

07.03: Objective

How Did the Civil Rights Movement Inspire Other Movements?



Martin Luther King, Jr., and his wife Coretta Scott King lead a march for voting rights from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1965.

African Americans were not the only people to demand equal rights in the 1960s. The message of Dr. Martin Luther King inspired other groups to publicize and seek their own civil rights—chiefly women, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans.

In this lesson, you will learn about these other social movements and the characteristics they shared.

You will use the information to complete a chart outlining their goals, methods, and successes. You will submit this chart and a reflection piece at the end of the lesson.

Objective 07.03 Minority Rights

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain the advancements made in the Women's Rights Movement
- examine similarities between social movements
- examine artistic responses to social issues and new ideas

07.03 Minority Rights: Social Movements

What Did the Various Social Movements Have in Common?

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s is famous for its sit-ins, boycotts, and marches. Other social movements of the era used these strategies as well. Women marched in Washington, D.C., and other cities for equal rights. Native Americans occupied property they argued was theirs by law and treaty. Hispanic American farmers used strikes and boycotts to protest working conditions and low pay.

Movements like these had specific goals. Often the participants were trying to gain legal rights for one group, but their actions also benefitted others. For example, the victory of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not only benefit African Americans. Title III of the act prohibited segregation and discrimination in public places based on "race, color, religion, or national origin." Title VII on employment practices included "sex" in that list, which prevented discrimination against working women.

The social movements of the 1960s focused on extending protection of basic rights to minority groups. Many times, participants supported more than one cause. For example, Fannie Lou Hamer, a prominent figure in the Civil Rights Movement, was also part of the women's movement. She supported the National Women's Political Caucus, or NWPC. Founded in 1971, the organization aims to help women who believe in gender equality to win election to Congress and pass related legislation.

07.03 Minority Rights: Feminism

What Is Feminism?

After World War II, women were marrying younger and having more children. In the 1950s, the prevailing view was that a woman's place was at home, rearing children and tending to her husband. Even female college graduates were often expected to make "home" their career. Yet increasing numbers of women sought college degrees and found work outside the home. The birthrate began to drop in 1957.

Did You Know?

Have you heard of the Gray Panthers? Maggie Kuhn founded the organization in 1970 with several other people who were retiring from careers in social activism. They value honoring the potential of mature Americans. The Gray Panthers aim to address a variety of issues facing U.S. society through multi-generational collaboration, especially health care and civil rights.

Most working women had low-paying service jobs, earning only about 60 cents for every dollar a man earned for the same work. Though they represented half the nation's population, very few women served in government. In 1960, only 17 of the 535 members of Congress were women. Television, magazines, and other cultural media showed women as happiest when

taking care of their families and homes. Working women were often portrayed as unhappy and even foolish.

All of this began to change in the 1960s. **Feminism** is the belief that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to men. The Feminist Movement or Women's Liberation Movement emerged out of frustration with women's status in society. The movement had success through changes in laws and the availability of social services.

Groups in many communities established shelters for abused women and rape crisis centers. Examine the timeline below by selecting the images to see milestones in this "second" women's rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

1951 – Poetry: Though the mainstream media portrayed women as happy homemakers, many artists were expressing a different opinion. As was common in many social movements, art expressed feminism as well as political action. Adrienne Rich was a prominent feminist poet. Her poem "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," published in 1951, on the surface is about a woman who is knitting, but the deeper meaning is about her struggle with what she sees as the monotony of her daily life. The poem relates to the discontent Friedan described in *The Feminine Mystique*.

"The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand."
--Adrienne Rich (1929-2012)

Image: A black-and-white photograph of Adrienne Rich.

1961 - President's Commission on the Status of Women: President John F. Kennedy signed an executive order that required government contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color or national origin." The order also established a committee to study and make recommendations on the status of women in American society. Two years later the commission published its report. Its recommendations led to legislation aimed at prohibiting discrimination based on gender. For example, the 1963 Equal Pay Act required equal pay for men and women for the same work.

Image: A black-and-white photograph of President John F. Kennedy walking with Eleanor Roosevelt down a corridor.

1963 – Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique*: Largely credited with sparking a new women's rights movement in the United States, Friedan's book sought to explain widespread discontent among American women. The photo shows Friedan in 1978, still active in the women's rights movement.

Image: A black-and-white photograph shows Betty Friedan under a banner that says "RATIFY THE ERA" with a group of women behind her.

1964 – Civil Rights Act of 1964: Famous for its role in the African American Civil Rights Movement, the 1964 Civil Rights Act also was a milestone for women. It prohibited discrimination in employment by gender as well as race, except when an employer could show that gender was a "bona fide" requirement of the position. Yet the agency set up to

enforce this legislation focused mainly on the race portion, frustrating many women.

Image: A black-and-white photograph of a woman office worker using a Triumph typewriter.

