THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT . . .
THROUGH THE EYES OF
CAROLYN MAULL McKINSTRY

1948

JANUARY 13, 1948:
Carolyn Maull is born in Clanton, Alabama.

1954

MAY 17, 1954:
Supreme Court bans segregation in schools in the
Brown v. Board of Education decision.

1955

AUGUST 28, 1955:
Fourteen-year-old Emmett Till is kidnapped and
murdered in Mississippi.

DECEMBER 1, 1955:
Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat
to a white in Montgomery, Alabama.

DECEMBER 5, 1955:
Montgomery bus boycott begins.
1956

**NOVEMBER 13, 1956:**
Supreme Court affirms ban on segregated seating on Alabama buses.

**DECEMBER 25, 1956:**
Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth's house in Birmingham is bombed.

1957

**SEPTEMBER 2, 1957:**
Klan members kidnap and castrate Edward Aaron in Birmingham.

**SEPTEMBER 24, 1957:**
The “Little Rock Nine” enter Central High under the protection of the United States Army’s 101st Airborne Division.

1961

**FEBRUARY 26, 1962:**
The Supreme Court rules that segregation is unconstitutional in all transportation facilities.
JANUARY 14, 1963:
Newly elected Alabama governor George C. Wallace takes the oath of office.

APRIL 12, 1963:
Dr. King is arrested and locked up in a Birmingham jail.

MAY 2–3, 1963:
Children’s marches in downtown Birmingham are broken up by police with attack dogs and fire hoses.

JUNE 11, 1963:
Alabama governor George Wallace stands in the doorway of University of Alabama to try to keep Vivian Malone and James Hood from enrolling.

JUNE 12, 1963:
Klan member kills Mississippi Civil Rights leader Medgar Evers.

AUGUST 28, 1963:
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leads march on Washington, D.C., with more than 250,000 people in attendance.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1963:
A bomb planted at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church explodes and kills four girls.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1963:
Virgil Ware, 13, is killed in Birmingham by two white youth; Johnny Robinson, 16, is killed by police in Birmingham.

SEPTEMBER 30, 1963:
Police arrest Robert Chambliss, Charles Cagle, and John W. Hall in conjunction with the Sixteenth Street Church bombing; they are released after each paying a $100 fine.

NOVEMBER 22, 1963:
President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.
1964

**JULY 2, 1964:**
President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**OCTOBER 14, 1964:**
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advocating a policy of nonviolence.

1965

**FEBRUARY 21, 1965:**
Malcolm X is assassinated.

**MARCH 25, 1965:**
Martin Luther King Jr. leads thousands of nonviolent crusaders to the completion of a 54-mile pilgrimage from Selma to Montgomery.

**AUGUST 6, 1965:**
President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act outlawing literacy tests for voting eligibility in the South.

1967

**OCTOBER 2, 1967:**
Thurgood Marshall is sworn in as the first black Supreme Court justice.

1968

**FEBRUARY 1968:**
FBI closes its investigation of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing without filing charges.

**APRIL 3, 1968:**
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech in Memphis, Tennessee.

**APRIL 4, 1968:**
Dr. King is assassinated in Memphis.

**JUNE 5, 1968:**
Robert F. Kennedy is shot in Los Angeles, California, and dies 26 hours later.

1977: Robert Chambliss is found guilty for the murder of Denise McNair and sentenced to life in prison.


1988: Alabama attorney general Don Siegelman reopens the church-bombing case again.

1989: Army general Colin Powell becomes the first black to serve as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

1989: L. Douglas Wilder (Virginia) becomes the first black elected governor.

1993: Birmingham-area black leaders meet with FBI about the church bombing, and agents secretly begin new review of the case.

1994: Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing suspect Herman Frank Cash dies.
OCTOBER 27, 1998:
Federal grand jury in Alabama begins hearing evidence regarding church-bombing case.

APRIL 15, 2001:
Thomas Blanton Jr. goes on trial for the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing.

MAY 1, 2001:
The court finds Blanton, 62, guilty on four counts of first-degree murder.

MAY 6, 2002:
Carolyn testifies in court during Bobby Cherry’s trial.

MAY 22, 2002:
The court finds Cherry, 71, guilty on four counts of murder and sentences him to life in prison.

NOVEMBER 18, 2004:
Bobby Frank Cherry, 74, dies in prison from cancer.

SPRING 2007:
Carolyn and Dr. Neal Berte raise $4 million for the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church restoration.

NOVEMBER 2008:
Barack Obama is elected first African-American president of the United States.

