**Standard 8-7:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of the impact on South Carolina of significant events of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

**Enduring Understanding**

Changes that took place in the United States during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries revitalized the economy and challenged traditional society and politics in South Carolina. To understand the response of South Carolina to these challenges, the student will . . .

**8-7.2** Analyze the movement for civil rights in South Carolina, including the impact of the landmark court cases *Elmore v. Rice* and *Briggs v. Elliot*; civil rights leaders Septima Poinsette Clark, Modjeska Monteith Simkins, and Matthew J. Perry; the South Carolina school equalization effort and other resistance to school integration; peaceful efforts to integrate beginning with colleges and demonstrations in South Carolina such as the Friendship Nine and the Orangeburg Massacre.

**It is essential for students to know**

Jim Crow laws, restrictions on voting through poll taxes and literacy tests, and discrimination in the workplace (8-5.1), continued to limit the social, political, and economic opportunities of African Americans in the 20th century. It is important for students to understand that the movement for civil rights in the United States was continuous from the colonial period. Throughout the 20th century, organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association of Colored Women, and the National Urban League actively sought the recognition of African American rights and the fulfillment of the promises of the Declaration of Independence and the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments.

The Civil Rights Movement intensified after World War II. The movement for civil rights accelerated as a result of the “victory abroad, victory at home” (Double V) campaign of African Americans, the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of* Education, the influence of mass media and the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) took the legal approach and brought cases to the courts that challenged the prevailing practices of discrimination and laid the groundwork for change. Among many other cases, the NAACP challenged the exclusion of African American voters from participation in the South Carolina Democratic Party’s selection of candidates. The Democratic Party had dominated politics in South Carolina and the South since Reconstruction so the white primary effectively excluded blacks from having any say in selecting the state’s elected officials. The United States Supreme Court ruled in Elmore v. Rice (1947) that the white primary was unconstitutional. African Americans, who continued to face white hostility, still had to overcome the intimidation but they now had the opportunity to impact the selection of candidates and subsequently the eventual officeholders in the solidly Democratic South Carolina.

The landmark case of *Brown v Board of Education* (1954) started with a simple request. The parents of African American students in Clarendon County, South Carolina requested a bus to take their children to their all-black school. Some children had to walk 18 miles to and from school each day. Since the county’s [2375] white children had [30] school buses for their use and its [6531] black students had none, parents at Scott’s Branch School felt that the “separate-but-equal” doctrine established by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* required that the school district at least pay for the gas and repairs on the used bus that the families had bought to take their children to school. Parents did not originally seek integration but equality. The original case was dismissed due to a technicality. With the assistance of local leaders including Modjeska Monteith Simkins and the NAACP, parents brought suit against the school district in a new case, *Briggs v. Elliot*, for equal treatment under the law as required by the 14th amendment. In federal district court, the counsel for the state of South Carolina admitted that the separate schools for African Americans were unequal but claimed that the state had initiated a building program that would bring the African American schools up to par with the white schools (see below). The court, therefore, ruled in favor of the school district. The NAACP then appealed the case to the United States Supreme Court. *Briggs v. Elliot* was one of five cases that became part of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision. In *Brown* the Supreme Court overturned *Plessy v Ferguson* and ruled that separate was inherently unequal. The court further ruled that African American students should be integrated into classrooms with white children with “all deliberate speed.”

South Carolina officials resisted efforts to integrate schools in a variety of ways. While the *Briggs* case was still pending in the federal courts, South Carolina launched a statewide effort to improve education by making separate African American schools equal to schools for whites and therefore able to remain segregated under the *Plessy* “separate but equal” doctrine. This massive building program is known as the equalization effort. Modern schools for African American students were built throughout the state. When the equalization effort was not successful in persuading the courts that “separate but equal” should be upheld, the *Brown* ruling was met with widespread and sometimes violent opposition and delay, delay, delay. The governor of South Carolina [James F. Byrnes] encouraged this resistance. White Citizens Councils were established to coordinate efforts to intimidate African Americans who petitioned for equal treatment and to label whites who supported the court’s ruling as traitors to their race. South Carolina’s Senator Strom Thurmond authored the Southern Manifesto, signed by all but three of the Congressmen from the Deep South [101 in total]. This document condemned the *Brown* decision for upsetting the relationship of whites and African Americans in the South and encouraged resistance to desegregation. Resistance included the establishment of numerous ‘white flight’ private academies, school choice, and plans for the voluntary closing of public schools. For almost two decades South Carolina sought to avoid the integration of public schools. Similar actions were taken in other southern states. It would be the early 1970s before full-scale integration occurred in most South Carolina schools.

