

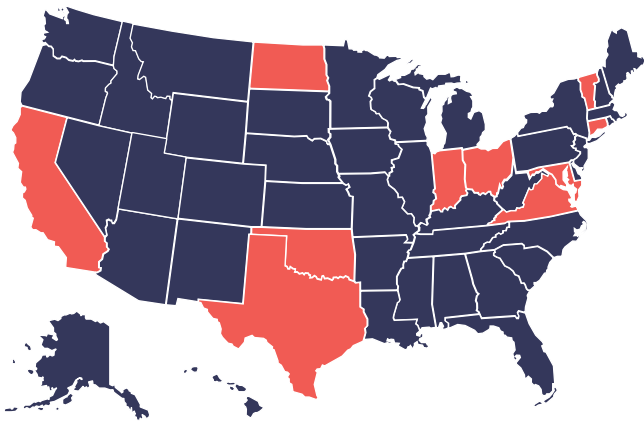
# CELEBRATING AMERICA 250 AND INSPIRING

## NATIONAL HISTORY DAY® TOPICS

As National History Day® (NHD) prepares to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, we are continuing a series that started in 2025 and will appear across theme books through 2030. Each year, we ask NHD affiliates to contribute topics to inspire NHD students to explore the annual theme through the lens of local history. One strength of the United States is its diverse stories of people, places, and events. There is no one American story—instead, there are millions of them. This year, we hope that exploring what makes their communities unique will inspire NHD teachers and students to discover examples of revolution, reaction, and reform in history in their own backyards.

Local topics from ten affiliates follow. Each page includes an image (a painting, sketch, photograph, etc.) that connects to local history and is accompanied by a description and questions to encourage students to consider the topic in light of the 2026 NHD theme, *Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History*. We hope these topics will provide inspiration to students across the nation and around the world as they work to identify their NHD topics.

### CONTRIBUTING AFFILIATES



Explore these NHD resources that address and celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. All are created by teachers and for teachers and are available for free download on the NHD website.

#### *Revolutionary Ideals* [nhd.org/RevIdeals](https://nhd.org/RevIdeals)

*Revolutionary Ideals* is a resource created by teachers who participated in a 2022 NHD teacher institute in Providence, Rhode Island. The book, created in partnership with the Rhode Island Historical Society, includes two essays and 15 lesson plans created by NHD teachers. These lessons explore the ideals that drove the American Revolution and how they were (or were not) applied. The book includes lessons that explore the *Gaspee* Raid, the Philadelphia Tea Party, the Regulator Rebellion, the role of a free press, the Rhode Island First Regiment, mercantilism and the Triangle Trade, the Indigenous roots of revolutionary ideas, and the impact of the American Revolution in France and Haiti. Teachers can download the lesson plan book or the individual lessons, which include the supporting materials (primary sources, graphic organizers, student instructions, and more).

#### *Building a More Perfect Union* [nhd.org/250](https://nhd.org/250)

*Building a More Perfect Union* is a two-part resource series (published in 2021 and 2023) that explores how individuals and groups have worked to make the United States a better place for all its citizens. Developed in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities, the series includes four historical essays and 30 lesson plans. The topics span from the colonial period to modern American history and include inquiry-based lessons in which students explore primary source content using active learning strategies. The lessons are designed to be used in full, mined for primary source content, or modified or adapted to meet the needs of learners.

## NORTH DAKOTA

MADISON MILBRATH, Education Outreach Supervisor, National History Day in North Dakota Coordinator, State Historical Society of North Dakota



A.C. Townley, founder of the Nonpartisan League (NPL), addresses an NPL meeting in Glencoe, Minnesota, 1916. The NPL was first active in North Dakota and then spread into Minnesota. State Historical Society of North Dakota (B0921-00001).

The Nonpartisan League (NPL), a political movement dating from the early 1900s, changed North Dakota's economy and government, helping farmers who felt they were being treated unfairly by big businesses. By 1915, many farmers in North Dakota were struggling. Out-of-state companies controlled the grain markets and banks, making it hard for local farmers to earn a living. A.C. Townley, a former farmer and newspaper editor, saw the need for change. In February of that year, he presented his idea for a new political movement, which would not be associated with the existing political parties, to farmer Frank B. Wood near Deering, North Dakota. He promised to take power away from these companies and give it back to the people of North Dakota. The NPL's ideas were **revolutionary** because they pushed for the state to control important industries, such as banking and grain processing, so farmers could have more say over their businesses.

