



# Civil Rights Landmarks Display

# Slavery in North America

1654-June 19, 1865?

Four hundred years ago, in 1607, Jamestown, VA, the first permanent settlement by Europeans in North America was founded. In 1610, John Rolfe introduced a strain of tobacco which quickly became the colony's economic foundation. By 1619, more labor was needed to support the tobacco trade and "indentured servants" were brought to the colony including about 20 Africans. As of 1650, there were about 300 "Africans" living in Virginia, about 1% of an estimated 30,000 population. They were still not slaves, and they joined approximately 4000 white indentured "servants" working out their loans for passage money to Virginia. They were granted 50 acres each when freed from their indentures, so they could raise their own tobacco.

Slavery was brought to North America in 1654, when Anthony Johnson, in Northampton County, convinced the court that he was entitled to the lifetime services of John Casor, a Black man. This was the first judicial approval of life servitude, except as punishment for a crime. Anthony Johnson was a Black man, one of the original 20 brought to Jamestown in 1619. By 1623, he had achieved his freedom and by 1651 was prosperous enough to import five "servants" of his own, for which he was granted 250 acres as "headrights".

However, the Transatlantic slave trade from Africa to the Americas had been around for over a century already, originating around 1500, during the early period of European discovery of West Africa and the establishment of Atlantic colonies in the Caribbean and South and North America when growing sugar cane (and a few other crops) was found to be a lucrative enterprise. Slaves were usually captured by African tribes in raids or open warfare or purchased from other African tribes. Many tribes were happy to get rid of their enemies by capturing and selling them for trade goods--usually whiskey, swords, guns and gold. It is believed that about 11 million men, women and children were transported in ships across the Atlantic to various ports in the Americas, mostly to Brazil and the islands in the Caribbean from 1500 to 1850.



Slave Sale  
in Maryland

The importation of slaves into the United States was banned in 1808, by which time between 300,000-500,000 had been imported. Subsequent slaves were nearly all born in the United States. By 1800, nearly all slavery in non-southern states had been banned, with Vermont being the first state to do so in 1791.

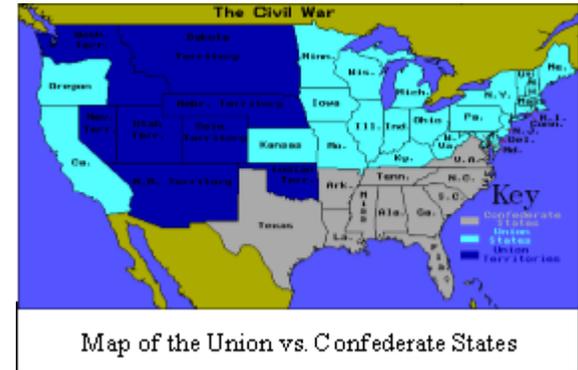
# Slavery in North America (continued)

1654-June 19, 1865?

However, conditions were unconscionable. Between 1700 and 1865 there were very few real restrictions of the conduct of a master toward his slave, except those that flowed from what, at the time, would be considered "Christian decency", and social norms.

Around 1750, Quakers began to fight for the abolition of slavery. Beginning around 1825, slaves and White abolitionists, began to gain ground in their struggle for independence. Slaves in the United States who escaped ownership would often make their way north with White and Black abolitionist support to the northern part of the country or Canada through what became known as the "Underground Railroad". The Russell House, here at Wesleyan was one stop on the "Railroad." Famous active abolitionists of the U.S. include William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass and John Brown.

The American Civil War began in 1861 when eleven southern states declared their secession, largely over the question of abolition. At first, Abraham Lincoln reversed attempts at emancipation by Secretary of War Cameron and Generals Fremont and Hunter in order to keep the loyalty of the border states and the War Democrats. Lincoln then tried to persuade the border states to accept his plan of gradual, compensated emancipation and voluntary colonization, while warning them that stronger measures would be needed if the moderate approach was rejected. Only the District of Columbia accepted Lincoln's gradual plan. Thus, on January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing, at least on paper, all slaves in the United States. Slavery was constitutionally abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in the United States in 1865, freeing over 4 million slaves. The Civil War resulted in the loss of about 600,000 lives.



On June 19, 1865, also known as Juneteenth, Union General Gordon Granger and 2,000 federal troops arrived on Galveston Island, Texas to take possession of the state and enforce former slaves' new freedoms. It is believed that this was the last place in the United States to receive the news of the Emancipation Proclamation, two and half years after it was made.



# Sojourner: Witness of Truth

(Isabella Baumfree ~ 1797-1883)

The world didn't know her as Sojourner Truth when she entered it in the late 1790's. Born to slave parents, Isabella Baumfree, as was the name given to her, grew up on the Colonel Johannes Hardenbergh estate in Swartekill, in Ulster County, a Dutch settlement in New York - a state that allowed slavery until an emancipation decree was passed in 1827.

Isabella was one of thirteen children born to Elizabeth and James Baumfree, who were forced to live in the cramped, drafty cellars of their masters. Her earliest memories were of hardship and deprivation. She spoke Dutch until she was sold from her family around the age of 9. In 1808, John Neely purchased her along with a herd of sheep, for \$100. Neely's wife and family only spoke English and beat Isabella fiercely for the frequent miscommunications and because of this cruel treatment, she learned to speak English quickly. It was also during this time that she began to find refuge in religion and began her journey with God.

Over the next few years, she was bought and sold by a succession of masters. Tired of the uncertainty that filled her life, Isabella decided to take action. With the help of her father (considered a free man as a result of illness) who interceded on her behalf to a tavern owner, she was purchased for \$105. Although the work atmosphere was crude and morally questionable, it was a safer haven for her. But a year and a half later, in 1810, Isabella was once again sold to a new master in New York state, and continued to suffer many hardships.

Sometime around 1815, she fell in love with a fellow slave named Robert. Robert's owner forbade the relationship because he did not want his slave having children with a slave he did not own. One night Robert visited Isabella, but was followed by his owner and son, who beat him savagely, bound him and dragged him away. Robert never returned. Isabella had a daughter shortly after, named Diana. In 1817, forced to submit to the will of a new owner, John Dumont, she married an older slave named Thomas. They had four children: Peter, James, Elizabeth and Sophia.

