

You will find the definitions of bold words in the glossary on pages 140-41.

**A**FRICAN AMERICANS HAVE RESISTED oppression since the moment they were first enslaved and transported to the New World in the 1600s. However, their progress was limited until the Civil War (1861–65). After the war, three **amendments** to the Constitution were approved. The 13th Amendment (1865) ended slavery. The 14th Amendment (1868) made ex-slaves citizens. The 15th Amendment (1870) gave black men the right to vote. But these new laws were often ignored or even challenged by local and state governments.

Congress also passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875. It was the first law to forbid racial **discrimination** in public facilities. But in many states, deeply rooted systems of racism remained, and black people were often prevented from voting. Violence against African Americans increased. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), formed in 1909, worked to ensure that the country offered justice to every citizen. African Americans may have been “free” after the Civil War, but there was still much work to be done.

*A family of slaves poses for a photograph at a plantation in South Carolina in 1862, not long after the start of the Civil War.*





**J**IM CROW WAS THE NAME OF A STOCK character in white minstrel shows of the 1800s. Minstrel shows featured white performers wearing blackface makeup, ridiculing African Americans for white audiences. Later, the term *Jim Crow* was used to refer to the laws, rules, and customs that kept black people **segregated** from white society.

Jim Crow laws began to be passed almost as soon as slavery ended after the Civil War. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that state laws requiring “separate but equal” public accommodations for black people were legal. By 1914, every southern state had passed Jim Crow laws. Jim Crow laws made it illegal for blacks and whites to attend the same schools, swim in the same pools, or study in the same libraries. Facilities for African Americans were almost always inferior to those used by white people. The injustice of this segregation was one of the reasons that many black people migrated to the North. In many northern states, they had a better chance to escape legal oppression and find economic opportunity.

*Students in the early 1900s listen to a history lesson at the Tuskegee Institute, an all-black school in Georgia that was established after the Civil War to provide quality educational opportunities to black students.*





**B**LACK SOLDIERS HAVE FOUGHT FOR THE United States since the Revolutionary War, but for many years they served under different rules than their white counterparts. They were placed in segregated units and usually given support roles, such as being cooks. They knew the color of their skin had nothing to do with their ability to serve. During World War II (1939–1945), many people began pushing to **integrate** the military. For example, a black newspaper called the *Pittsburgh Courier* started a movement known as the Double V Campaign. This called attention to the fight for justice and added pressure on the government to expand the military's anti-discrimination policies.

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981, committing the government to the integration of the military. Now all soldiers, regardless of their race, would serve in units together. In the 1950s, President Dwight D. Eisenhower went on to set policies that desegregated military schools, hospitals, and bases. The country was slowly marching toward liberty and justice for all.

The name of the campaign came from the saying "V for Victory."

*African American soldiers march through England during World War II.*

