

## MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

Below is a copy of the Montgomery City Code, which outlines the law as it stood in 1955 and was cited by prosecutors as the reason Rosa Parks broke the law. Read the code and answer the following questions.

C. 6, § 10

MONTGOMERY CITY CODE

C. 6, § 18

### **Sec. 10. Separation of races—Required.**

Every person operating a bus line in the city shall provide equal but separate accommodations for white people and negroes on his buses, by requiring the employees in charge thereof to assign passengers seats on the vehicles under their charge in such manner as to separate the white people from the negroes, where there are both white and negroes on the same car; provided, however, that negro nurses having in charge white children or sick or infirm white persons, may be assigned seats among white people.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the operators of such bus lines from separating the races by means of separate vehicles if they see fit. (Code 1938, §§ 603, 606.)

### **Sec. 11. Same—Powers of persons in charge of vehicle; passengers to obey directions.**

Any employee in charge of a bus operated in the city shall have the powers of a police officer of the city while in actual charge of any bus, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the preceding section, and it shall be unlawful for any passenger to refuse or fail to take a seat among those assigned to the race to which he belongs, at the request of any such employee in charge, if there is such a seat vacant. (Code 1938, § 604.)

### **Sec. 12. Failure to carry passengers.**

It shall be unlawful for any person operating a bus line in the city to refuse, without sufficient excuse, to carry any passenger; provided, that no driver of a bus shall be required to carry any passenger who is intoxicated or disorderly, or who is afflicted with any contagious or infectious disease, or who refuses to pay in advance the fare required, or who for any other reason deemed satisfactory by the recorder should be excluded. (Code 1938, § 699.)

### **Sec. 13. Smoking.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to smoke a cigar, pipe or cigarette upon any bus in the city; provided, however, that

**Arrest Record for Rosa Parks**

*Misc*

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY OF MONTGOMERY

Date 12-1-55 1955

Complainant F. P. Blake (w)

Address 27 No. Lewis St. Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Offense Misc. Reported By Same as above

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time Offense Committed 12-1-55 6:06 pm

Place of Occurrence In Front of Empire Theatre (On Montgomery Street)

Person or Property Attacked \_\_\_\_\_

How Attacked \_\_\_\_\_

Person Wanted \_\_\_\_\_

Value of Property Stolen \_\_\_\_\_ Value Recovered \_\_\_\_\_

Details of Complaint (If describe, and give value of property stolen)

We received a call upon arrival the bus operator said he had a colored female sitting in the white section of the bus, and would not move back.

We (Day & Mixon) also saw her.

The bus operator signed a warrant for her. Rosa Parks, (cf) 634 Cleveland Court.

Rosa Parks (cf) was charged with chapter 6 section 11 of the Montgomery City Code.

Warrant #11254

THIS OFFENSE IS DECLARED:  
 UNFOUNDED   
 CLEARED BY ARREST   
 EXCEPTIONALLY CLEARED   
 DETERMINED NOT CLEARED

Officers F. S. Day  
D. W. Mixon

Division Patrol Time 7:05 pm  
12-1-55

Source: The National Archives



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1. Why would an organized bus boycott put economic strain on the city?
2. What was the bus line's reaction to the boycott's second month of success?
3. Three other African-Americans complied with the bus driver's demand that they move to give their seats to whites. How might you have felt had you given up your seat while Mrs. Parks held firm in her conviction to keep her seat?
4. Mrs. Parks was originally arrested for violating a city segregation ordinance but the charge was later changed to read "a violation of a state law, which gives bus drivers the power to assign and reassign seating." Why would prosecutors wish to change the charge?

### NEGROES' BOYCOTT CRIPPLES BUS LINE

Special to The New York Times  
Also, *Knox Times* (1857 Current file), Jan. 6, 1956; ProQuest Historical Newspapers, The New York Times  
No. 71

## NEGROES' BOYCOTT CRIPPLES BUS LINE

### Carrier in Montgomery, Ala., Increases Fares to Offset Loss of Business

Special to The New York Times  
MONTGOMERY, Ala., Jan. 7  
—The boycott of Montgomery bus lines by Negro riders entered its second month this week with no conciliation in sight.

As a result of the bus company's loss of revenue in the boycott, the City Commission Wednesday raised fares 50 per cent, adult fares from 10 to 15 cents, school fares from 5 to 8 cents. The commission also authorized a 5 cent charge for transfers, which have heretofore been free.

Asking for the increase, the bus company cited losses averaging 22 cents a mile since the boycott began Dec. 5. The losses would run even higher, company spokesmen said, except for a curtailment in service that has reduced mileage by 31 per cent.

Shortly after the boycott began, virtually all service to Negro communities was abolished. Two routes, serving predominantly Negro areas, were abandoned entirely and other routes revised so as to exclude Negro neighborhoods along them.

#### Negro Woman Convicted

The boycott began with the arrest and conviction of Mrs. Rosa Parks, a Negro seamstress employed by a downtown department store. Mrs. Parks had refused to give up her seat when told to do so by the bus driver.

At the time the incident occurred, there were twenty-six Negroes and ten white persons seated in the thirty-six-passenger bus. Law requires the bus driver to segregate the passengers but leaves it within his discretion where the line is to be drawn. Thus, on many routes serving populous Negro areas it is not

uncommon to see Negroes occupying all but a few seats.

When the driver asked Mrs. Parks and three other Negroes to give up their seats, a number of white persons were about to board. There were already some white persons standing as well as a number of Negroes. The driver explained later in court that he was "equalizing" seating facilities.

Mrs. Parks refused to yield her seat and was arrested for violation of a city segregation ordinance. Later the charge was changed to read a violation of a state law, which gives bus drivers the power to assign and reassign seating. The law makes it a misdemeanor for anyone to disobey the driver's orders.

Mrs. Parks was found guilty in City Recorder's Court and fined \$30. Her attorneys filed notice of appeal. At a mass meeting in a local Negro church the night following the court hearing, Negro citizens were urged not to ride the buses. The following morning, Negro patronage was down by an estimated 90 per cent. Today it is close to 100 per cent off.

#### Conditions Laid Down

Negro citizens, led by virtually all the city's Negro ministers, have demanded that three conditions be met before they resume riding the buses. These are:

1. Adoption of a "first-come-first-served" rule as is in effect in other Alabama cities such as Mobile and Huntsville. Under this plan Negroes would continue to load from the rear and whites from the front, but the seating, once established, would remain fixed.

2. Greater courtesy on the part of drivers. Negro bus riders have complained of rude, insulting treatment.

3. Employment of Negro drivers on routes serving predominantly Negro areas.

A bi-racial committee, appointed by the City Commission, has so far failed to resolve any of the differences. The company contends that it cannot adopt a "first-come-first-served" policy and comply with the segregation laws. Negotiations have been broken off, for the time at least.