

Domestic Issues of the 1960s

America in the 1950s

- America emerged from WWII economically & militarily strong & secure and confident in its growth.
- The 1950s saw the rapid growth of the middle-class.
 - The middle class was bigger, more powerful and more homogenous and than ever before.
 - White middle-class Americans truly believed that other Americans knew/experienced the same world that they did (one of economic growth, comfort and conformity)



Not Everyone's Reality



However, even within the middle-class, there were groups of Americans who found life unsatisfying for a variety of reasons.

WHO WERE THESE PEOPLE?

America in the 1960s

- In the '60s, America experienced tremendous social upheaval as Americans who had previously been pushed to the fringes began to fight for equality and challenge the status quo.
 - Who were some of those groups?
 - Women
 - African-Americans
 - Native Americans
 - Environmentalists
 - The poor
 - Youth
 - Latinos
- Add to the discontent, the continuing Cold War with the Russians and a proxy war in Vietnam.



- Americans' Cold War fears continued into the 1960s.

- FEAR OF COMMUNISM
SPREADING:

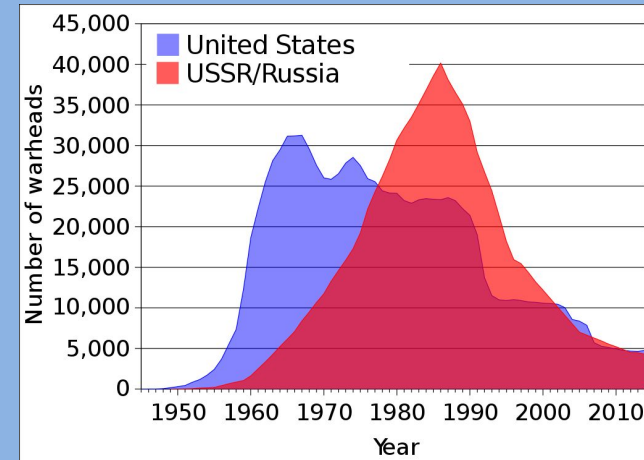
- Bay of Pigs puts US/Sov. on the brink of atomic war.
- Beginning of a proxy war in Vietnam

- ARMS RACE: ----->>>>>>

- SPACE RACE: the U.S. and Russia raced to gain the upperhand in space.

- Oct. 1957 Sputnik, a Soviet satellite, became the first manmade object to orbit the Earth. A year later, the U.S. launched their first satellite into space and created NASA.
- In April 1961 the Soviets launched the first man into space. One month later, the U.S. sent their first man to space.