1966 – NOW: Betty Friedan forms the National Organization for Women (NOW) with about 300 other women and serves as its first president. Its first goal was to force government to enforce the employment section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The group challenged many different companies in court, accusing them of gender discrimination. By 1974 NOW had about 40,000 members, 175,000 by 1988, and over a half million in 2012.

Image: A black-and-white photograph of the Official logo of the National Organization for Women (NOW), an American women's rights organization founded in 1966.

1967 – Affirmative Action: President Lyndon B. Johnson issues an executive order to enforce section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act applying to women and employment. "The contractor will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, color, religion, sex or national origin."

—President Lyndon B. Johnson
Executive Order 11375

Image: A black-and-white photograph of President Lyndon Baines Johnson addresses the nation on his first Thanksgiving Day television program, broadcast from the executive offices of the White House.

1967 ERA Gains Support: NOW increases support for an Equal Rights Amendment, or ERA, to the Constitution. The ERA originated just a few years after the passage of women's suffrage and was submitted often to Congress, where it finally passed in 1972. It reads:

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Not all women's rights activists supported the ERA, fearing that its ratification would undermine laws that aimed at protecting women.

Image: An Equal Rights Advocates (ERA) protest and march in Washington, with the Capitol Building in the background and a banner that reads: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex".

1972 – Congress Passes ERA: Congress finally passed the ERA thanks to the efforts of NOW and other women's rights activists, including Gloria Steinem, shown here with Congresswoman Bella Abzug. However, the amendment cannot become an official part of the Constitution unless at least three-quarters of the states ratify it. Thirty-five states approved the ERA by 1977, just shy of the 38 needed. It remains a controversial issue today.

Image: A black-and-white photo of Gloria Steinem with Congresswoman Bella Abzug 1972

1972 – Phyllis Schlafly: Phyllis Schlafly, a college-educated mother of five, began a campaign against ratification of the ERA, called "STOP ERA." "STOP" stood for "Stop Taking Our Privileges." The photo shows Schlafly at left at a debate in Chicago with Betty Wood and Betty Friedan. She emerged as a powerful voice against the ERA, raising concerns that the ERA would lead to the loss of certain benefits for women. Examples include income benefits for widows and exemption from military draft. As of 2012, she was still a speaker on many political issues, including the ERA.

Image: The black-and-white photo shows Phyllis Schlafly at left at a debate in Chicago with Betty Wood in the center and Betty Friedan on the right.

1972 – Music: Helen Reddy was a singer who felt like no songs of the day captured the true feelings of women. She co-wrote "I Am Woman" with Ray Burton, a song that became the anthem for the Women's Rights Movement. In the photo, Reddy accepts a Grammy award for the song.

"I am strong, I am invincible, I am woman."

Image: A black-and-white photo of Helen Reddy at the Grammy Awards

1972 – Title IX: Title IX, a section of education-related law, prohibits discrimination based on gender in education programs funded by government. It did not name school sports programs specifically, but that is what many Americans associate the law with today.

Image: A black-and-white photo of a girl in uniform playing baseball.

1973 – *Roe v. Wade*: The Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* rules that a woman has a legal right to an abortion. It remains one of the court's most controversial decisions, even among women's rights advocates.

Image: As many as 500,000 people came to Washington, DC to march in support of pro-choice reproductive rights. A rally was held on the Mall, where actors like Susan Sarandon and Julianne Moore spoke, as well as activists like Gloria Steinem.

1973 – Battle of the Sexes: Famous women's tennis champion Billie Jean King accepts a challenge to play against former men's champion Bobby Riggs in 1973. The 55-year-old Riggs claimed that women's tennis was inferior and that he could beat any top female player. In the match Americans called "The Battle of the Sexes," The 29-year-old King beat Riggs in all three rounds and took home a \$100,000 prize. She said, "I thought it would set us back 50 years if I didn't win that match. It would ruin the women's tour and affect all women's self-esteem." Many Americans credit King and her win with increasing respect for women's sports.

Image: A black-and-white photo of American tennis player, Billie Jean King taking a shot.

1978 – Pregnancy Discrimination Act: Congress amends the 1964 Civil Rights Act to prohibit discrimination in employment of women based on pregnancy or childbirth.

Image: A black-and-white photo of a woman holding a baby and a blanket in her arms

07.03 Minority Rights: United Farm Workers

Who Are the United Farm Workers?

In the first half of the 20th century, instability in Mexico and demand for labor in the southwestern United States drew many Mexicans into the U.S. for work. Even though the majority of these immigrants became U.S. citizens, they still faced discrimination and even violence, like other minority groups. Mexican Americans lacked representation in government, were unlikely to earn a high school degree, and suffered an unemployment rate twice that of non-Hispanic whites. They lacked access to better schools, sanitation, police protection, and skilled jobs, often based on skin color and language



Cesar Chavez

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During WWII, the Bracero Program drew more Mexican workers into the United States to fill a need for physical laborers. It ended in 1964, but legal and illegal immigration continued to grow. Problems increased when prejudice against illegal immigrants began affecting legal residents and citizens as well. Efforts to stop illegal immigration failed, and U.S. businesses continued underpaying both legal and illegal immigrant workers.

