

“Words That Matter”: Voices of Civil Rights—The 1st Day at Central High

Selected and edited by students
in the LRCHS Civil Rights Memory Project Team

**Using excerpts from primary documents:
memoirs, newspaper headlines, articles, and editorials and other eyewitness accounts
of September 4th, 1957, at Little Rock Central High School**

Written for use as
a reader’s theater, audio podcast, and future walking tour
following the footsteps of Elizabeth Eckford and other members of the Little Rock Nine
on their first attempt to attend classes at the formerly all-white school

Dedicated to
**The nine students who were brave enough to integrate their school
despite the danger they were placed in by ignorance and hate.**
**Especially, to Elizabeth Eckford, whose bravery before, during, & after her traumatic first day
at Central High calls and challenges us all to meet hate with peace and death with life.**
**And to everyone who experienced and lived through this awful experience and wrote or spoke
about it.**
Your words allowed us to create this, lest we forget our past. Your words matter.

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For more information, contact: George West, Butler Center Education Outreach Coordinator: gwest@cals.org
and see the student-produced Memory Project website: www.lrchmemory.wix.com/lrch
Note: Footnote version of script plus lesson plans are available

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“Words That Matter”: Voices of Civil Rights, the 1st Day at Central High

Table of Contents

Option Audio Headlines BEFORE 1st Day) Inside the NHS park—(hear Headlines BEFORE 1st Day)

Audio Stop #1) West entrance of Visitors Center (hear “NIGHT BEFORE” excerpts)

Audio Stop #2) former Bus Stop 13th & Park—Elizabeth Eckford gets off city bus (hear “MORNING OF”)

Audio Stop #3) SW corner of school campus, Daisy Bates Ave (14th) & Park—Elizabeth Eckford turned away from campus by Guardsmen, who point toward opposite side of street

Audio Stop #4) Across street and 25 steps to the right (south) from corner—Elizabeth Eckford is spotted by crowd of segregationists and turns back into middle of street; the crowd follows around her

Audio Stop #5) Mid-Block (back to school side of street)—where Elizabeth Eckford tries again to enter school campus, but is blocked again by Guardsmen

Audio Stop #6) Middle of street, again—where iconic photo of Elizabeth’s historic solo walk is taken

Audio Stop #7) NE corner of 16th & Park, site of former Bus Stop bench—where Elizabeth Eckford goes to wait for bus after being locked out of Drug Store [still standing on SE corner] when she tried to call taxi; here she is approached by several persons but remains surrounded by menacing crowd; when city bus arrives, she boards and leaves for her mother’s workplace, accompanied for short while by Grace Lorch, wife of white math professor at Philander Smith who supported integration

Option Audio Headlines AFTER 1st Day) Same corner, facing Central— (hear Headlines AFTER 1st Day)

Speaking parts can be assigned:

Headlines: use the “popcorn” approach, next in line reading next headline down the page

Narrators (1 male/1 female): read title, purpose, credits, speaker’s names; [*alternate, 1 stop at a time*]

LR 9: Elizabeth Eckford, EE mother [*just 1 line—female narrator reads*] Carlotta Walls, Terrence Roberts, Ernest Green [*just 1 line—male narrator reads*], Melba Pattillo

Journalists: Ark Gaz (reporter), AG editor Harry Ashmore, Reverend Marion A. Boggs, ArkDem (reporter) [*can be read by “Will Counts”*], ArkDem photographer Will Counts, NYT reporter Benjamin Fine

Public/Crowd: minister’s prayer [= *Rev. Marion Boggs*], *quoted in Ashmore editorial*]

Crowd/Male 1, Crowd/Male 2, Crowd/Female 1, Crowd/Female 2

Officials/Celebrities: Faubus, Eleanor Roosevelt, Louis Armstrong, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

VCR 1st Day at Central / Option Audio Headlines BEFORE
Tour group starts at west entrance to National Historic Site Visitors Center
(Hear Headlines BEFORE 1st Day; can use full list (17) or shorter list (12))

“BEFORE” Headlines

1954,

May 17: The U.S. Supreme Court rules unanimously in Brown vs. Board of Education that state laws mandating segregated public schools are unconstitutional under...the 14th Amendment..., declaring that segregated schools are “inherently unequal.”

