

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN SAN DIEGO

Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, San Diego was a city where housing discrimination forced Blacks to live in one area of the city (Southeast San Diego). Houses and apartments were not sold or rented to Blacks in areas outside the Southeast area. The exception was when a White person would buy a house and then sell or rent it to a Black friend. Renting an apartment outside the Southeast area was almost impossible.

Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, San Diego was a city where racial discrimination kept Blacks out of most of the jobs that made up the San Diego economy. During that time Blacks were not hired as salespersons (in any sales area), workers in food markets (even to bag groceries), bus drivers, taxi cab drivers (except for one Black company), zoo workers, bank tellers or any other jobs in the bank. There were no Black principals or vice principals in San Diego's schools, even in the schools that had predominantly Black or minority student bodies. Black medical doctors, lawyers and dentists all practiced in Southeast San Diego. There were no Blacks in the print or electronic media except for the two Black newspapers.

As a result of the "Freedom Ride" led by Jim Farmer, and as a result of the sit-ins that were taking place in the south, a handful of people decided to form a local chapter of C.O.R.E. in 1960.

CORE raised the issue of racial discrimination on every front: in employment, housing, and education. CORE led demonstrations against food chains, banks, the Zoo and SDG&E. CORE protested against any action of racial discrimination that arose. CORE picketed extensively at the California Real Estate Association to break down the practices of racial discrimination by realtors.

CORE picketed, sat-in, marched and held demonstrations from 1960 to 1965. CORE's last battle before disbanding was with the banking industry. These demonstrations led to a number of arrests and court trials and resulted in jail sentences for some of the CORE members.

Demonstrations against SDG&E and Bank of America were the most famous. Against SDG&E, CORE practiced civil disobedience and CORE members were arrested and jailed for trespassing.

As a result of all the demonstrations the barriers facing Blacks in the areas of employment, housing and education began to fall.

Also during this period, the Chollas Democratic Club used picketing to address their grievances against the police department and others.