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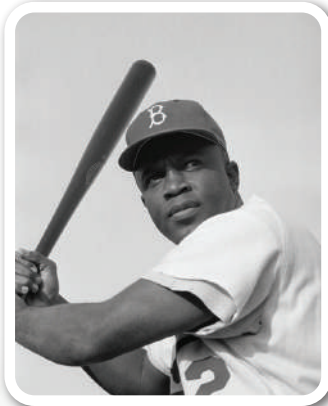
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Toward a More Perfect Union



Reader

Jackie Robinson



Mabel Ping-Hua Lee



Rosa Parks



Silent Sentinels



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Toward a More Perfect Union

Reader



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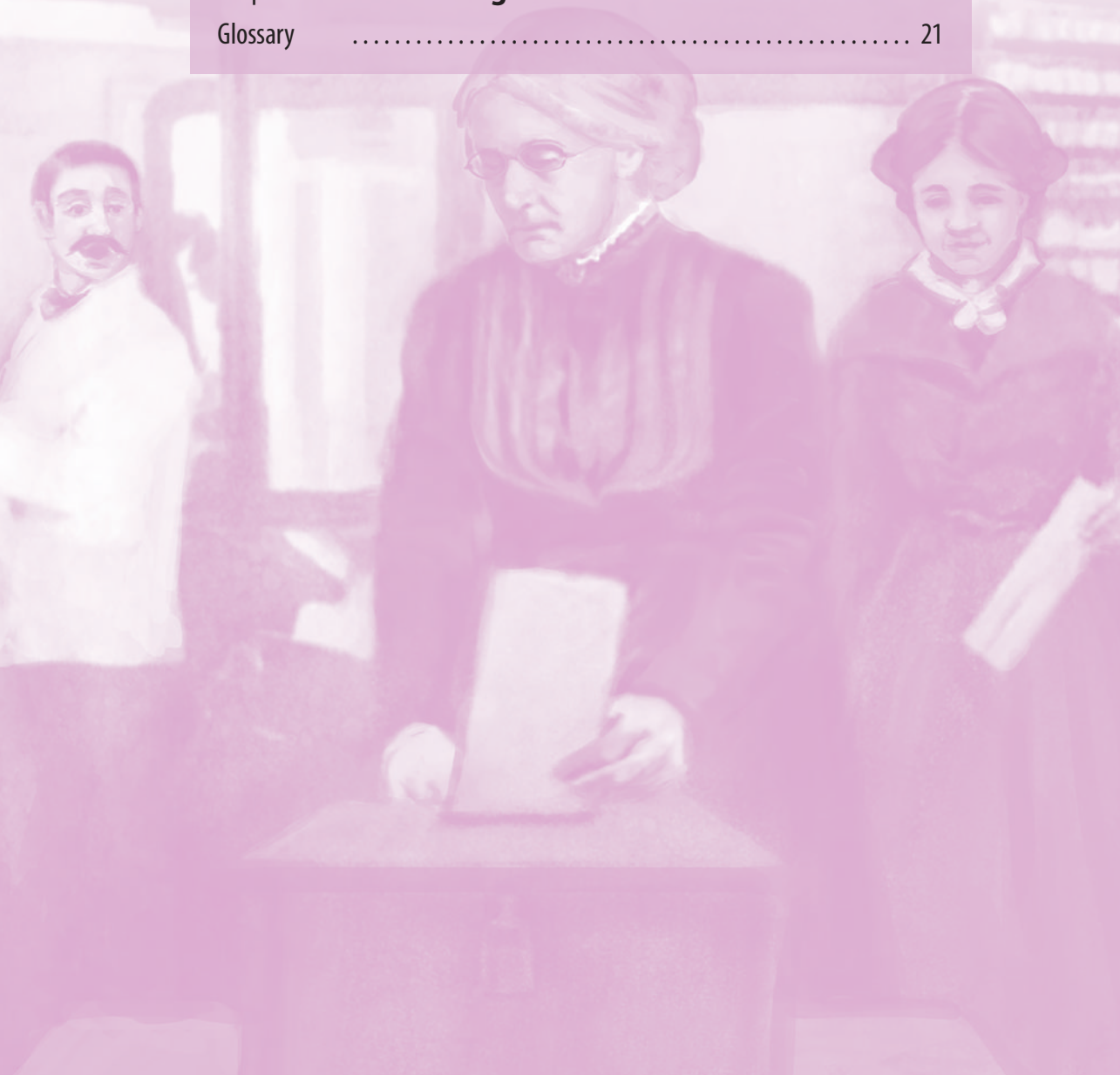
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Toward a More Perfect Union

