

# READ IOWA HISTORY

STUDENT MATERIALS

## School Desegregation

LESSON PLAN FOR SUPPORTING QUESTION

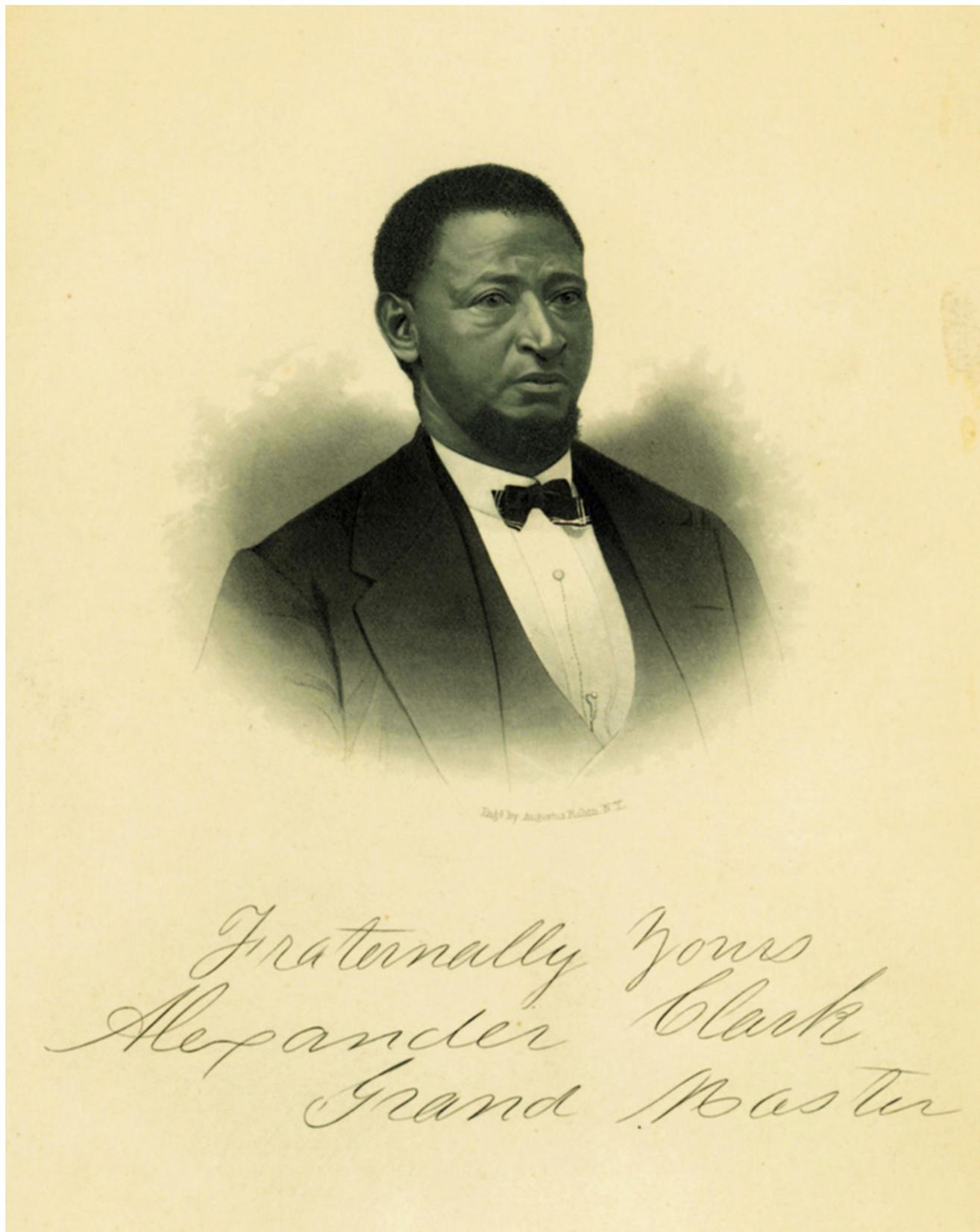
How did school desegregation happen in Iowa compared with southern states?

5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF IOWA  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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This is a portrait of Alexander Clark, who was the father of 12-year-old Susan Clark. Alexander Clark filed a lawsuit to allow his daughter to integrate the white-only public school near their home. The Iowa Supreme Court affirmed the district court's decision that children of color could not be refused admission to Iowa's district schools. *Courtesy of Robin, Augustus, Portrait of Alexander Clark: Engraving, New York, Date Unknown*

The Iowa Supreme Court Rules in Equal Access to Schools and Common Carriers  
Outside In: African-American History in Iowa by Bill Silag, Susan Koch Bridgford and Hal Chase,  
Published by the State Historical Society of Iowa, 2001. Pg. 72-73

Alexander Clark was a man of many parts - a political leader, an orator, a barber, an investor in Muscatine real estate, a conductor on the Underground Railroad, and a recruiter for the Union Army. Clerk was also a father of three children and cared passionately about their education. In 1867 he wrote a letter to the Muscatine Journal: “[M]y personal object is that my children attend where they can receive the largest and best advantages of learning.”

Clark noted the contrasts between Muscatine’s segregated schools. The white schools were conveniently located in the city, while the black school was “nearly a mile from many of the small colored children, keeping more than a third of them from school.” The white schools had “globes and charts and competent teachers,” whose salaries ranged from \$700 to \$900 a year. The black school had none of these advantages, and its teacher was paid a yearly salary from \$150 to \$200. The white schools “have prepared and qualified pupils by the hundred for the high school; the colored school has never prepared or qualified one that could pass an examination for any class in the high school.”

