

Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks was born February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama. She was very small for her age and suffered from chronic tonsillitis. She grew up with her grandparents in Montgomery, Alabama where she accumulated views about hard work and racism. At a very young age, Rosa began picking and planting cotton. She also came to realize that black people were not free when she witnessed the Ku Klux Klan come into her community and kill blacks. Her schooling was sporadic, as she had to travel in order to get beyond elementary schooling. Later on in life, she was finally able to get her high school diploma. During half of Rosa's life, she faced laws that prohibited African Americans from gaining freedom. Then, in December of 1955, on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Rosa refused to give up her seat to a white man. She was arrested and put into jail. Luckily, Rosa's husband was a member of the NAACP so she was bailed out easily. Rosa became an active member in the civil rights groups. She started a boycott on the Montgomery bus system that lasted almost a whole year. In that time, Rosa helped fund a carpooling system so that blacks could get to work, and she provided clothing and blankets for those in need. She met and worked closely with Martin Luther King, Jr. up until and even long after the Supreme Court ruled segregation unconstitutional in Montgomery on November 13, 1956. Rosa founded the Rosa and Raymond Institute, an institute that offers programs for youth. Cleveland Avenue in Montgomery, Alabama, home of the bus boycott, was changed to Rosa Parks Boulevard in her honor.