

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

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At the time of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, segregation was a way of life in the South. Everything from schools to drinking fountains were divided. Segregation was a common part of society, and although it was wrong, it was carried on as though nothing was wrong at all. African-Americans were treated with unthinkable discrimination because somehow, someway, the color of their skin made them different.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a pivotal point in the Civil Rights Movement. It arose when the Black population of Montgomery refused to use the bus system in protest of racial segregation policies of the company. It was one of the first major steps taken in the civil rights era, and inspired many other activist groups to take action. The year long boycott affected the lives of almost every Montgomerian, but this influential movement wouldn't have taken place or been a success without the contributions of several important figures.

Rosa Parks had no idea that her small act of defiance would be the beginning of a critical chapter of the Civil Rights Movement. On December 1, 1955, after a typical at

work, Parks boarded a bus in Montgomery. She sat down, but was told by the driver that she needed to move to the back to make room for white passengers. However, she refused to leave her seat because she was tired of giving in and being treated like a second-class citizen. Her steadfastness, though, led to her arrest, trial, and conviction for disorderly conduct and violating local ordinances. As a result of her arrest, the Montgomery Bus Boycott was created. This event eventually ended bus segregation, and although Rosa Parks didn't realize the importance of her courageous deed, it was this act that began the one of the most significant movements of the civil rights era and made her a civil rights legend.

It is safe to say that the Montgomery Bus Boycott would not have been a success without the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. A primary spokesman of the boycott, King's powerful speeches and non-violent practices played a great part in the triumph of the event that brought about integration of buses. Although King was a prominent leader during the protest, he did not seek this role, moving to Montgomery only for ministerial purposes. However, when the Montgomery Bus Boycott began, MIA (Montgomery Improvement Association) organizers needed a spirited leader that could peacefully unite people. After being recommended by a church member, King was elected MIA president. His non-violent ways were a key part of his effective protest strategy. The "voice of Black Montgomery", Martin Luther King Jr. was an essential figure in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and is credited with the victory that resulted from it.

Joseph Lacey was just 13 years old when the Montgomery Bus Boycott began. In Freedom's Children, Lacey recounts the morning of December 5, 1955, when an empty bus passed by him, arousing delight in him and his friends. In the interview, Lacey goes on to tell of the unifying of Black Montgerians in the boycott. He explains how everybody in Montgomery came together to participate in the protest, and how everybody had a role in one of the most significant events in civil rights history. Everyone made sacrifices to ensure the success of the boycott, but each person's duty was important. Without the dedication of every Black in Montgomery, even young Joseph Lacey and his friends, the campaign for integrated buses wouldn't have prevailed.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was an important victory for the Civil Rights Movement. It ended the racial segregation laws for bus transportation, and set the stage for other civil rights campaigns. Yet, the protest would not have succeeded without the cooperation of every Black Montgerian, and the bravery and guidance of many influential civil rights leaders. From young Joseph Lacey and his friends to powerful figures like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr., every role played in the protest was an important one. These people left behind a legacy that reminds us that peace and unity will always reign victorious in the face of adversity.