The Montgomery Bus Boycott

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a seamstress and an officer in the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), took a seat in the front row of the colored section of a city of Montgomery bus. Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, had been learning about ways to protest segregation in her community. She came to the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950’s by refusing to give up her seat in a Montgomery, Alabama public bus to a white man. The bus driver called for the police to enforce the bus company’s segregation law which kept white and black passengers separated. Rosa Parks’ arrest became the starting point of a citywide bus boycott by African-Americans (boycott means refusing to participate or purchase for a specific reason).

It took one full year for the boycott to force the bus company to change its rules. When the boycott finally ended, African-Americans could sit anywhere on a bus they had paid to ride. This boycott really started the effort to use peaceful nonviolence in protests to force change in segregation laws, especially in the southern United States. This event was led by the then, very young, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, who soon became a nationally recognized civil rights leader.