Aug. 23: Public schools in Charleston, Ark. ...admit 11 black students, making that system...the first in the former Confederacy...to end school segregation.

Sept. 7: Fayetteville enrolls nine black students...and becomes the 2nd school in the state to integrate.

1955,

May 22: The Little Rock School Board...and Supt. Blossom issue a plan for gradual integration...to begin in 1957.

July 11: Twenty blacks enroll peacefully amid 1,000 white students in Hoxie, the first school in the Arkansas Delta to integrate.

Aug. 20: ...following a front page story in Life magazine, mounting white opposition to integration in Hoxie...leads the local board to close its schools.

Oct. 24: Hoxie schools re-open after a federal court bars segregationists from preventing the admission of blacks.

1956,

Jan. 28: Gov. Faubus reports that “85 percent of all the people” in Arkansas oppose school desegregation in a survey he commissioned.

May 9: Little Rock...opens the...new Horace Mann High School as a segregated facility for black students.

1957,

Feb. 26: Faubus signs into law four segregation bills passed by the Arkansas legislature.

April 30: The pro-segregation Capital Citizens Council of Little Rock appeals to Faubus in a letter...to “order the two races to attend their own schools”.

July 23: The Little Rock School Board reveals that Central High will be the system’s only school with black enrollment. All 700 students at the new Hall High will be white.

Aug. 23: Just after midnight, a rock is thrown through the...window at the home of Daisy Bates and her husband...A note tied to the rock said, “Stone this time, Dynamite next.”

Aug. 25: A cross 8 feet high is burned on the lawn of L.C. and Daisy Bates. A sign near the cross bears a white lettered message. “Go back to Africa. KKK.”

Sept. 1: "The LR School Board Issues Call for Cooperation and Understanding."

Sept. 2: Faubus orders Arkansas Guard "Troops Take-Over at Central High; Negroes Told, Wait"

Sept. 3: "Letters and Telegrams Say Faubus Has 'Saved the State'
Federal "Judge Orders Start of Integration Today"

[Audio Stop #1] "BEFORE" Headlines—Shorter List (12)

1954,

MAY 17: The U.S. Supreme Court rules unanimously in Brown vs. Board of Education that state laws mandating segregated public schools are unconstitutional under...the 14th Amendment..., declaring that segregated schools are "inherently unequal."

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Sept. 3: Federal "Judge Orders Start of Integration Today"

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #1

Move to NPS memorial park across street, facing display, school in background
(Begin speaking parts, hearing “NIGHT BEFORE” voices from homes of Nine)

NARR: *Arkansas Gazette* Editor– Harry Ashmore.

ASHMORE: “A Time of Testing”: in the wake of changes in the law, this is a time of testing for all of us. We are confident that the citizens of Little Rock will demonstrate on Tuesday, for the world to see, that we are a law-abiding people.

NARR: Carlotta Walls.

WALLS: The integration of the finest high school in Arkansas would happen just once in our lifetime, and I had to have a dress to match the occasion. Mother and I found the perfect outfit: a black skirt set...sophisticated and smart, not too dainty. I hung the skirt set in my closet to wait for the big day.

NARR: Terrence Roberts.

ROBERTS: The conversations at home that night before did not include much speculation about what the next day might bring, just the usual banter typical of our household full of children.

WALLS: That night Mrs. Bates had called again to tell my parents to drop me off at 8:30 a.m. at 13th and Park streets, about a block from the school. An interracial group of ministers would meet us there to escort us to school, she said. We wouldn’t have to walk alone.

NARR: Elizabeth Eckford.

ECKFORD: The night before, I was so excited I couldn’t sleep.

ROBERTS: Perhaps the most significant thing said came from my parents. “Son,” they said, “we want you to know that if you are set on going through with this, we are behind you. But if you decide not to do it, you have our full support for that decision, too.”

