The Civil Rights Movement

Analyzing Visual Primary Sources

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Introduction

Primary sources are the building blocks of history. Using these sources to introduce students to historical periods offers students the opportunity to become historians themselves—to analyze the evidence, form hypotheses, and learn how to support arguments based on evidence. They learn what it means to interpret the past in ways that provide meaning for the present. Textual primary sources can often be difficult for students to engage with because they are often couched in unfamiliar language from a different historical era. Visual primary sources can prove more appealing and accessible to students, and they also involve different types of "reading" skills.

How to Use This Product

This PowerPoint® presentation is designed to walk students through the process of primary source interpretation. Slides help to focus students' attention and train them how to "read" visual primary sources. Targeted questions and enlarged insets from images help to train students to see deeper into the historical record, to uncover evidence that, though plainly before their eyes, is not always obvious at first glance.

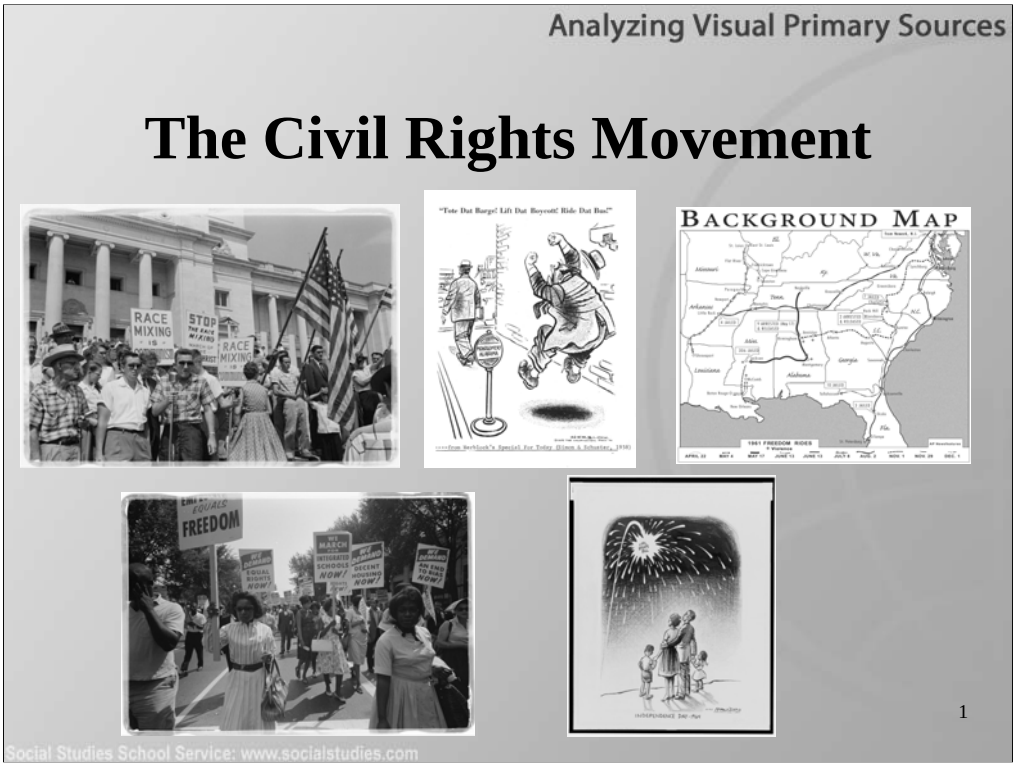
The posters provide visual reinforcement for the images analyzed in the presentation. Use them before or after the PowerPoint® analysis for either pre- or post-reading activities. In addition, we have provided extra images on each disc so that once the students are trained in the skills of analyzing visual primary sources they can further hone their skills. You can print them out and distribute as handouts for in-class or independent study, or you can import the images into PowerPoint® for students to analyze individually or with the class as a whole.

Let Us Know What You Think

At Social Studies School Service, we always strive to provide the best supplemental curriculum materials at a superior value. If you have feedback that could help us improve this product, requests for other titles in this series, or stories of how it has helped your students, please let us know. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
Chief Education Officer
Social Studies School Service



The idea of civil rights for all citizens has always been difficult to balance in American history. The Declaration of Independence stated that all men were "created equal," yet the new nation continued to allow slavery. In the 19th century, slavery was abolished at the end of the Civil War and the 14th Amendment guaranteed U.S. citizenship to freed slaves, yet the U.S. Supreme Court also upheld the idea of "separate but equal" facilities for blacks and whites.

