

1960s Civil Rights for Latinos

Throughout the 1960s, and the flourishing of the civil rights movement, 900,000 Latinos were facing unequal rights in the United States. Latinos, any people of Latin American descent, were encouraged to come to this country through the Immigration Act of 1965. Once the Latinos settled down, they realized there were many new obstacles to overcome in their new home. Some hardships include living below poverty line, struggling to find low-paying unskilled jobs, facing discrimination and fighting for education. The fight for social justice was a difficult and long journey. People who fought for the cause were called Chicanos, a shortened term of Mexicanos.

The 1960s was a time of tremendous change for Latinos everywhere. The 1960s began with the spotlight on Latinos because Cold War tensions were quickly heating up the Cuban Missile Crisis. Many Latin Americans fled Cuba to escape Castro's regime. The Latin Americans who settled in America were extremely affected by discrimination because of the negative energy centered around their country. People who didn't know any better showed hostility to all Cubans without concern to if they were communist or not. Rising problems caused reformers to begin taking action and trying to improve the lives of this minority group. Although the Civil Rights main focus was the equality of Blacks and Whites, Latin Americans were an additional group struggling to prove themselves in our great country.

Schools were particularly challenging for Latino students. Many teachers did not speak Spanish and most students dropped out before finishing high school because of frustrated attitudes or failing grades. In 1963, the Ford Foundation granted money to the first bilingual program in an elementary school. The school, Miami's Coral Way, proved successful and encouraged reform to Latino education.

Another aspect of life, work and labor, was introduced to a program of reform in 1965 in Delano, California. Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta founded the United Farm Worker union for all the working grape-pickers in the community. Their first successful boycott, The Grape Boycott, gave the Latino community a newfound power and purpose in the workforce. After just fifteen years of existence, the UFW had obtained workers contracts for 50,000 members.

In 1966, a huge leap was made for those Cuban refugees facing discrimination. During this year, Congress announced that any Latin American who had been living in the country for minimum of one year was permitted to apply for citizenship. This was a huge accomplishment for Cubans who felt that being recognized as American citizens would help eliminate hostility from other Americans.

1968 brought a revolutionary year in Latino education. At that time many Latin Americans were feeling discrimination within their school districts. High school students were being punished for little things such as going to the bathroom during lunch and speaking Spanish on school property. Additionally, most students were discouraged from going to college. The students of Los Angeles city school decided to protest and staged a walk-out. The walk-out was a great failure; 13 students were arrested. However, this paved the way for greater college attendance by Latino high school students in the years to come.

Later that year The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund was established. This was the first legal associated to openly protect civil rights of Latin Americans.

Era of Activism Notes:

Movement: _____

<p>Causes of the Movement:</p>	<p>People and Organizations Involved:</p>
<p>Strategies used by the Movement:</p>	<p>Effects of the Movement: (Legislation, events that follow)</p>
<p>Leveled Questions that reflect on the Reading:</p>	<p>Student Evaluation of the Movement's success:</p>

American Indian Movement – History

Alcatraz, Trail of Broken Treaties, Wounded Knee, and Pine Ridge.

Founded in 1968, the American Indian Movement (AIM) is an organization dedicated to the Native American civil rights movement. Its main objectives are the sovereignty of Native American lands and peoples; preservation of their culture and traditions; and enforcement of all treaties with the United States.

Despite the straightforwardness of its stated objectives, AIM's reputation had been seriously harmed by well-publicized and controversial incidents of law-breaking and violence, resulting in the organization's peak and decline within a few years. Significant historical events include AIM's hostile occupation of Alcatraz Island (1969); the "Trail of Broken Treaties" march on Washington, D.C. (1971); occupation of Wounded Knee (1973); and the Pine Ridge shootout of 1975, which resulted in the controversial arrest and imprisonment of the most famous AIM member, Leonard Peltier. Following these events, the organization's visibility and viability as a political force greatly declined.



