

Lecture 2.15 - The Evolving Civil Rights Movement

- WW2 and Equality
 - World War 2 fueled demands for equality among many different groups because of the emphasis FDR puts on pluralism, tolerance, and equality during the war
 - Biggest things: Pluralism, tolerance, equality
 - War is framed within this context
 - This does happen for some people...
 - Immigrants become “white”
 - All the Europeans who were not considered white are now shifted more into the white category
 - These groups are accepted into white mainstream society
 - Southern, Eastern, Irish—not white
 - Heritage is not considered a strike against them
 - End Chinese Exclusion, 1943
 - In the fight against Japan, US is allied with China
 - Repealed the Chinese Exclusion act, meaning greater Chinese communities, more immigration
 - Greater economic gains as well in China
 - Veterans came back, invested in the idea of the US and newer rights.
 - However, they still face resistance and segregation
- Red-Lining
 - The most noticeable way this is seen is in the housing market
 - Federal govt orgs, private banks, and private real estate standardize policies on the housing market that further segregation
 - Goes back to 1930s HOLC
 - In the 1930s, HOLC assigned neighborhoods letter grade and color code based on their investability
 - High risk neighborhoods were letter D and color red
 - Loans denied in these areas!
 - Minority-dominated neighborhoods were considered high risk
 - Premise here is that minority dominant neighborhoods are credit risks
 - Subversive racial evidence or racial hazards *are phrases used to justify* this
 - People living in these areas are not given loans on homes because of these bad ratings – but also not getting investment in community structures and businesses that they might already have
 - People can’t get homes for buying houses, but businesses also can’t take loans as well
 - HOLC closed in 1954, but the FHA and VA continue to use these maps which are based on these racial prejudice
 - Denied loans (see above!)
 - Fewer developments – less roads, houses, shops, public transit, malls

- Racial Covenants
 - This is not govt done, but most minorities are also excluded from the 1950s suburbs because some neighborhoods prohibit the resale of homes to certain minorities
 - Explicitly in the agreements for the neighborhood
 - Even if you have money and the GI bill says you can
 - Technically outlawed with the SCOTUS case...
 - 1948 *Shelley v. Kraemer*
 - Outlaws racial covenants
 - Even so, banks and businesses steer minorities away from these places
 - They don't say it, but still attempt to keep white neighborhoods "safe"
 - This even still happens today!
 - Suburbs ban sales – like Levittown,
 - Not even in a racial covenant – just no sales period
 - Marketed as neighborhoods that literally do not have black people sometimes
 - What does this do for the minority groups?
 - Reinforces stereotypes, and segregation about minorities
 - Fewer opportunities to grow and develop
 - Impacts generational wealth – homeownership is still a key factor in familial wealth overall
 - Long-term wealth inequalities get bigger
 - Creates definite boundaries between racial groups – more separation
 - Creates "food deserts"
 - Difficult to enjoy the prosperity that white America is enjoying during this time, which sours the civil rights movement
 - This is considered in three distinct stages over 1950s-60s
- Brown v. Board of Education, 1954
 - Middle class black families push for desegregation in the south over the course of 1940s-50s in 3 steps: STEP #1
 - NAACP + Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)
 - These two groups are leading step#1
 - File many many lawsuits focused on school desegregation
 - Black children and college students better access to education – to start the flow of a better future
 - This pays off – culminates in SCOTUS case B v BOE (which is a unanimous decision)
 - This decides that separate but equal is inherently unequal, thus, violating the 14th amendment (equality and due process of law)
 - Legal precedent for segregation is gone, segregation no longer allowed
 - Overturned Plessy v. Ferguson
 - However, enforcement and implementation is not very clear in their rulings

- KKK and people in the south – also the more business-oriented White Citizens Council – are trying to maintain segregation or slow down desegregation
 - Creates an environment where murder is still used to enforce these ideas
- Murder of 14-year-old Emmet Till, 1955
 - Allegedly whistled at a white woman
 - Very unsettling – he was beaten and drowned?
 - Even while making legal progress, there is still backlash
- The Little Rock 9, 1957
 - Another strong example of resistance to desegregation
 - Arkansas school board wants to integrate central high school in little rock
 - Start with 9 students
 - State governor reacts by sending the national guard to block them
 - This is being framed in the context of the Cold War – *integration is communist coming to schools*
 - Weaponize the Cold War to hate on people you don't like
 - Eisenhower looks at this, is like nope to the govt. and takes over the national guards
 - Uses his position as head of the US military
 - Sends in the 101st airborne division (war heroes who are well-known) who escort the students into the building
 - They attend school for 1 year but constantly facing harassment and threats for expulsion
 - Other schools (not just in Arkansas) chose to close rather than integrate – that is how strong the backlash to this is in many places
 - Protecting their children? Not exposing their children to Black people?
- Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-56
 - This doesn't just end with pushed for school, expands into other forms of segregation
 - This boycott is the next more successful act – not trying to desegregate the whole nation or every aspect, instead just one little thing in one area
 - Rosa Parks agreed to serve as a test case for sitting in the white section in the bus and not giving up her seat – not random
 - Arrested in Dec 1955 for the refusal to give up her seat
 - Activists organize a citywide bus boycott
 - No bussing, walking carpooling biking
 - Using economic power to try and make a difference
 - They do this for 11 months
 - After this, SCOTUS orders full desegregation of bus system in Montgomery in 1956
 - The reality of monetary loss becomes very real, so this works!!
 - This is what helps bring young pastor MLK into prominence as a key leader of the civil rights movement
 - Martin Luther King Jr. and other black ministers form the...

- Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)
 - Organized in 1957 to continue organizing these types of movements
 - Middle class is just dealing with one place at a time
- The Student Movement
 - In the 1960s, younger activists push for greater economic and political equality
 - This is the STEP #2 – these are the rebellious teens who want to do something more than one place at a time
 - Still focus on nonviolence, but they emphasize...
 - Direct action + civil disobedience
 - Protests, getting in people's way, etc.
 - Private business/property – they go from public spaces like buses to private places
 - White allies – shift to integration of white allies (many young college students)
 - THESE ARE THE THREE SHIFTS
 - Greensboro 4 Sit-ins (1960)
 - Four people sit in at a lunch counter – most places won't serve you or get you to get your food from the back directly
 - People pick up on this, creates a trend involving 70k college students across the country
 - Students founded/formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960
 - 1961 Freedom Rides
 - The first thing they do is organize ^^^
 - They get together and ride buses across the country to implement the Montgomery bus idea all over
 - This is combined with white allies for safety and solidarity
 - Testing whether they are actually desegregating the public bus system
- Birmingham Campaign
 - April 1963
 - Letter from a Birmingham Jail
- March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom
 - Aug. 1963
 - Greater than 250,000
 - "I Have a Dream"
 - Birmingham Church Bombing
- Freedom Summer, 1964
 - 1964 Civil Rights Act
 - Public accommodations
 - enforcement
 - Employment
- SNCC, CORE, NAACP, SCLC
- 800 (white) volunteers
 - Voter registration drives
 - Freedom schools

- Selma and Voting Rights, 1965
- Late 1960s
 - 1964-75: Vietnam War
 - Drafted more
 - white supremacy
 - \$\$\$
 - 1965
 - Malcom X murder
 - Kerner Commission
 - 1967 Loving v. Virginia
 - 1968
 - MLK Assassination
 - Fair Housing Act
 - Shirley Chisholm
- Black Power
- Black Panther Party
- COINTELPRO