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**BLACK AMERICAN WOMEN'S STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS
IN THE UNITED STATES
(1830-1960)**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

My mother, “BENFRIHA .W” and my father “EL-HADJ”

My brothers “A. HAFID and NOR .D”

My sisters “SOUSOU. JIJ and WASSIA”

All extended family and for all whom I know

My beloved friends

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Abstract

People from all over the world went to the United States to benefit from this land of freedom. Also, the import of Black Slaves from Africa in the Colonial Era was followed by the most acute forms of discrimination. In addition to this; the American society was based on life, freedom and search for happiness; all of this benefited only whites. Furthermore, Black Women were forced to come to American Colonies were enslaved and exploited by whites; they spent their lives under torture, race and discrimination, and were deprived of their basic civil rights. These Black Women fought to secure their right to vote and to regain their status. Through their struggle they reached an important role. In the early 1950s they tried to gain political power, the right to vote and equality in public places. This research deals with the role of Black Women in the most important events that changed American society during the twentieth century with the aim to highlight the evolution of their lives within the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and the struggle and resistance to continued discrimination.

List of Abbreviations

NAACP: the National Association of Colored Women

KKK: the Ku Klux Klan

US: the United States

YCWA: the Young Christian Women's Association

WTUL: Women's Trade Union League

SCLC: the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

UL: the Urban League

SNCC: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

CORE: Congress of Racial Equality

WPC: the Women's Political Council

MIA: the Montgomery Improvement Association

General Introduction

Women have always been victims of the hardest times in society trying to gain rights for themselves, especially when it came to success or even expressing their opinion on subjects such as politics, culture, and economics. Of course, black American women faced more difficulties when trying to achieve peace and defend their rights. With all the hardships experienced by black women, one attended the emergence of movements that would enable them to control their lives.

The story of Black Women began in the 17th century, when they were brought from Africa to the American colonies. From their arrival in America they suffered the worst forms of exploitation and humiliation on the ground they were Black. They were sold to American slavers and were strictly punished if they tried to rebel.

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

What is the role of Black Women in the Abolition Movement and during the Civil War?

What is the role of Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement?

What is the main event in this movement?

What famous organizations did this Movement bring?

My dissertation has been divided in two main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the historical background of Black Women. To that intent, their sufferings before the Abolition of slavery, through the Abolition Movement, and during the Civil War and in the Reconstruction Era have been tackled.

In the second chapter, I focus on the struggle of Black Women for Civil and Political Rights. Moreover, this chapter illustrates the role of Black Women in the twentieth century. After analysis, it seems that in spite of their status as women and their marginalization, African American Women have contributed to major changes in the social and political life of blacks in America during the 20th century and subsequently their struggle will help blacks all over the world regain dignity

Chapter One

Chapter One: Historical Background of Black Women in the United States

The Black Woman lived a respectable life in Africa. When she came to America she became a slave by losing everything they had enjoyed in her country. She lived under the Slave System but applied her African Traditions. In addition to this, she resisted Slavery for a long time in order to achieve her freedom. Moreover, the Black Woman participated in Anti-Slavery Movements. She fought for Abolition and for the realization of the Right of Women. So, in this chapter will be devoted to her life through Slavery, in Abolitionist Movement, during the Civil War, and in the Reconstruction Era.

I.1. History of Black Women

African Americans are an ethnic group of African descent. This term is used to refer to people of African descent who live in America and most of them are African. They were enslaved by slave traders.¹ African Black Women were brought to America in the early nineteenth century. The majority came from West Africa². They brought with them their religious beliefs, languages, musical styles and many other aspects of their communities³. Black Women have played several important roles in the history of the United States since The American revolution. Many of these Women are key figures in the struggle for civil rights. They also made several contributions to the arts, to science and to civil society⁴.

African Women contributed to the enlightenment of the farm system in America. They have been exploited and have given their energies to build wealth for their owners; their work was by force and unpaid⁵. They were human property, ill-treated and humiliated, their chances of life were limited and their ambition was to have freedom only.⁶ However; African Women escaped and rebelled. Also they challenged the power of their masters despite their suffering and their struggle for their survival of their race.

¹ Gilliam. *African American History*, available under ccby.sa

² Gail, Collins. *America's Women*, Harper Collins Publishers, 2003. P140

³ Rose, Rodgers. *The Black Women*, UK, sage publications, 1980. p16

⁴ Jon Lewis, Johnson. *Women's History*, article website

⁵ Robin, D. G. Kelly and Lewis, Earl. *A History of African Americans*, Oxford University press, 2000, p79

⁶ Bell, Hooks, *Ain't a Woman*, Black Women and Feminism, South and Press, 1981, p41

I.2.Black Women during the Abolition Slavery

Slavery has returned to America since the discovery of the New World and led by the country to start the African Slave Trade in Portugal. This trade was first exploited on plantation. Slavery meant many things to many people, but overall slaves themselves can explain this through their voice and history. Also it can be difficult to understand the lives of slaves without a full description of their categories⁷. One example that identified the meaning of slaves was in Hurber's article:

As slaves were forbidden to speak their own languages or practice their own religions, they began to mix their native cultures with the European and Native American cultures that existed in America and through. The English language, they found new ways of entertaining, educating and expressing themselves⁸

The slave's exploitation of the sexual sex of Black Women was one of the most important factors distinguishing the experience of slavery for males and females. Throughout the period of slavery in America, white society believed Black Women to be eccentric fungal beings. Because the ideal White Woman, in the 19th century, was very modest, she made African Women seem sexually active as a white man's waste and imagination. In slavery relationships, teachers often felt they had the right to engage in sexual activity with Black Women. Sometimes female slaves accepted progress, hoping that these relations will increase the chances of either their liberation or their children by the master. However, slave owners took slaves by force⁹.