SEPTEMBER 15, 2013:
The Sixteenth Street Baptist Church will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the bombing.
Sample Jim Crow Laws

• Colored persons may not address white persons by their given names; they must always use titles of respect (e.g., Mr., Mrs., Miss, Sir, or Ma’am). Whites must not use courtesy titles of respect when referring to blacks. Instead, blacks must be called by their first names.
• Blacks must be introduced to whites, never whites to blacks. For example, “Mr. Peters [the white person], this is Charlie [the black person], about whom I spoke to you.”
• A black man cannot offer his hand to shake with a white man because it implies social equality. A black male is forbidden from offering his hand or any other part of his body to a white woman.¹
• It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectually separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to
a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided.

- All persons licensed to conduct a restaurant shall serve either white people exclusively or colored people exclusively and shall not sell to the two races within the same room or under the same license.²

- Colored people must sit in the backseat or in the back of a truck driven by a white person.

- When crossing an intersection, a black driver must always give the right-of-way to the white driver.³

- Negroes are to be served through a separate branch or branches of the county free library, which shall be administered by a custodian of the Negro race under the supervision of the county librarian.

- The state librarian is directed to fit up and maintain a separate place for the use of the colored people who may come to the library for the purpose of reading books or periodicals.⁴

- No person or corporation shall require any white female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which negro men are placed.

- The board of trustees shall maintain a separate building, on separate grounds, for the admission, care, instruction, and support of all blind persons of the colored or black race.

- There shall be maintained by the governing authorities of every hospital maintained by the state for treatment of white and colored patients separate entrances for white
and colored patients and visitors, and such entrances shall be used by the race only for which they are prepared. 

- All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races.
- The conductor of each passenger train is authorized and required to assign each passenger to the car or the division of the car, when it is divided by a partition, designated for the race to which such passenger belongs.
- All railroad companies are hereby required to provide separate cars or coaches for the travel and transportation of the white and colored passengers.
- All circuses, shows, and tent exhibitions, to which the attendance of more than one race is invited shall provide not less than two ticket offices and not less than two entrances.
- Any public hall, theatre, opera house, motion picture show, or place of public entertainment which is attended by both white and colored persons shall separate the white race and the colored race.
- Separate schools must be established for the education of children of African descent. It is unlawful for colored children to attend any white school or any white children to attend a colored school.
- School textbooks must not be exchanged between the white and colored schools.
- If an instructor teaches in any school, college, or
institution where white and colored students are enrolled as pupils, he will be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction, be fined.  

- It shall be unlawful for a Negro and white person to play together or in company with each other at any game of pool or billiards.

- It shall be unlawful for any amateur white baseball team to play on any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of a playground devoted to the Negro race, and it shall be unlawful for any amateur colored baseball team to play baseball within two blocks of any playground devoted to the white race.
Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to share a few thoughts as we gather here today to remember four little girls tragically taken from us in 1963, and to congratulate you on the restoration of one of the landmarks of the Civil Rights Movement in America.

I imagine that in quiet moments, many of you have thought about who Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and Cynthia Wesley might have become had they been allowed to grow up. Maybe a doctor and a history teacher, a singer and a social worker— their world would have been one of increasing possibility, symbolized in no small part by this magnificent Church and the community that built and sustains it.

Much has changed in four-and-a-half decades, and our nation has made great progress. But as we gather here today, we know that so much remains to be done. We know that the Lord calls on us to keep the memory
of these girls alive by fighting for justice so that we may look at each other and at ourselves and say that they have not died in vain.

On this day 45 years ago, four young souls were lost in the struggle of that time to extend our nation’s promise to all of our citizens. The men who inflicted the pain on that day sought to set off a chain reaction of similar events around the South. But what man meant for evil, God used for good, and the shock and horror of that day galvanized a nation. It led to an outpouring of protest from people of all colors, and to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

We clearly understand what the sacrifice of those young women meant for African Americans. However, we can also see how their passing allowed many whites to be led less by the laws of Jim Crow and the societal pressures that went with them, and more by their hearts in their treatment of African Americans. The Civil Rights Movement did not simply free African Americans, it freed all Americans.

The attack on this church made people stand up from the streets of Birmingham to the halls of Congress. Today, we must continue to stand against injustice and inequality. One of the best ways to honor this tragic day is to participate in the electoral process by registering new voters, recruiting new volunteers, and encouraging people to turn out on Election Day. And when we do this, we will continue the work of creating equality
of opportunity for all Americans and creating a more perfect union.

That’s what we can do to honor the memory of those four little girls, and to create the change we seek. On behalf of Michelle and our two little girls, God bless you all, and God bless this nation.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama