At Levine Museum of the New South, we look at how Charlotte and the surrounding area has changed since the end of the American Civil War in 1865. These changes range from the types of jobs people have held to the constitutional rights we hold dear today. When we think about the New South, we like to define it as:

• A Time — The New South is the period of time from 1865, following the Civil War, to the present.
• A Place — The New South includes areas of the Southeast U.S. that began to grow and flourish after 1865.
• An Idea — The New South represents new ways of thinking about economic, political and cultural life in the South.

This lesson plan explores the Civil Rights Era of the 1940s-1970s.

Objective: Students will learn about people who challenged discrimination and segregation during the Civil Rights Era.

Essential Question: Who were some of the important changemakers and what were some of the important events in the struggle for Civil Rights in North Carolina and Charlotte?

Standards Addressed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.G.1</td>
<td>Understand how human, environmental and technological factors affect the growth and development of North Carolina.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.E.1</td>
<td>Understand how a market economy impacts life in North Carolina.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.H.2</td>
<td>Understand the political, economic and/or social significance of historical events, issues, individuals and cultural groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.H.1</td>
<td>Use historical thinking to analyze various modern societies.</td>
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<td>8.H.1</td>
<td>Apply historical thinking to understand the creation and development of North Carolina and the United States</td>
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<td>8.H.3</td>
<td>Understand the factors that contribute to change and continuity in North Carolina and the United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AH1.H.1.2</td>
<td>Use historical comprehension to reconstruct meaning of a passage, differentiate between facts and interpretation, analyze data in maps and analyze visual literary and musical sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH1.H.1.4</td>
<td>Use historical research to formulate historical questions obtain data from a variety of sources, support interpretations with evidence and construct analytical essays using evidence to support arguments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>AH1.H.4/</td>
<td>Analyze how conflict and compromise have shaped politics, economics and culture in the United States.</td>
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<td>AH2.H.4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>AH1.H.5/</td>
<td>Understand how tensions between freedom, equality and power have shaped the political, economic and social development of the United States.</td>
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<td>AH2.H.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>AH1.H.7/</td>
<td>Understand the impact of war on American politics, economics, society and culture.</td>
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<td>AH2.H.7</td>
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We Shall Overcome:  
Charlotte Changemakers Part 1  
1940s-1970s

Glossary:

- **Civil Rights Era** - 1940s-1970s, when people fought to overcome Jim Crow laws and to secure basic legal rights for African Americans, such as voting, access to housing, and integrated education.
- **Disenfranchisement** - denying people the opportunity to vote.
- **Segregation** - the forced separation of different racial groups in society, primarily African Americans and whites in the South.
- **Jim Crow** - laws that segregated whites and African Americans in the United States.
- **Separate but Equal** - a policy that permitted racial segregation in the South as long as there were equal opportunities and facilities provided for all races, which never happened.
- **Redlining** - refusing property loans, credit, or insurance for property to African Americans and other communities of color.
- **Boycott** - refusing to buy goods or participate in something as a form of protest.
- **Sit-in** - a form of protest in which activists refuse to leave a place until their demands are met.
- **Integration/desegregation** - ending racial segregation.

We Shall Overcome

The **Civil Rights Era** of the 1940s to 1970s was a political, social and legal struggle for African Americans to gain equality and full citizenship rights. While African Americans had always fought for equality, the Civil Rights Era was a very active time of individuals and organizations challenging **disenfranchisement** and **Jim Crow segregation**. At the time, African Americans in Southern cities, including Charlotte, were not allowed to attend the same schools; live in the same neighborhoods, which was upheld by redlining; eat in the same restaurants; or use the same restrooms and water fountains as white people. Activists challenged Jim Crow laws through marches, **boycotts**, lawsuits, **sit-ins**, and civil disobedience.

North Carolina was the birthplace of one of the most powerful tactics of the Civil Rights Era, the sit-in movement. In 1960, four African American students from North Carolina A & T University in Greensboro, sat down at a segregated lunch counter at the Woolworth department store, placed an order and refused to leave until they were served. They were not served, and they returned the next day to continue their protest. College students across America followed suit, including those from Charlotte’s Johnson C. Smith University. More than 200 students followed J. Charles Jones to sit-in at Woolworth, Grant’s and other stores. Charlotte desegregated its lunch counters in July 1960, after six months of protesting.

Charlotte citizen Zechariah Alexander inspired his sons Kelly and Fred to work for better opportunities for African Americans. In 1940, Kelly became president of the Charlotte chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. In the 1960s, Fred became the first black member of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and the first African American elected in the 20th century to the city council. Both Alexanders pushed for mayor Sam Brookshire to desegregate Charlotte’s parks and public facilities. Their efforts along with those of Charlotte dentist and minister Reginald Hawkins, led hundreds of JCSU students to march against segregated businesses, helped desegregate Charlotte hotels and restaurants in 1963. The threat of retaliation was very real for civil rights activists. In November 1965, segregationists bombed the homes of the Alexanders, Hawkins, and attorney Julius Chambers. Fortunately, no one was hurt in the blasts.
Activity 1: Studying Historical Photos

Use the “SEE” approach to study the historical photos of Charlotteans during the Civil Rights Era. Write your responses on a separate sheet of paper.

S. Who is the subject of the picture? What is his/her expression?

E. What experience does the image capture? What is happening in the scene? In the background?

E. How would you evaluate the photograph? What is the message you take away it?

Photo 1: J. Charles Jones protests discriminatory housing policies, June 9, 1966; courtesy of the Washington Post.
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Photo 2: Reginald A. Hawkins; courtesy of the Charlotte Observer.
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Photo 3: Robert and Mabel Williams; courtesy of facingsouth.org.
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Photo 4: Charlotteans in support of the Civil Rights Movement, Levine Museum of the New South.
Photo 5: Fred Alexander watches the fence separating segregated Elmwood and Pinewood Cemeteries being removed, January, 1969; courtesy of landmarkscommission.org.
**Photo 6:** Kelly Alexander with Charlotte police officers, 1957; courtesy of naacpnc.org.
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Photo 7: Activist protesting in Charlotte, early 1960s; Levine Museum of the New South.
Photo 8: JCSU students hold a sit-in at Charlotte Woolworth’s in February 1960; 
*Charlotte Observer* Image Collection, Courtesy of the RSCR, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.