The Civil Rights Movement
• 1946: Jackie Robinson breaks color barrier in professional baseball.

• 1948: President Truman orders U.S. Army to desegregate.

• 1954: *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* rules that public school segregation is unconstitutional.

• 12/1955 to 1/1957: Birmingham bus boycott, started by Rosa Parks.

• 1957/58: Integration and closing of Little Rock Central High School
Little Rock Central

- 5/1954: *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*
- 8/1954: NAACP petitions Little Rock School Board for immediate integration
- 8/1957: Mother’s League sues to stop integration
Little Rock Central

- 9/2/1957: Governor Orville Faubus orders Arkansas National Guard to prevent African-American students from entering Central High.
Little Rock Central

- 9/23/1957: An angry mob of 1,000 gather as the Little Rock Nine enter the school, but are then escorted out by police for their protection.
- 9/24/1957: President Eisenhower calls the rioting “disgraceful,” orders in 1,200 troops, and nationalizes the Arkansas National Guard.
- 9/25/1957: Under the protection of federal troops, the Nine enter school for their first day of classes.
Little Rock Central

- 9/12/1958: Governor Faubus orders Little Rock schools closed.
- 5/25/1959: Recall election removes three segregationists from Little Rock School Board.
- 8/12/1959: Little Rock schools reopen and 21 segregationist protesters are arrested.
photo of Elizabeth Eckford taken by Will Counts of The Arkansas Gazette on September 4, 1957
Elizabeth Eckford was helped by Dr. Benjamin Fine, a New York Times journalist and Mrs. Gracie Lorch, the white wife of a professor. Fine reportedly told her “don’t let them see you cry” and Lorch helped her get to a public bus.
I am not sure at that age what I thought, but probably I overheard that my father was opposed to integration. I vividly remember that the National Guard was going to be there. But I don't think I was old enough to have any convictions of my own yet. I was just mirroring my adult environment. I wasn't following Elizabeth. She happened to come along, the crowd shifted and I was standing in that spot so I just went along with the crowd.

I soon forget about it all. I married as a teenager, right out of school. I was not quite 17. But there was Martin Luther King's Civil Rights activities and gradually you began to think that even though he was a trouble-maker, all the while, deep in your soul, that he was right.

I think motherhood brings out the protection or care in a person. I had a sense of deep remorse that I had wronged another human being because of the color of her skin. But you are also looking for relief and forgiveness, of course, more for yourself than for the other person.

I called her (Elizabeth Eckford). The first meeting was very awkward. What could I say to her? I thought of something finally and we kind of warmed up. The families are not at ease about this relationship. Housing is still strictly segregated in Little Rock. There is some tension regarding our safety. On one side there are blacks who feel Elizabeth has betrayed them by becoming friends with me, and certain whites feel that I have betrayed them by becoming friends with her, and certain whites feel that I have betrayed our culture. But we have become real friends.

Hazel (Bryan) Massery, 1998
• 1960: Sit-in protests in Greensboro, North Carolina by NCA&T students.

• 1961: John Howard Griffin’s *Black Like Me*; CORE sponsors freedom rides.

• 1962: court-ordered enrollment of James Meredith at Old Miss

• 1963: Brutal tactics used in Birmingham by Chief of Police “Bull” Connor.
Medgar Evers
(1925-1963)

From 1954 to 1963, Medgar Evers served as the NAACP’s field secretary for Mississippi. Evers traveled the state, encouraging African Americans to register to vote and organizing boycotts against white-owned firms that practiced discrimination. He became Mississippi's best-known champion of civil rights and a target of white supremacists.

On June 12, 1963, President Kennedy announced in a nationally-televised speech that he was sending a Civil Rights Bill to Congress. That evening, Medgar Evers pulled into his driveway after returning from an integration meeting with NAACP lawyers. Emerging from his car, Evers was struck in the back with a bullet. He staggered 30 feet before collapsing, dying at the local hospital 50 minutes later.
Byron De La Beckwith, a fertilizer salesman and member of the White Citizens' Council, was arrested for Evers' murder. All-white juries twice deadlocked on De La Beckwith's guilt, allowing him to escape justice.

On the evening of the murder, Jackson author Eudora Welty wrote her fictionalization of the event, “Where is The Voice Coming From?”, which was published in *The New Yorker* on July 6, 1963.

Three decades after the murder, De La Beckwith was again brought to trial based on new evidence concerning statements he made to others. He was convicted in 1994 and died in prison in 2001. The 1996 film *Ghosts of Mississippi* tells the story of the 1994 trial.

A few weeks after Evers’ death, Bob Dylan Wrote “Only a Pawn in Their Game.”
On August 28, 1963, the March on Washington drew nearly a half million supporters of the Civil Rights Movement from all over the United States to Washington, D.C.
Although city officials had agreed to begin to integrate public facilities in Birmingham, four members of the Ku Klux Klan placed 122 sticks of dynamite with a time-delayed fuse outside the basement wall of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham on September 15, 1963. When the bomb went off, 26 children were gathering in the basement to hear a sermon titled “The Love That Forgives.” Four girls aged 11 to 14 were killed. Although the F.B.I. under the direction of J. Edgar Hoover kept information from prosecutors, one perpetrator was convicted in 1978. Eventually this information was used to convict two of the surviving perpetrators in 2001 and 2002.

Spike Lee’s 1997 film *4 Little Girls* about the bombing won an Academy Award as best documentary.
6/21/1964: three young CORE workers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Mickey Schwermer, were murdered in Neshoba County, Mississippi. President Johnson forced a reluctant J. Edgar Hoover to investigate and the F.B.I. involvement is portrayed in the 1988 film *Mississippi Burning*. After a teacher and three high school students in Lincolnshire, Illinois produced a National History Day project that produced new evidence, Edgar Ray Killen was convicted of murder by a Mississippi jury in 2005.
- 7/2/1964: President Johnson signed the Civil Right Act of 1964
- 8/1964: The Mississippi Freedom Democrat delegates were refused seats at the National Convention.
- 1/1965: 24th Amendment outlawed poll taxes in federal elections.
- 1965: President Johnson issued executive order requiring affirmative action in federal contracts
- 2/21/1965: Malcom X assassinated.
- 3/7/1965: Bloody Sunday march in Selma, Alabama where protesters were attacked on the Edmund Pettus Bridge
- 3/21-25/1965: 3,200 marchers completed the march to Montgomery from Selma
- 8/6/1965: National Voting Rights Act signed
- 1966: Supreme Court ruled all poll taxes unconstitutional.
• 1966: Robert Weaver appointed as first African-American Cabinet member and Constance Motley as first African-American female federal judge

• 1967: Thurgood Marshall appointed as first African-American Supreme Court justice

• 1968: federal courts initiate forced busing to achieve desegregation.
April 4, 1968: Martin Luther King in Memphis to support sanitation workers is assassinated. The night before he had given his “Mountaintop” speech to a gathering of supporters.