

CIVIL RIGHTS

ROAD TRIP

TRAVEL *the* PATH TO EQUALITY

TAKING A CIVIL RIGHTS ROAD TRIP today is a great way to see America. But in the 1950s and 1960s, traveling the area shown on this map could be difficult and even dangerous.

In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote about the discrimination that African Americans faced—on the road and elsewhere—and why they were so impatient for change.

“When you take a cross-country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you ... then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait,” he wrote.

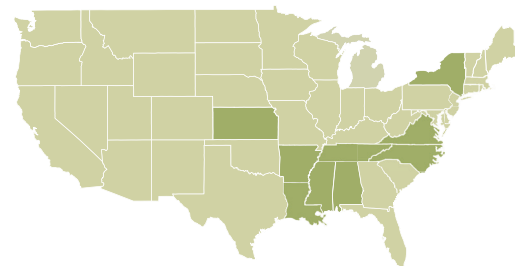
King and other African Americans were tired of waiting for civil rights—the right to vote, the right to go to good schools, the right to participate in normal life without fear. The U.S. Constitution guaranteed them those rights. And they were the same rights that white Americans had long enjoyed.

King was not the only activist traveling in this struggle for civil rights. “Freedom Riders” rode buses and risked beatings or jail time to integrate the nation’s transportation system. Civil rights workers drove cars to Mississippi to register and educate voters. And thousands made the long march on foot from Selma to Montgomery in Alabama, calling for the right to vote.

You can travel the path to equality with this Teaching Tolerance poster. From the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling to King’s assassination in 1968, this map illustrates an important time and place in our nation’s history.



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Most struggles for civil rights took place in the South, where black and white people were kept separate by a system of laws and customs. But racism and prejudice were nationwide problems.

Topeka, Kansas

1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to have separate schools for black and white students.

Montgomery, Alabama

1955-56 *Montgomery Bus Boycott*

Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, refused to give up her seat to a white man. Her arrest led to a boycott that ended city bus segregation.

Little Rock, Arkansas

1957 *Desegregation of Central High*

When nine African-American students

tried to attend the school, they were blocked by the state National Guard and met by angry white protesters who threatened violence.

New Orleans, Louisiana

1960 *Desegregation of Schools*

Six-year-old Ruby Bridges became the first black student at her elementary school. But four U.S. marshals had to guard her.

Greensboro, North Carolina

1960 *Lunch Counter Sit-Ins*

Four black college students sat at a “whites only” lunch counter. They

weren’t served, but their daring protest quickly spread to other cities.

Anniston, Alabama

1961 *Freedom Rides*

Black and white “Freedom Riders” boarded buses together to protest segregation on long-distance routes. In Alabama, the Riders were attacked and nearly killed.

Oxford, Mississippi

1962 *Integration of the University of Mississippi*

Violent white mobs met James Meredith, a black man, when he tried to go to

school at the University of Mississippi.

Birmingham, Alabama

1963 *Children’s Crusade and the 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing*

Hundreds of African-American children who marched for civil rights were met with fire hoses and police dogs. Later that year, four girls were killed when a bomb planted by Ku Klux Klansmen tore through their church.

Washington, D.C.

1963 *March on Washington*

1964 *Passage of the Civil Rights Act*
1965 *Passage of the Voting Rights Act*

About 250,000 people gathered to rally for civil rights. In the next two years, Congress passed laws to end legal discrimination.

New York City

1964 *Malcolm X’s Split with the Nation of Islam*

Malcolm X was a leader in the Nation of Islam, a group that did not trust white people. But Nation members murdered him after he spoke out in favor of racial harmony.

Philadelphia, Mississippi

1964 *Freedom Summer and the*

Murder of Three Civil Rights Workers

During “Freedom Summer,” college students flooded into Mississippi to register African-American voters. The Klan murdered three of the volunteers.

Alabama

1965 *Bloody Sunday and the Selma-to-Montgomery March*

Police attacked more than 600 peaceful protesters as they began a 54-mile march from Selma to Montgomery. Two weeks later, even more marchers set out again—and this time they made it.

Caroline County, Virginia

1967 *Loving v. Virginia*

In 1958, it was illegal for people of different races to marry in Virginia. Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter wed anyway. They were arrested. The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the law.

Memphis, Tennessee

1968 *Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.*

King was standing on the balcony of his Memphis hotel when a bullet struck and killed him. People mourned worldwide.