Cold War Continues

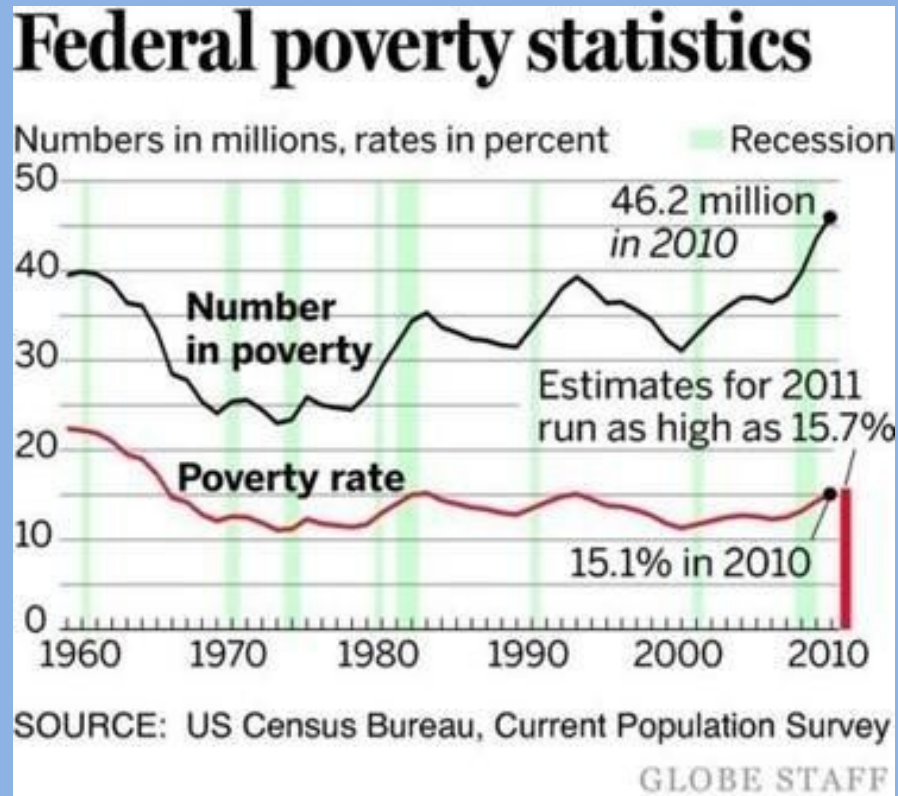


Poverty



- The great economic growth of the 1950s did not eliminate poverty.
 - There were large groups of Americans who remained outside the middle class.
 - 20% of Americans were always in poverty.

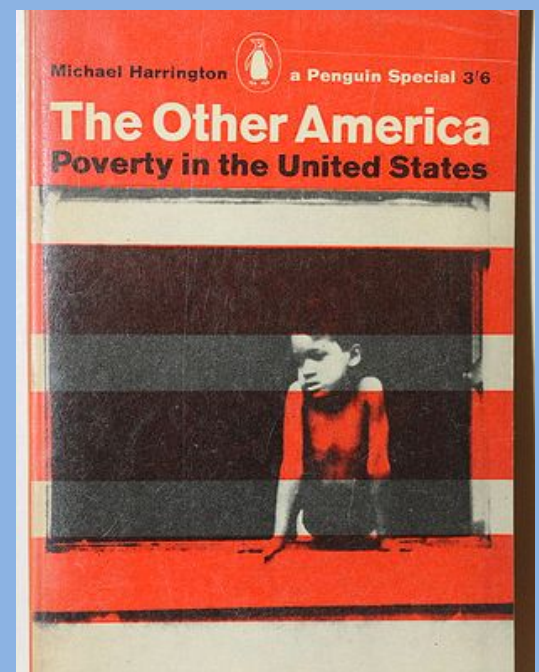
- The PROBLEM
 - 1959: 22.4% poverty rate
 - 1 out of 5 in poverty
 - Hunger
 - High crime
 - Lack of housing
 - Unemployed



Poverty (cont.)

Michael Harrington, *The Other America*

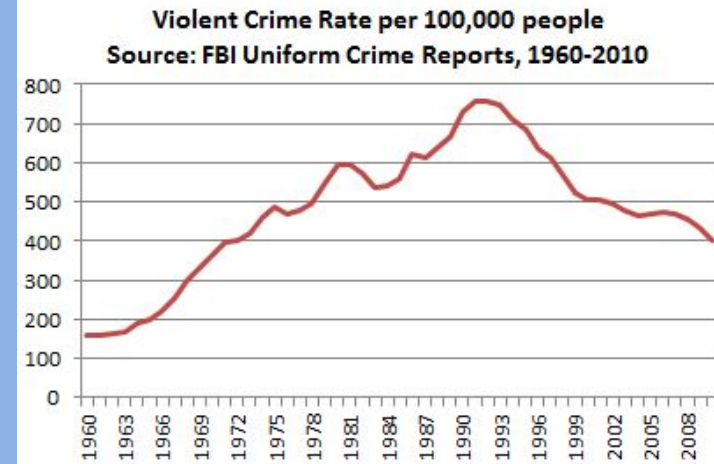
- In 1962, Michael Harrington wrote *The Other America* where he described the continuing existence of poverty within the U.S..
- While the white middle class Americans were enjoying 1950s prosperity, 1/5th of Americans (over 30 million people) were living below the poverty line in 1960.



