4.11

Political Courage and Those Who Affirmed or Denied Democratic Ideals

Political courage is the act of standing up for and affirming democratic ideals no matter how popular or unpopular those ideas may be at a given time in history. Activities examine individuals who stood for the ideals of democracy and people and policies that directly negated those ideals. A Media Literacy Connection explores the ongoing media framing of January 6, 2021 insurrection.

Standard 4.11: Political Courage and Those Who Affirmed or Denied Democratic Ideals

Examine the varied understandings of the role of elected representatives and discuss those who have demonstrated political courage or those whose actions have failed to live up to the ideals of the Constitution. (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Studies) **[8.T4.11]**

FOCUS QUESTION: When and How Have Politically Courageous Individuals and Groups Worked to Realize Democratic Ideals?

Copper sculpture "Full Circle: Profile of Courage" in the John F. Kennedy Federal Building, Boston, Massachusetts

Photo by Carol M. Highsmith from a Library of Congress collection

Women and men who demonstrate **political courage** are essential to a democracy, for as the 35th President John F. Kennedy wrote in the 1957 Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Profiles in Courage*: "The true democracy, living and growing and inspiring, puts its faith in the people – faith that the people will not simply elect men who will represent their views ably

and faithfully, but also elect men who will exercise their conscientious judgment – faith that the people will not condemn those whose devotion to principle leads them to unpopular courses, but will reward courage, respect honor and ultimately recognize right" (quoted from About the Book: Profiles in Courage, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum).

United States history is filled with times when political figures and everyday people **affirmed the ideals of democracy and the nation's Constitution**. The INVESTIGATE and UNCOVER sections offer examples of politically courageous individuals who affirmed the ideals of freedom and justice during crucial times in the nation's past, including the Amistad Case, the Scopes Trial, and Delano Grape Strike and Boycott.

At the same time, there have many occasions of individuals, policymakers, and groups engaging in **actions that contradicted and suppressed American ideals --** most recently during the January 6, 2021 attack on the nation's Capitol by a pro-Trump group of insurrectionists seeking to overturn the 2020 Presidential election (Rampage at the Capitol, *The New York Times*, January 7, 2021). The ENGAGE section discusses the events and subsequent investigations of January 6 as well as the history of the Reconstruction Era; the Indian Wars of the American West; and 1950s McCarthyism, Red Scare, and Lavender Scare.

Political courage is found in the actions of individuals and groups who stood up for the ideals of liberty and justice in sharp contrast to those who do not.

What do you and will you stand up for?

Modules for this Standard Include:

1. INVESTIGATE: When American Ideals Were Affirmed
   1.1. Joseph Cinque, John Qunicy Adams, and the Amistad Case
   1.2. The Scopes Trial and the Debate Over Darwin's Origin of the Species
   1.3. Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong and the Delano Grape Strike and Boycott
2. UNCOVER: Claudette Colvin, the *Browder v. Gayle* case and the Struggle to Desegregate Public Transportation
3. ENGAGE: When and How Were American Ideals Denied?
   3.1. Special Topic Box: The January 6, 2021 Insurrection at the Capitol and Prosecutions of Donald Trump
   3.2. Wilmington, Tulsa, and Other Race Massacres
   3.3. The Reconstruction Era
   3.4. The Indian Wars of the American West
   3.5. McCarthyism, the Red Scare, and the Lavender Scare
   - MEDIA LITERACY CONNECTIONS: Media Framing of the Events of January 6, 2021

1. INVESTIGATE: When American Ideals Were Affirmed

United States history is filled with examples of courageous women and men who, facing discrimination, injustice, and hatred, worked ceaselessly to build a better, more equitable society. African American leaders Harriet Tubman, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Shirley Chisholm; women activists Alice Paul and Helen Keller; labor organizer Mother Jones; socialist presidential candidate Eugene Debs; and gay civil rights pioneers Bayard Rustin and Harvey Milk are highlighted in other chapters of this book.

There are many little-known individuals who exhibited great political courage throughout our history.

- Lucy Stone was a prominent women's rights activist and abolitionist born in West Brookfield Massachusetts (1818-1893). She was the first woman in Massachusetts to earn a college degree, organized her own women's rights convention in Worcester, Massachusetts, and openly defied gender norms by speaking about political issues, wearing pants, and refusing to take her husband's name in marriage.
- Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, the only woman member of the U.S. Senate at the time, in 1950 delivered a nearly four hour speech that condemned Joseph McCarthy's statements falsely accusing members of the government as being members of the Communist Party.
    - Watch Bridget Bleakley deliver a selection from the speech at the National Oratory Fellows Celebration of Oratory at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. in 2018.
- Elizabeth Peratrovich, a Tlingit Nation member, led a campaign that led to the passage of the nation's first anti-discrimination law in Alaska in 1945. She was honored with a Google Doodle on December 30, 2020.
- Austin Bearse, a ship captain from Cape Cod, Massachusetts who smuggled escaped slaves to freedom as part of the underground railroad at sea. You can read about his exploits in his book, **Reminiscences of the Fugitive-Slave Law Days** (1880) available from the Library of Congress and at the National Park Service site Safe Harbor: The Maritime Underground Railroad in Boston.