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Chapter 1

Women's Suffrage

Women Speak Out Sisters Angelina and Sarah Grimké grew up in South Carolina in the early 1800s. At that time, people were legally enslaved in this state. Angelina and Sarah were so against slavery that they left the South.

The Framing Question

How did women gain the right to vote?

In the 1830s, the Grimké sisters began giving talks against the evils of slavery. Many people were shocked by their stories. But it was not what the sisters said that shocked them. It was the fact that these women were speaking to the public at all.

At the time, women were not usually **public figures**. Many people thought women should not be allowed to speak at public meetings.

Vocabulary

public figure, n. a person who is well known or famous



Angelina and Sarah Grimké spoke out against slavery.

Life for women in the early 1800s was very different. In some places in society women lacked **equal rights**. Women also sometimes did not have access to equal education. In those days, most people did not go to school for more than a few years. But a man was more likely to finish high school or go to college than a woman. And when women worked outside their homes, they usually earned very little money.

In most states, when a woman married, everything she owned became the property of her husband. If she worked, her husband was in charge of the money she earned. Women could not vote or hold government **office**. The laws would not be changed unless men voted to change them. In time, men did. But these changes came very slowly. Still, many women, like the Grimké sisters, worked hard for change.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony

Like the Grimké sisters, Elizabeth Cady Stanton hated slavery. She attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840. Women at the **convention** could only sit in the balcony—they could not participate.

Vocabulary

“equal rights”

(phrase) the freedoms and legal protections guaranteed to all citizens

office, n. a position of leadership



At the World Anti-Slavery Convention, women were not allowed in the main audience.

Vocabulary

convention, n. a formal gathering of people for a purpose

At the convention, Stanton met Lucretia Mott. They became friends.

Stanton and Mott wanted to do something about women's rights. They decided to hold their own convention. On July 19, 1848, two hundred women and some men met in Seneca Falls, New York.



People gathered at Seneca Falls to hold a convention on women's rights.

Stanton read aloud a Declaration of Sentiments she had written. The beginning echoed the Declaration of Independence. It said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal." Stanton went on to list fifteen ways that women were treated unequally.

At the end of the Declaration, Stanton demanded that women be given the right to vote. Her friend Lucretia Mott did not agree. She thought that was asking too much too soon.

Only a few newspapers reported on the convention. They thought the demands for women's rights were laughable.



Elizabeth Cady Stanton (left) and Susan B. Anthony (right) founded the National Woman Suffrage Association.

Stanton was not discouraged. She soon met a woman named Susan B. Anthony who agreed with her. They both thought that every human being deserved equal rights. Together they joined the **movement** to end slavery, along with many other people. And after slavery was abolished, Stanton and Anthony continued their work for equal rights for all. They founded the National Woman **Suffrage** Association in 1869. Its goal was to gain the right for women to vote.

Vocabulary

movement, n. a group of people working together for a shared cause

suffrage, n. the right to vote

naturalized, adj. having gained citizenship in a new country

In 1868, Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment. This amendment declared “all persons born or **naturalized** in the United States” to be citizens and protected the right of all male citizens to vote. However, while the amendment granted voting rights to African American men, women were still unable to vote. Susan B. Anthony decided she would vote anyway.



Susan B. Anthony was arrested and stood trial because she voted.

On Election Day in November 1872, she and fifteen other women voted in the election for president of the United States. This was against the law, and they were arrested, but only Anthony had to stand trial.

When the time came for her trial, Anthony was not allowed to speak in her own defense. Her lawyer argued that she had the

Ain't I a Woman?

Sojourner Truth was an African American woman who was also a **reformer**. She had been born into slavery, but in 1827, she ran away with her infant Sophia to a nearby abolitionist family. She could not read or write, but she was a powerful speaker.

