

Civil Rights Movement: Historical Timeline (Charry 2025)

1954

- May Supreme Court case: Brown vs. Board of Ed. ("separate educational facilities are inherently unequal").
- Jul. White Citizens Council formed in Mississippi (first of many, to fight desegregation).

1955

- Aug. 14-year-old Emmett Till murdered in Mississippi.
- Sep. The two accused White murderers of Till acquitted by an all-White male jury.
- Dec. Montgomery, AL bus boycott initiated by Rosa Parks and led by MLK, Jr.

1957

- Feb. Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) established with MLK as first president.
- Sep. Little Rock, AR Central High School desegregated after Governor Faubus blocked it with Arkansas National Guard and then Eisenhower federalized the Guard to protect the Black students. Louis Armstrong made public statement criticizing Faubus and Eisenhower the week before.

1958

- Mar. Sonny Rollins, *Freedom Suite* (rec. Feb.-Mar.)

1959

Charles Mingus, "Fables of Faubus" on Columbia, without the lyrics.

1960

- Feb. Four Black students from NCA&T sit-in at segregated Woolworths food counter for service
- Apr. Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) established (Shaw University, Raleigh, NC).
- Sep. Max Roach (percussion): *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*.
- Oct. Charles Mingus, "Original Fables of Faubus" on Candid, with the lyrics.

1961

- Apr. Student freedom riders sent on buses to south by Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to desegregate interstate travel. Met with violence in Alabama and Mississippi.
- May Art Blakey, *The Freedom Rider* (rec. Feb.-May)
- Oct. James Meredith integrated U. of Mississippi; JFK sent 5,000 troops to establish order.

1963

- Mar. Fire hoses and dogs used on Black demonstrators in Birmingham, AL.
- Jun. Mississippi NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers murdered outside his home by Whites.
- Aug. March on Washington, 200,000 people heard MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech.
- Sep. Four girls killed in Birmingham, AL Black church bombing.
- Nov. John Coltrane, "Alabama" (rec. Nov.);
President John F. Kennedy assassinated.

1964

- Jan. 24th amendment abolished the poll tax for voting
- Jun. Freedom summer, massive voter registration drive by Council of Federated Organizations. Civil rights workers Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were murdered by KKK in Mississippi, drawing in the FBI and national attention.
- Jul. Civil Rights Act signed by LBJ; Prohibits discrimination.
Riot in Harlem after police shooting of 15-year-old boy.

1965

- Feb. Malcolm X murdered in NYC.
- Mar. Selma to Montgomery, AL marchers for voting rights tear gassed and clubbed by police.
- Aug. Riots in Watts, LA;
Voting Rights Act signed by LBJ.

1966

- Jun. SNCC chair Stokely Carmichael popularized term "Black Power" in speech at Greenwood, MS. Published book *Black Power* in 1967.
- Oct. Black Panthers founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, CA.

1967

- Jun. Supreme Court declared that prohibiting interracial marriage is unconstitutional (Loving v. Virginia). 16 states effected.
- Jul. Riots in Newark and Detroit.
- Dec. Cleveland (Carl Stokes) and Gary, IN (Richard Hatcher) elected their first African American mayors, the first of a slow wave in large northern cities.

1968

- Apr. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. murdered in Memphis.
Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination in housing signed by LBJ.