

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

In 1964, almost 100 years after the end of the Civil War and an end to slavery, African-Americans were still denied all the rights and privileges they were entitled to as American citizens. They were being denied their right to vote. In many public places, there were separate drinking fountains and separate restrooms for African-Americans. Many hotels, restaurants and theaters had “whites only” signs posted. Educational

and employment opportunities were not as good as they were for other people.

After several years of protests and demonstrations by African-Americans, our representatives in the United States Congress recognized that laws were needed to change



this unfairness. They passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and on July 2, President Lyndon Johnson signed it into law. Historians agree that this law was arguably the most important law passed in the 20th century.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 ACCOMPLISHED:

- > The “whites only” signs came down and people of all races were allowed to go to hotels, restaurants and theaters. Sections set aside for African-Americans to sit in on buses, at sports events and other places disappeared.
- > Equal employment opportunities were established not only for

African-Americans, but also for women.

- > Equal opportunities for women in high school and college sports were established.

Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 addressed voting rights, it took another act by Congress to end discrimination in voting.

CIVIL RIGHTS TIMELINE

1865-1870 Passage of the Civil Rights Amendments. The 13th Amendment banned slavery, the 14th Amendment defined citizenship and equal protection of the laws, and the 15th Amendment provided that no man could be denied the right to vote based on “race, color or previous condition of servitude.”

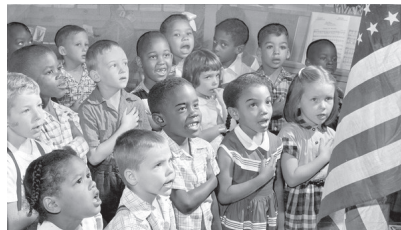
1875 Congress passes Civil Rights Act based on 14th Amendment.

1883 U.S. Supreme Court strikes down the Civil Rights Act of 1875 on the grounds that the Constitution did not extend to private businesses.

1954 The United States Supreme Court announces that segregation in public schools is unconstitutional in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case.

1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

1965 Voting Rights Act of 1965 eliminated literacy tests and poll taxes.



QUIZ YOURSELF!

- 1 Name three ways African-Americans were being discriminated against in 1964.
- 2 What was the name of the legislation passed in 1964 to try and remedy this treatment?
- 3 Which president signed the legislation into law?

ACTIVITIES

- 1 In your newspaper, find articles and pictures showing the many races in your community. How do people of every race in your community contribute to what makes your community a great place to live?
- 2 Visit your local newspaper office or use online archives to find newspapers from July 1948. Research stories about how President Truman desegregated the military.
- 3 What were the Jim Crow laws? What is meant by the term segregation? How did the Jim Crow laws and segregation go against what our nation stands for?
- 4 Learn more on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Movement at <http://civilrightsmuseum.org/learn/educators>, <http://www.lbjlibrary.org>, and http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/civil_rights/background.htm

Missouri Learning Standards:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.10