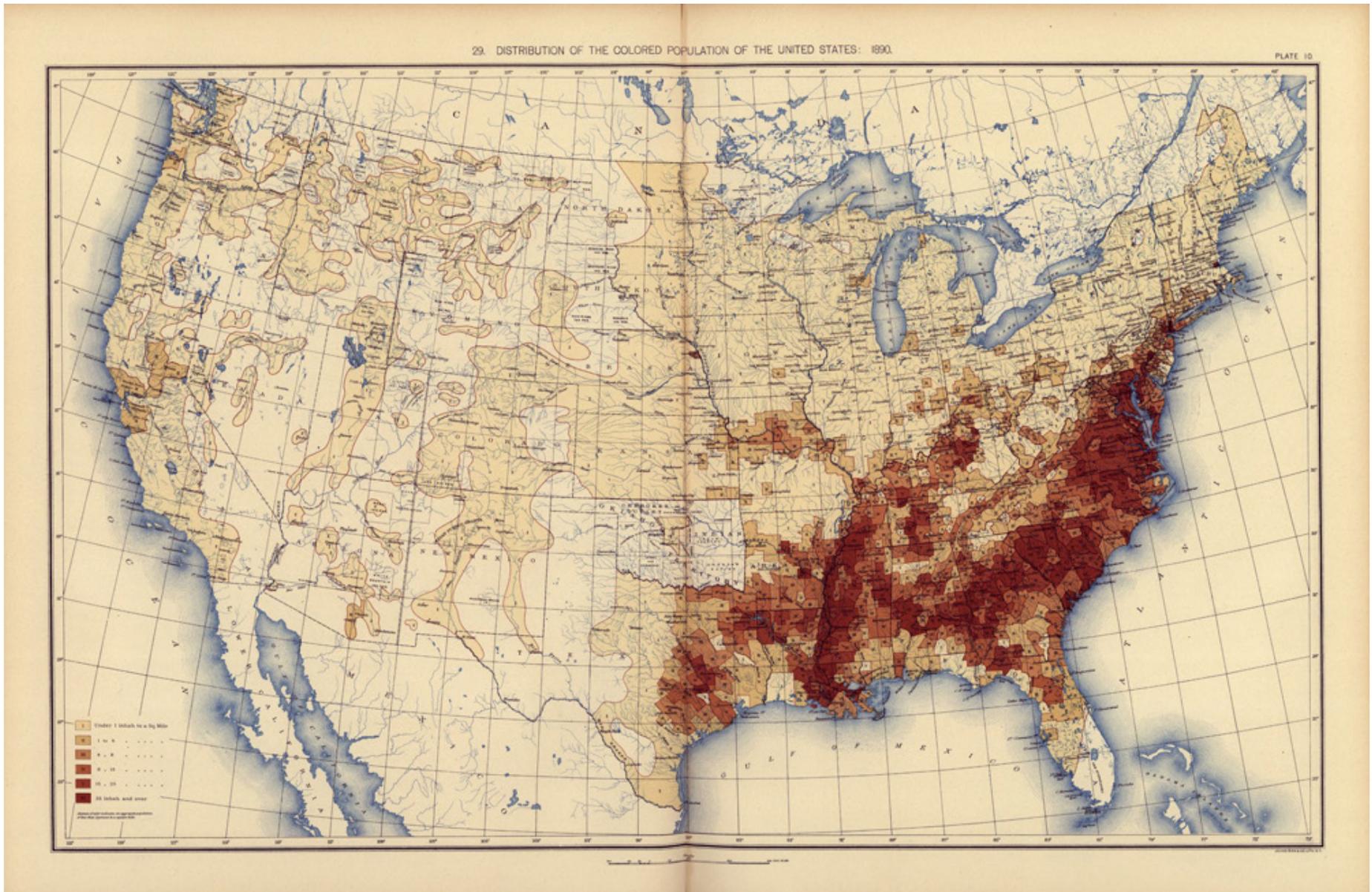
On September 10th, 1867, Alexander Clark’s 12-year-old daughter, Susan, presented herself at Muscatine’s white “Grammar School No. 2” And was refused entry. That same day, the principal of the school wrote to Alexander Clark: “I am authorized by the school board of this city to refuse your children admittance into Grammar School No. 2.”

Clark, as “next friend” of his daughter, filed a lawsuit in the Muscatine County District Court, asking for a writ of mandamus to compel the school board to admit Susan into Grammar School No. 2. The district court ordered the writ, and the board of directors appealed, claiming that it had the right to maintain a separate school for black children. In *Clark v. The Board of Directors, etc.*, the Iowa Supreme Court affirmed The District Court’s decision, holding that children of color could not be refused admission to Iowa’s district schools.