The NPL used the North Dakota primary election to take control of the Republican Party in 1916. At this time, their influence began to spread and they garnered followers in Minnesota as well. In the 1917–1918 elections, the NPL was on the ballot in both North Dakota and Minnesota. After the 1918 elections, the NPL successfully dominated the state government. They soon made **reforms**, including creating the Bank of North Dakota in 1919, the first (and only) state-owned bank in the United States. This bank gave farmers

low-interest loans, allowing them to avoid the high rates of private banks. The NPL also built the North Dakota Mill and Elevator, which allowed farmers to process their grain locally and sell it for more money.

However, not everyone **reacted** well to the changes. Big companies and some political groups accused the NPL of being too extreme and called them socialists. The fight between the NPL and their opponents came to a head in 1921, when voters removed North Dakota Governor Lynn Frazier, a key NPL leader, from office in the first recall election in U.S. history. This **reaction** showed how divided people were about the NPL's **reforms**.

Even though the NPL faced strong opposition, some of their **reforms** still exist. The Bank of North Dakota and the state-owned mill and elevator continue to operate, demonstrating the lasting impact of the NPL on North Dakota's economy and government.

- › Why did the rise of the Nonpartisan League represent a **revolution** in North Dakota politics?
- › How did **reactions** to Governor Lynn Frazier's 1921 recall reflect North Dakota's divided political landscape?
- › In what ways did the NPL's **reforms** shape the future of North Dakota's farmers and businesses?

# CONNECTICUT

**REBECCA TABER, Director of Secondary Education Programs, Connecticut History Day State Coordinator, Connecticut Democracy Center**

One of the most significant legal cases of the mid-nineteenth century revolved around the freedom of a group of men and children who led a revolt aboard a Cuban schooner, *La Amistad*, after having been illegally captured from what is today Sierra Leone as part of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Although Spain signed a treaty with Great Britain in 1817 to abolish the slave trade in the Spanish colonies, including Cuba, enslavers continued the practice. In 1839, two Spanish plantation owners, José Ruiz and Pedro Montes, purchased 53 West African people (49 men and four children) in Havana, Cuba. They planned to transport the captives on *La Amistad* to nearby plantations.

Shortly after the voyage started, Sengbe Pieh, also known as Joseph Cinqué or C-Cinqué, escaped his shackles, freed the other captives, and ignited a **revolution** on board the ship. Two captives and two crew members died during this revolt. The Africans took control of the ship and ordered Ruiz and Montes, whose lives they spared because of their navigational skills, to sail east to West Africa. However, at night, the Spaniards changed course to sail along the East Coast of the United States.

In August 1839, a U.S. Navy brig, *Washington*, intercepted *La Amistad* in Long Island Sound and towed the schooner to New London, Connecticut. American officials **reacted** by imprisoning the *Amistad* captives on charges of murder and piracy while allowing Ruiz and Montes to remain free. Spain's foreign minister insisted that the ship and its cargo be returned to Spain, a demand President Martin Van Buren wished to grant to preserve international relations.

The first court case, held before a U.S. Circuit Court in Hartford, Connecticut, dismissed murder charges against the *Amistad* Africans. Questions remained about the ownership of the ship and its contents and whether the *Amistad* captives would be considered to be free men or cargo. The Spanish government, *Washington's* captain, and Ruiz and Montes each claimed their right of possession. The Court ruled it did not have jurisdiction and sent the case to a U.S. District Court in New Haven.

The *Amistad* trials captured the public's imagination. Abolitionists **reacted** during the first hearing and began assisting the prisoners by raising money, finding translators, and hiring defense lawyers. Abolitionist and proslavery newspapers covered the trial, and artists, such as John Warner Barber and Nathaniel Jocelyn, depicted the *Amistad* Africans to publicize the case and rally support. Thousands of people visited the New Haven jail that housed the *Amistad* prisoners and packed the courtrooms.

Sengbe and other *Amistad* prisoners provided eyewitness testimony. The U.S. District Court recognized their

freedom. Not accepting this verdict, President Van Buren's administration appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. Former President John Quincy Adams eloquently defended the *Amistad* Africans before the Supreme Court, which ruled that the Africans had been illegally seized and were not enslaved in March 1841.

The Supreme Court did not hold any party responsible for their return to their homelands. *Amistad* survivors toured the Black and White churches in the Northeast to raise money for their voyage to Sierra Leone. Of the 53 *Amistad* Africans, the surviving 35, accompanied by five missionaries, sailed to Freetown, Sierra Leone, in January 1842.

The *Amistad* trials raised awareness about the continued practice of the slave trade and mobilized support for the growing abolitionist **reform** movement as slavery continued to expand in the United States. Reverend James W.C. Pennington, who was born into slavery, and his congregation supported the *Amistad* captives and helped them return to their homeland. Images produced by artists helped portray *Amistad* Africans as individuals and pushed back against racist imagery and stereotypes. The *Amistad* became a widely recognized story of resistance that helped strengthen the anti-slavery movement.