WALLS: Governor Faubus appeared on late-night television to make a speech about Central. My parents liked Faubus. They had voted for him twice before. He was a man of the people, I’d heard them say, not a strident segregationist. My parents and I had no clue that Faubus was moments away from announcing a bold, about-face move that would write Little Rock’s civil rights history.

NARR: Arkansas Governor—Orval Faubus.

FAUBUS: “Units of the National Guard have been mobilized with the mission to maintain the peace and good order of this community, and to act in every way possible to protect the lives and property of the citizens of Pulaski County.”

WALLS: I was a citizen of Pulaski County. My parents paid taxes; they were citizens, too. I honestly believed I was included in those our governor was deploying the Guard to protect. When I closed my eyes that night, I was confident that I would be at Central the next day and that I would be safe.

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #2
Move half-block north to former Bus Stop at SW corner of 13th & Park
(Hear “MORNING OF” voices from Nine, leaving home, arriving school)

NARR: Elizabeth Eckford.

ECKFORD: The next morning I was about the first one up. While I was pressing my black and white dress—I had made it to wear on the first day of school—my little brother turned on the TV set. Mother called from the kitchen...

FEMALE NARR: “Turn that TV off!”

ECKFORD: She was so upset and worried. Before I left home, she said we should have a word of prayer. Then I caught the bus.

NARR: Carlotta Walls.

WALLS: The next morning, I popped out of bed without hesitation. It was really going to happen I thought. The anticipation of walking up those regal steps into Central made each moment seem to tick by slowly.

NARR: Terrence Roberts.

ROBERTS: This was to be no ordinary day. Already my parents and I had witnessed the gathering crowds around the school as we tuned in to the morning TV news shows. We calculated, however, that the imagined threat was bigger by far than any real element of danger, based on the fact that National Guardsmen were there.

WALLS: At the meeting spot, we noticed a small group of students—although I couldn’t see Elizabeth or Terrence or Melba—there were two black ministers whom Mother recognized. Three older white ministers and a young white man...were there, too. We chatted anxiously until one of the ministers approached and said it was time to get moving. But first, he said, we needed to pray.

NARR: *Gazette* editor, Ashmore.

ASHMORE: At Second Presbyterian Church yesterday the Reverend Marion A. Boggs offered a special prayer:

BOGGS: We pray that all persons in authority be given wisdom, and we ask God to restrain the passions of violent men. We pray that we will not suffer the spirit of lawlessness to gain ascendancy in our community, and that all the persons have the patience to wait the due process of law.

ASHMORE: These words speak for the great silent, mass of our people who abhor violence, respect the law, and would be ashamed for any child of any race to look upon the naked face of hatred.

ECKFORD: And I got off a block from school. I saw a large crowd of people standing across the street from the soldiers guarding Central. As I walked on, the crowd suddenly got very quiet.

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #3

Move to SW corner of school campus

Elizabeth turned away from campus by Guardsmen, 1st time; others arrive later, also blocked

NARR: Arkansas Gazette.

ARK GAZETTE: Sept. 5th: The first Negro applicant to try to enroll at Little Rock Central High School, Elizabeth Eckford, 15, wearing sunglasses and a white dress with broad checkered trim on the skirt, and carrying a small green notebook alighted from a public transportation bus at Thirteenth Street and Park Avenue at 7:50 a.m. and walked a block to Park and Fourteenth Street.

NARR: Arkansas Democrat, photographer Will Counts.

COUNTS: There were only a couple of other newsmen waiting at 14th and Park when Elizabeth Eckford approached the National Guardsmen. White students had been passing through the line of troops along the sidewalk. I had suspicions but no real knowledge that the Guardsmen had orders to block students from entering.

ECKFORD: At the corner I tried to pass through the line of guards around the school so as to enter the school grounds behind them. One of the guards pointed across the street. He wouldn't speak.

NARR: Arkansas Gazette.