In 1799, the state of New York began to legislate the gradual abolition of slaves, which was to happen on July 4, 1827. Dumont had promised Isabella freedom a year before the state emancipation "if she would do well and be faithful." However, he reneged on his promise, claiming a hand injury had made her less productive.

# Sojourner: Witness of Truth (continued)

(Isabella Baumfree ~ 1797-1883)

Isabella decided she could no longer live under these conditions. She began to make plans to escape with her infant daughter, Sophia, and was forced to leave her other children behind. In later years, she spoke of how God remained with her during this uncertain time, giving her direction and declared, "I did not run off, for I thought that wicked, but I walked off, believing that to be all right."

During her flight to freedom, a Quaker couple, Isaac and Maria Van Wagenen, learned of her predicament and took her in until the state's emancipation took effect. Because of the Van Wagenen's benevolence, she began to learn what it meant to love those who had oppressed her and had a life-changing religious experience - becoming "overwhelmed with the greatness of the Divine presence", and was inspired to preach.

Now that she was finally free, she moved to New York City and found work as a domestic servant and soon became active in a Methodist church. Later joining the African Methodist Episcopal denomination, she did volunteer social work helping former slaves. On June 1, 1843, she changed her name to 'Sojourner [Traveler] Truth' and told friends, "The Spirit calls me [East], and I must go. ...the Lord gave me Truth, because I was to declare the truth to the people." She wandered in relative obscurity, depending on the kindness of strangers. In 1844, she joined the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Massachusetts, founded by abolitionists to promote cooperative and productive labor. They were strongly anti-slavery, religiously tolerant, women's rights supporters, and pacifist in principles. She began dictating her memoirs to Olive Gilbert, one of the Association's members. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave* was published privately in 1850 by William Lloyd Garrison. It gave her income and increased her speaking engagements. In 1854, at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, she gave her most famous speech, with the legendary phrase, "Ain't I a Woman?"

Sojourner was well into her 60s when the Civil War broke out, but she solicited supplies for the Union Army's Black volunteer regiments. She met President Lincoln in 1864. She also served as a counselor in the national Freedmen's Association for a year, helping emancipated slaves get established in the "new West." She continued to teach and lecture after the war. When at last she retired, Sojourner moved to Battle Creek, Michigan, where she died on November 26, 1883. Isabella Baumfree not only left a given birth name behind, but also a magnificent legacy.



Sojourner Truth met with President Abraham Lincoln on October 29, 1864, when he showed her a Bible that was presented to him by the Black people of Baltimore, Maryland.

Excerpts taken from adaptations of "Great Women in American History", by Rebecca Price Janney.

# The Underground Railroad in Middletown

The Underground Railroad was a network of routes by which African slaves in the 19th century United States attempted to escape to free states, or as far north as Canada, with the aid of abolitionists. Other routes led to Mexico or overseas. At its height between 1810 and 1850, an estimated 30,000 to 100,000 people escaped enslavement via the Underground Railroad, though Census figures only account for 6,000.

The escape network was "underground" in the sense of underground resistance but was seldom literally subterranean. The Underground Railroad consisted of clandestine routes, transportation, meeting points, safe houses and other havens, and assistance maintained by abolitionist sympathizers. These individuals were organized into small, independent groups who, for the purpose of maintaining secrecy, knew of connecting "stations" along the route but few details of their immediate area. Escaped slaves would pass from one way station to the next, steadily making their way north. The diverse "conductors" on the railroad included free-born Blacks, white abolitionists, former slaves (either escaped or manumitted), and Native Americans. Churches and religious denominations played key roles, especially the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Congregationalists, Wesleyans, and Reformed Presbyterians as well as breakaway sects of mainstream denominations such as branches of the Methodist church and American Baptists.

In 1820, 97 slaves and 7,844 free people of color lived in Connecticut. According to the 1830 census, Middletown's population was 6,892. Of these residents, 209 were people of color, all of them free. Freedom, however, did not automatically bring basic rights. Education and voting rights were hard to come by in Connecticut in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although there were no more slaves in Middletown by 1830, slavery was not fully abolished in the state until 1848.

Slavery was a burning issue in New England in the 1830s. In 1831, the same year that Jehiel Beman, first regular pastor at the A.M.E. Cross Street Church, brought his family to Middletown and Wesleyan University was founded, William Lloyd Garrison began publishing his anti-slavery paper, *The Liberator*. Garrison was indeed heard in Middletown.

The New England Anti-Slavery Society (later known as the American Anti-Slavery Society) was founded in Boston in 1832, and the cause spread throughout the North in response to Garrison's call. Within just five years, there were twenty-nine anti-slavery societies in Connecticut alone.



Map of General route on the Underground Railroad

# The Underground Railroad in Middletown (continued)

Jehiel Beman was tireless in his fight against slavery. A founding member of the Middletown Anti-Slavery Society in 1834, he became one of its five managers. Both of his sons, Amos and Leverett, were also active in the cause. Clarissa Beman, Leverett's wife, was one of the founders of Middletown's Colored Female Anti-Slavery Society in the same year. This group was one of the earliest women's abolitionist societies in the United States. Cross Street Church was so closely allied with the anti-slavery movement that it was known as "Freedom Church" in this period.

A more hidden aspect of the abolitionist movement was the underground railroad. Several Middletown citizens, both white and Black, served as underground railroad conductors, sheltering slaves who were fleeing the South in search of freedom in Canada or elsewhere. With the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, the need for the underground railroad increased. Along with prominent white citizens Jesse Baldwin and Benjamin Douglas, Jehiel Beman and his second wife, Nancy, served as underground railroad conductors after they returned to Middletown in 1854, and perhaps before. Cross Street Church was very likely a way station on the railroad.