- › How might the *Amistad* uprising be considered a **revolution**?
- › How did the justices and activists in Connecticut **react** when the *Amistad* arrived in New London?
- › How did the U.S. government **react** to the court rulings in the *Amistad* case and why?
- › Why was the *Amistad* case important to anti-slavery **reform**?



Portrait of C-Cinqué, by Nathaniel Jocelyn, c. 1840. New Haven Museum.

# OKLAHOMA

SARAH A. DUMAS, Oklahoma National History Day Coordinator, Oklahoma Historical Society

MATTHEW PEARCE, Ph.D., State Historian, Oklahoma Historical Society

U.S. Highway 66, popularly known as Route 66 or the Mother Road, **revolutionized** transportation in Oklahoma. Before the creation of an integrated highway system, leisure travel and shipping in the United States relied upon railroads. Established in 1926, Route 66 spanned approximately 400 miles in Oklahoma as part of an all-weather route connecting the Midwest to the West Coast. By the time the highway was decommissioned in 1985 in favor of interstate highways, Route 66 had contributed to a golden age of American automobile travel.

Motorists on Route 66 passed through small towns and large cities in Oklahoma. Locals, such as Royce and Neva Adamson of Edmond, who opened the Royce Café in 1933, **reacted** to the growing influx of travelers by establishing motels, diners, garages, service stations, and other roadside businesses. Unique roadside architecture and folk art encouraged motorists to stop for a brief respite.

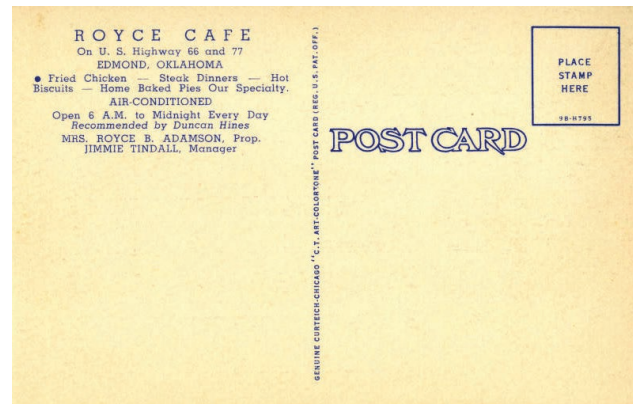
Travel on Route 66 was a boon to many local economies and contributed to the emergence of a consumer culture that emphasized speed and convenience. Demand for new car models and well-maintained roads invigorated the automobile, petroleum, and construction industries. Tourism became (and remains) an important facet of Oklahoma's economy, otherwise dominated by oil and natural gas production and agribusiness.

Not all travel along Route 66 was for leisure, however. During the Great Depression, Route 66 was a lifeline for drought-

and poverty-stricken Oklahomans seeking jobs and a better life in California. Dismissed and disdained as "Okies," these migrants symbolized the plight of many in America, and were immortalized in songs, novels, and films.

Meanwhile, state-mandated segregation often prompted Black motorists to avoid Route 66 while traveling through Oklahoma. Many businesses refused to offer services to Black travelers, and several communities along the route were known as "sundown towns" that prohibited African Americans from even stopping within city limits. African Americans **reacted** by creating travel guides and establishing their own businesses along or near the route. For example, the Threatt Filling Station near Luther, Oklahoma, established by Allen Threatt, Sr., around 1915, served Black motorists on Route 66 for decades.