What other examples of hidden histories and untold stories of political courage can you find?

Writing About Politically Courageous Elected Officials a video from John F. Kennedy Presidential Library provides an opportunity to learn more about courageous Americans. You can view the **The Struggle for Justice,** an exhibition from the National Portrait Gallery or read Teaching about Unsung Heroes: Encouraging Students to Appreciate Those Who Fought for Social Justice, a chapter in Bill Bigelow's *A People's History for the Classroom*(2008).

Here are three more occasions of political courage where the actions of individuals affirmed American ideals:

1.1. Joseph Cinque, John Quincy Adams, and the Amistad Case

Joseph Cinque (Sengbe Pieh) led a slave revolt aboard the ship *Amistad* in 1839 and was defended in court by the former President, John Quincy Adams.

A portrait of Cinque (Sengbe Pieh), the leader of the Mende revolt aboard the *Amistad*
"Sengbe Pieh" by Nathaniel Jocelyn | Public Domain

There is more information at a *resourcesforhistoryteachers* wiki page for Sengbe Pieh (Joseph Cinque), John Quincy Adams and the Amistad Case.

1.2. The Scopes Trial and the Debate Over Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*

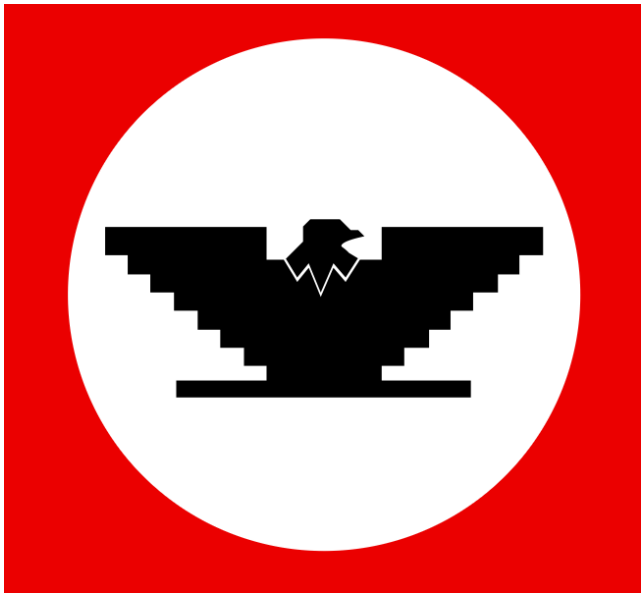
In a famous court case, John Scopes, a public school science teacher, went to jail because he taught the theory of evolution in a Tennessee school in 1925.

William Jennings Bryan (seated at left) being interrogated by Clarence Darrow during the Scopes Trial, July 20, 1925
"Tennessee v. John T. Scopes Trial"

There is more information about the evolution controversy at *resourcesforhistoryteachers* wiki pages for The Scopes Trial and the Debate Over Charles Darwin's Origin of the Species and Charles Darwin and the Theory of Evolution.

1.3. Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, and the Delano Grape Strike and Boycott

The five-year-long Delano Grape Strike and Boycott (1965-1970) was a transformative moment in the American Labor Movement. The strike began on September 8, 1965 when Filipino-American grape workers in California's San Joaquin Valley went on strike against poor pay and deplorable working conditions. Initially led by Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz, the strikers hoped for a 15 cents an hour raise. California celebrates Larry Itliong Day every year on October 25.



United Farm Workers Black Eagle Flag Containing the Huelga Bird on a White Disc on a Red Field
Public Domain

Soon after, Mexican American labor activists **Cesar Chavez** (An American Hero: Biography of Cesar E. Chavez**)** and **Dolores Huerta** (Biography from Dolores Huerta.org) joined the strike. They organized Filipino and Mexican-American workers into the United Farm Workers union. Promoting nonviolent tactics in the face of violence from supporters of the grape producers, the Farm Workers Union began a national boycott and millions of Americans stopped eating grapes in support of the strikers.

When the strike ended in 1970, farm workers everywhere were able to receive higher wages and better benefits. However the original Filipino strikers have been largely forgotten for their role in launching the strike. Learn more: The 1965-1970 Delano Grape Strike and Boycott.

