, attended the funeral. This tremendous outpouring of grief and respect highlighted the profound influence of this remarkable leader.

Did You Know?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2003. Hundreds of streets, schools, and government buildings across the United States bear his name. The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC, was dedicated in 2011.

REVIEW AND SUMMARIZE

1. What was the purpose of the 1964 Civil Rights Act?
2. How did the events of Bloody Sunday affect the Civil Rights Movement?
3. How did Lester Maddox respond to the 1964 Civil Rights Act?



Chapter Review

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Section 1: Georgia's Response to School Integration

- African Americans' contributions in World War II sparked calls for racial equality. President Truman desegregated the military and federal offices in 1948. His civil rights stance split the Democratic Party, leading to the creation of the "Dixiecrats," though courts increasingly ruled in favor of civil rights.
- The NAACP fought segregation in education and housing through court challenges. Though some legal victories were won, southern states like Georgia tried to maintain segregation by improving black facilities instead of integrating schools.
- The 1954 Supreme Court *Brown v. Board of Education* decision declared segregated schools unconstitutional, prompting backlash in Georgia. The state changed its flag in 1956 to include the Confederate emblem as a symbol of defiance, and many leaders sought to resist integration.
- Faced with federal orders, economic pressure, and public advocacy, Georgia began slowly desegregating its schools. The Sibley Commission recommended local control over integration, leading to peaceful desegregation in some Georgia cities by the early 1960s.
- The Montgomery Bus Boycott elevated Martin Luther King Jr. as a national civil rights leader. He helped form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), promoting nonviolent protest and organizing efforts like citizenship schools.
- Sit-ins at segregated lunch counters spread across the South. These protests led to the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), with leaders like John Lewis and Julian Bond.
- Freedom Rides, the Albany Movement, and the 1963 March on Washington brought national attention to civil rights issues. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech became a defining moment in the fight for racial equality.

Section 3: Results of Federal Civil Rights Laws

- In many parts of the South, resistance to civil rights persisted, resulting in violence and even the murder of activists.
- Major civil rights legislation—like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965—ended legal segregation, banned discriminatory practices, and expanded voting rights.
- Lester Maddox became Georgia's governor in 1967. He was well known for resisting integration as a business owner. He used his political power to continue to espouse racist views and resist integration and civil rights progress.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968 while supporting a workers' strike, sparking worldwide mourning and securing his lasting legacy.

Section 2: The People's Fight for Civil Rights

- Court rulings and legal actions challenged segregation laws, but everyday citizens also played a crucial role through peaceful protests and civil disobedience.
- Inspired by Rosa Parks's arrest in Alabama, bus boycotts became a powerful protest tool. Similar actions in Georgia, led by black pastors, helped overturn transit segregation laws.

ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING

Vocabulary

On sticky notes or index cards, create a word map for the terms listed below:

desegregation
integration
sit-ins

For each term, your word map will include all of these:

- A. The vocabulary word/term
- B. The term's definition
- C. A sentence from the text using that word
- D. The page number where you found this sentence

Understanding the Facts

1. Explain the facts surrounding the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. How does this ruling differ from *Plessy v. Ferguson*?
2. Why was the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision important for Georgia?
3. How did the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) form, and who were two of its important leaders?
4. What was the purpose of Freedom Rides?
5. How did the Albany Movement help black citizens?
6. Why did Lester Maddox become a symbol of resistance to the Civil Rights Movement in Georgia?

Developing Critical Thinking

1. Compare the Georgia flag adopted in 1956 to the flag we have today. Evaluate the design and symbolism of each flag.
2. Evaluate why public transportation, like buses, became such an important focus in the fight to end segregation in the South.

Writing across the Curriculum

Write an informational short essay that explains the role of the Sibley Commission in Georgia during the Civil Rights Movement. Be sure to explain why the Sibley Commission was created and why it was important in the history of school integration in Georgia.

Extending Reading Skills

Read the sections “Civil Rights Act of 1964” and “Bloody Sunday and the 1965 Voting Rights Act” on pages 442-443. Compare and contrast the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Applying Your Skills

1. Access the entire script for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s “I Have a Dream” speech. Study the words in detail and look for the meaning between the lines. In your own words, summarize the key points of Dr. King's speech.
2. Review and summarize resistance to the events of the Civil Rights Movement. Create a timeline that shows the order of events.

Exploring with Technology

Use a search engine to explore other speakers and performers at the March on Washington besides Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Who were they? How did they come together to demand civil rights?