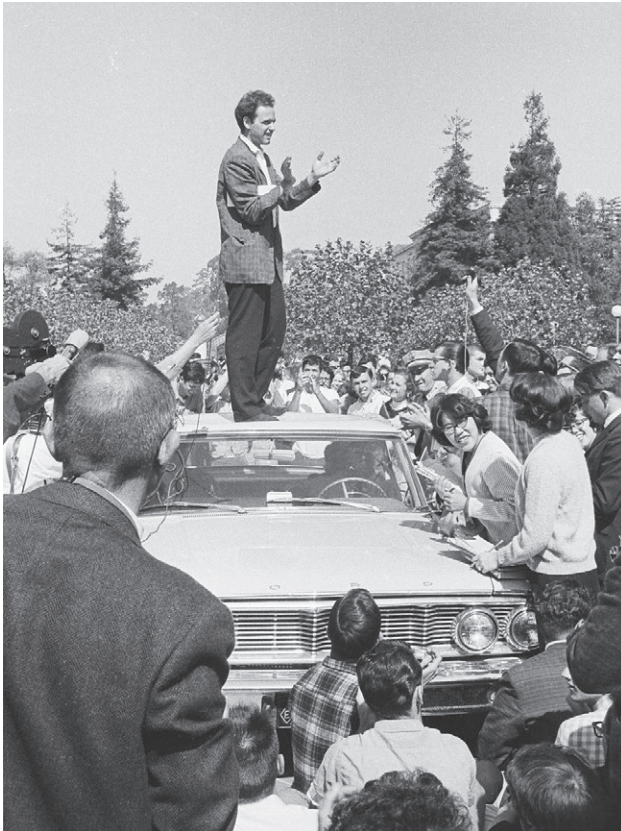
- › In what ways does the construction of Route 66 represent a **revolution** in transportation? How did Route 66 connect Oklahoma towns to the broader national culture?
- › How did African Americans **react** and respond to segregation and threats of violence while traveling on highways such as Route 66?
- › How did communities **react** to migrants traveling along Route 66 during the Great Depression?
- › What local or national **reforms** were inspired by its impact on communities and economies along Route 66?



Restaurants such as the Royce Café were a common sight for travelers along Route 66. Postcards of cafés, service stations, and other roadside services have contributed to the nostalgia of Route 66 as the "Main Street of America." Oklahoma Postcards Collection, Oklahoma Department of Libraries (OKCOL1PC0097).

# CALIFORNIA

WHITNEY OLSON, History-Social Science Educational Consultant, Co-Coordinator History Day California, Sacramento County Office of Education



Undergraduate student Mario Savio speaking at the 1964 protest on the University of California, Berkeley, campus that started the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. Photograph by Steven Marcus. Courtesy of The Regents of the University of California, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (BANC PIC 2000.002-NEG Strip 6:7).

The Free Speech Movement (FSM) rocked the University of California, Berkeley, campus during the 1964–1965 academic year. Throughout the movement, thousands of students engaged in civil disobedience, reacting to university rules that banned student participation in political activities on campus. These acts of civil disobedience revolutionized the student experience on college campuses, affirming their rights to free speech and unleashing the political activism among college students that became a trademark of the 1960s. While the FSM succeeded in **reforming** rules and traditions on college campuses, the conservative **reaction** to student activism resulted in a new conservative movement called the New Right, popularized by Ronald Reagan.

The FSM students and their tactics had strong ties to the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and the fight for civil rights in Mississippi. During the summer of 1964, some Berkeley students worked with CORE during Freedom

Summer. When they returned to school in the fall, these students continued their work for CORE by setting up tables on campus to recruit volunteers. In September, school officials suspended eight students for violating the new rule prohibiting political activism on campus. On October 1, graduate student Jack Weinberg was arrested for working at a CORE table on campus, sparking a spontaneous student sit-in that surrounded a police car for 32 hours. Mario Savio, a CORE volunteer in Mississippi and one of the previously suspended students, jumped on top of the police car and became the movement's spokesperson.

October and November were filled with student marches and negotiations between the FSM and administrators. By late November, it was clear that the university would not agree to grant freedom of speech on campus. On December 2, approximately 1,500 students began a sit-in in Sproul Hall, the location of the offices of the chancellor and other top administrators. California Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown **reacted** by ordering the arrest of 800 students, the largest mass arrest in California history.

The FSM led to **reforms** in higher education, as students won the right to political activism, free speech, and a say in the courses offered on campus. As the FSM shifted the university away from reactionary policies toward the ideas of the New Left, the New Right formed in **reaction** to the FSM and student activism.

The New Right gained momentum on college campuses as conservative students organized to bring a new voice to conservative politics in the United States. Ronald Reagan began his first term as Governor of California in 1967. During his 1970 re-election campaign, he advocated for campus reforms to curb student activism, aligning himself with the ideology of the New Right. This movement continued to gain followers during and after his presidency (1981–1989).

The FSM marked the beginning of a **revolution** on college campuses that questioned the university's role and the rights of students as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Connecting the **revolutionary** ideals of the Civil Rights Movement to the **reactionary** Vietnam War student protests, the FSM exposed the fault lines rumbling beneath the surface of America's youth, establishing a tradition of student activism that continues today.

- › How did the FSM lead to **revolutionary** changes in the ways people participated in government and society?
- › How is the FSM an important link between other **revolutionary** movements?
- › How did the revolutionary actions of the FSM lead to **reform** and **reaction**?

## VERMONT

DANIELLE HARRIS-BURNETT, Museum Educator, State Coordinator for Vermont History Day, Vermont Historical Society



A political button in support of the 2000 Vermont Civil Union Act. The pink triangle was originally used as a symbol to oppress gay men in Nazi Germany. In the 1970s, the pink triangle became a symbol for the LGBT equal rights movement. Vermont Historical Society (2013.9.22).