Slavery was a moral issue which involved White and Black Women in politics. Black Women participated in the struggle to end slavery in the United States. They also participated in all movements that protested slavery and worked to abolish it.¹⁰

⁷ Bartleby.com, magazine website, Bartleby bookstore, copyright 2016

⁸ www.Hurber.com , article website

⁹ *Slavery and the making of America* website, 'the slave experience : men, women and gender'

¹⁰ Gail, Collins. *America's Women*, Harper Collins Publishers, 2003, p165-170

I.3 -Black Women in the Abolitionist Movement

The Abolitionist Movement was a Social and Political Policy of Emancipation of all Slaves to end racial Discrimination and Segregation. Also it provides an opportunity to understand the impact of race and gender on the lives of black women¹¹. They established a black women's activism based on their own experience. Black Women's Activism became popular in the 1960s, as a result of the Civil Rights Movement¹². Also it's emerged as a political and social were focused on their agenda¹³.

One of the most prominent Black Women who made important contributions to the Abolitionist Movement was 'Sojourner Truth' (1797-1883). She was born in slavery as Isabella in New York. It's one of the most powerful defenders of human rights in the 19th century. Also, it's the most well-known and respected of the Abolitionist Movement. She suffered from the misery of her sale when she was nine years old and was brutally beaten and abused. However, she became the first Black Women anti-slavery speaker.

Sojourner Truth known as one of the most famous Abolitionist and Women's Rights speeches in American history, 'AINT I A WOMAN?' speak about the Rights of African Americans and Women during and after the Civil War. She delivered an unforgettable speech by declaring:

Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man - when I could get it - and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? ¹⁴

¹¹ History.com, Abolitionist Movement

¹² Jamilah Lemieux, Black Feminism goes viral, March 3,2014

¹³ Marry Ann, Weathers. An argument for black women's liberation as a revolutionary force

¹⁴ National Park Service. *Women's rights*, national historical park.' Website article'

Sarah Mapp Douglas (1806-1882) is a writer and educator, the daughter of ‘Robert and Grace Douglas’ in Black Abolitionist family in Philadelphia. She also served as a registration secretary, librarian and director of Philadelphia Women’s Anti-Slavery Association. Also, she contributed to courses in literature science and anatomy¹⁵.

I.4-Black Women during the Civil War

The American Civil War (also called War between the United States and the War of Secession)¹⁶. Also, Civil War is the central event in the historical consciousness of America. This War was the largest and most dangerous conflict in the Western World, and Slavery was one of its main causes¹⁷. Moreover, the Civil War has been an important pillar of dialogue and discussion on the meaning of freedom, self-employment citizenship. However, African American Women have played key roles in ensuring that Blacks remain in slavery and Black societies in freedom. In slavery and freedom, Black Women have established networks centered on Women to serve the needs of the Black community¹⁸.

The Civil War main objective was to rebuild union, the elimination of Slavery and the Emancipation of all slaves. Black Women began to liberate them under varying conditions. Mothers who fled during the Civil War took great risks, ran away with young children in the middle of the night and walked for several days until reaching the union lines.

Black Women faced enormous barriers during the Civil War. However, they have created a distinctive world view based on the Liberalization Policy that helped them negotiate their new lives during and after the Civil War. They have faced power with the tools available to them and resisted policies that block their freedom¹⁹.

During the Civil War Sojourner Truth contributed to the recruitment of Black Soldiers in the army of the Union to collect food and clothing after the war she tried to give the land from the federal government to the slaves.

¹⁵ SHARON, PRESLEY. *Black Women Abolitionists and the fight for freedom in the 19th century*, Libertarianism.org

¹⁶ Encyclopedia Britannica.inc, *American Civil War*, United States History

¹⁷ DR. JAMES, MC PHERSON, Civil War trust, a brief overview of the American Civil War.

¹⁸ Karan, Cook Bell. *Black perspectives*. ‘Black Women agency and the Civil War’

¹⁹Karan, Cook Bell. *Black perspectives*. Black Women agency and the Civil War. website solution, article

In 1864, she was received by the President Abraham Lincoln. When he issued the Emancipation Proclamation many slaves fled to Washington, DC. in search of freedom the government was not prepared for such a flow, there was no place to live little food and no jobs²⁰. President Lincoln told the New York newspaper that preserving the Union was his main goal in the Civil War not the Abolition of Slavery. Lincoln said: “If I could save the union without freeing any slave i would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all slaves I would do it.”²¹

During the Civil War Black Women worked as nurses. The United States has also employed many African American Women as first-class Women²². Among the black women who worked as nurses one finds Harriet Tubman. She is probably one of the best known figures in the Civil War. Was born in Slavery²³.she was worked for the union army as a nurse, cook and spy. Also; her experience of leading slaves along an underground railway was particularly useful because she knew the land well. It drafted a group of former slaves to search for insurgent camps and report on the movement of confederate forces²⁴.

