

# TIMELINE OF EVENTS

## Before Reconstruction .....

- 1619** Beginning of English-speaking transatlantic slave trade
- June 17, 1822** Denmark Vesey's slave revolt in Charleston, SC, thwarted
- March 6, 1857** Supreme Court issues *Dred Scott v. Sandford* declaring people of African descent are not US citizens
- April 12, 1861** Civil War begins
- January 1, 1863** President Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in the Confederate states
- May 5, 1863** Freedman's Village created on Robert E. Lee's Arlington estate

## Reconstruction Era .....

- January 12, 1865** General Sherman issues Field Order No. 15, colloquially known as "40 acres and a mule," which President Andrew Johnson later rescinds
- March 3, 1865** Congress issues charter for Freedman's Savings and Trust Company (Freedman's Saving Bank) and establishes The Freedmen's Bureau
- April 9, 1865** Civil War ends
- April 14–15, 1865** President Lincoln is assassinated; Andrew Johnson becomes president
- December 6, 1865** 13th Amendment ratified abolishing slavery, except for those duly convicted of a crime
- July 30, 1866** Mechanics' Institute massacre (New Orleans, LA)



- July 9, 1868** 14th Amendment ratified granting birthright citizenship and prohibiting states from denying people rights without due process or equal protection of the laws
- February 27, 1869** John Willis Menard is the first Black person elected to Congress, but never seated
- March 4, 1869** Ulysses S. Grant inaugurated as president
- February 3, 1870** 15th Amendment ratified prohibiting states from denying or abridging citizens' right to vote on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude
- February 25, 1870** Hiram Revels sworn in as US Senator and first Black member of Congress
- May 31, 1870** First Ku Klux Klan Enforcement Act enacted
- June 2, 1870** Congress establishes the US Department of Justice, which prioritizes dismantling White domestic terrorist groups
- December 12, 1870** Joseph Rainey (SC) becomes first Black member of US House of Representatives
- Spring 1871** The following Black people join US House of Representatives: Jefferson Long (GA), Robert De Large (SC), Robert Elliott (SC), Benjamin Turner (AL), Josiah Walls (FL)
- February 28, 1871** Second Ku Klux Klan Enforcement Act enacted
- April 20, 1871** Third Ku Klux Klan Enforcement Act enacted
- March 4, 1873** The following Black people join US House of Representatives: Richard Cain (SC), John Lynch (MS), Alonzo Ransier (SC), James Rapier (AL)
- April 13, 1873** Colfax massacre (LA)
- January 6, 1874** Congressman Robert Elliott delivers his famous speech supporting the Civil Rights Act on the House floor
- June 29, 1874** Freedman's Savings and Trust Company closes
- February 5, 1875** Civil Rights Act of 1875 enacted



- March 4, 1875** Blanche Bruce (MS) joins Senate; the following Black people join US House of Representatives: Jeremiah Haralson (AL), John Hyman (NC), Charles Nash (LA), Robert Smalls (SC)
- March 27, 1876** Supreme Court issues decision in *U.S. v. Cruikshank*, throwing out convictions from Colfax massacre
- July 8, 1876** Hamburg massacre (SC)
- February 26, 1877** Wormley Agreement reached, resolving disputed 1876 presidential election
- March 4, 1877** Rutherford B. Hayes sworn in as president and withdraws remaining federal troops from the South

**After Reconstruction . . . . .**

- October 15, 1883** Supreme Court issues decision in the *Civil Rights Cases* invalidating Civil Rights Act of 1875
- March 4, 1897** George Henry White (NC) is last Black member of Congress elected from a Southern state for 76 years
- March 23, 1900** Freedman’s Village is permanently closed
- September 9, 1957** Civil Rights Act of 1957 enacted creating Civil Rights Division at US Department of Justice
- June 12, 1963** NAACP (MS) field secretary Medgar Evers is assassinated
- September 15, 1963** 16th Street Baptist Church is bombed
- July 2, 1964** Civil Rights Act of 1964 enacted, readopting many of the provisions from the Civil Rights Act of 1875
- August 6, 1965** Voting Rights Act of 1965 enacted
- January 3, 1967** Edward Brooke (MA) becomes first Black senator since 1881
- March 30, 1971** Congressional Black Caucus is founded



- January 3, 1973** Barbara Jordan (TX) and Andrew Young (GA) become first Black people elected to Congress from the South since 1897
- January 22, 2009** Barack Obama inaugurated as first Black president
- June 25, 2013** Supreme Court issues decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* curtailing the Voting Rights Act of 1965
- June 17, 2015** Massacre at Emanuel AME Church (Charleston, SC)
- January 6, 2021** Challenging the validity of votes from majority-Black jurisdictions, supporters of the defeated incumbent president storm the US Capitol in a deadly coup attempt aimed at overturning the 2020 presidential election
- January 20, 2021** Former US Senator Kamala Harris is sworn in as the first woman as well as first Black and South Asian person to serve as Vice President of the United States