

Civil Rights Movement – Timeline

1860: Abraham Lincoln elected President, signaling the secession of Southern states.

1863: President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation.

1865: The Civil War ends.

April 15, President Lincoln is assassinated.

The 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery, is ratified.

Ku Klux Klan is organized in Pulaski, TN

1866: Civil Rights Act grants citizenship and the same rights enjoyed by white citizens to all male persons in the United States

1868: The 14th Amendment, which requires equal protection under the law to all persons, ratified.

1870: The 15th Amendment, which bans racial discrimination in voting, is ratified.

The "*Jim Crow*" or *segregation laws* are passed in Tennessee and later other Southern states mandating the separation of African Americans from whites on trains. Soon the rest of the South falls into step. By the end of the century, African Americans are banned from white hotels, schools, barber shops, restaurants, theaters and other public accommodations.

1882: Over the veto of President Chester Arthur, Congress passes *the Chinese Exclusion Act*

1886- 1900: Lynching has become virtually a fact of life as a means for intimidating African Americans. Between 1886 and 1900, there are more than 2,500 lynchings in the nation, the vast majority in the Deep South. In the first year of the new century, more than 100 African Americans are lynched, and by World War I, more than 1100.

1896: *Plessy v. Ferguson*, rules that state laws requiring separation of the races are Constitutional as long as equal accommodations are made for blacks; thus establishing the "separate but equal" doctrine that justifies legal segregation in the South.

1910: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is founded by W.E.B Du Bois, Jane Addams, John Dewey and others.

- 1920:** August 18, 19th Amendment ratified which guarantees all American women the right to vote, after decades of struggle and protest.
- 1923:** Equal Rights Amendment originally written by Alice Paul and introduced in the Congress for the first time, designed to guarantee equal rights for women.
- 1924:** Indian Citizenship Act granting American citizenship to Native Americans
- 1925:** In its first national demonstration, the Ku Klux Klan marches on Washington, D.C.
- 1942:** U.S. government places in "relocation camps" some 110,000 Japanese Americans.

1943: Congress repeals Asian Exclusion Acts but establishes quotas

- 1947:** Jackie Robinson becomes first African American to play major league baseball.
- 1948:** President Truman issues an executive order outlawing segregation in the U.S. military.

Supreme Court, *Shelley v. Kramer*, declares illegal the government support enforcement of restrictive covenants which exclude minorities from buying homes in white neighborhoods.

- 1954:** In *Brown v. Board of Education* the decision widely regarded as having sparked the modern Civil Rights era, the Supreme Court rules deliberate public school segregation illegal, effectively overturning "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Thurgood Marshall heads the NAACP/Legal Defense Fund team winning the ruling.

Hernandez v. Texas becomes the first Mexican American discrimination case to reach the Supreme Court. Court rules that 'persons of a distinct class' are protected under the 14th Amendment.

- 1955:** On August 28, 14 year old African-American Emmett Till is beaten and murdered for speaking to a white woman, Mississippi.

Hard evidence showed Bryant's husband Roy and his half-brother J. W. Milam kidnapped, brutally tortured and killed Till After a 5-day trial, Bryant and Milam were Months later, they admitted to killing him in a magazine interview but could not be re-tried.

Rosa Parks (Dec 1), African-American civil rights activist is jailed for refusing to move to the back of a Montgomery, Alabama, bus. A boycott follows, and the bus segregation ordinance is declared unconstitutional.

1955-56: Montgomery (AL) Bus Boycott ends in victory when a federal ruling, *Browder v. Gayle* takes effect. US Supreme Court decision declares the Alabama and Montgomery laws requiring segregated buses to be unconstitutional.

1957: Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus uses the National Guard to block nine black students from attending Little Rock High School. Following a court order, President Eisenhower sends in federal troops to allow the black students to enter the school.

1959: George L. Rockwell founds the American Nazi Party

1960: Four black college students begin sit-ins at the lunch counter of a Greensboro, NC, restaurant where black patrons are not served.

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) founded.

John F. Kennedy elected president.