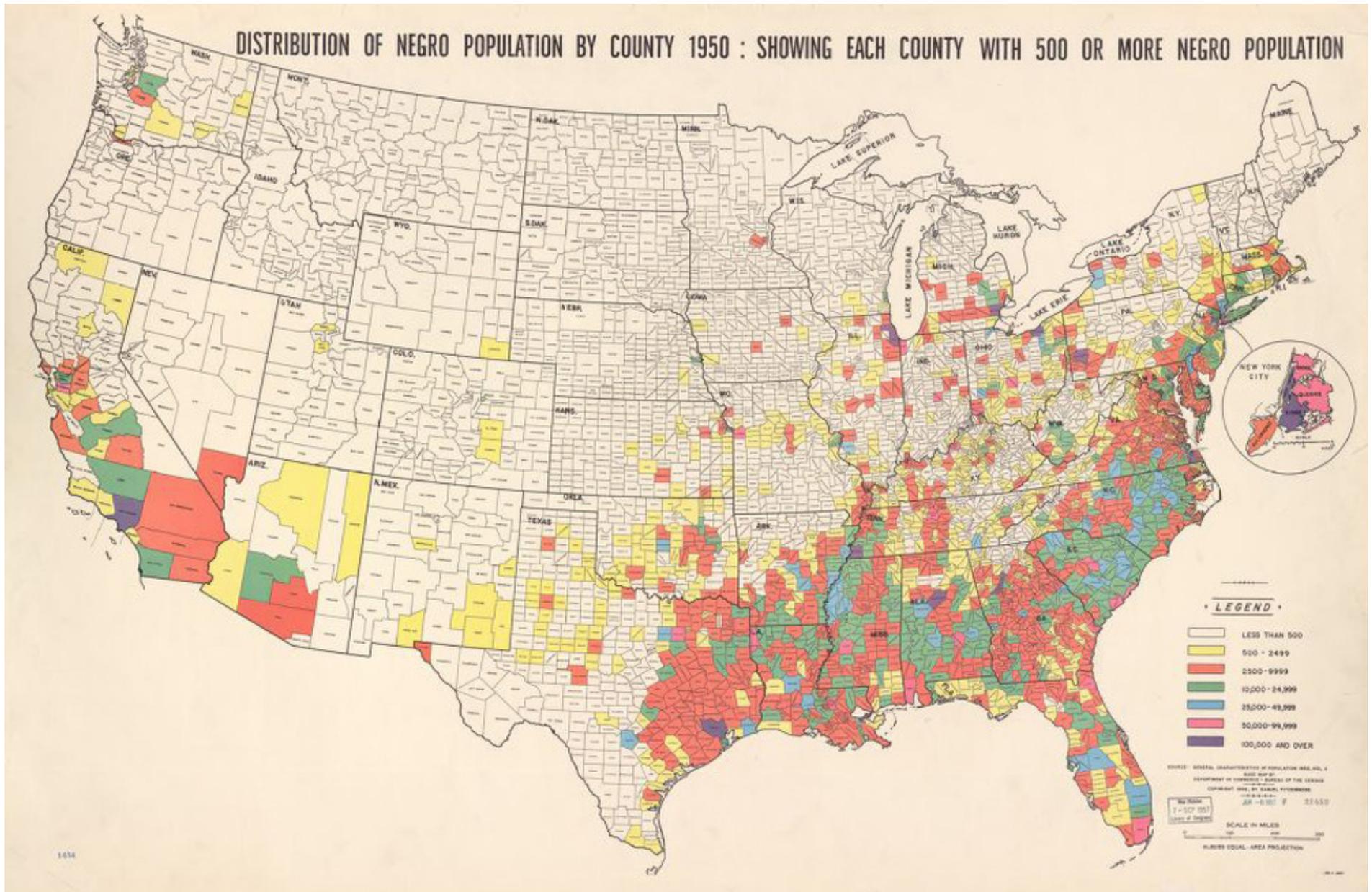
In its opinion, the court reviewed the history of Iowa's discriminatory school statutes, but noted that the Constitution of 1857 had created a statewide board of education, which was required to "provide for the education of all the youths of the State, through a system of common schools." The court reasoned that this constitutional provision and subsequent legislation removed from the board of directors all discretion to decide "what youths shall be admitted."

The court rejected the board's argument that because it maintained several schools within the district, it could decide which of the several schools a student could attend and, pursuant to this discussion, could require Susan Clark to attend the black school. If the board would require African American children to attend separate schools, it equally could require German, Irish, French, English, and children of other nationalities to attend separate schools. The court concluded: "[T]he board cannot, in their discretion... deny a youth admission to any particular school because of his or her nationality, religion, color, clothing or the like."

In 1870, the Iowa legislature struck out the words "white male" from the statute concerning the qualifications to practice law. Now Alexander Clark could realize and even higher ambition for his children, and his son, Alexander Clark Jr., became the first African-American student to enroll in the State University's Law Department in Iowa City, receiving his law degree in 1879. Clark Sr. himself attended the law school in 1883 and graduated the following year.



