



MR. POGREBA, PARKER SCHOOL

UNIT 8: THE 1960S CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT



THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

INACTION AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

- ▶ Despite the attention given to the 1950s protests and public statements in favor of civil rights, **John F. Kennedy** did little as President to advance civil rights.
- ▶ As late as 1962, only **5% of eligible Black voters** were registered in **Mississippi**. **Eleven Southern counties** with majority-black populations had **no registered black voters**, and **one county in Louisiana** had not registered a Black voter since **1900**.
- ▶ **Poll taxes, literacy tests**, intimidation and violence kept the racist status quo in place.



MLK AND JFK AFTER THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

SIT-INS

- ▶ King's non-violent campaign inspired a mass movement when the **Greensboro Four** demanded service at a "whites only" counter in North Carolina in 1960.
- ▶ Within two months, **54 cities** saw similar sit-in campaigns.
- ▶ The **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** worked with King's **Southern Christian Leadership Conference** to expand the campaign to churches, pools, and other segregated facilities.



ANNE MOODY AT JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI SIT-IN IN 1963

Black Americans challenged segregation by repeatedly seeking admission to whites-only pools and by filing lawsuits against their cities. Eventually, these social and legal protests desegregated municipal pools throughout the North, but desegregation rarely led to meaningful interracial swimming. When black Americans gained equal access to municipal pools, white swimmers generally abandoned them for private pools. Desegregation was a primary cause of the proliferation of private swimming pools that occurred after the mid-1950s. By the 1970s and 1980s, tens of millions of mostly white middle-class Americans swam in their backyards or at suburban club pools, while mostly African and Latino Americans swam at inner-city municipal pools.

Jeff Wiltse, Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America

FREEDOM RIDERS

- ▶ In 1961, the **Congress of Racial Equality** (CORE) sent Black and white riders to test adherence to a court order barring segregation on buses.
- ▶ In May, a group of white supremacists attacked one bus and burned it to the ground.
- ▶ Widespread violence against them gained international attention, but JFK asked for a **"cooling off"** and called the riders **"unpatriotic"** for embarrassing the US in the Cold War.



PEOPLE IN MISSISSIPPI ATTACK THE FREEDOM RIDERS

THE BIRMINGHAM CAMPAIGN

- ▶ The SCLC chose **Birmingham**—the most segregated city in America—as the site of a major campaign of creative protest.
- ▶ Their goal was to fill the jails with protesters. King and 50 others were arrested, and while in jail, King issued his **Letter from a Birmingham Jail**, the greatest work of American rhetoric.
- ▶ The Birmingham campaign marked a conscious shift from educating white Americans to create such tension that it could not be ignored.



THE BIRMINGHAM CAMPAIGN

Birmingham would supply the savagery and the sacraments. That savagery was notable even by the standards of the Deep South. Birmingham was widely viewed as the most segregated city in the United States. Racial terrorism was commonplace. The bombing of ordinary black homeowners was so prolific that it yielded nicknames for a neighborhood (Dynamite Hill) and the city (Bombingham). On a whim, members of one of its many Ku Klux Klan affiliates kidnapped a black pedestrian, Edward Aaron, out for a walk with his girlfriend. After they forced him to crawl and choose between death or castration, they emasculated him and doused his bleeding wound with turpentine.... For daring to defy white supremacy, Rev. Charles Billups, was kidnapped and blindfolded, beaten with chains, tied to a tree, and branded on the stomach with the letters KKK.

Jonathan Rieder Gospel of Freedom: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail and the Struggle That Changed a Nation

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

- ▶ With the campaign stalled, the SCLC chose to increase tension by having children march.
- ▶ On May 2, 1963, 7th grade **Gwendolyn Sanders** led her class on a walkout from Parker High School.
- ▶ Birmingham police chief **Bull Connor** used dogs and firehoses on the protesters, shocking the nation and the world. 600 students were arrested.
- ▶ Desegregation came slowly after, but not before 4 young girls were killed in an attack on a church in the city that came to be known as "**Bombingham.**"



THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON

- ▶ The high point of the Civil Rights Movement was the August 1963 **March on Washington**, when over 200,000 marched to the Lincoln Memorial.
- ▶ At that time, it was the largest civil rights protest in history and it forced JFK to bring MLK to the White House to discuss the aims of the movement.