Susie King Taylor (1848-1912) became famous for voluntary service during the civil war. She was the first African American nurse in The Union Army²⁵. She was the daughter of slaves in Georgia. Her owner agrees to go to Savannah to live with her grandmother²⁶. Susan learned to read by attending a secret school, there were taught by Black Women. She taught Union soldiers how to read and write when they were out of service. Moreover, Mrs. Taylor was the only African American Women published memoir of her experiences in wartime; this memoir was titled ‘A Black Woman’s Civil War Memoirs’. Also, she had two husbands through her life, ’Edward King and Russell Taylor²⁷. In 1862, Susie fled to St. Simons Island with many African Americans, Taken at that time by The Union forces²⁸.

²⁰ Maggie, Maclean. *Civil War Women*. Women of the Civil War and Reconstruction Era 1849-1877. posted on 2006

²¹ The week website: Lincoln reveals *the real goal of the Civil War*. West wing reports.

²² Maggie, Maclean. *Black Civil War Nurses* article, posted on 2014

²³ Civil war trust article, biography *Harriet Tubman*.

²⁴ The library of congress, ‘America’s library’ America’s story article.

²⁵ Maggie, Maclean. Civil war women. *Black civil war nurses* posted on 2014.

²⁶ Ronald, E. Butchart. *History and archaeology*, New Georgia encyclopedia

²⁷ Kani, Saburi, Ayubu. *Black art depot today*. African American history, art and culture

²⁸ Ronald, E. Butchart. New Georgia encyclopedia, ‘history and archaeology’ article.

Clara Barton was the most Civil War nurse. It established an agency to provide troops and participated in many battles. Also, Clara was interested with wounded soldiers from both sides. She established the American Red Cross. Moreover, Barton personally collected food, clothing and medical assistance for The Union Army²⁹.

I.5-Black Women in the Reconstruction Era

In American History “Reconstruction” is the idiom generally applied to the Era (1865-1877). Through which The United States sought to bring order of the massive social, political, economic ...wrought by secession and the Civil War³⁰. At the time of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln formed a plan for the reunification of the United States and the Confederation, and this plan was called ‘Reconstruction’. Also, its goal was to rebuild the nation after the Civil War³¹. One of the steps of Reconstruction was the Emancipation Proclamation. Moreover, the Emancipation Proclamation led to more African Americans serving in The Union’s Army. Also, it means liberation³².

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 was the first United States federal law³³. The main objective was to protect The Civil Rights of people of African descent born in the United States or brought to the United States³⁴. It was passed by Congress. Moreover, it included the Right to own property, the Right to make contracts and the Right to access to the courts³⁵.

Reconstruction was an era of political conflict and changes in the nature of the United States government, Also the African American society wanted land, political power, and equality and freed from slavery. Most Black sought to renew the economy by built their own institutions like; hospitals, schools and churches³⁶.

²⁹ Alice, P. Stein. History.com. *Americas civil war*, article on 1999

³⁰ Richard, Zuczek. *encyclopedia of the reconstruction era* p 32

³¹ Susan, M. Latta. *The reconstruction era*, published by Abdo publishing, 2015. p9

³² Ibid, p 10

³³ White Deborah (2012). *freedom on my mind* Boston Bedford/ St. Martin’s p.391

³⁴ Text of civil rights act of 1866 website, teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document

³⁵ Teaching American history.org. document of the civil rights act of 1866

³⁶ Black History in America. Website article about Reconstruction Era.

The passage of Thirteenth Amendment Abolished Slavery in the United States. So, the Amendment read: Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime where of the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction³⁷.

The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees all persons born in America. It also guarantees equal citizenship, equal protection under the law, Civil and Legal Rights to African American's and slaves freed after the American Civil War. The full text of The Amendment is:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws³⁸.

The Fifteenth Amendment guarantees African American men the Right to vote. And they denied Black their right to vote under the Fifteenth Amendment. The Fifteenth Amendment states:

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude³⁹.

Susan B. Anthony was an American social interest and activist in the field of Women's Rights. Also, she played a central role in the Movement of Women's Right to vote 'Women's Suffrage Movement which organized for equal Rights for both Women and African American. Black Women began their demands for Civil Rights, including the Right to vote⁴⁰. Moreover, she was a prominent pioneer in American Civil Rights played a pivotal role in the Women's Rights Movement of the nineteenth century to introduce Women's Right to vote in the United States⁴¹.

³⁷ History.com, website, black history: the thirteenth amendment to the US Constitution

³⁸ Encyclopedia Britanica.com, 14th amendment by ; the editors of encyclopedia Britannica

³⁹ History.com/topics/black-history. The fifteenth amendment article.

