

Early Foundations (Pre-1940s)

- 1865 The Thirteenth Amendment is ratified, abolishing slavery in the United States.
- 1868 The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified, granting citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States and guaranteeing equal protection under the law.
- 1870 The Fifteenth Amendment is ratified, prohibiting states from denying the right to vote based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
- 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson: The Supreme Court upholds "separate but equal" segregation laws in public facilities.

1940s: Early Activism & Legal Challenges

- 1941 A. Philip Randolph organizes a March on Washington to protest racial discrimination in defense industries, leading President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 8802, banning discrimination in defense jobs.
- 1942 The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) is founded in Chicago to challenge segregation through nonviolent direct action.
- 1948 President Harry S. Truman issues Executive Order 9981, desegregating the armed forces.

1950s: Legal Victories & Mass Mobilisation

- 1954 Brown v. Board of Education: The Supreme Court rules that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional, overturning Plessy v. Ferguson.

1950s: Legal Victories & Mass Mobilisation (cont)

- 1955 Emmett Till, a 14-year-old African American, is brutally murdered in Mississippi, galvanizing national attention to racial violence.
- 1 December 1955 Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white passenger on a Montgomery, Alabama bus, leading to the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
- 1955-1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott: Led by Martin Luther King Jr. and the Montgomery Improvement Association, the boycott successfully ends with the Supreme Court ruling that bus segregation is unconstitutional.
- 1957 The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is founded by Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders to coordinate nonviolent protests.
- 1957 The Little Rock Nine integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, under federal troop protection following resistance from the state governor.
- 1957 The Civil Rights Act of 1957 is signed into law, establishing the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice and the Commission on Civil Rights.

1960s: Height of the Movement

- 1960 The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is founded in Raleigh, North Carolina, emphasizing youth-led, grassroots activism.
- 1 February 1960 Greensboro sit-ins begin as four African American college students sit at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter, sparking similar protests across the South.
- 1961 Freedom Rides: CORE and SNCC activists ride interstate buses into the segregated South to challenge non-enforcement of Supreme Court rulings against segregation.
- 1962 James Meredith enrolls at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), facing violent resistance; federal marshals are deployed to ensure his admission.
- 1963 Birmingham Campaign: Led by the SCLC, protests in Birmingham, Alabama, confront segregation, resulting in police violence and mass arrests; media coverage shocks the nation.
- 28 August 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom: Over 250,000 people gather at the Lincoln Memorial, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech.

1960s: Height of the Movement (cont)

1964 Freedom Summer: A campaign to register African American voters in Mississippi, marked by the murders of civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner.

2 July 1964 The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, banning discrimination in public accommodations, employment, and education.

1965 Selma to Montgomery Marches: Highlighting voting rights issues, the marches lead to "Bloody Sunday" when state troopers attack marchers; widespread outrage follows.

6 August 1965 The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is signed into law, prohibiting racial discrimination in voting practices and enforcing the Fifteenth Amendment.

1966 The Black Panther Party is founded in Oakland, California, by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, advocating for armed self-defense and community programs.

1967 Loving v. Virginia: The Supreme Court rules that state bans on interracial marriage are unconstitutional.

1980s-2000s: Ongoing Struggles & Progress

1982 The Voting Rights Act is extended for 25 years.

1983 Martin Luther King Jr. Day is established as a federal holiday.

1991 The Civil Rights Act of 1991 is passed, strengthening existing civil rights laws and providing for damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination.

2003 Grutter v. Bollinger and Gratz v. Bollinger: The Supreme Court upholds affirmative action in college admissions at the University of Michigan, allowing race to be considered as one factor.

2010s-Present: Renewed Movements

2010 The Affordable Care Act is signed into law, expanding healthcare access and including provisions addressing health disparities.

2013 Shelby County v. Holder: The Supreme Court invalidates key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, leading to new voting restrictions in several states.

2014 The Black Lives Matter movement gains national prominence following the police killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in New York City.

2020 Nationwide protests occur following the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota, leading to renewed calls for police reform and racial justice.

2021 Juneteenth is established as a federal holiday, commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.



By RainyMoons (RainyMoons)

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