

KEY

Throughout American history, various groups of citizens have fought for rights that the American **constitution** gave them. The civil rights movement in the United States is about the fight of African Americans. Because of their **skin** color, they did not have the same rights that white people did for a long time. This injustice towards African Americans led to a time of social unrest. In the 1950's and 1960's, blacks rose up to fight against the social systems and authorities that had taken these rights away from them. Many whites supported their **campaign**.

After the Civil War (1861-65), slavery was **abolished**, and African Americans were free. However, there was so much prejudice against blacks that laws were passed which **separated** blacks from whites in public and made them second-class **citizens**.

The modern civil rights movement began in the 1950s. In 1955, a black woman in Alabama, Rosa Parks, **refused** to give her seat on a bus to a white man. For this act of protest, Parks was **arrested**. Blacks no longer wanted to "sit at the back of the bus," and started a **boycott** of the bus system. They chose a young minister, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to lead their protest.

The Montgomery boycott was very important for African Americans. It **encouraged** them to protest for civil rights in other cities as well. Dr. King spoke out on radio and television programs and urged blacks to take part in non-violent protests.

On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 Americans of all **races** gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Their goal was to urge the government to take action against racial **discrimination** and segregation. At this event, Dr. King surprised the nation with his famous "*Have a Dream*" speech.

On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson **signed** the Civil Rights Act. It forbade discrimination based on a person's race, color, national origin, religious **beliefs**, or sex. It **protected** every citizen's right to use public **facilities**, get employment, and to vote in elections.