

*“One day a half century ago, the black citizens in Montgomery rose up in protest and united to demand their rights—by walking peacefully. It all started on a bus.”*

—Russell Freedman, from *Freedom Walkers*

**DECEMBER 1949**

Days before Christmas, Jo Ann Robinson, Professor of English at Alabama State, is humiliated as a Montgomery bus driver yells, “Get up from there! Get up from there!”<sup>1</sup>



JO ANN ROBINSON

**MAY 1954**

Public school segregation is declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court, opening the way for the possibility of other desegregation.

**MARCH 2, 1955**

Spunky fifteen-year-old Claudette Colvin, on her way home from school, tells police, “It’s my constitutional right to sit here.”<sup>2</sup>



EMMETT TILL  
Library of Congress

**SUMMER 1955**

Emmett Till’s “murder by white men . . . shocked the nation and helped galvanize the civil rights movement.”<sup>3</sup>

**DECEMBER 1, 1955**

After work on Thursday evening, Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat to a white person. “The only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”<sup>4</sup>

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1955**

52,500 leaflets announcing a boycott are distributed in Montgomery’s black communities.



ROSA PARKS  
AP/Wide World Photos

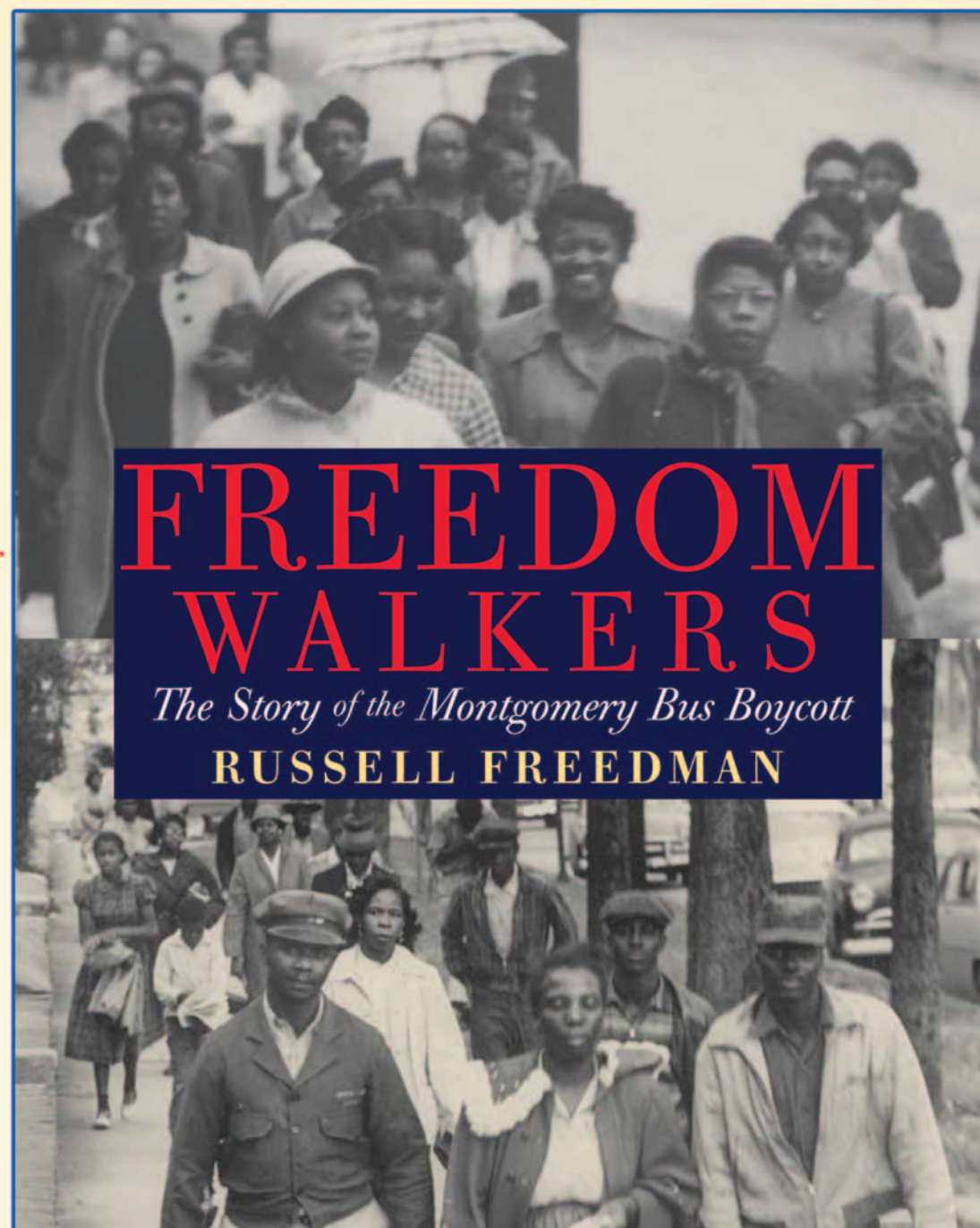
**MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1955**