However, by the middle of the 20th century, changes had begun to occur. President Harry Truman desegregated the armed forces. *Brown* v. *Board of Education* ended the "separate but equal" doctrine in public education, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott ended discrimination on that city's buses, making Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King household names in the process. By the 1960s, King's philosophy of nonviolent disobedience had become a major tool in the fight for equal rights as black students sought to integrate segregated lunch counters and "Freedom Riders" fought for integration of buses and bus terminals. Frequently, however, nonviolent protest was met by violent resistance, such as the police brutality that occurred during the Mother's Day March in Birmingham, the beatings of several Freedom Riders, and the murders of three civil rights workers in Mississippi in 1964. In spite of the violence and overall resistance to change, the civil rights movement did begin to make significant gains, including the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Though many African Americans subscribed to Dr. King's philosophies, others became impatient with the pace of gains. Leaders such as Malcolm X did not preach nonviolence, but instead urged blacks to achieve their rights "by any means necessary." Stokely Carmichael, a leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), began to advocate "black power" as a means to force more changes. The murder of Dr. King in 1968 (and the riots that followed in several cities) not only dealt a blow to the movement but also underscored the climate of violence that had seemed to erupt in America. However, such setbacks did not wipe out the significant gains the movement had achieved. While African Americans may still have yet to attain full equality in some ways even today, the civil rights movement made giant strides toward that goal.

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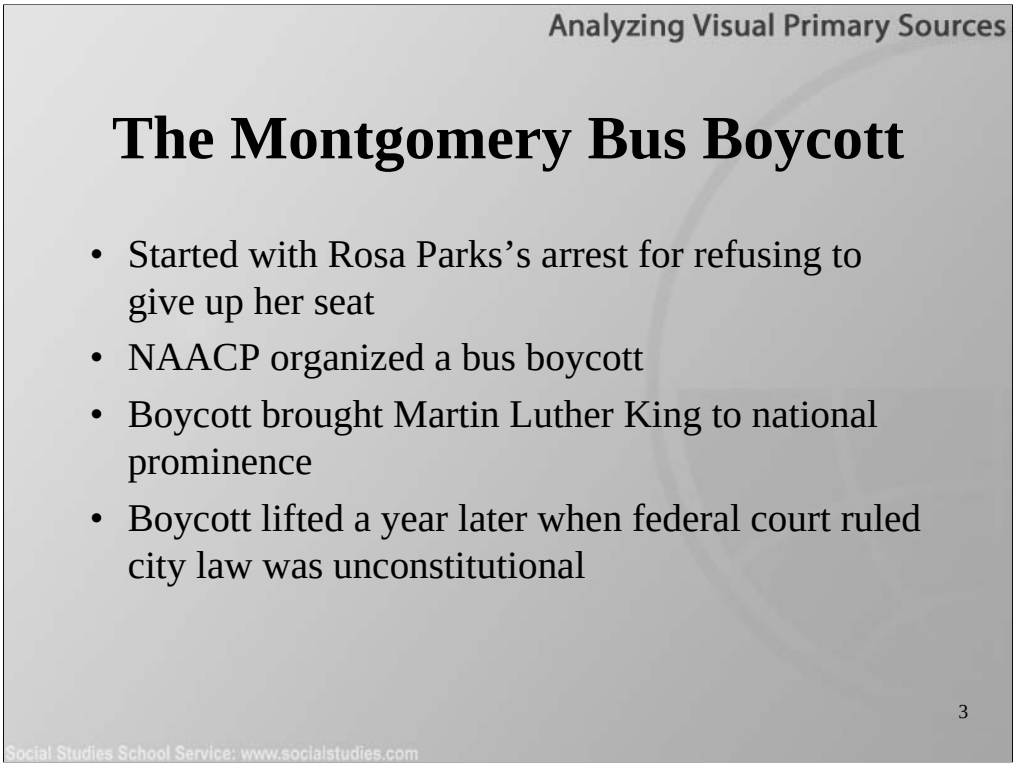
- Montgomery Bus Boycott

