

- 1943: Congress, seeking to reward China for becoming an ally in the war against Germany and Japan, repeals all previous [Asian Exclusion Acts](#) and establishes an annual quota of 105 Chinese emigrants to the United States each year.
- 1947: [Jackie Robinson](#) becomes first African American to play major league baseball.
- 1948: Supreme Court, in *Shelly v. Kramer*, declares illegal the government support enforcement of restrictive covenants under which private parties could exclude minorities from buying homes in white neighborhoods.  
Democratic party endorses civil rights platform, prompting Southern walkout and formation of States Rights Democratic Party (better known as the Dixiecrats) and nomination of Strom Thurmond as presidential candidate.
- 1952: Tuskegee Institute reports that, for the first time in the 71 years it has been keeping records, there were no lynchings of African Americans during the year.
- 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](#). Chief Justice Earl Warren, writing for a unanimous Court, notes that to segregate children by race "generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." [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. The case involves a murder conviction by a jury that includes no Latinos. Chief Justice Earl Warren holds persons of Mexican descent are "persons of a distinct class" entitled to the protection of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- 1955: On August 28, 14 year old [Emmett Till](#) is beaten, shot and lynched by whites after allegedly saying "bye, baby" to a white woman in a store in Mississippi.  
In Alabama, on December 1 [Rosa Parks](#) refuses to up her bus seat to a white man, precipitating the [Montgomery bus boycott](#), led by [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)
- 1956: [Montgomery bus boycott](#) ends in victory, December 21, after the city announces it will comply with a November Supreme Court ruling declaring segregation on buses illegal. Earlier in the year, [King's home was bombed](#). Autherine Lucy is first African American admitted to the University of Alabama.
- 1957: Efforts to integrate Little Rock, Ark., [Central High School](#) meet with legal resistance and violence; [Gov. Orval Faubus](#) predicts "blood will run in the streets" if African Americans push effort to integrate. On Sept. 24, federal troops mobilize to protect the nine African American students at the high school from white mobs trying to block the school's integration.
- 1959:

Alaska and Hawaii are admitted as states. Hawaii, the 50th state, elects [Hiram Fong](#) (of Chinese ancestry) and [Daniel Inouye](#) (of Japanese ancestry) to represent them in Congress, the first two Asian Americans to serve in that body.

1960:

February 1, [Lunch counter sit-in](#) by four college students in Greensboro, N.C. begins and spreads through the South. On April 17, the [Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee](#) (SNCC) is founded.

John F. Kennedy elected president.

Following Sudan (1956) and Ghana (1957), 11 African nations achieve independence.

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 mobs](#) in several places, including Birmingham and Montgomery, Ala.

1962:

The [United Farm Workers Union](#), under the leadership of [Cesar Chavez](#), organizes to win bargaining power for Mexican Americans.

[James Meredith](#) becomes first African American student admitted to the University of Mississippi.

1963:

June 20, President John F. Kennedy meets with civil rights leaders at the White House in an attempt to call off the [March on Washington](#) scheduled for August.

Over a quarter of a million people participate in the March on Washington on August 28, 1963, and hear Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Medger Evers, NAACP field secretary in Jackson, Miss., murdered on June 12, 1963. A Birmingham church is bombed on Sept. 15, killing four African American girls attending Sunday school: Denise McNair, age 11, and Cynthia Wesley, Carole Robertson and Adie Mae Collins, all 14 years old.

1963:

In an event that traumatizes the nation, President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Two days later, his alleged assailant, Lee Harvey Oswald, is also shot and killed. Vice President Lyndon Johnson becomes president.

Martin Luther King Jr. receives the Nobel Peace Prize. The Twenty-fourth Amendment, ending the poll tax, is ratified and becomes part of the Constitution.

[Mississippi 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 Scherner, and an African American civil rights worker, James Chaney, are murdered. The Bracero Program is terminated.

1965:

Selma, Ala. voting rights campaign. Jimmie Lee Jackson, 26, participating in a march led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, is killed by Alabama state troopers as he attempts to prevent the troopers from beating his mother and grandfather.

Selma to Montgomery march. The Voting Rights Act passes and is signed into law on August 6, effectively ending literacy tests and a host of other obstacles used to disenfranchise African American and other minority citizens.

[Malcolm X](#), the fiery orator and Muslim leader, is assassinated. For some, Malcolm X's militant rhetoric is a rival and alternative to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s message of Christian non-violence.

The Watts section of Los Angeles erupts in five days of rioting after an African American woman is killed by a fire truck driven by white men.

1966:

[National Organization for Women](#) (NOW) is founded to fight politically for full equality between the sexes.

[Stokely Carmichael](#), head of the [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee](#), first uses the phrase "black power" during a voter registration drive in Mississippi. The phrase - and its many different interpretations by African Americans and whites - divides the civil rights movement.

1967:

Sparked by a police raid on a black power hangout, Detroit erupts into the worst race riots ever in the nation, with 43 people dead, including 33 African Americans and 10 whites. During the nine months of the year, 164 other racial disturbances are reported across the country, including major riots in Tampa, Cincinnati, Atlanta, Newark, Plainfield and Brunswick, New Jersey, which kill at least 83 people.

[Thurgood Marshall](#) becomes the first African American justice of the Supreme Court. Muhammad Ali, formerly Cassius Clay, is stripped of his heavyweight boxing title for resisting military draft as a Muslim minister in the Nation of Islam.

Jose Angel Gutierrez founds the Mexican American Youth Organization in San Antonio, Texas. The group would become over time La Raza Unida Party, the first Chicano political party.

Articles of incorporation are filed in San Antonio for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the first national Chicano civil rights legal organization. Congress enacts the [Age Discrimination Act of 1967](#) prohibiting employment discrimination against older Americans. The act is amended 12 years later to prohibit discrimination against older Americans by any housing provider who receives federal funds.

1968:

March 1, The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, popularly known as the Kerner Commission after chairman Otto Kerner, Governor of Illinois, issues its report warning that the nation is moving toward two separate societies-one black and poor, the other affluent and white. The commission, appointed by President Johnson following the 1967 disorders in Detroit and other communities, calls for major anti-poverty efforts and strengthened civil rights enforcement to eliminate the causes of the disorders.

April 4, Martin Luther King, Jr. is murdered. The assassination sparks unrest and civil disorders in 124 cities across the country, including the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. On April 11, as disorders continue, President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1968, aimed at curbing discrimination in housing.

June 6, Sen. Robert Kennedy, campaigning for the Democratic nomination for president, is shot and killed in a Los Angeles hotel.

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

American Indian Movement (AIM) founded in Minneapolis.

The Supreme Court, in [\*Green v. County School Board of New Kent County\*](#) (Virginia), rules that "actual desegregation" of schools in the South is required, effectively ruling out so-called school "freedom of choice" plans and requiring affirmative action to achieve integrated schools.

1969:

A June 27 police raid on the [\*Stonewall Inn\*](#), a Greenwich Village bar catering to homosexuals, results in two nights of rioting and is the symbolic beginning of the gay rights movement. The event is commemorated each year by Gay Pride demonstrations across the nation.

1971:

The Supreme Court, in [\*Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education\*](#), upholds busing as a legitimate and sometimes necessary tool to achieve desegregation and integration. But the Court does not rule on segregation in public schools in northern states where it is not imposed by statute.

Source: <http://www.civilrights.org/resources/civilrights101/chronology.html>