Gay and lesbian Americans have long faced discrimination and challenges both legally and socially. Vermonters became leaders as LGBTQ activists fought against discriminatory treatment across the U.S. Although activists first identified as LGBT, their understanding of identity shifted to become more inclusive over time.

In 1992, the Vermont Legislature passed a law making it illegal for employers to discriminate based on sexual orientation. Before the law, LGBTQ people had no legal protection in the workplace and could lose their jobs. Then, in 1999, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples needed marriage protections.

Vermont **reacted** by passing *An Act Relating to Civil Unions* in 2000. Civil unions are domestic partnerships between two adults. They differ from marriages in that they are only recognized by individual states, meaning that couples who moved to another state could lose their legal recognition. Vermont was the third state to recognize same-sex couples, following Hawai'i and California. Together, these three states **revolutionized** LGBTQ rights in the United States. The Vermont bill helped protect same-sex couples and their families by providing the same basic legal protections as marriage, including parental rights and the ability to claim unemployment benefits, inheritance, and property.

However, not all Vermonters supported civil unions. Anti-civil union protesters **reacted** and organized a campaign called Take Back Vermont. While protesters voted out some state representatives who supported civil unions, they were unsuccessful in overturning the law. In 2009, same-sex marriage became legal in Vermont, replacing the need for civil unions. In 2015, the United States Supreme Court decision *Obergefell v. Hodges* ruled that bans on same-sex marriage were unconstitutional nationwide.

The Vermont Civil Union Act brought national attention to marriage inequality. It also provided an example for LGBTQ activists in other states to introduce legal **reform**. Before the 2015 Supreme Court decision, only 37 states and the District of Columbia had legalized same-sex marriage. Vermont LGBTQ activists helped take the first steps toward nationwide marriage equality.

- › The Vermont Civil Union Act helped influence other states to pass similar laws. Later, these same states passed civil marriage laws. How did Vermonters act as leaders in this **revolution**?
- › How did legislators and LGBTQ activists in Vermont overcome adverse **reactions** from anti-Civil Union protesters?
- › How did Vermont's Civil Union Act **reform** marriage equality in the United States?
- › The Vermont Civil Union Act is more than 25 years old. How can historians learn from **revolutionary** actions taken in the recent past?

# MARYLAND

## DEYANE MOSES, Director of Programs and Partnerships, Afro Charities

In the summer of 1961, African diplomats from newly independent nations faced discrimination at rest stops and restaurants along Maryland's U.S. Route 40, drawing national and international attention. Although President John F. Kennedy issued an apology, the diplomats were humiliated. Concerned about the impact on U.S. relations with African nations, President Kennedy **reacted** by sending a special task force to Route 40 to address the discriminatory policies of these establishments toward African diplomats.

This announcement was met with cynicism in the reporters' offices of Baltimore's *The Afro-American* newspaper.<sup>1</sup> Ordinary Black Americans had been denied service for decades at these same places without the same public concern. Reporter James D. Williams recalled in a 1978 article, "It was clear that the Federal forces were not being deployed out of any strong concern for Black Americans; rather, these forces were sent along Route 40 to persuade restaurant owners to serve Black foreigners, thereby addressing an embarrassing situation for the State Department and aiding America's foreign policy."

The reporters **reacted** to the restaurant owners' racism and Kennedy's task force with a plan of their own. The idea was simple: dress two reporters as diplomats and one as an interpreter, add accents and a photographer, and see if the White restaurant owners on Route 40 could distinguish them from actual diplomats. George W. Collins and Herbert Magrum (diplomats), and Rufus Wells (interpreter) led the hoax, playing their roles convincingly. *The Afro-American* publisher Carl Murphy approved the plan. The group visited five restaurants, with mixed results: two restaurants served them, while three others refused. The newspaper published the details, sparking both laughter and outrage. The story, which would become known as the "Great Route 40 Hoax," gained national attention, highlighting the absurdity of segregation and embarrassing the restaurant owners who had unknowingly served Black Americans.

Despite the negative publicity and federal pressure, most restaurant owners continued to refuse service to Black citizens and African diplomats. After hearing about the discrimination happening along Route 40, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) decided to take more **revolutionary** action and directly push for change. The group announced plans to send 1,500 Freedom Riders to Maryland, led by activist Julius Hobson. At the last minute, most restaurants agreed to serve everyone. CORE ultimately rescheduled the ride for December 16, with 500 participants. Most were served, though not always gracefully, and eight were arrested. Nevertheless, CORE declared the ride a success.