One outgrowth of the strike is a movement to create a **Cesar Chavez National Holiday**. Presently, Cesar Chavez is honored with a state holiday in California and an optional holiday in Colorado and Texas. Additionally, there are yearly celebrations in Arizona, Michigan, Nebraska and New Mexico.

There is more information about the Cesar Chavez and the Grape Strike at a *resourcesforhistoryteachers* wiki page for the Latino Civil Rights Movement.

Suggested Learning Activities

- **State Your View**
  - Do you support the movement to create the Cesar Chavez National Holiday?
    - Read Senator Barack Obama Statement for a Cesar Chavez National Holiday (March 2008)
    - Learn about the movement for a Cesar E. Chavez National Holiday

- **State Your View:** Should students, teachers, and community members go about renaming schools to honor individuals who stood for American ideals?

  - In Education Week, Corey Mitchell (2020) reported that as of June 2020, there were 174 schools in 16 states named for historical figures connected to the Confederacy during the Civil War; most commonly, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Sidney Lanier. There are over 1,700 Confederate monuments still standing.
    - Activists have demanded, and many community leaders have agreed, that Confederate-themed school names deeply offend African Americans and inaccurately portray the history of slavery and the Civil War (Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy, Southern Poverty Law Center, February 1, 2019).

  - In Minnesota, students, teachers, families, and community members led an effort to change the name of Alexander Ramsey Middle School (Ramsey was a territorial governor in the mid-19th century who forced Native Americans from their homelands) to Alan Page Middle School (Page is the first African American Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court and Hall of Fame football player for the Minnesota Vikings.
    - Whose heritage does the name of your school honor?

Online Resources for the Delano Grape Strike and the United Farm Workers Union

- The United Farm Workers and the Delano Grape Strike.
- Legacy of the Delano Grape Strike, 50 Years Later, San Francisco Chronicle (September 16, 2015)
- Delano Grape Strike and Boycott, 1965 from Records of Rights, National Archives

2. UNCOVER: Claudette Colvin, the *Browder v. Gayle* case (1956), and the Struggle to Desegregate Public Transportation

Nine months before Rosa Parks' famous protest, a fifteen-year-old high school student named **Claudette Colvin** refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery Alabama city bus. She was dragged from the vehicle and arrested by white police officers becoming the first person arrested for resisting bus segregation in Montgomery.

Claudette Colvin, aged 13, in 1953
Public Domain

Claudette Colvin subsequently joined three other women—Aurelia Browder, Susie McDonald, and Mary Louise Smith—in the ***Browder v. Gayle*** court case challenging segregation on the city's public buses.

A district court ruled that segregation on buses inside the state of Alabama was unconstitutional because it denied African Americans equal protection of the law under the 14th Amendment. On December 17, 1956, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the district court's decision. Three days later an order for integrated buses ended the Montgomery Bus Boycott (Browder v. Gayle The Women Before Rosa Parks).

Watch on YouTube

Others Who Refused to Give Up Their Seats

Claudette Colvin and Rosa Parks were not the only African Americans who refused to give up their seats on streetcars, railroad cars, and buses as a form of protest against discrimination. As the website *Teaching for Change* has documented, the struggle for the racial desegregation of transportation has a long history of courageous individuals taking great risks for social and racial justice (Transportation Protests: 1841 to 1992).

- **Frederick Douglass** refused to leave a Whites-only train car in 1841.
- **Elizabeth Jennings Graham** was forcibly expelled from a New York City bus in 1954 (she was defended in court by the future President of the United States, Chester Arthur.
- **Charlotte Brown** began a legal suit against a company that three times forced her off a horse-powered streetcar in San Francisco in 1863.
- **Ida B. Wells** in 1884 refused to give up her seat in a ladies railroad car and was removed by force from the train;
  - She filed suit against the Chesapeake, Ohio and Southwestern Railroad Company. She won the case, but the decision was reversed on appeal.
- **Jackie Robinson,** the future baseball hall of fame star, faced an Army court-martial in 1944 after he refused to move further back in a bus (he was acquitted at the trial).
  - Learn more at Jim Crow, Meet Lieutenant Robinson: A 1944 Court Martial.
- **Tallahassee (Florida) Bus Boycott** in 1956 happened after two Black students were arrested for sitting in the Whites-only section of a segregated bus.

What other stories of courage, resistance, and action by African Americans in response to discrimination in transportation or other areas of life can you find?

Suggested Learning Activity

Construct a People's History or Interactive Timeline of Those Who Refused to Give Up Their Seats

- Find information about courageous individuals in Transportation Protests:1841 to 1992
- What was the importance of the actions of these individuals in promoting change?