⁴⁰ En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan B. Anthony. The free encyclopedia, article Susan B. Anthony

⁴¹ www.answers.com, Women's suffrage S, B. A

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955) was a child of former slaves in South Carolina. She was a prominent teacher and Civil Rights Activist, and she became the Bethune Cookman College and its president for many years⁴².

The role of Black Women has not changed even after the Civil War. Black Women were subjected to abuse as a male-dominated culture; it was common for a Woman to be abused while a man could do whatever he wanted. Black Women migrated better in the North where their former friends in Abolition of slavery and feminist were ready to educate them and jobs were more open to female. Than in the South allowing for a certain degree of independence and in the North Black Women began to form their own programs such as: The National Association of Colored Women and the NAACP⁴³.

I.6-Civil and Political Rights and the Civil Rights Movement

Civil Rights: Are rights enjoyed by any citizen of a country and apply to all the people within limits. These Rights are granted under the laws of the country. In many countries Civil Rights contain Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Assembly. Civil Rights also contain the Right to own property and to get equal curing from the government and from other people and from private groups. Civil Rights are protected by law and custom. Also; the constitutions of many democracies have a 'Bill of Rights' that describes the people's Liberties and Rights. A well-known example is the United States Bill of Rights⁴⁴.

Today the term 'Civil Rights' is also used to describe the progress of equality for all citizens regardless of race, sex, age, disability, religion or certain other characteristics⁴⁵. Moreover, Civil Rights contain ensuring the physical and mental integrity of the people, life and safety protection from discrimination on grounds such as ; race ,gender, national origin, disability, ethnicity and color⁴⁶

⁴² The biography.com, website article ; Mary McLeod Bethune biography

⁴³ Aaron, Mejia's. Prezi.inc.womenshistory.about.com/farmwomen, timeline history of black women. reconstruction 1920

⁴⁴ Text is available under the creative commons attribution license and the GFDL

⁴⁵ Thomson, Reuters. findlaw article'

⁴⁶The Civil Rights act of 1964, Ourdocuments.go

Political rights:

The name given to the Right and privileges of citizens established by the constitution of the United States and the granting of power to participate in the establishment and management of government⁴⁷. These Rights ensure the positive freedom to contribute to the process of managing the affairs of the society in which the individual lives. Political Rights assume that government processes should be organized to supply opportunities for political participation for all eligible citizens. According to the modern concept of Political Rights; every citizens must have the Right and opportunity without unreasonable restrictions to participate in the management of public affairs, While Political Rights are very much emphasized in the United States. Political Rights involves the ability to participate directly or indirectly in the establishment or management of the government such as: the Right of citizenship, The Right to vote and the Right to hold public office⁴⁸.

Political Rights including natural justice in law such as ; the Right of the accused, including the Right to a Fair Trial, Rights of Participation in Civil society and Politics like ; freedom of Association, the Right to Assemble, the Right to vote and the Right of self-defense⁴⁹.

Civil and Political Rights are the original and principal part of International Human Rights. Also, are a category of Rights that protect the freedom of individuals⁵⁰. as already mentioned Civil and Political Rights are the Rights that restrict the government authorities in general with regard to actions that affect the individual and his independence 'Civil Rights' and allow people to contribute the determination of laws and participation in government 'Political Rights'⁵¹.

⁴⁷ Black's law dictionary free 2nd ed, and the law dictionary

⁴⁸ West's encyclopedia of American law

⁴⁹ The civil right act of 1964.

⁵⁰ Wikipedia.org/wiki/civil and political rights.

⁵¹ Lincoln.edu/criminal justice/he/civil and political.htm. civil and political rights

The Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was a struggle between African Americans in the mid-1950s and late 1960s to obtain Civil Rights equal to the Rights of whites. Including equivalent opportunities in employment, housing and education, also the Right to vote and the Right to be free from racial discrimination. Moreover, this movement sought to restore African Americans the citizenship Rights secured by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.⁵²

The Civil Rights Movement was concentrated in the south. Where the African-American population is concentrated, the Movement has taken three main areas of discrimination: education, social segregation and voting Rights⁵³. The Civil Rights Movement was an era dedicated to the struggle for equal Rights and treatment for African Americans in the United States. During this period, people gathered for social, legal, political and cultural modification to stop discrimination and end segregation⁵⁴.

In conclusion, Black Women were victims of injustice in the American political system. Also, In spite of their suffering Black Women contributed significantly to the Abolitionist Movement and they played a decisive role during the Civil War ,but they were considered American Citizens after the Thirteenth Amendment which included the Abolition of Slavery. Despite this, they are still deprived of the Civil Rights enjoyed by White Citizens. Moreover, Black Women have established their own Organizations to advocate their rights because of the hardships they suffered and have struggled hard for the right to vote.

