



**AFRICAN AMERICAN/BLACK  
HISTORY MONTH**



**Civil Rights in America – Feb 1-29, 2014**

# CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

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<http://www.forthoodsentinel.com/story.php?id=12699>

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## 1600s – 1700s

- ▶ **1619** Dutch ship brings 20 Africans to Jamestown, Va., the first enslaved Africans in the U.S.
- ▶ **1793** Eli Whitney's new cotton gin increases demand for slaves.
- ▶ **1793** Congress passes Fugitive Slave Act, making it a federal crime to assist a slave trying to escape.

## 1800s

- ▶ **1808** Congress bans importation of slaves.
- ▶ **1820** Missouri Compromise bans slavery above the southern border of the state.
- ▶ **1831** Nat Turner leads largest slave rebellion prior to Civil War.
- ▶ **1849** Harriet Tubman escapes to Philadelphia and subsequently helps about 300 enslaved people to freedom via the Underground Railroad.

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- ▶ **MARCH 6, 1857** The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scott decision to deny citizenship and constitutional rights to all black people, legally establishing the race as "subordinate, inferior beings -- whether slave or freedmen."  
<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>
- ▶ **1859** John Brown leads raid of U.S. Armory and Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, W.Va.  
<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>
- ▶ **1861** South secedes from Union and Civil War begins.  
<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>
- ▶ **JAN. 1, 1863** Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Lincoln freed slaves in the Confederacy.  
<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>
- ▶ **1865** Civil War ends.  
<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>
- ▶ **DEC. 6, 1865** The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution abolished slavery. However, Southern states managed to revive slavery era codes creating unattainable prerequisites for blacks to live, work or participate in society. The following year, the First Civil Rights Act invalidated these "Black Codes," conferring the "rights of citizenship" on all black people.  
<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>



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## **JULY 9, 1868**

- ▶ The 14th Amendment granted due process and equal protection under the law to African Americans.

<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>

## **1870**

- ▶ Fifteenth Amendment guarantees that right to vote cannot be denied because of race, color or previous condition of servitude.
- ▶ Hiram Revels becomes first Black member of Congress.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

## **MARCH 1, 1875**

- ▶ Congress passed a third Civil Rights Act in response to many white business owners and merchants who refused to make their facilities and establishments equally available to black people. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 prohibited such cases of racial discrimination and guaranteed equal access to public accommodations regardless of race or color. White supremacist groups, however, embarked upon a campaign against blacks and their white supporters

<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>

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- ▶ **MAY 18, 1896** The U.S. Supreme Court decision in Plessy v. Ferguson upheld an 1890 Louisiana statute mandating racially segregated but equal railroad cars. The ruling stated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution dealt with political and not social equality. Plessy v. Ferguson gave a broad interpretation of "equal but separate" accommodations with reference to "white and colored people" legitimizing "Jim Crow" practices throughout the South.

<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>

## 1900s

- ▶ **1900** William H. Carney becomes first Black to be awarded Medal of Honor.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

- ▶ **FEB. 12, 1909** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded by a multi-racial group of activists in New York, N.Y. Initially, the group called themselves the National Negro Committee. Founders Ida Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Moscowitz, Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villiard and William English Walling led the call to renew the struggle for civil and political liberty.

<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>

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- ▶ **1940** Hattie McDaniel becomes first Black to win an Academy Award.
- ▶ **1947** Jackie Robinson becomes first Black to play Major League Baseball.
- ▶ **1950** Ralph J. Bunche becomes first Black to win the Nobel Peace Prize.
- ▶ **1953** Willie Thriver becomes first Black to play quarterback in the National Football League.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

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- ▶ **MAY 17, 1954** The U.S. Supreme Court's unanimously ruled in the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* that public school segregation was unconstitutional and paved the way for desegregation. The decision overturned the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling that said "separate educational facilities were inherently unequal." It was a victory for NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall, who argued the case and later returned to the Supreme Court as the nation's first African-American Supreme Court justice.

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## **AUG. 27, 1955**

- ▶ While visiting family in Mississippi, fourteen-year-old Chicagoan Emmett Till was kidnapped, brutally beaten, shot and dumped in the Tallahatchie River for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Two white men, J. W. Milam and Roy Bryant, were arrested for the murder and acquitted by an all-white jury. They later boasted about committing the murder in a Look magazine interview. The case became a cause célèbre of the civil rights movement.