The *Brown* decision prompted other civil rights actions throughout the South and South Carolina was affected. In response to the actions of Rosa Parks’ and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Supreme Court ruled that city buses could not be segregated. But South Carolina bus companies ignored the ruling. When students staged a sit-in at a North Carolina lunch counter, South Carolina students followed their example throughout the state and initiated a new tactic (see below). Grassroots protests and demonstrations throughout South Carolina echoed the national movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. The response of the white leadership of South Carolina was tempered by their desire to attract economic investment to the state (8-7.1). Pictures of protests and violence in other southern states carried on nationwide TV and in newspaper articles did not encourage such investment.

Consequently in 1963, South Carolina began to slowly and deliberately integrate public facilities. Beginning first with Clemson College and followed by the University of South Carolina, state colleges were integrated without the violence which engulfed campuses in other southern states. This relatively peaceful integration of public facilities in South Carolina was marred by the violence of the Orangeburg Massacre (see below). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were enforced in South Carolina and public schools were finally desegregated as a result of another court ruling 15 years after the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education.*

Although many South Carolinians played a significant role in the civil rights movement, most notable among them are Septima Clark, Modjeska Simkins and Matthew Perry. Septima Poinsette Clark was a public school teacher. In a case brought by the NAACP, she sought equal pay for African American and white teachers. A member of the NAACP, Clark left South Carolina when the state legislature passed a bill saying that public employees could not belong to any civil rights organization. Clark later taught at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee where many civil rights leaders learned the strategy of nonviolent direct action. Clark served in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference led by Dr. King. Clark founded citizenship schools to improve literacy among the African American community and increase voter registration. Modjeska Monteith Simkins was a teacher and public health worker. An active member of the NAACP, she also participated in the efforts to equalize teachers’ salaries and to reform the white primary (*Elmore v Rice*). Simkins also helped write the declaration for the lawsuit that asked for the equalization of Clarenden County schools (*Briggs v Elliot*). Matthew J Perry was the first graduate of the new law school at South Carolina State to pass the bar exam. As a civil rights lawyer, Perry was instrumental in bringing cases in South Carolina to challenge segregation. African American efforts to push for integration of schools to conform to the *Brown* ruling were first pursued at the college and university level because these would be least resisted by white parents. Perry defended the right of an African American student to attend Clemson University. Perry also fought for the adoption of single-member districts in South Carolina's House of Representatives, making it possible for more black lawmakers to get elected. Perry later served as South Carolina’s first African American federal judge.

South Carolina college students also played a role in the Civil Rights Movement. The Friendship Nine were students at Friendship College who introduced a new tactic to the movement in the early 1960s. While planning a sit-in at a Rock Hill lunch counter, the students decided that if arrested, they would not accept bail but would serve out their sentences. By so doing, they brought greater public attention to their protest against segregation. Other protesters across the country adopted the "jail no bail" tactic, and served out their jail sentences, thus straining the local prison system and drawing the attention of the national press. In 1968, students at South Carolina State College protested the segregation of a bowling alley in Orangeburg. Several days later police who had been called in to keep the peace, opened fire on students, injuring dozens and killing three. The officers were acquitted but a wounded student was convicted of “riot” because of his activity at the bowling alley several nights before the shooting. By 1968, the national press, inured to the violence by urban riots, paid little attention to the event and it was overshadowed by the riots that followed the assassination of Dr. King in April.