

Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King was born on 15th January 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia (US).

He was originally called Michael King, after his father. However, when his father, a Baptist minister, changed his name from Michael to Martin Luther (inspired by the German theologian of the same name), Michael King Jr. became Martin Luther King Jr.



Martin Luther King was a talented student. He skipped 9th grade and 12th grade, attending Morehouse College at the age of 15. He went on to graduate with a sociology degree.

On 18th June 1953, King married Coretta Scott. They had four children, Yolanda King, Martin Luther King III, Dexter Scott King and Bernice King.

In 1954, when he was just 25 years old, Martin Luther King became pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

King was heavily involved in the organization of the Montgomery Bus Boycott following the arrest of Rosa Parks. King was arrested during the protest and he started to become a national figure associated with the civil rights movement.



In 1957, King, along with other key civil rights activists, started the Southern Christian Leadership Conference – a group dedicated to protesting non-violently to achieve civil rights reform.

King visited Gandhi's birthplace in India. He became absolutely convinced that a non-violent approach was the best way to achieve change in America.



King was involved in the Albany Movement and a non-violent civil rights campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. The Birmingham campaign was much more successful and led to more public places being accessible to the city's black community.

He was also involved in demonstrations in St Augustine,

Florida and Selma, Alabama.

King was involved in the March on Washington in 1963, and in front of the Lincoln Memorial that he delivered his famous, 17 minute, "I Have a Dream" speech. It would appear that the portion of the speech in which he talks about his dream, wasn't in his original notes and wasn't scripted.

He was against the Vietnam War and spoke out against it in his "Beyond Vietnam" speech.

Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on 4th April 1968. He was shot while standing on the second-floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. James Earl Ray was charged with his murder. Many people believe that James Earl Ray wasn't acting alone and that there was a conspiracy to have King assassinated. King was just 39 years old.

The third Monday of January each year is a federal holiday in the United States to honour Martin Luther King Jr. Day and has been observed by all 50 states since 2000.

- More than 700 US cities have streets named after Martin Luther King.
- King was arrested 29 times during his civil rights campaign.



- The author of several books, King also won a Grammy award in 1971 for the spoken-word recording 'Why I Oppose the War in Vietnam'.

- He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. He was 35 years old and at the time, he was the youngest ever recipient of the award. He donated the prize money (\$400,000) to the Civil Rights movements.

- He was the first African-American person to be named Time Magazine's Man of the Year.

- King's wife, Coretta Scott King, died in 2006. She was 78 years old.

