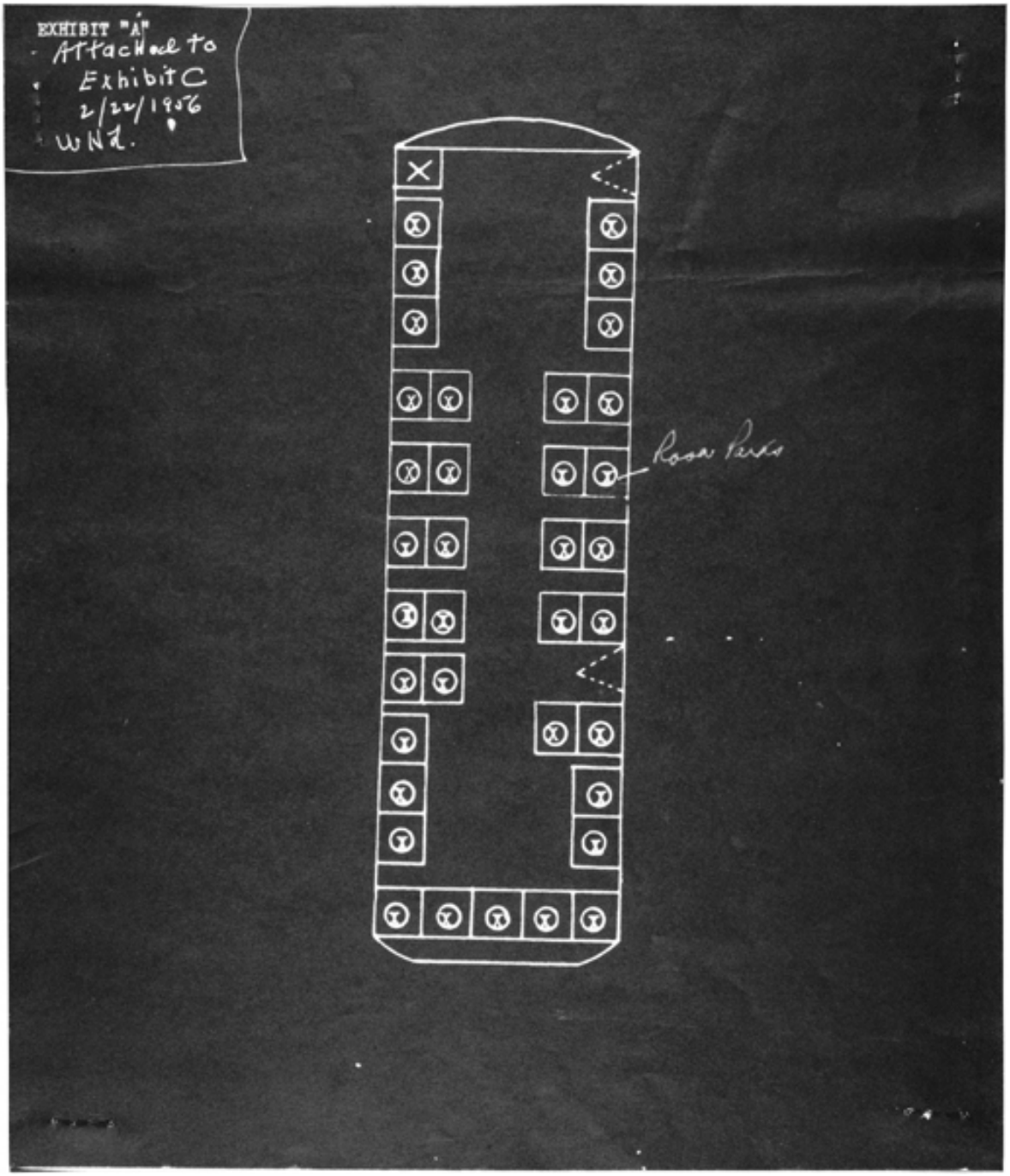
On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks took the bus home from work. In one of her books, she tells us what happened when she was told to give up her seat:

> *One evening in early December, 1955, I was sitting in the front seat of the colored section of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. The white people were sitting in the white section. More white people got on, and they filled up all the seats in the white section. When that happened, we black people were supposed to give up our seats to the whites. But I didn't move. The white driver said, "Let me have those front seats." I didn't get up. I was tired of giving in to white people.*
>
> Rosa Parks
> *Rosa Parks: My Story*

The bus on which Rosa was riding that day is now on display at the Henry Ford Museum, in Dearborn.

We can view the exact location of Rosa's seat, thanks to a court record. This image depicts an exhibit from Civil Case 1147, *Browder, et al v. Gayle, et. al* which was filed, during 1955, in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Northern (Montgomery) Division. Locate Rosa's seat next to a window, on the right side of the bus, five rows back from the front door.



After Rosa Parks defied the law in Montgomery, Alabama - refusing to give up her bus seat to a white man - she was arrested, fingerprinted and convicted after a very short trial. Her actions effectively launched the modern-day civil rights movement.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - not well-known nationally before Rosa Parks was arrested - also rose to prominence as he urged Montgomery's African-American citizens to participate in a bus boycott.

That boycott lasted 382 days, ending (in December of 1956) after bus companies, throughout Alabama, had no choice but to change their actions. The U.S. Supreme Court had issued a ruling—in a case called *Browder v. Gayle* (also known as *Gayle v Browder*)—declaring that segregation, on all methods of public transport, was illegal.

