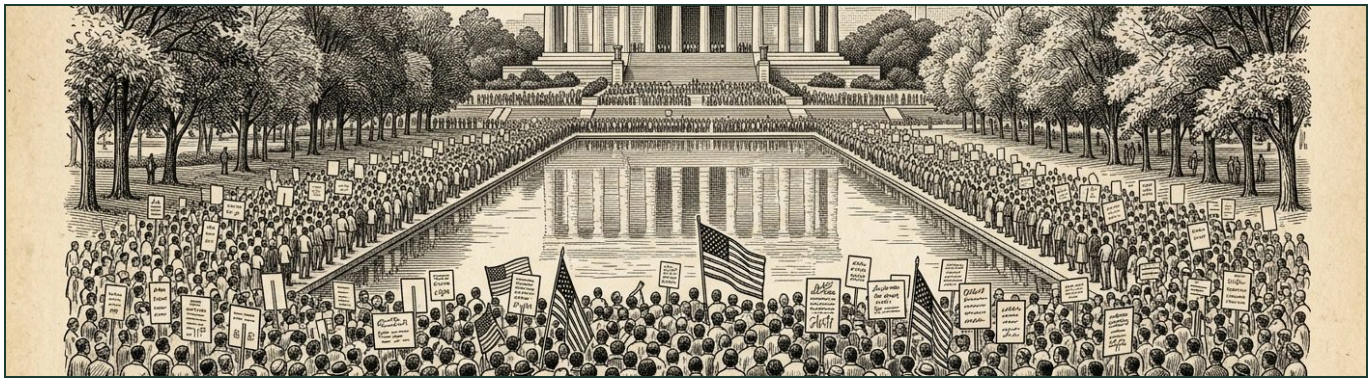


1954 – 1968

Civil Rights Movement Timeline

The Civil Rights Movement was a struggle by Black Americans to end legal discrimination and win equal rights under the law, led by figures like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

1954 — **Brown v. Board of Education**

The Supreme Court unanimously rules that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional.

> **Why it mattered:** *It overturned the ruling that had made separate-but-equal the law of the land, striking the legal foundation of segregation in America.*

1955 — **Montgomery Bus Boycott**

Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger; Black residents boycott the city's buses for 381 days.

> **Why it mattered:** *The boycott succeeded — bus segregation was ruled unconstitutional — and it launched Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a national civil rights leader.*

1957 — **Little Rock Nine**

Nine Black students attempt to integrate Central High School in Arkansas; the governor calls the National Guard to block them.

> **Why it mattered:** *President Eisenhower sent federal troops to enforce integration, showing the federal government would protect civil rights against state resistance.*

1960 — **Greensboro Sit-Ins**

Four Black college students sit at a segregated lunch counter in North Carolina and refuse to leave when denied service.

> **Why it mattered:** *Their peaceful protest spread to dozens of cities and helped desegregate lunch counters across the South.*

Civil Rights Movement Timeline *continued*

1963 — **Birmingham Campaign**

Civil rights leaders organize peaceful marches in Birmingham, Alabama; police use fire hoses and dogs on the protesters, including children.

> **Why it mattered:** *Shocking photos and TV footage of peaceful demonstrators being attacked shifted national opinion and put direct pressure on Congress.*

1963 — **March on Washington**

About 250,000 people gather at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., where Dr. King delivers his famous speech including the words I Have a Dream.

> **Why it mattered:** *The march showed the enormous public support for civil rights and pushed Congress and the Kennedy administration toward legislation.*

1964 — **Civil Rights Act of 1964**

President Johnson signs a landmark law banning discrimination based on race, color, or religion in public places and employment.

> **Why it mattered:** *It made legal segregation across the United States illegal — the most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction.*

1965 — **Bloody Sunday — Selma**

State troopers attack peaceful marchers at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, in full view of television cameras.

> **Why it mattered:** *Footage of the brutal attack shocked the nation and directly led President Johnson to push for the Voting Rights Act within weeks.*

1965 — **Voting Rights Act**

President Johnson signs a law banning discriminatory practices like literacy tests that had been used to prevent Black Americans from voting.

> **Why it mattered:** *Millions of Black citizens in the South could now vote for the first time, permanently changing American politics.*

1968 — **Assassination of Dr. King**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is shot and killed in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, while supporting striking sanitation workers.

> **Why it mattered:** *The nation mourned the movement's most prominent leader; Congress passed the Fair Housing Act — another major civil rights law — just days later.*