⁵² West's Encyclopedia of American Law, edition 2.'the free dictionary by farlex

⁵³ Jack, E. Davis. *Civil Rights Movement*. *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*. Grolier Online, website article civil rights movement : an overview

⁵⁴ www.learningtogive.org/civil-rights-movement

Chapter Two

Chapter Two: Black Women's Struggle for Civil and Political Rights

It is always supposed that Black Men were leaders in the struggle for Civil Rights. Also, Black Women played an important role in the Movement, and deserve recognition on the list of Black Activist. During the struggle for Civil Rights, many Heroines appeared but were not as important as Black Men. These Black Women also suffered a lot from beaten, arrested and abused. Also, most of them risked their lives and the lives of their families.

These are some examples of Civil Rights Activists included: Rosa Parks, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ella Baker and many others. These Women struggled for Civil Rights and for the existence of Black Women as well as gaining more Political Power.

II.1. History of Civil Rights

In the contemporary political concept, the term "Civil Rights" is related with the struggle for the equality of Black Americans in the 1950s and 1960s. The goal of this struggle was to guarantee equal citizenship in a liberal democratic state. Civil Rights are the basic legal Rights that every person must enjoy. Which constitute a free and equal citizenship include personal, Political and economic Rights. No modern thinker believes that these Rights can be legitimately denied to a person on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or disability⁵⁵.

The most popular legal application of the term Civil Rights includes the secured Rights of citizens and residents of the United States through legislation and the Constitution. Civil Rights protected by the Constitution include freedom of expression and freedom from discrimination.

The term privileges and immunities is linked to Civil Rights, Privileges and immunities include all Rights of individuals, moreover, privileges involve all the legal benefits of living in the United States, such as the freedom to sell land. And Immunities are the preservation provided by law that prohibits the Government from disturbing the enjoyment of the lives of others.

⁵⁵ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice

The Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution, defines specific Rights for citizens and residents of the United States; No State can strip or limit the Rights ensured by the Constitution. In 1857, the U.S. Supreme Court held, in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, that the Constitution did not apply to African Americans because they were not citizens when writing the Constitution after the Civil War⁵⁶.

In 1866, the Civil Rights Bill known that “All persons born in the United States were to enjoy their rights without regard to race”⁵⁷. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States to the Constitution⁵⁸, also ; known as the Civil War Amendments, were drafted to give Civil and Political Rights to the former slaves⁵⁹.

The Thirteenth Amendment prohibited slavery; it was passed by the United States, Senate on 1865. The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was suggested by congress on 1868, it was stipulated that all persons born on the American land were American citizens, and were under the equal protection of the laws. The Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibited the federal on 1870, it was granted all Black men the Right to vote⁶⁰.

During the period of Reconstruction congress passed a Civil Rights act in 1875⁶¹, providing all people regardless of race and color, equal handling in public accommodations, public transportation. Moreover, this Act did not give the chance for Blacks to gain neither economic power nor improve their social status⁶².

When slavery was abolished at the end of the Civil War, the Southern states formed Black Codes, to protect white supremacy. The Black Codes prohibited many former slaves from voting, serving on juries, owning land, they could not own or carry guns also were forbidden to marry white people. African Americans were also denied of their lands⁶³.

⁵⁶ <https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Civil+Rights>

⁵⁷ history@mail.house.gov. Historical highlights. the civil rights bill of 1866.

⁵⁸ Eric, Foner, *the Reconstruction Amendments: Official Documents as Social History*. Gilderlehrman.org. the Gilder Lehman Institute of American History, n. d. Web. 5 Dec. 2012

⁵⁹ Article reconstruction amendments, the free encyclopedia

⁶⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconstruction_Amendments

⁶¹ Adam, Richards. Study.com, civil rights act of 1875

⁶² Mary Welek, Atwell, (2012). ‘Civil rights act of 1875’ in Wilbur R. Miller. *The social history of crime and punishment in America*, an encyclopedia. p 262-263.

⁶³ www.khanacademy.org/reconstruction. black codes

White Southerners showed their superiority. And Support for reconstruction policies has reduced since the early 1870s and violent acts by white organizations such as Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

The Ku Klux Klan was an organization which founded in 1866; its members conduct a campaign of intimidation and violence pointed at white and black Republican Leaders⁶⁴. Also it was a white supremacist terrorist group that emerged during Reconstruction.

II.2.Black Women and Politics in the 1920s

II.2.1.The Great Migration

The Great Migration was the Movement of about 5 million Blacks of the South in the North and West from 1915and 1960.during the first wave most of Immigrations moved to the Northern cities. Moreover, it was the first huge Black Movement during the World War I, when 454,000 Black Southerners moved to the North. In the 1920s, 800,000 Blacks left the South, followed by 398,000 in the 1930s, and between 1940 and 1960 more than 3.348,000 people left south to the Northern and Western cities.

The economic motives of migration were to escape the cruel economic situations in the South, and the promise of prosperity in the North, since their freeing from slavery. Also, Blacks suffered in rural areas. when the World War I created a demand for workers in Northern factories, many Southern Blacks took advantage of this chance to leave the cruel economic conditions in the South.’ the Great Migration one of the largest internal migrations in the history of the US, changed forever the urban North, the rural South and African America’⁶⁵.