- School Integration and Opposition to Civil Rights

- Freedom Riders

- March on Washington

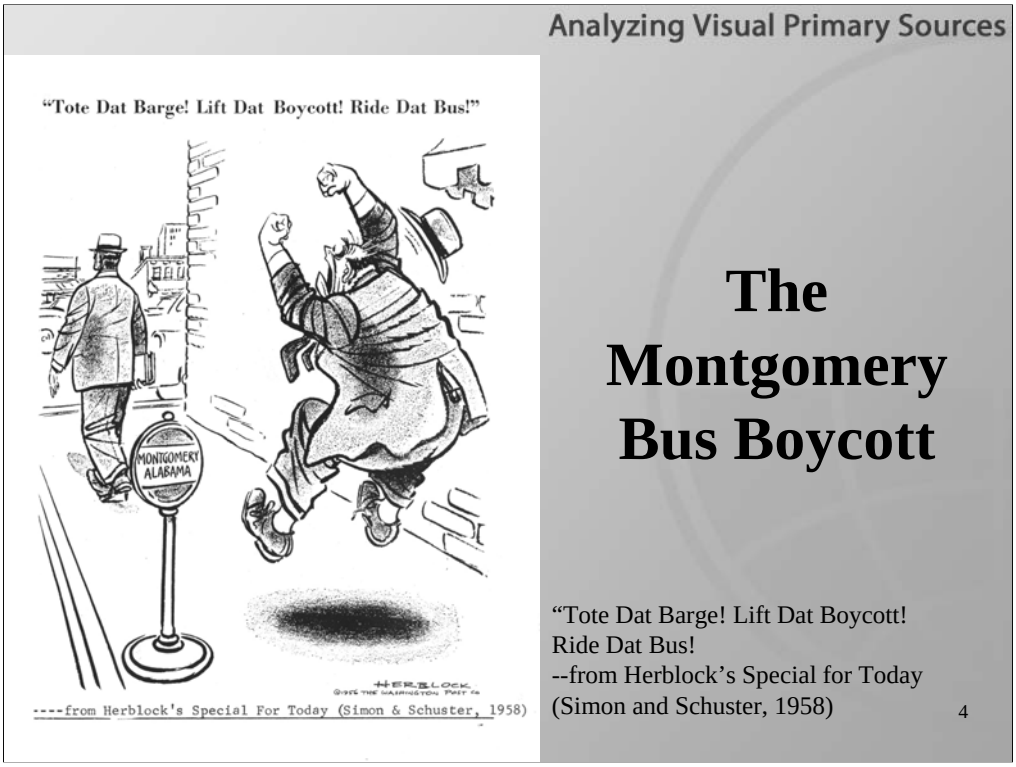
- Civil Rights Act of 1964



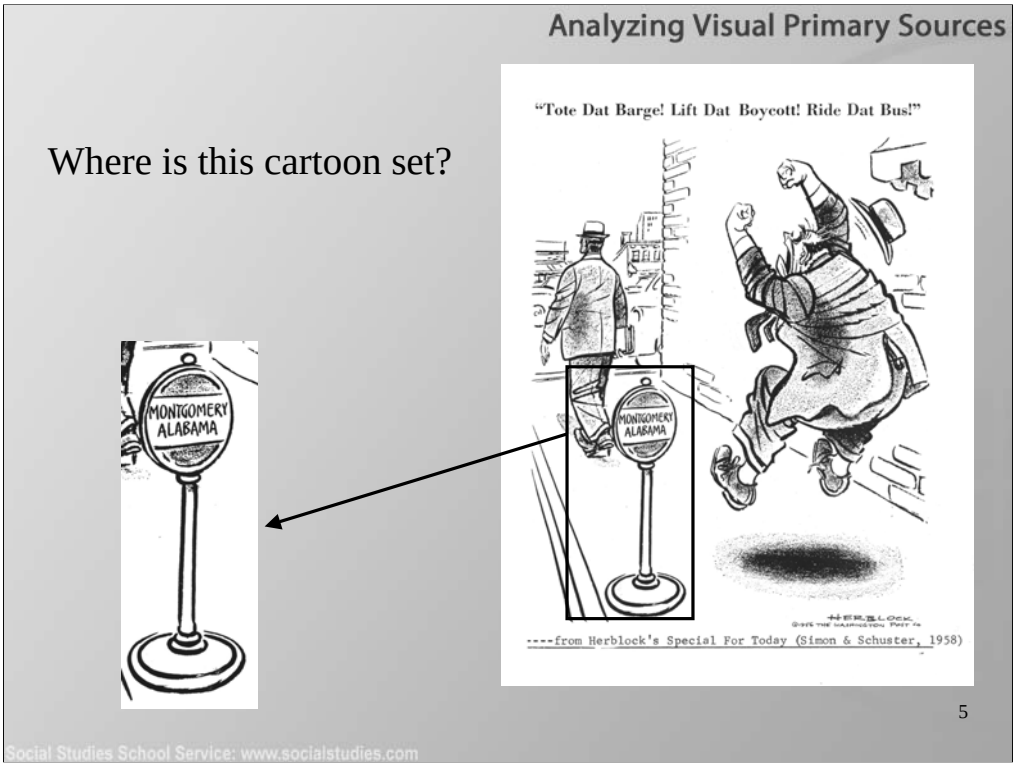
On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama, who also worked for the local chapter of the NAACP, boarded a city bus. As the bus became crowded with passengers, she was ordered to give up her seat to a white male passenger. She refused and was arrested for violating a Montgomery city ordinance.