Prior to the formation of AIM, issues involving U.S. Indian–non-Indian relations had largely faded away. Starting in the 1950s, the U.S. government had embarked on a serious policy plan to terminate its responsibilities to Native Americans pursuant to extant treaties and agreements. This action included the relocation of thousands of reservation Indians to urban areas and the termination of federal duties to two major tribes, the Menominee of Wisconsin and the Klamath of Oregon. (Federal rights were restored to both a few years later.) However, by the 1970s, relocation as well as termination policies were all but abandoned.



A number of problems arose when Native Americans left the reservations and intermingled with local towns, where Native Americans allegedly caused and/or became parties to local disturbances or crimes. Moreover, after World War II and the Korean War, many Native Americans who had served in the armed forces no longer wanted to return to stereotypical Indian lifestyles. As more intermingling and merging occurred, other Native Americans became increasingly intent on searching for their cultural roots and maintaining their ethnic identities. They vowed not to be assimilated and thus their views paralleled the ideals of other Civil Rights Movements of the era. The most radical elements to emerge from these militant Native American groups ultimately formed the AIM, which was intended as an indigenous version of the Black Panther Party.

During the summer of 1968, about 200 members of the Native American community in urban Minneapolis, Minnesota, met to discuss various issues, including slum housing, alleged police brutality, unemployment, and alleged discriminatory policies involving the local county's welfare system. The group had been impressed with media coverage of the Black Panther policy of monitoring routine police interrogations or arrests and adopted similar tactics.

From the beginning, the group stirred controversy in seeking attention. Mobilizing in different cities and gaining momentum, it employed increasingly negative tactics such as holding an "anti-birthday party" for the United States atop Mt. Rushmore on the Fourth of July, painting Plymouth Rock bright red on Thanksgiving Day 1970, and seizing the Mayflower replica. All of these actions served to alienate many would-be sympathizers. However, AIM did get the media attention it desired, which seemed only to spawn further controversy. When the group organized a hostile occupation of Alcatraz Island off the coast of California, AIM finally became a force to be reckoned with, however so briefly.



Wounded Knee, 1973

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The Story of *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson

How a courageous woman took on the chemical industry and raised important questions about humankind's impact on nature.

Although their role will probably always be less celebrated than wars, marches, riots or stormy political campaigns, it is books that have at times most powerfully influenced social change in American life. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* galvanized radical sentiment in the early days of the American revolution; *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe roused Northern antipathy to slavery in the decade leading up to the Civil War; and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which in 1962 exposed the hazards of the pesticide DDT, eloquently questioned humanity's faith in technological progress and helped set the stage for the environmental movement.

Carson, a renowned nature author and a former marine biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was uniquely equipped to create so startling and inflammatory a book. A native of rural Pennsylvania, she had grown up with an enthusiasm for nature matched only by her love of writing and poetry. The educational brochures she wrote for the Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as her published books and magazine articles, were characterized by meticulous research and a poetic evocation of her subject.

"Things Go Out of Kilter"

Carson was happiest writing about the strength and resilience of natural systems. Her books *Under the Sea Wind*, *The Sea Around Us* (which stayed on the *New York Times* bestseller list for 86 weeks), and *The Edge of The Sea* were hymns to the inter-connectedness of nature and all living things. Although she rarely used the term, Carson held an ecological view of nature, describing in precise yet poetic language the complex web of life that linked mollusks to sea-birds to the fish swimming in the ocean's deepest and most inaccessible reaches.

DDT, the most powerful pesticide the world had ever known, exposed nature's vulnerability. Unlike most pesticides, whose effectiveness is limited to destroying one or two types of insects, DDT was capable of killing hundreds of different kinds at once. Developed in 1939, it first distinguished itself during World War II, clearing South Pacific islands of malaria-causing insects for U.S. troops, while in Europe being used as an effective de-lousing powder. Its inventor was awarded the Nobel Prize.