Horn of Plenty

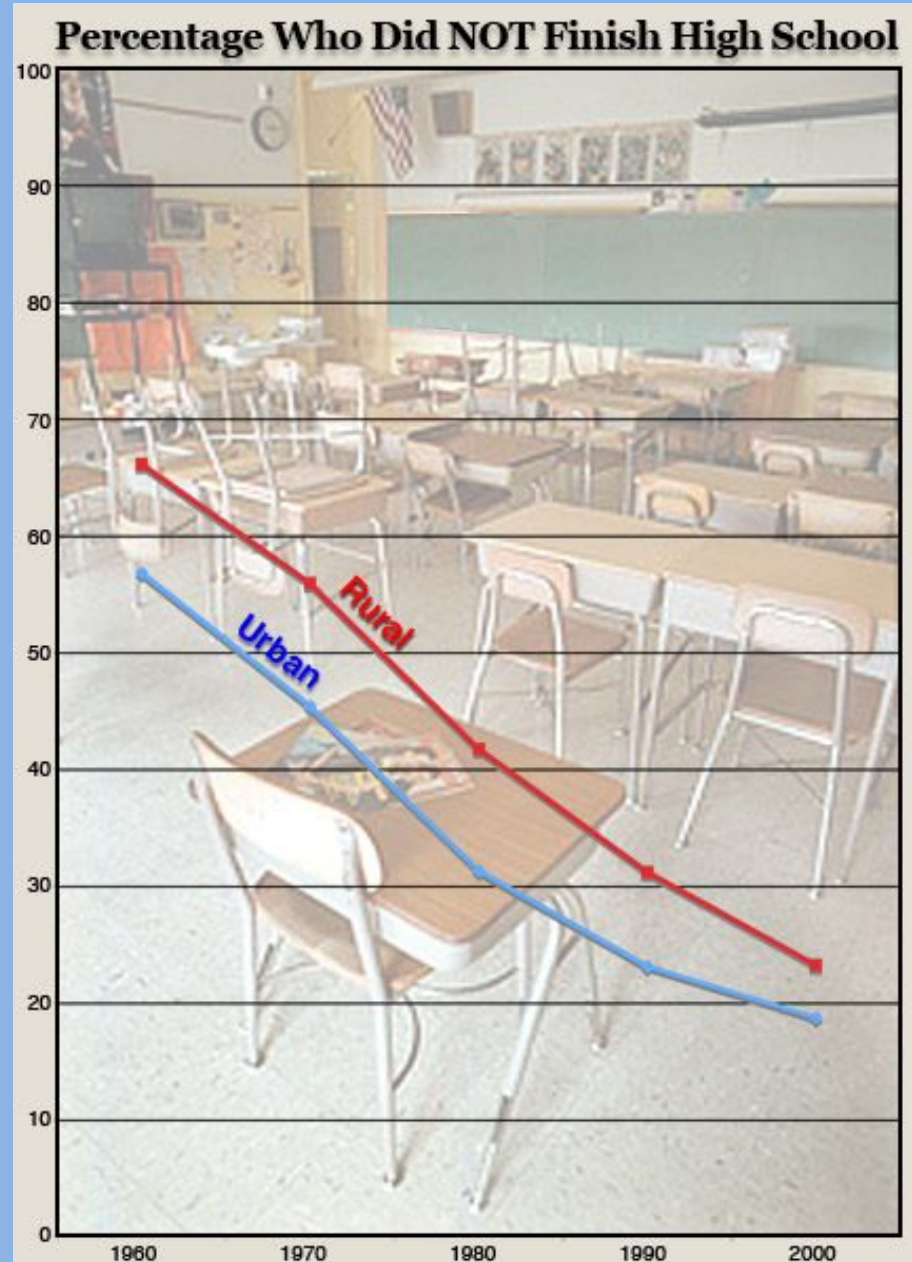
Urban Issues

- Skyrocketing crime rates (burglary, assault, rape, drugs, etc.)
 - \$27 billion spent on crime prevention annually (failing!)
- Shortages of affordable housing and goods
- Race riots/protests in cities
- Mass exodus of middle & upper class & businesses from urban areas in the years after WWII (white flight)
 - Left the cities low income, predominantly non-white, homes in disrepair
 - Tax revenue also left the cities



Education

- Many urban & rural schools lacked materials/funds/quality teaching (as compared to the suburbs)
- Segregation continued in many schools
- American students were ranked lower when compared to other 1st world countries (not ideal during the Cold War!)
 - 66% of rural students did not graduate high school, while 57% of urban students did not graduate high school.
 - Only 10% of students completed 4 years of college