Black Women were permitted to work in factories and many of them enter social work. They became clerks, policewomen and officers; others found jobs in health services like: nurses. Although, Black Women have been employed in many industrial domains. They often refused to be inducted by white employers, the fact that they accepted any job offered to them.

⁶⁴ www.history.com. article Ku Klux Klan

⁶⁵ Available at : <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/great-migration-1915-1960> James M. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Floret Henri, *Black Migration: Movement North, 1900-1920* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1975).

Moreover, White Women also discriminated against Black Women and refused to work side by side with them. Also; Black Women were paid between 10 to 60 percent less than White Women⁶⁶.

One of the most famous Black communities of the North was the New York City Harlem, the cultural capital of Black America during 1920 and 1930. approximately 300.000 Black people arrived in Harlem. Blacks in Harlem became artist, musicians, manifesting in literature and stage performance. Actually they sought to develop a culture of their own from the experiences of African American people creating therefore the Harlem Renaissance⁶⁷.

II.2.2.Black Women in the Progressive Era and their Suffrage

The Progressive Era was a period of spread social activity and political reform throughout the United States that spanned from the 1890s to the 1920s. Also; the main objectives of the Progressive Movement were to eliminate the problems result in industrialization, civilization, immigration and corruption in government. Moreover, many Progressives supported prevention in the United States in order to demolish the political power of local presidents. And at the same time women's suffrage was promoted⁶⁸. In Progressive Era America was a melting pot of millions of immigrants from around the world⁶⁹.

Progressive argued for Women's Suffrage to equality and the White Foundation denied Blacks from voting⁷⁰. Moreover; Ida B. Wells described how African Americans despite their liberation are still far from achieving true liberation because they are denied the right to vote⁷¹. Also, African American Women often became dependents of their families, working in white households and in the marketplace⁷². It was a journalist had written about the horrors of Lynching in the South, Wells work can be considered worrisome because it has led to the development of the Anti-Lynching campaign. Moreover, Booker T. Washington was an educator who founded the 'Tuskegee Institute'. Washington insisted that African Americans should learn careers that would provide them with the opportunity to be Progressive citizens, rather than combating discrimination.

⁶⁶ Paula, Giddings. *When and where i enter*. Harper Collins publishers, 1984. p 143-144

⁶⁷ Steven Watson. *The Harlem Renaissance*, hub of African American culture 1920-1930.

⁶⁸ Available at : [www.definitions.net/definition/progressive era](http://www.definitions.net/definition/progressive%20era). Article, progressive era definitions

⁶⁹ Rebecca, Valentine. Lawrence W. Baker. *Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Thomson Gale Corporation, 2007. P.VIII

⁷⁰ Southern, David W. *the Progressive Era and Race reaction and reform.1900-1917 wheeling* 2005. 25print

⁷¹ Barnett Ida. B and Alfreda Duster. *Crusade for justice: the autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, chicago 1970. 417print

⁷² Aewitt, Nancy' politicizing domesticity: Anglo, black and Latin women Tampa's progressive movement' ed, Noralee Frankel and Nancy Dye Lexington :up Kentucky 1991. 33print

Also, W.E.B Du Bois was the founder of the Niagara Movement and the later the NAACP. Du Bois opposed with Washington. He asserted that African Americans should consistently fight for ethnic equality⁷³.

Progresses were not a single movement but a group of alliances that encouraged changes and reforms at increasing democracy in America. This included Women's Suffrage and the direct election of senators. One particularly prominent aspect of progress was the full participation of American Women, with women denied of voting, women applied what they saw as their right as citizens to form public policy and create public institutions and through organizations as ; the Young Christian Women's Association (YCWA), Women's Trade Union League (WTUL). Progressive reformers formed many institutions and policies that we accept as a natural part of our national life today and Progressive reform was unbelievable without the participation of Women⁷⁴.

One of the major initiatives in the Progressive Era was the Women's Suffrage Movement. However; many of the organizations established to fight for voting rights for women have isolated or ignored African American Women⁷⁵.

Directly after the Civil War, Suzanne B. Anthony one of the strongest Women's Rights advocates said that the Fourteenth Amendment should include a guarantee of voting for women as well as for African American males. In 1869, Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton established the National League for Women's Rights. However; Women throughout the country did not have the right to vote until the 19th Amendment was passed in 1919⁷⁶. Moreover, African American Women as: Mary Church Terrell became devoted to organizing women on the local and national level to fight for equal rights. The work of white suffrage organizations along with African American Women's Organizations eventually led to the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment which granted Women with the right to vote⁷⁷.

⁷³ Lewis, Femi. article available at : www.thoughtco.com. African Americans in the progressive era

⁷⁴ Dr. Robyn, Muncy. Article available at : www.nationalparkservice.gov. women in the progressive era

⁷⁵ Lewis, Femi. Article Available at : www.thoughtco.com. African Americans in the progressive era

⁷⁶ Available at : loc.gov/teachers/classroomaterials. women's suffrage in the progressive era

⁷⁷ Lewis, Femi. Article Available at : www.thoughtco.com. African Americans in the progressive era

II.3.Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement

II.3.1.The History of the Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was a struggle by African Americans in the mid 1950s until the late 1960s, to achieve Civil Rights equal to the Rights of Whites, including equal opportunity in employment, housing and education.