When DDT became available for civilian use in 1945, there were only a few people who expressed second thoughts about this new miracle compound. One was nature writer Edwin Way Teale, who warned, "A spray as indiscriminate as DDT can upset the economy of nature as much as a revolution upsets social economy. Ninety percent of all insects are good, and if they are killed, things go out of kilter right away." Another was Rachel Carson, who wrote to the *Reader's Digest* to propose an article about a series of tests on DDT being conducted not far from where she lived in Maryland. The magazine rejected the idea.

Silent Spring

Thirteen years later, in 1958, Carson's interest in writing about the dangers of DDT was rekindled when she received a letter from a friend in Massachusetts bemoaning the large bird kills which had occurred on Cape Cod as the result of DDT sprayings. The use of DDT had proliferated greatly since 1945 and Carson again tried, unsuccessfully, to interest a magazine in assigning her the story of its less desirable effects. By 1958 Carson was a best-selling author, and the fact that she could not obtain a magazine assignment to write about DDT is indicative of how heretical and controversial her views on the subject must have seemed. Having already amassed a large quantity of research on the subject, however, Carson decided to go ahead and tackle the DDT issue in a book.

Silent Spring took Carson four years to complete. It meticulously described how DDT entered the food chain and accumulated in the fatty tissues of animals, including human beings, and caused cancer and genetic damage. A single application on a crop, she wrote, killed insects for weeks and months, and not only the

targeted insects but countless more, and remained toxic in the environment even after it was diluted by rainwater. Carson concluded that DDT and other pesticides had irrevocably harmed birds and animals and had contaminated the entire world food supply. The book's most haunting and famous chapter, "A Fable for Tomorrow," depicted a nameless American town where all life -- from fish to birds to apple blossoms to human children -- had been "silenced" by the insidious effects of DDT.

First serialized in *The New Yorker* in June 1962, the book alarmed readers across America and, not surprisingly, brought a howl of indignation from the chemical industry. "If man were to faithfully follow the teachings of Miss Carson," complained an executive of the American Cyanamid Company, "we would return to the Dark Ages, and the insects and diseases and vermin would once again inherit the earth." Monsanto published and distributed 5,000 copies of a brochure parodying *Silent Spring* entitled "The Desolate Year," relating the devastation and inconvenience of a world where famine, disease, and insects ran amuck because chemical pesticides had been banned. Some of the attacks were more personal, questioning Carson's integrity and even her sanity.

Vindication

Her careful preparation, however, had paid off. Anticipating the reaction of the chemical industry, she had compiled *Silent Spring* as one would a lawyer's brief, with no fewer than 55 pages of notes and a list of experts who had read and approved the manuscript. Many eminent scientists rose to her defense, and when President John F. Kennedy ordered the President's Science Advisory Committee to examine the issues the book raised, its report thoroughly vindicated both *Silent Spring* and its author. As a result, DDT came under much closer government supervision and was eventually banned. The public debate moved quickly from *whether* pesticides were dangerous to *which* pesticides were dangerous, and the burden of proof shifted from the opponents of unrestrained pesticide use to the chemicals' manufacturers.

The most important legacy of *Silent Spring*, though, was a new public awareness that nature was vulnerable to human intervention. Rachel Carson had made a radical proposal: that, at times, technological progress is so fundamentally at odds with natural processes that it must be curtailed. Conservation had never raised much broad public interest, for few people really worried about the disappearance of wilderness. But the threats Carson had outlined -- the contamination of the food chain, cancer, genetic damage, the deaths of entire species -- were too frightening to ignore. For the first time, the need to regulate industry in order to protect the environment became widely accepted, and environmentalism was born.

Carson was well aware of the larger implications of her work. Appearing on a CBS documentary about *Silent Spring* shortly before her death from breast cancer in 1964, she remarked, "Man's attitude toward nature is today critically important simply because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature. But man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself?[We are] challenged as mankind has never been challenged before to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of nature, but of ourselves."

One of the landmark books of the 20th century, *Silent Spring's* message resonates loudly today, even several decades after its publication. And equally inspiring is the example of Rachel Carson herself. Against overwhelming difficulties and adversity, but motivated by her unabashed love of nature, she rose like a gladiator in its defense.

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