

A Brief Chronology of Major U.S. Social Movements

- 1848 First women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, NY
- 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes Uncle Tom's Cabin
- 1860-1865 Civil War ends in victory of Union over Confederacy
- 1863 President Abraham Lincoln (R) issues Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves in the Confederate states
- 1865-1877 Reconstruction: Union army occupies South; Freedman's Bureau establishes schools, election of new legislatures; first Civil Rights Laws in 1870
- 1865 13th Amendment to the Constitution: Abolition of slavery and involuntary servitude
- 1866 Stanton and Anthony form American Equal Rights Association
- 1866, 1868 14th Amendment: citizenship, due process of law, equal protection of the laws
- 1869 Women's rights movement splits into NWSA & AWSA over 15th Amendment
- 1869, 1870 15th Amendment: right of citizens to vote shall not be denied on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude
- 1877 Compromise of 1877: in tight 1876 election, Rutherford B. Hayes (R) defeats Samuel J. Tilden (D), who lead in popular vote, after getting electoral college support from South by agreeing to withdraw Union army and end Reconstruction. Jim Crow laws begin.
- 1882-1964 Lynchings: 4,742 documented cases in U.S. (3,445 blacks and 1,297 whites -- most of the whites before 1900)
- 1890 NWSA & AWSA are reunited as NAWSA
- 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decided by Supreme Court; "separate but equal" doctrine

- 1905 Thomas Dixon publishes The Clansman, a popular novel portraying the KKK as savior of the South
- 1909 NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) founded
- 1910 National Urban League founded
- 1915 D. W. Griffith produces Birth of a Nation, first full-length feature silent film, based on Dixon's novel; NAACP leads protests
- 1916 Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first woman elected to U.S. House of Representatives
- 1916-1918 World War I ends with defeat of Germany, Russian Revolution
- 1920 19th Amendment: right of citizens to vote shall not be denied on account of sex
- 1923 National Women's Party first proposes the ERA
- 1929 Stock market crash, economy slides into Great Depression
- 1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt (D) elected President, defeating incumbent Herbert Hoover (R); begins New Deal programs
- 1935 National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act) legalizes collective bargaining; Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters recognized by the Pullman Co.
- 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act sets minimum wage and limits child labor
- 1941 President FDR signs Executive Order 8802, ending discrimination by defense contractors and establishing Committee on Fair Employment Practices (later the FEPC), pushed by A. Philip Randolph who threatened "March on Washington"
- 1941-1945 World War II ends in victory for Allies; United Nations founded
- 1947 Taft-Hartley Act passes over Truman's veto; allows state "right-to-work" laws

- 1948 President Truman (D) signs Executive Order 9981, ending segregation in the armed forces, after A. Philip Randolph threatened a civil disobedience campaign
- 1948 Truman (D) defeats Thomas Dewey (R) in close election campaign - black vote is crucial in California, Illinois and Ohio; Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by U.N.
- 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decided by Supreme Court, overturning Plessy v. Ferguson; separate is not equal in public education
- 1955 AFL-CIO merger; Randolph named to Executive Board
- 1955-1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott
- 1957 Little Rock school integration crisis
- 1960 Lunch counter sit-in movement begins
- 1961 Freedom Rides begin
- 1963 Equal Pay Act; Betty Friedan publishes The Feminine Mystique
- 1963 Birmingham campaign; March on Washington brings together NAACP (Roy Wilkins), NUL (Whitney Young), CORE (James Farmer), SCLC (Martin Luther King Jr.), and SNCC (John Lewis) under leadership of A. Philip Randolph; JFK assassinated
- 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project; Civil Rights Act; challenge to Democratic Convention by Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party; LBJ launches "War on Poverty;" Vietnam War escalates
- 1965 Selma campaign; Voting Rights Act; CDGM Head Start project in Mississippi
- 1966 Betty Friedan organizes NOW
- 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated in Memphis, TN; RFK assassinated in LA