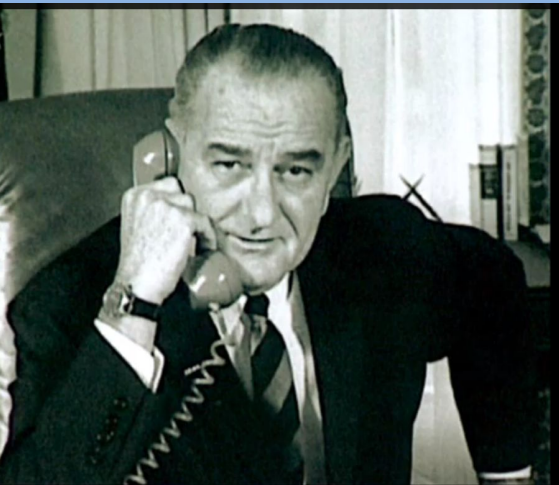
Civil Rights



- Racial discrimination and segregation continued well into the the '60s.
- Activism on the part of groups like the NAACP as well as ordinary people who were the victims of this discrimination continued and increased over the course of the '60s.
- Media was flooded with images from these protests, many of which featured non-violent protestors being responded to with violence.
 - For example,
 - The violence brought on black students who demonstrated at lunch counter sit-ins in Greensboro, NC
 - Shocking images of white police officers turning attack dogs and fire hoses on school children in Birmingham
 - The peaceful march on Washington where Martin Luther King delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech.

How did politicians in the 1960s deal with these changing realities?

- Americans who wanted more from the government during the 1950s began to look to the president/federal govt. more to take on this role in the 1960s.
 - This led to an expansion of the liberal state in the 1960s, whereby the fed. govt was more involved in policy-making and intent on providing for the needs of all people, especially those who were in the need of the most help/protection.



John F. Kennedy

(1961-1963)

- Senator from Massachusetts (Democrat)
- Good-looking, young (43), Catholic and well-spoken
- Ran against Rep. Richard Nixon in a close election decided in large part thanks to the TV.
- Made his own personality & family an integral part of his presidency.
 - Wife, Jacqueline, and two children, Caroline and John became central figures in American life.



OPTIMISM: JFK's Inaugural Address, 1960



Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1968)

- Born in west Texas, rose in politics through his effort and ambition.
 - Worked his way through SW Texas State Teachers' College
 - Campaigned for the House of Rep. during the New Deal
 - WWII Navy Lieutenant.
 - Skilled legislator after 6 terms in the House and 12 years as a senator.
 - In 1953, he became the youngest Minority Leader in Senate history and later the Majority leader

Big Enough For The Job--Young Enough To Get It Done

Lyndon Johnson

A DYNAMIC PERSONALITY

**He Knows
Washington**
AND CAN GET THINGS
DONE FOR THE PEOPLE

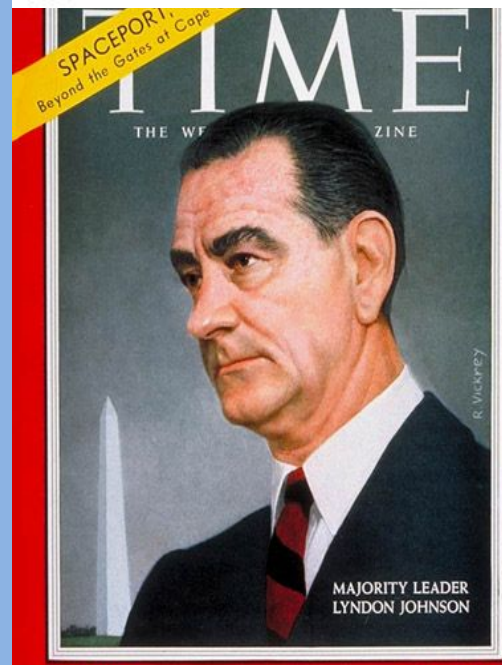
LYNDON B. JOHNSON
EDUCATED AS STATE
DIRECTOR OF SWA
Aubrey Williams, SWA
administrator, said Johnson
was the man "first class
job" and termed him "one
of the ablest State Direc-
tors we have had."
Available From
New York, N.Y.