Middletown was home to abolitionists, both Black and white, as well as to pro-slavery factions, and to those who believed that Black emigration to Africa held the answer to ending racial strife. In 1835, Cross Street was the scene of an anti-Black, anti-abolitionist riot. Leverett Beman wrote that Cross Street was "crowded with those worse than Southern bloodhounds." Wesleyan's first President, Willbur Fisk, a member of the mostly-white Colonization Society, believed that slavery was wrong, but maintained that the solution to the problem of slavery lay in the voluntary emigration of Blacks to Africa, rather than in the abolitionist movement. Most Black Americans, including the Bemans, deplored the activities of the Colonization Society. In the summer of 1831, Black people gathered at the Cross Street Church to protest colonization. Amos Beman was elected secretary of the group, and wrote, "Why should we leave this land, so dearly bought by the blood, groans and tears of our fathers? Truly this is our home, here let us live and here let us die."



Harriet Tubman,  
famous conductor  
on the Underground  
Railroad

# Black Women & The Suffrage Movement 1848-1923

*“There is no slave, after all, like a wife... Poor women, poor slaves...All married women, all children and girls who live in their father’s house are slaves” ~Mary Boykin Chestnut, A Diary from Dixie, 1861*

When Woodrow Wilson arrived in Washington, D.C. on March 3, 1913, he expected to be met by crowds of people welcoming him for his inauguration as United States President the next day. But very few people came to meet his train. Instead, hundreds of thousands of people lined Pennsylvania Avenue to watch a Woman Suffrage Parade.

To demand their right to vote, five thousand women had united under the leadership of suffragist, Alice Paul, and marched through Washington on the day that would give maximum exposure to their cause.

Women demanded suffrage as early as 1848. The Seneca Falls convention in July of 1848, brought together two hundred women and forty men, including feminists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, to make the claim for full citizenship. The delegates believed women to be citizens not limited in any way to their roles as wives or mothers. In the language of the founding fathers, they wrote, “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men and women are created equal.” They rejected Victorian domesticity and its separation of women and men into private and public spheres, respectively. It was at Seneca Falls that the suffrage movement first began.



As the movement progressed, others spoke loudly, including Susan B. Anthony, who stated, “I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman.” White and Black women fought among and between themselves over the best course of action. Sojourner Truth, who had already experienced her own personal struggle toward freedom from slavery, remained unwavering in her support of women’s rights. In her unique way, Sojourner commented on the issue in 1867, when female suffrage was still very much being debated: “I feel that I have the right to have just as much as a man. There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and colored women not theirs, the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before.”

# Black Women & The Suffrage Movement 1848-1923 (continued)

*“There is no slave, after all, like a wife... Poor women, poor slaves...All married women, all children and girls who live in their father’s house are slaves” ~Mary Boykin Chestnut, A Diary from Dixie, 1861*

Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). The vast majority of American women, Black and White, did not belong to either organization. They seemed to accept society’s claim that they truly were apolitical beings and belonged not in the voting booth, but at home, taking care of their families. Some housewives even denounced female suffrage, claiming that if women were to vote differently from their husbands, domestic unrest would surely follow.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, White and Black women, however, did return to their role as social reformers. The largest and best known was the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, (WCTU) founded in 1874. Their policies encouraged separate Black and White unions, but at least one White woman, Amelia Bloomer, campaigned against racism within the movement, and some Black women did rise to positions of prominence. Frances Harper, for one, was most effective in recruiting Black women to the cause and was eventually appointed to the national office.

Among Black women who were staunch suffragists was Anna Julia Cooper, best known for her statement: “Only the BLACK WOMAN can say when and where I enter in the quiet undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence or special patronage; then and there the whole Negro race enters with me.” Cooper was particularly effective in emphasizing to Black women that they required the ballot to counter the belief that “Black men’s” experiences and needs were the same as theirs.



Despite the racial divisions, Black women were collective in their courage in the fight for equality. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the journalist who led an anti-lynching campaign in the late nineteenth century, organized the Alpha Suffrage Club among Black women in Chicago and brought members with her to participate in the 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, D.C. The organizers of the march asked that they walk at the end of the parade. She tried to get the White Illinois delegation to support her opposition of this segregation, but found few supporters. They either would march at the end or not at all. Ida refused to march, but as the parade progressed, Ida emerged from the crowd and joined the White Illinois delegation, marching between two White supporters. She refused to comply with the segregation.

Excerpts taken from *One of Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black and White Women* by Midge Wilson & Kathy Russell, [Anchor](#), 1996— and PBS.org

# Historically Black Colleges and Universities:

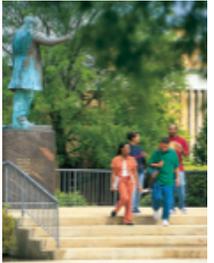
## And a Spotlight on Mary McLeod Bethune, 1875-1955

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are colleges or universities that were established before 1964 with the intention of serving the African American community. There are more than 100 historically black colleges in the United States, located almost exclusively in the southern and eastern states.

Southern University is the largest HBCU and one of the most prestigious universities. Located in Louisiana, Southern University has campuses in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Shreveport, the Southern University Law Center and the Southern University Agricultural and Extension Center. Southern University has become the only HBCU system in the United States with an enrollment of over 15,000 students. The System encompasses five institutions offering two-year, four-year, graduate, professional, and doctoral degrees.

Cheyney University in Cheney, Pennsylvania has been known for graduating prominent alumni through its education and journalism departments. Cheyney, founded in 1837, is the oldest HBCU, established for the purpose of educating youth of African descent.

Hampton University was founded in 1868 and is located in Hampton, Virginia. With an endowment of more than \$185.8 million, Hampton is one of the wealthiest HBCUs. The school confers approximately 848 undergraduate degrees yearly and consistently ranks in the top 10 in graduating African Americans with degrees in biology, business administration, communications, English, journalism, pharmacy, nursing and psychology.