The Civil Rights Movement is a comprehensive term for several activities that seek to secure Political, Social and Economic Rights of African Americans. The Civil Rights Movement emerged in the Twentieth Century as a response to the unfulfilled promises of Emancipation. Also, The American African Civil Rights Movement has been a series of reform Movements. Which aims to protest racial discrimination suffered by African Americans and faced fierce opposition from White racists⁷⁸.

The Civil Rights Movement has been called the Second Reconstruction. Moreover; this Movement sought to restore African Americans to the Rights of citizenship guaranteed by the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Amendments, which were lost through by Segregationist Jim Crow Laws in the south. So, Jim Crow Segregation meant that Southern Blacks would continue to live in conditions of poverty and inequality with White Supremacists refused them there had-won Political Rights and Freedoms. The Civil Rights Movement included many different Strategies and Approaches, including Legal Procedures, Nonviolent Civil Rebellion and Black Militancy⁷⁹.

Although, African Americans struggled for their Rights since before the Civil War, they accomplished Political equality until the period of the 1960s. In the 1950s, Black people in the South were still denied their basic Civil and Political Rights. Most of them were unable to vote and those trying to register were severely punished; they lost their jobs, were severely beaten, or lynched. Also, Jim Crow Segregation Laws were still found in trains, hospitals, hotels and employment. The United States had become a powerful nation. And the biggest worry for Blacks was the Civil Rights Movement⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ www.dictionary.com

⁷⁹ www.thefreedictionary.com

⁸⁰ U.S. Department of State

In addition to this; Harry Truman (1884-1972), The 33rd United States President. He supported the Civil Rights Movement. He believed in Political equality, but not Social equality, he recognized the increasing importance of Black Civil Voting. Also, he appointed a Civil Rights commission to investigate discrimination based on race and religion.

Moreover, Black Americans continued to support Civil Rights Organizations such as: National Association for the advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as the oldest and most known Civil Rights Organization in the United States. The NAACP has more than 500.000 members working locally and nationally to ‘ensure Political, Education, Social and Economic equality for all and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination’.

During the Civil Rights Movement the NAACP is helping to merge public schools in the South through Brown’s case against the Education Board. In addition to this ; the local secretary of the NAACP, refused to give up her seat on a separate bus in Montgomery, for this reason, the province has become a starting point for Organizations like ; NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Urban League (UL) for the development of the National Civil Rights Movement. At the peak of the Civil Rights Movement, the NAACP played a pivotal role in passing the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Furthermore, there are others several organizations worked together to create change in United States Society such as; Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), was founded in April 1960 at Shaw University. Throughout the Civil Rights Movement Also, SNCC organizers worked in the South. In addition to; Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) played a pivotal role in the Civil Rights Movement. CORE was established by James Farmer. Jr, in 1942. Also, was founded in Chicago. Chiefs of the Organization utilized the principles as a strategy against oppression. The Organization participated in National Campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement.

The last Organization is Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), was associated with Martin Luther King, Jr. The SCLC was founded in 1957 following the success of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Various the NAACP, SNCC and SCLC didn't recruit the individual members but worked with local Organizations and Churches to build its membership. On the other hand, the SCLC was sponsored by the following programs like; Citizenship Schools as founded by Septima Clark, the Albany Movement and Selma Voting Rights March⁸¹.

II.3.2.The Montgomery Bus Boycott

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a Civil Rights objection in which African Americans refused to take city Buses in Montgomery, Alabama, to protest on separate seats. The Boycott took place from '5 December 1955 to 20 December 1956'. And is regarded as the first comprehensive United States Demonstration against Segregation. The Modern Civil Rights Movement was characterized by the refusal of Rosa Parks to give up her seat to a White Man. Actually; her action was the origin of the Civil Rights Movement.

As we have seen, Black Women have established their own Organizations to improve the conditions of African Americans. In the 1960s Black Women were the backbone of the Civil Rights Movement, and one of the Leaders of the Boycott, a young priest named Martin Luther King .Jr. Appeared as a well-known Leader of the American Civil Rights Movement⁸².

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks (1913-2005), was an activist in the Civil Rights Movement, known for her pivotal role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Also, described by the United States Congress as the 'First Women of Civil Rights and the Mother of the Freedom Movement'.⁸³

She lived in Tuskegee, Alabama. Also, it is an African American Civil Rights Activist, refused to give up her seat on a public Bus to a White Man. She was not tired after work but she tried to give her Bus seat to White People, because the Jim Crow Laws in the South made Black people suffered from segregation in daily life, included ; public transportation.

⁸¹ Lewis, Femi. Website article, Organizations of the Civil Rights Movement

⁸² Available at ; www.history.com

⁸³ Available at : the free encyclopedia

She became a Secretary of the NAACP. Its primary objectives Buses in Montgomery. Secondly; to gain the Right to vote for Blacks. She was often faced racial discrimination and violence, she was very proud of her Blackness, and gained much respect from its community. However, she was a Woman lived with the double burden of being Black and she became a heroine. She was an example of courage in the history of Black America, and gave her the name of ‘the Mother of the Civil Rights Movement’.

