

After graduation in 1915, he served in various posts all over the world. He trained recruits in the U.S. during World War I. Eventually, he impressed his superiors enough that he was given special training for leadership within the army. When World War II came, he was selected to command the U.S. forces for invasion of North Africa and, later, all Allied forces in Europe. He showed considerable skill in making all of the different Allied armies and their opinionated commanders work together. He was eventually promoted to the newly-created rank of five star general. After the war, he served as Army Chief of Staff. He retired briefly to become the president of Columbia University and was recalled to duty to serve as the first commander of NATO. He retired from that to run for the presidency in 1952.

McCarthy. The most famous of the anti-communist Congressmen was Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. He became an incredibly powerful person for several years before 1954. His technique was accusing people of being communists in the State Department, or some other organization. He could never prove his charges, but it did not matter. People believed him. He ruined the careers of many honest men by denouncing them as communists on little or no evidence. He did considerable damage to the morale and effectiveness of the government in the early 1950s. People were afraid of him.

McCarthy's witch hunt led him to attack the army in 1954. However, the end of the Korean War in 1953 had eased Cold War tensions and the army fought back. Senate hearings on McCarthy's charges were shown live on television. In the hearings, McCarthy finally came across as a lying bully tossing around unproven charges. He lost public support, was **censured** by the Senate, and faded into obscurity. His excesses made "McCarthyism" a name for an unfair, intrusive investigation based on questionable or made up evidence.

Civil Rights-Background. The Civil War had settled the issue of slavery, but had left black Americans as second-class citizens. They were forced to use segregated, inferior public facilities, and schools. They were often denied the right to vote by special laws or intimidation. They were discriminated against in employment, housing, and services. However, by the 1950s American attitudes were finally beginning to change, and African Americans began an effective campaign to receive equal treatment under the law.

Violent opposition to black equality in the South, and more passive acceptance of white superiority in the North, had kept African Americans from acting sooner. Black leaders of the post-Civil War era faced immense cultural pressure for black people to accept an inferior position. One of the greatest black leaders of the post-Civil War era, Booker T. Washington, was an excellent example of this dilemma.

Washington was born into slavery, but managed by hard work to obtain an education and, eventually, a nationwide reputation as an educator and spokesman for African Americans. He founded and led Tuskegee Institute, which taught black students trades such as carpentry. In order to effectively support black people, especially those who had just recently escaped slavery, and overcome the violent hostility of white people, who held all the political power, Washington argued for a slow approach to black equality. He urged black people to learn a trade and make themselves successful in the American economy. He accepted segregation as a temporary measure to allow black Americans time to build up their wealth and level of education. He stressed the need for black people to get along with the system for now and wait until they became more economically successful before demanding legal equality.

Washington saw his plan as a slow path to equality. Many white people supported it because it had the effect of keeping black Americans "in their place," which aligned with

their racist views. Washington’s chief opponent was W.E.B. DuBois, a black historian, sociologist, and communist party member. He argued that black people should have the opportunity for higher education and should press for equality now. DuBois was among the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which has historically been in the forefront of the battle for civil rights. At that time, there was almost no public support for black equality.

African American soldiers fought bravely in both World Wars in segregated units, although they were often assigned to do manual labor rather than fight. In 1948, Truman used his authority to order the federal bureaucracy and the army to integrate. The integrated units did well in Korea in spite of the dire predictions by white supremacists that they would fail. However, Truman had been unable to get civil rights legislation, and Eisenhower did not make it a priority. Finally, however, the African Americans and the courts stepped in and got the ball rolling.

Civil Rights–Beginnings. The modern movement for civil rights began in December of 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama. It was triggered by a black woman named Rosa Parks who refused, one day, to sit in the back of the bus as segregation laws required. She was arrested and the black people of Montgomery rose to support her. Led by Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist pastor, they peacefully boycotted the bus system for a year. With the help of the courts, who sided with the protesters, bus segregation in that city was ended. This incident gave Dr. King a national reputation and set off a mass movement among African Americans to press for full and fair equality.

They were aided in their quest by the federal court system under Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Warren Court moved American law substantially in the direction of individual rights. In 1896 the Supreme Court had ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, that “separate but equal” facilities for black and white people



| Students entering Central High School

were constitutional. The facilities had since then been separate, but never equal. The Court reversed itself in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954. The Court ruled that segregation in education was “inherently unequal” and ordered schools to integrate with “all deliberate speed.”

Following a court order, Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas prepared to admit nine African American teenagers in 1957. The governor of the state, Orville E. Faubus, mobilized the National Guard and public opinion to stop it. Angry mobs surrounded the school and made it unsafe for the black students to attend. Eisenhower, who had shown little interest in pushing integration, would not let such a challenge to federal authority pass. He sent in armed paratroopers who surrounded the school and escorted the students to class. The image of quiet black students trying to get an education, passing through crowds of jeering, hateful white people began to open the long-closed doors of the American conscience.

In that same year, congress finally passed a new Civil Rights Law (the first since the 1870s). It set up a Civil Rights Commission to

investigate violations of the rights of minority groups and authorized some protection of voting rights. It was a start, but it lacked the force needed to be effective.

Second Administration. Eisenhower easily won re-election in 1956 despite the fact of a heart attack in 1955 and an attack of intestinal problems that required surgery in 1956. Besides civil rights legislation, Eisenhower had several successes during his term. He believed in careful control of government finances. He balanced the federal budget three of his eight years by laying off federal workers and eliminating projects. He did, however, approve several expensive projects that benefitted the

nation. He supported a plan to invest billions in an interstate highway system and signed a bill setting up the St. Lawrence Seaway that brought ocean traffic into the Great Lakes.

Eisenhower's personal popularity did not extend to the whole Republican Party, however. The Democrats gained control of Congress in 1954 and kept it through the remainder of Ike's term. Nevertheless, he kept the nation on a steady path of increasing prosperity that was only briefly interrupted by a recession in 1957–58. His legacy was a time of stability and growth—a welcome relief after the tempestuous years leading up to the 1950s.



Name the item, event, or person.

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| 2.1 | | Truman's legislative program |
| 2.2 | | Anti-communist senator, censured for his accusations |
| 2.3 | | Post-Civil War black leader, accepted segregation until black people could gain economic power |
| 2.4 | | Economic problem right after World War II |
| 2.5 | | Former State Department official convicted of perjury for lying about passing information to a spy |
| 2.6 | | First commander of NATO |
| 2.7 | | The three parties the Democrats split into in 1948 |
| 2.8 | | |
| 2.9 | | |
| 2.10 | | 1952 Republican presidential slogan |

- 2.11 _____ Black historian/sociologist, helped found NAACP
- 2.12 _____ Woman whose decision to sit in front triggered the Civil Rights movement
- 2.13 _____ City that Eisenhower sent paratroopers to escort black teenagers to school
- 2.14 _____ Gave veterans loans and grants to adjust after the war
- 2.15 _____ Supreme Court Chief Justice, expanded individual rights
- 2.16 _____ Expensive transportation plans set up under Eisenhower
- _____
- 2.17 _____ Eisenhower’s vice president
- 2.18 _____ Court decision ordered the end of segregated education
- 2.19 _____ Black pastor who led the Montgomery bus boycott
- 2.20 _____ Pair executed for giving atomic secrets to the U.S.S.R.
- _____
- 2.21 _____ Court decision, allowed “separate but equal”

Answer these questions.

2.22 Who was expected to win the presidency in 1948 and why didn’t he?

2.23 What legislation did Truman want that never became laws?