Sojourner Truth knew what it meant to be enslaved. She was first enslaved by a Dutch-speaking family in New York. She was bought and sold four different times. Truth had to learn English on her own. She eventually escaped from slavery. The family who helped her bought her freedom for twenty dollars. As a former enslaved woman, Sojourner Truth became an outspoken reformer for abolition and women's rights. Beginning in the 1830s, she spoke to groups about the importance of ending slavery and the need for women's suffrage. Her autobiography, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, was written with Olive Gilbert's help and was published in 1850. As you have learned, Truth could not read or write.

During her lecture tour in 1851, Sojourner Truth was invited to speak at an Akron women's rights conference, where she delivered her famous speech "Ain't I a Woman?" In this speech, she challenged the idea that women were somehow less able than men.



Sojourner Truth spoke powerfully about abolition and women's rights.

Vocabulary

reformer, n. a person who works for reform, or positive change

right to vote because of the Fourteenth Amendment. But the judge decided that she was guilty because women were still not allowed to vote. The judge ordered Anthony to pay a large fine.

Mabel Ping-Hua Lee and Alice Paul

The twentieth century arrived, and women still did not have the right to vote. Women of all backgrounds volunteered their time and energy to work for equality.

One notable activist for women's rights was Mabel Ping-Hua Lee. Lee was born in China and moved to the United States as a child with her family. In 1912, she helped lead a suffrage parade of ten thousand people. In 1914, she published an essay called "The Meaning of Woman Suffrage." She wrote that women's voices were necessary in a democracy.



Mabel Ping-Hua Lee was an activist for women's suffrage in the early twentieth century.

Another important activist for women's rights was Alice Paul. She had grown up attending women's suffrage meetings. In 1912, she became a leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Paul began organizing **demonstrations**. On March 4, 1913, Woodrow Wilson was to be **inaugurated**

Vocabulary

demonstration, n.
a public display of support or opposition

inaugurate, v. to
officially start the term of a public official at a ceremony

as the new president of the United States of America. Paul chose the day before the inauguration events to lead more than five thousand people in a march for women's suffrage in Washington, D.C. She hoped it would get the attention of people all over the country.

Then, in 1917, Alice Paul organized groups of women to **picket** at the White House. They stood on the sidewalk with signs and banners demanding the right to vote. They were not breaking any laws, but police arrested them anyway. Paul and the other women were sent to jail. In jail, they agreed to **protest** their poor treatment.

President Wilson wanted these protests to stop. He urged Congress to give women the right to vote. In 1920, when Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment, they finally did just that.



Alice Paul led thousands of people in a march for women's suffrage.

Vocabulary

picket, v. to stand outside a certain place to show opposition to something

protest, v. to say or do something to show disagreement



The women who picketed the White House were called the Silent Sentinels.

Despite the new law, many women of color were still discouraged or even prevented from voting. Both Alice Paul and Mabel Ping-Hua Lee continued to fight for women's rights. It took decades after the Nineteenth Amendment was passed for the voting rights of women of color to be protected throughout the United States.

PRIMARY SOURCE: EXCERPT FROM THE DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS (1848)

In 1848, a group of activists met in Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss women's suffrage and how to obtain it. It has become known as the Seneca Falls Convention. They put together a Declaration of Sentiments to show their views.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations [offenses] on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to [vote].

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice. . . .

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns. . . .

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but [little pay]. . . .

He has denied her the [opportunities] for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her. . . .

Source: Adapted from Report of the Woman's Rights Convention, held at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19th and 20th, 1848.



Chapter 2

The Civil Rights Movement

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness Many laws and documents in the United States were written to support the belief that everyone deserves **civil rights**. However, fully equal rights were denied to many of Americans for centuries.

The Framing Question

How did the Civil Rights Movement end legal segregation in the United States?

Vocabulary

civil rights, n. the things that the citizens of a country are allowed to say and do, based on the laws of that country



For many years, separate water fountains and restrooms were assigned to people of color.

Segregation

Slavery was outlawed in the United States in the 1860s. This did not mean that African Americans were treated equally after that. **Segregation** became the law in many places around the country, especially in the South. Unfair laws known as “Jim Crow” laws kept Black people separate from white people in many public spaces. People of different races were not allowed to eat in the same restaurants or attend the same schools. Local swimming pools, new housing, and other things were reserved for white people only. African American people were also often prevented from voting. And because they could not vote, they could not choose officials who might pass new laws. Segregation was legal in the United States for more than seventy years.

