

**CULTURAL
AWARENESS**

OBSERVANCE



**Black History Month
Information Base**

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FEBRUARY

Black History Month
People



Introduced at the March on Washington as "the acknowledged champion of civil rights in America," Roy Wilkins headed the oldest and largest of the civil rights organizations, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. By the early 1960s, with a new generation of activists trying a more confrontational approach, Roy Wilkins remained a moderate but insistent voice for progressive action, with a direct line to the White House.

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Education/Students/Leaders-in-the-Struggle-for-Civil-Rights/Roy-Wilkins.aspx>

Charles Lenox Remond was one of the earliest recorded Black abolitionist speakers. At 18, he traveled from his home in Massachusetts to London for the World Anti-Slavery Convention and remained abroad for many years to lecture on abolition in universities across the United Kingdom. During the Civil War, he recruited Blacks and helped to staff the first two all-Black units from Massachusetts.

<http://www.blackpast.org/1841-charles-lenox-remond-slavery-it-concerns-british>

The March on Washington represented a coalition of civil rights organizations, all of which generally had different approaches and different agendas. The "Big Six" organizers were James Farmer, of the Congress of Racial Equality; Martin Luther King, Jr., of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; John Lewis, of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; A. Philip Randolph, of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Roy Wilkins, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and Whitney Young, Jr., of the National Urban League.

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-firsts>

Bayard Rustin, once called the Socrates of the civil rights movement, was the engineer behind the scenes of the March on Washington, and its success was largely due to his planning. Rustin's activism was rooted in his Quaker upbringing and deep belief in the concept of one human family, with all members of that family being equal. Imprisoned for militant pacifist activities during World War II, he was involved in nearly every major civil rights effort from the 1940s on.

<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Education/Students/Leaders-in-the-Struggle-for-Civil-Rights/Bayard-Rustin.aspx>

The Tuskegee
Airmen flew over
200 combat
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War II and lost
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to enemy fire.

When the U.S. military was segregated, there were myths that Black men were not successful fighters. The Tuskegee Airmen proved this misled theory wrong when they flew over 200 combat missions in World War II and lost none of their own to enemy fire. Their second-to-none fighting record was instrumental in burying myths about correlations concerning race and combat skills and paved the way to full integration of the U.S. military.

<http://tuskegeeairmen.org/explore-tai/a-brief-history/>

Jean Baptiste Point du Sable is known as the first settler of present-day Chicago. As merchant and farmer of the region, Point du Sable established both a prosperous farm in a region otherwise unsettled and an affable relationship with the local Native American tribes. After the end of the Revolutionary War, his farm prospered greatly. Travelers as far as the East coast knew of the Point du Sable farm as one of the only sources of farmed produce in the area.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/chicago/peoplevents/p_dusable.html

The 1963 March on Washington was envisioned by A. Philip Randolph, a long-time civil rights activist dedicated to improving the economic condition of Black Americans. When Randolph first proposed the march in late 1962, he received little response from other civil rights leaders. He knew that cooperation would be difficult because each had his own agenda for the civil rights movement, and the leaders competed for funding and press coverage. He knew that for the March on Washington to be successful, all civil right leaders would have to support the event.

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-firsts>

Nine months before Rosa Parks refused to move from her seat, a young woman named Claudette Colvin did the same. Claudette, only 15 years old at the time, was beaten and arrested for taking a stand. In the months that followed, the Montgomery Bus Boycott came to fruition in Alabama.

"Claudette Colvin: an unsung hero in the Montgomery Bus Boycott." Jet 28 Feb. 2005: 12+. Diversity Studies Collection. Web. 8 Jan. 2016.

Known as the "Father of Black History," Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the celebration he called "Negro History Week" in 1926. He selected the second week of February because it fell between the birthdays of the famed orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, the celebration expanded to include the entire month.

<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history-facts>

Mary McLeod Bethune was the founder of the Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls in Daytona Beach, Florida. It formally opened in October of 1904 with 5 students enrolled. In 1929, Bethune merged with the Cookman Institute and became co-ed. By 2015, the Bethune-Cookman University had grown to enroll upwards of 4,000 undergraduate students each year.

