1861 - The Civil War begins; the First Confiscation Act is enacted
1862 - DC Emancipation Compensation Act is enacted
1865 - United States Colored Troops created; Emancipation Proclamation
1866 - The 13th Amendment enacted; the Civil War ends
1867 - The first Civil Rights Act is established
1867 - Black men vote in Washington, DC; Howard University founded
1870 - The 14th Amendment is enacted
1870 - The 15th Amendment is enacted; first Colored High School founded in DC, later to be Dunbar High School
1877 - The Hayes Compromise, Reconstruction ends
1879 - Booker T. Washington establishes Tuskegee Institute
1881 - Booker T. Washington delivers Atlanta Compromise speech, W.E.B. DuBois publishes
1882 - GW Williams writes first history of Black Americans
1889 - Duke Ellington is born in Washington, DC
1895 - Booker T. Washington delivers Atlanta Compromise speech, W.E.B. DuBois publishes
1898 - Henry Flexner writes first history of Black Americans
1900 - James Weldon Johnson publishes
1902 - WC Handy hears The Blues in Tutwiler, MS
1903 - W.E.B. DuBois publishes
1903 - W.E.B. DuBois publishes
1905 - W.E.B. DuBois publishes
1911 - Thurgood Marshall, first Black Harvard Law student
1914 - Thurgood Marshall, first Black Harvard Law student
1919 - Red Summer; The New Negro Movement begins; Woodrow Wilson
1920 - Suffrage for women is won with the 19th Amendment
1922 - A. Philip Randolph organizes the Sleeping Car Porters Union; Malcolm X born
1925 - Malcolm X born
1926 - Carter G. Woodson & Mary Church Terrell establish Negro History Week
1929 - MLK, Jr. is born in Atlanta
1932 - The Apollo Theater opens in Harlem
1933 - U.S. government sponsors red-lining
1936 - Jesse Owens wins 4 gold medals in Germany
1937 - Eleanor Holmes Norton is born
1940 - Hattie McDaniel becomes the first Black to win an Oscar
1942 - CORE organizes the first sit-ins for civil rights in Chicago
1943 - A. Philip Randolph threatens a national march on Washington for civil rights unless the U.S. government desegregates the war industries
1944 - The first US soldiers that hit the beach on D-Day are the 320th Battalion of Black infantry
1945 - Over one million Black GIs fight in WWII, returning home to begin the Modern Civil Rights Movement
1947 - Jackie Robinson plays his first game in MLB, from Slavery to Freedom published by John Hope Franklin
1952 - Mary Church Terrell successfully wins Thompson vs. The District
1954 - Brown vs. Board decision; Malcolm X becomes minister at Temple #7 in Harlem; Oprah Winfrey born in Kosciusko, MS
1955 - Emmett Till is lynched in Mississippi in June; Rosa Parks sits at the front of a bus in Alabama on December 1, beginning the Montgomery Bus Boycott; MLK becomes leader
1957 - The Little Rock Nine enter school in Arkansas; Rev. James Lawson teaches non-violent direct action at Fisk University
1958 - Althea Gibson wins US Open; Black Civil Rights Opens in DC
1959 - Rev. Jim Lawson trains southern youth in nonviolent direct action in Nashville with Marian Barry, Diane Nash and John Lewis are his first students; Berry Gordy, Jr. establishes Motown Records
1960 - Ella Baker organizes a meeting at Shaw University during which the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) is formed with Marion Barry as its first chairman; first 4-mil run across North Carolina A&T in February; New Orleans 4, 9 Prented, and Etienne, integrate schools
1961 - The Freedom Riders begin in Washington, DC to New Orleans
1962 - SNCC organizes the Albany, Georgia Campaign
1963 - Gloria Richardson is the leader of the Cambridge Movement; the March on Washington; The Birmingham Campaign; four little girls murdered in Birmingham; Malcolm X leaves Nat. of Islam
1964 - SNCC creates the “Freedom Summer” in Mississippi; the 1964 Civil Rights Act is enacted; LA Rebellion; the beginning of “long hot summers”
1965 - SNCC organizes the Selma March; The 1965 Voting Rights Act is enacted
1966 - The Black Panther Party is founded
