**Segregation in America**

* Events surrounding WWII helped set the stage for civil rights movement
* Need for soldiers during WWII led to a shortage of white laborers, thus more opportunities for AA laborers
* 1 million AAs served during WWII and saw better conditions in Europe
* During the war civil rights groups campaigned for ending Jim Crow laws
* A major goal was to overturn Plessy v. Ferguson

NAACP Challenging Segregation

* NAACP used the court system to overturn segregation laws
* Much focus on unequal schools
* In the late 1930s, America spent 10 times more educating a white child vs. AA child
* *Thurgood Marshall:* led NAACP lawyers to win 29 of 32 cases in Supreme Court over 23 years
* Later became 1st AA to serve on Supreme Court

Brown v. BOE of Topeka

* 8 yr. old Linda Brown was denied entry into all white elementary school 4 blocks away
* Closest AA school was 21 blocks away
* May 17, 1954 Supreme Court ruled in favor of Brown
* Topeka BOE was violating the 14th Amendment, Equal Protection Clause
* Impacted 12 million students in 21 states

Reaction to Brown Decision

* In some states officials quick to comply (KS)
* Others less than willing (MS, GA, AL, etc.)
* Within a year 500 districts had desegregated classrooms
* In 1955 Supreme Court passed “Brown II,” stating that desegregation be implemented at once
* Eisenhower initially rejected enforcing policy change

Little Rock Nine

* AR governor supported segregation
* He ordered the National Guard to bar 9 AA students from entering Little Rock Central High
* Eisenhower was forced to place AR National Guard under federal control
* NAACP also assisted with desegregation
* The 9 students attended class while escorted by soldiers
* Became a widely followed national and int’l news story