## **DEC. 1, 1955**

- ▶ Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat at the front of the "colored section" of a bus in Montgomery, Ala., to a white passenger, defying a southern custom of the time. In response to her arrest, the Montgomery black community launched a bus boycott that lasted over a year until the buses desegregated on Dec. 21, 1956. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., the newly elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), was instrumental in leading the boycott.

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- ▶ **SUMMER 1957** NAACP Branch President Robert F. Williams successfully led an armed self-defense of the home of the branch vice president and Monroe, N.C.'s black community from an armed attack by a Ku Klux Klan motorcade. At a time of high racial tension, massive Klan presence and official rampant abuses of the black citizenry, Williams was recognized as a dynamic leader and key figure in the American South where he promoted a combination of nonviolence with armed self-defense, authoring the widely read "Negroes With Guns" in 1962.
- ▶ **SEPT. 2, 1957** Integration was easier said than done at the formerly all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Ark. Nine black students, who became known as the "Little Rock Nine," were blocked from entering the school on the orders of Arkansas Governor Orval Fabus. President Eisenhower sent federal troops and the National Guard to intervene on behalf of the students, but a federal judge granted an injunction against the governor's use of National Guard troops to prevent integration. They were withdrawn on Sept. 20, 1957.
- ▶ On Monday, Sept. 23, when school resumed, Little Rock policemen surrounded Central High where more than 1,000 people gathered in front of the school. The police escorted the nine black students to a side door where they quietly entered the building to begin classes. When the mob learned the blacks were inside, they began to challenge the police with shouts and threats. Fearful the police would be unable to control the crowd, the school administration moved the black students out a side door before noon.

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- ▶ **FEB. 1, 1960** Four black university students from N.C. A&T University began a sit-in at a segregated F.W. Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C. Although they were refused service, they were allowed to stay at the counter. The event triggered similar nonviolent protests throughout the South. Six months later, the original four protesters are served lunch at the same Woolworth's counter. Student sit-ins would be an effective tactic throughout the South in integrating parks, swimming pools, theaters, libraries and other public facilities.
- ▶ **MARCH 6, 1960** President Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925, prohibiting discrimination in federal government hiring on the basis of race, religion or national origin and establishing The President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, the EEOC. They were immediately directed to scrutinize and study employment practices of the United States government and to consider and recommend additional affirmative steps for executive departments and agencies.
- ▶ **APRIL 1960** The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded at Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., providing young blacks with a more prominent place in the civil rights movement. The SNCC later grew into a more radical organization under the leadership of Stokely Carmichael (1966-1967) and H. Rap Brown (1967-1998). The organization changed its name to the Student National Coordinating Committee.

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- ▶ **1961** Freedom rides begin from Washington, D.C. <http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>
  - ▶ **OCT. 1, 1962** James Meredith became the first black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi. President Kennedy sent 5,000 federal troops to contain the violence and riots surrounding the incident. <http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>
  - ▶ **JUNE 12, 1963** Mississippi's NAACP field secretary, 37-year-old Medgar Evers, was murdered outside his home in Jackson, Miss. Byron De La Beckwith was tried twice in 1964, both trials resulting in hung juries. Thirty years later, he was convicted of murdering Evers. <http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>
  - ▶ **AUG. 28, 1963** More than 250,000 people join in the March on Washington. Congregating at the Lincoln Memorial, participants listened as Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. <http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>
  - ▶ **SEPT. 15, 1963** Four young girls, Denise McNair, Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Addie Mae Collins, attending Sunday school were killed when a bomb exploded at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, a popular location for civil rights meetings. Riots erupted in Birmingham, Ala., leading to the deaths of two more black youth. <http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>
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- ▶ **JAN. 23, 1964** The 24th Amendment abolished the poll tax, which had originally been instituted in 11 southern states. The poll tax made it difficult for blacks to vote.

## **MAY 4, 1964 (FREEDOM SUMMER)**

- ▶ The Mississippi Freedom Summer Project was organized in 1964 by the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), a coalition of four civil rights organizations: the Student NonViolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE); the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The project was to carry out a unified voter registration program in the state of Mississippi. Both COFO and the Summer Project were the result of the "Sit-In" and "Freedom Ride" movements of 1960 and 1961, and of SNCC's earlier efforts to organize voter registration drives throughout Mississippi.
- ▶ The Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) launched a massive effort to register black voters during what becomes known as the Freedom Summer. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) began sending student volunteers on bus trips to test the implementation of new laws prohibiting segregation in interstate travel facilities. One of the first two groups of "Freedom Riders," as they are called, encountered its first problem two weeks later when a mob in Alabama sets the riders' bus on fire. The program continued and by the end of the summer, more than 1,000 volunteers, black and white, participated.
- ▶ CORE also sent delegates to the Democratic National Convention as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to protest - and attempt to unseat - the official all-white Mississippi contingent.