Hampton

University

Howard University, located in Washington, D.C., is one of the most prominent historically Black higher education institutions in the United States. Howard University is a comprehensive, research-oriented, private university providing an educational experience of exceptional quality to students of high academic potential. Particular emphasis is placed upon providing educational opportunities to promising Black students. Howard has produced more African American doctorate degree holders than any other institution in the world. Howard is the only HBCU to make the U.S. News and World Report's top 100 colleges and universities.

Florida A & M University was announced as the best school for African Americans in 2006 by the Black Enterprise magazine. Founded in 1887 as the State Normal College for Colored Students, the venerable HBCU offers 62 bachelors degrees in 103 majors/tracks and 36 master's degrees in 56 majors/tracks.

# Historically Black Colleges and Universities: (continued)

## And a Spotlight on Mary McLeod Bethune, 1875-1955

Florida A & M University was announced as the best school for African Americans in 2006 by the Black Enterprise magazine. Founded in 1887 as the State Normal College for Colored Students, the venerable HBCU offers 62 bachelors degrees in 103 majors/tracks and 36 master's degrees in 56 majors/tracks.

Xavier University of New Orleans, Louisiana is the top school in the nation in the placement of Black students into medical schools and has the largest number of Black undergraduates receiving degrees in biology or life sciences. Xavier also has the distinction of being the only historically Black and Catholic university in the Western Hemisphere.

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) is a rapidly growing institution. It is the first liberal arts college for African Americans in the country. Its School of Law is ranked as one of America's top law schools in the nation by the Princeton Review. With a student population of 9,000, NCCU is the ninth largest HBCU. NCCU also has the highest HBCU graduation rate in North Carolina. In 2005, NCCU ranked third in North Carolina in admitting the most National Merit Scholars.



Mary McLeod Bethune

Mary McLeod Bethune was born in 1875 to former slaves in Mayesville, South Carolina. She devoted her life to ensuring the right to education and freedom from discrimination for African Americans. She believed that through education, Blacks could begin to earn a living in a country that opposed racial equality. In 1904, Bethune opened the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls. Bethune never refused to educate a child whose family could not afford tuition. There was objection during Bethune's time to the education of Black children, but her zeal and dedication won over skeptics of both races. Bethune also opened a high school and a hospital for Blacks. In 1923, Bethune oversaw the high school's merger with the Cookman Institute, thereby forming the HBCU Bethune-Cookman College. She helped integrate the Red Cross and became president of the National Association of Colored Women, formed the National Council of Negro Women, and in 1940, Bethune served as VP of the NAACP.

# Rosa Parks

## And the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Many have heard a simplified version of the Rosa Parks story, as an isolated incident in which she refused to give up her seat because she was tired, ultimately resulting in bus desegregation. In reality, steps to organize against bus segregation had begun years before, and the boycott was a coordinated effort that involved approximately 40,000 people and over a year of sacrifice.

There had been numerous instances of Blacks refusing to obey the segregation laws on public transportation throughout the 1940s. The Women's Political Council (WPC) was formed in 1949, after Jo Ann Gibson was made to leave an almost empty bus for refusing to move to the back. By 1955, the WPC had members in every school, and in federal, state and local jobs, and according to Gibson, its President, "we knew that in a matter of hours, we could corral the whole city". The WPC had met with the mayor of Montgomery in May of 1954, and followed it up in writing, asking for changes to the bus segregation practices and informing him that if conditions on the busses did not change, citizens would stage a boycott. She stated that with three-fourths of the riders being African American, the busses would not be able to function without their patronage. When conditions did not change, the WPC waited for the right event to serve as the catalyst for the boycott. Three opportunities arose in 1955 when, at different times, a woman was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. When, on December 1, Rosa Parks was arrested, the leaders knew the time was right.



Rosa Parks was one of the first women in Montgomery to join the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and had served as its secretary for years. She had learned about union struggles, had worked to desegregate the local schools and had defied the bus segregation laws in the past.

She had the respect of the community, and the strength to deal with the resultant publicity, pressure and hostility. When she refused to give up her seat in the "colored" section, she acted with full knowledge of what she was doing and the potential consequences.

# Rosa Parks (continued)

## And the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Community leaders called for a one day bus boycott for December 5, the day of her trial. When the boycott was a success, the leadership formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA). They chose Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a new member to the community, as their leader. At a mass meeting that evening, it was decided to continue the boycott. Thousands walked or found other means of travel for work, school and shopping, and a system of carpools was created. Drivers and passengers were often ticketed or arrested, and many boycott supporters were threatened with the loss of their jobs and harassed by local government officials.

In 1955, the Federal Interstate Commerce Commission banned segregation on interstate trains and buses. On February 1, 1956, the MIA filed suit in the U.S. District Court challenging the constitutionality of bus segregation in Montgomery. The suit named other Black women, not Rosa Parks, as the plaintiffs. Later that month, over 100 protestors, including Dr. King, were arrested for “hindering” a bus. In June, the court ruled in favor of the MIA, and the city appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. In mid-November, the Supreme Court affirmed the District Court’s decision that segregation on buses was unconstitutional, and Montgomery buses were finally desegregated on December 20, 1956. The boycott had lasted 381 days.



For the first time, black passengers board through the front of the bus and sit where they please.

# School Desegregation

## In elementary and secondary education

For more than a century, African Americans fought for equal educational opportunity. The history of this struggle is best summarized through a review of legal challenges. The earliest reported case was in 1849, *Roberts v. the City of Boston*. Parents petitioned that their children should be allowed to attend schools in Boston other than the segregated Smith School. However, the court ruled that it was sufficient that provisions had been made for the “colored students” to have a school.

The next major ruling came in 1896, in the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which supported “separate but equal” segregation of the races. This decision was finally overturned in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* in 1954, when the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional, and that separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. However, desegregation was met with much resistance, particularly in the southern states.

Virginia legislators passed a resolution in 1956 that the Supreme Court’s decision to integrate schools was incompatible with the state constitution, and gave the governor power to close down any school system that attempted to desegregate.

In Little Rock, Arkansas in September of 1957, Governor Orval Faubus used the National Guard to block nine Black students from entering the all-White Little Rock Central High School. Although President Eisenhower sent federal troops to intervene on behalf of the students, who become known as the “Little Rock Nine,” the threats and intimidation continued.