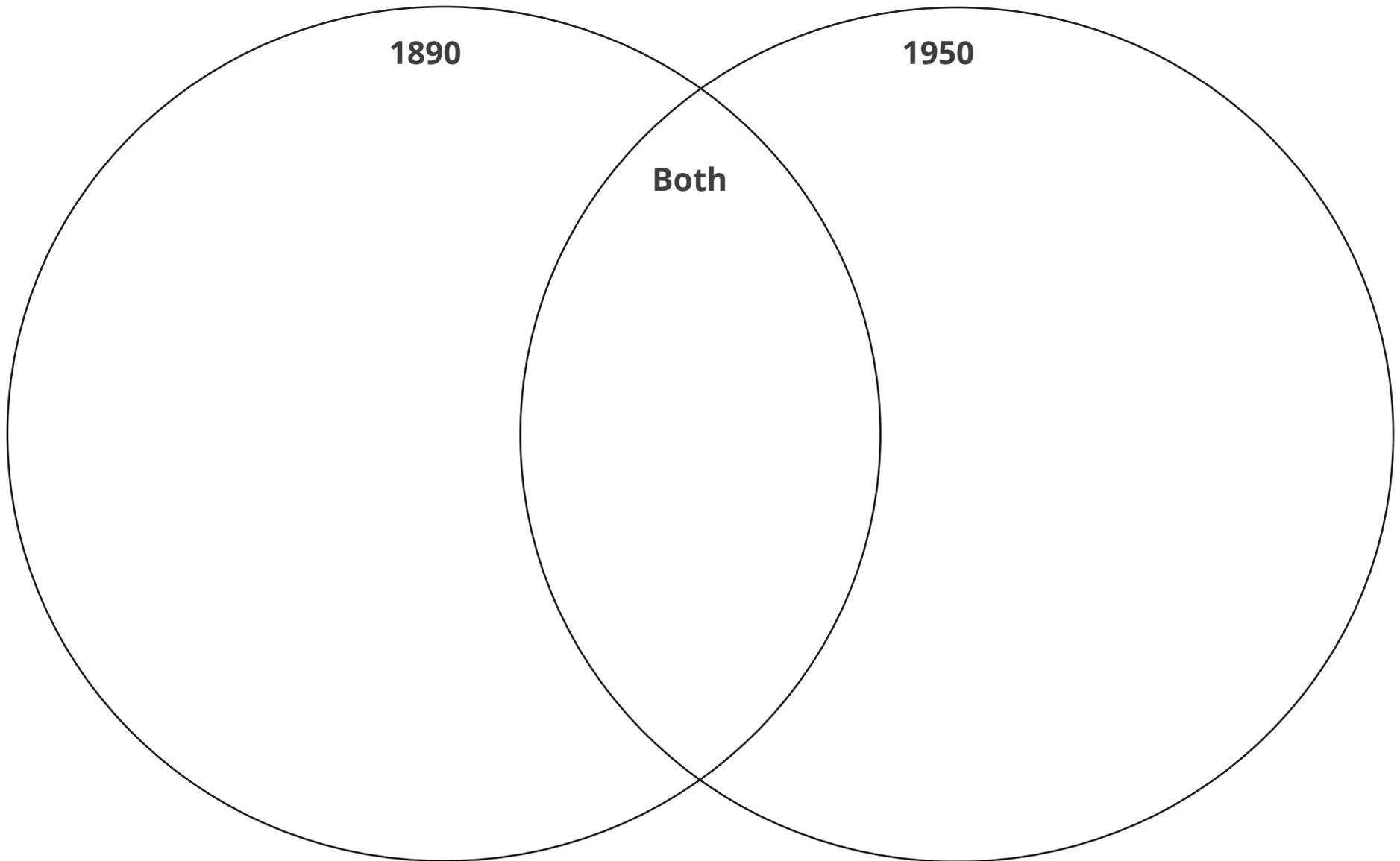
“Distribution of the Colored Population of the United States” is a statistical atlas of the United States that is based on the results of the 11th census, completed in 1890, and it shows the distribution of the “colored population” of the country. *Courtesy of Library of Congress, United States Census Office, 11th Census (1890), and Henry Gannett, Washington, 1898*



"Distribution of Negro Population by County" is a statistical atlas by Samuel Fitzsimmons that shows the distribution of the "Negro population" by each county in 1950. Courtesy of Library of Congress, Fitzsimmons, Samuel, "Distribution of Negro population by county 1950," Washington, 1956

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Distribution of African-American Population





Attorneys George E.C. Hayes, Thurgood Marshall and James M. Nabrit, are shown congratulating each other, following the U.S. Supreme Court decision declaring segregation unconstitutional. *Courtesy of Library of Congress, Associated Press, 17 May 1954*

Good evening, my fellow citizens.

This afternoon, following a series of threats and defiant statements, the presence of Alabama National Guardsmen was required on the University of Alabama to carry out the final and unequivocal order of the United States District Court of the Northern District of Alabama. That order called for the admission of two clearly qualified young Alabama residents who happened to have been born Negro.

That they were admitted peacefully on the campus is due in good measure to the conduct of the students of the University of Alabama, who met their responsibility in a constructive way.

I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents. This nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.

Today we are committed to a worldwide struggle to promote and protect the rights of all who wish to be free, and when Americans are sent to Vietnam or West Berlin, we do not ask for whites only. It ought to be possible, therefore, for American students of any color to attend any public institution they select without having to be backed up by troops.

It ought to be possible for American consumers of any color to receive equal service in places of public accommodation, such as hotels and restaurants and theaters and retail stores, without being forced to resort to demonstrations in the street, and it ought to be possible for American citizens of any color to register and to vote in a free election without interference or fear of reprisal.

It ought to be possible, in short, for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or his color. In short, every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated. But this is not the case.

The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section of the Nation in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby born in the same place on the same day, one-third as much chance of completing college, one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man, twice as much chance of becoming unemployed, about one-seventh as much chance of earning \$10,000 a year, a life expectancy which is seven years shorter, and the prospects of earning only half as much.

This is not a sectional issue. Difficulties over segregation and discrimination exist in every city, in every state of the Union, producing in many cities a rising tide of discontent that threatens the public safety. Nor is this a partisan issue in a time of domestic crisis. Men of good will and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics. This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone. It is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets, and new laws are needed at every level, but law alone cannot make men see right. We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution.

The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public schools available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay?

One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons,

*Courtesy of Library of Congress, "The President Faces the Racial Crisis," CBS News, 11 June 1963 (1 of 3)*

are not fully free. They are not yet freed from the bonds of injustice. They are not yet freed from social and economic oppression, and this nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free.

We preach freedom around the world, and we mean it, and we cherish our freedom here at home, but are we to say to the world, and much more importantly, to each other that this is a land of the free except for the Negroes; that we have no second-class citizens except Negroes; that we have no class or caste system, no ghettos, no master race except with respect to Negroes?

Now the time has come for this nation to fulfill its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them. The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, North and South, where legal remedies are not at hand. Redress is sought in the streets, in demonstrations, parades and protests which create tensions and threaten violence and threatens lives.