1961: Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organizes Freedom Rides into the South to test new Interstate Commerce Commission regulations and court orders barring segregation in interstate transportation. Riders are beaten by white mob in several places, including Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama

1962: President Kennedy sends federal troops to the University of Mississippi to end riots so that James Meredith, the school's first black student, can attend.

The United Farm Workers Union under the leadership of Cesar Chavez organizes

1963: NAACP field secretary and civil rights leader Medgar Evers is assassinated by white supremacist and Klansman from Mississippi, Byron De La Beckwith.

August 28 - Over a quarter of a million people participate in the March on Washington. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech.

September 15 - The 16th Street Baptist Church, center for Civil Rights meetings, is bombed. Four young African American girls attending Sunday school are killed, 20 others are injured., Birmingham, Alabama

November 22 - President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Vice President Lyndon Johnson becomes president.

1964: Martin Luther King Jr., receives the Nobel Peace Prize.

Congress passes the Civil Rights Act of 1964, declaring racial discrimination illegal.

The 24th Amendment abolishes the poll tax, which originally had been established in the South after Reconstruction to make it difficult for poor blacks to vote.

Freedom Summer, a voter education and registration project, begins. White northern college students volunteer to run practice elections in preparation for the Presidential election of 1964. Two white students, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, and an African American civil rights worker, James Chaney, are murdered, in Mississippi

Over the course of the ten-week project:

- four civil rights workers were killed (one in a head-on collision)
- at least three Mississippi blacks were murdered because of their support for the civil rights movement
- four people were critically wounded
- eighty Freedom Summer workers were beaten
- one-thousand and sixty-two people were arrested (volunteers and locals)
- thirty-seven churches were bombed or burned
- thirty Black homes or businesses were bombed or burned

1964-1971: More than 700 race-related civil disturbance incidents and riots, killing 228 people and injuring 12,741 others, more than 15,000 separate incidents of arson were reported, many black urban neighborhoods were in ruins. The most deadly riots were in Detroit (1967), Los Angeles (1965), and Newark (1967). Measuring severity by also including arrests, injuries, and arson adds Washington (1968) to that list. Particularly following the death of Martin Luther King in April 1968, the riots signaled the end of the carefully orchestrated, non-violent demonstrations of the early Civil Rights Movement.

1965: Jimmie Lee Jackson, an unarmed black man shot by white supremacists, leads to a series of civil rights protests in Selma, Ala.

1965: A march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, is organized to demand protection for voting rights. Jimmie Lee Jackson, 26, participating in a march is killed by Alabama state troopers.

Malcolm X, Black Muslim leader is assassinated.

August 6, A new Voting Rights Act, which made it illegal to force would-be voters to pass literacy tests in order to vote, is signed.

1966: National Organization for Women (NOW) is founded to fight politically for full equality between the sexes.

1966: Black Panthers are founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale

1967: Thurgood Marshall becomes the first African American justice of the Supreme Court.

Congress enacts the Age Discrimination Act prohibiting employment discrimination against older Americans.

June 12, *Loving v. Virginia*, was a landmark civil rights decision of the US Supreme Court which invalidated laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

1967: Stokely Carmichael, a leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), coins the phrase "black power", Washington

1967: Major race riots take place in Newark (July 12–16) and Detroit (July 23–30).

1968: *February*, Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike

April 4, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. The assassination sparks unrest and civil disorders in 124 cities across the country, including the nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1968 which prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing.

June 6, Sen. Robert Kennedy, campaigning for President, is assassinated in Los Angeles, CA

Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.) is the first African American woman elected to Congress.

1969: The Stonewall Riot, single most important event leading to the gay rights movement, New York

1969: Black Panther, Fred Hampton, killed in police raid.

1970: The Supreme Court, in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, upholds busing as a legitimate tool to achieve desegregation.

1971: Rev. Jesse Jackson founds PUSH, promoting African-American economic development

1972: Equal Employment Opportunity Act passed, prohibiting job discrimination

1972: 40-year Tuskegee syphilis experiment ends.