<http://ncnw.org/about/bethune.htm>

Henry Ossian Flipper was the first African American to graduate from West Point academy in 1877. He became the first Black commander when he was assigned to the 10th Cavalry, a Buffalo Soldier regiment.

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-firsts>

The NCOs of the 10th
Cavalry in 1902.
diversity.defense.gov



Fannie L. Hamer was a civil rights activist whose depiction of her own suffering focused attention on the plight of Blacks throughout the South. In 1964, she worked with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, organizing the Freedom Summer voter registration drive in Mississippi. Hamer's tombstone is inscribed with her famous quote, "I am sick and tired of being sick and tired."

<http://www.history.com/topics/fannie-lou-hamer>

In 1988, while at Temple University, scholar Molefi Asante founded the first Ph.D. program in African-American studies.

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-firsts>

In 2007, Barbara Hillary became the first recorded Black woman to reach the North Pole. Hillary was 75 years old.

pbs.org

Black civil rights activist Ida B. Wells was one of the first American women to continue to keep her last name after her marriage.

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-firsts>

The Montgomery Bus Boycott officially began when Rosa Parks, a young Black protestor, famously refused to give up her seat for a White man on the bus. Parks was a politically active member of the NAACP long before her actions on that day, and came from a family of activists. That day in 1955, the “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement” and her quiet act of defiance resonated throughout the world.

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/rosa-parks/>

George Washington Carver, who made agricultural advancements and inventions pertaining to the use of peanuts, and Percy Julian, who helped create drugs to combat glaucoma, were the first African Americans admitted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 1990.

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-firsts>

Alain Locke, a writer, philosopher, and intellectual, was the first Black Rhodes Scholar. A strong supporter of African-American arts, he wrote about the Harlem Renaissance in *The New Negro* (1925).

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-firsts>

In 1932, Jane Bolin became the first Black woman to become a judge in the United States. She was also the first Black woman to receive a law degree from Yale.

<http://www.biography.com/tv/classroom/black-history-firsts>

A housemaid and former slave, Hattie McDaniel was the first Black actor to be honored with an Oscar on February 29, 1940. She won Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Gone with the Wind*. In addition to acting, she was in fact the first Black woman to sing on the radio in America.

<http://www.notablebiographies.com/Ma-Mo/McDaniel-Hattie.html>

Black women, who could not formally join the Army, nonetheless served as nurses, spies, and scouts, the most famous being Harriet Tubman, who scouted for the 2nd South Carolina Volunteers.

[archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

Ralph Abernathy was the pastor of Montgomery's First Baptist Church and one of the most prolific Freedom Riders of the movement. As a good friend of Martin Luther King, Abernathy helped to lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott and later took over as the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) after King's assassination.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/people/ralph-abernathy/>



The Louisiana Native Guard—an African American regiment that fought in the Civil War.
diversity.defense.gov

The first Black recipient of the Medal of Honor was Sergeant William H. Carney of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry for combat valor on July 18, 1863, at Fort Wagner, SC.

highbeam.com

Staff Sergeant Ruben Rivers was killed in action on November 19, 1944 in Guebling, France. Despite a severe wound on his leg, Rivers refused medical treatment and advanced with his company. Upon seeing another tank halted by enemy fire, Sergeant Rivers offered cover fire. While doing so, his tank was hit, killing him and wounding the crew. Staff Sergeant Ruben Rivers was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his fighting spirit and daring leadership.

https://history.army.mil/moh/mohb.html

By the Civil War's end, 16 Black soldiers had been awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor.

archives.gov

In 1930, Thurgood Marshall was denied admission to the University of Maryland Law School because he was Black. After getting accepted to Howard University Law School, he began to develop an impressive track record of winning court cases against states that aimed to continue practicing discrimination. He later became the first Black American to sit on the Supreme Court, from 1967 to 1991.

http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/122/hill/marshall.htm

When he escaped slavery in 1838 at the age of eighteen, Frederick Douglass landed in New York and began to astonish America with his intellect and rhetorical skills. He used his knowledge and talents to change the way Americans thought about race, slavery, and American Democracy. Even after his death over a century ago, his legacy endures. Every day, people are inspired by his resilient advocacy for civil rights and political awareness.