for **CONGRESSMAN**
10TH DISTRICT

Support the Man Who—

Stands with the President and for the People
Has Helped Hundreds of Farmers and Working Men
Understands Departmental Routine of Washington
Will Carry Colorado and Benzons Projects Through
Capably Administered His Part of the Roosevelt
Program for Texas

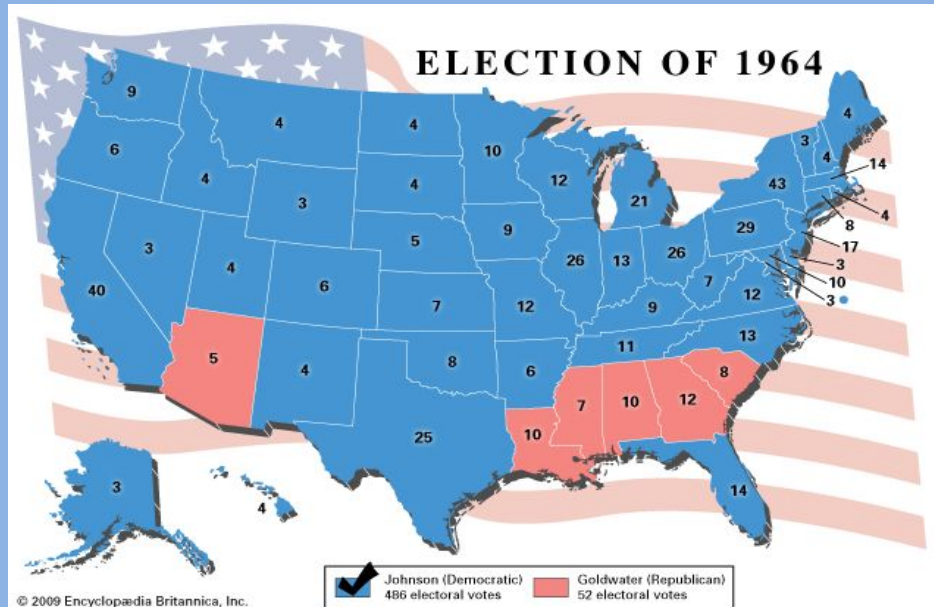


- Kennedy's Vice President, Johnson, was sworn in when JFK was assassinated.



Photograph by Cecil W. Stoughton

- Johnson ran for re-election in 1964 and won with 61% of vote (the widest popular margin in American history, more than 15 million votes!)



A Shift to the Left



Kennedy's New Frontier

- Kennedy focused on economic expansion, equal rights reform, aid to the poor, a focus on the space race and increasing the role of arts in society.
- He wasn't as effective as he would have liked due to a narrow electoral victory & his lack of legislative experience.