When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed, it provided the federal government with the powers to enforce desegregation by denying federal funds to any program which discriminated on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin.

In 1968, in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia*, the Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional that the county was operating a dual system of schools, and that it must convert to one system.



**Elizabeth Eckford  
is yelled at and  
blocked from  
entering Central  
High, 1957**

# School Desegregation (continued)

## In elementary and secondary education

It stipulated that school boards have a duty to eliminate imposed segregation, and to integrate schools.

In 1971, the Supreme Court, in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, upheld busing as a tool for integrating public schools and correcting racial imbalances. Court-ordered busing plans continued in some cities until the late 1990s.

Arguments in support of achieving diversity in public elementary and secondary education say that it is a critical period for transmitting societal values, promoting discussion between the races and fostering cultural understanding. However, in 2006, the Supreme Court agreed to hear two major cases regarding practices used to maintain diverse learning environments in public schools, even though the lower courts had upheld the school districts' practices. In both cases, one in Seattle and the other in Louisville, parents of White students sued the school districts when their children were refused admission into popular area schools, claiming that using race in student assignments denied their rights. In November of 2006, Michigan passed Proposal 2, which banned preferential treatment, claiming that affirmative action programs deny qualified applicants. As of December 2006, four states have banned affirmative action policies: Michigan, California, Texas, and Washington.



School segregation protest

Desegregation  
By Eloise Greenfield  
We walk the long path lined with shouting nightm are faces,  
nightm are voices.  
Inside the school, there are eyes that are distant.  
We wish for our friends.  
We wish for our old, laughing selves.  
We hold our heads up, hold our tears in.  
The grown-ups have said we must be brave, that only  
the children can save the country now.

# Community Organizing Efforts

1960-1964



After the successful outcome of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote the book *Stride Toward Freedom*. In the book he explained the crucial roles that both non-violence and direct action played in the success at Montgomery, laying the foundation for the landmark non-violent protests and community organizing efforts of the early 1960s. Two such events that left a lasting impression on the Civil Rights Movement were the Lunch Counter Sit-Ins of 1960 and the Freedom Summer of 1964.

On February 1, 1960, four first-year students from the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College, Franklin McCain, David Richmond, Joseph McNeil, and Ezell Blair, entered an F. W. Woolworth Company store in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat at the lunch counter and asked to be served. As black men at a segregated lunch counter they knew that they would not be, but they stayed sitting silently at the Woolworth's until the store closed that evening. The next morning word had spread about their efforts and they returned with media coverage and a growing number of protestors who helped to continue their peaceful sit-in.

Within two weeks, students in 11 cities held sit-ins. The students always remained non-violent and for these first few weeks were spared any major harassment. Then, on February 27 in Nashville, sit-in students were attacked by a group of White teenagers. When the police arrived they let the White teenagers go and the protesters were arrested for "disorderly conduct". As students were arrested, new groups of students were there to take their place, and all that were taken in that day were found guilty and fined accordingly. By May of that year, with support of Mayor Ben West, Nashville lunch counters began integrating and serving Blacks.

By August of '60 sit-ins had attracted over 71,000 participants and generated over 3,000 arrests. Within these 6 months the sit-ins had ended restaurant and lunch-counter segregation in twenty-six southern cities. A conference of sit-in students that October resulted in the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) which would prove to be a critical group throughout the rest of the civil rights movement.



**Pickers protesting the F.W. Woolworth store's policy on lunch counter segregation**

# Community Organizing Efforts (continued)

1960-1964

In the summer of 1964, a presidential election year, after months of work on voter registration in the southern states, SNCC decided to send volunteers into Mississippi for a voter registration drive. It soon became known as Freedom Summer. The goals of Freedom Summer, outlined by Robert Paris Moses, a leader in the SNCC, were determined: expand black voter registration in Mississippi, organize a constituted “Freedom Democratic Party” (MFDP) to challenge the Whites-only Mississippi Democratic party, and establish Freedom Schools to teach reading and math to black children.



Hundreds of people gathered in the northern states to prepare for the trip to Mississippi. On June 21, the day after the first volunteers left for Mississippi, three workers disappeared. The bodies of Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chaney were found two months later.

All had been shot and James Chaney, the one Black man of the group, had been severely beaten. In the two months the men were missing, Freedom Clinics and Freedom Schools had been established by the other volunteers that had safely made it to Mississippi. The discovery of the bodies, however, breathed new life into the efforts of the SNCC.



Their goal was to take the MFDP to the Democratic National Convention that summer in Atlantic City. The Democratic Party, however, was not convinced that they were entitled to the seats. After long deliberations involving President Johnson and Senator Hubert Humphrey, the party was offered a compromise of two non-voting seats next to the Mississippi delegates. Despite Martin Luther King’s support of the compromise, SNCC refused the Democratic Party’s Offer. They did, however, make a presence at the convention, standing in the place of their removed seats singing freedom songs.

While the MFDP did not fully achieve its goals, it reminded Black people in Mississippi that they could have political awareness and power. In 1964 when their campaign began, 6.7% of voting-aged Blacks in Mississippi were registered to vote, 16.3% below the national average. By 1969, that number jumped to 66.5%, 5.5% above the national

Atlantic City boardwalk, August 1964.  
Vigil in support of the MFDP challenge  
to the Democratic Convention.

# Medgar Evers

## July 2, 1925-June 12, 1963

Born in Decatur, Mississippi, Medgar Evers attended school there until he was inducted into the army. Evers fought for the United States in WWII, however, he found that upon his return to his country, authorities discriminated against Evers and five friends because of their skin color, pushing them away at gunpoint from a local election. Despite this, Evers went on to pursue a degree in business administration from Alcorn State University. He was active in athletics and extracurricular activities, contributing to the football and track teams, the debate team and serving as president of the junior class.