Black Women were central figures in the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Therefore, the most known leaders were Rosa Parks and Jo Ann Robinson. She was a Professor of English at the University of Alabama, and a leader of the Women’s Political Council (WPC), it’s a group of Black Women working for Civil Rights. Moreover, she organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott, to protest against humiliation of African Americans on the Montgomery Buses.

The Boycott proved that African Americans were willing to sacrifice their jobs and their lives, to defend their Rights and show their dignity. For over a year, Black Citizens marched from Montgomery to Boycott all Buses, with a strong desire to make their voices heard. Rosa Parks thought it was unlikely that Black Citizens would be considered inferior to Whites.

In addition to this, the Boycott was so successful that local Civil Rights leaders decided to extend it indefinitely. A group of local ministers formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), to support the Boycott and legal challenge of the segregation laws⁸⁴.

Rosa Parks said that the Montgomery Bus Boycott was a turning point in the history of Black America because it gave the African Americans an opportunity to reveal their daily sufferings. It was also seen as the establishment for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, and the first step toward freedom, which allowed millions of African Americans to gain their Rights and dignity. The Montgomery Bus Boycott gave Rosa Parks International Recognition⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Available at : www.britannica.com ‘Montgomery Bus Boycott’

⁸⁵ Available at : www.history.com ‘Montgomery Bus Boycott’

II.4. The Role of the Black Women in the Civil Rights Movement

The American Civil Rights Movement is a unique chapter in the history of the struggle of African Americans for freedom and an end to racial inequality and segregation. African Americans also fought for equal rights against violence, exploitation and discrimination. But in 1964 the Civil Rights Act was passed to eliminate discrimination against colored people in public places. Since that time, the situation of the Afro-Americans has been improved. During the civil rights movement, Black Women devoted much of their time and effort to fighting for equal rights for African Americans. They were an important element in the civil rights movement. These women have played vital roles in the struggle for human rights and justice in the South, they organized demonstrations and taught illiterates how to read and write for liberation and freedom. They also participated in many organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Racial Equality Conference and the Nonviolent Student Coordination Committee, and worked to improve the situations of Black Americans.

Black women considered it their responsibility to care for and protect society as a whole, so they joined the Movement without thinking for African Americans. Despite their suffering and ill-treatment, they have become the Backbone of the Movement.

These are some of the most famous names in a very long list of black heroines who marched, bled, and died in the struggle for equality during the civil rights movement such as; Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott-King, Fannie Lou Hammer, Ella Baker, Septum Clark and Dorothy Height. Among these Black Women Rosa Parks, she became a famous activist for Civil Rights throughout Alabama, Although Parks was a working woman, and she joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to act on behalf of African Americans. Rosa Parks became a symbol of African Americans who fought for equal and civil rights, also she known as the 'Mother of freedom'.

Another figure during the Civil Rights Movement is Ella Baker; she was a leader in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Also, Baker made a great effort to fight for the rights of Blacks; she helped people in the south. Baker was the pillar of strength that could be depending on.

In addition to this, there is also a very important black woman called Septima Clark, often called the “Queen Mother” of Civil Rights. Also, she sacrificed a lot during the Movement. She was a member of NAACP, she taught Blacks how to write and read, so that they can participate in voting and follow up their rights.

These three black women have made great contributions to the Civil Rights Movement and have changed the lives of many African Americans, there are also many Black Women whose names we do not know but who have devoted much to the movement, without the help of these African American women, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the civil rights movement has not achieved such enormous success; Black women have long-term benefits and rights they have never dreamed of before. Because of equal rights, some black women have entered the professional fields in which white women work, and some educated black women have gained a good education in business and science. Although compared to white men and white and black women, black women may still feel alienated from the dominant society and continue to participate actively in voting and other political affairs.⁸⁶

In a conclusion, the Civil Rights Movement had finally defined the true meaning of freedom. Black Women emerged as the catalysts of the Black Civil Rights Movement. Also, they often risked and lost their lives, in order to gain their basic Civil Rights such as; the Right to vote. Moreover; those Black Women like; Rosa Parks, Ella Baker, Septima Clark, Fannie Lou Hammer and others were viewed as the backbone of the movement, also helped millions of segregated people to understand the real meaning of freedom.

⁸⁶ The role of African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement. By Xiaohan Yi. Senator Sam Ervin and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. *Proudly powered, by Word Press.*

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The history of African American women brought a new meaning to American freedom, justice and independence. These women worked hard to change the face of America and fought for freedom from slavery, racism and sexuality and contributed significantly to making America the land of freedom and equality.

Their struggle was distinctive because they represented women and African Americans. They fought slavery during the Civil War and the great migration. Moreover, their main role was during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. During their struggle, they sought better education, political roles and leadership roles in American society. Famous Black Women such as: Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hammer, Septima Clarke and Ella Baker, have become the heroines of the civil rights movement of the 1960s after having devoted their lives to the struggle to put an end to discrimination.

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