1967 - Cambridge, Maryland explodes with SNCC with H. Rap Brown; Howard University students take over the campus; MLK delivers anti-war speech at Riverside Church, Literary & Virginia decision
1968 - The year that changed the world: Dr. MLK assassinated; Bobby Kennedy assassinated; Chicago riot at DNC Convention; the 1968 Fair Housing Act is enacted; Shirley Chisholm is the first Black woman in US Congress; First inter-racial kiss on TV, L. Urruma and Captain Kirk
1970 - U.S. Bombs Cambodia, college campuses shut down; 4 Kent State students killed; 2 Jackson State University students killed; Watermelon Man, Van Peebles film released
1972 - Shirley Chisholm runs for the US, first Black female to do so
1973 - Cesar Chavez, farm worker becomes the first Black Farming Collective founded, Barbara Jordan is the first Southwestern Black woman in US Congress
1976 - Roots is published by Alex Haley
1979 - Marion Barry becomes Mayor of Washington, DC
1982 - Congressman Harold Washington wins mayor in Chicago; Michael Jackson’sThriller becomes the best-selling album ever
1983 - Alice Walker wins Pulitzer Prize for The Color Purple
1984 - Jesse Jackson runs for President of the U.S.
1985 - The South Africa Movement shuts down South African embassy every day for two years
1986 - MLK National Holiday enacted and celebrated
1988 - Jesse Jackson runs for President of the U.S., almost wins
1991 - Rodney King is videotaped being beaten in LA
1992 - LA explodes, Rodney King’s police brutality acquitted
1993 - Toni Morrison wins the Nobel Prize for Literature
1995 - The Million Man March
1997 - Tiger Woods wins Masters; Che Marley Demczuk born in DC
1998 - African American Civil War museums opened, founded by Dr. Frank Smith (SNCC)
1999 - Senna Williams wins US Open
2000s:
2001 - Colin Powell appointed Secretary of State: Hall Berry and Denzel Washington win the Oscars
2005 - Condoleezza Rice appointed Secretary of State
2008 - Barack Obama is inaugurated as President of the United States
2011 - MLK Memorial opens on Mall
2013 - BLM Founded
2015 - Black Lives Matter founded after Trayvon Martin is killed; Lower 9th Ward
2016 - Baltimore riots; The Baltimore Uprising
2017 - Atlanta, Georgia Veterans at the White House by Woodrow Wilson; 10,000 N'Kia march down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC
2019 - Marcus Garvey, from Jamaica, Founds UMA, Carter G. Woodson publishes the Journal of Negro History
2019 - 400,000 Black GIs fight in WWII, 65,000 US soldiers killed
2019 - 12,000 Black women die in childbirth
2020 - 1 million Black Americans have lost jobs
2021 - George Floyd murdered in Minneapolis
2022 - The National Museum of African American History and Culture opens
2023 - Image of African American culture opens at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC

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The History of the Critical Race Theory: Critical Race Theory grew out of the scholarship of jurists/legal scholar Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. In the 1940s, he examined how British legal precedents in the 17th century led to racial slavey in the U.S. Twenty years later, at the height of the Modern Civil Rights Movement, Harvard Law students Derrick Bell and Charles Ogletree speculated Higginbotham’s findings to interpret American history from the perspective of African Americans — not from the lens of Great Dead White Men who, heretofore, wrote American history from their viewpoint only. To truly understand American history, we need to study Black history and culture critically, hence, critical race theory.

“The defining experience of African American life has been making a way out of no-way mastering the nimbleness, ingenuity and perseverance to establish a place in our society. This experience is a lens which we understand what it is to be an American. In some ways, the African American experience is the quintessential American experience. The museum celebrates American history and culture and who we are as Americans.”

—Lennie Bunch, III, Director of the NMAAH