http://www.nps.gov/frdo/learn/historyculture/people.htm

Joseph Cinque and 53 others were abducted from their home in Sierra Leone by Portuguese slave traders. Aboard the schooner *Amistad*, Cinque led a successful revolt against the slave trader crew. On March 9, 1841, the U.S. Supreme Court freed the 35 Africans who survived the ordeal and cleared their passage back to their home on the West African coast.

http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/reform/jb_reform_amistad_1.html

During the Civil War, Kansas was the first state to officially begin training and recruiting Black soldiers. From July 1862 to October 1863, Fort Scott produced both the 1st and 2nd Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry Regiments. The 1st Regiment was the first all-Black regiment from a Northern state to enter the Union army.

www.wnppa.org

In 1866, the U.S. 10th Cavalry Regiment was formed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and recruited Black men from Northern states. The men in the 10th Cavalry were known as the original “Buffalo Soldiers,” and generations proudly fought for their country from the Cavalry’s installation until its deactivation in Algeria in April 1944, marking the end of the Regiment.

<http://www.buffalosoldiers-amwest.org/history.htm>

In March of 1999, following several deployments and service in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Admiral Michelle Howard became the first African American woman to command a ship in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS *Rushmore*. In July of 2014, Howard became the 38th Vice Chief of Naval Operations.



<http://www.navy.mil/navydata/bios/navybio.asp?bioID=394>

On March 8, 1943, Private George Watson was on board a ship that was attacked by enemy bombers. As the ship sank, Watson abandoned his own safety in order to assist several of his comrades who couldn't swim. His actions in saving several of these men subsequently cost him his own life when the suction of the sinking ship dragged him down. Private George Watson was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his extraordinarily valorous actions and self-sacrificing devotion to his fellow-man.

<https://history.army.mil/moh/mohb.html>

Section Photo

A Buffalo Soldier in the 9th Cavalry.

“Buffalo Soldier 9th Cav Denver” by Denver Public Library, <http://cdm16079.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/23968/rec/8>. Licensed under Public Domain via Commons

Black History Month
Events



Widely hailed as a masterpiece of rhetoric, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech invoked the Declaration of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the United States Constitution. In his 17-minute speech, King alluded to Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address by saying "Five score years ago..." and also referenced the abolition of slavery articulated in the Emancipation Proclamation: "It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity."

<http://www.blackfacts.com/fact/a02eab5d-4e20-411b-b2a2-3f5dfe2d22c0>

The largest plantation house in Florida is the Kingsley Plantation on Fort George Island. The main house was built by slaves in 1738, and was sold to Zephaniah Kingsley and his wife, Anta Madgigine Jai in 1815. When the U.S. gained possession of Florida in 1821, Kingsley fought against laws that greatly prohibited the activities of slaves and free Blacks, and even wrote a major treatise on the subject. Even though he owned slaves, he was a strong believer in treating people according to their abilities, not their color.

http://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/kp_history.htm

Founded in 1738, Fort Mose Settlement was the first community of free ex-slaves. It was located at a Spanish colony in Florida called Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose. Before the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves could escape to the colony and get their freedom when they declared their allegiance to the King of Spain and joined the Catholic Church.

<http://fortmose.org/>

The Underground Railroad was a loosely organized network of connections for slaves escaping to the North. Homes, or “stations” would provide food and shelter for escaping slaves, and the leader of the group, or “conductor,” ensured that they moved safely from station to station. It is estimated that close to 100,000 fugitive slaves used the railroad between 1810 and 1860, the majority of whom escaped from Kentucky, Virginia, and Maryland.

