

Description + Context: The Thirteenth Amendment and “Section 1” of the Fourteenth Amendment made to the United States Constitution in 1865 and 1868, respectively

Amendment XIII (1865)

Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XIV (1868)

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Description + Context: Excerpt from Chief Justice Earl Warren’s Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka I* on May 17, 1954

Mr. Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion of the Court...

“We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.”

Description + Context: Description + Context: Excerpt from Chief Justice Earl Warren's Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka II* on May 31, 1955

Mr. Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion of the Court...

“Full implementation of these constitutional principles may require solution of varied local school problems. School authorities have the primary responsibility for elucidating, assessing, and solving these problems; courts will have to consider whether the action of school authorities constitutes good faith implementation of the governing constitutional principles. Because of their proximity to local conditions and the possible need for further hearings, the courts which originally heard these cases can best perform this judicial appraisal. Accordingly, we believe it appropriate to remand the cases to those courts.”

Description + Context: Excerpt from “Nonviolence and Racial Justice,” an article by Martin Luther King Jr. published in a weekly religious magazine in December, 1956

It is commonly observed that the crisis in race relations dominates the arena of American life. This crisis has been precipitated by two factors: the determined resistance of reactionary elements in the south to the Supreme Court’s momentous decision outlawing segregation in the public schools, and the radical change in the Negro’s evaluation of himself. While southern legislative halls ring with open defiance through “interposition” and “nullification,” while a modern version of the Ku Klux Klan has arisen in the form of “respectable” white citizens’ councils, a revolutionary change has taken place in the Negro’s conception of his own nature and destiny. Once he thought of himself as an inferior and patiently accepted injustice and exploitation. Those days are gone.

Description + Context: Excerpt from “Nonviolence and Racial Justice,” an article by Martin Luther King Jr. published in a weekly religious magazine in December, 1956

A second point is that nonviolent resistance does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that noncooperation and boycotts are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.

Description + Context: Excerpt from President Dwight D. Eisenhower's televised address to the citizens of the United States on September 24, 1957 on his executive order to deploy the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army as military protection and escort for the Little Rock Nine.

This morning the mob again gathered in front of the Central High School of Little Rock, obviously for the purpose of again preventing the carrying out of the Court's order relating to the admission of Negro children to that school.

Whenever normal agencies prove inadequate to the task and it becomes necessary for the Executive Branch of the Federal Government to use its powers and authority to uphold Federal Courts, the President's responsibility is inescapable. In accordance with that responsibility, I have today issued an Executive Order directing the use of troops under Federal authority to aid in the execution of Federal law at Little Rock, Arkansas. This became necessary when my Proclamation of yesterday was not observed, and the obstruction of justice still continues.

Description + Context: Telegram sent by the parents of the Little Rock Nine on to President Eisenhower on September 30, 1957

We the parents of nine negro children enrolled at Little Rock Central High School want you to know that your action in safe guarding their rights have strengthened our faith in democracy. Now as never before we have an abiding feeling of belonging and purposefulness. We believe that freedom and equality with which all men are endowed at birth can be maintained only through freedom and equality of opportunity for self development growth and purposeful citizenship. We believe that the degree to which people everywhere realize and accept this concept will determine in a large measure America's true growth and true greatness. You have demonstrated admirably to us the nation and the world how profoundly you believe in this concept. For this we are deeply grateful and respectfully extend to you our heartfelt and lasting thanks. May the almighty and all wise father of us all bless guide and keep you always.

Description + Context: Excerpt from a 1985 video interview (for a documentary on the Civil Rights Movement) with Melba Patillo Beals, who was one of nine African American students who enrolled in Little Rock Central High School as the first African American students to do so in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.

OK, let's take the heroism away right now and understand that Little Rock was a quiet reservation. And there was no thought on my part, no thought on any of our parts that when we went to Central High School it would trigger this terrible catastrophe. I wanted to go because they had more privileges. They had more equipment, they had five floors of opportunities. For me, I understood education before I understood anything else. From the time I was two, my mother said, "You will go to college. Education is your key to survival," and I understood that. And it was a kind of curiosity. It was not an overwhelming desire to go to this school and integrate this school and change history. Oh no, there was none of that. There was just, be, fun to go in this school I ride by every day. I want to know what's in there. I don't necessarily want to be with those people, I assumed that being with those people would be no different than being with the people that I was already with. I had no idea, none whatsoever, until the adventure started that it would be this way. And my getting into Central High School was somewhat almost of an accident. I simply raised my hand one day when they said, "Who of you lives in the area of Central High School?" Then, that was two years before, in 1955, and, they said, you know who has good grades, and I had excellent grades. It was an accident of fate.

Description + Context: Excerpt from a 1985 video interview (for a documentary on the Civil Rights Movement) with Melba Patillo Beals, who was one of nine African American students who enrolled in Little Rock Central High School as the first African American students to do so in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.

Well, you know, when people take out their high school annuals and they look back at their high schools, I get sick in the stomach as hell to look at mine. I remember once, see because, we're not being accepted in the white high school, we can't go anywhere, or do anything or be anybody. At the same time, we aren't accepted anymore in the black high school because we have now made trouble for the black people of the city. They're losing their jobs. My mother lost her job. They're asking us to withdraw and also we're on national media, so it separates us. We become separate people by virtue of what we endure. We become separate, and in some ways symbiotic because only another one of us can understand what we are doing. And in a strange way, we're going through a rite of passage that makes us separate, that makes us an adult, that makes us understand spirit, that makes us understand who we are and our limits and you can't obliterate that, you can't change that, and you can't separate it. So we really had no camaraderie. We had very little camaraderie with our, you know, black schoolmates.

Description + Context: Excerpt from a 1985 video interview (for a documentary on the Civil Rights Movement) with Ernest Green, who was one of nine African American students who enrolled in Little Rock Central High School as the first African American students to do so in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957.

Well the symbolism of Central, when you see it, it's an imposing, an impressive structure. Very imposing. It takes up two city blocks. It was, in 1957, the top high school in that area; not just in Little Rock, but in that whole mid-South area. And to have successfully gone through there meant that you had cracked one more barrier that had been barred to black people in the city of Little Rock. And what I saw, and I think, speaking for the other eight students, that it was always important for our own education. We thought we were getting the very best that public funds had available in Little Rock, but halfway through the school year, we knew we were doing something for everybody in the town, everybody black in the town. And that the longer we stayed there and if we successfully completed there, it would be difficult, impossible, for anybody to say that black people couldn't compete in that environment and two, that one more all white institution broken down.