NAACP and The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Juliet Sturge and Amber Mascarenas
Founding in the early 20th century

- The NAACP, or National Association for the advancement of Colored People, was **established on February 12, 1909** following a race riot in Springfield in 1908.
- It is America’s largest and oldest civil rights organization.
- It was a racial and religiously integrated organization from the very beginning.
  - Early members included WEB Du Bois, Mary White Ovington, Joel and Arthur Spignam, Mary McLeod Bethune, and famous reformers of the era Lincoln Steffens and Jane Addams.
Founding in the early 20th century

- Its purpose was to “secure for all people the rights guaranteed in the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments of the United States Constitution, which promised an end to slavery, the equal protection of the law, and universal adult male suffrage.”
- The NAACP grew quickly
  - Membership rose from 9,000 in 1909 to approx. 500,000 at the end of WWII
  - Offices were mostly opened in Northern cities but began to open in the South as well
- One of its prime areas of advocacy being the fight against lynching
  - Also lobbying for civil rights legislation
  - And the decades long legal battle against segregation and discrimination in education
Impact of Walter White

- He had blonde hair and blue eyes however, a fraction of his ancestry was African American.
- Served as an American civil rights activist and a spokesman for African Americans.
- Became the executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
- His main objective was to abolish lynching:
  - To put to death, especially by hanging, by mob action and without legal authority.
- His work in the NAACP decreased the number of lynchings and change the public climate.
Impact of Charles Hamilton Houston

- “The Man Who Killed Jim Crow”
- Became the Dean of the Howard University Law School
- Captured the attention of Walter White and was hired as special counsel to the NAACP
- A black lawyer who helped play a role in getting rid of the Jim Crow laws and helped train future Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall
- Played a role in almost every civil rights case before the Supreme Court between 1930 and Brown V. Board of Education (1954)
- He dedicated his life to freeing people from “the bonds” of racism
Impact of Thurgood Marshall

- Thurgood Marshall was a U.S. Supreme Court Justice and civil rights activist
- His mentor, Charles Houston, taught him to defeat racial discrimination through the use of existing law
- He served as legal counsel for the NAACP and helped guide the litigation that destroyed Jim Crow segregation
- Was the Nation’s first African American justice
- Marshall strongly supported upholding individual rights, expanding civil rights, and limiting the scope of criminal punishment
- In 1954 he got the case he had been waiting for, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, declared unconstitutional racial segregation in American public schools
Impact of the LDF

- The Legal Defense Fund is the country’s first civil and human rights law firm
- It was founded in 1940 by Thurgood Marshall
- The mission of the LDF has been to achieve racial justice, equality and an inclusive society
- During the 50’s LDF was forced to sue hundreds of school districts across the country to uphold Brown v. Board of Education
- LDF continues to fight against racial inequality
  - Today it goes by “The Legal Defense and Educational Fund”
The March on Washington

- The NAACP was one of primary organizer so of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963
- Approx. 250,000 people gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. in wake of violent attacks on civil right sin Birmingham, Alabama
The March on Washington

- Its goal was to draw attention to the challenges and inequalities faced by African American 100 years after emancipation.
- President Kennedy met with civil rights leaders before the march and tried to dissuade them from going forward with march.
  - “We want success in the Congress, not just a big show at the Capitol.”
The March on Washington

- Kennedy ended up endorsing the March albeit reluctantly
  - He tasked his brother and attorney general, Robert, with making sure security precautions were taken with the organizers
- The leaders decided to end the march at the Lincoln Memorial instead of the Capitol to ensure that members of Congress would not feel as if they were under siege
- Other than the marchers, 3,000 members of the press covered the event
The March on Washington

- Speakers included A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, NAACP president Roy Wilkins, John Lewis of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), civil rights veteran Daisy Lee Bates and actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee.
  - The march also featured musical performances from the likes of Marian Anderson, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan and Mahalia Jackson.