**“Don’t ride the bus to work, to town, to school, or anywhere on Monday, Dec. 5. If you work, take a cab, or share a ride, or walk.”<sup>5</sup>**

**MONDAY EVENING**

“There comes a time when people get tired.”<sup>6</sup>

At the Holt Baptist Church, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gives the speech “launching his career as a leader of the nation’s civil rights movement.”<sup>7</sup>



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**DECEMBER 1955**

Elaborate arrangements are made to transport thousands of boycotters by car. Elderly Mother Pollard prefers to walk: “My feet is tired, but my soul is rested.”<sup>8</sup>

**JANUARY 26, 1956**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is arrested and jailed, then abruptly released after a get tough policy to harass boycotters is ordered by the police commissioner.

**FEBRUARY 21, 1956**

115 boycotters are indicted by a special grand jury under an obscure 1921 law.



DEFENDANTS AND SUPPORTERS  
AFTER THE INDICTMENT  
AP/Wide World Photos

*“Park’s defiance on that December evening in 1955 set in motion a peaceful revolution that led to the death of Jim Crow segregation in the South and brought black Americans into the nation’s political life. But the success and true impact of the Montgomery boycott depended on the sacrifices and determination of thousands whose names are lost to history—maids, laborers, teachers, students, cooks, and others—ordinary people who rose above the safe routines of their daily lives to become actors in an historical drama that changed a nation.”*

—Russell Freedman, from *Freedom Walkers*

**MARCH 1956**

“King is . . . found guilty of leading an ‘illegal’ boycott.”<sup>9</sup>



KING AND HIS WIFE, CORETTA, LEAVE  
THE MONTGOMERY COURTROOM.  
AP/Wide World Photos



KING (IN CENTER WEARING HAT)  
IS ONE OF THE FIRST BUS RIDERS  
ON DECEMBER 21, 1956.  
AP/Wide World Photos

**DECEMBER 21, 1956**

**381 days after the boycott began, Montgomery, Alabama, integrates its public buses and the boycott ends.**

**DECEMBER 20, 1956**

The bus integration order is at last delivered to city officials and becomes law.

**NOVEMBER 13, 1956**

The U.S. Supreme Court affirms that bus segregation laws are unconstitutional.

**JUNE 4, 1956**

“The boycotters [win] their first legal victory. . . . Segregation on [Alabama city] buses violated the Fourteenth Amendment . . . [and] was declared unconstitutional.”<sup>10</sup>

**HOLIDAY HOUSE**  
[www.holidayhouse.com](http://www.holidayhouse.com)

<sup>1</sup> *The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It: The Memoir of Jo Ann Gibson Robinson*, edited with a foreword by David J. Garrow (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987): 16; <sup>2</sup> *Freedom’s Children: Young Civil Rights Activists Tell Their Own Stories*, by Ellen Levine (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1993; Puffin, 2000): 24; <sup>3</sup> *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott*, by Russell Freedman (New York: Holiday House, 2006): 32; <sup>4</sup> *Rosa Parks: My Story*, by Rosa Parks with Jim Haskins (New York: Dial, 1992): 116; <sup>5</sup> *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, by Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Harper & Row, 1958): 48; <sup>6</sup> King: 61; <sup>7</sup> Freedman: 45; <sup>8</sup> *Parting the Water: America in the King Years, 1954-63*, by Taylor Branch (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988): 149; <sup>9</sup> Freedman: 78; <sup>10</sup> Freedman: 79.