<http://www.harriet-tubman.org/underground-railroad/>

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Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia, often referred to as “Sweet Auburn Avenue,” was the commercial, cultural, and spiritual hub of African-American life in the region in the early twentieth century. At its height, Sweet Auburn Avenue was home to many landmarks including Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. was a pastor, as well as the headquarters of the National Association for the advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/auburn-avenue-sweet-auburn>

On May 4, 1961, a group of 13 civil rights activists began the Freedom Rides, a series of bus trips through the American South to protest segregation in interstate bus terminals. The Freedom Riders, who were recruited by the Congress of Racial Equality, departed from Washington D.C. and attempted to integrate facilities at bus terminals along the way into the South. The group encountered tremendous violence from White protestors along the route, but also drew international attention to their cause. By the end of the summer, more than 1,000 volunteers participated.

<http://www.history.com/topics/freedom-rides>

Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. It stipulated that if the Southern states did not cease their rebellion by January 1, 1863, the Proclamation would go into effect. When the Confederacy did not yield, Lincoln issued the final Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

<http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/emancipation-150/10-facts.html>

Little Rock High School was the scene of the most tumultuous tests of the Supreme Court's Brown vs. Board of Education ruling. Three years after the trial, a federal court ordered Little Rock to comply and desegregate the school. Nine students—known as the “Little Rock Nine”—were met with mobs of angry White protesters swarming the front steps. This violence and noncooperation from the community forced the Nine to withdraw from the school for their protection. Two years later, four of the Nine returned to complete their high school educations.

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/akl.htm>

Since 1976, every U.S. President has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.

<http://www.history.com/topics/black-history-month>

On April 5, 1945, the 477th Bombardment Group, the first Black bomber group, attempted to integrate an all-White officers' club at Freeman Field, Indiana. As the officers attempted to enter, they were arrested. By the end of the evening, 103 officers had been arrested. The trials drew national attention. The Freeman Field Mutiny is regarded as an important step toward the integration of the U.S. military.

<http://www.redtail.org/the-airmen-a-brief-history/feeman-field-mutiny/>

Seneca Village is believed to have been Manhattan's first stable community of African-American property owners.

Seneca Village was a settlement in central Manhattan that comprised a small part of present-day Central Park. It is thought to have been Manhattan's first stable community of African-American property owners from 1825 to the mid-1850s.

<http://www.centralparknyc.org/things-to-see-and-do/attractions/seneca-village-site.html>

Little Rock Central High School is widely regarded as the first Southern school to be integrated, but Clinton High School in Tennessee was integrated a year earlier. In 1957, three years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision, Bobby Cain graduated from Clinton High as the first Black graduate of an integrated high school in the South. In 1958, Gail Ann Epps became the first Black female to graduate. In October 1958, Clinton High was bombed and the school was destroyed.

<http://www.greenmcadoo.org/story.html>



A sailor conducting a "sick call" in Vietnam in 1967.
diversity.defense.gov

On March 7, 1965, a group of demonstrators began a march to Montgomery in support of voting rights. They were stopped by state troopers and the Dallas County Sheriff's Department at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. The lawmen attacked the peaceful demonstrators with billy clubs and bull whips. Networks interrupted telecasts to broadcast footage from the incident they dubbed "Bloody Sunday." The march was the catalyst for the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

<http://www.sitimovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>

Mulberry Row is the main road on Monticello—Thomas Jefferson’s 5,000-acre plantation in Virginia. A once-bustling hub of homes, workshops, and sheds, the Row was where all walks of life came together and worked as farmers, weavers, carpenters, gardeners, and blacksmiths. The plantation suggests the intricacy of labor at such a large, production-focused establishment.

<https://www.monticello.org/mulberry-row/gallery/01-introduction>

From the 1880s into the 1960s, a majority of American states enforced segregation through Jim Crow laws (named after a Black character in minstrel shows). From Delaware to California, and from North Dakota to Texas, many states and cities imposed legal punishments on people for consorting with members of another race. The most common types of laws forbade intermarriage and ordered business owners and public institutions to keep their Black and White clientele separated.

http://www.nps.gov/malu/forteachers/jim_crow_laws.htm

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's largest and strongest civil rights organization. Founded in 1909, in New York City by a group of Black and White citizens committed to social justice, the NAACP's principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of minority group citizens of United States and eliminate racial prejudice.

<http://www.blackfacts.com/fact/9f0a9876-88f7-409e-8525-665c5dcf13c6>

Section Photo

The Little Rock Nine are presented the Congressional Gold Medal by President Bill Clinton on November 9, 1999.