He married classmate Myrlie Beasley on December 24, 1951, and completed his degree the following year. The couple moved to Mound Bayou, Mississippi, where T.R.M. Howard hired Evers to sell insurance for his Magnolia Mutual Life Insurance Company. Howard was also the president of the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL), a civil rights and self help organization. Evers' involvement with RCNL gave him crucial training in activism. He helped organize RCNL's boycott of service stations that denied blacks use of their restrooms. The boycotters distributed bumper stickers with the slogan "Don't buy gas where you can't use the restroom." Evers applied to the then-segregated University of Mississippi Law School in February 1954. When his application was rejected, Evers became the focus of a NAACP campaign to desegregate the school, a case aided by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* that segregation was unconstitutional. In December 1954, Evers became the NAACP's first field officer in Mississippi.

After moving to Jackson, Mississippi, Evers was involved in a boycott campaign against White merchants and was instrumental in eventually desegregating the University of Mississippi when that institution was forced to enroll James Meredith in 1962.

In the weeks leading up to his death, Evers found himself the target of several threats. His public investigations into the murder of Emmett Till and his vocal support of Clyde Kennard left him vulnerable to attack. On May 28, 1963, a molotov cocktail was thrown into the carport of his home, and several days later, he was nearly run down by a car after he emerged from the Jackson NAACP office.

Civil rights demonstrations accelerated in Jackson during the first week of June 1963.

# Medgar Evers (continued)

July 2, 1925-June 12, 1963

A local television station granted Evers time for a short speech, his first in Mississippi, where he outlined the goals of the Jackson civil rights movement. Following the speech, threats on Evers' life increased.

On June 11, 1963, Evers pulled into his driveway after returning from an integration meeting where he had conferred with NAACP lawyers. Emerging from his car and carrying NAACP t-shirts that read, "Jim Crow Must Go," Evers was struck in the back with a bullet that ricocheted into his home. He staggered 30 feet before collapsing, dying at a local hospital 50 minutes later. Evers was murdered just hours after President John F. Kennedy's speech on national television in support of civil rights.

Mourned nationally, Evers was buried on June 19 in Arlington National Cemetery and received full military honors in front of a crowd of more than 3,000 people. The past chairman of the American Veterans Committee, Mickey Levine, said at the services, "No soldier in this field has fought more courageously than Medgar Evers."

On June 23, Byron De La Beckwith, a member of the White Citizen's Council and Ku Klux Klan, was arrested for Evers' murder. During the course of his first 1964 trial, Beckwith was visited by former Mississippi governor Ross Barnett and one-time Army Major General Edwin A. Walker. All White juries deadlocked twice that year on Beckwith's guilt, allowing him to escape justice. In response to the murder and miscarriage of justice, musician Bob Dylan wrote the song "Only a Pawn in Their Game" about Evers and his assassin. More recently rapper Immortal Technique wrote about the blood of Malcolm X and Medgar Evers in the song "Crossing the Boundary." Evers' legacy has been kept alive in a variety of ways. In 1970, Medgar Evers College was established in Brooklyn, NY as part of the City University of New York.



The Evers home a museum  
in Jackson, Mississippi

In 1994, 30 years after the two previous trials had failed to reach a verdict, Beckwith was again brought to trial based on new evidence concerning statements he had made to others. Beckwith was convicted on February 5, 1994, after living as a free man for 3 decades after the murder. Beckwith appealed unsuccessfully, and died in prison in January 2001. The 1996 film *Ghosts of the Mississippi* tells the story of the 1994 trial. Evers' wife, Myrlie became a noted activist in her own right, eventually serving as chairwoman of the NAACP. Evers' brother Charles remained involved in Mississippi Civil Rights for years to come. In 2001, Myrlie and Medgar's oldest son died. Evers is survived by his wife Myrlie, a daughter and a son.

# Malcolm X: Life and Death

## 1925-1965



Malcolm X, originally Malcolm Little, was born in Omaha, Nebraska. After moving to the Midwest with his family at a young age, he suffered great tragedy with the alleged suicide of his father and the subsequent institutionalization of his mother. After spending his remaining childhood years in foster homes with his siblings, Malcolm dropped out of middle school, and a few years later moved to Boston and found work on the streets as a shoe-shiner, drug dealer, gambler and burglar.

It was while serving a ten year sentence in prison for burglary that Malcolm X became passionately committed to furthering his education. It was also at this time that Malcolm's brother alerted him to the teachings of the Nation of Islam (NOI) and encouraged Malcolm to convert to the Muslim faith. Intrigued by the NOI, Malcolm began studying the work of Elijah Muhammad who preached about systemic oppression and fought for a world separate from one inhabited by White people.

By the time Malcolm X was released from prison he was a devout follower and soon after meeting Muhammad and agreeing to work for NOI, changed his surname to "X". The change was intended to symbolize the shedding of what he thought of as his slave name as well as the "x" that many slaves received as a brand on their upper arm.

Malcolm X was soon appointed as a minister and national spokesperson for Nation of Islam. He was also charged with establishing new mosques around the country. He returned to Boston and became the Minister of the NOI's Temple # 11. He was also selected to lead the NOI's mosque #7 on Lenox Avenue in Harlem and is credited with other establishments in Detroit, Michigan and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His public speaking and media appearances also contributed to increased awareness and interest in the Nation of Islam. In fact, Malcolm X is largely credited with the increase in the NOI membership from 500 in 1952 to 30,000 in 1963.

The public nature of his work, however, led the FBI and national government to pay very close attention to Malcolm X. At certain points the NOI organizations Malcolm X was involved in were infiltrated by the FBI and the group's communications and activities were heavily monitored.

*"Human rights are something you were born with. Human rights are your God-given rights. Human rights are the rights that are recognized by all nations of this earth"*  
*-Malcolm X*

# Malcolm X: Life and Death

## 1925-1965

In the early 1960's Malcolm was made aware of accusations of adultery against Elijah Muhammad. The women who Muhammad was said to have extramarital affairs with were all women within the Nation of Islam organization and the shock of the news proved to be a difficult test of Malcolm X's faith. Upon confirmation of these rumors from Muhammad, Malcolm X was not only hurt by the deception of his mentor, but felt guilt for leading so many people into an organization that he now believed to be deceitful.



