

Civil Rights Movement (1955-1972)

1955 August - African American student Emmett Till is murdered in Mississippi.

1955 November - Interstate Commerce Commission bans segregation in interstate travel.

1955 December - Montgomery Bus Boycott begins when African Americans refuse to ride segregated city buses in Montgomery, Alabama. This protest lasts for a year.

1956 The African nation of Sudan gains independence from the United Kingdom and Egypt. As numbers of African diplomats in segregated Washington, D.C. increases, so does pressure for equal treatment for all people of African descent.

1956 January-February - The homes of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and E.D. Nixon are bombed in reaction to their roles in organizing the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

1956 February - The first African American student, Autherine Lucy, is admitted to University of Alabama, but is not allowed to attend due to concerns over her "safety."

1956 March - "Southern Manifesto" is issued. Southern members of Congress pledge their opposition to school desegregation.

1956 May - Tallahassee Bus Boycott begins (ended 1958).

1956 June - Alabama outlaws the NAACP.

1956 November - U.S. Supreme Court upholds a Federal District Court ruling that segregation on public buses in Montgomery, Alabama is unconstitutional.

1956 December - Montgomery Bus Boycott ends with desegregation of the city's bus system.

1959 Prince Edward County, Virginia reacts to school desegregation with a massive resistance policy. The public school system is closed down for five years.

1957 January - Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) is founded.

1957 The African nation of Ghana gains independence from the United Kingdom.

1957 August - President Eisenhower sends U.S. Army troops to protect African American students trying to integrate Little Rock Central High School, Arkansas (to May 1959).

1957 August - Civil Rights Bill passes. The bill establishes the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice.

1958 *Cooper v. Aaron*. U.S. Supreme Court rules that the potential for mob violence does not

justify schools' refusal to desegregate.

1959 June - Prince Edward County, Virginia abandons its public school system to circumvent desegregation.

1960 The Year of African Independence. A dozen countries gain freedom from European colonizers: Zaire, Somalia, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Chad, Congo, Brazzaville, Gabon, Senegal, Mali, and Nigeria.

1960 John F. Kennedy is elected president.

1960 February - Four African American college students stage a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. They start a wave of similar sit-ins all over the country.

1960 April - Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is founded.

1960 June - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. meets President John F. Kennedy.

1960 U.S. Supreme Court rules against segregation of buses and trains.

1961 January - A Federal Court orders the University of Georgia to admit two African American students, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes. A riot follows.

1961 June - Civil rights organizations meet with Attorney General Robert Kennedy for voting rights.

1961 September - Interstate Commerce Commission declares segregation in interstate bus terminals is illegal.

1961 Summer - Freedom Riders organized by CORE, SNCC, and SCLC. African-American and white freedom riders challenge local compliance with U.S. Supreme Court ruling for integration on interstate buses by traveling together across the south. They encounter violent mobs of whites and confrontations with police.

1961 November - August 1962 - African American community organizations formed an alliance in Albany, Georgia. At first, the "Albany Movement" demonstrations are ineffective, but soon after, Albany has African Americans on the city commission and abolishes segregation statutes.

1962 The Caribbean and African nations of Jamaica, Trinidad/Tobago and Uganda achieve independence from the United Kingdom.

1962 James Meredith becomes the first African American student to attend the University of Mississippi. His enrollment leads to the most violent campus riot of the decade.

1962 President Kennedy federalizes the Mississippi National Guard and later deploys the Army

to enforce desegregation at the University of Mississippi.

1963 The African nation of Kenya achieves independence from the United Kingdom.

1963 April - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is arrested while leading confrontational, nonviolent protest in Birmingham, Alabama. He writes his influential "Letter from Birmingham City jail" while incarcerated.

1963 April - SCLC launches "Project C" (for confrontation) in Birmingham, Alabama.

1963 June - Medgar Evers, field secretary for the NAACP, is murdered in Mississippi.

1963 April-May - Police use dogs and water cannons on Civil Rights marchers (many of them children) in Birmingham, Alabama. TV and press coverage shocks the nation and attracts widespread support for the Civil Rights Movement.

1963 September - Four African American children are murdered in the firebombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

1963 August - 250,000 civil rights protesters march on Washington, in support of proposed civil rights legislation.

1964 African nations Malawi and Zambia achieve independence from the United Kingdom.

1964 January - 24th Amendment eliminates the poll tax on federal elections.

1964 April - Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) is founded.

1964 May - *Griffin et al. V. County School Board of Prince Edward County et al.* U.S. Supreme Court finds a school board may not close a school to circumvent a desegregation order.

1964 June - Three civil rights workers (Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman) are arrested and then murdered while traveling through Mississippi to assist with voter registration.

1964 Summer - Mississippi Freedom Summer campaign for African American voter registration begins.

1964 July - Civil Rights Act is signed into law. The act requires equal access to public places, facilities, and accommodations, and outlawed discrimination in employment.

1964 August - MFDP challenges the legitimacy of the all-white Mississippi Democratic Party delegation at national convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

1964 November - Lyndon B. Johnson is elected president.

1964 December - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

1965 January - Voting rights drive is organized by the SCLC in Selma, Alabama.

1965 First U.S. Marines arrive in Vietnam. During the war, disproportionate numbers of African Americans serve in combat.

1965 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission established by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 begins work.

1965 February - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. meets with President Lyndon B. Johnson.

1965 February - Malcolm X is assassinated.

1965 March 7 "Bloody Sunday" - Voting rights marchers are beaten back by Alabama state troopers on Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama.

1965 March 9 - James Reeb, a Unitarian Minister, is brutally attacked in Selma, Alabama. He dies of his wounds.

1965 March 21-25 - Voting rights march, which begins in Selma, successfully arrives in Montgomery, Alabama.

1965 March - Viola Liuzzo is murdered by the Ku Klux Klan as she drives voting rights marchers back from Montgomery to Selma, Alabama.

1965 White rioting against integration occurs in Cleveland, Ohio.

1965 August - Watts Riots, Los Angeles. The riots are seen as an indication of frustrations of inner-city African Americans with the rate of progress toward equality.

1966 February - In Chicago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. meets with Elijah Mohammed, leader of the Nation of Islam, and leads an unsuccessful protest against job discrimination, poor schools, and slum housing.

1966 June - James Meredith is shot and wounded soon after beginning his "March Against Fear" from Memphis, Tennessee to Jackson, Mississippi.

1966 July - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. begins campaign for open housing in Chicago, Illinois.

1966 October - Black Panther Party is founded. The party's aims are to fight racism in northern cities, defend the African American community against racist police officers, and provide social services for inner-city African American communities.

1966 World Heavyweight Champion Muhammad Ali refuses to be drafted into the U.S. Army.

1967 Thurgood Marshall is appointed to U.S. Supreme Court.

1968 April 4 - Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. He is in town to lead a march in support of striking sanitation workers. The night before his death, he delivers his famous "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech.

1968 June - Presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy is assassinated in Los Angeles. Kennedy is a key supporter of the Civil Rights Movement.

1968 National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concludes the nation is "moving toward two societies, one black, one white - separate and unequal."

1968 October 29 - *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education*. U.S. Supreme Court rules that school districts must end racial segregation at once and must operate only unitary school systems.

1969 Black Economic Development Conference in Detroit, Michigan issues "Black Manifesto" demanding reparations.

Source: <http://www.nps.gov/brvb/historyculture/civilrights.htm>