# Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Early in the history of the United States, black people were forced to leave the country of Africa to become slaves in America, especially in the southern states. They had to work very hard, but they were not paid any money for their work. Rich people owned them like property. Some owners treated the slaves like animals. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, said that this was bad. In 1863, President Lincoln declared that the slaves would be free.

The African Americans were not slaves anymore, but many white people continued to be mean to them. This was especially true in the states of the South, such as Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Even one hundred years after the slaves were freed, black children could not go to the same schools as white children. Black people could not eat food at the same restaurants as white people. Black people could not use the same bathrooms as white people or drink from the same water fountains. They were not allowed to sit close to the front of a bus, even if all of the seats in the front were empty. The law said that they could participate in government, but people tried to trick them or hurt them when they went to