MLK AT THE MARCH



THE CROWD

CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION

▶ The **Civil Rights Act of 1964**

- ▶ protection of voting rights for all Americans
- ▶ opening of public facilities (restaurants, hotels, stores, restrooms) to people of all races
- ▶ a commission to protect equal job opportunities for all Americans.

▶ The **Voting Rights Act of 1965**

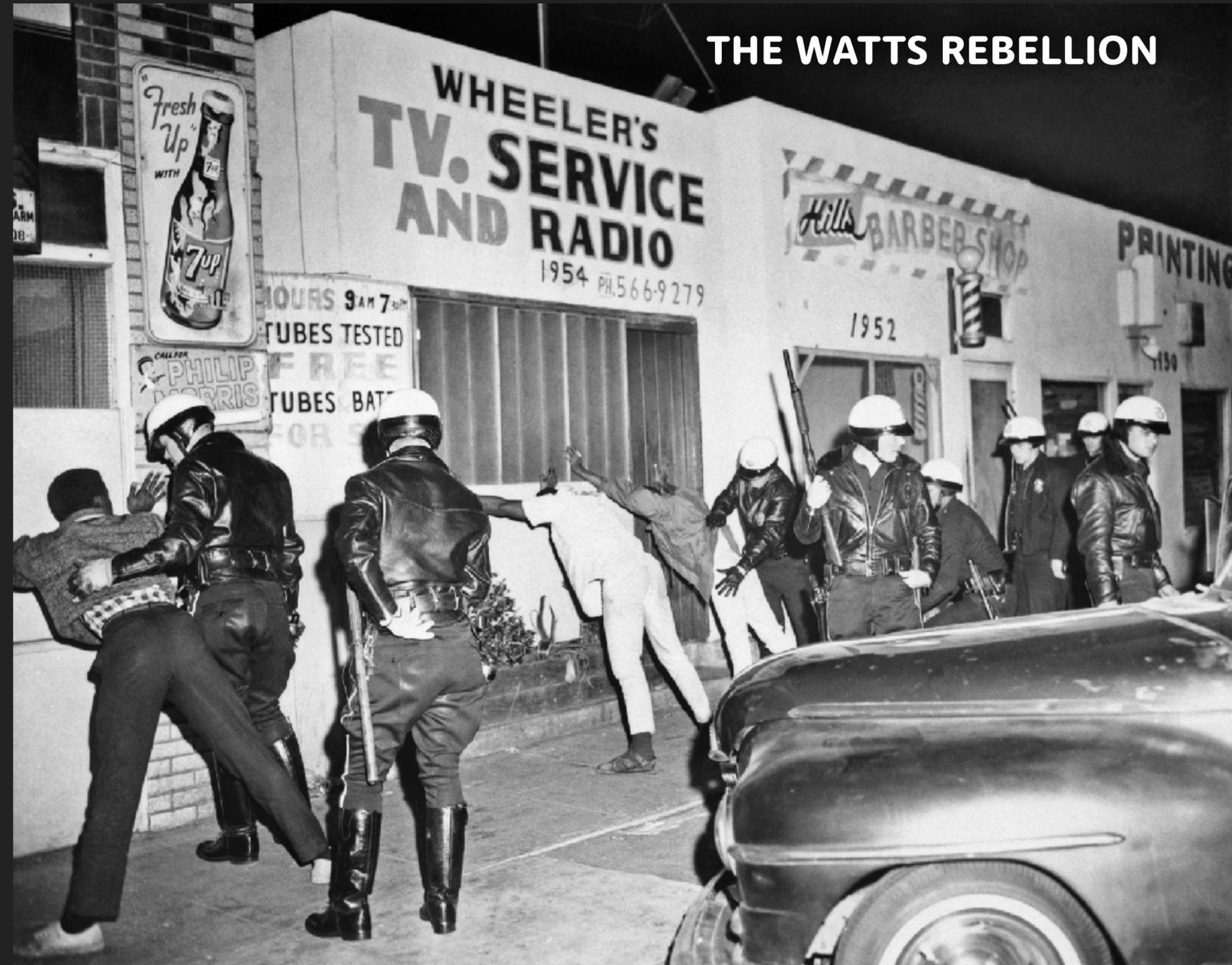
- ▶ Put an end to literacy tests
- ▶ Authorized federal examiners to register voters in areas suspected of denying Black Americans the right to vote
- ▶ Directed the attorney general to take legal action against states that continued to use poll taxes in state elections



SIGNING OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

REBELLION

- ▶ Within a week of the passage of the Voting Rights Act, the **Watts Rebellion** broke out, killing 35 and doing \$35 million in property damage.
- ▶ Chicago, Cleveland, and 40 other American cities had major race conflicts in the summer of 1966.
- ▶ Following the Watts Rebellion, California called the **McCone Commission**, which found "the root causes of the riots to be high unemployment, poor schools, and related inferior living conditions that were endured by African Americans in Watts."
- ▶ Few of their fixes were implemented.