Online Resources for Claudette Colvin and *Browder v. Gayle*

- Claudette Colvin: The 15-Year-Old Who Came Before Rosa Parks
- Civil rights pioneer Claudette Colvin honored for bus protest
- Before Rosa Parks, There Was Claudette Colvin
- The Other Rosa Parks: Now 73, Claudette Colvin Was First to Refuse Giving Up Seat on Montgomery Bus, YouTube video
- Claudette Colvin: The Original Rosa Parks, YouTube video
- **BOOK**: *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*, Jeanne Theoharis (Beacon Press, 2015)

3. Engage: When and How Were American Ideals Denied?

United States history is filled with occasions when undemocratic and oppressive policies fueled by political and financial gain and racist and sexist attitudes negated the ideals of freedom, liberty, and social justice. Examples here include the January 6, 2021 Insurrection at the nation's Capitol and subsequent investigations of Donald Trump's role; the 1898 Wilmington Massacre; White southerners responses to Reconstruction; the Indian Wars of the American West; and the 1950s McCarthy Era in American politics with its accompanying Anti-Communist Red Scare and Anti-Gay Lavender Scare.

3.1. The January 6, 2021 Insurrection at the Capitol and Prosecutions of Donald Trump

Shortly after noon on **January 6, 202**1 following a inciteful speech by President Donald Trump, a mob of thousands of White supremacists, Neo-Nazis, election conspiracy adherents, MAGA supporters and other far-right insurrectionists attacked the nation's Capitol as Congress was meeting to certify the results of the 2020 Presidential election. Their goal was to shut down and take over the government by preventing Congress from approving Joe Biden as the 46th President and Kamala Harris as the 49th Vice-President.

Screenshot of a FBI Seeking Information Poster from January 5, 2021 | Public Domain

The ensuring riot resulted in people's deaths, destruction of property, and debasement of democratic norms. Members of Congress, their staffs, reporters, and other media professionals were forced into lockdown, fearing for their lives and safety. The event was shown live on television cable news networks and streamed on social media. Rioters carried Confederate and Trump flags, broke into Congressional offices, and for a time occupied the floor of the House of Representatives - one individual even posed sitting in the seat of the Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. Two bombs were found. Violent confrontations happened between rioters and police officers.

Alarming evidence of an organized assault rather than a spontaneous riot emerged almost immediately afterwards.

- There had been tours of the Capitol building the day before the attack despite pandemic restrictions on public access to the building.
- The President was apparently not rushed to a secure location, but remained in the White House watching events on television.
- The acting Department of Defense secretary delayed sending in the National Guard to assist Capitol police as they were being overrun by the mob.
- Attackers had information of where to find different Congressional offices. Members of the mob were communicating and coordinating in real time on social media during the assault.
- While many rioters took selfies and videos, others carefully hid their faces from cameras and authorities to avoid recognition.

As of December 2022, at least 964 people had been criminally charged and 465 had pleaded guilty in connection with their actions at the Capitol on January 6 (Insider.com, 2022).

On December 19, 2022 the House Select Committee to Investigate the January Attack on the U.S. Capitol referred former President Trump to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution for four different federal crimes (Read the Introductory Material to the Final Report of the Select Committee & Watch the December 19 Committee Proceedings on YouTube).

Read the Final Report of the January 6 Committee.

- The report makes clear that the former President and his aides were engaged in a "multipart plan to overturn the 2020 election." It demonstrates that Trump had a concerted plan to declare he won even if he lost and that plan involved consisting Biden's victories in court, pressuring state officials to create and submit false slates of electors, trying to install a loyalist as Acting Attorney-General, pressuring the Vice President not to certify ballots from states Trump lost, urging supporters to march on the Capitol on January 6, and standing by for 187 minutes while a mob attacked and members of Congress fled to safety.

Watch on YouTube

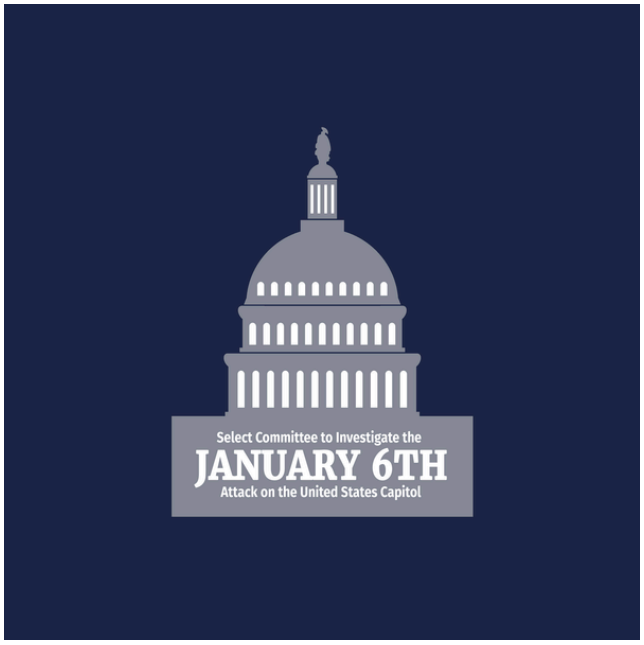
History of Investigations into the January 6 Events and Donald Trump's Role

