Ch. 43 – Segregation in the Post-World War II Period/EQ: How did segregation affect American life in the post-war period?

43.1 – Introduction
- In the 1940s, when this event took place, African Americans throughout the South suffered under a harsh system of racial discrimination.
  - Jim Crow segregation laws not only kept blacks out of amusement parks like Fair Park.
  - They also separated blacks from whites in most public facilities, including schools, libraries, and hospitals.
- In this chapter, you will learn what life was like for African Americans in the postwar years in the South and the rest of the country.
  - You will also learn how things finally began to change for the better.

43.2 – A Nation Divided: Segregation American Life
- Racial segregation forced blacks to behave in certain ways.
- They were expected to accept their lesser status in society and act accordingly.
  - W. E. B. Du Bois called this pattern of behavior “living behind the veil.” In private or among other blacks, they acted normally.
  - But around whites, they put on a “mask,” hiding their true feelings and acting meek and inferior.
  - This code of rules and behavior was the product of a long history of racial discrimination in the United States.
  - It was most evident in the South, but it extended throughout American society.

Segregation in Public Accommodations
- Segregation was common in public places, especially in the South.
  - Jim Crow laws established separate facilities for whites and blacks across the South.
    - In waiting rooms and rest rooms, train cars and buses, theaters and restaurants, and even on park benches, blacks and whites were kept apart.
    - One state even passed a law requiring separate telephone booths.
  - Often there was simply no accommodation for blacks at all.

Segregation in Schools
- Jim Crow laws for schools began to appear shortly after the Civil War.
  - By 1888, school segregation had been established in almost every southern state, along with some northern and western states.
  - Although the Plessy decision stated that separate accommodations for the races must be equal, the reality was often quite different.

Segregation in Housing
- African Americans also experienced housing segregation.
  - This came in two main forms.
    - One was de facto segregation [de facto segregation: segregation established by practice and custom, rather than by law], which was established by practice and custom, rather than law.
      - This form was found in all parts of the country.
    - The other was de jure segregation [de jure segregation: segregation by law], or segregation by law. De jure segregation occurred mostly in the South.
      - De facto segregation was common in many northern cities.
  - One practice was the restrictive covenant [restrictive covenant: an agreement among neighbors not to sell or rent to African Americans or other racial minorities].
  - De jure segregation was accomplished through racial zoning [racial zoning: local laws that defined where the different races could live].

Segregation in Marriage
- Between 1870 and 1884, eleven southern states passed laws against miscegenation [miscegenation: interracial marriage], or interracial marriage.
Segregation in the Workplace

- Employment and working conditions reflected widespread segregation in American society.
- Discrimination in employment was a direct result of racism, but it was also the product of poor schooling for African Americans.

Segregation in Politics

- Southern whites also found ways to disenfranchise, or deny voting rights to, African Americans. In the years after Reconstruction, poll taxes and literacy tests kept many blacks from voting. Many southern states also disenfranchised blacks through use of the white primary, a primary election in which only whites could participate.
- Gerrymandering was another method used to discriminate against black voters and render their votes meaningless.

43.3 – Small Steps Towards Equality

- Jackie Robinson would become one of the greatest baseball players in the history of the game.
- In 1944, however, he was a lieutenant in the army, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas.
- Leaving the base one day, he got on a military bus and took a seat up front.
- The driver ordered him to move to the back, but Robinson refused.
- When he got off at his stop, he was arrested.
- Robinson was nearly court-martialed for his actions that day.
- Later, he would achieve fame on the baseball diamond and become a role model for millions of Americans.
- Over the course of his life, Robinson came to represent both the struggles of African Americans and their gradual advances in white-dominated society.

Breaking the Color Line in Sports

- Jackie Robinson began his baseball career in the Negro Leagues after World War II.
  - At the time, baseball was divided by the color line, a barrier created by custom, law, and economic differences that separated whites from nonwhites.
- In 1945, Robinson crossed the color line when Brooklyn Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey hired him.
- Around the same time, other professional sports began to open up to black athletes.

Desegregation of the Armed Forces

- Another area of American life in which the color line would soon fall was the armed forces.
  - But again, change did not come easily.
- Truman knew that desegregation in the armed forces was necessary, not only on moral grounds but also for political reasons.
- On July 26, 1948, Truman signed Executive Order 9981.