"Little Rock Nine Awarded Congressional Gold Medal In Washington." *UPI Photo Collection*. 2010. *Diversity Studies Collection*. Web. 8 Jan. 2016.

Black History Month Milestones



On February 10, 1964, after ten days of debate, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by a vote of 290–130. The bill prohibited any state or local government or public facility from denying access to anyone because of race or ethnic origin.

<http://www.floridablackhistory.com/>

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its ruling in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. The Court's unanimous decision overturned the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which allowed for "separate but equal" public facilities. Declaring that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," the *Brown v. Board* decision helped break state-sponsored segregation and provided an intricate piece to the American Civil Rights Movement.

<http://www.history.com/topics/brown-v-board-of-education-of-topeka>

In 1948, President Harry Truman enacted Executive Order Number 9981, which directed equality of treatment and opportunity in all of the United States Armed Forces. This order, in time, led to the end of racial segregation in the military forces.

http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/desegregation/large/index.php

On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 Americans gathered in Washington, D.C., for a political rally known as the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Organized by civil rights and religious groups, the event was designed to shed light on the political and social challenges African Americans faced across the United States. The march became a key moment in the struggle for civil rights in the U.S., and it culminated in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

<http://www.history.com/topics/march-on-washington>

The Emancipation Proclamation transformed the Civil War from a war against secession into a war for "a new birth of freedom," as Lincoln stated in his Gettysburg Address in 1863. This ideological change discouraged the intervention of France or England on the Confederacy's behalf and enabled the Union to enlist the 200,000 African-American soldiers and sailors who volunteered to fight between January 1, 1863, and the conclusion of the war. In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution formally abolished slavery.

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/emancipation-proclamation-goes-into-effect>

The Civil Rights Act of 1964—which ended segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin—is considered one of the greatest legislative achievements of the civil rights movement. First proposed by President John F. Kennedy, it survived strong opposition from Southern members of Congress and was signed into law by Lyndon B. Johnson.

<http://www.history.com/topics/civil-rights-act>

To commemorate and celebrate the contributions to our nation made by people of African descent, American historian, Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week. The first celebration occurred on Feb. 12, 1926.

http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb12-ff01.html

On March 6, 1960, President Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925, prohibiting discrimination in federal government hiring on the basis of race, religion, or national origin and establishing the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, the EEOC. They were directed to scrutinize and study employment practices of the U.S. government and recommend additional affirmative steps for executive departments and agencies.

<http://www.sitinmovement.org/history/america-civil-rights-timeline.asp>

Section Photo

<https://share.america.gov/life-legacy-martin-luther-king-jr/>

Black History Month Quotes



"We have witnessed today in Washington tens of thousands of Americans, both Negro and White, exercising their right to assemble peaceably and direct the widest possible attention to a great national issue. Efforts to secure equal treatment and equal opportunity for all without regard to race, color, creed, or nationality are neither novel nor difficult to understand. What is different today is the intensified and widespread public awareness of the need to move forward in achieving these objectives—objectives which are older than this nation."

—President John F. Kennedy, at the March on Washington.

"I am sick and tired of being sick and tired."

—Fannie Lou Hamer

"I never, in my life, felt more certain that I was doing right, than I do in signing this paper. If my name ever goes into history it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it."

—President Abraham Lincoln, on the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

"We have more to do to bring Dr. King's dream within reach of all our daughters and sons. We must stand together for good jobs, fair wages, safe neighborhoods, and quality education. With one voice, we must ensure the scales of justice work equally for all—considering not only how justice is applied, but also how it is perceived and experienced. As Dr. King told us, 'injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,' and this remains our great unfinished business."

-President Barack Obama

"A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess."

-A. Philip Randolph

"When you do the common things in life in an uncommon way, you will command the attention of the world."

-George Washington Carver

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will."

-Frederick Douglass

Section Photo

President Barack Obama after speaking in Chicago on October 27, 2015.

"U.S. President Obama Waves After Speaking In Chicago." UPI Photo Collection. 2015. Diversity Studies Collection. Web. 8 Jan. 2016.
