

# Black empowerment – from Alabama to Obama

**1955**

**Rosa Parks** refuses to give up her seat for white passenger on segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama



Her arrest sparks year-long bus boycott led by **Martin Luther King**, which spurs on fledgling civil rights movement

**1963** King jailed during civil rights protests – advocates non-violent civil disobedience in **Letter from Birmingham Jail**

250,000 people gathered in Washington DC hear King deliver **I Have a Dream** speech

**1964** President **Lyndon Johnson** signs **Civil Rights Act**, prohibiting discrimination on basis of race, colour, religion or national origin

Three civil rights workers killed by extreme white supremacist organization **Ku Klux Klan**

King is awarded **Nobel Peace Prize**



**Sidney Poitier** becomes first African American to win **Academy Award** for Best Actor

**1965** Black militant leader **Malcolm X**, who articulated concepts of race pride and black nationalism, is assassinated



**Voting Rights Act**, easing way for Southern blacks to register to vote, passed in wake of protest march from Selma to Montgomery in which protesters are violently beaten by police

Six days of race riots in **Watts** area of Los Angeles leave 34 people dead

**1966** **Stokely Carmichael**, leader of **Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee**, advocates "black power", ushering in more militant civil rights stance



**Huey Newton** and **Bobby Seale** (above), found **Black Panther Party** with original purpose of self-defence from acts of police brutality

**Edward Brooke** of Massachusetts is first African American elected to U.S. Senate by popular vote



**1967** First black Supreme Court justice, **Thurgood Marshall**, appointed

Supreme Court rules that prohibiting interracial marriage is unconstitutional

**1968** King is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee



U.S. athletes **Tommie Smith** and **John Carlos** give **Black Power** salute at Mexico City Olympics



**1972** Congresswoman **Shirley Chisholm** is first African American woman to make bid for U.S. presidency

**Equal Employment Opportunity Act** gives legal basis to "affirmative action" to redress racial discrimination in workplace

**1983** **Guion Bluford**, crew member on space shuttle **Challenger**, becomes first African American in space



**1984** Civil rights leader **Jesse Jackson** gains 1,218 votes at Democratic convention but fails to win party's nomination



**1989** General **Colin Powell** is first African American to be named head of U.S. military



**Oprah Winfrey** named Entertainer of the Year – she is now worth over \$2bn



**1990** Virginia elects **Douglas Wilder** as first black state governor in U.S. history



**2002** **Halle Berry** becomes first African American woman to win Oscar for Best Actress

**1992** 65 die in race riots in Los Angeles after jury acquits four white policemen of beating black motorist **Rodney King**

**1997** **Tiger Woods** becomes first black winner of **Masters** golf tournament



**2001** Colin Powell becomes Secretary of State. Cabinet of new President **George W. Bush** has more African Americans than any before

**2005** **Condoleezza Rice** is first black woman to be appointed Secretary of State

**Hurricane Katrina** kills around 1,800 people. Heavily African-American **New Orleans** bears brunt of flooding and federal government is slow to react

**2008** Democrat **Barack Hussein Obama** becomes the first African American to be elected President of the United States. President Obama takes office on January 20, 2009



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Sources: Public Broadcasting Service, BlackPast.org, Encyclopædia Britannica