

Who Was Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King Sr.

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Martin Luther King Sr. (born Michael King; December 19, 1899 – November 11, 1984) was an American Baptist pastor, missionary, and an early figure in the civil rights movement. He was the father and namesake of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. King was the senior pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church from 1931 to 1975.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day (officially Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., and often referred to shorthand as MLK Day) is a federal holiday in the United States observed on the third Monday of January each year. King was the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement, which protested racial discrimination in federal and state law and civil society. The movement led to several groundbreaking legislative reforms in the United States.

Born in 1929, Martin Luther King Jr.'s actual birthday is January 15 (which in 1929 fell on a Tuesday). The earliest Monday for this holiday is January 15 and the latest is January 21. The Monday observance is similar for those federal holidays which fall under the Uniform Monday Holiday Act.

The campaign for a federal holiday in King's honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, and it was first observed three years later on January 20, 1986. At first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names or combining it with other holidays. Official observance in each state's law as well as federal law occurred in 2000.

Martin Luther King Jr.

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Martin Luther King Jr. (born Michael King Jr.; January 15, 1929 – April 4, 1968) was an American Baptist minister, civil rights activist and political philosopher who was a leader of the civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. He advanced civil rights for people of color in the United States through the use of nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience against Jim Crow laws and other forms of legalized discrimination.

A Black church leader, King participated in and led marches for the right to vote, desegregation, labor rights, and other civil rights. He oversaw the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott and became the first president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). As president of the SCLC, he led the unsuccessful Albany Movement in Albany, Georgia, and helped organize nonviolent 1963 protests in Birmingham, Alabama. King was one of the leaders of the 1963 March on Washington, where he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and helped organize two of the three Selma to Montgomery marches during the 1965 Selma voting rights movement. There were dramatic standoffs with segregationist authorities, who often responded violently. The civil rights movement achieved pivotal legislative gains in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of

1968.

King was jailed several times. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) director J. Edgar Hoover considered King a radical and made him an object of COINTELPRO from 1963. FBI agents investigated him for possible communist ties, spied on his personal life, and secretly recorded him. In 1964, the FBI mailed King a threatening anonymous letter, which he interpreted as an attempt to make him commit suicide. King won the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance. In his final years, he expanded his focus to include opposition towards poverty and the Vietnam War.

In 1968, King was planning a national occupation of Washington, D.C., to be called the Poor People's Campaign, when he was assassinated on April 4 in Memphis, Tennessee. James Earl Ray was convicted of the assassination, though it remains the subject of conspiracy theories. King's death led to riots in US cities. King was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977 and Congressional Gold Medal in 2003. Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a holiday in cities and states throughout the United States beginning in 1971; the federal holiday was first observed in 1986. The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., was dedicated in 2011.

Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park

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The Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park covers about 35 acres (0.14 km²) and includes several sites in Atlanta, Georgia related to the life and work of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. Within the park are his boyhood home and Ebenezer Baptist Church – the church where King was baptized and both he and his father, Martin Luther King Sr., were pastors – as well as the grave site of King and his wife, civil rights activist Coretta Scott King.

The park is administered by the National Park Service and has a visitor center and museum.

Martin Luther King III

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Martin Luther King III (born October 23, 1957) is an American human rights activist, philanthropist, and an advocate. The second child and eldest son of civil rights leaders Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, he served as the fourth president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from 1997 to 2004. As of 2024, he is a professor of practice at the University of Virginia.

Martin Luther King Jr. assassination conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories about the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., a prominent leader of the civil rights movement, relate to different accounts of

Conspiracy theories about the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., a prominent leader of the civil rights movement, relate to different accounts of the incident that took place on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. King was assassinated on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, the day after giving his final speech "I've Been to the Mountaintop". Claims soon arose over suspect aspects of King's assassination and the controversial role of the assassin, James Earl Ray. Although his guilty plea eliminated the possibility of a trial before a jury, within days, Ray had recanted and claimed his confession was forced. Suspicions were further raised by the confirmation of illegal surveillance of King by the FBI and the CIA, and the FBI's attempt to allegedly prompt King to commit suicide.

