

This study covers over 140 years of Baltimore history beginning in 1831 and ending in 1976. In 1830, Baltimore was the second largest city in the country. Baltimore City and County was home to 28,541 free and enslaved people of color. From 1831 through 1976, countless African Americans in Baltimore organized, advocated, and protested to protect and expand their Civil Rights. Individual activists living and working in Baltimore, among them teachers, doctors, lawyers and laborers, helped to lead and support these efforts. Working with neighbors, activists built citywide, statewide and national organizations to effect change for African American people in Baltimore.

In this study, we describe how buildings, parks, monuments, and neighborhoods helped to shape and structure this long Civil Rights movement and, in turn, how racism and Civil Rights activism shaped the design and development of Baltimore's architecture and cultural landscapes.

Organization

How is the study divided into different sections?

The organization of this study follows a similar periodization to the National Historic Landmark (NHL) program study *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites* (2002, rev. 2009). Rather than begin with the American Revolution and the War of 1812, we instead started the study with Nat Turner's Rebellion in Virginia—an event that had major consequences for free and enslaved black people living in Baltimore and Maryland. We also made changes to the periodization in the 20th century to support a closer look at black resistance to segregation and discrimination before World War II. This created six sections that each begin with major events that shaped the local and national context for African American Civil Rights:

1. [Abolition and Emancipation: 1831 – 1870](#)
2. [Rights without Reconstruction : 1870 – 1905](#)
3. [Segregation and WWI: 1905 – 1929](#)
4. [Great Depression and WWII: 1929 – 1954](#)
5. [A Changing City: 1954 – 1968](#)
6. [After the Riots: 1968 – 1976](#)

What topics does each section of the study cover?

Following the approach suggested by the 2009 white paper *The Components of a Historic Contest* by Barbara Wyatt, each of these section of this study describes:

- how the Civil Rights movement developed and changed with the period;
- why those changes took place;
- what contributions individuals and groups made to those changes;
- and what factors outside of Baltimore contributed to those changes.

What themes does the study cover?

Additional context on specific themes supplements this chronology with more detailed descriptions of key events and patterns. To identify these themes, this study again followed the model of the NHL *Civil Rights Framework* which suggested a list of key themes represented by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968:

- Equal Education
- Public Accommodation
- Voting
- Housing
- Equal Employment
- Criminal Injustice

Our goal with this approach is to connect the significance of associated historic places to the same public policies and social issues that structured the Civil Rights movement itself. This structure also helped us to build on the existing scholarship on Civil Rights history in Baltimore.

What sources did we use for this study?

Secondary Sources

Since we used *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites* (2002, rev. 2009), to establish the framework for this study, it made sense to use the related studies from the series as key sources:

- Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations (2004, rev. 2009)
- Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States (2000) and supplement (2004)
- Civil Rights in America: Racial Voting Rights (2007, rev. 2009)

The study draws on journal articles from Maryland Historical Magazine, Maryland Law Review, and the Journal of African American History. Other key sources include *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790–1860* (1997), *Borders of Equality* (2013), *The Politics of Public Housing* (2004), and *Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth in an American City* (2011).

Primary Sources

In addition to these secondary sources, the study relied on a number of digitized primary sources including:

- The Baltimore Sun (ProQuest Historical Newspaper Database)
- The Afro-American Newspaper (ProQuest Historical Newspaper Database)
- Coleman Directories (Maryland State Archives)