- Last to speak was Martin Luther King Jr. He delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech which went on to become one of the most famous speeches of the civil rights movement and of human history.
The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
SNCC and voter registration

- During the college student lunch counter sit ins, the [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Student_Nonviolent_Coordinating_Committee) (SNCC) was established in April 1960
- In areas, mostly the rural south, that hadn’t been reached previously by the efforts of major civil rights organizations, the SNCC became the leading force for voter registration
- The members and leaders put themselves in danger by going to areas where the KKK and violent suppression of African Americans were rampant
The "Black Belt" were the rural areas in the Deep South in which African Americans comprised a majority of the population. Because the cities like Montgomery, Little Rock, Greensboro, and Nashville were easily accessible to press, publicity was able to enact change. This was not possible in rural Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia where publicity would not help register African American voters or elevate their political and economic power.
SNCC impact in the “Black Belt”

- The volunteers would often live in the communities they were operating in
  - They would constantly face violence
  - But they overcame residents’ fears of outsiders
    - They would listen and follow advice
    - Learn the local customs

- African Americans who offered a bed or meal to the volunteers or expressed any interest in voting would face severe economic and physical reprisals, including death

- But still the campaigns of “One Man, One Vote” continued
Ella Baker’s impact on the SNCC

- A 56-year-old veteran civil rights activist, who was a committed and gifted community organizer who served as an NAACP staffer
  - Called the Mother of the Civil Rights Movement
- She prompted the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) to sponsor the Southwide Youth Leadership Conference
  - On April 15-17 at Shaw University
  - 200 college students attended
- She traveled to communities in the South to recruit members to the NAACP and became the Director of Branches in 1943
Ella Baker’s impact on the SNCC

- In 1957 she joined the SCLC as its first staff member.
- Leaders of the SCLC, including Martin Luther King, Jr., wanted the SNCC to be the youth wing of the SCLC.
  - Baker, however, wanted the Civil Rights Movement to be led from the below, not from the top.
  - She thought that the energy and optimism of the college students who had led sit-ins in 1960.
    - And so, the SNCC became an independent organization.
Impact of John Lewis

- It was at the American Baptist Theological Institute and Fisk University where Lewis became involved in sit-ins at lunch counters and other segregated places.
- In 1961 Lewis was participating in the Freedom Rides.
  - Which fought against the segregation of Southern interstate bus terminals.
  - Lewis was beaten and arrested.
    - One of many experiences.
- In 1963 he was elected as the chairman of the SNCC and held the position until 1966.
- Played a big part in the March on Washington.
  - Part of “Big Six”: Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, A. Phillip Randolph, Roy Wilkins, and Whitney Young.
Impact of John Lewis

- In 1970 Lewis became the Director of the Voter Education Project.
- In 1981 he won a seat on the Atlanta City Council.
- Since 1986 he has been representing Georgia’s 5th district in the House of Representatives.
  - He is one of the most respected members of Congress.
  - In office he has called for healthcare reform, measures to fight poverty, and improvement of education.
- He has also overseen many renewals to the Voting Rights Act.
- He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the NAACP’s Spingarn Medal and the sole John F. Kennedy "Profile in Courage Award" for Lifetime Achievement.
Stokely Carmichael

- A civil rights activist who became chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)
  - In 1968 the “N” was changed to “National” and within two years, the SNCC ceased to exist and was superseded by the BPP
- On June 16, 1966, Carmichael gave a speech in which he coined the term “Black Power” after the “Walk Against Fear”
  - The walk was done by the first black student, James Meredith, at University of Mississippi
  - The walk was from Memphis Tennessee to Jackson Mississippi, however Meredith was shot and could not continue, so the SNCC took over
  - Carmichael said Black Power was: "A call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations."
The Black Panther Party (BPP)
The Black Panther Party (BPP)

- The Black Panther Party was founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in October 1966
  - Originally called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense
- The party was founded in wake of the assassination of Malcolm X and after police shot and killed a black teen named Matthew Johnson
- The original purpose of the party was to patrol African American neighborhoods to protect residents from acts of police brutality
- They also engaged in acts of community service
  - They set up free breakfast programs, medical clinics, and after-school programs
  - Helped them gain support of black communities
The Black Panther Party (BPP)

- The party membership exceeded 2,000 at its height and it operated chapters in several major American cities.
- PBB eventually developed into a Marxist revolutionary group that called for the arming of all African Americans.
- As the party began to grow, it drew the attention of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover who began a counter-intelligence program known as COINTELPRO.
  - It was meant to neutralize the Black Panthers and other black nationalist “hate groups.”
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