**Overview of the 1960s Digital History**

The 1960s was a decade when hundreds of thousands of ordinary Americans gave new life to the nation's democratic ideals. African Americans used sit-ins, freedom rides, and protest marches to fight segregation, poverty, and unemployment. Feminists demanded equal job opportunities and an end to sexual discrimination. Mexican Americans protested discrimination in voting, education, and employment. Native Americans demanded that the government recognize their land claims and the right of tribes to govern themselves. Environmentalists demanded legislation to control the amount of pollution released into the environment.

Summary:

Early in the decade, African American college students, impatient with the slow pace of legal change, staged sit-ins, freedom rides, and protest marches to challenge segregation in the South. Their efforts led the federal government to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting discrimination in public facilities and employment, and the 24th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, guaranteeing voting rights.

The examples of the civil rights movement inspired other groups to press for equal rights. The women's movement fought for equal educational and employment opportunities, and brought about a transformation of traditional views about women's place in society. Mexican Americans battled for bilingual education programs in schools, unionization of farm workers, improved job opportunities, and increased political power. Native Americans pressed for control over their lands and resources, the preservation of native cultures, and tribal self-government. Gays and lesbians organized to end legal discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In a far-reaching effort to reduce poverty, alleviate malnutrition, extend medical care, provide adequate housing, and enhance the employability of the poor, President Lyndon Johnson launched his Great Society Program in 1964. But the Vietnam War, ghetto rioting, and the rise of a militant antiwar movement and the counterculture, contributed to a political backlash that would lead the Republican Party to control the presidency for 10 of the next 14 years.

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