- 1973:** *Roe v. Wade* landmark decision
- 1973:** June 21, in *Keyes v. School District No. 1, Denver, Colorado*, the Supreme Court, for the first time, addresses the issue of school desegregation in northern public schools, finding segregation intentionally imposed unconstitutional.
- 1973:** Standoff at Wounded Knee between US authorities and American Indian Movement.
- 1976:** Negro History Week becomes Black History Month.
- 1977:** The KKK ringleader, Robert Chambliss, was finally convicted of one count of murder in the death of one of the girls in the Birmingham Church Bombing.
- 1977:** Andrew Young, becomes first African American US ambassador to UN
- 1978:** *Regents of University of California v. Bakke* imposes limitations on affirmative action, bars racial quotas
- 1982:** Equal Rights Amendment reintroduced by Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA). The amendment has been reintroduced in every session of Congress since 1982.
- 1983:** The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday is established.
- 1988:** Civil Rights Restoration Act passed, giving federal protections for minority groups, women, the elderly and the physically disabled
- 1989:** Gen. Colin Powell is first African American Chair of Joint Chiefs of Staff of US Military
- 1989:** Oprah Winfrey, first African American woman to host nationally syndicated talk show.
- 1993:** Mae Jemison, first African American woman astronaut in space
- 1994:** OJ Simpson charged with murder, acquitted in 1995.
- 1994:** Florida legislature agrees to compensate survivors of 1923 incident in which a white mob destroyed the African American town of Rosewood, FL
- 1994:** Byron De La Beckwith finally convicted of the 1963 assassination of civil rights leader Medgar Evers.
- 1995:** The Supreme Court rules that federal programs that consider race as a category for hiring must have "compelling government interest" to do so. The Supreme Court

- rules that the consideration of race in creating congressional districts is unconstitutional.
- 1995:** Nation of Islam, Minister Louis Farrakhan organizes Million Man March, Washington, DC
- 1996:** Wave of black church burnings in the Deep South.
- 1998:** James Byrd, Jr. “lynched by dragging “behind a truck by white supremacists, Jasper, Texas.
- 1999:** Chaney, Goodman, Schwerner murder case reopened. Sam Bowers begins a life sentence for ordering the 1966 firebombing in Hattiesburg, Miss.
- 2000- 2002:** The remaining two suspects in the Birmingham Bombing case, Thomas Blanton and Bobby Frank Cherry, are finally indicted
- 2000:** Bob Jones University, a fundamentalist South Carolina private institution, ends its ban on interracial activities
- 2001:** Gen. Colin Powell becomes Secretary of State
- 2002:** The Slavery Reparations Coordinating Committee announces plans to sue for reparations from companies that profited from slavery
- 2003:** *Grutter v. Bollinger*, upholds affirmative action at University of Michigan Law school, however *Gratz v. Bollinger* requires change in admissions policy
- 2005:** June 21 Edgar Ray Killen, a Ku Klux Klan organizer and the leader of the Mississippi murders of the Chaney, Goodman, Schwerner in 1964.
- 2006:** The Supreme Court, in the *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* case, upholds the principle of affirmative action but rejects fixed racial quotas as unconstitutional.
- 2005-2007:** Emmett Till's 1955 murder case, reopened. The two confessed murderers, J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant had died by 1994, and prosecutors lacked sufficient evidence to pursue further convictions.
- 2007:** James B. Fowler, a former state trooper, is indicted for the 1965 murder of Jimmie Lee Jackson.
- 2008:** Barack Obama is elected first African American US President. Security was increased early for Obama due to fears and overt threats of possible assassination attempts by white supremacist or other racist groups or individuals.

2009: Barack Obama awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

2009: The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act expanded the 1969 United States federal hate-crime law to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

2011: Lawrence Brewer found guilty in the murder of James Byrd, Jr.

2013: Barack Obama sworn in for his second term as President.

2013: Barack Obama sworn in for his second term as President In the weeks before the re-election, several hanging effigies of Obama occur throughout the South and anti-Obama protests escalate. Racially motivated death threats are recorded daily.

2013: Civil rights icon, Myrie Evers-Williams, widow of slain Medgar Evers, becomes first laywoman to deliver a presidential inaugural invocation.

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