

Timeline



Eli Whitney

- 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 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 Throver 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



Nat Turner



Willie Throver

- 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 government more power to protect citizens against race, religion, sex or national-origin discrimination

- 1965** Malcolm X, former minister in 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** In *Loving v. Virginia* ruling, Supreme Court declares law prohibiting interracial marriages to be unconstitutional

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

- 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** Rev. 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 gains momentum amid the shootings of unarmed Black citizens by white police officers

- 2016** Announcement that Lt. Gen. Stayce D. Harris, highest-ranking Black woman pilot in all U.S. armed forces, to be inducted into Women in Aviation International's Pioneer Hall of Fame in March 2017



Rosa Parks



Martin Luther King Jr.



Former President and First Lady Barack and Michelle Obama