

**Black History Month Facts of the Day 2017**



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## Black History Month 2017

Date	Fact
1	Black History Month, also known as African American History Month, is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role they have played in the history of the United States.
2	In June 1839, 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 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.
3	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.
4	The Montgomery Bus Boycott began when Rosa Parks, a black protestor, refused to give up her seat for a white man on the bus. Parks was a politically active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) long before her actions on that day and came from a family of activists. On that day in 1955, the unassuming actions of the " <i>Mother of the Civil Rights Movement</i> " echoed throughout the country.
5	Jean Baptiste Point du Sable is known as the first settler of present-day Chicago. As a merchant and farmer of the region, Point du Sable established both a prosperous farm in an area otherwise unsettled and an affable relationship with local Native American tribes. After 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.
6	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 African wife, Anna 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.
7	Fannie Lou 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>I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.</i> "
8	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.
9	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.
10	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.
11	When he escaped slavery in 1838, 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.

12	When the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, the 369 <sup>th</sup> Infantry, also known as the “Harlem Hellfighters,” was among the first regiments to arrive in France and it became one of the most highly decorated. An all-black regiment under the command of mostly white officers including its commander, Colonel William Hayward, the 369 <sup>th</sup> spent 191 days in combat, longer than any other American unit in the war. Hayward described his unit saying, “ <i>My men never retire, they go forward or they die.</i> ”
13	In addition to being the first black author to win the Pulitzer Prize, Gwendolyn Brooks was a poetry consultant to the Library of Congress and the poet laureate of the State of Illinois.
14	Although Adolf Hitler intended the 1936 Berlin Games to be a showcase for the Nazi ideology of Aryan racial supremacy, it was a black man who left the biggest imprint on that year’s Games. In one of the greatest performances in Olympic history, American track star Jesse Owens earned gold in the 100 meters, long jump, 200 meters and 4×100 meter relay, a feat that would not be matched until American Carl Lewis did the same at the 1984 Los Angeles Games.
15	In February 1944, the Navy commissioned its first African-American officers. This long-hoped-for action represented a major step forward in the status of African Americans in the Navy and in American society. The 12 commissioned officers, and a warrant officer who received his rank at the same time, came to be known as the “ <i>Golden Thirteen.</i> ”
16	Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1924, Shirley Chisholm is best known for becoming the first black congresswoman (1968), representing New York State in the U.S. House of Representatives for seven terms. She went on to run for the 1972 Democratic nomination for the presidency—becoming the first major-party African-American candidate and the first female to do so.
17	Ralph Abernathy was the pastor of Montgomery’s First Baptist Church and one of the most prolific Freedom Riders of the movement. Abernathy, a good friend of Martin Luther King, Jr., helped to lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott and later took over as the president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLS) after King’s assassination.
18	Alice Walker is a novelist, short story writer, poet, essayist and activist. In 1983, her novel <i>The Color Purple</i> was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Her creative vision is rooted in the economic hardship, racial terror and folk wisdom of African American life and culture in the rural South. Walker became active in the civil rights movement while she attended Spelman College in Atlanta, and was later invited to the home of Martin Luther King, Jr. in recognition of her attendance at the Youth World Peace Festival in Finland.
19	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 five students enrolled. In 1929, Bethune merged with the Cookman Institute and became co-ed. As of 2015, Bethune-Cookman University has grown to enroll upwards of 4,000 undergraduate students each year.
20	Doris “Dorie” Miller enlisted in the Navy in 1939 as a mess attendant and worked his way up to cook. While serving aboard the USS West Virginia, he became the ship’s heavyweight boxing champion. Miller distinguished himself by courageous conduct and devotion to duty during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor when he carried injured sailors to safety, then manned a machine gun until he ran out of ammunition and was ordered to abandon ship. He was awarded the Navy Cross.
21	On July 2, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. This landmark law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race in public accommodations, in publicly owned or operated facilities, in employment and union membership, and in the registration of voters.
22	In 1942, the Commandant of the Marine Corps issued formal instructions to recruit qualified African-American men. The men who enlisted in response completed recruit training at Montford Point in North Carolina. Between 1942 and 1949, approximately 20,000 African-American men completed recruit training and became known as the “ <i>Montford Point Marines.</i> ” Their efforts proved their courage and paved the way for integrated armed forces. By 1949, training was desegregated.
23	On April 7, 1940, the U.S. Post Office Department issued a stamp honoring Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) as part of its Famous Americans Series. Born a slave in Hale’s Ford, Virginia, he served as a role model for other struggling African Americans. In 1888, Washington founded Alabama’s

	Tuskegee Normal Industrial School (renamed Tuskegee Institute in 1937). Washington's stamp was the first U.S. stamp to honor an African American.
24	When Phillis Wheatley was seized from Senegal in 1760, she was only seven years old. After arriving in Boston the young girl was sold to John and Susanna Wheatley, who taught Phillis to read and write. By the time she was 18, Phillis had written a collection of 28 poems, and with the help of Mrs. Wheatley, sent them off to a London publisher. Phillis was the abolitionists' illustrative testimony that Blacks could be both artistic and intellectual. Her first volume of poems, <i>Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral</i> (1773), became the first book of poetry published by a black woman.
25	In 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African-American player in Major League Baseball. Brooklyn Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey chose Robinson because of his excellent athletic record and strength of character. The first player to "cross the color line" would have to withstand intense public scrutiny and avoid confrontation even when met with insults and hostility. Robinson was a well-rounded athlete, had served in the Army and was active in the Civil Rights Movement.
26	In 1959, a young African-American songwriter named Berry Gordy founded Motown Records Corporation. Motown was the first African-American-owned record label to reach widespread national acclaim. It broke down racial prejudice by becoming the most successful independent record company in history and the most successful African-American-owned business in America. The distinctive, upbeat and uplifting music brought together pop and soul, White and Black, old and young.
27	Langston Hughes was one of the most important writers and thinkers of the Harlem Renaissance, the African-American artistic movement in the 1920s that celebrated black life and culture. He was influenced by his life in New York City's Harlem, a primarily African-American neighborhood. Through his poetry, novels, plays, essays and children's books, he promoted equality, condemned racism and injustice, and celebrated African-American culture, humor and spirituality.
28	In June 1967, Air Force Major Robert Henry Lawrence Jr. successfully completed the Air Force Flight Test Pilot Training School at Edwards Air Force Base, California. That same month, he was selected by NASA as an astronaut in the Air Force's Manned Orbiting Laboratory Program, thus becoming the first African-American astronaut. He died in a crash while working as an instructor pilot at Edwards Air Force Base on December 8, 1967. He never got to go into space.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Source</b>
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