

31 Dream street
New York U.S
May 27 1996

Dear Julie,

How are you ? I'm very well. I'm writing to answer your questions. You asked when the American Civil War had begun, when slavery had been abolished and of course who Rosa Parks was. You were also interested in learning more about the fifties and the sixties. The first slaves arrived in America in 1619. Slaves were put to work in plantations. They were punished if they didn't work hard enough. Yet slavery was abolished in 1865. The American Civil War began in 1861 and finished in 1865.

Black people were told not to drink from the fountains reserved to Whites. Colored people had to sit at the back of buses. They couldn't vote whereas Whites could. Black people were not authorised to use the same restaurants or the same hotels as Whites either.

Rosa Parks was a black woman who was arrested in Montgomery in 1955, because she had refused to give up her seat to a White passenger in a bus. She disobeyed an Alabama law requiring black people to give up their seats to White people when the bus was full. MLK and other Civil Rights movement activists decided to organize a boycott and consequently buses were desegregated in 1956.

Ruby Bridges was the first black pupil to enter an all-White school in the South, on November 14th 1960, when she was 6 years old . However Federal Marshals had to escort her, to and from school to protect her from the furious White crowds. On that particular day, black children were allowed to go to the same schools as white kids.

From then on, we were allowed to go to a White school with my black friends, but White pupils kept on being mean to us and furious at us for a long time.

You asked me who Martin Luther King was. He was one of the most important figure of the Civil Rights Movement. He was the non-violent leader of the Montgomery bus boycott. In the sixties, Dr King gave his « I have a dream » speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C, and one year later he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Later he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

Blacks and Whites are now equal and not separate anymore as opposed to the past. That evolution is so wonderful !

I look forward to hearing from you soon !

Lots of love !

Your grandad who loves you.
Charly