On February 1, 2021, investigative reporting by *The New York Times* found connections between the Trump Campaign and the insurrectionists who attacked the capital. The *Times* concluded that: “For 77 days between the election and the inauguration, President Donald J. Trump attempted to subvert American democracy with a lie about election fraud that he had been grooming for years” (Rosenberg & Rutenberg, 2021, para. 1). Members of the campaign and the former President himself worked to organize not only a rally on January 6, 2021, but also the march that led to the attack on the Capitol.

The Coup d’état Project at the Cline Center of the University of Illinois determined that the storming of the Capitol "was an attempted **coup d’état**: an organized, illegal attempt to intervene in the presidential transition by displacing the power of the Congress to certify the election" (2021, para. 1). The Coup d’état Project has since reclassified the event as an **"auto-coup"** where an "incumbent chief executive uses illegal or extra-legal means to assume extraordinary powers, seize the power of other branches of government, or render powerless other components of the government such as the legislature or judiciary" (December 15, 2022).

On October 31, 2021, *The Washington Post* released "The Attack: Before, During and After," a three-part investigation into the events surrounding the January 6 assault on the Capitol. The *Post* concluded that President Donald Trump was at the center of what happened: "Trump was the driving force at every turn as he orchestrated what would become an attempted coup." Reporters looked at what had been happening weeks before January 6 and what has happened in the weeks and months following. Again, the *Post* concluded that the attack was "not a spontaneous nor an isolated event. It was a battle in the broader war over the truth and the future of American democracy."

On January 2, 2022, in an appearance on *ABC's This Week*, Congressman Bennie Thompson (D-MS), chair of the House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack, stated that the committee has substantial evidence that "**it appeared to be a coordinated effort on the part of a number of people to undermine the election**."



United States House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack Logo | Public Domain

The *Washington Post* Fact Checker was even blunter, noting that January 6 was a "sustained effort by a sitting President to overturn election results" ("The Truth about the January 6 Attacks," January 7, 2022). According to the Post:

- Trump inspired the attack.
- Trump aides and supporters actively sought to overturn the election.
- The attack was violent.
- Trump took inadequate steps to calm the attackers.
- Many Republicans and Trump supporters, at least briefly, were appalled.
- Capitol Hill security was deficient in part because of concerns about Trump.

On January 13, the Justice Department acknowledged that the attack on the Capitol resulted from a **seditious conspiracy** when it indicted the leader of the far-right Oath Keepers organization. The FBI had encoded encrypted communications that revealed how members of that group held meetings, conducted training sessions, and brought military-style tactical equipment to the event.

In June 2022 on the eve of televised House of Representatives hearings investigating the Capitol insurrection and the continuing Big Lie about the 2020 election, the Brookings Institution published Trump on Trial: A Guide to the January 6 Hearings and the Question of Criminality that concluded that the former President and his supporters engaged in "entertaining, exploring, and even attempting to enact an astonishing array of legally unjustifiable schemes to retain power" (p. 3). Trump's actions indicate potential violations of federal criminal laws.

In July 2022, Representative Bennie G. Thompson from the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol created a Twitter handle to keep the public updated on the televised investigation.

@January6thCmte

Who Were the January 6 Insurrectionists?

Researchers from the University of Chicago Project on Security and Threats have been collecting information on the rioters who have faced prosecution for their actions on January 6 (initial report: American Face of Insurrection, January 5, 2022).

Updated information reported by Anthony Conwright in *Mother Jones* (January/February 2023, pp. 10-11) found that of the 890 insurrectionists from 47 states were 92 percent white and 86 percent male. Most were older (in their 40s and 50s) and more than half were from counties that Joe Biden won in the 2020 presidential election. Additionally, 21 million Americans (8 percent of potential voters) believe the election was stolen and that violence was justifed to restore Trump to power.

Race and White grievance were powerful motivating factors: Rioters were more likely to come from a county where the white population had declined in the years before 2020.