RADICAL CRITIQUES: BLACK POWER

- ▶ Under the leadership of **Stokely Carmichael**, the SNCC shifted to a policy of separatism. He later joins the **Black Panther Party**, founded by **Huey Newton**.
- ▶ The most famous advocate for Black Power was **Malcolm X**, who as a leader of the **Nation of Islam**, spoke against integration and for **Black Nationalism**.
- ▶ After a change of views following his pilgrimage to Mecca, he was assassinated in 1965.



And now you're facing a situation where the young Negro's coming up. They don't want to hear that "turn the-other-cheek" stuff, no. In Jacksonville, those were teenagers, they were throwing Molotov cocktails. Negroes have never done that before. But it shows you there's a new deal coming in. There's new thinking coming in. There's new strategy coming in. It'll be Molotov cocktails this month, hand grenades next month, and something else next month. It'll be ballots, or it'll be bullets. It'll be liberty, or it will be death. The only difference about this kind of death—it'll be reciprocal.

Malcom X, The Ballot or The Bullet Speech 1964

KING SHIFTS LEFT

- ▶ As the Vietnam War raged on and the Great Society programs failed to lift Black Americans out of poverty, King became more radical, offering a critique of the Vietnam War and calling for a **Poor People's Campaign and March**.
- ▶ He argued that a legal end to segregation meant little to those in poverty.
- ▶ By the time of his assassination, King was deeply unpopular in the United States. When asked for their strongest reaction to his death in 1968, **31% of Americans felt he "brought it on himself."**



THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

As I have walked among the desperate, rejected, and angry young men, I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they ask — and rightly so — what about Vietnam? They ask if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government.”

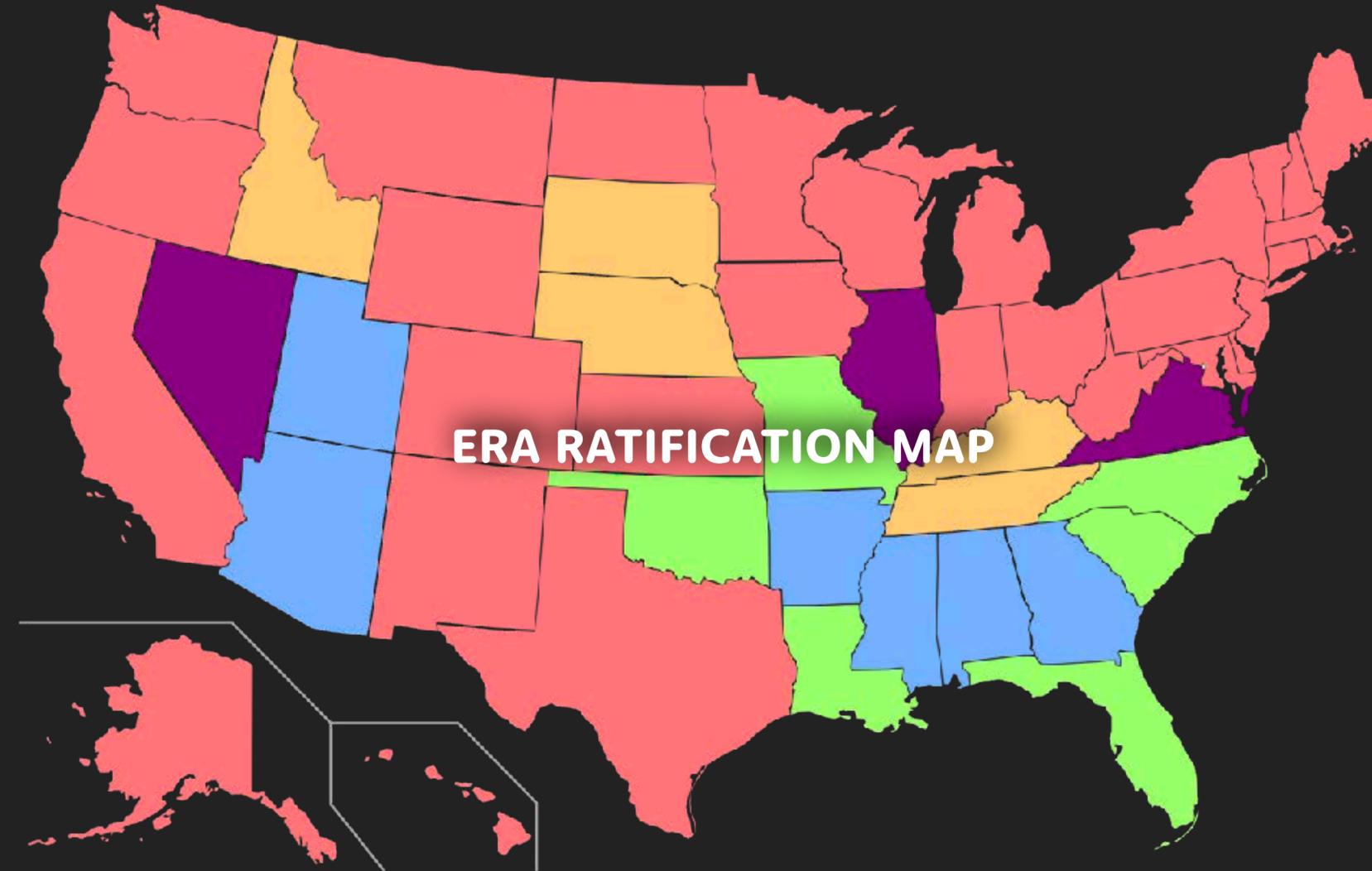
Martin Luther King, Jr. “A Time to Break the Silence” Speech, April, 1967