We face, therefore, a moral crisis as a country and as a people. It cannot be met by repressive police action. It cannot be left to increased demonstrations in the streets. It cannot be quieted by token moves or talk. It is a time to act in the Congress, in your state and local legislative body, and, above all, in all of our daily lives. It is not enough to pin the blame on others, to say this is a problem of one section of the country or another, or deplore the fact that we face. A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all.

Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as reality.

Next week I shall ask the Congress of the United States to act, to make a commitment it has not fully made in this century to the proposition that race has no place in American life or law. The federal judiciary has upheld that proposition in a series of forthright cases. The executive branch has adopted that proposition in the conduct of its affairs, including employment of federal personnel, the use of federal facilities, and the sale of federally-financed housing.

But there are other necessary measures which only the Congress can provide, and they must be provided at this session. The old code of equity law under which we live commands for every wrong a remedy, but in too many communities, in too many parts of the country, wrongs are inflicted on Negro citizens as there are no remedies at law. Unless the Congress acts, their only remedy is in the street.

I am, therefore, asking the Congress to enact legislation giving all Americans the right to be served in facilities which are open to the public — hotels, restaurants, theaters, retail stores and similar establishments. This seems to me to be an elementary right. Its denial is an arbitrary indignity that no American in 1963 should have to endure, but many do.

I have recently met with scores of business leaders urging them to take voluntary action to end this discrimination and I have been encouraged by their response, and in the last two weeks over 75 cities have seen progress made in desegregating these kinds of facilities. But many are unwilling to act alone, and for this reason, nationwide legislation is needed if we are to move this problem from the streets to the courts. I am also asking Congress to authorize the federal government to participate more fully in lawsuits designed to end segregation in public education. We have succeeded in persuading many districts to desegregate voluntarily. Dozens have admitted Negroes without violence. Today a Negro is attending a state-supported institution in every one of our 50 States, but the pace is very slow.

Too many Negro children entering segregated grade schools at the time of the Supreme Court's decision nine years ago will enter segregated high schools this fall, having suffered a loss which can never be restored. The lack of an adequate education denies the Negro a chance to get a decent job.

The orderly implementation of the Supreme Court decision, therefore, cannot be left solely to those who may not have the economic resources to carry the legal action or who may be subject to harassment.

Other features will be also requested, including greater protection for the right to vote. But legislation, I repeat, cannot solve this problem alone. It must be solved in the homes of every American in every community across our country.

In this respect, I want to pay tribute to those citizens North and South who have been working in their communities to make life better for all. They are acting not out of a sense of legal duty, but out of a sense of human decency.

Like our soldiers and sailors in all parts of the world, they are meeting freedom's challenge on the firing line, and I salute them for their honor and their courage.

My fellow Americans, this is a problem which faces us all — in every city of the North as well as the South. Today there are Negroes unemployed two or three times as many compared to whites, inadequate in education, moving into the large cities, unable to find work, young people particularly out of work without hope, denied equal rights, denied the opportunity to eat at a restaurant or lunch counter or go to a movie theater, denied the right to a decent education, denied almost today the right to attend a state university even though qualified. It seems to me that these are matters which concern us all, not merely presidents or congressmen or governors, but every citizen of the United States.

This is one country. It has become one country because all of us and all the people who came here had an equal chance to develop their talents.

We cannot say to ten percent of the population that you can't have that right; that your children can't have the chance to develop whatever talents they have; that the only way that they are going to get their rights is to go into the streets and demonstrate. I think we owe them and we owe ourselves a better country than that. Therefore, I am asking for your help in making it easier for us to move ahead and to provide the kind of equality of treatment which we would want ourselves; to give a chance for every child to be educated to the limit of his talents.

As I have said before, not every child has an equal talent or an equal ability or an equal motivation, but they should have the equal right to develop their talent and their ability and their motivation to make something of themselves.