Soon after this discovery, Malcolm X was silenced for 90 days by none other than Elijah Muhammad for publicly criticizing John F. Kennedy directly after his assassination. While he respected the order, it was not long after that he publicly announced his separation from the Nation of Islam and founded his own religious organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc.

After spending time on a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, sharing his beliefs and visions with people of all different cultures, Malcolm X returned to the United States with a new energy and vision for his work. He began to not only direct his work towards African Americans but to people of all races and ethnicities. He preached about human rights, freedom, action, and community building. While re-establishing himself, however, the old tensions with the Nation of Islam were still festering and rumors began that Malcolm X had been targeted for assassination. Attempts were made on his life and threats were made against his wife, Betty, and four daughters. In February of 1965 his family home was firebombed, and while everyone made it out alive, no one was ever charged with the crime.

*“Power in defense of freedom is greater than power in behalf of tyranny and oppression, because power, real power, comes from our conviction which produces action, uncompromising action.”*  
-Malcolm X

It was only one week later, on February 21, 1965, in Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom when three men rushed Malcolm X on stage during a speaking engagement and shot him 15 times at close range. He was pronounced dead upon arrival at New York's Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. Later that year his wife Betty gave birth to their twin daughters. Three men, Talmadge Hayer, Norman 3X Butler, and Thomas 15X Johnson, were all convicted of the murder in March of 1966.

The legacy of Malcolm X and his work have inspired and informed many others in their fight for social justice and equality. He has been immortalized not only in his work, “The Autobiography of Malcolm X”, but in other books, documentaries, and movies, and remains a historical figure admired by all generations.

# Voting Rights: Selma to Montgomery Marches

February 18<sup>th</sup> – March 25, 1965

In the early 1960s, Selma was a focal point for voting rights. Half of the city's residents were Black but only one percent were registered to vote because the registration board only opened doors for registration two days a month, arrived late and took long lunches.

The Selma to Montgomery marches for voting rights represented the political and emotional peak of the modern civil rights movement. Led by John Lewis and Hosea Williams, the marches were the culmination of the voting rights movement launched by Amelia Boynton Robinson and her husband.

On February 18th, 1965, following what began as a peaceful demonstration for voting rights, Jimmy Lee Jackson was shot in the stomach by a state trooper while trying to defend his mother and 82 year old grandfather from police attacks. He was arrested and charged with assault and battery before he was taken to the hospital. He died on February 26.



The initial march on March 7th, as the marchers reach the bridge.



On "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965, some 600 civil rights marchers headed east out of Selma on U.S. Highway 80. They got only as far as the Edmund Pettus Bridge six blocks away, where state and local lawmen attacked them with billy clubs and tear gas and drove them back into Selma. Amelia Boynton Robinson was beaten and gassed nearly to death — her photo appeared on the front page of papers and newsmagazines around the world. Seventeen marchers were hospitalized, leading to the naming of the day "Bloody Sunday".

Two days later, on March 9, 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr. led a "symbolic" march to the bridge. Then, civil rights leaders sought court protection for a third, full-scale march from Selma to the state capitol building in Montgomery. Federal District Court Judge Frank Minis Johnson, Jr., weighed the right of mobility against the right to march and ruled in favor of the demonstrators.

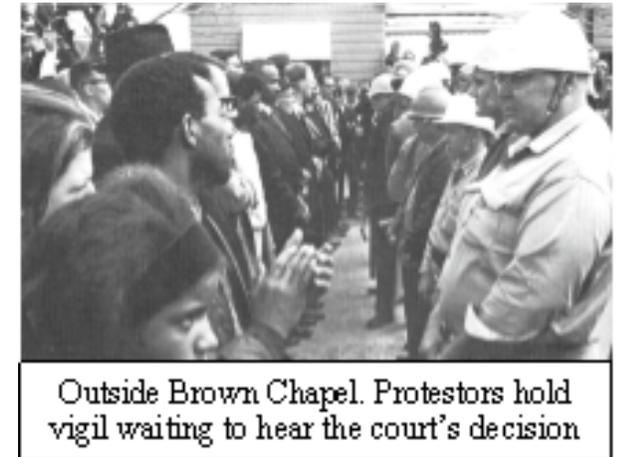
"Bloody Sunday" - State Troopers tear gas the marchers as they cross the bridge

# Voting Rights: Selma to Montgomery Marches (continued)

February 18<sup>th</sup> – March 25, 1965

After the second march, James Reeb, a white Unitarian Universalist minister from Boston who had come for the second march and had agreed to stay, was attacked with a club in front of the Silver Moon Café, a hangout for whites. Being turned back by the small local hospital in Selma (reported to be full at the time), Reeb's companions were forced to take him to University Hospital in Birmingham, two hours away. Reeb died on Thursday, March 11, at University Hospital with his wife by his side.

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee spokesperson Stokely Carmichael was reported as saying, “What you want is the nation to be upset when anybody is killed... but it almost [seems that] for this to be recognized, a White person must be killed.”



On Sunday, March 21, 1965, about 3,200 marchers set out for Montgomery, walking 12 miles a day and sleeping in fields. By the time they reached the capitol on Thursday, March 25, 1965, they were 25,000-strong.



Following this powerful demonstration, Viola Liuzzo and Leroy Moton were driving individuals back to the airport. On one of these trips, a car of four White men, seeing this White Woman and a Black Man, shot at the car. Viola was hit twice in the head and died instantly. Leroy was uninjured. Three of the four men were arrested and charged. The fourth, an undercover FBI agent, testified against them.

Less than five months after the last of the three marches, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Amelia Boynton Robinson was present during the ceremony.

Jackson, Reeb, & Liuzzo are memorialized in a monument outside the Brown Chapel where each of the marches began.

The events are also brilliantly written about in the book *Selma Lord, Selma: Girlhood Memories of the Civil Rights Days* by Sheyann Webb & Rachel West Nelson who took part in the marches at the ages of 11 & 12.