Domestic Terrorists

Evidence of deliberate and planned intent to disrupt the election and the government was provided by FBI Director Christopher A. Wray in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 2, 2021. Wray stated the Bureau had determined that there were three groups involved on January 6: 1) those who protested lawfully and without violence; 2) those who committed minor, non-violent offenses after getting caught up in the actions of the mob; and 3) those who arrived in paramilitary gear, carrying weapons, and planning to stop the certification of electoral college ballots by any means. He called these individuals **domestic terrorists**, adding that inside-the-United States White supremacist organizations are, along with ISIS, the country's top national security threats.

"Tear gas outside the United States Capitol on 6 January 2021" by Tyler Merbler is licensed under CC BY 2.0

In March 2021, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued a report - Domestic Violent Extremism Poses Heightened Threat in 2020 - warning of the ongoing threat from violent individuals and organized militia groups who are using social media platforms to spread hate, promote the superiority of the white race, and mobilize and radicalize members to commit violence against the local, state, and national government.

The Eastman Memo

In fall 2021, Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Robert Costa discovered a memo written by a Trump lawyer, John Eastman, outlining a 6-point plan to overturn the election and install Trump as President. You can read the memo here. The January 6 Insurrection and the Eastman memo were deliberate attempts to overthrow a democratically-held election.

Differing Responses by Law Enforcement

There was also the troubling differences in how law enforcement responded to these right-wing, largely White U.S. Capitol rioters as compared with Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters during the summer of 2020. BLM protesters were met with tear gas, flash bangs, low-flying helicopters, and many more arrests. Researcher Roudabeh Kishi examined recent marches and protests and found that police were more than twice as likely to attempt to break up left-wing protests and used force more often compared to those by right-wing groups (The Police's Tepid Response to the Capitol Breach Wasn't an Aberration, *FiveThirtyEight*, January 7, 2021).

In the aftermath of the events in Washington, D.C., members of the media struggled to label what had happened: Was it a rampage, a riot, a protest, an insurrection, a conspiracy, an assault, a siege? Were those involved rioters, insurrectionists, extremists, conspirators? It was an attempt to overturn a duly elected government, making it a completely anti-democratic action.

You can find more information at 6 Ways to Help Students Make Sense of the Capitol Siege from Education Week.

Ongoing Investigations and Prosecutions of Donald Trump

By August 2023, former President Donald Trump was facing **91 counts of criminal conduct** based on state and federal indictments (The Case(s) Against Donald Trump: A Guide. *New York Intelligencer* (August 29, 2023):

1) illegal hush-money payments in Stormy Daniels case.

2) election interference in the state of Georgia.

3) mishandling of classified documents after leaving the Presidency.

4) actions surrounding the January 6th insurrection and its aftermath, including organizing slates of fake electors from multiple states and efforts to disrupt the certification of electoral votes by Congress.

In May 2023, in a separate **civil case** in New York, Trump was convicted of sexually abusing writer E. Jean Carroll and told to pay her $5 million for battery and defamation. He faces an additional defamation charge based on remarks made about Caroll after his conviction.

Trump is also part of another **civil case** in New York against the Trump Organization for business fraud for misrepresenting his wealth and the value of properties he owns.

United States V. Donald J. Trump (2023)

On June 9, 2023, as part of classified documents case and following months of investigations, Special Counsel Jack Smith unsealed a 37 count indictment charging former President Donald Trump with violating national security laws and participating in a conspiracy to obstruct justice.

Read the full text of the mishandling of classified documents indictment here

Read Trump January 6 Indictment, Annotated (*The New York Times*, August 1, 2023). Charges include:

- One count of conspiring to defraud the government
- One count of conspiring to disenfranchise voters (link to the Klu Klux Klan Act of 1871)
- Two counts of corruptly obstructing a congressional proceeding

Fact-Checking Trump's Election Lies, (*The New York Times*, August 17, 2023).

***The State of Georgia v. Donald J. Trump* (2023)**

Indicted under the state's RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) law.

Read the Full Georgia Indictment Against Trump and 18 Allies (PBS, Augst 15, 2023)

3.2. Wilmington, Tulsa, and Other Race Massacres

Incidents of horrific violence against Black communities by White mobs is another example where democratic ideals were denied by the actions of individuals and groups. At the **1898 Wilmington Massacre** a heavily armed mob of 1,500 white men attacked and killed Black citizens and took over the legally elected government of Wilmington, North Carolina (Zucchino, 2020). Learn more about this event at Nov. 18, 1898: Wilmington Massacre from the Zinn Education Project website.

The **1921 Tulsa Race Massacre** destroyed 35 blocks of the prosperous Greenwood neighborhood, wiping out 1,100 homes and businesses and taking hundreds of Black lives, robbing Black families of generational wealth and the opportunities that come with it. Learn more about The Tulsa Race Massacre, including the little-known roles of two women reporters who documented the events.

