

Defining Documents in American History: Civil Rights (1954-2015)

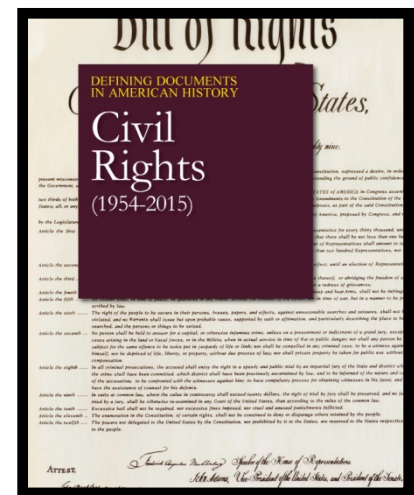
Reviews

“Using the tried and true format established for the series, 40 primary sources are considered, which in this case include speeches, laws, letters, religious sermons, and excerpts from legal cases. All of part of the document is contained in the entry supported with a critical essay that includes an overview, a biography of the sources’ author, a document analysis, the key themes and a discussion of the moment leading to the creation of the document. As you might expect, documents dealing with African American civil rights are most numerous but other minorities are given deserved attention including women, Latinos, Gays, and Native Americans.

As with other titles in this series each essay provides a clear and relevant discussion that will be helpful to students in understanding the context of the documents and its importance, as well as a list of resources for further research. A chronological list of all the documents, a collected bibliography, and a general index round out the volume.”

-Against the Grain

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“The fight for civil rights is no longer considered specific to an era: rather, it is an ongoing part of the American story. This volume in the *Defining Documents in American History* series gathers a good variety of primary source documents revolving around the general theme of civil rights and couples them with contemporary analysis prepared by a host of knowledgeable scholars.

“Five main sections focus on the most compelling areas of civil rights study: African American Civil Rights, Women and Equality, Latino Civil Rights, The Gay Rights Movement, and Native American Rights. Within each section readers will find applicable primary source documents ranging from letters to speeches to court opinions and more. Some examples of the documents within this volume include Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” the National Organization for Women (NOW) Founding Statement, and the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell law.

Enriching these documents are well-organized essays providing background and contemporary insights into the challenges and implications wrought by the issues. Each essay is similarly constructed, with well-demarcated, concise sections providing a summary overview, defining moment, document author biography, document analysis, and essential themes. Other features within each essay include a glossary of selected terms from the primary document and a bibliography.

Appendixes offer further supplemental information, and include a chronological list of events relative to the volume’s documents, Web resources, a bibliography, and an index.

Whether reaching back to the mid-twentieth century to hear the Women’s Political Council of Montgomery, Alabama, ask for respectful treatment in public transportation to reading an impactful 2015 Supreme Court decision about defining marriage in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, readers will get an excellent sense of the complex fights for civil rights in the United States.”

-ARBA