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## **JULY 2, 1964**

- ▶ President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination of all kinds based on race, color, religion or national origin and transform American society. The law allowed the federal government to enforce desegregation and prohibits discrimination in public facilities, in government and in employment. The "Jim Crow" laws in the South were abolished, and it became illegal to compel segregation of the races in schools, housing or hiring. Enforcement powers were initially weak, but they grew over the years, and later programs, such as affirmative action, were made possible by the Act. Title VII of the Act established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

## **AUG. 4, 1964**

- ▶ The bodies of three civil-rights workers - two white, one black - were found in an earthen dam. James E. Chaney, 21; Andrew Goodman, 21; and Michael Schwerner, 24, had been working to register black voters in Mississippi, and on June 21, went to investigate the burning of a black church. They were arrested by the police on speeding charges, incarcerated for several hours, and released after dark into the hands of the Ku Klux Klan, who murdered them.

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- ▶ **FEB. 21, 1965 - MALCOLM X Assassinated** Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Neb., on May 19, 1925, this world-renowned black nationalist leader was assassinated at the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan on the first day of National Brotherhood Week. A Black Muslim Minister, revolutionary black freedom fighter, civil rights activist and for a time the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam, he famously spoke of the need for black freedom "by any means necessary." Disillusioned with Elijah Muhammad's teachings, Malcolm formed his own organization, the Organization of Afro-American Unity and the Muslim Mosque Inc. In 1964, he made a pilgrimage to Islam's holy city, Mecca, and adopted the name El-Hajj Malik El Shabazz.
- ▶ **MARCH 1965 Selma to Montgomery Marches** The Selma to Montgomery marches, which included Bloody Sunday, were actually three marches that marked the political and emotional peak of the American civil rights movement.
- ▶ **MARCH 7, 1965 Bloody Sunday** Blacks began a march to Montgomery in support of voting rights, but were stopped at the Edmund Pettus Bridge by a police blockade in Selma, Ala. State troopers and the Dallas County Sheriff's Department, some mounted on horseback, awaited them. In the presence of the news media, the lawmen attacked the peaceful demonstrators with billy clubs, tear gas and bull whips, driving them back into Selma.
- ▶ The incident was dubbed "Bloody Sunday" by the national media, with each of the three networks interrupting telecasts to broadcast footage from the horrific incident. The march was considered the catalyst for pushing through the Voting Rights Act five months later.

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## **MARCH 9, 1965**

- ▶ Ceremonial Action within 48 hours, demonstrations in support of the marchers, were held in 80 cities and thousands of religious and lay leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, flew to Selma. He called for people across the country to join him. Hundreds responded to his call, shocked by what they had seen on television.
- ▶ However, to prevent another outbreak of violence, marchers attempted to gain a court order that would prohibit the police from interfering. Instead of issuing the court order, Federal District Court Judge Frank Minis Johnson issued a restraining order, preventing the march from taking place until he could hold additional hearings later in the week. On March 9, Dr. King led a group again to the Edmund Pettus Bridge where they knelt, prayed and to the consternation of some, returned to Brown Chapel. That night, a Northern minister who was in Selma to march, was killed by white vigilantes.

## **MARCH 21-25 1965 (Selma to Montgomery March)**

- ▶ Under protection of a federalized National Guard, voting rights advocates left Selma on March 21, and stood 25,000 strong on March 25 before the state capitol in Montgomery. As a direct consequence of these events, the U.S. Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, guaranteeing every American 21 years old and over the right to register to vote.

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- ▶ **AUG. 10, 1965** Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, making it easier for Southern blacks to register to vote. Literacy tests, poll taxes and other such requirements that were used to restrict black voting were made illegal.
- ▶ **SEPT. 24, 1965** President Lyndon Johnson issued Executive Order 11246 to enforce affirmative action for the first time because he believed asserting civil rights laws were not enough to remedy discrimination. It required government contractors to "take affirmative action" toward prospective minority employees in all aspects of hiring and employment. This represented the first time "affirmative action" entered the federal contracting lexicon and sought to ensure equality of employment. (*Presidential Executive Order 11375 extends this language to include women on October 13, 1968.*)
- ▶ **JUNE 12, 1967** In *Loving v. Virginia*, the Supreme Court ruled that prohibiting interracial marriage was unconstitutional. Sixteen states that still banned interracial marriage at the time were forced to revise their laws.
- ▶ **AUG. 30, 1967** Senate confirmed President Lyndon Johnson's appointment of Thurgood Marshall as the first African American Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court after he served for two years as a Solicitor General of the United States.