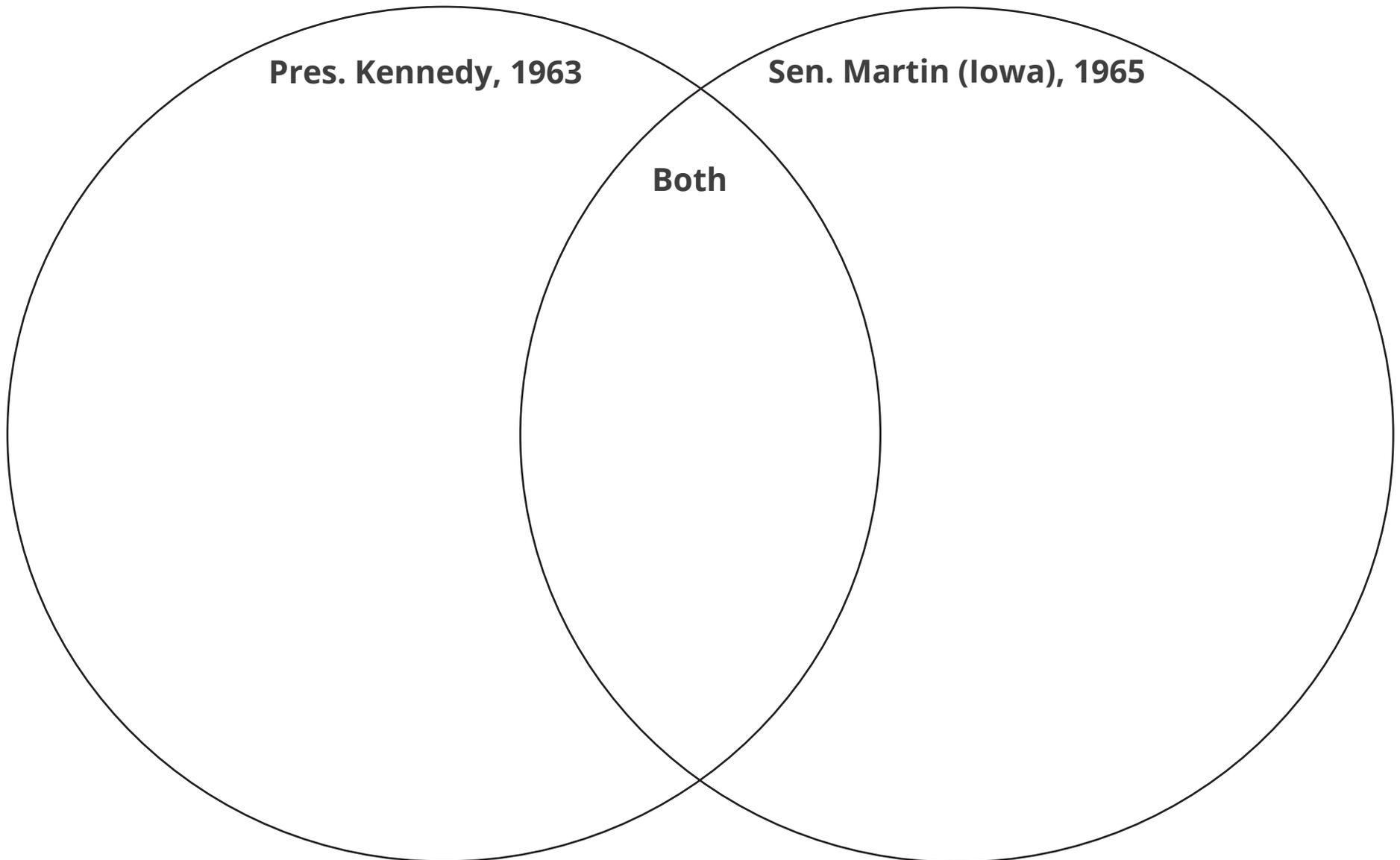
We have a right to expect that the Negro community will be responsible, will uphold the law, but they have a right to expect that the law will be fair; that the Constitution will be color blind, as Justice Harlan said at the turn of the century.

This is what we are talking about and this is a matter which concerns this country and what it stands for, and in meeting it I ask the support of all of our citizens.

Thank you very much.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Comparison of Two Speeches on Civil Rights



CIVIL RIGHTS

The problem of ending racial segregation and bringing a full measure of civil rights ~~to~~ to ALL Americans ~~throughout~~ in ALL parts of the country, has been met head-on and is proving to be one of the toughest of current domestic problems. Everyone now admits that it is a problem which will take a long time to solve fully, ~~and~~ one which requires a maximum of effort and patience and understanding on all ~~sides~~ sides.

To many of you, it may seem like an unduly long process. On the other hand, those ~~opponents~~ who have been accustomed to racial segregation and to the discriminations which we now seek to end, contend that ~~the practices and~~ manner<sup>A</sup> of living which ~~has~~ <sup>HAS</sup> developed over many decades, cannot be ~~discarded~~ <sup>OUTLAWED</sup> overnight in favor of <sup>A</sup> diametrically opposed manner<sup>A</sup> of living.

~~There is at least a limited degree of logic and justice in their argument. But conceding that the goal of equality for all will take some time and cannot be achieved overnight, there then arises the question of what is reasonable speed and how much delay is necessary. That, basically, is the core of today's civil rights ~~problem~~ problem.~~

The Supreme Court first decreed an end to <sup>racial</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>100% IN</sup> segregated public schools in 1954. Today, segregated schools are a thing of the past throughout the north. ~~Many~~ Segregation has been largely ended in the so-called border states. <sup>SO-CALLED "DEEP SOUTH"</sup> But the problem remains in the ~~southern~~ states, in some of which there has been a token ~~in~~ racial integration of public schools but several of which are fighting to the bitter end against any integration, even to the point of closing down those schools to which admittance of negroes has been ordered by Federal courts.