The case, challenging segregated busing, was filed by four African-American young women: Aurelia Browder, Mary Louise Smith, Susie McDonald and Claudette Colvin. The ruling, by the Supreme Court, effectively overturned the high court's decision in Plessy v Ferguson (which led to the Jim-Crow era in America).

Dr. King paid for his bus-boycott leadership. On the 22nd of March, 1956, he was convicted under a law (passed in 1921) designed to break actions by trade unions. At the time, the 27-year-old King was convicted of organizing an illegal boycott. Fined $500 for his actions, MLK was also ordered to pay an equal amount in court costs.

When his lawyers gave notice of their plan to appeal the conviction, the court converted the fine into a prison sentence of 386 days (which would be suspended until the appeal could be heard).

Mrs. Parks, the recipient of numerous honors in her life, also wrote four books. They are:

- *Rosa Parks: My Story*, by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins;

- *Quiet Strength*, by Rosa Parks with Gregory J. Reed;

- *Dear Mrs. Parks: A Dialogue With Today's Youth*, by Rosa Parks with Gregory J. Reed, which won the NAACP's Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work (Children's) in 1996; and

- *I am Rosa Parks* - a book for preschoolers by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins.

Rosa Parks died, at the age of 92, on October 24, 2005. She was the first woman to lie in state in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol building.

A book released in time to celebrate the 100th anniversary of her birth - February 4, 1913 - explores a lesser-known side of the civil-rights icon. It is called *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*.

This video clip is the trailer for the award-nominated "Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks."

See, also:

Video: Rosa Parks, Mother of the Modern-Day Civil Rights Movement

Credits:

Clip from "Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks," copyright Hudson & Houston (studio), all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the production.

Director
Robert Houston

Producers
Robert Hudson
Bill Couturié
Dulanie M. Ellis

Writer
Robert Houston

Cinematographer
Geoffrey George

Editor
Nancy Barber

Musical Score
Kevin Saunders Hayes

Soundtrack features:
Lowell Fulson
Big Bill Broonzy
Ray Charles
John Lee Hooker

Running time: 40 minutes

Released: 2002

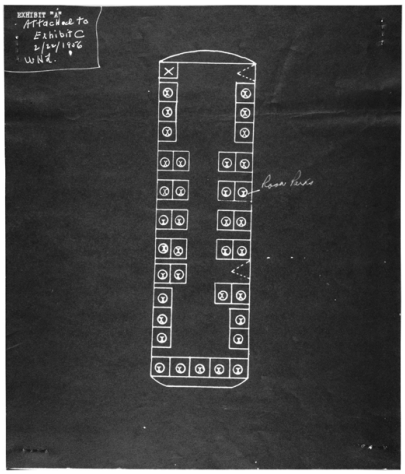
In-text image of the bus on which Rosa Parks was riding when she refused to give-up her seat is by Maksim and is online via Wikimedia Commons. Image license: CC BY-SA 3.0

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Rosa-Parks-Mighty-Times

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Rosa-Parks-Mighty-Times

Media Stream

Rosa Parks Bus
View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/



Rosa Parks Bus Seat
View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/

Rosa Parks - Civil Rights Leader
Photo online, courtesy U.S. Library of Congress.
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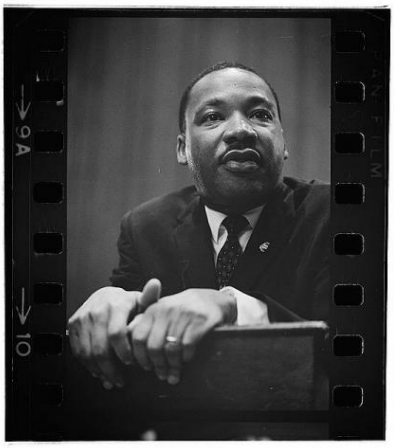
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Rosa-Parks-Civil-Rights-Leader



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was America's greatest civil-rights leader of the 20th-century.

We learn more about Dr. King from the Library of Congress:

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., twentieth-century America's most compelling and effective civil rights leader, was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia.

After entering Morehouse College at age fifteen, King followed his father and grandfather into the Baptist ministry. He received a bachelor of divinity from Crozer Theological Seminary in 1951 and a Ph.D from Boston University in 1955.

King entered the civil rights movement in 1955. A young, newly married pastor of a Montgomery, Alabama church, he was asked to lead a bus boycott aimed at ending segregation of public transport in Montgomery.

The boycott, initiated by Rosa Parks' refusal to surrender her bus seat to a white passenger, lasted over a year and resulted in the desegregation of the city's busses.

A founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, King advocated non-violent action as a means of lifting racial oppression. Sit-ins, marches, and peaceful demonstrations highlighted issues of inequality.

The commitment and moral integrity of activists who remained calm in the face of violent opposition inspired national admiration. Jailed during an Alabama campaign to abolish segregated lunch counters, King delineated his philosophy of nonviolence in the now famous "Letter From the Birmingham Jail."

Click on the image for a better view.

Image online, courtesy U.S. Library of Congress.

Text quoted above from the U.S. Library of Congress, American Memory, January 15th.

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View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dr.-Martin-Luther-King-Jr.