ARK GAZETTE: She approached the Guardsmen on the corner, they drew together and blocked her entrance to the sidewalk.

NARR: Carlotta, arriving with group at the same corner, minutes later.

WALLS: The guardsmen had formed a ring around the school. But I wasn't afraid. They blocked the entrance, but I was certain that when they saw us, they would just step aside and allow us through. There were, after all, there to protect us and keep out the troublemakers, I thought. But not one of ...the guardsmen in front of us, budged. Ernest Green said,

GREEN: "You're not going to let us in?"

NARR: *Gazette* Editor, Harry Ashmore.

ASHMORE: "The Crisis Mr. Faubus Made"—Little Rock arose yesterday to gaze upon the incredible spectacle of a high school surrounded by National Guard troops called out by Governor Faubus to protect life and property. The Crisis Mr. Faubus made is one he must now live with, and the rest of us must suffer under. If Mr. Faubus in fact has no intention of defying federal authority, now is the time for him to call a halt to resistance. And certainly he should do so before his own actions become the cause of the violence he professes to fear.

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #4

Move across street to opposite side of Park, walk 25 steps to right (south)

Elizabeth, spotted by crowd of segregationists, turns back into middle of street; crowd follows

ECKFORD: So I walked across the street, then someone shouted,

CROWD/MALE 1: Here she comes, get ready!

NARR: Arkansas Gazette.

ARK GAZETTE: Before she had taken 25 steps, she cut [back] into the street and walked back to the line of Guardsmen. It was then that a crowd of 200 saw her and rushed to the scene.

ECKFORD: The crowd moved in closer and then began to follow me, calling me names. I still wasn't afraid. Just a little bit nervous. I kept thinking the guards would protect me. Then my knees began to shake all of a sudden, and I wondered whether I could make it. It was the longest block I ever walked in my whole life.

NARR: Democrat photographer Will Counts.

COUNTS: When she was turned away by the National Guard troops, the courage and grace she exhibited as she walked two blocks through the mob of school-integration dissidents became one of my most moving experiences. Her actions epitomized for me the nonviolent principles Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference had begun using to compel the country toward racial justice.

WALLS: We didn't realize that Elizabeth had already arrived and was trapped in the crowd at the end of the block... Meanwhile, around us, the scene felt surreal. With everyone jeering and screaming at once, their words sounded muddled, except for one: *nigger ... nigger ... nigger*. It shot out of angry mouths like bullets and pierced my ears again and again.

ROBERTS: I still hear the sound of shrill voices filling the air with vicious knife edged words, calculated to hurt as much as possible.

WALLS: Adrenaline pulsed through my body and quickened the pace of my heart. ... I had never seen such raw anger up close before. And this was directed at me. For what? Because I wanted to go to school?

NARR: Melba Pattillo.

PATILLO: Mother and I had come on our own, saw the crowd, and parked two blocks away. As we drew near, the angry outbursts became even more intense, and we began to hear their words more clearly ... "Niggers, go home! Niggers, go back where you belong!"

NARR: Arkansas Gazette.

ARK GAZETTE: Eckford, silent and looking straight ahead, walked alone at a brisk pace down the line of troops. The crowd walked along with her and began a stream of cat-calling. A woman made a lunge at the girl.

CROWD MALE 1: Go back where you came from!

ARK GAZETTE: and was pushed back by a Guard officer. Another in the crowd said,

CROWD FEMALE 1: "You've got a better school than ours so why don't you go back to it."

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #5

Move to mid-block on campus, facing first sidewalk curving toward front doors

Eckford tries again to enter school campus, but is blocked by Guardsmen (2nd time)

ECKFORD: When I got to the middle of the block in front of the school, I went straight up to a guard again but he didn't move to let me pass him. I didn't know what to do. So I walked until I was right in front of the path to the front door.

NARR: Arkansas Gazette.

ARK GAZETTE: She made an attempt in the middle of the line to cross onto the school grounds and again was stopped by Guardsmen,

CROWD FEMALE 2: "Don't let her in our school—that 'nigger'."