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- ▶ **APRIL 4, 1968** Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., at age 39, was shot as he was standing on the balcony outside his hotel room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn. Escaped convict and committed racist James Earl Ray was convicted of the crime. The networks then broadcast President Johnson's statement in which he called for Americans to "reject the blind violence," yet cities were ignited from coast to coast.
- ▶ **APRIL 11, 1968** President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing.
- ▶ **1969** President Nixon's "Philadelphia Order" presented "goals and timetables" for reaching equal employment opportunity in construction trades. It was extended in 1970 to non-construction federal contractors.
- ▶ **APRIL 20, 1971** The Supreme Court, in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* upheld busing as a legitimate means for achieving integration of public schools. Although largely unwelcome (and sometimes violently opposed) in local school districts, court-ordered busing plans in cities such as Charlotte, Boston, and Denver continued until the late 1990s.

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- ▶ **1972** Shirley Chisholm becomes first major-party Black candidate to run for president.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

- ▶ **1977** Pauli Murray became the first African American woman to become a Episcopal priest.

<http://paulimurrayproject.org/pauli-murray/biography>

- ▶ **1983** Vanessa Williams becomes first Black Miss America.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

- ▶ **1984** Reverend Jesse Jackson becomes first Black to make serious bid for presidency.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

- ▶ **1986** First observation of Dr. King's birthday as a national holiday.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

- ▶ **MARCH 22, 1988** Overriding President Ronald Reagan's veto, Congress passed the Civil Rights Restoration Act, which expanded the reach of nondiscrimination laws within private institutions receiving federal funds.

<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>



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- ▶ **1990** Douglas Wilder of Virginia becomes first Black to be elected governor.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

- ▶ **1991** President George H.W. Bush signs Civil Rights Act of 1991, which strengthened laws on employment discrimination.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

- ▶ **JUNE 23, 1992** In the most important affirmative action decision since the 1978 Bakke case, the Supreme Court (5?4) upheld the University of Michigan Law School's policy, which ruled race could be one of factors colleges consider when selecting students because it furthered "a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body."

<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>

- ▶ **1993** Dr. Joycelyn Elders becomes first Black Surgeon General.

<http://www.diversityinc.com/diversity-facts/black-history-month-facts-figures>

## 2000s

- ▶ **2001** General Colin Powell becomes first Black Secretary of State.

- ▶ **2009** Barack Obama becomes first Black president.

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- ▶ The Revolutionary American Thomas Paine held that “civil rights are those which appertain to man in right of his being a member of society.” From the beginning of our Republic, free people of African descent have seen themselves as citizens, members of society, and therefore due equal rights. From the nation’s origins, Americans believed that religion should not be a basis for abridging a citizen’s rights, but very few believed color should be treated similarly. And gender and sexual orientation were not even open for discussion. The resulting struggles over civil rights have remade our nation for more than two centuries.

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- ▶ The history of civil rights in the United States is largely the story of free people of color and then African Americans to define and enumerate what rights pertain to citizens in civil society. It has been the history of enlisting political parties to recognize the need for our governments, state and federal, to codify and protect those rights. Through the years, people of African descent have formed organizations and movements to promote equal rights. The Colored Convention Movement, the Afro-American League, the Niagara Movement, the National Council of Negro Women, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference carried the banner of equality when allies were few. In the modern era, integrated organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, and the Congress of Racial Equality fought for and protected equal rights. The names of America's greatest advocates of social justice—Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Fanny Lou Hamer — are associated with the struggle for civil rights.

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- ▶ Within this struggle for civil rights, many of the important leaders have been men and women whose rights as women and as members of the gay and lesbian community were subordinated to the general cause. Pauli Murray, Bayard Rustin, James Baldwin, and many others litigated, organized, and wrote on behalf of civil rights, believing fully in the path towards equal rights for all. Their struggles accentuate the universality of the movement for equality in America, and form a central part of the 2014 National African American History theme

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# MCBH EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

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FEBRUARY 2014

Jamie Adachi, EEO Specialist

*Special Observances are conducted to recognize the continuous achievement of all Americans to American Culture and to increase awareness, mutual respect, and understanding. It is designed to enhance cross-cultural and cross-gender awareness and promote harmony among all military members and civilian workforce.*

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