EXPANDED CIVIL RIGHTS

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

- ▶ A **Second Wave** of American feminism—focused on economic and social equality for American women is kicked off by the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963).
- ▶ “**Women’s Liberation**” became the rallying cry of the movement.
- ▶ **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act** (1964) barred job discrimination based on sex.
- ▶ The **Equal Rights Amendment** was passed by Congress in 1972, but a strong conservative pushback stopped ratification.
- ▶ In 1973, the **Roe v. Wade** decision held that the right to privacy extended to the right to abortion.



- PINK=RATIFIED
- PURPLE=RATIFIED AFTER 1982
- GREEN/BLUE=NOT RATIFIED
- ORANGE=RATIFIED, BUT REVOKED

CHICANO MOVEMENT

- ▶ Addressing the plight of Latino migrants—who had long labored without equal rights or pay in the US—became the focus of the **Chicano Movement**.
- ▶ One of their most important leaders was **Cesar Chavez**, who formed a union for migrant laborers called the **United Farm Workers**.
- ▶ They used calls for boycotts and strikes to increase public awareness and improve the conditions of workers.



CESAR CHAVEZ AND THE UNITED FARM WORKERS

AMERICAN INDIANS

- ▶ While the **Indian Reorganization Act of 1934** had improved the political conditions of American Indians, endemic poverty made reservation life very challenging.
- ▶ Some Indian leaders, led by **Russell Means**, formed the **American Indian Movement** in 1968.
- ▶ In 1972, they occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- ▶ In 1973, they occupied **Wounded Knee** in South Dakota.



FLAG OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT

GAY RIGHTS

- ▶ The spark for the modern LGBTQ+ movement came on Jun 27, 1969, at the **Stonewall Uprising** when people at the club resisted one of the common police raids of "gay clubs."
- ▶ The **Gay Liberation Front** was founded in 1969 and public discussion—and debate—about LGBTQ+ Americans happened for the first time.
- ▶ In 1974, the American Psychological Association stopped identifying homosexuality as a mental illness.



MARSHA JOHNSON

THE WARREN COURT

- ▶ The 1960s saw a dramatic expansion of civil liberties during the era of the **Warren Court**.
- ▶ **Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)** held that states must give indigent people a legal defense.
- ▶ **Miranda v. Arizona (1966)** required police to inform suspects of their rights.
- ▶ **Loving v. Virginia (1967)** struck down miscegenation laws.
- ▶ **Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)** guaranteed the right to use birth control.



THURGOOD MARSHALL



WILLIAM BRENNAN