ECKFORD: I stood looking at the school—it looked so big! Just then the guards let some white students through. The crowd was quiet, again waiting to see what was going to happen. When I was able to steady my knees, I walked up to the guard who had let the white students in. When I tried to squeeze past him, he raised his bayonet, and then the other guards moved in.

NARR: Arkansas Democrat.

As she walked along the Guard line in the street in front of the high school, the crowd followed, calling her names.

CROWD FEMALE 1: "Go home nigger, you will never get into this school. We don't want you here."

ECKFORD: They glared at me with a mean look, and I was very frightened but didn't know what to do. I turned around, and the crowd came toward me. They moved closer and closer.

NARR: Democrat Photographer Will Counts.

COUNTS: Her imperturbable walk through the mob has become a slow-motion *cinema verite* memory. I still find it difficult to believe that this display of racial hatred was happening in front of my old high school—and my camera.

NARR: Gazette, Harry Ashmore.

ASHMORE: But the point is that the armed troops Governor Faubus placed around Central High School had orders to keep the Negro children out of the school – and did so. Until last Thursday the matter of gradual, limited integration in the Little Rock schools was a local problem. On that day Mr. Faubus appeared in court on behalf of a small but militant minority and chose to make it a state problem. On Monday night he called out the National Guard and made it a national problem.

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #6

Move to next sidewalk curving toward doors, toward corner of 16th & Park, face street
Elizabeth's historic solo walk is captured in iconic photo reprinted in newspapers nationally

CROWD MALE 1, FEMALE 1: Two, four, six, eight, we ain't gonna integrate!

ALL CROWD VOICES: Two, four, six, eight, we ain't gonna integrate! (*Getting louder*)

ECKFORD: I tried to see a friendly face somewhere in the mob—anybody who maybe would help. I looked into the face of an old woman, but when I looked at her again, she spat on me. I turned back to the guards, but their faces told me I wouldn't get any help from them.

ROBERTS: After a few tries, I saw that the Guards primary assignment was to keep me out of school.

ECKFORD: Then I looked down the block and saw a bench at the bus stop. "If I can only get there, I will be safe." I don't know why the bench seemed a safe place to me, but I started walking towards it. I tried to close my mind to what they were shouting.

CROWD MALE 2: If we let 'em in, next thing they'll be marrying our daughters!

CROWD FEMALE 2: Just let those niggers show up! Just let 'em try!"

ECKFORD: And kept saying to myself, "If only I can make it to the bench, I will be safe."

NARR: Democrat Photographer Will Counts.

COUNTS: As I watched and composed the photographs, I didn't know what might happen after each step Elizabeth took. The mob became increasingly strident, and while I saw no one attempt to strike Elizabeth, that possibility was always present.

NARR: Eleanor Roosevelt, Washington, D.C.

ROOSEVELT: Within all of us there are two sides. One reaches for the stars, the other descends to the level of the beasts. The picture of the mobs in Little Rock...shows clearly that the beast in us was predominant.

NARR: Martin Luther King, Jr. telegram to The White House

KING: Mr. President, if the federal government fails to take a strong, positive stand at this time, it will set the process of integration back fifty years.

ROOSEVELT: No one in authority in this city tried to control and draw out the best in people instead of the worst. That is the sad thing about it. Not even the few courageous ministers could kindle even a spark of courage which would have turned the tide.

ECKFORD: "If only I can make it to the bench, I will be safe."

[continued next page]

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #6 –*continued*

NARR: Arkansas Gazette.

ARK GAZETTE: Grand Forks, N.D. (Associated Press) – Trumpet player Louis (“Satchmo”) Armstrong said he’s given up plans for a government-sponsored trip to Russia because

ARMSTRONG: The way they are treating my people in the South, the government can go to hell. It’s getting almost so bad a colored man hasn’t got any country,” the Negro entertainer said.

ARK GAZETTE: One official at the State Department commented gloomily that Russian propagandists undoubtedly would seize on Armstrong’s words. The Reds have been pounding away at the school integration problems in the South as evidence of American intolerance of colored peoples.