Vocabulary

segregation, n. the act of keeping people separate, usually on the basis of race

Jackie Robinson

Professional sports were segregated, too. African American baseball players and white baseball players did not play together. This changed because of a man named Jackie Robinson.

Jackie Robinson was born in 1919 in Georgia. As a boy, he was a talented athlete. He played football, basketball, baseball, and tennis, and he ran track, too. Growing up, Robinson faced **discrimination**. When he was an adult, he became an officer in the U.S. Army. On one occasion, he was ordered to sit at the back

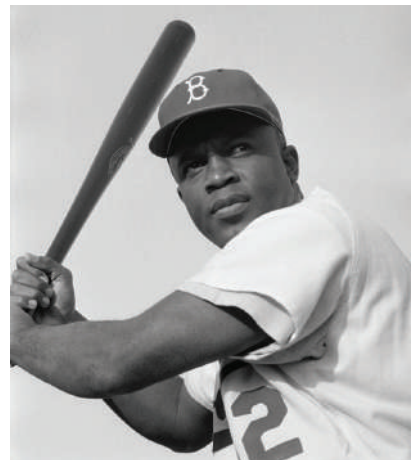
Vocabulary

discrimination, n. the unfair treatment of people because of something they cannot change

of a military bus, away from the white soldiers. Robinson refused. He knew that the color of his skin should not be a reason or excuse to treat him unfairly.

When Jackie Robinson left the army, he played baseball for the Kansas City Monarchs, an all-African American professional team. The president of the Brooklyn Dodgers, an all-white professional team, saw Robinson play. He wanted Robinson to play for the Dodgers. Making this happen would not be easy. But Robinson would become the first Black athlete to play Major League Baseball. On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson played his first game for the Dodgers. His uniform number was 42. Thousands of fans were there to see the game.

To begin with, many of the players and the fans were cruel and unkind to Robinson. They called him names and did not support him. But Robinson ignored them and played his very best. His determination on the field and off the field despite hard circumstances made him a successful player. Because of this, he changed many minds and in the end, he changed baseball forever.



Jackie Robinson was the first African American person to play on a Major League team. He became the first African American player to be included in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks was born in 1913 in Alabama. When she was a girl, she went to a school that was just for African American children. It was an old, one-room schoolhouse. It did not have enough supplies for all the children. It only held classes for five months each year. Parks noticed that buses took white children to a new school nearby.

Rosa Parks lived in Montgomery, Alabama, as an adult. She rode the city bus to and from work. Back then, bus drivers could tell African American passengers to give up their seats to white passengers. One evening, in 1955, all the seats on the bus were full. Some white people were left standing. The bus driver told all the African American passengers to get up. All of them did—except for Rosa Parks. The bus driver asked her one more time to stand up, and she said, “I don’t think I should have to stand up.” Before long, a police officer came and arrested Parks.

African American people in Montgomery decided to show their support for Rosa Parks. They protested by walking instead of riding the buses. Some white people supported the **boycott**, too. It lasted more than a year. Without passengers, the city couldn’t afford to run the buses anymore.



Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus.

Vocabulary

boycott, v. to refuse to buy a product or use a service out of protest

The U.S. Supreme Court decided in 1956 that it was against the law to make African American passengers give up their seats on public transit. Rosa Parks's actions helped start the **Civil Rights Movement**. Rosa was one of the first people to take a stand for civil rights. But she was far from the last.

Vocabulary

Civil Rights

Movement, n.
the name given to the fight to end segregation and discrimination against African Americans in the United States

Ruby Bridges

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court, in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, ruled that segregation in public schools was against the Constitution. This meant that it was illegal for schools to separate students by race. However, across the South, many white people resisted this ruling. In 1960, in Louisiana, a federal court ordered that all of its schools must be desegregated. And on November 14, 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges walked into the history books as the first Black child to attend an all-white elementary school in New Orleans.

