Rosa Parks Essay, Research Paper

Rosa Parks protest stimulated a growing movement to desegregate public transportation and marked a historic turning point in the African American battle for civil rightsAt the end of the reconstruction era, African Americans were considered second-class citizens both economically and politically. Jim Crow laws and black codes prevented Blacks from obtaining their rights as citizens. It was not until the 1950?s and 1960?s that blacks began to fight for equal opportunities. One individual who was one of the first to start the civil rights movement was an African American woman from Montgomery, Alabama. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks boarded a bus after a long day of work. Rosa sat in a row of seats just beyond the section of a bus that was designated for whites only. When a white man boarded the bus and was unable to locate an empty seat, the bus driver told Parks and the others seated by her to give up their seats for him. Rosa refused. Despite the adversity in Rosa?s refusal, she continued to fight for what

she believed in. In Quiet Strength, (Zondervan Publishing House, 1994) a book later written by Rosa Parks, she explains, “Our mistreatment was just not right, and I was tired of it. I kept thinking about my mother and my grandparents, and how strong they were. I knew there was a possibility of being mistreated, but an opportunity was being given to me to do what I had asked of others.” Her protest stimulated a growing movement to desegregate public transportation and marked a historic turning point in the African American battle for civil rights.

After Rosa parks arrest, African Americans wanted to continue the civil rights movement that Rosa established. Blacks through out the entire town of Montgomery attended a meeting at which they decided to boycott the use of buses as transportation. As a result, the bus company lost much of their business because blacks made up the majority of those who used buses. Their boycott lasted an entire year until finally the courts ruled that segregation in public transportation was illegal.

Consequently, during their fist meeting in Montgomery, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. surfaced as a civil rights movement leader. He along with other African-American community leaders held another meeting to organize future action. They named their new organization, the Montgomery Improvement Association and Dr. King was elected as its president. Soon After, King urged African Americans to use peaceful means to achieve their goals. In 1960, a group of black and white college students organized the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to help in the civil rights movement. They joined with young people from the SCLC, CORE, and the NAACP in staging sit-ins, boycotts, marches, and freedom rides. During the early 1960’s, the combined efforts of the civil rights groups ended discrimination in many public places, including restaurants, hotels, theaters, and cemeteries.

In 1957, Congress passed the first civil rights law since the Reconstruction. The act created a civil rights division in the Department of Justice to ensure that everyone received constitutional rights. Later, In Little Rock, Arkansas, the first all white school became integrated and nine black students were admitted into the all white Central High School.

In conclusion, these acts mentioned above were just the beginning of the civil rights movement. But, this movement would not have occurred if it hadn?t been for Rosa Parks. As a result to Rosa Parks? act, a citywide boycott of the bus system occurred lasting more than a year. The boycott raised an unknown clergyman named Martin Luther King, Jr., to national prominence and resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in city buses. Over the next four decades, she helped make her fellow Americans aware of the history of the civil rights struggle. This pioneer in the struggle for racial equality is the recipient of innumerable honors, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Nonviolent Peace Prize. She is an example of courage and determination and an inspiring symbol to all Americans to remain free.