Johnson's Great Society

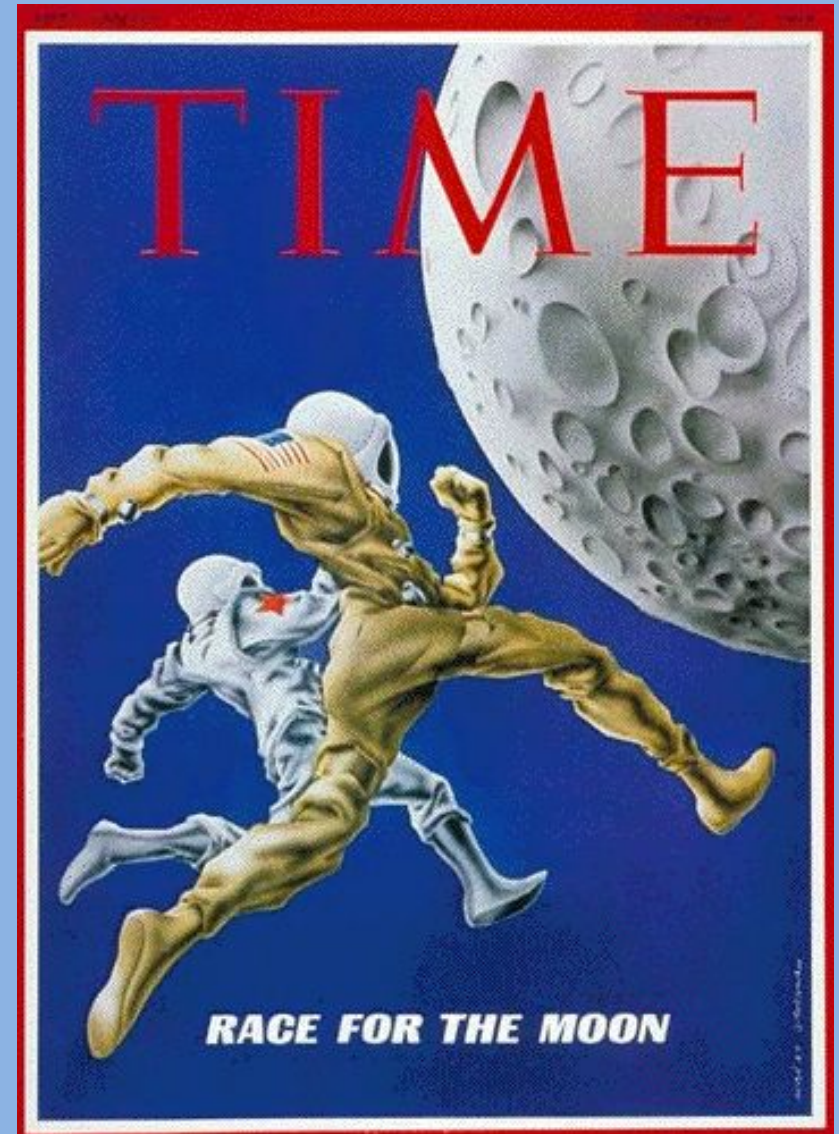
- He urged the nation to “build a great society, a place where the meaning of man’s life matches the marvels of man’s labor.”
- Between 1963-1966, LBJ compiled the most impressive legislative record of any president since FDR.
 - In total, put forward 200 new laws/agencies and 181 of them were passed into law.

Presidential Efforts



Presidential Efforts - The Space Race

- JFK committed the US to landing a man on the moon before the end of the decade (July 29, 1969)
- Congress increased NASA funding to do this.
 - 1960 about \$401 million in funding
 - By 1965, about \$5+ billion in funds





Presidential Efforts - Poverty

- As part of LBJ's War on Poverty the gov't spent \$22 trillion on anti-poverty programs including:
 - Job corps
 - Economic opportunities act
 - Food stamps act
 - Neighborhood youth corps
 - Community programs
 - Raising minimum wage
- 1st year: poverty rate drops to 17.3%
- 1973: poverty rate to 11.1%

The War on POVERTY

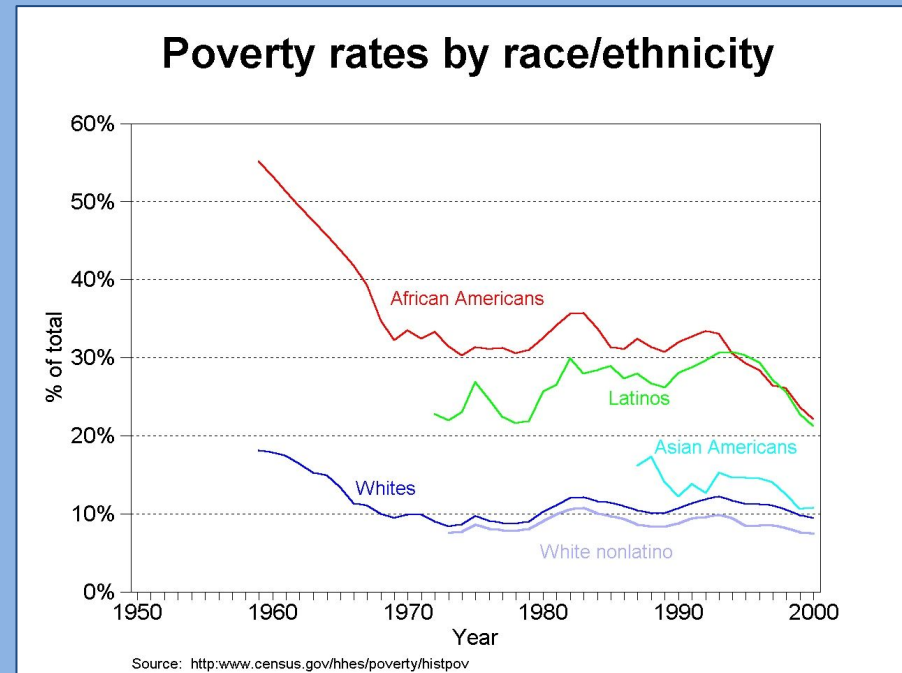
50 years ago, Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, prompting the creation of dozens of federal programs aimed at alleviating poverty and striking at its roots. Today, just how much progress has been made?