The monument outside Brown Chapel in Selma today.

# March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

August 28, 1963



Martin Luther King, Jr., Giving the "I Have a Dream" Speech. United Press International.

**Written by Shmuel Ross**

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place in Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963. Attended by some 250,000 people, it was the largest demonstration ever seen in the nation's capital, and one of the first to have extensive television coverage.

1963 was noted for racial unrest and civil rights demonstrations. Nationwide outrage was sparked by media coverage of police actions in Birmingham, Alabama, where attack dogs and fire hoses were turned against protestors, many of whom were in their early teens or younger. Martin Luther King, Jr., was arrested and jailed during these protests, writing his famous "Letter From Birmingham City Jail," which advocates civil disobedience against unjust laws. Dozens of additional demonstrations took place

across the country, from California to New York, culminating in the March on Washington. President Kennedy backed a Civil Rights Act, which was stalled in Congress by the summer.

The March on Washington represented a coalition of several civil rights organizations, all of which generally had different approaches and different agendas. The stated demands of the march were the passage of meaningful civil rights legislation; the elimination of racial segregation in public schools; protection for demonstrators against police brutality; a major public-works program to provide jobs; the passage of a law prohibiting racial discrimination in public and private hiring; a \$2 an hour minimum wage; and self-government for the District of Columbia, which had a Black majority.

President Kennedy originally discouraged the march, for fear that it might make the legislature vote against civil rights laws in reaction to a perceived threat.



A view of the rally from the Reflecting Pool by Nat Herz

# March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (continued)

August 28, 1963

Once it became clear that the march would go on, however, he supported it. The march was also condemned by some civil rights activists, including Malcolm X, who felt it presented an inaccurate, sanitized pageant of racial harmony.

The two most noteworthy speeches came from John Lewis and Martin Luther King, Jr. Lewis represented the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a younger, more radical group than King's. John Lewis's speech stated:

"The revolution is at hand, and we must free ourselves of the chains of political and economic slavery. The nonviolent revolution is saying, 'We will not wait for the courts to act, for we have been waiting hundreds of years. We will not wait for the President, nor the Justice Department, nor Congress, but we will take matters into our own hands, and create a great source of power, outside of any national structure that could and would assure us victory.' For those who have said, 'Be patient and wait!' we must say, 'Patience is a dirty and nasty word.' We cannot be patient, we do not want to be free gradually, we want our freedom, and we want it now. We cannot depend on any political party, for the Democrats and the Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence."

King's speech remains one of the most famous speeches in American history. He started with prepared remarks, saying he was there to "cash a check" for "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness," while warning fellow protesters not to "allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force." But then he departed from his script, shifting into the "I have a dream" theme he'd used on prior occasions, drawing on both "the American dream" and religious themes, speaking of an America where his children "will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." He followed this with an exhortation to "let freedom ring" across the nation, and concluded with: "And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last."



Marchers surrounding the Reflecting Pool on the National Mall

# The Legacy of and Memorial to Dr. King

Dr. King was assassinated on April 4th, 1968, but his legacy is enduring. He was identified in a 2005 poll as the third greatest American of all time. Civil Rights movements for the past five decades have been modeled on his leadership and he continues to be an inspiration to people worldwide.



Coretta Scott King

King's wife, Coretta Scott King, was a leader both during his life and continued to be active in matters of social justice and civil rights until her death in 2006. The same year Martin Luther King was assassinated, she established the King Center in Atlanta, Georgia, dedicated to preserving his legacy and the work of championing nonviolent conflict resolution and tolerance worldwide. She was active in numerous social justice movements including the anti-apartheid movements of the 1980s, animal rights, women's rights and was a leader of merging the civil rights movements of people of color and lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Despite the anger of many religious leaders, Mrs. King called on the civil rights community to join in the struggle against Homophobia and anti-gay bias. "Homophobia is like racism and anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry in that it seeks to dehumanize a large group of people, to deny their humanity, their dignity and personhood", King stated. "This sets the stage for further repression and violence that spread all too easily to victimize the next minority group."

Martin Luther King's children have also been active in numerous social justice movements. Dexter King served as the King Center's president until 2004 and Martin Luther King III is currently the president. Daughters, Bernice & Yolanda King, have both spoken worldwide regarding social justice and have been involved in numerous movements.

Dr. King's likeness and words are utilized in many places to call for justice and his legacy and that of other leaders is memorialized around the world. Notably, in 1989, a Civil Rights Memorial was dedicated in Montgomery, AL by the Southern Poverty Law Center.



The Civil Rights Memorial in  
Montgomery

# The Legacy of and Memorial to Dr. King (continued)

The Civil Rights Memorial, designed by Maya Lin (who also designed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial), was inspired by Dr. King's quotation "*... we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. ...*", from the *I Have a Dream* speech. The table is etched with the names of the 40 people who died between 1954 and 1968 in the struggle for civil rights and the wall behind the table is etched with the quote. Water runs smoothly over both the table and the wall.



In 1996, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity was authorized by the US Congress to pursue the creation of a national monument honoring Dr. King. The memorial will be only the second dedicated to a non-president in the area of the National Mall. It was designed by a San Francisco based firm and the groundbreaking ceremony was held on November 13th, 2006.

The website for the memorial states, "This memorial is not designed to be experienced in a single way with one single message, but rather it is to have a broad accessibility, appealing to all of the senses with diverse, repetitive and overlapping themes." It uses the natural elements of water, stone, and trees to represent the themes of justice, democracy and hope.

Niches at the monument will be dedicated to others who gave their lives to the movement. The website goes on to say, "In deference to the unfinished nature of the movement, a random number [of niches] will be left open and incomplete, allowing additional niches to be dedicated at a later point in time. These semicircular nave-like spaces are intended to engage personal contemplation and quiet reflection, and will be directly accessible from the upper walkway. Each space will be hewn from rock, with rough edges on the outside, and smooth stone on the inside ("rough places made plain")."

More information about the memorial can be found at [www.mlkmemorial.org](http://www.mlkmemorial.org)