The Washington Post's Retropolis series has reported on more race massacres that most students ever learn about in school, including ones in Colfax, Louisiana (1873), Washington, D.C. (1919), Elaine, Arkansas (1919), Ocoee, Florida (192), and Rosewood, Florida (1923). Massacres in the United States, 1782-2021 is an interactive graph of violence against African Americans, Native Americans, Labor Unions, and other groups.

Historians have concluded that mob actions and violence are a recurring pattern in American history, as Eric Foner noted: “In other ways, it is not unprecedented at all. It represents something deeply rooted in the American experience,

which is actually hostility to democracy" (quoted in "Was the Assault on the Capitol Really 'UnPrecedented'? Historians Weigh In," National Geographic, January 8, 2021).

3.3. The Reconstruction Era

Reconstruction, what historian Eric Foner (2014) has called "America's unfinished revolution," was a time when American ideals were both affirmed or denied in the period between the end of the Civil War and 1877.

Affirming and extending core American ideals of democracy: the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments became law; Blacks were elected to local, state, and national offices throughout the South (there had only been five African Americans elected officeholders in the entire country prior to 1877); land was redistributed to freed Blacks by the Freedmen's Bureau; the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was passed; Black schools and colleges were established across the South.

But the Reconstruction Era also saw actions by White politicians and all White extra-legal groups that fundamentally negated America's constitutional freedoms. The Ku Klux Klan emerged in Tennessee in 1866 before spreading to every state in the South. Along with other white supremacy organizations in southern states, the Klan engaged in murder, lynchings, church bombing, and other acts of domestic terror, including the Colfax Massacre on Easter Sunday 1873.

The passage of Black Codes that helped establish a system of agricultural sharecropping that left Black families in debt for life. To learn more about white supremacy, read Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s book, *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow* (2019) (see the *New York Times* Book Review: In 'Stony the Road,' Henry Louis Gates Jr. Captures the History and Images of the Fraught Years After the Civil War) The sharp contrasts of the Reconstruction era sets the stage for exploring other times in our history when the actions of individuals and groups served to affirm or deny the ideals of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

You can learn more at a **Jim Crow Era** wiki page on the resourcesforhistoryteachers wiki which includes material on **Juan Crow Laws** targeting Mexican Americans.

Today, in the words of historian Heather Cox Richardson, "we are reliving the Reconstruction years after the Civil War." Following the election defeat of Donald Trump and the failed January 6, 2021 insurrection, Republican-led state legislatures began passing "voter integrity" laws that like the Black Codes and Jim Crow laws of the Reconstruction era, will disproportionately target and disenfranchise Black and Brown voters. In June 2021, the Supreme Court allowed voter suppression laws in Arizona to stand, further narrowing the impact of the 1965 Voting Rights Act to prevent discriminatory voting laws in states. The Court allowed election officials in discard ballots cast at the wrong precinct and upheld rules that only family members, mail carriers, and election officials can deliver a person's ballot to a polling location. Florida imposed what amounted to a poll tax (a practice outlawed by the Constitution's 24th Amendment) by requiring former felons to pay off debts incurred while in jail (such as medical fees and other expenses) before they can vote in elections. Whether is trend will continue or whether public opinion will reject these efforts at restricting the right to vote remains a open question as we move toward the 2022 and 2024 elections.

3.4. The Indian Wars of the American West

The **Indian Wars** of the American West were a series of armed conflicts between native peoples, settlers, and the U.S. Army that lasted from the end of the Civil War to about 1890 (Cozzens, 2016).

Photo of a marker at Bosque Redondo, Fort Sumner, in New Mexico
" Bosque Redondo" by Phil Konstantin | Public Domain

These wars included some of the most lasting and complex stories and personalities in the history of the American West: The Little Bighorn or Greasy Grass Fight; the Transcontinental Railroad; African American Buffalo Soldiers; Geronimo; Wounded Knee; the Dawes Act; and reservations for native tribes. Learn more from the Western Indian Wars page on the Museum of American History.

There is more information about another dramatic event at a *resourcesforhistoryteachers* wiki page for The Navajo War and the Long Walk of the Navajos, 1848 to 1868.

3.5. McCarthyism, the Red Scare, and the Lavender Scare

McCarthyism, an anti-Communist **Red Scare,** and the anti-Gay **Lavender Scare** happened in the early 1950s during a time of intensifying Cold War tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

AMERICANS.....