In 1962, Cesar Chavez began to organize farm workers to demand better pay and enforcement of California's labor laws. The Delano Grape Strike began in 1965 and lasted for five years. During the strike, workers in the grape industry walked out on the growers and began a boycott of grape products produced in the region.

Their effort drew support from prominent leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King and Senator Robert Kennedy. Millions of Americans and Canadians showed support for "La Causa" (the farm workers' cause) by joining the boycott. In 1966, Chavez led a march from Delano, California, to the state capital, Sacramento. At one point, Chavez went to jail for continuing a lettuce boycott, but he stayed true to his commitment to nonviolent protest. During this time, he also protested an Arizona law that aimed to prevent organized labor unions.



This large mural in San Francisco, California celebrates the life and work of Cesar Chavez (1927-1993) in the name of farm workers.

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Chavez's labor union eventually took the name United Farm Workers (UFW) and included not only those of workers of Mexican descent but also Filipino Americans and other Hispanic Americans working as farm laborers. The UFW signed contracts with different companies agreeing to better working conditions for various groups of workers across the country. Even citrus growers in Florida who worked for Minute Maid soda, benefitted from these contracts.

The UFW still operates today. Chavez's work led Hispanic American political groups to form throughout the American Southwest. Mexican Americans and other Hispanic Americans still face many economic and social difficulties. However, their political influence has increased since the 1960s.

07.03 Minority Rights: Native American Power

What Was the Native American Power Movement?



This photograph shows a home on the Navajo Reservation, the largest in the United States. In the 1960s, the people there suffered extreme poverty. The reservation has a government that is semi-independent from the United States.

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Image Quest 2012

In the mid-20th century, Native Americans were still the poorest minority group in the United States. In 1953, Congress passed a law that did two things.

First, it ended the status of Native Americans as wards of the United States, meaning they were no longer under the nation's special protection but were citizens like everyone else.

Second, it required ending the reservation system and special services to Native American tribes. States could take and sell reserved lands without tribal consent. This second part further placed Native Americans in poverty as developers bought former reservation lands. Congress also approved a voluntary relocation program to urban areas that would assist Native Americans with finding jobs and places to live.

Native American life expectancy was only about 44 years. As a group, they suffered much higher rates of death from treatable conditions. Two out of every five Native Americans lived in poverty, many cases extreme where basic sanitation and solid shelter were nonexistent. However, like other groups, Native Americans organized and demanded change.

During World War II, Native Americans formed an intertribal group they called the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). They opposed the 1953 laws, including the relocation program, describing them as an attempt to kill off their people. The NCAI as well as other groups that formed later would seek legal means to prevent the taking of lands and land rights. Some groups were more militant and used the phrase "Red Power" or "Native American Power."



The photograph shows a Native American man standing on the roof of a former Alcatraz prison building in 1970.

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Universal Images Group/Image Quest 2012

The most famous group is probably the American Indian Movement, or AIM. It was responsible for a 1972 march called the "Trail of Broken Treaties" that ended with an occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to bring attention to their cause. Two hundred people armed with weapons occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973, the site of the 1890 massacre of Sioux Indians.

Their efforts did grab the attention of Congress, leading to laws protecting Native American rights in education, health care, and child custody rules. The Supreme Court decision *Menominee Tribe v. United States* in 1968 ruled that states could not take away Native American rights to hunt and fish on lands they received through past treaty agreements.

Native Americans tested the ruling through demonstrations, marches, and "fish-ins." In 1969, about 200 Native Americans took control of Alcatraz Island, the abandoned site of a former prison off the coast of California for nearly 19 months. They argued that the land was rightfully theirs according to a treaty signed by Abraham Lincoln that said Native Americans could reclaim lands that the U.S. government had abandoned. The activists offered to buy the island from the U.S. government for "24 dollars in glass beads and red cloth." Eventually, the government cut off all power to the island and then removed those who refused to leave.

07.03 Minority Rights: Review

Minority Rights

You should now be familiar with the efforts of several minority groups to achieve equal rights in the 1960s and 1970s.

Review your notes and the information in the lesson. Did you print or save your notes and place them in a safe location?

Now it's time to practice your learning.

Interactive

True/False Quiz - Text Version

Cesar Chavez was a leader of the Native American Power movement.
True or False?

Native Americans took control of Alcatraz from prison officials by force in 1969.
True or False?

The women's movement has called for an Equal Rights Amendment, which has failed to be ratified.
True or False?

Congress has passed legislation that protects women's rights in different areas of life and society.
True or False?

Women's rights activists and other minority group activists used many of the same strategies as the Civil Rights Movement.
True or False?