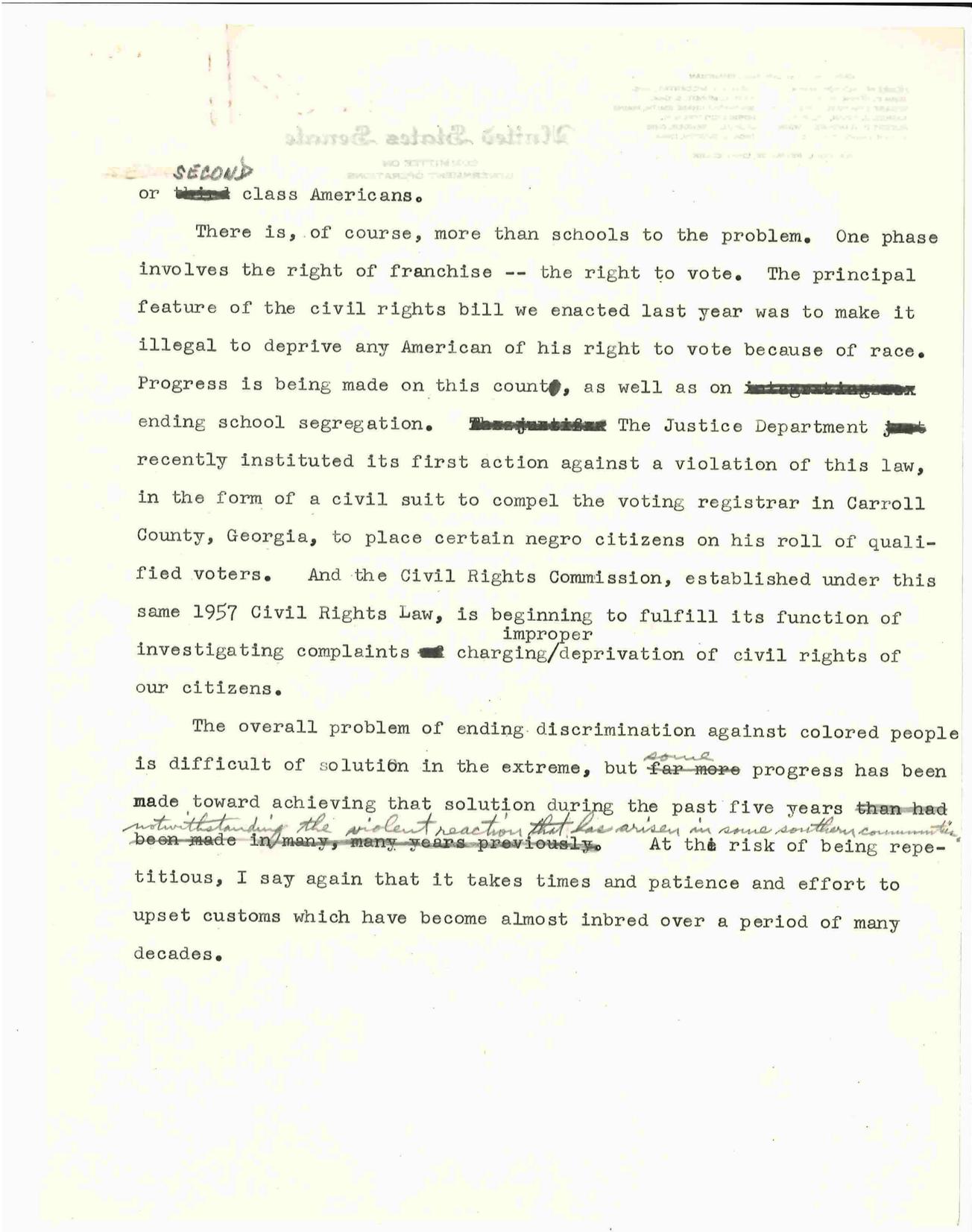
Iowa U.S. Congressman and Senator Thomas E. Martin explains current work on desegregating schools and ensuring equal rights for all races in 1965. Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1965 (1 of 3)

James E. Martin, Senator

To some of us in the north, it appears on the surface that these southern states are blatantly flouting the authority of the Federal Government. In a sense, that may be true. But the real issue here is to ~~make~~ <sup>MAKE</sup> the people of these states ~~realize~~ <sup>REALIZE</sup> the basic truth that our Constitution never was meant to be a document to bestow its rights and privileges only on a favored segment of our American people, but that rather it was intended to -- and does -- guarantee those rights and privileges to ALL Americans. ~~and as they have affirmatively demonstrated~~ In the eyes of ~~the~~ our Constitution and our laws enacted under it, every American is entitled to these rights and privileges, regardless of race, creed or color. The people of the south already are coming to realize this basic fact. ~~It~~ <sup>THIS</sup> is evidenced by the growing ~~opinion~~ public feeling, in those communities where schools ~~are~~ have been closed rather than obey court orders ~~for~~ <sup>ENDING</sup> racial ~~integration~~ <sup>SEGREG</sup>, that no ill effects need be anticipated merely because white and negro children attend the same school. More and more, the people of these unfortunate communities are realizing that it is far better to keep their schools open ~~on~~ on a racially-integrated basis, <sup>IT IS</sup> than <sup>A</sup> to allow their schools to be closed in a futile protest against ending a practice which from its very inception improperly and illegally deprived ~~in~~ some American citizens of some of the rights and privileges guaranteed them by our Constitution.

But this awakening ~~awareness~~ still is only a stirring awareness among some of our southern people, and the awareness must spread far wider before full integration can be achieved peacefully. It will be done ultimately, but not until the South as a whole ~~recognizes~~ <sup>RECOGNIZES</sup> that under <sup>OUR</sup> ~~the~~ Constitution, ~~an American citizen is an American and~~ <sup>AMERICANS</sup> there is no provision for ~~dividing them~~ classifying ~~them~~ as first,

Iowa U.S. Congressman and Senator Thomas E. Martin explains current work on desegregating schools and ensuring equal rights for all races in 1965. Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1965 (2 of 3)



Iowa U.S. Congressman and Senator Thomas E. Martin explains current work on desegregating schools and ensuring equal rights for all races in 1965. *Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1965 (3 of 3)*

## Original Speech by Sen. Thomas Martin

The problem of ending racial **segregation** and bringing a full measure of **civil rights** to ALL Americans in ALL parts of the country, has been met head-on and is proving to be one of the toughest of current domestic problems. Everyone now admits that it is a problem which will take a long time to solve fully, one which requires a maximum of effort and patience and understanding on all sides.

To many of you, it may seem like an unduly long process. On the other hand, those who have been accustomed to racial **segregation** and to the **discriminations** which we now seek to end, contend that a manner of living which has developed over many decades, cannot be outlawed overnight in favor of diametrically opposed manner of living.

There is at least a limited degree of logic and justice in their argument. But conceding that the goal of equality for all will take some time and cannot be achieved overnight, there then arises the question of what is reasonable speed and how much delay is necessary. That, basically, is the core of today's **civil rights** problem.

The **Supreme Court** first decreed an end to racial **segregation** in public schools in 1954. Today, segregated schools are a thing of the past throughout the north. **Segregation** has been largely ended in the so-called border states. But the problem remains in the so-called "deep south" states, in some of which there has been a token racial integration of public schools but several of which are fighting to the bitter end against any integration, even to the point of closing down those schools to which admittance of negroes has been ordered by Federal courts.