"The Great Route 40 Hoax," orchestrated by *The Afro-American*, was a bold and clever act of journalism that

demonstrates the power of the press and grassroots activism in challenging and ultimately **reforming** societal norms.

- > How did the Civil Rights Movement influence Baltimore's *The Afro-American* newspaper's **reaction** to discrimination during "The Great Route 40 Hoax"?
- > What other significant actions did the newspaper and its reporters undertake during the Civil Rights Movement? How did they contribute to the **revolution** against segregation?
- > How did the actions of *The Afro-American* and CORE spark **reform** in the local community and the nation as a whole?



"African, Yes—American, NO." *The Afro-American*, September 2, 1961. Courtesy of the Afro American Newspapers Archives.

1 Baltimore's *The Afro-American* newspaper is archived at the Afro Archives. Learn more at afro.com/archives/.

# VIRGINIA

**SAM FLORER, Manager of Public Programs, State Coordinator for Virginia History Day, Virginia Museum of History & Culture**

Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, Virginia's hot-button political issue revolved around the state's pre-war debt. Standing at more than \$45 million by 1871, most of Virginia's annual budget went to debt payments instead of funding popular programs, such as the recently created public school system. Political factions soon formed on both sides of the debt issue. Funders believed the state should pay off the full debt to avoid a downgrade of Virginia's credit rating, while Readjusters wanted to refinance the debt to free up more money for public programs. The issue disrupted the established Republican and Democratic parties in Virginia.

It was in this new political atmosphere that former Confederate general William Mahone saw an opportunity to gain power. Mahone, a Virginia railroad magnate, former Democrat, and opponent of Reconstruction, harbored resentment toward many of Virginia's traditional elite, especially those who opposed his railroad expansion schemes. Mahone **reacted** to the disrupted political status quo by bringing together a biracial coalition of refinance supporters. He promised increased spending on public schools, which benefited poor White and Black families alike, and opposed a recently enacted poll tax. By appealing to class instead of race, Mahone's policies attracted support in both rural and urban centers. In 1879, the newly founded Readjuster Party swept to power in the Virginia General Assembly and elected Mahone to the U.S. Senate. Many African American Readjusters won races alongside Mahone at both the local and state levels.

Over the next four years, the Readjuster Party continued to win elections by adopting populist **reforms**, including readjusting the state's debt, lowering taxes on farmers and small businesses, and raising taxes on larger corporations. With this new tax revenue, the Readjusters invested in the public school system and created the South's first

public college for African American teachers, Virginia State University. They also eliminated the whipping post as punishment and abolished the poll tax. In a period often associated with the beginning of racially restrictive Jim Crow laws, Virginia's Readjuster Party proved **revolutionary** as a successful biracial reform party in the heart of the former Confederacy.

The Readjusters' opponents **reacted** to that success by attempting to divide their racial unity. The Funders accepted the Readjusters' changes to the debt and reorganized themselves as the old Democratic Party. They began appealing to White voters by stoking racist fears of African American political domination. The Readjuster Party struggled to combat these tactics, and their biracial coalition fell apart. By 1883, Democrats won a majority in the General Assembly, and by 1885, the Readjuster Party ceased to exist. These **reactions** culminated in the 1902 Constitution of Virginia, which codified literacy requirements to vote, poll taxes, and school segregation. The new constitution disenfranchised most Black and many poor White Virginians.

- › How did the Readjuster Party **revolutionize** Virginia politics after the Civil War? What were the short- and long-term effects of the Readjusters' reforms?
- › What tactics did opponents of the Readjusters use to **react** to their successes? How did these tactics change over time?
- › How do the Readjusters fit into or challenge the standard narratives about the end of Reconstruction and rise of the Jim Crow era?
- › Why would William Mahone, a former Confederate general and opponent of Reconstruction, lead a biracial political party and appoint African Americans to positions of power?



The Readjuster State Convention at Richmond, June 25, 1881, Library of Virginia.

# INDIANA

RAY BOOMHOWER, Senior Editor, IHS Press, Indiana Historical Society

LEXI GRIBBLE, Manager, Education and National History Day in Indiana, Indiana Historical Society



Senator Robert F. Kennedy announcing the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., April 4, 1968. Indianapolis Recorder Collection, Indiana Historical Society (P0303).

