



Crusaders for Civil Rights

The human rights movement, of which voting was an essential part, was a highly-concerted effort conducted by many national, state and local citizens' organizations. Beginning in the 1940s, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.), and Congress on Racial Equality (C.O.R.E.) organized and conducted a variety of campaigns to achieve equality for African Americans in American society. The crusade in Alabama led to the creation of a new and narrowly-focused genre of organized bodies designed to address the challenges of inequality in voting, employment and education within a predominately rural region. As the various aspects of the civil rights movement expanded in scope, so did those who were among the participants. Soon, youths from age 8 and upwards, professionals, and clergy became actively engaged in civil rights activities. The following organizations were among the most notable...

SNCC

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) organized at Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina in 1960. Bernard and Colia Lafayette were invited by the Dallas County Voters League to organize a chapter of SNCC in Selma in February of 1963.

SCLC

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)—Based in Atlanta, GA and composed primarily of clergy of different faiths founded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Rev. Joseph Lowery and Ralph Abernathy in 1957 in Montgomery, Alabama, following the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956.

Dallas County Voters League

Organized during the 1920s by Samuel W. Boynton, a local agricultural extension agent, to address African-American voting rights and land ownership. In the 1960s, local activists furthered their efforts through legal action against Dallas County and in educating potential voters through their "Citizenship School" conducted by Mrs. Marie Foster.

Marion Civic League

This group was formed to organize the effort to obtain jobs and voting rights for African Americans in Perry County. Led by Albert Turner, Rev. A.T. Days, youth leader James Orange and others, this organization planned a series of mass meetings and protests in Perry, Hale, and Greene Counties in early 1965, including the first night march of the campaign that took place in Marion on February 17, 1965 and led to the shooting death of Jimmie Lee Jackson.

Lowndes County Christian Movement for Human Rights and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization

The former was created with the assistance of SCLC in 1965 with John Hulett as the first chairman. The latter was formed with the help of SNCC to get African Americans registered to vote for African-American candidates that might run local government. The Lowndes County Freedom Organization formed a new political party and entered candidates in the local political races. The emblem of this organization was a black panther. The Black Panther Party that was founded in Oakland, California in 1966 traces its roots to this group.

