

## US History

### An Age of Civil Disobedience

#### Learning Target:

*I can examine and determine why one of the first battles of the Civil Rights Movement was segregated schools.*

### **5. Civil Rights – Public Education**

#### **Brown vs. The Topeka Board of Education**

##### Public Education –

- The first area that would enflame segregationists and integrationists
- Both knew that the attitudes of children would carry on to the next generation
- 17 states and DC prohibited black students going to school with white students

##### Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896) –

- Court case that set legal precedent for separate but equal in New Orleans
- Stated that if equal accommodations were given then it was constitutional
- Used to justify separate housing, restaurants, swimming pools, and schools

##### NAACP Strategy –

- Looked for an appropriate school district to take before the Supreme Court
- Wanted one out of the South to show it was a national issue
- Thurgood Marshall led the NAACP case
- Chose Topeka, Kansas where 7 year old Linda Brown had to cross a railroad yard to catch a bus to an all black school when an all white school was several blocks away

##### The Court Case –

- Schools for blacks and whites were comparable in Kansas unlike in South
- In 1954 the Supreme Court decided that the institution of segregation made it impossible for equality
- Separate but equal is ruled an impossible concept

##### Results –

- Segregation was now officially illegal
- Blacks had legal grounds to protest Jim Crow laws in all aspects of society
- Would cause chaos in the South

#### **The Little Rock Nine**

##### Location and Plan –

- Little Rock seemed unlikely place for a dispute over school segregation
- Little Rock school board announced its willingness to obey the law
- Plan consisted of placing 9 black students in Central High School

### First Attempt –

- Night before the first day of school
- Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus announced he had ordered the National Guard to surround the school due to threats of violence
- Eight black students stayed away from the school the next day due to safety
- One girl did not have a phone and went alone and was harassed severely

### Second Attempt –

- Orval Faubus asked for a one year delay from Eisenhower and was denied
- Faubus in defiance removed the National Guard from Little Rock
- Chaos erupted as nearly 1000 whites gathered the next day
- Local police were unable to prevent riots when the black students entered school
- Little Rock Nine were forced to leave at midday
- Many saw this as an issue between state and federal authority

### Aftermath –

- President Eisenhower forced to intervene
- Nationalized the Arkansas National Guard and sent in Federal Troops
- First time since Reconstruction a president sent troops to South to enforce the Constitution
- National Guard remained for the entire year to enforce integration