



1793



1849



1950

Timeline

- 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

- 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

- 1857** In *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, U.S. Supreme Court declares that Blacks are not citizens of the U.S. and that Congress cannot prohibit slavery

- 1859** John Brown leads raid of U.S. Armory and Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

- 1861** South secedes from Union and Civil War begins

- 1863** President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring "all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free"

- 1865** Civil War ends

- 1865** Thirteenth Amendment is ratified, prohibiting slavery

- 1868** Fourteenth Amendment is ratified, allowing Blacks to become citizens

- 1870** Fifteenth Amendment is ratified, guaranteeing that right to vote cannot be denied because of race, color or previous condition of servitude

- 1870** Hiram Revels becomes first Black member of Congress

- 1896** U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that segregation doesn't violate the 14th Amendment's equal-protection clause as long as conditions provided are "separate but equal"

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

- 1909** NAACP is founded

- 1926** Carter G. Woodson establishes "Negro History Week"

- 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 Thrower becomes first Black to play quarterback in the National Football League

- 1954** In *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka*, U.S. Supreme Court rules that racial segregation in public schools violates the 14th Amendment

- 1955** An all-white jury acquits two white men who confessed to murdering a 14-year-old Black boy, Emmett Till, for allegedly whistling at a white woman

1955 Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in Montgomery, Ala., leading to the Montgomery Bus Boycott

1957 Little Rock Nine integrate Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas

1960 Four Black students stage famous sit-in at a whites-only Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C.

1961 Freedom rides begin from Washington, D.C.

1962 James Meredith becomes first Black student to enroll at the University of Mississippi. Violence prompts President Kennedy to send in 5,000 federal troops

1963 More than 200,000 people march on Washington, D.C., in the largest civil-rights demonstration in U.S. history; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gives his "I Have a Dream" speech

1963 Four young Black girls are killed in the bombing of a Birmingham, Ala., church

1964 President Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1964, giving the government more power to protect citizens against race, religion, sex or national-origin discrimination

1965 Malcolm X, former minister in the Nation of Islam and civil-rights activist, is assassinated

1965 Thousands participate in three protest marches from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., for Black voting rights

1965 President Johnson signs Voting Rights Act of 1965

1967 Thurgood Marshall becomes first Black U.S. Supreme Court justice

1967 In *Loving v. Virginia* ruling, Supreme Court declares law prohibiting interracial marriages to be unconstitutional

1968 Dr. King is assassinated

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

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

1983 Vanessa Williams becomes first Black Miss America

1984 Reverend Jesse Jackson becomes first Black to make serious bid for presidency

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

1990 Douglas Wilder of Virginia becomes first Black to be elected governor

1991 President George H.W. Bush signs Civil Rights Act of 1991, which strengthens laws on employment discrimination

1993 Dr. Joycelyn Elders becomes first Black Surgeon General

2001 General Colin Powell becomes first Black Secretary of State

2009 Barack Obama becomes first Black president

2014 Hundreds gather in various protests across the country after grand juries decline to indict Michael Brown's and Eric Garner's killers

2015 Black Lives Matter movement gains momentum amid the shootings of unarmed Black citizens by white police officers

