

# On the Homefront:

**The Texas Civil Rights Movement, 1920-1980**

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# Organizing Concepts

1. Texas was not a Black/White binary and always had three or more distinct cultural groups.
2. Growing urban centers in Texas powered the Civil Rights movement.
3. Local events and realities shaped the national and international environment as much or more than the national and international shaped the local.

# Organizing Concepts Evidence

Demographic Change: (divided by language use and parents' point of origin)

	1887 State Census	1930 Census	1980 Census
TX Total	2,015,000	5,825,000	14,229,191
S Anglo	1,148,550 (57%)	3,145,500 (54%)	N/A
N Anglo	141,050 ( 7%)	349,500 (6%)	N/A
Total Anglo	1,289,600 (64%)	3,495,000 (60%)	5,100,000 (45%)
African American	403,000 (20%)	873,750 (15%)	1,368,000 (12%)
German/Czech/Eur.	181,350 (9%)	466,000 (8%)	1,315,000 (12%)
Tejano	80,600 (4%)	699,000 (12%)	2,495,000 (22%)
Other	60,450 (3%)	291,250 (5%)	1,132,000 (9%)

Percentage Urban in Texas (over 2,500)			
1920	1930	1970	1980
32.4%	41%	79.7%	79.6%

# I. Context and Trajectory, 1920-1980

- What do the numbers and the image mean? Do they confirm or counter what you previously thought?
- Cultural and linguistic borders
- Borders connect and borders divide
- Aspirational racism
- Two Civil Rights Movements?
- Urban Centered self-help
- Remember – From the bottom up; not just the top down

## II. William J. Durham (1896-1970)

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/durham-william-j>

- WWI veteran
- Sherman legal practice
- George Hughes lynching and riot ~ May 1930

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/sherman-riot-of-1930>

- Move to Dallas in 1943
- Increased involvement in Civil Rights cases

# III. Sweatt v. Painter (1950)

- Durham one of the lead attorneys – great example of the bottom up
- Backed by the Houston and Dallas NAACP
- No law schools for African Americans in Texas
- Failed the test of separate and equal used at the time (Plessy v Ferguson)
- Precursor to Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

# IV. Voting Rights

- Poll Tax amendment of 1902
- Evolution of the All-white Primary in the Democratic Party-state law by the 1920s
- Smith v Allwright (1944) out of Houston  
<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/smith-lonnie-e>
- evolution of the Lilly White Republicans
- The vote meant something– case of Harry Wurzbach, San Antonio, and anti-lynching legislation
- Voting Rights Act (1965) and Barbara Jordan
- Poll Tax amendment (1964)- later extended by the courts to include state elections

# V. Concurrent movements – Tejano activism

- J. T. Canales and the Texas Rangers, 1919

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/canales-jose-tomas>

- LULAC, 1930

- G. I. Forum Hector P. Garcia, 1948

- *Hernandez v Texas* (1954) ~ LULAC and American G.I. Forum ~ jury of your peers

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/hernandez-v-state-of-texas>

- Whiteness and the middle-class Tejano– drive to be recognized as White?
- White but not equal
- Whiteness was more than skin color or ethnicity

# V. Concurrent movements – Tejano activism

(continued)

- Operation Wetback - 1954 - some 80,000 deported and perhaps another 500,000 left to avoid deportation by government authorities
- Supported by the American Federation of Labor and the American G.I. Forum
- Henry B. Gonzalez (1916-2000) and the special case of San Antonio (the vote matters)

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/gonzalez-henry-barbosa>

# VI. Equal Opportunity for an Education

- Tri-part segregated school ~ finally ended in 1957 for ethnic Mexicans (complete end of legal segregation took till the early 1970s)
- Very slow actual integration
- World War II led to more aggressive response to education inequality
- American G. I. Forum took the lead
- *Delgado v Bastrop ISD* (1948) ~ whiteness and separate schools  
<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/delgado-v-bastrop-isd>

# VI. Equal Opportunity for an Education

(continued)

- NAACP ~ Houston and Dallas chapters took the lead
- *Sweatt v Painter* (1950)
- *Brown v Board of Education* (1954)
- Early desegregation but slow integration at the University of Texas
- Sports in schools
- UT in 1969 / Texas Western in 1966

<http://transformations.utep.edu/?p=2011>

<http://transformations.utep.edu/?tag=basketball>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6-QpNV\\_lww](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6-QpNV_lww)

# VII. LBJ to Ronald Reagan ~

## The top down meets the bottom up

- Lyndon Baines Johnson and Modern Texas – 1964 – continued dominance of the Democratic party & LBJ
- Lyndon Johnson, “We Shall Overcome” (March 15, 1965)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxEauRq1WxQ>

- Full version

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVWn89vGJys>

29:00 Real hero

37:00 Cotula

41: 00 pursuit of the American Dream

<http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?year=1964>

# VII. LBJ to Ronald Reagan ~

## The top down meets the bottom up

(continued)

- Ronald Reagan and the 1980 election ~ Neshoba County, Mississippi August 1980  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX\\_eTDP-CSg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX_eTDP-CSg)
- Aspirational racism, borders between groups, and party politics
- The urban trajectory and tri-part (multi-part) Texas
- Into the future– What persists and what changes?
- *Question to consider:* How do you explain the movement of White Texans from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party after 1980?