Although this was a great step forward, Ruby Bridges had to be guarded by U.S. deputy marshals as she went to and from school. Angry crowds gathered outside to protest desegregation. All but one teacher refused to teach her. Teacher Barbara Henry sat with Bridges for a full year, teaching her and supporting her. Through all of this, Ruby Bridges was incredibly brave.



Ruby Bridges being escorted into school

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, in the 1930s. As an adult, he became a church minister. He is called Dr. King because he earned a special degree called a doctorate. Dr. King wanted to end the unfair treatment of people of color and to replace it with legal equality.

Dr. King took a job at a church in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1954. When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus, he helped organize the Montgomery bus boycott. He realized that peaceful protests could make great changes happen. King was inspired by books he read by another leader who believed that violence should never be used when fighting for human rights. That man was Mohandas Gandhi. He had used **civil disobedience**, a form of peaceful protest, to help India gain independence from Great Britain.



Dr. King was a church minister.

Vocabulary

civil disobedience, n.
the refusal to follow certain laws as a form of peaceful protest

King became one of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. He did this even though he knew he was putting himself and his family in danger. There were many people who were angry and did not agree with the changes he and others were working to achieve. Even when faced with angry people, Dr. King said that those involved in the Civil Rights Movement must remain peaceful.

Dr. King and other ministers brought together members of African American churches throughout the South. They set out to register African Americans in the South to vote. They also hoped to bring about change through elections.

The Civil Rights Movement grew rapidly. Black people living in southern states began to hold sit-ins. Sit-ins were nonviolent protests that involved people sitting in places where they were not allowed.

People rode buses from state to state to protest in towns and cities that allowed segregation. They marched in the streets. Many people were arrested for taking part in these peaceful protests. King was arrested many times.



Sit-ins were peaceful protests against segregated places such as lunch counters.

In 1963, Dr. King led a march on Washington, D.C. More than two hundred thousand people came from across the country to listen to speeches in front of the Lincoln Memorial. King gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech there. In this speech, he said that he dreamed of a day when people would be judged “not . . . by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” The following year, King was given one of the highest awards anyone can achieve: the Nobel Peace Prize.

Because of the work of Dr. King and many others, a law was passed in 1964. The 1964 Civil Rights Act put an end to legal segregation. The following year, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act to protect the right to vote. Tragically, in 1968, King was killed by a gunman in Memphis, Tennessee.

Honoring Dr. King

Immediately after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s death, people began to call for a holiday in his honor. Several states created holidays on his birthday. In 1983, Congress established the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday. The country honors Dr. King on the third Monday in January. In 2011, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial was completed. This monument stands in Washington, D.C.

PRIMARY SOURCE: MARCH ON WASHINGTON (1963)



Glossary

B

boycott, v. to refuse to buy a product or use a service out of protest (16)

C

civil disobedience, n. the refusal to follow certain laws as a form of peaceful protest (18)

civil rights, n. the things that the citizens of a country are allowed to say and do, based on the laws of that country (12)

Civil Rights Movement, n. the name given to the fight to end segregation and discrimination against African Americans in the United States (17)

convention, n. a formal gathering of people for a purpose (4)

D

demonstration, n. a public display of support or opposition (8)

discrimination, n. the unfair treatment of people because of something they cannot change (14)

E

“equal rights” (phrase) the freedoms and legal protections guaranteed to all citizens (4)

I

inaugurate, v. to officially start the term of a public official at a ceremony (8)

M

movement, n. a group of people working together for a shared cause (6)

N

naturalized, adj. having gained citizenship in a new country (6)

O

office, n. a position of leadership (4)

P

picket, v. to stand outside a certain place to show opposition to something (9)

protest, v. to say or do something to show disagreement (9)

public figure, n. a person who is well known or famous (2)

R

reformer, n. a person who works for reform, or positive change (7)

S

segregation, n. the act of keeping people separate, usually on the basis of race (14)

suffrage, n. the right to vote (6)



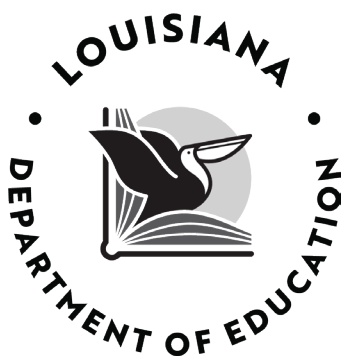
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