Civil Rights Organizations Challenge Discrimination

- The fight to end segregation would never have succeeded without the determined efforts of civil rights activists.
- One of these organizations was the Congress of Racial Equality, an organization founded in 1942 that was dedicated to civil rights reform through nonviolent action (CORE).
  - Founded in Chicago in 1942 by a group of students, CORE was committed to nonviolent direct action as a means of change.
- Another key group, the National Urban League, formed in response to the Great Migration of blacks to northern cities in the early 1900s.
  - The Urban League focused on helping African Americans achieve success in the North.
- Founded in 1909, the NAACP continued its efforts to promote civil rights legislation.
43.4 – The Courts Begin to Dismantle Segregation

- In 1951, getting to school every day was hard for Linda Brown, a seven-year-old in Topeka, Kansas.
  - First she had to walk a mile, passing through a railroad yard on her way to the bus stop.
  - Then she had to take a long bus ride to school.
  - All of this made no sense to Linda because there was a good school only seven blocks from her house.
  - But the schools in Topeka were segregated.
  - The school near Linda was for whites only, and Linda was black.
  - Her father, Oliver Brown, decided to do something about that.
  - With the help of the court system, Brown and other civil rights activists began to dismantle segregation.

Early Court Decisions Make Big Strides

- In the 1930s and 1940s, the Supreme Court began to strike down Jim Crow laws.
- In 1948, the Supreme Court tackled the issue of segregated housing.
- In *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the Court ruled that states could not enforce restrictive covenants.
- As a result, many city neighborhoods became desegregated.
- In 1950, the Court handed down strong rulings against discrimination in education.
  - In two cases, the Court declared that segregation in graduate schools and law schools was unconstitutional.
  - It began to look as if all “separate but equal” education was on the way out.

A Landmark Ruling: *Brown v. Board of Education*

- *Brown vs Board of Education* was actually a set of cases from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, and Washington, D.C., that had moved up through the court system at the same time.
- The Court decided to combine the cases because the plaintiffs were all looking for the same legal remedy.
- The *Brown* case was a class-action lawsuit, a lawsuit filed by people on behalf of themselves and a larger group who might benefit.
  - The NAACP’s lead attorney, Thurgood Marshall, argued the case.
  - He supplied evidence showing how segregation harms African American children.
  - The most famous piece of evidence was the “doll test.”
  - In the test, 16 black children had been shown a white doll and a brown doll.
  - Ten of the children chose the white doll as the “nice” doll. The children were also asked to identify the doll that looked “bad.”
  - Eleven children selected the black doll.
  - According to the psychologist who conducted the test, “the Negro child accepts as early as six, seven or eight the negative stereotypes about his own group.”
- The *Brown* decision dismantled the legal basis for segregation in schools and other public places.
- In fact, the *Warren Court* became known for its activism on civil rights and free speech.

All Deliberate Speed? Much of the South Resists Change

- In some border states, desegregation took place without incident.
  - But in parts of the South, there was greater resistance.
  - For example, in 1955 a white citizens’ council in Mississippi published a handbook called *Black Monday*, referring to the day the Supreme Court handed down the *Brown* decision.
  - The handbook called for an end to the NAACP and public schools.
  - It also advocated a separate state for African Americans.
- Despite such opposition, the *Brown* decision inspired hopes that African Americans could achieve equal rights in American society.
Summary

Segregation remained widespread in the United States after World War II, especially in the South. But there were also signs of change. In the 1940s and 1950s, desegregation began in sports and the military. Civil rights organizations grew stronger. The landmark Supreme Court ruling Brown v. Board of Education heralded the beginning of the modern civil rights movement.

Segregated society Segregation affected every aspect of life in the Jim Crow South. De jure segregation was defined by law, while de facto segregation was determined by custom. Blacks in the North and West also experienced de facto segregation, especially in housing.

Breaking the color line Professional sports began to be integrated in the late 1940s. Most notable was Jackie Robinson’s entry into major league baseball. The integration of professional football and basketball soon followed.

Executive Order 9981 President Truman was determined to integrate the armed forces. His executive order, issued in 1948, ended segregation in the military.

Civil rights groups Civil rights organizations gained strength in the postwar years. CORE was dedicated to civil rights reform through nonviolent action. The National Urban League tried to help African Americans who were living in northern cities. The NAACP began a legal branch and launched a campaign, led by Thurgood Marshall, to challenge the constitutionality of segregation.

Brown v. Board of Education The NAACP’s legal campaign triumphed in 1954, when the Warren Court issued the Brown v. Board of Education decision. This ruling declared segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional and undermined the legal basis for segregation in other areas of American life.