To some of us in the north, it appears on the surface that these southern states are blatantly flouting the authority of the Federal Government. In a sense, that may be true. But the real issue here is to make the people of these states realize the basic truth that our Constitution never was meant to be a document to bestow its rights and privileges only on a flavored segment of our American people, but that rather it was intended to -- and does -- guarantee those rights and privileges to ALL Americans. In the eyes of our Constitution and our laws enacted under it, every American is entitled to these rights and privileges, regardless of race, creed or color. The people of the south already are coming to realize this basic fact. This is evidenced by the growing public feeling, in those communities where

## Paraphrased for Upper Elementary Students

The problem of ending racial **segregation** and bringing a full measure of **civil rights** to ALL Americans in ALL parts of the country, has been met head-on and is proving to be one of the toughest problems of our time. Everyone now admits that it is a problem which will take a long time to solve fully, one which requires a maximum of effort and patience and understanding on all sides.

To many of you, it may seem like an unnecessarily long process. On the other hand, those who are used to racial **segregation** and to the **discriminations** that we are trying to end, say that a way of life that has developed over many decades cannot be outlawed overnight and changed into the opposite way of life.

There is at least a limited degree of logic and justice in their opinion. But the goal of equality for all will take some time and cannot be achieved overnight raises the question of what is a reasonable speed and how much delay is the right thing to do. That, basically, is the core of today's **civil rights** problem.

The **Supreme Court** first decreed to end racial **segregation** in public schools in 1954. Today, segregated schools are a thing of the past throughout the north. **Segregation** has been largely ended in the so-called border states. But the problem remains in the so-called "deep south" states. In some of the deep south states there has been a small amount of racial integration of public schools, but several communities are fighting to the bitter end against any integration, even to the point of closing down the public schools because the Federal courts have ordered them to allow negroes students to attend.

To some of us in the north, it appears on the surface that these southern states are openly disobeying the authority of the Federal Government. In a sense, that may be true. But the real issue here is to make the people of these states realize the basic truth that our Constitution never was meant to be a document to give rights and privileges only to a flavored part of our American people, but that rather it was intended to -- and does -- guarantee those rights and privileges to ALL Americans. In the eyes of our Constitution and our laws enacted under it, every American is entitled to these rights and privileges, regardless of race, creed, or color. The people of the south already are coming to realize this basic fact. There is a growing

## Original Speech by Sen. Thomas Martin

schools have been closed rather than obey court orders ending racial **segregation**, that no ill effects need be anticipated merely because white and negro children attend the same school. More and more, the people of these unfortunate communities are realizing that it is far better to keep their schools open on a racially-integrated basis, than it is to allow their schools to be closed in a futile protest against ending a practice which from its very inception improperly and illegally deprived some American citizens of some of the rights and privileges guaranteed them by our Constitution.

But this awakening still is only a stirring awareness among some of our southern people, and the awareness must spread far wider before full integration can be achieved peacefully. It will be done ultimately, but not until the South as a whole recognizes that under our Constitution, there is no provision for classifying Americans as first or second class Americans

There is, of course, more than schools to the problem. One phase involves the right of franchise -- the right to vote. The principal feature of the **civil rights** bill we enacted last year was to make it illegal to deprive any American of his right to vote because of race. Progress is being made on this count, as well as on ending school **segregation**. The Justice Department recently instituted its first action against a violation of this law, in the form of a civil suit to compel the voting registrar in Carroll County, Georgia, to place certain negro citizens on his roll of qualified voters. And the **Civil Rights** Commission, established under this same 1957 **Civil Rights** Law, is beginning to fulfill its function of investigating complaints charging improper deprivation of **civil rights** of our citizens.

The overall problem of ending **discrimination** against colored people is difficult of solution in the extreme, but some progress has been made toward achieving that solution during the past five years notwithstanding the violent reactions that has arisen in some southern communities. At the risk of being repetitious, I say again that it takes time and patience and effort to upset customs which have become almost inbred over a period of many decades.

## Paraphrased for Upper Elementary Students

public feeling, in those communities where schools have been closed rather than obey court orders ending racial **segregation**, that there is no need to worry about something bad happening because white and negro children attend the same school. More and more, the people of these unfortunate communities are realizing that it is far better to keep their schools open on a desegregated basis, than it is to allow their schools to be closed in a pointless protest against ending a way of life which from its very beginning improperly and illegally took away some of the rights and privileges guaranteed to American citizens by our Constitution.

But this awakening still is only beginning among some of our southern people, and the awareness must spread far wider before full integration can be achieved peacefully. It will be done ultimately, but not until the South as a whole recognizes that under our Constitution, there is no place for classifying Americans as first or second class Americans.

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The overall problem of ending **discrimination** against colored people is extremely difficult, but some progress has been made toward achieving that goal during the past five years even with the violent reactions that have arisen in some southern communities. At the risk of repeating myself, I say again that it takes time and patience and effort to reverse customs which have become widely accepted over a period of many decades.



# Analyze a Source

**Type of Sources (circle one)**

Text

Image

Map

Video

Other:

**Source Title****Creator(s)****Date Created or Published**

1. Describe what you see in the source. Who is in it? What are they doing? What is the story that the creator is trying to tell with this source?

2. Where did this source take place? *geographic location (i.e. place); era in history (i.e. time)*

3. Why do you think this source was created?

4. Who is the creator's intended audience?

5. What questions does this source lead you to ask?

# Assessment: School Desegregation

Separate but equal schools are unfair because...

School Desegregation in Iowa

School Desegregation in the South