ARMSTRONG: The people over there ask me what’s wrong with my country. What am I supposed to say?

ECKFORD: “If only I can make it to the bench, I will be safe.”

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #7

Move to NE corner of 16th & Park, facing red brick storefront across street

Elizabeth waits for bus after being locked out of Drug Store when she tried to call taxi; on bus bench [located next to present-day telephone pole] she is approached by several persons (including (including Mr. L.C. Bates, Terrence Roberts, CBS TV newsman Robert Schakne, NY Times Reporter Benjamin Fine, Grace Lorch) but remains surrounded by menacing crowd; when city bus arrives, she boards and leaves for her mother's workplace, accompanied for short while by Grace Lorch, wife of white professor at Philander Smith who supported integration

ECKFORD: When I finally got there to the bus stop bench, I don't think I could have gone another step. I sat down, and the mob hollered...

CROWD FEMALE 2: Go back where you came from!

CROWD MALE 1: Go home before you get hurt, nigger!

CROWD MALE 2: If they're in my class I'll walk out! ...

CROWD FEMALE 2: If they don't have guards with them niggers, they're gonna get murdered.

CROWD FEMALE 1: We got us a nigger right here!

CROWD FEMALE 1: Drag her over to this tree!

CROWD MALE 2: Lynch her!

ECKFORD: Just then a white man sat down beside me, put his arm around me, and patted my shoulder. He raised my chin and said,

NYT BENJAMIN FINE: Don't let them see you cry.

ROBERTS: Elizabeth was visibly shaken by all of the hostility directed toward her, and I had begun to feel a higher level of fear myself as I listened to the taunts and name-calling from the mob. I made my way over to Elizabeth to see if I could offer anything that might help her. I suggested she walk home with me, but she declined. She told me later that if she had gone home with me, she still would have had to find a way to get to her own home. Grace Lorch, a white woman from Little Rock, stayed with Elizabeth and said that she would see to it that she got on a bus. I decided it would be best if I went back home, and I turned away from the mob and started to walk.

WALLS: The next day, *The New York Times* would run this account of the moment when a lone white woman—Grace Lorch, whose husband taught at Philander Smith College—came to Elizabeth's aid:

NYT BENJAMIN FINE: The Negro girl sat on a bench. She seemed in a state of shock. A white woman, Grace Lorch, walked over to comfort her.

[continued next page]

VCR 1st Day at Central / Audio Stop #7—*continued*

CROWD MALE 2: “What are you doing, you nigger lover?” ...

FINE: ... Mrs. Lorch was asked.

CROWD FEMALE 1: “You stay away from that girl!”

LORCH: “She’s scared,” ...

FINE: she said, appealing to the men and women around her.

LORCH: “Why don’t you calm down?” ...

FINE: she asked the crowd.

LORCH: “Six months from now you’ll be ashamed of what you’re doing.”

FINE: Mrs. Lorch escorted the Negro student to the other side of the street, but the crowd followed. Finally, after being jostled by the crowd, she worked her way to the street corner, and the two boarded a bus.

NARR: Will Counts.

COUNTS: The National Guard troops remained on the sidewalk, passively watching the crowd verbally assail her. Elizabeth has told me that as she was sitting on a bench at the bus stop, she wondered why the newsmen—including me—who crowded around, didn’t assist her onto a bus. I have no good answer for her question.

NARR: Eleanor Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT: The world is made up of people of many races and many colors. They must be accepted as people and treated with the same dignity and respect wherever they are...Until we do this with our own citizens at home, we will be suspect to the world, our leadership will have little value, and we will endanger the peace of the world ...we have the responsibility to give an example of how nations can live together in peace and unity.

NARR: Gazette, Harry Ashmore.

ASHMORE: “Reflections in a Hurricane’s Eye” –We are going to have to decide what kind of people we are—whether we obey the law only when we approve of it, or whether we obey it no matter how distasteful we may find it.”