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Example of AntiCommunist Literature in the 1950s

"Anticommunist Literature 1950s" | Public Domain

McCarthyism

At the beginning of the 1950s, Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy was convinced that the American government was being taken over by members of the American Communist Party who were under the control of Soviet leaders. A fear-monger and demagogue, McCarthy launched a series of televised hearings that ruined many careers through threats, innuendos, and blacklists, although "no one McCarthy investigated was ever convicted of anything" (Menard, 2020, p. 73). McCarthyism did not end till 1954 when President Eisenhower told members of the government that they did not have to testify before McCarthy's Senate committee. The *resourcesforhistoryteachers* wiki has primary sources and more historical information about McCarthyism and the Red Scare.

McCarthy was an extraordinary, but not singular, example of an uniquely American strain of political demagoguery, notes biographer Larry Tye in his book *Demogogue: The Life and Long Shadow of Senator Joe McCarthy* (2020, p. 2). A **demagogue** is an politician who rises to power through lying, attacking opponents, and appealing to people's prejudices and fears, and in Tye's analysis, these are exactly the kind of activities that Donald Trump has used to gain and hold power.

The Red Scare

Historian Louis Menard, writing in the *New Yorker* (2020), notes that the **Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s**, a product of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, preceded McCarthy's hearings. Menard cites President Harry Truman as the figure who launched the Scare, first with the aggressive anti-communist Truman Doctrine and then with the establishment of the Employee Loyalty Program in which 4,765,705 federal employees had to forms that initiated loyalty investigations (Menard, 2020, p. 73). Congress followed with hearings by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), and the Red Scare also produced the censorship of artists, writers, and musicians known as **The Hollywood Blacklist**. Charlie Chaplin, Langston Hughes, Orson Welles, Lena Horne, Dalton Trumbo, Leonard Bernstein and Dorothy Parker were among the individuals who were denied work in the entertainment industry.

McCarthyism and the Red Scare has primary source materials including comic book covers, posters, audio recordings, and documents.

Anti-Gay Lavender Scare of the 1950s

The **Lavender Scare** was a campaign against federal employees who were suspected of being gay or lesbian. People's civil rights and civil liberties were violated by surveillance, interrogations, and rumors. Thousands lost their jobs or resigned from the government. One historian noted that at the time "many politicians, journalists, and citizens thought that homosexuals posed more of a threat to national security than communists" (Johnson, 2004, p. 2).

It took decades, but in January 2017, outgoing Secretary of State John Kerry issued a formal apology to the LGBTQ+ community for decades of discrimination from the State Department (State Department Apologizes for the Lavender Scare). Still today, the Lavender Scare remains a little-taught history in many school curriculums.

Media Literacy Connections: Media Framing of the Events of January 6, 2021

The public's understanding of January 6 depends in large part on how the media chose to frame it. **Media framing** is how reporters and editors present what happened - the words used in stories, the images shown in videos, the pictures that accompany news bulletins, the choice of who to interview to gain information and insights, etc...

"6 January 2021" by Tyler Merbler is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Different media outlets offered different framing, as evidenced by this report from PBS Newshour (There's a Battle of Words to Describe January 6, 2021. Here's Why It Matters). The following resources from AllSides.com offer more examples of different media framing: Capitol Breach Coverage Demonstrates Media Bias and Capitol Chaos.

In the following activities, you will compare and contrast different media framing of the January 6, 2021 events at the Capitol.

- **Activity 1: Compare and Contrast the Media Framing of January 6, 2021**
- **Activity 2: Examine Media About and By the United States House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack**

Suggested Learning Activities

- **Write Your Statement Responding to Anti-Democratic Actions**
  - Link here for statements by four former Presidents condemning the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol
- **Design a History Learning Plan for Students**
  - Use the following links to teach students the ways were American ideals neglected or denied in one of these events?
    - The Indian Wars - The Navajo War and the Long Walk of the Navajos, 1848 to 1868
    - The Red Scare - Anticommunism and McCarthyism in the 1950s
    - The Lavender Scare - The Lavender Scare
    - Lord Jeffrey Amherst and His Relationship with First Americans
- **Write a People's History of The Hollywood Blacklist**
  - Video: What is the Hollywood Blacklist?
  - The Great American Songbook Blacklist, Indiana Public Media (July 23, 2018)
  - The Hollywood Blacklist, ColdWar LA

Standard 4.11 Conclusion

Political courage is an essential quality in a democracy. **INVESTIGATE** profiled three examples of courageous individuals who affirmed American ideals through their actions: Joseph Cinque, John Quincy Adams, and the Amistad Case; John Scopes and the Scopes Evolution Trial; and Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong and the Delano Grape Strike. **UNCOVER** reviewed the history of Claudette Colvin and the *Browder V. Gayle* case. **ENGAGE** asked what American ideals were denied during the Indian Wars of the American West, McCarthyism and the Anti-Communist Red Scare, and the Anti-Gay Lavender Scare of the 1950s.

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