On April 4, 1968, Robert F. Kennedy, U.S. Senator from New York, appeared in Muncie, Indiana. This visit was part of his campaign for the Indiana Democratic presidential primary, which would be held in May. In the primary, he faced opposition from Indiana Governor Roger Branigin and fellow U.S. Senator Eugene McCarthy. As Kennedy prepared to leave Muncie for a short flight to Indianapolis, where he would appear at another rally, he learned that **revolutionary** civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had been shot outside his hotel in Memphis, Tennessee. Before his plane landed at Weir Cook Airport in Indianapolis, Kennedy heard news that King had died from his wounds. Despite warnings from police officials that they could not guarantee his safety, Kennedy decided to proceed with plans. He brushed off concerns from his staff and prepared to address an outdoor rally. The event was scheduled to take place in the heart of the city's Black community at the Broadway Christian Center's outdoor basketball court on Seventeenth and Broadway.

Kennedy broke the news of King's death to a crowd that had been anticipating a typically raucous political event. The stunned audience of Black and White voters **reacted** with disbelief. Kennedy gave an impassioned, extemporaneous six-minute speech on the need for compassion in the face of violence. To help explain the tragedy, Kennedy referenced Aeschylus, the Greek tragedian whose words had comforted

him following the assassination of his brother, President John F. Kennedy. He told the crowd: "My favorite poet was Aeschylus. He once wrote: 'Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.'" Kennedy ended his remarks by urging the crowd: "Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man and to make gentle the life of this world. Let us dedicate ourselves to that, and say a prayer for our country and for our people."

The **reaction** to King's death sparked outrage and violence across the country. As riots broke out in more than 100 cities, and approximately 75,000 National Guard and federal troops were called out to maintain order, the streets of Indianapolis remained quiet. "We walked away in pain but not with a sense of revenge," remembered William Crawford, who went on to have a distinguished career in the Indiana legislature.

Abie Robinson, a U.S. Navy veteran who attended the speech and later worked at the memorial commemorating it, noted that Kennedy's speech and temperament changed the **reactions** of those who were angry about King's death. "I was thinking revenge right away," Robinson remembered. "But then the words [Kennedy] used and his calmness made me understand the right response in the face of Dr. King's assassination. [Kennedy's] speech made me reflect on what Dr. King stood for and that was peace and getting together and creating change. It made me realize one person could make a difference."

Today, the Kennedy-King National Commemorative Site, located on the site where Kennedy made his April 4, 1968, speech, honors the memory of both men. Situated within Indianapolis's Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Park, it includes the Landmark for Peace memorial designed by writer Greg R. Perry. The memorial was constructed with two large curves of Cor-Ten steel cut with the outlines of Kennedy and King, cast by Indianapolis sculptor Daniel Edwards. From each of these rounded steel curves, the half figures of Kennedy and King reach out to one another.

- › How can this event help us understand the time of change and **revolution** the United States was experiencing?
- › Describe the **reactions** people had to the event depicted in the image.
- › What type of **reform** was Kennedy calling for in his speech?
- › What short- and long-term effects did Kennedy's speech have on Indianapolis?

# OHIO

## MORGAN MCQUEEN, Education Coordinator, Ohio History Connection

Across central and southern Ohio are eight massive, **revolutionary** works of human genius built by American Indians 2,000 years ago. Known as the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, these UNESCO World Heritage Sites were constructed as places of ceremony and gathering connected to the cosmos, created with incredible precision and alignment to the key risings and settings of the moon and sun. Groups of American Indians came together from across Eastern North America to build these complex pieces of landscape architecture as part of a spiritual movement that linked many small communities.

The size, majesty, and precision of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks first drew archaeologists to the sites in the 1780s. Their exploration was often destructive and disregarded the voices and experiences of American Indians. As archaeological investigation of the sites increased in the nineteenth century, the unique and artifact-rich nature of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks played an important role in the origin of American scientific archaeology.

Archaeological exploration in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries included excavation that permanently damaged the Earthworks and led to the removal of many sacred artifacts, human remains, and objects related to the burial of human remains. Despite American Indian protest and **reaction**, remains and objects removed from the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, like many American Indian artifacts at the time, were kept by scientists and museums at the cost of fully respecting the human dignity and sacred nature of the remains and objects.

Before the twenty-first century, there was no standardized approach to removing, storing, handling, or returning American Indian artifacts and remains. Archaeologists conducted excavations as they saw fit, often without consulting American Indian Tribes. Once museums or other organizations acquired remains or artifacts, tribes were either ignored or unable to reclaim them.

American Indians held differing views on the appropriate treatment of sites and what was removed from them. However, a consensus existed that museums and the scientific community generally discounted or ignored American Indian voices, and they did not treat the remains and associated objects with adequate respect or reverence.