Parks's arrest provided the impetus for the NAACP to organize a boycott of buses by black residents, who made up a substantial percentage of the bus company's fares. Many local ministers were in the forefront of the boycott movement, called the "Montgomery Improvement Association." Martin Luther King, a newly ordained minister, became a leading voice in the boycott.

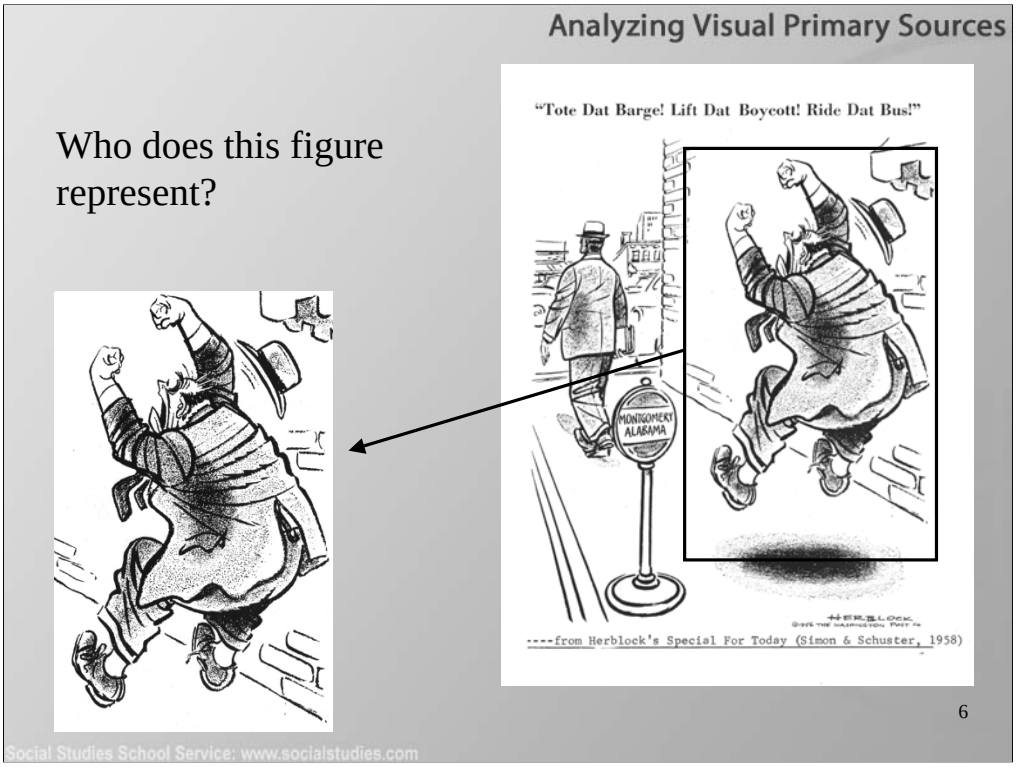
For the next 381 days, blacks refused to ride buses. They walked, carpooled, or in some instances, rode in "rolling churches"—church buses that had been pressed into service to help transport black riders to work and school. Finally, a federal court ruled that the city ordinance segregating Montgomery buses was unconstitutional: blacks could sit wherever they wanted and could not be ordered to move. The boycott succeeded not just by ending segregation on Montgomery city buses, but by helping to spark a much bigger struggle to ensure equal rights for blacks in all sorts of areas, including equal employment, voting, and holding office.



Give students approximately one minute to view the cartoon, then proceed to the following slides.



As we can see from the sign (which, not coincidentally, is meant to look like a bus stop sign of the era), the cartoon is set in Montgomery, Alabama.



While the cartoonist doesn't specifically label either of the figures in the drawing, the figure most likely represents the average white person in Montgomery.