

OOO JUST A BLACK THING

Civil Rights are not just the concern of African-Americans.

Most groups have struggled in some way for equality in America. Many have found inspiration—or sobering lessons—in the ways that African-Americans waged this battle. And many have joined forces in the struggle for equality.

Native Americans

Native Americans lived in the United States long before others came here, but they saw their fortunes fall as land and freedoms were taken away from them.

In South and Central America, the parts of the New World where Spain and Portugal first established colonies, Native Americans were often mistreated, killed or enslaved.

In North America, the destruction of Native American nations continued as Europeans established colonies and moved westward across the continent. Indians often resisted—sometimes violently through warfare, sometimes diplomatically through peace treaties.

In the early and mid-1800s several American Indian nations like the Cherokees were forced to march to "Indian Territory," now known as Oklahoma. Many people died on that "Trail of Tears."

American Indians were forced onto reservations. Indian youth were forced to study at schools where they were not allowed to speak their own languages or learn about their histories.

In the 1970s and 1980s, inspired by the black civil rights movement, Native Americans created the American Indian Movement and other rights organizations to help preserve Native American culture.



Native Americans took inspiration from the civil rights movement and created the American Indian Movement.

Irish

The Potato Famine drove many Irish to America in the 1840s and 1850s. Here, they found increasing hostility in the form of anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant feelings.

These feelings grew from the belief among other Americans that the United States' government could not be maintained with a large Catholic population because Catholics' main loyalty was to the Pope who headed their church.

In the 1850s, the Know-Nothing Party grew out of a secret New York Society that opposed immigration (the name came from members' habit of saying they "knew nothing" about the group's activities). While the party ultimately failed, the sentiment persisted. Help-wanted ads often said: No Irish Need Apply.

Japanese-Americans and Chinese-Americans

Chinese immigrated to the United States at first to work on the railroads of the late 19th century.

But immigrating proved difficult.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first significant U.S. law to restrict immigration. The law kept Chinese from coming to the United States for 10 years and also kept them from becoming citizens. In 1902, the act was extended.

In 1920, California denied Japanese newcomers the right to own land.

Before World War II, about 127,000 persons of Japanese ancestry lived in the United States. During World War II, after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in December 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt forced

all Japanese-Americans, regardless of citizenship, into 10 prison camps called internment camps.

Roosevelt did not impose similar restrictions on Americans of German or Italian ancestry, even though the United States was fighting Germany and Italy at the time.

The Japanese-Americans who were relocated lost their businesses and homes. Still, some 3,600 Japanese-Americans joined the U.S. military and fought valiantly for their country—just as African-Americans facing Jim Crow laws eagerly joined the fight to defend the United States.

In 1988, U.S. Congress gave each survivor of the Japanese internment camps \$20,000 as payment for their suffering.

Women

Women did not receive the right to vote in this country until 1919—143 years after the U.S. was founded.

To gain that right women sometimes worked with African-Americans.

The first laws established by the American colonies required all voters to be landowners and excluded servants, women and non-whites. Massachusetts, for example, gave the vote only to all male, adult Congregational church members.



Women did not always have the right to vote in this country. The women's suffrage movement did not succeed until 1919.

Civil Rights Timeline (1968-1995)

1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated after addressing striking garbage workers in Memphis, TN.

President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the 1968 Housing Act prohibiting discrimination in sale, rental or lease of housing.

Shirley Chisholm of New York is first black woman elected to U.S. Congress.

1969 James Earl Ray pleads guilty to murdering Martin Luther King and is sentenced to 99 years in prison.

1970 Federal court orders the Internal Revenue Service to tax segregated schools in Mississippi.

Senate extends the Voting Rights Act of 1965 banning literacy tests.

1971 Eight blacks claim the test required to become a federal employee is "culturally and racially discriminatory."

U.S. Supreme Court says employers cannot use job tests that discriminate against blacks if those tests are not related to the work.

1978 Unita Blackwell, founding member of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, becomes the first black woman mayor in the history of Mississippi in city of Mayersville. She had once been denied to vote there.

1980 U.S. Supreme Court rules that intentional discrimination must be proven in order to declare a local election unconstitutional.

1983 President Ronald Reagan approves law making Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a federal holiday

Vanessa Williams is crowned first black Miss America

Guion S. Bluford Jr. becomes the first black American astronaut in space

