Laura West

HIS 949

Varley

Race Timeline Event

Kirk, John. “The Long Road to Equality”, *History Today* (February 2009): 52-58.

<http://0-web.ebscohost.com.library.meredith.edu/ehost/detail?vid=5&hid=110&sid=9b62fcc1-d821-4b29-ab04-405badcbe3a6%40sessionmgr110&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=ahl&AN=36590274>

The date February 12, 1909 was the 100th anniversary of Lincoln’s birth. On this date “a group of 60 activists, both black and white, signed a petition issuing ‘The Call’ for America to rededicate itself to the ideals of racial justice that Lincoln had come to represent,”[[1]](#footnote-1) The date of Lincoln’s birth held an important significance for many African Americans at this time. Lincoln symbolized to them someone who had actually taken a stand for African American rights; Lincoln had done this on a national scale with his promise of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

The NAACP saw a need for an organization due to the growing violence and discrimination in the South, “African-Americans who transgressed the law, or who simply failed to show adequate deference to whites, could face deadly consequences. Lynching’s were rife. One study compiled by the NAACP reported 3,224 lynching’s of African Americans between 1889 and 1919,”[[2]](#footnote-2) Because of this danger many African Americans who could afford to, moved North and West in the movement known as the Great Migration; the Great Migration began in 1910. Growing tired of this need to accommodate whites and their racial discrimination W.E.B. DuBois led 29 black activists forming the Niagara Movement in July of 1905, “taking its name from a meeting held at Niagara Falls, which demanded ‘every right that belongs to a free-born American—political, civil, and social,’” [[3]](#footnote-3) Although DuBois’s movement would make little headway in Niagara, the Niagara Movement would grow to become the forerunner of the NAACP.

African Americans during this time continuously saw reasons to organize and deal with these issues of racial discrimination. However it wasn’t until a race riot in August 1908 in Springfield, Illinois had something triggered African Americans on a national level. During this riot six African Americans were killed, 50 injured, and thousands forced to flee for the safety of their lives, the riot triggered many African Americans because Springfield was, “symbolically significant as the place Abraham Lincoln called ‘home’,”[[4]](#footnote-4)

Following the riot there grew the immediate need for African Americans to display a united front against the increasingly violent racism in the United States. The violence and hate was spreading and it needed to be faced aggressively by the African American community. Due to this a meeting took place in New York City in May-June of 1909, this meeting “followed The Call and led to the founding of a National Negro Conference. The next year it was renamed the NAACP,”[[5]](#footnote-5)

Since its formation The NAACP since its formation in 1909 has become of the United States largest and oldest grassroots based organization. The NAACP has grown to over 500,000 members and supporters all over the United States. The NAACP currently still stands strong and is frequently involved in issues concerning race and equality.

1. John Kirk, “ The Long Road to Equality”, *History Today* (February 2009): 52-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John Kirk, “ The Long Road to Equality”, *History Today* (February 2009): 52-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. John Kirk, “ The Long Road to Equality”, *History Today* (February 2009): 52-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)