

It Took More Than the Emancipation Proclamation

It took more than the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War for people of Black skin to reach the same legal status as whites. The emancipation proclamation stopped one person from owning another, but it did not change the hearts and minds of people who thought dark skinned people were inferior, lazy, ignorant, and in some cases not even human. The Emancipation proclamation did not grant people of color the vote, like Pauli's grandfather, Robert Fitzgerald, had hoped. Without the vote, dark skinned people couldn't elect others who looked like them, felt like them, knew of their experience and would change the laws that oppressed them. Over more than 150 years, laws were passed with the intention of providing people of color the same rights and benefits of citizenship as whites, but each time a law was passed, it seemed, those who did not believe in the equality of the races managed to subvert the laws. It has taken many steps forward to overcome the back slides and the battle is still not won.

Chronology	Positive Steps	Negative Steps
1863	Emancipation Proclamation	
July 18, 1863	54 th Massachusetts Negro Regiment fights admirably at Fort Wagner and puts to rest the myth that Black soldiers were lazy cowards.	
March, 1865	Fifth Massachusetts including Robert Fitzgerald take a Rebel Fortification in Petersburg.	
May, 1865	End of Civil War	
1865-66		Black Code
1865	13 th Amendment – Abolishes Slavery	
December 1865		Birth of Ku Klux Klan
1865 -77		Intimidation of Blacks by whites grows
1866-77	Reconstruction and Occupation of the South by Union Troops results in Blacks voting, holding office, holding jobs previously held only by whites. ⁱ	
1867	Reconstruction Act	
1868	14 th Amendment – Guarantees all persons equal protection under the law	

1870	15 th Amendment – African American males have the right to vote	
1877		Tilden Compromise – In a contested presidential Election Republican Rutherford Hayes is given the victory in exchange for Union troops leaving the Democratic South.
1877-1954		Jim Crow Laws enacted by southern States to keep people of dark skin separate/segregated and inferior.
1889 - 1966		Laws pass in many states requiring Blacks to pay a tax in order to vote. Designed to prevent Blacks from voting in the South, it often required paying poll tax in all previous years in order to vote.
1896		Plessy v. Ferguson enshrines the doctrine of separate but equal. Supreme court rules that laws which segregated Blacks from whites in public facilities are constitutional as long as the facilities are equal.
1896-1954		Jim Crow Laws proliferate
1909	Creation of NAACP to ensure enforcement of the 13-15 th amendments which ended slavery, guaranteed equal protection under the law and the vote for all adult males.	
1910-1954	NAACP Fights legal battles against discrimination NAACP begins to fight segregation one instance at a time. e.g. one school, one hospital, one drinking fountain as not being equal.	
1919	NAACP publishes <i>Eighteen Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889-1918</i> which puts the spotlight on lynching—the practice declines to a certain extent.	
1940	Pauli Murray refuses to sit in the back of the bus and goes to jail for creating a disturbance.	

1943	Ruth Powell, Pauli Murray and other Howard University students stage a sit-in at Little Palace Cafeteria in Washington, DC and integrate it.	
1944	Ruth Powell, Pauli Murray and other Howard University students stage a sit-in at a John R. Thompson Cafeteria in Washington, DC and integrate it.	
1944		U.S. Congress ⁱⁱ threatens to cut off funds to Howard University if student protests don't stop.
1950	<i>States Laws on Race and Color</i> by Pauli Murray lists every federal, state, county, municipal law governing race. It allows lawyers to better fight discrimination. ⁱⁱⁱ	
1954	<i>Brown vs. Board of Education</i> mandates desegregation of schools and overturns <i>Plessy vs. Ferguson</i> . This is the beginning of the dismantling of Jim Crow laws.	
1954-1973~		States refuse to desegregate schools
1955-1970	Civil Rights Movement	
1957	Civil Rights Act of 1957 – First time since reconstruction Congress passes a law to protect civil rights – in particular voting rights.	
1963	March on Washington for Jobs	
1964	Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Outlaws discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion or national origin. Bans segregation in schools, employment or public accommodations. Bans unequal voter registration requirements. Provides for States to withhold funding from schools which refuse to desegregate.	
1964	Pauli Murray and Mary Eastwood co-write “Jane Crow and the Law: Sex Discrimination and Title VII,”	

	equating racial discrimination to sex discrimination	
1964	24 th Amendment eliminates the poll tax in Federal Elections.	
1965	Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits state and local governments from infringing on voting rights granted by the 15 th amendment.	
1966	<i>Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections</i> prohibits poll taxes in state elections as violating the 14 th Amendment.	
1966	Pauli Murray and Dorothy Kenyon—U. S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama— <i>White v. Crook</i> – Prohibits “[s]ystematic exclusion of Negroes by race” and “[statutory] exclusion of women from jury service.” ^{iv}	
1968	Civil Rights Act of 1968 – Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in sale, and rental of housing on the basis of race, color, sex, religion and national origin.	
1971	Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Supreme Court of the United States— <i>Reed v. Reed</i> – “dissimilar treatment of men and women was unconstitutional” ^v	
1971- present	Battles large and small, personal and nationwide continue.	

ⁱ **Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction** issued by President Lincoln; it offers pardon and restoration of property (except slaves) to Confederates who take an oath of allegiance to the Union and agree to accept emancipation; it also proposes a plan by which loyal voters of a seceded state can begin the process of readmission into the Union <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/chronol.htm>

ⁱⁱ The U.S. Congress is the primary funder of the District of Columbia because of all the government buildings in DC which do not pay property taxes. District of Columbia still does not have voting representation in Congress.

ⁱⁱⁱ NAACP, ACLU used this book to fight Jim Crow laws and to integrate places where there are no laws, just custom, keeping races apart.

^{iv} Court Proceedings from <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/251/401/2249435/>

^v <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1971/70-4>