VCR 1st Day at Central / Option Audio Headlines AFTER

Remain standing at corner, but turn to face Central

(Hear Headlines AFTER the 1st Day)

1957

20 September — Federal Judge Davies rules that Governor Faubus did not use the National Guard troops to preserve law and order and forbids him from interfering with the integration of Central High. The governor removes the National Guard Little Rock Police then move in.

23 September — The Little Rock Nine enter a side door at Central High School as a crowd of about 1,000 whites riot out front. The police cannot handle the crowd. The nine students are removed from the school before noon for their safety. President Eisenhower call the rioting disgraceful and issues Executive Order # 10730 paving the way for the use of federal troops to stop it.

24 September —The 101st Airborne Division (1,100 officers and soldiers) rolls into Little Rock before dawn. The Arkansas National Guard is placed under federal orders and mobilized.

25 September — Under federal troop escort, the nine students ride up to Central High School in an Army staff car and finally enter the school for their 1st full day of classes.

9 October — Governor Faubus states that only the withdrawal of the nine students will end the crisis at Central High School.

17 December — Black student Minnijean Brown dumps a bowl of chili on two of her white antagonists in the Central High cafeteria. She receives a six-day suspension.

1958

24 January — Five bomb threats in five days occur at Central, but nothing is found except a stick of dynamite without a fuse or cap and a few firecrackers.

17 February — Minnijean Brown is expelled from Central. Minnijean says she is being punished for calling a girl “white trash” after the other girl hit her. Sammie Dean Parker, a white student, is suspended for pushing Gloria Ray, one of the nine, down a flight of stairs; and two white boys are suspended for showing cards saying, “One down, eight to go.”

25 May — The first African-American student to graduate from Central High School is Ernest Green. Civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is in attendance at the ceremony as a guest of the Green family.

26 August — Governor Faubus addresses the state legislature, saying that federal government has no power in the integration issue.

12 September — Governor Faubus signs into law the school closing bill then orders the four high schools in Little Rock (Central, Hall, Horace Mann and Technical) closed as of 8 a.m., Sept. 15. The rest of the 1958-59 school year, commonly referred to as “The Lost Year”, is held with no classes in the public high schools.

17 September — The [WEC] Women’s Emergency Committee to Re-Open Our Schools is formed to solicit votes “for integration” in the special election on September 27.

27 September — Votes are 19,470 to 7, 651 against “immediate integration of all schools”

4 November — Orval Faubus is elected to his third two-year term as governor, garnering 83% of the vote....

1959

6 May— The School Board splits over the issue of teacher contracts. [The three segregationist members], declaring themselves a quorum after the three [moderates] walk out of the meeting, vote to not renew contracts of 44 teachers, including 7 principals, [they considered supportive of integration.]

7 May — The PTA Council strongly criticizes the firings.... Protest meetings spring up at several schools.

9 May — STOP (Stop This Outrageous Purge) is organized by 179 prominent downtown business and civic leaders for the purpose of recalling [the 3 board members who fired the teachers.]

10 May — Petitions to recall [the 3 moderate] board members are circulated by [CROSS, Committee to Retain Our Segregated Schools.] [Both groups run ads in rival papers *Ark Gazette* and *Ark Democrat*.]

26 May — [Using the WEC's grassroots neighborhood plan to identify and turn out their supporters], STOP makes a clean sweep in the recall election. The 3 segregationists are voted off and the 3 moderates are retained. [The Lost Year is ended, and Little Rock returns operation under its desegregation plan in the upcoming 1959-60 school year.]

NARR: Atlanta Daily World, Sept 26, 1957: "Dr. King Asks Non-Violence in Little Rock School Crisis"

NARR: History is on your side. World opinion is with you. The moral conscience of millions of white Americans is with you. Keep struggling with this faith and the tragic midnight of anarchy and mob rule which encompasses your city at this time will be transformed into the glowing daybreak of freedom and justice." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

--End--

“Words That Matter: Voices of Civil Rights—The First Day at Central High”

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