Though there had been protests against archaeological practices at sites of historical importance for American Indians for years, the large-scale **reaction** that led to the prioritization of American Indian voices and practices did not come until the late 1980s. In 1987, the U.S. Congress considered a bill that would **reform** practices by providing for the repatriation (return) of American Indian remains and associated objects to the Tribes with whom they are affiliated. Through the introduction of the bill, subsequent investigation, and discussions between American Indian Tribes and museums, a national outcry arose demanding

legal guidance on the protection and repatriation of American Indian remains and artifacts, culminating in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990.

In tandem with the implementation of NAGPRA, the 1990s and 2000s saw a shift in best practices in managing and interpreting American Indian sites around the United States. At the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, partnerships, educational initiatives, and consultation programs led to significant change, including using innovative and less invasive technologies in archaeological exploration, and elevating American Indian voices at the sites. Thanks to these **reforms**, the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks are now recognized as sites of great historical and cultural importance, earning a UNESCO World Heritage inscription.

- › How did the archaeological explorations of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries reflect and challenge the norms of interaction between American Indians and scientists or museums?
- › Widespread change in the treatment of American Indian sites and artifacts did not come until the late 1980s to 1990s with the introduction of NAGPRA. Why might it have taken a large-scale **reaction** to bring about change in the treatment of American Indians' graves and associated artifacts?
- › Not all American Indians share the same feelings about the excavation and management of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks. How might the differing perspectives on this issue have impacted the **reforms** made to the management and interpretation of the sites?
- › How does the history of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks reflect broader societal **reform** in the appropriate treatment of American Indian graves and associated artifacts?



American Indian protesters and archaeologists gather for a pipe and prayer ceremony on July 30, 1992, after American Indians and supporters protested the archaeological excavations being conducted at the Great Circle Earthworks. Ohio History Connection.

# TEXAS

LISA BERG, Director of Education Services, Texas State Historical Association



Lorenzo de Zavala, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence and advocate for establishing the Republic of Texas, in 1836. Courtesy of the Star of the Republic Museum, Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site.

Lorenzo de Zavala became an unlikely leading figure in the Texas fight for independence from Mexico. Born in 1788 in the small Yucatán village of Tecoh, he graduated from the Tridentine Seminary of San Ildefonso in Mérida in 1807. After graduating, he established and served as editor for various newspapers. His support for democratic **reforms** and **revolutionary** change led to his imprisonment in 1814 by the Spanish government of Mexico.

De Zavala began his political career in 1821, when Mexico gained its independence from Spain. He served in many offices during a time of political turmoil. In 1829, Federalist Vicente Ramón Guerrero became Mexico's second president. In June 1830, Guerrero was overthrown by Centralist Vice President Anastasio Bustamante, forcing de Zavala into exile in the United States. Upon his return to Mexico in the summer of 1832, de Zavala served as governor of the state of Mexico and as a representative to Congress for the Yucatán state.

In October 1833, Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna appointed de Zavala as the first minister plenipotentiary (power to act independently on behalf of Mexico) to Paris. However, this post was short-lived when

Santa Anna grabbed dictatorial power in April 1834. This shift in power was contrary to the ideals de Zavala advocated, and he resigned in response. He became a **revolutionary** when he joined the Texas fight for independence from Mexico in 1835, making him a traitor to his beloved country.

De Zavala **reacted** with purpose to Texas's fight for independence by serving in the Permanent Council, the governing body of Texas that lasted only three weeks, and as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1836. As the representative for Harrisburg (now part of Houston), he signed the Declaration of Independence from Mexico and helped write the Constitution for the Republic of Texas, which included **reforms** he championed during his political career. His fellow delegates elected him as the interim vice president of the Republic before they fled to avoid being captured by Mexican forces led by Santa Anna.

After the Texans defeated Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, leaders chose de Zavala to be part of a commission to negotiate a treaty with Mexico, but they later canceled the plan. He returned to his home near the San Jacinto battlefield, where he resigned as vice president in October 1836 due to poor health. He died on November 15, 1836, from pneumonia.

Lorenzo de Zavala's influence contributed to the annexation of Texas by the United States in 1845. He left behind a rich literary legacy, including a respected two-volume history of Mexico titled *Ensayo histórico de las revoluciones de México, desde 1808 hasta 1830* (Paris and New York, 1831 and 1832). A Texas county and numerous schools bear his name. He certainly inspired his granddaughter, Adina de Zavala, to help establish the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and fight to preserve the Alamo as a historical landmark.

- › What makes one country's **revolutionary** hero another country's traitor?
- › How did de Zavala's **reaction** to Santa Anna's power grab lead to joining the Texan rebellion against the Mexican government?
- › What types of **reforms** would be considered democratic?
- › In what ways can you compare the **revolutions** in the United States in 1776 and in Texas in 1836?

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