IN 1960 22.1% OF AMERICANS WERE LIVING IN POVERTY

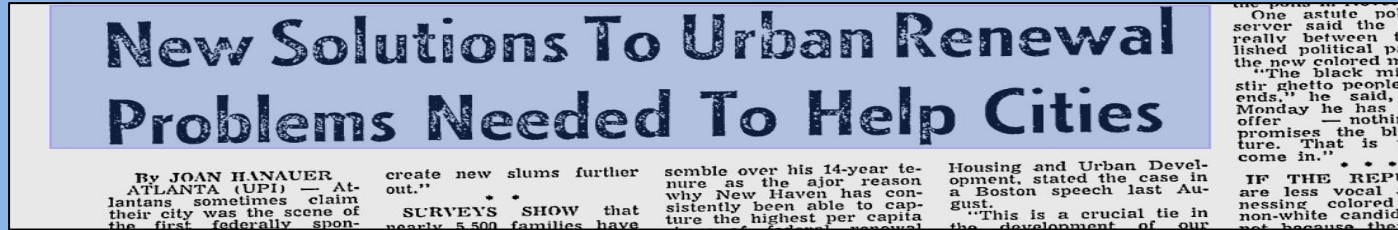
In 1964, President Johnson responded to the crisis

“This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America.”

Lyndon B. Johnson, State of the Union Address, January 8th, 1964



Presidential Efforts - Urban Issues



- Established a national crime commission to study crime to better inform crime prevention efforts. Based on findings:
 - Increased fed. funds for crime research & local law enforcement
 - Increased gun control (raised age to 21 to purchase firearms, etc.)
 - Increased FBI budget by 10% & trained police in riot control
 - Passage of the Prison Rehabilitation Act to create job & skills training for inmates
- Increased funds for public housing, construction of water/sewers, etc.
- Federal funding for local community action agencies
 - Job Corp - train people ages 16-24
 - Vista - volunteers to urban/underdeveloped areas
 - Headstart – free early childhood education for poor youth

Presidential Efforts - Education

- Increased federal funding to elementary & secondary schools as well as to colleges.
 - **Elementary & Secondary Education Act** (1965): increased aid to education & guaranteed equal access to education.
Included:
 - \$1 billion for educational research, professional development, books, etc.
 - increased \$ to low income schools (designed to close the skills gap between urban & rural/suburban areas)
 - created bilingual education programs
 - aid to handicapped children
 - **Higher Education Acts** (1963/1965): increased federal aid to colleges, funding for scholarships and low interest rate college loans, federal aid for facilities, etc.

Civil Rights - Successes & Challenges

- Following years of court cases challenging segregation in public spaces and non-violent demonstrations at lunch counters, bus stations, and businesses throughout the South, the federal govt. passed the **Civil Rights Act of 1964** which
 - Outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin in hotels, restaurants, theaters, and other public accommodations.
 - Prohibited state & local govts from denying access to public facilities on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin.
- Passage of the **Voting Rights Act of 1965**
- In spite of these federal laws, racial discrimination & violence continued
 - Civil rights leaders like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King were assassinated
 - There was continued racial unrest and rioting in the cities through the end of the 1960s
 - It seemed there was no easy solution in spite of federal anti-poverty & anti-discrimination programs



Individual/Group Activism