In 1979, the United States House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) concluded that there was a likelihood of conspiracy in the assassination of King and that Ray may have served as a scapegoat. In 1999, a mixed-race jury at a Memphis civil suit reached a unanimous verdict that King was assassinated as a result of a conspiracy involving the U.S. government, a person named Raoul, among others. After the verdict, Coretta King said: "There is abundant evidence of a major, high-level conspiracy in the assassination of my husband." The jury found the mafia and various local, state, and federal government agencies were "deeply involved in the assassination. ... Mr. Ray was set up to take the blame."

List of streets named after Martin Luther King Jr.

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Streets named after Martin Luther King Jr. can be found in many cities of the United States and in nearly every major metropolis. There are also a number of other countries that have honored Martin Luther King Jr., including Italy and Israel. The first street in the United States named in his honor was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in Chicago in 1968. The number of streets named after King is increasing every year, and about 70% of these streets are in states which were members of the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas. King's home state of Georgia had the most, with 75 streets as of 2001; this had increased to 105 as of 2006.

As of 2003, there were over 600 American cities that had named a street after King. By 2004, this number had grown to 650, according to NPR. In 2006, Derek Alderman, a cultural geographer at East Carolina University, reported the number had increased to 730, with only 10 states in the country without a street named after King (Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Vermont). In 2014 he estimated that there were over 900 streets named after King in 41 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. In 2019, National Geographic published an interactive mapping of more than 1,000 streets around the world named after King.

Business owners in the affected parts of cities have often filed objections (and in the case of Kansas City, voted in a referendum to reverse a designation) against streets named for King, arguing that naming a street after Martin Luther King would cause a severe decline in their businesses, associating violent crimes and homicides with a re-naming and claiming it makes the neighborhoods a King-named road passes through dangerous by proxy, though in many cases there is no correlation with that occurring.

The following is a list of streets named after King in the United States.

Alberta Williams King

of Martin Luther King Jr., and also as the grandmother of Martin Luther King III. She was the choir director of the Ebenezer Baptist Church. She was shot

Alberta Christine Williams King (née Williams; September 13, 1903 – June 30, 1974) was an American civil rights organizer best known as the wife of Martin Luther King Sr.; and as the mother of Martin Luther King Jr., and also as the grandmother of Martin Luther King III. She was the choir director of the Ebenezer Baptist Church. She was shot and killed in the church by 23-year-old Marcus Wayne Chenault six years after the assassination of her eldest son Martin Luther King Jr.

King Center for Nonviolent Social Change

The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, commonly known as The King Center, is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization based

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Assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

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On April 4, 1968, at 6:01 p.m. CST, Martin Luther King Jr., an American civil rights activist, was fatally shot at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. He was rushed to St. Joseph's Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 7:05 p.m at age 39.

The alleged assassin, James Earl Ray, an escaped convict from the Missouri State Penitentiary, was arrested on June 8, 1968, at London's Heathrow Airport, extradited to the United States and charged with the crime. On March 10, 1969, Ray pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 99 years in the Tennessee State Penitentiary. He later made many attempts to withdraw his guilty plea and to be tried by a jury, but was unsuccessful, before he died in 1998.

The King family and others believe that the assassination was the result of a conspiracy involving the U.S. government, the mafia, and Memphis police, as alleged by Loyd Jowers in 1993. They believe that Ray was a scapegoat. In 1999, the family filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Jowers for the sum of \$10 million. During the trial, both sides presented evidence alleging a government conspiracy. The accused government agencies could not defend themselves or respond because they were not named as defendants. Based on the evidence, the jury concluded that Jowers and others were "part of a conspiracy to kill King" and awarded the family the symbolic \$100 they requested in damages. The allegations and the finding of the Memphis jury were later disputed by the United States Department of Justice in 2000 due to perceived lack of evidence.

The assassination was one of four major assassinations of the 1960s in the United States, coming several years after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 and the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965, and two months before the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy in June 1968.

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